



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

ABERDEEN CITY LOCAL SENIOR OFFICER AREA

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE THEMATIC REPORT INSPECTIONS

Report Ref SFR/22/126

1 RECOMMENDATION

The Aberdeen Public Protection Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Consider and note the information provided in this report in relation to prevention and protection.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Fire Safety Enforcement (FSE) refers to our programme of legislative fire safety audits within relevant premises as defined in Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005.
- 2.2 Fire safety legislation aims to ensure the safety of employees, residents, visitors or customers and sets out the 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. They are defined in the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 as Duty Holders.

- 2.3 The SFRS has developed a fire safety policy framework that prioritises FSE audits in premises where the greatest risk of harm from fire is present e.g. care homes, hospitals, HMO's etc.
- 2.4 Through a risk-based fire safety audit programme, our Fire Safety Officers will work in partnership with duty holders to assist them in meeting their fire safety legislative requirements and ensure that their buildings are safe for the building users.

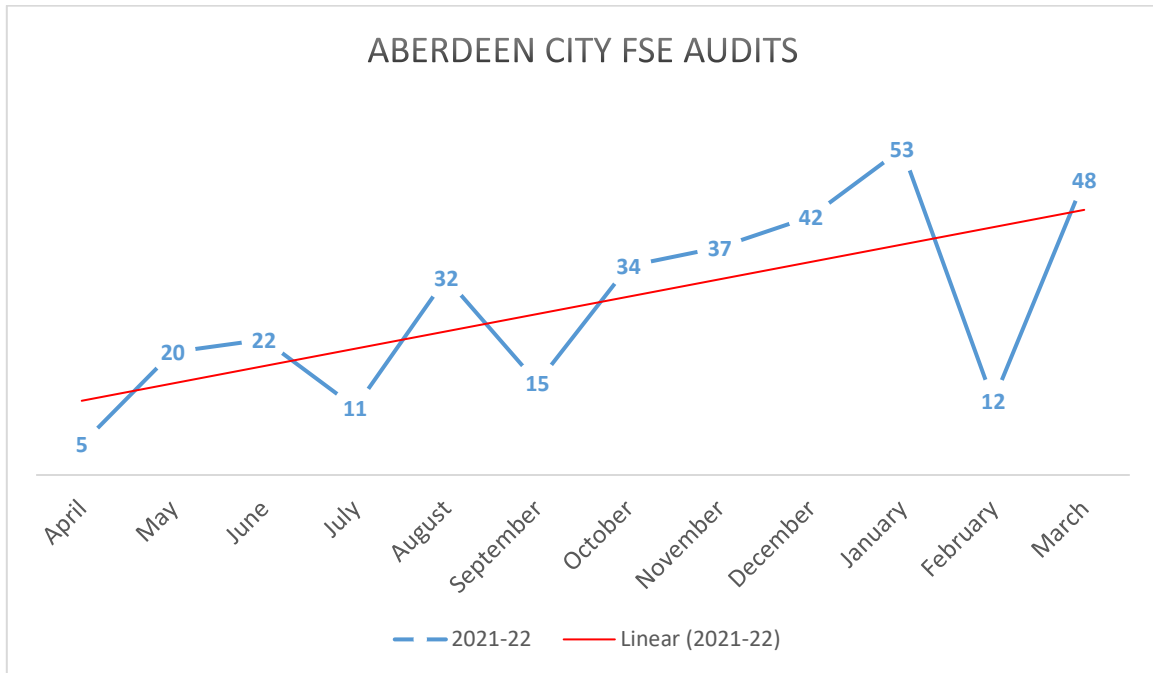
3 FIRE SAFETY ENFORCEMENT VISITATIONS

- 3.1 With the reduction in restriction levels for Covid-19 during this reporting period, SFRS have resumed their fire safety audit activities.

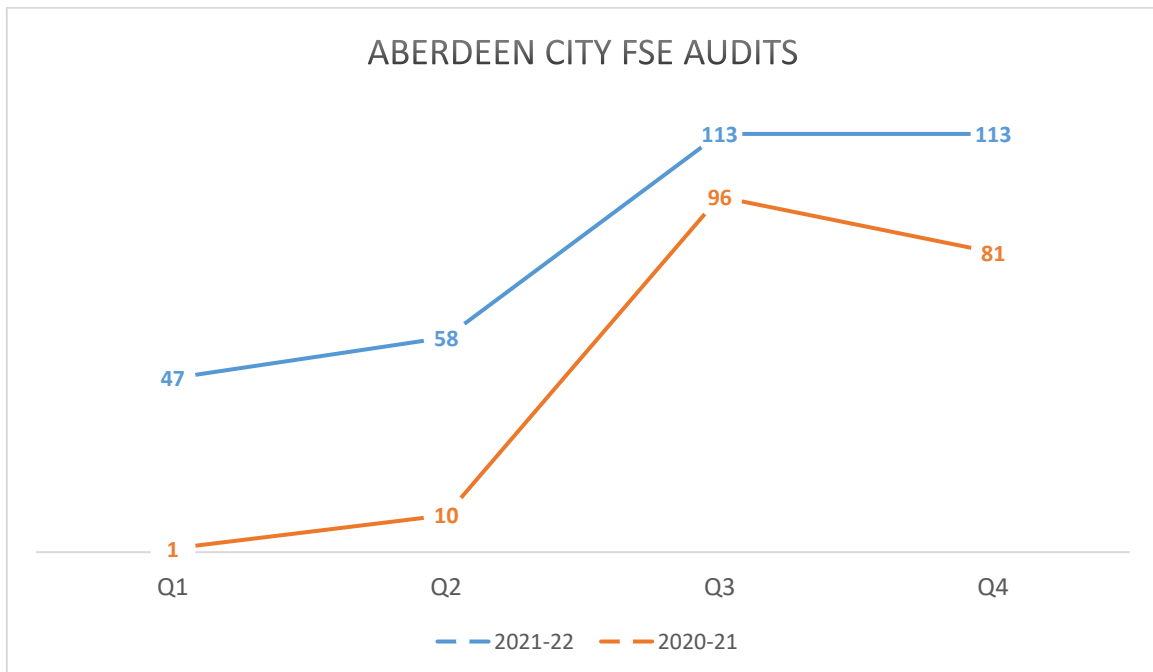
Scottish Government guidance has been followed when working in the community with physical visits to business premises conducted where possible.

Due to some sector specific restrictions at times to reduce or mitigate infection due to increased levels of illness, a remote audit procedure has been utilised by local officers.

3.2 The table below shows our audit activity for the 2021-22 reporting period.



3.3 The table below shows a comparison between our 2020-21 and 2021-22 audit activity.



3.4 Additionally, our Fire Safety Enforcement Team have been providing support to both

Orkney and Shetland Isles. This approach by SFRS is intended to ensure that we carry out our framework audits in all areas across Scotland.

- 3.5 Looking forward, the SFRS has increased the number of Fire Safety Officers across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray to ten. This team will flex to meet the needs of the local area on a risk-based approach.

4 SHORT TERM LETS

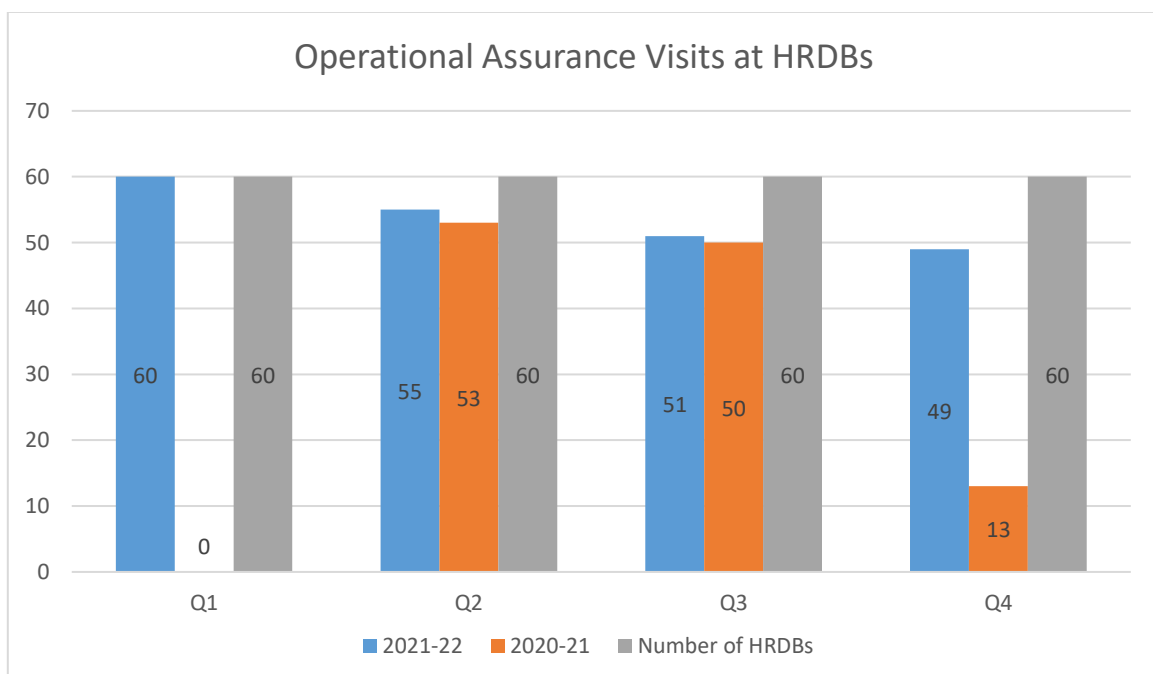
- 4.1 The new Short Term Lets (STL) legislation impacts on thousands of existing, and new, relevant premises that are providing sleeping accommodation across Scotland. Whilst a number of these premises may already be identified within the SFRS Policy Framework and be a part of the current auditing process, the likelihood is that the majority will not currently be subject to audit.
- 4.2 The SFRS will be engaging with external partners to identify the additional challenges in terms of numbers of licensing applications for STL type relevant premises.
- 4.3 This engagement will inform how SFRS manage to meet licensing demands, whilst ensuring they continue to provide support and appropriate education for duty holders with responsibility for STL type accommodation in respect of fire safety.
- 4.4 Local authorities will have until 1 October 2022 to establish a licensing scheme for implementation and existing STL hosts will have until 1 April 2023 to apply for an operating licence. The final deadline for all STL hosts and operators to have an operating licence is 1 July 2024.

The licensing will apply to the following:

- a) a licence for home sharing;
 - b) a licence for home letting;
 - c) a licence for home sharing and home letting; or
 - d) a licence for secondary letting.
- 4.5 Currently it is difficult to estimate the number of new license applications that may come from this new legislation. One local authority has already indicated that they have identified 1400 new premises, however further discussion shall be required across Scotland to provide more accurate figures.
- 4.6 The possible impact on SFRS may be significant and a standardised national approach shall be required for the appropriate management of any additional workload.
- 4.7 SFRS continue to process various licensing applications in partnership with local authorities but any additional workload will impact on SFRS resource capability and steps will be required to manage this, and other licensing demands.
- 4.8 A number of options are being considered for implementation and further consultation with local authorities may be appropriate, to review all current working practices for licensing activities.
- 4.9 An SFRS working group has been established to oversee this which will support the delivery of a process for managing STL within appropriate timescales.

5 INSPECTIONS

- 5.1 Operational Intelligence visits (390), The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is committed to firefighter safety. The provision of Operational Intelligence (OI) is a key component of this by providing readily accessible information regarding operational risk at the point of need. Despite the reduction in COVID levels, the first half of the reporting period saw resistance in the business community to allowing crews to physically carry out Operational Intelligence visits. This has eased in the second half of the period, and we have worked extremely hard to capture or review 390 premises on the O.I. system.
- 5.2 Operational Assurance visits to High Rise Domestic Buildings (HRDB) have continued, with these visits providing benefits similar to OI but also giving SFRS the opportunity to check safety features within the HRDB, such as self-closing fire doors. 215 inspections have been carried out for the 2021-22 reporting period. Aberdeen City Council have been swift in rectifying issues reported as a result.



- 5.3 Care Home Visits (30) There has been an understandable unwillingness to carry out familiarisation visits to care homes during the reporting period, given the extra risks posed by COVID 19 to occupants. 30 familiarisation visits have been carried out, and the majority of these have been in the last few weeks. O.I. inspections have occurred where needed however.
- 5.4 Hydrant Inspection (429) Section 17(1) of the 2005 Fire (Scotland) Act states that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has a duty to 'take all reasonable measures for securing an adequate supply of water' Hydrants are inspection in a blended approach by operational and hydrant operators across Scotland. Within Aberdeen City this is solely carried out by operational crews. 429 Hydrant Inspections have been carried out over the period, with a range of faults being reported where needed.