

The Next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland

Fairer Scotland Duty Summary

September 2021

**Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment
Summary Template**

<p>Title of Policy, Strategy, Programme etc</p>	<p>The next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland.</p>
<p>Summary of aims and expected outcomes of strategy, proposal, programme or policy</p>	<p>The next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland will provide guidance and support to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) on its strategic priorities and objectives in carrying out its functions.</p>
<p>Summary of evidence</p>	<p>Fire incidents cannot be looked at in isolation, and, when other contributory factors are considered, it is evident that health, demographics and deprivation are key elements to Scotland’s high rate of fires¹. This was all considered as part of the Scotland Together report², in which a review of published statistics, reports and strategies was utilised to help understand any differences between Scotland and other parts of the UK.</p> <p>Deprivation is strongly associated with the rate of dwelling fires as is confirmed by SFRS’s 2019-20 official annual incident statistics³. The 20% most deprived areas of Scotland have a rate of dwelling fires 4.2 times higher than the 20% least deprived and 1.9 times higher than the Scotland average. This relationship has persisted over time as dwelling fire reductions have occurred for each deprivation quintile in relatively similar proportions.</p> <p>In the eight-year period 2012-13 to 2019-20 there was a 21% reduction in the 20% most deprived areas, followed by 13.7% for the next 20% of areas, then 16.2% and 19.8% for the least deprived areas. These figures vary each year as the totals can fluctuate. There is a similar relationship for secondary fires with the most deprived areas having a rate 4.6 times higher than the least deprived and 2.4 times higher than the all Scotland average.</p>

¹ [BRE Scottish Fire Deaths briefing paper](#)

² Scotland Together: A Study Examining Fire Deaths and Injuries in Scotland (May 2010).

³ [Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics 2019-20](#)

There is a clear relationship between deprivation and fire casualty rates in Scotland. Fire related casualty rates are 4.9 times higher in the 20% most deprived areas compared to the 20% least deprived⁴.

For fatal casualties, the most deprived areas in Scotland have a 4.4 times higher fatal casualty rate than the least deprived and 1.8 times the Scotland average. The middle 60% of Scottish areas have rates quite close to the Scotland average, while the least deprived 20% of areas have a rate less than half the average.

For non-fatal casualties the situation is similar, with the most deprived areas having a 5 times higher casualty rate than the least deprived.

Deprivation is a very clear factor in the historic casualty profile regardless of gender or age. For fatal casualty rates it is clear from the official SFRS incident statistics that adults in the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland have had a significantly higher rate regardless of gender or age.

Men in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintile 2 have had a higher rate for those aged over 30. Those aged over 70 clearly have much higher rates than average for all but those in the least deprived areas, a caveat which does not apply for those over 80. 19 fatal casualties in the last eight years were aged over 90, 10 of whom were men in SIMD quintiles 3 and 4.

For non-fatal casualties the rates show that all adults in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland have higher casualty rates than average. For males this extends further, as those in the 40% most deprived areas have higher than average rates. Those aged over 80 have higher than average rates regardless of gender or level of deprivation.

There are strong links between childhood injury deaths and families living in deprived circumstances. For all unintentional childhood injury deaths, the children of parents who have never worked or are in long term unemployment are 13 times more likely to die from an injury than those whose parents have higher managerial occupations. When childhood deaths from house fires are

⁴ Fire safety regime for existing high rise domestic buildings - review: Fairer Scotland Duty summary

	<p>examined the gradient is even steeper at 37 times the rate for more advantaged families (Edwards et al. 2006)⁵.</p>
<p>Summary of assessment findings</p>	<p>It is a requirement of Section 40 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended) that Scottish Ministers prepare such a Framework document, and do so in consultation with SFRS, bodies representing SFRS staff, COSLA and any other relevant bodies.</p> <p>The Framework is the statutory vehicle through which Scottish Ministers set out priorities and objectives that SFRS must have regard to in carrying out its functions. The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 states that Scottish Ministers will keep the Framework under review, and ‘may from time to time revise it’. The current Framework has been in place since 2016.</p> <p>The new Framework acknowledges the evidence above and explains that SFRS can reduce inequality by preventing fires and the longer term effects that can worsen social and economic conditions such as homelessness and impact on ability to continue in employment by preventing fires.</p> <p>In the community, the evidence is that there are people with multiple risk factors for harm, and risk of fire can be one or related to these e.g. poorer health, lower education attainment and disability (<i>SFRS Strategic Plan 2019-22</i>⁶). The Framework asks SFRS to prioritise fire prevention and wider prevention with these individuals, groups and premises at heightened fire risk to have most impact.</p> <p>The Framework also explains that analysis of available evidence demonstrates that those individuals living in Scotland’s most deprived communities are more likely to experience an incident of unintentional harm, although it can affect anyone. The Framework asks SFRS to continue to work to progress the Scottish Government’s commitment to building safer communities with partners, continuing to develop a co-ordinated and strategic approach to reducing unintentional harm.</p> <p>The Framework contains the following strategic priority for SFRS:</p>

⁵ Deaths from Injury in Children and Employment Status in Family

⁶ SFRS Strategic Plan 2019-22

	<p><i>A priority for SFRS is preventing fires and reducing their human, social and economic impact, using an evidence-based approach to target groups and individuals according to risk and universal population wide activities to achieve improved fire and wider safety. These should contribute to improving community safety, reducing inequality and encouraging sustainable and inclusive growth. SFRS should work with public, private and voluntary organisations; communities and individuals where it can add value and contribute to outcomes.</i></p> <p>SFRS will need to adapt to their operating context which continually shifts around them, creating new and ever more complex demands. The Framework advocates further evolution because the context in which SFRS operates and the challenges that it faces are continuing to evolve. In addition to the challenges which Covid recovery and EU Exit bring, Scotland is facing changes in climate, population and in the expectations the public holds for all public services. While the resultant challenges are complex, they also serve to foster opportunities for SFRS and the Framework also contains the following strategic priority for SFRS:</p> <p><i>SFRS should continually improve and modernise the service it provides so that it can do more to improve outcomes for communities across Scotland. Modernisation proposals should be considered, developed and delivered using sound evidence and should include but not be limited to ensuring SFRS is using its people, assets and financial resources in the most efficient and effective manner and that the role of firefighters is modernised to allow the Service to address new and emerging risks in our communities.</i></p> <p>Scottish Ministers will keep the terms of the Framework under review and will look to indicators of gaps in outcomes by deprivation (as well as population level figures), to consider whether the Framework is leading to reductions in inequalities around fire risk.</p>
<p>Sign off</p>	<p>Name: Wendy Wilkinson</p> <p>Job title: Deputy Director, Safer Communities</p>



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