



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

Working together for a safer Scotland

**North Service Delivery Area**  
**Aberdeen City**  
**2020/21 Annual Performance 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	1/4/20 to 31/3/21					RAG rating
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	YTD
All accidental dwelling fires	300	240	262	257	219	<b>GREEN</b>
All accidental dwelling fire	31	23	40	42	28	<b>GREEN</b>
All deliberate fires	346	361	446	356	335	<b>GREEN</b>
Non-domestic fires	108	98	118	105	88	<b>GREEN</b>
All deliberate other building fires	11	18	16	16	15	<b>GREEN</b>
False Alarm - UFAS	1471	1412	1349	1428	1209	<b>GREEN</b>

	Red	>9% higher than the previous YTD period.
	Amber	Up to 9% higher than the previous YTD period.
	Green	Equal to or improved upon the previous equivalent YTD period.

Note
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.

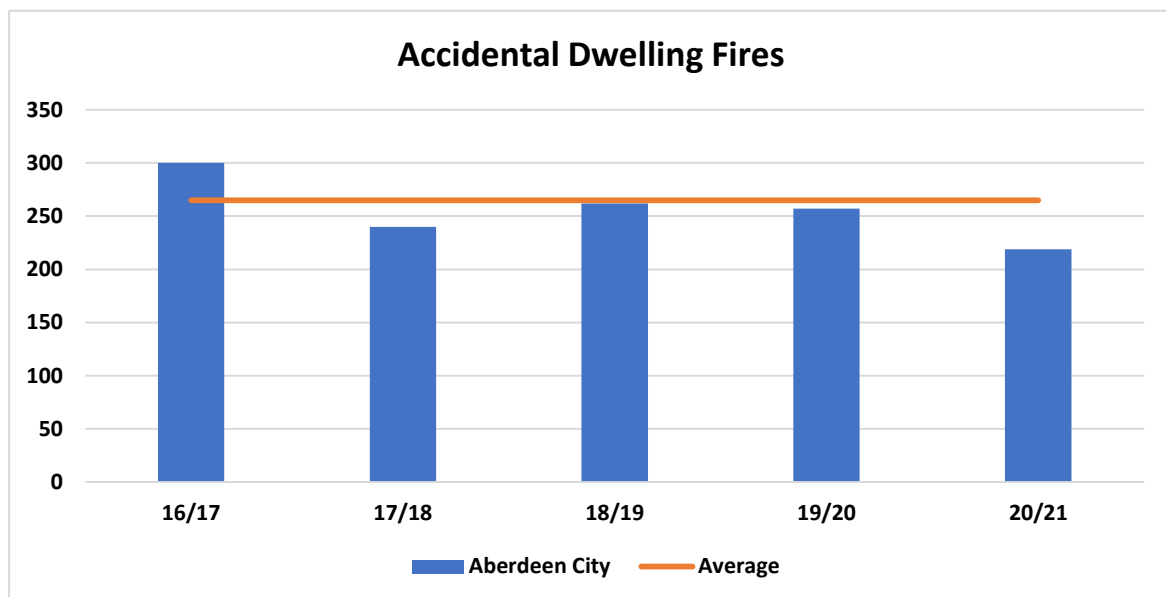
## Progress on local fire & rescue plan priorities

### 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:



#### Analysis

Dwelling fires can have a significant negative impact upon both individuals and the community and are financially costly to householders 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.

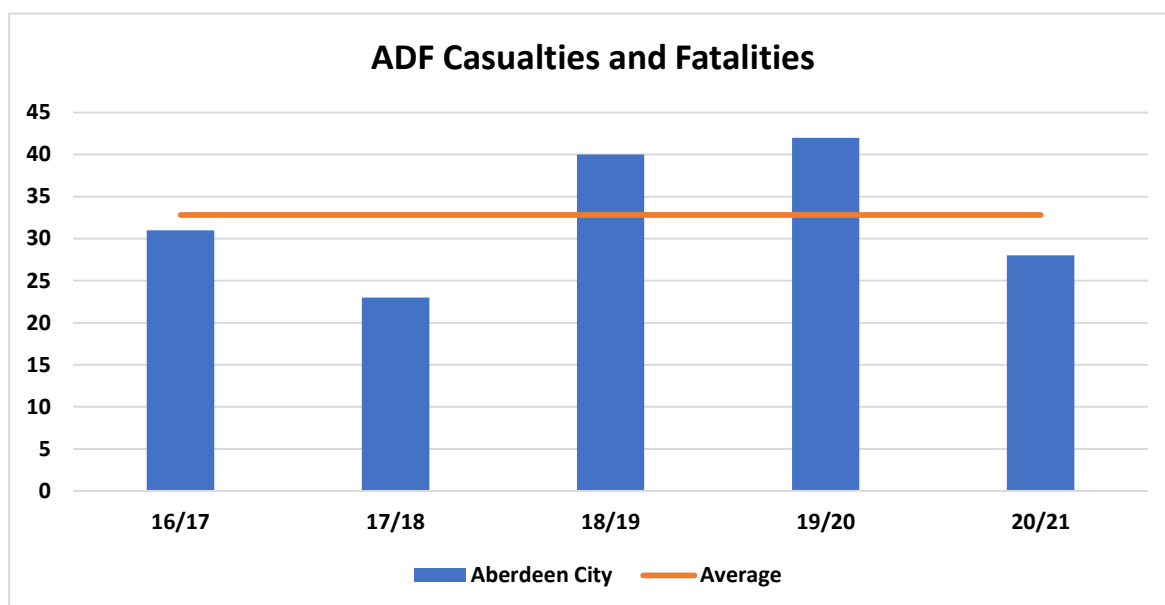
The annual figure of 219 incidents represents a decrease of 15% from the same reporting period in 2019/20 (257) and is below the preceding 4yr average of 265.

These figures represent a welcomed downward trend in accidental dwelling fires and is representative of the focus local community safety education personnel have placed on improving home safety. Even through the Covid-19 pandemic local personnel have used all resources available to them and have adapted their work to continue to deliver against local community safety priorities.

Cooking activity continues to be the highest cause of accidental dwelling fires. Over the reporting period cooking accounted for 112 of the 219 incidents (51%).

Distraction/falling asleep were contributory factors in 88 of the 219 (40%).

## Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties and Fatalities



### Analysis

Fire casualty and fatality rates provide an indication of the severity of fires being experienced across Aberdeen City. 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 prevention 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 also more likely to occur in the areas with highest operational demand.

In the reporting period there have been 18 casualties as a consequence of accidental dwelling fires in Aberdeen City. This is a decrease of 2 compared with the same period the previous year and a decrease of 4 against the preceding 4yr average.

Tragically, during the reporting period, there were 3 fire fatalities, an increase of 3 on the previous year and above the preceding 4yr average of 2.

The decrease in all casualties but increase in fire fatalities in Aberdeen is reflected nationally. When conditions allow multi-agency case conferences will be held to discuss the circumstances of each of these fatalities and any learning identified and actioned.

Of the 25 non-fatal casualties reported 1 received a precautionary check, 13 received first aid at the scene and 11 were taken to hospital with slight injuries.

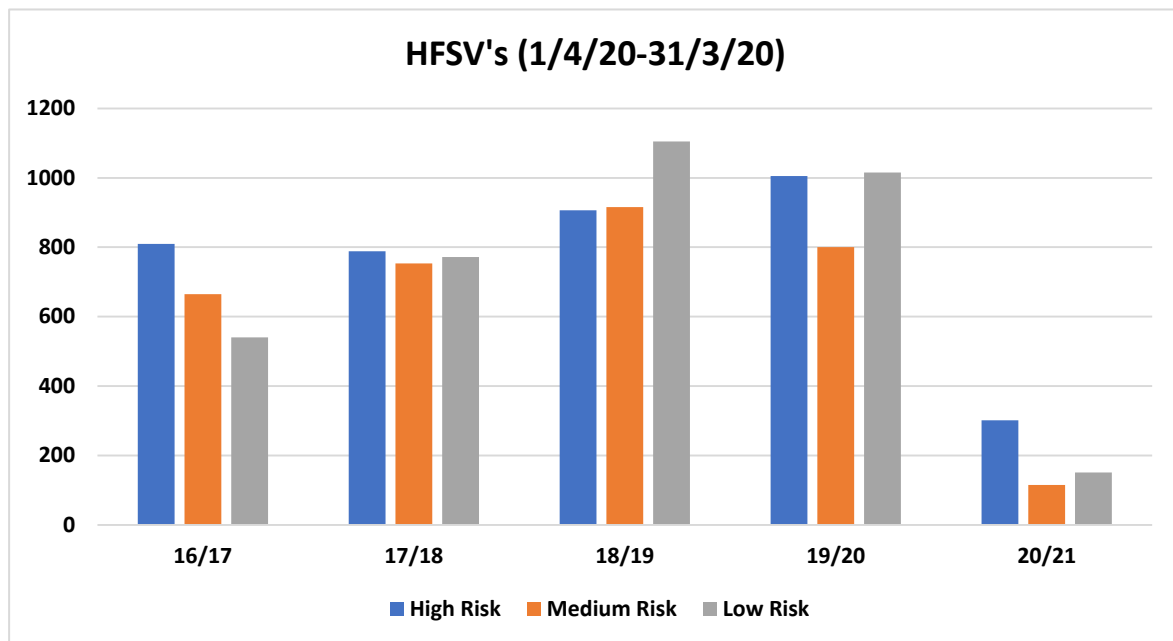
Cooking activity was the primary cause of fire in 12 of the 28 casualties. Detection was present on 27 occasions operating and raising the alarm for 18 of the casualties.

Following all domestic incidents, SFRS personnel initiate effective and meaningful community engagement' through our Post Domestic Incident Response process. We

engage with neighbouring households, and the wider community, offering Home Fire Safety Visits and providing community fire safety advice, guidance and reassurance.

**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.

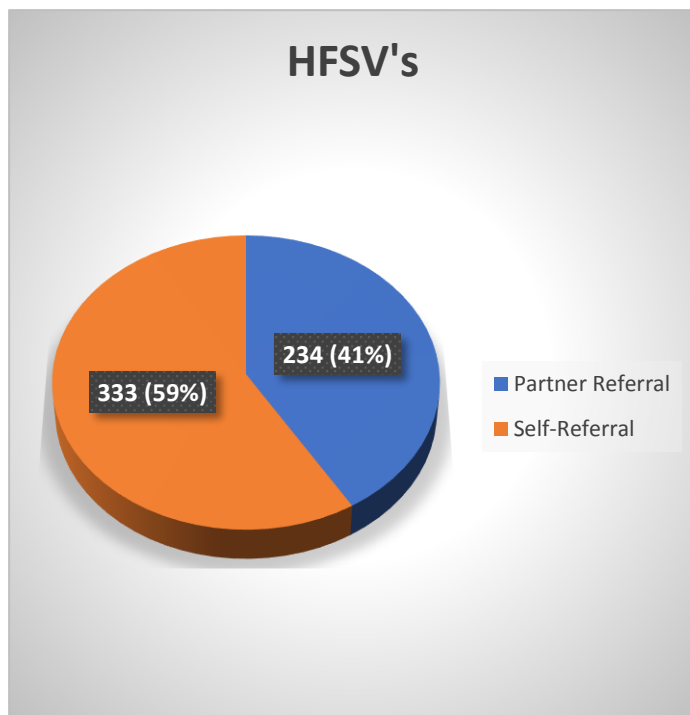


**Analysis**

The restrictions that Covid-19 has brought has severely limited our ability to undertake physical HFSV's. During this time personnel have engaged with householders in different ways, working in partnership with CFINE to deliver 15,000 "Make The Call" campaign leaflets, have made contact with over 400 addresses on our HFSV pending list to offer advice and continue to install detection where none is present and distribute fire-retardant bedding where required.

Through engagement with partners involved in the Community Planning Partnership, referral pathways have been put in place to allow partners to refer "High Risk" vulnerable members of the community to SFRS for a comprehensive free Home Fire Safety Visit to be carried out. Visits are also carried out in the vicinity of accidental dwelling fires, this aids SFRS in reaching those at high risk of fire in specific wards of Aberdeen City.

## 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 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

### **Analysis**

41% of all completed Home Fire Safety Visits were originally referred to us by partner agencies. This is below our aspirational target of 50%, however this percentage split reflects the limitations we have faced during this period and is measured against much lower numbers than we would normally aim to do.

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.

We are always looking for opportunities to expand our referral pathways to ensure the most vulnerable are flagged to us as timeously as possible.

The referral pathways we have in place are regularly reviewed to ensure they are efficient and effective.

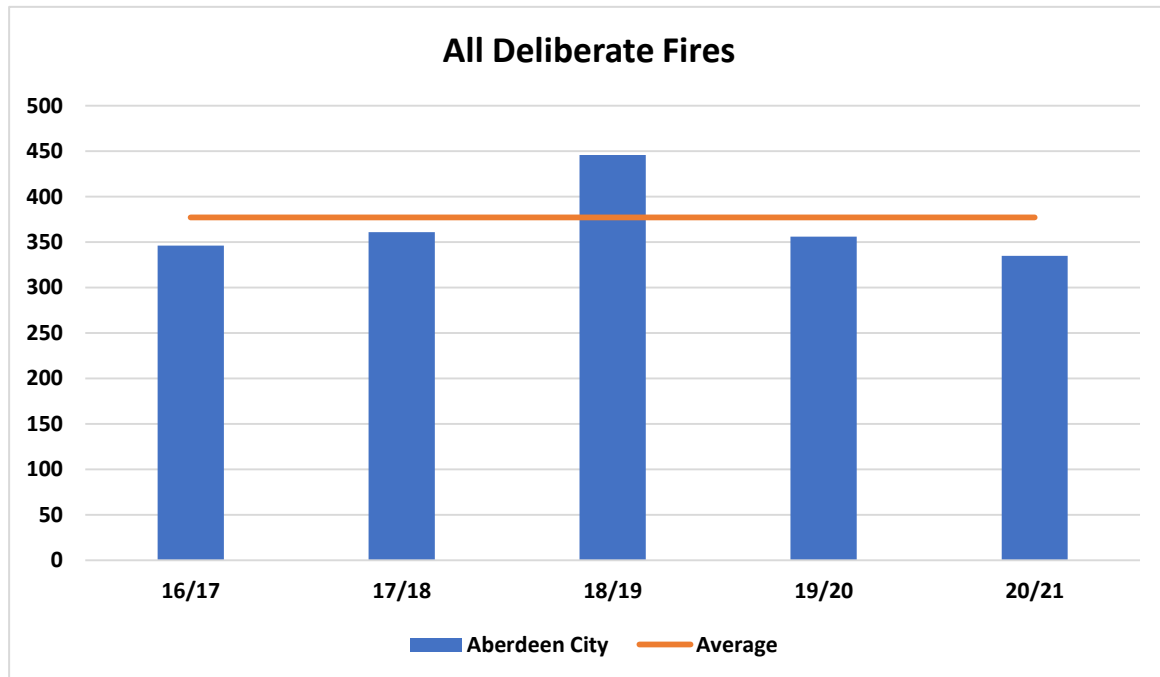


## LPI Assessment 2: Deliberate Fire Setting

The main areas of measurement of Deliberate Fire Setting is:

- All deliberate fires

### All Deliberate Fires:



### Analysis

During the reporting period there were 335 deliberate fires across Aberdeen City. This represents a decrease of 6% against the same period the previous year and a decrease of 11% against the preceding 4yr average. This represents a slight downward trend over the 5yr period.

Wheelie bins (48 incidents) were the highest occurring property type with a particular spike in the Torry area in the first half of the year, however, through strong partnership work, sharing relevant incident information Police Scotland identified and apprehended an individual considered responsible for a large number of these incidents.

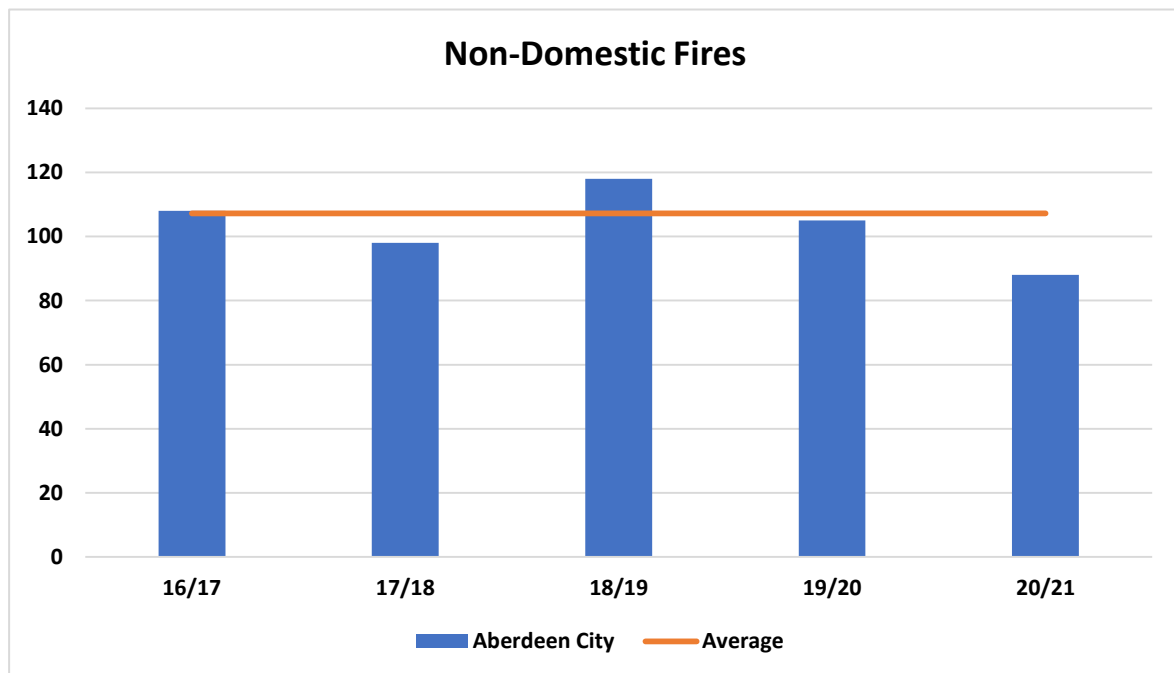
43 incidents were categorised as grassland in gardens which corresponds with the closure of recycling centres in the early part of the year and an increase in individuals burning garden waste. Whilst these fires are deliberately set they are not of an anti-social nature.

### 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:



#### Analysis

Over the reporting period there were 88 incidents, a decrease of 17 from the corresponding period the previous year and a decrease against the preceding 4yr average (107). Fires in non-domestic premises are showing a downward trend over the 5yr period.

Most fires in non-domestic premises are accidental in nature (75%) with over a quarter (23) attributed to cooking activity. Hospitals and Student Halls of Residence were the property types with the most number of incidents (12 and 11 incidents respectively) although incidents are spread across a range of property types.

It was anticipated that the lockdown restrictions the Covid-19 pandemic brought would see a decrease in non-domestic incidents and this appears to have been borne out both locally and nationally.

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.

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

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.

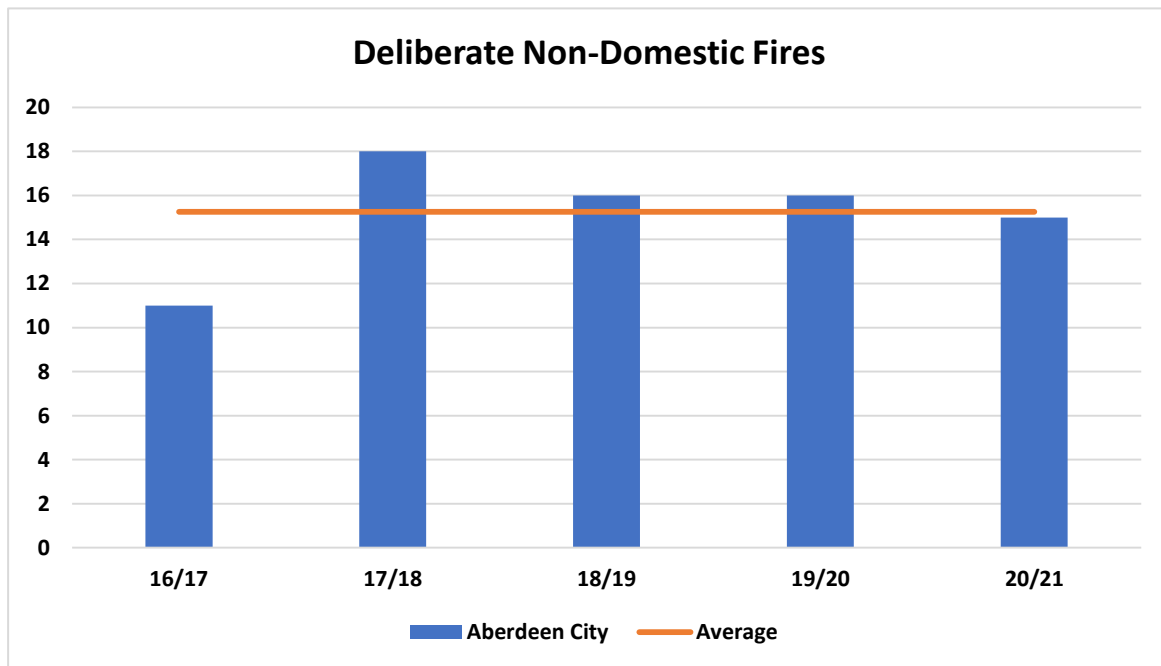
Anyone who has control, to any extent, of any premises will have some responsibilities for ensuring that those occupying the premises are safe from harm caused by fire.

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.

The restrictions imposed by Scottish Government, and the SFRS response to these restrictions, severely limited our abilities to undertake the quantity of legislative fire safety audits that we would normally aim to do. Local personnel have maintained contact with higher risk premises ensuring they continually review their risk assessments to reflect any changes introduced as a reaction to the need for social distancing and isolation.

They have also been key in introducing a national “remote audit” procedure and have used these procedures to undertake 192 audits over the reporting year. For context we would normally undertake approx. 500 legislative fire safety audits each year.

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



**Analysis**

There were 15 incidents over the reporting period, 1 below the corresponding period for the previous year and slightly below the average for the preceding 4yr average.

The 5yr trend is upwards, however, the number of incidents being analysed is very low.

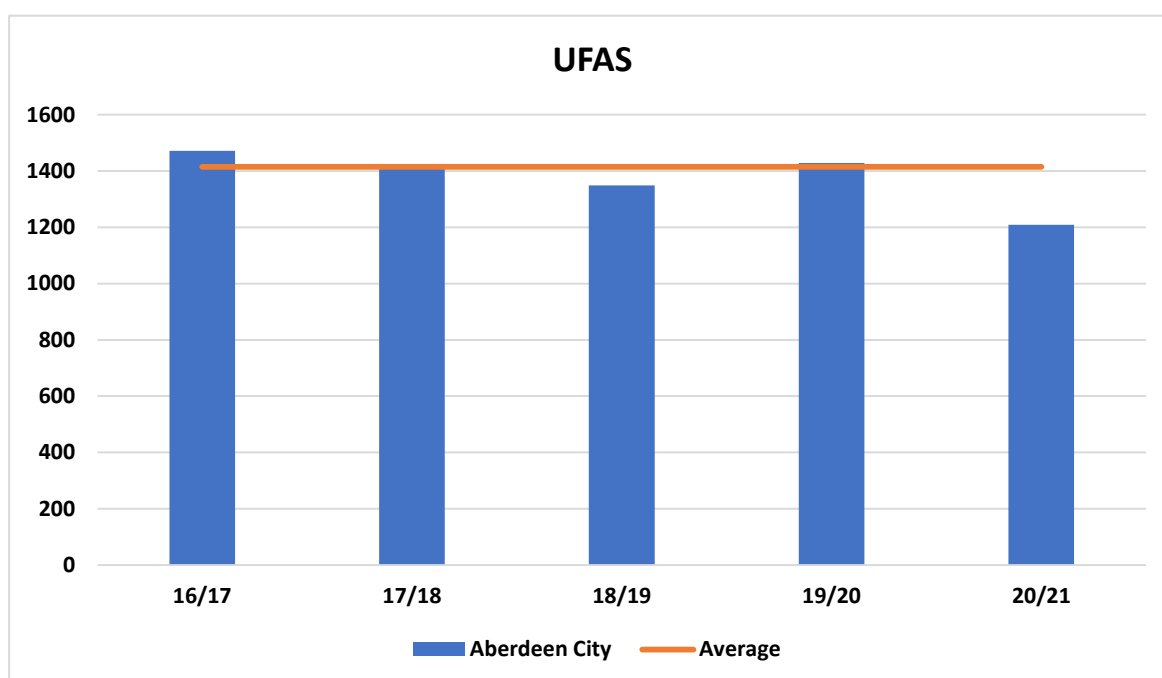
Our analysis shows that hospitals/medical centres and primary schools are the highest occurring property type accounting for 3 incidents each.

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.

#### LPI Assessment 4: Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS)

The main areas of measurement of UFAS 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 event. The SFRS are committed to working with partners and other stakeholders to reduce UFAS mobilisations.

False alarms account for 60% of all incidents during the reporting period with UFAS (as a sub-category of “All False Alarms”) accounting for 34% of all incidents. Working to reduce these is a key priority of The SFRS to reduce operational demand and create capacity to expand our work in other areas.

#### Analysis

There have been 1209 UFAS incidents during the reporting period which represents a 15% reduction against the the previous reporting year, and a 15% reduction against the preceding 5yr average. There is a welcomed downward trend of incidents of this nature.

The decrease seen over the reporting period is highly likely to be as a direct consequence of the significant reduction in people within business premises during this time. UFAS can be broadly split into 2 categories; human interactions and system faults, therefore it is logical that the decrease in human activity has positively impacted on the reduced number of UFAS incidents.

Hospitals are the property type causing the most incidents during the reporting period and are consistently the property type with the most activations. This is due to a number of factors, principally the size of these buildings and the number of detector heads required to sufficiently cover buildings which contain some of the most at-risk people in the event of a fire. Additionally, as one of the few premises types that have continued to operate during this reporting period it is to be expected that these premises would report highly against these incidents.

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 in order 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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