



**SCOTTISH**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

**North Service Delivery Area**

**Aberdeen City**

**2020/21 Q1 Public Protection Report**



The figures included in this report are provisional and subject to change as a result of quality assurance and review. The statistics quoted are internal management information published in the interests of transparency and openness.

The Scottish Government publishes Official Statistics each year which allow for comparisons to be made over longer periods of time.

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## Introduction

This report provides detail on the performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in the Aberdeen City area. In doing so it outlines our progress in the delivery of local priorities as set out within the Local Fire and Rescue Plan and the SFRS framework document.

The Scottish Government provides an overarching vision for public services. This vision is supported by 16 national outcomes, which demonstrate commitment to creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increasing sustainable growth. The SFRS can make a significant contribution to improving these outcomes for Aberdeen City by contributing to the Community Planning arrangements across the area.

The national priorities for the SFRS are set out in the Fire and Rescue Framework (Scotland) 2016. The SFRS Strategic Plan 2016-2019 outlines how the SFRS will deliver against these priorities and the outcomes against which this delivery can be measured.

The SFRS Local Fire and Rescue Plan for the Local Authority Area of Aberdeen City is the mechanism through which the aims of the SFRS Strategic Plan 2016-2019 are delivered to meet the agreed needs of Aberdeen City's communities.

The Plan sets out the priorities and objectives for SFRS within Aberdeen City and allows our Local Authority partners to scrutinise the performance outcomes of those priorities. The SFRS will continue to work closely with our partners in Aberdeen City to ensure we are all "Working Together for a Safer Scotland" through targeting risks to our communities at a local level.

The SFRS aspires to deliver the highest standards to our communities and our current performance is testament to the commitment, professionalism and dedication of our staff and the positive local partnerships embedded within Aberdeen City Community Safety working groups.

## Performance Summary

We measure how well we are meeting our priorities using the 6 key indicators depicted below.

Key performance indicator	Apr to Jun					RAG rating
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	YTD
All accidental dwelling fires	66	71	67	63	60	
All accidental dwelling fire casualties (fatal & non-	6	9	6	7	18	
All deliberate fires	89	127	126	88	110	
Non- domestic fires	42	21	34	27	28	
All deliberate other building fires	5	3	3	5	5	
False Alarm - UFAs	355	329	321	324	256	

	RED	10% higher than the previous YTD period, or local target not achieved.
	Amber	Up to 9% higher than the previous YTD period, or local target not achieved.
	Green	Equal to or improved upon the previous equivalent quarter (or YTD period), or local target achieved.

### Note

Quarterly Performance RAG rating = the reporting period compared to the average over the previous quarterly reporting periods  
 Year to Date RAG rating = the cumulative total of all quarterly performance in the current year compared to cumulative total of all quarterly performance in the previous year.

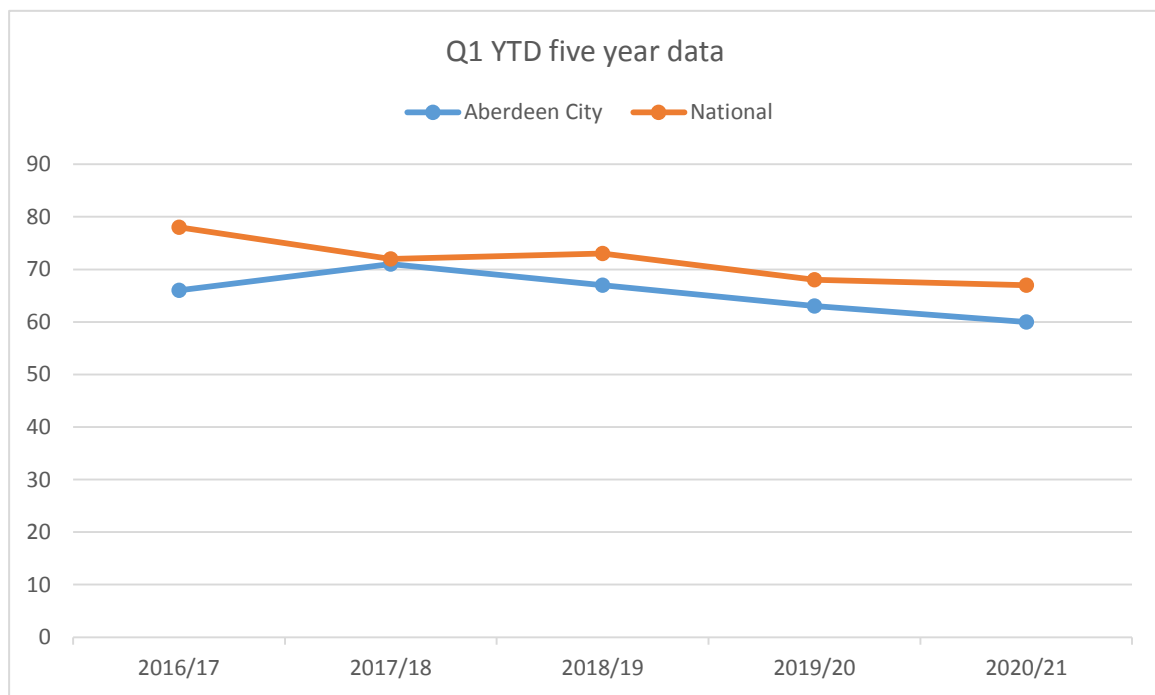
## Progress on local fire & rescue plan priorities

### LPI Assessment 1: Domestic Safety and Wellbeing

The main areas of measurement of Domestic Safety and Wellbeing are:

- Accidental Dwelling Fires
- Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties and Fatalities
- Number of high risk Home Fire Safety Visits delivered
- Number of referrals for Home Fire Safety Visits received from partners

#### Accidental Dwelling Fires:



Dwelling fires can have a significant negative impact upon both individuals and the community and are financially costly to house holders and housing providers in terms of repair and the reinstatement of homes. By giving safety advice and fitting smoke detectors, SFRS have reduced the risk of fire and its associated human and financial costs as well as enhancing community safety.

#### Results:

The same Year to Date (YTD) period average over the previous four years confirms a downward trend in relation to all accidental dwelling fires.

The figure for the Q1 2020/21 reporting period of sixty (60) incidents demonstrates a decrease of 5% from the same reporting period in 2019/20 of sixty-three (63) incidents.

Equally, the average over the previous four years for the same reporting period was Sixty-three (63) incidents. This also shows a 5% decrease for the 2020/21 stat against the four-year average and identifies a continual downward trend across Aberdeen City.

The continued reduction is a positive result for this reporting period as more people are cooking at home due to lockdown from COVID-19.

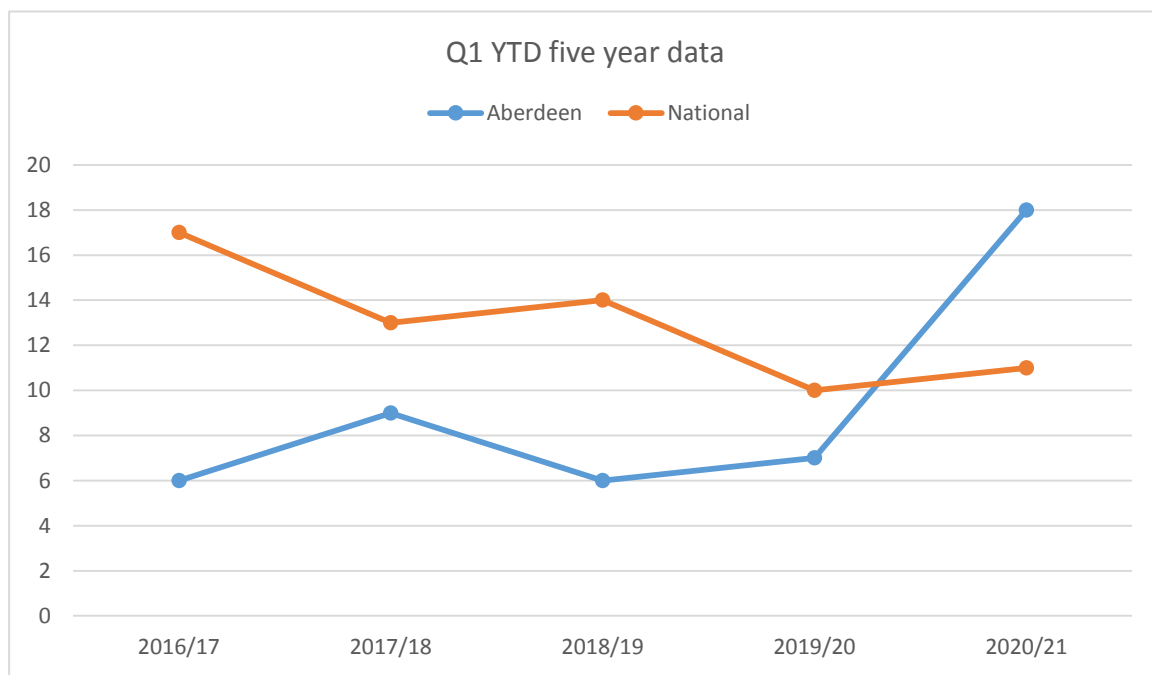
**Reasons:**

We have analysed statistical data which has helped us to identify the root cause of fire as food ignited via 'cooking appliances' in the kitchen. These are mainly caused by adults in the 18-64 age range. The most common human factors relate to occupants being distracted and under the influence of drugs/alcohol.

**Actions:**

We continue to use a targeted approach to promote fire safety, education and awareness programmes, and work with our communities and partners to deliver safety initiatives. We prioritised our 'Home Fire Safety' visits in our high-risk areas to reduce the risk of fire within the home, and ensure individuals in our community remain safe from fire.

**Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties and Fatalities**



Fire casualty and fatality rates provide an indication of the number of serious, life threatening injuries that occur as a result of fire. This statistic is a key indicator of the success of our risk reduction and community engagement strategies.

The reduction of fire fatalities and casualties is linked to the reduction in dwelling house fires and is at the core of preventative activities. The vulnerable in our communities continue to be those most at risk. Older people, those with disabilities, those who live alone and those with alcohol and drugs dependencies provide the SFRS with challenges in engagement and reduction strategies. Working with partner organisations with single shared assessments and signposting of vulnerable persons proves an effective method of identification and

engagement. Fire casualties are more likely to occur in the areas with highest operational demand.

#### Results:

The same Year to Date (YTD) period average over the previous four years confirms an upward trend in relation to all accidental dwelling fire casualties.

The figure for the 2020/21 reporting period is eighteen (18) which is up on the same reporting period in 2019-20 of seven (7).

The average over the previous four years for the same reporting period was seven (7) which identifies a continued downward trend.

Unfortunately, we must report that despite the efforts of SFRS crews a tragic death occurred on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020 during a fire at Charlotte Gardens, Aberdeen. A joint investigation has been carried out with Police Scotland for both incidents and the findings will be used to inform future safety messages.

#### Reasons:

Analysis for this reporting period shows that although accidental dwelling fires are reducing, the number of persons involved in these incidents has increased. This can be linked to the lockdown from COVID-19 where more people are at home during this reporting period. Therefore, the incidents of fire attended by SFRS will have the potential to involve more people and this is reflected in the increased statistics. The fire incidents recorded were predominantly accidental by adults and elderly persons. Historically these are between 12:00hrs & 21:00hrs, but for this reporting period there is a marked change. Incidents are recorded across the three main meal times of breakfast, lunch and evening meal but with a distinct spike between 03:00hrs and 04:00hrs in the morning. Once again this can be linked to the lockdown from COVID-19 with cooking and domestic appliances along with smoking materials being the main source of ignition. The fires were in the kitchens, living rooms and bedrooms with food, clothing and furniture being the main items ignited.

The majority of casualties were overcome with gas, smoke and toxic fumes or suffered slight breathing difficulties and two suffered burns. Eight were treated at the incident with the remainder going to hospital. Fire fighters rescued eight persons at these incidents.

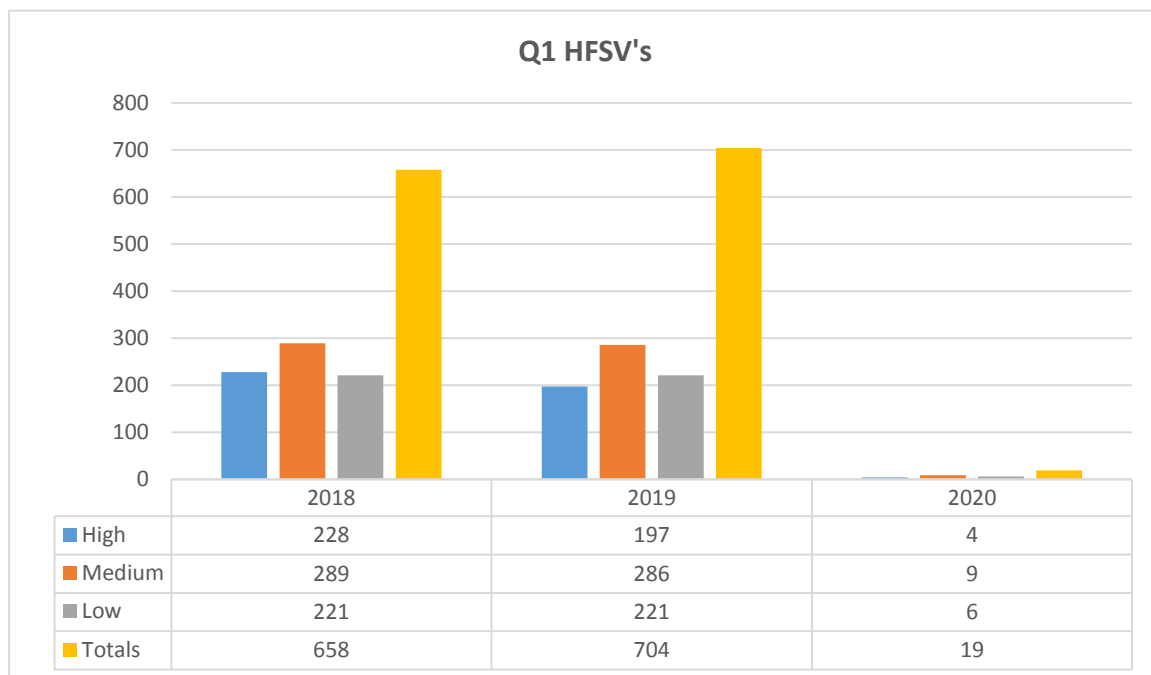
#### Actions:

Following all domestic incidents, SFRS personnel initiate effective and meaningful 'Community Engagement' through our 'Post Domestic Incident Response'. We engage with neighbouring households, and the wider community, offering Home Fire Safety Visits and providing community fire safety advice and guidance.

The area's Community Action Team actively targets where casualties have occurred, we have also invested in the provision of heat detectors which are being fitted on a risk basis to those most vulnerable from a kitchen fire. We have carried out fifty-seven (57) free Home Fire Safety Visits during this period and provided detection in twenty-six (26) premises in Aberdeen. Due to COVID-19 our community engagement was only undertaken in 'very high risk' premises. We will continue to engage with the local communities to target the highest risk individuals.

**Number of high risk Home Fire Safety Visits delivered:**

A Home Fire Safety Visit is a comprehensive assessment by our Firefighters or Community Action Team which examines the levels of fire risk within the home. It provides a means to mitigate the risk through the provision of guidance, advice and if required, the installation of battery operated smoke alarms and heat alarms where additional risk has been identified. Where appropriate, the HFSV will permit the occupier to be referred to other agencies for additional support.



**Results:**

During this reporting period our community engagement activities have been reduced due to COVID-19

**Reason:**

To ensure the safety of the public and of our staff during the Coronavirus outbreak, we have taken the decision to temporarily suspend most Home Fire Safety Visits except for those where the occupiers are identified as being at very high risk.

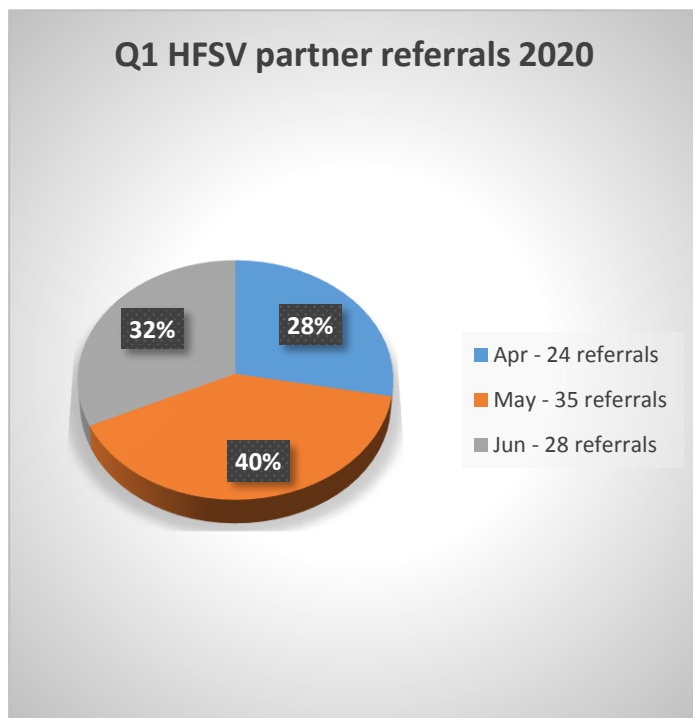
**Action:**

During COVID-19 SFRS initiated a **'Make the Call'** campaign. This is a hard-hitting appeal to carers, family, friends and of those who are at risk of serious injury or even death because of an accidental fire in their home to contact SFRS for a free Home Fire Safety Visit.

Very High-risk individuals are those who are –

- over 50 years old
- live alone
- use medical oxygen
- smoke
- have mobility issues

**Number of referrals for Home Fire Safety Visits received from partners:**



As part of our commitment to building a safer Scotland we offer everyone in Scotland a free home fire safety visit. We can also fit smoke alarms free of charge if your home requires them.

Get in touch with us, it's so easy to arrange:

- call [0800 0731 999](tel:0800 0731 999)
- text "FIRE" to 80800 from your mobile phone
- complete our online form
- call your local fire station

**Results:**

Historically, 35% of all Home Fire Safety Visits are referrals from partners. Our aim going forward is to increase this to 50%. It is pleasing to note that during COVID-19 lockdown we are still receiving partner referrals for HFSV's.

**Reason:**

Our referral pathways are continually providing us with high risk 'Home Fire Safety Visits' in the areas in our community that are at most risk. We continue to engage with our partner agencies to maintain these referral pathways to ensure that we continually reach the high-risk members of our community.

**Action:**

Our aim is to ensure that our resources are directed to those most vulnerable from fire, this part of the community can be the most difficult to reach, therefore partner referrals are key in assisting SFRS to create the opportunity to deliver lifesaving advice and increase smoke alarm ownership. Engagement with additional partners are currently underway to increase the number of referrals.

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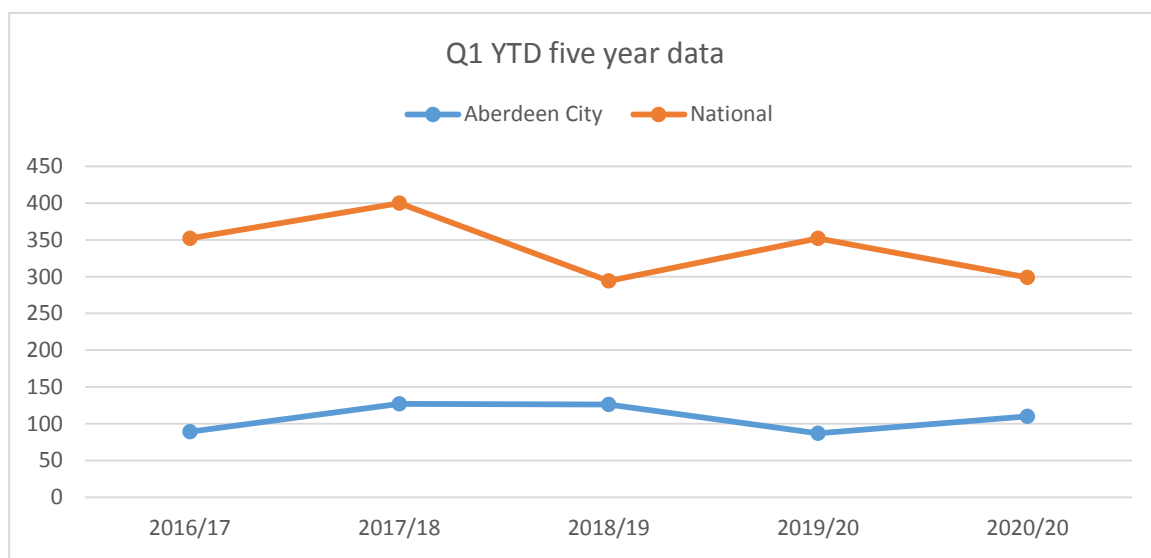


## LPI Assessment 2: Deliberate Fire Setting

The main areas of measurement of Deliberate Fire Setting is:

- All deliberate fires

### All Deliberate Fires:



Deliberate Fires include both Primary Fires (those that involve a building or property) and Secondary Fires (typically refuse fires or fires involving grass, trees or heathland). Deliberate fires are defined as fires which were ignited deliberately or the Fire and Rescue Service suspect they were started deliberately.

The reduction of deliberate dwelling fires continues to be a priority for the SFRS in Aberdeen City. SFRS continue to work in partnership with Police Scotland and Aberdeen City Council in order to reduce these incident types.

#### Results:

The same Year to Date (YTD) period average over the previous four years confirms an upward trend in relation to 'All Deliberate Fires'.

The figure for the 2020/21 reporting period is one hundred and ten (110) incidents which is up on the same reporting period in 2019/20 of eighty-eight (88).

The average over the previous four years for the same reporting period was one hundred and eight (108) which identifies the upward trend.

#### Reasons:

The annual trend for deliberate fires has increased in recent years due to anti-social behaviour. Through statistical analysis during this reporting period we could identify areas of high fire setting activity and we worked with our community partners to reduce this route

cause. Our actions and community engagement work will continue to mitigate anti-social behaviour in our communities.

**Actions:**

We worked closely with our partners, specifically Police Scotland and Aberdeen City Council in order to reduce deliberate fire setting across Aberdeen City, this partnership approach has seen a number of individuals arrested in recent years and subsequently charged with wilful fire raising. Our Community Action Team have delivered school presentations where the opportunity was taken to highlight the dangers from fire setting through anti-social behaviour to both secondary and primary children. This coupled with a close working relationship with Police Scotland and Aberdeen City council allows prevention activities such as clearing of combustibles and increased visibility patrols to have a positive impact on these fires in the future.

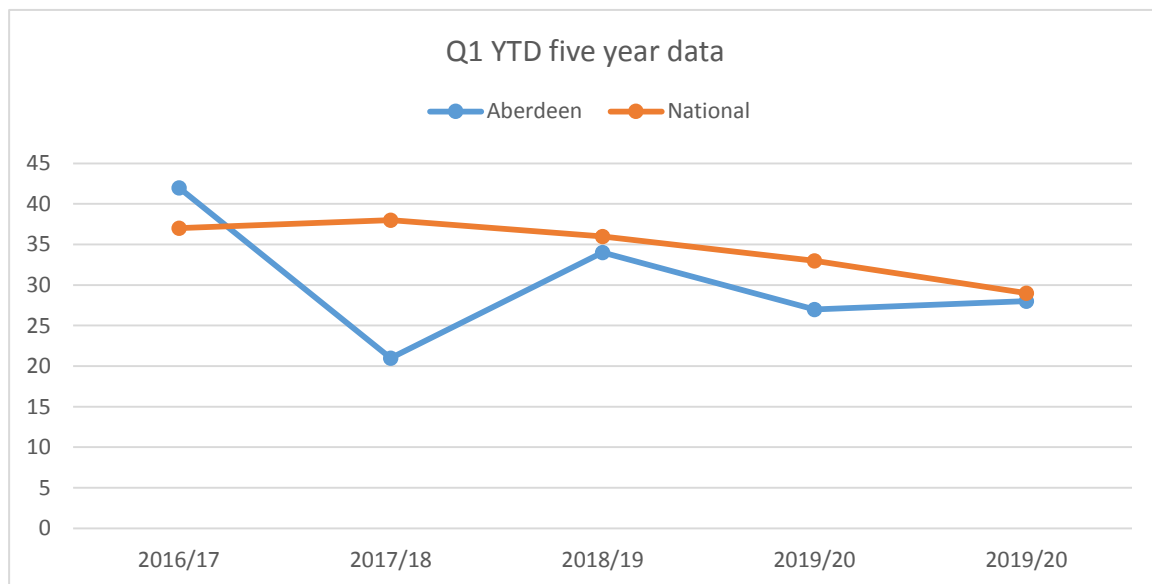
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**LPI Assessment 3: Non- Domestic Fire Safety**

The main areas of measurement of Domestic Safety and Wellbeing are:

- All non-domestic fires
- Number of Fire Safety Audits completed
- Deliberate fires in non-domestic properties

**All non-domestic fires:**



The most common cause of accidental fires in non-domestic buildings is by adults aged 18 – 64yrs bringing heat sources and combustibles together with cooking appliances being the main source of ignition. Deliberate fire setting accounts for eighteen percent (18%) of non-domestic fires with fourteen percent (14%) targeting other people’s property.

While the number of deaths from fires in non-domestic buildings is less than domestic buildings the potential for significant life loss and injuries is far greater. This is due to the large occupancy capacities that may be involved and the complexity of occupant behaviour including the potential for delay in occupant evacuation following the outbreak of fire.

#### Results:

The same Year to Date (YTD) period average over the previous four years confirms a downward trend in relation to 'Non-domestic fires'.

The figure for the 2020/21 reporting period is twenty-eight (28) incidents which is up on the same reporting period in 2019/20 of twenty-seven (27).

The average over the previous four years for the same reporting period was thirty one (31) which identifies a downward trend.

#### Reasons:

We have analysed statistical data which has helped us to identify contributory factors in relation to non-domestic fires. These are;

- Food ignited via 'cooking appliances'
- Deliberate fire setting
- Faulty equipment or appliances
- Electrical

#### Actions:

Through our risk based fire safety audit programme our Fire Safety Enforcement Officers carry out fire safety audits. Working in partnership with duty holders to meet their legislative fire safety requirements we assist them to ensure that their buildings are safe for the building users.

Our operational crews undertake Operational Intelligence visits to higher risk premises. This allows them to gather relevant operational information which is available to them in the event of an incident via our 'mobile data terminals' on appliances.

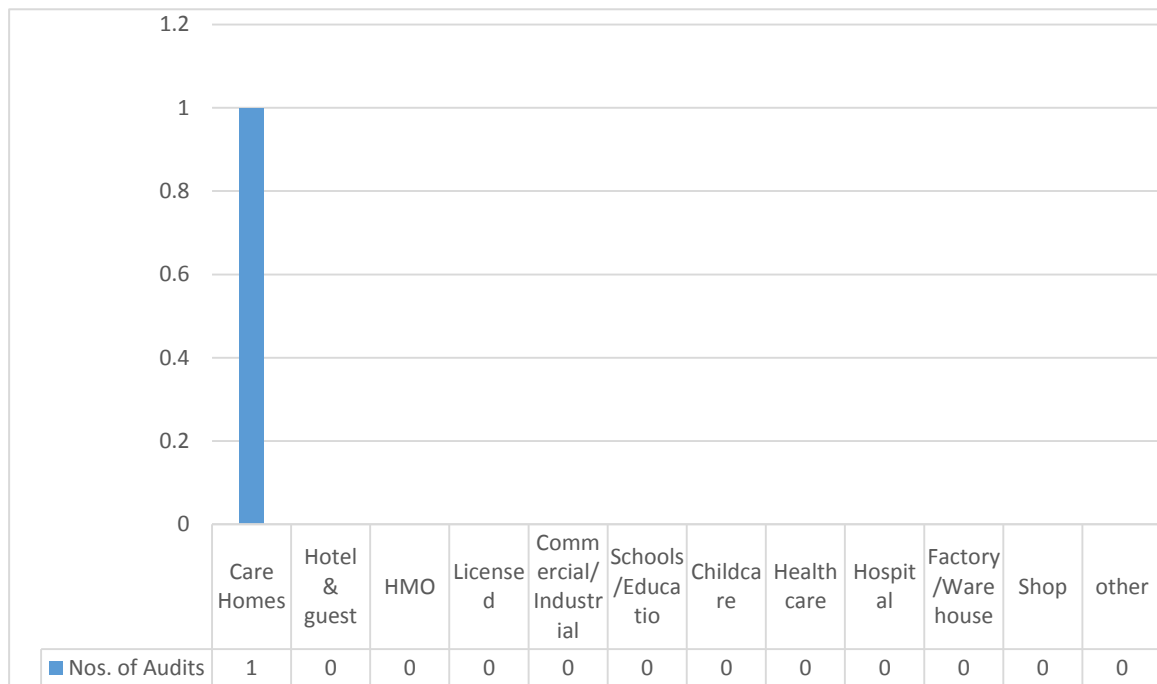
To ensure the safety of the public and of our staff during the Coronavirus outbreak, we have taken the decision to temporarily suspend our fire safety audits and engagement activities in non-domestic premises.

Our fire safety enforcement team developed an innovative approach to fire safety audits through a remote virtual audit. Utilising video links via social media they were able to view the property in a virtual setting and received appropriate documentation via IT facilities for checking. This approach was forwarded to our national Prevention & Protection team as an innovative approach to fire safety audits during lockdown and for rural areas.

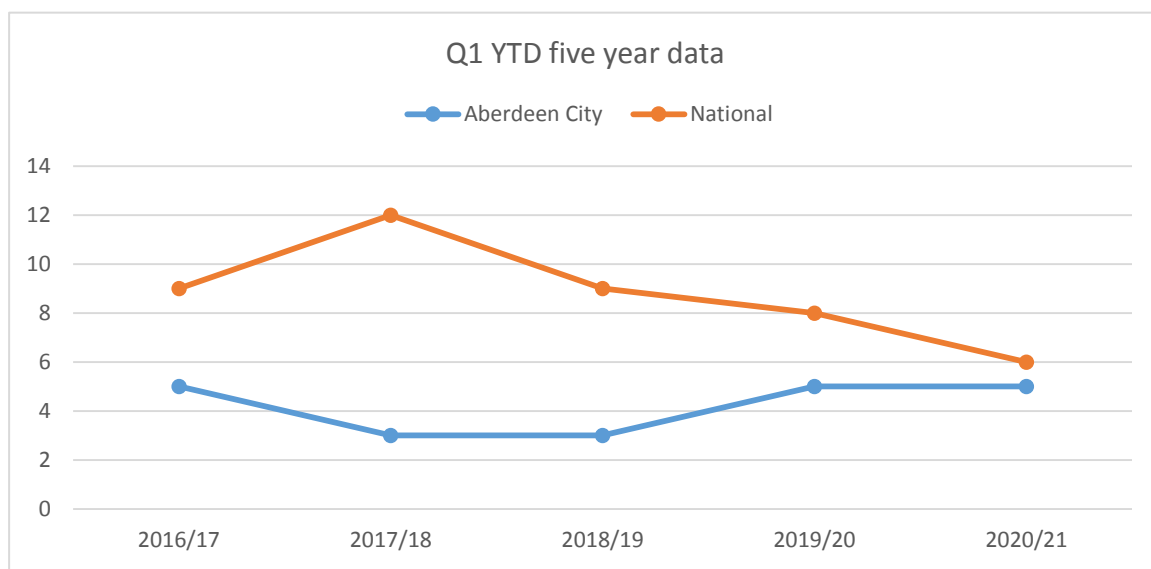
**Number of Fire Safety Audits completed: -**

As detailed in our actions above, our fire safety audit activities were temporarily suspended during COVID-19. Our fire safety team carried out one audit for their innovative remote virtual audit idea.

Fire safety legislation aims to ensure the safety of employees, residents, visitors or customers; it sets out rights and responsibilities in respect of fire safety. Anyone who has control, to any extent, of any premises will have some responsibilities for ensuring that those occupying the premises are safe from harm caused by fire. The legislation places a duty on those responsible for fire safety within relevant premises to carry out a fire risk assessment. These people are defined in the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 as Duty Holders.



### **Deliberate fires in non-domestic properties:**



Building fires are known as primary fires i.e. those that involve a building or property. Deliberate fires are defined as fires which were ignited deliberately or the Fire and Rescue Service suspect they were started deliberately.

The SFRS have a partnership arrangement with 'Crimestoppers Scotland' which encourages the public to report fire crime and vandalism.

#### Results:

The same Year to Date (YTD) period average over the previous four years confirms an upward trend in relation to 'All Deliberate other building fires.

The figure for the 2020/21 reporting period is five (5) incidents which is the same for the reporting period in 2019/20 of five (5).

The average over the previous four years for the same reporting period was four (4) incidents which identifies an upward trend.

#### Reasons:

Our statistical analysis for these deliberate fires show that they are caused by persons unknown in most cases with other people's property being targeted.

#### Actions:

Through our risk based fire safety audit programme our Fire Safety Enforcement Officers carry out fire safety audits. Working in partnership with duty holders to meet their legislative fire safety requirements we assist them to ensure that their buildings are safe for the building users.

The SFRS do this through partnership work and engagement with stakeholders including the business sector .

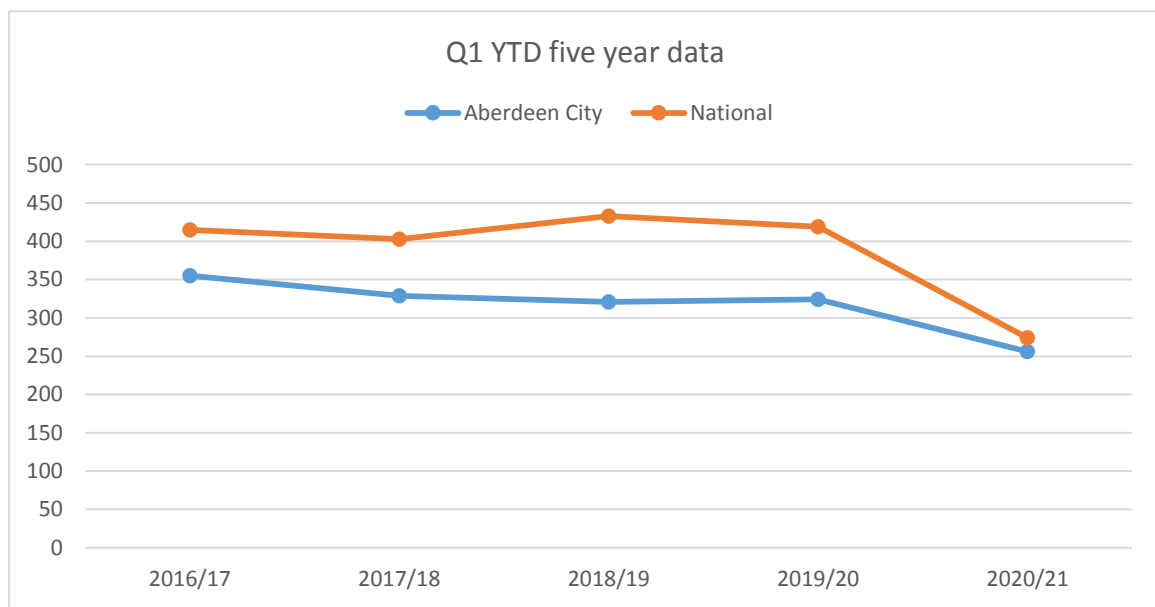
It is acknowledged that the Aberdeen City figures for the reporting period consistently remain lower than the national average over five (5) years.

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#### LPI Assessment 4: Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

The main areas of measurement of Unwanted Fire alarm Signals is:

- Number of UFAS incidents



Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) are defined as incidents where an automated fire alarm system activates and results in the mobilisation of SFRS resources, when the reason for that alarm turns out to be something other than a fire emergency. The SFRS are committed to working with partners and other stakeholders to reduce UFAS mobilisations.

#### Results:

The same Year to Date (YTD) period average over the previous four years confirms a downward trend in relation to 'False Alarms - UFAS'.

The figure for the 2020-21 reporting period is two hundred and fifty-six (256) which is down from the same reporting period in 2019-20 of three hundred and twenty-four (324).

The average over the previous four years for the same reporting period was three hundred and thirty-two (332) incidents which identifies a continual downward trend.

**Reason:**

The reduction can in some small way be attributed to the lockdown due to COVID-19. With a high percentage of people working from home the premises linked to UFAS actuations are not occupied to the same level and this has contributed to the marked reduction from previous years.

The increased prevalence of automatic fire detection systems throughout all classes of building has inevitably contributed to difficulties in terms of system faults and failures. The SFRS has long been aware of the importance of developing a robust process for managing UFAS activity. We have policies and procedures detailing the processes to be used to engage with persons responsible for managing automated alarm systems and the mechanisms available to support them in dealing with identified issues.

The majority of false alarm actuations originate from Hospital and medical care premises with student accommodation, manufacturing & engineering premises and retail shopping centres equally to a lesser extent. The types of alarm actuation most prevalent are 'faulty, accidental/careless set off, testing'.

**Action:**

SFRS has an electronic system for recording UFAS activity and providing an audit trail for all engagement undertaken. Officers manage the system and provide reports on progress. SFRS aims to reduce the number of UFAS calls and are currently working with partners at a local level to reduce these calls by applying national policy and process to ensure a consistent approach. This approach has seen significant investment from partners to reduce UFAS incidents across Aberdeen City. SFRS will continue to support duty holders in minimising the impact of false alarms on their day to day business and the subsequent impact on SFRS resources.

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