

Agenda Item	3
Report No	CC/01/26

# The Highland Council

**Committee:** Caithness Area Committee

**Date:** 09/01/26

**Report Title:** Scottish Fire and Rescue Area Committee Performance Report

**Report By:** Local Senior Officer for Highland

## 1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Caithness Area Committee Members on progress against the priorities outlined in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Area Committee Plan for Caithness.
- 1.2 Priority areas are identified through a range of Intervention, Prevention and Protection activities which are delivered in partnership to reduce the risk to the communities of Caithness.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to comment on and scrutinise the attached Area Performance Report.

## 3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - There are no implications arising from this report
- 3.2 **Legal** - There are no implications arising from this report
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** - There are no implications arising from this report
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** - There are no implications arising from this report
- 3.5 **Risk** - There are no implications arising from this report
- 3.6 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – There are no implications arising from this report
- 3.7 **Gaelic** - There are no implications arising from this report

## **4 Caithness Area Committee Performance Report**

4.1 The attached performance report provides the figures for Quarters one and two which covers the six-month period between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> September 2025. The tables also identify the four-year average from the central Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) performance management database.

4.2 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has introduced a new, modernised Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) system that enhances how we identify, assess, and support those most at risk from fire. 2025 is a transitional year as we embed these new systems and referral pathways, and as a result, we may initially see a decline in referrals and HFSVs. However, we are working hard at a local level to ensure we continue reaching the most vulnerable in our communities. We are actively encouraging new and existing partner organisations to sign up to our Data Sharing Framework (DSF), which enables secure, GDPR-compliant referrals and supports timely, person-centred interventions. Please share this information with your networks, and if interested in establishing a referral pathway, we encourage you to contact the Highland Community Action Team to arrange a local, face-to-face discussion and begin the sign-up process.

In achieving priorities within the Area Plan and the implementation of a new HFSV system will significantly increase information sharing between partner agencies and ensure our resources are targeted towards the most vulnerable in our communities. Post Domestic Incident Response (PDIR) are routinely carried out at all domestic incidents regardless of type which are aimed at reducing accidental dwelling house fires following our attendance.

Local crews are continually supporting community safety initiatives throughout the area, including the reduction of fire-related antisocial behaviour through engagement activities and thematic action plans.

Our local Community Safety Advocate (CSA) and station personnel have been proactive in co-ordinating local multi-agency initiatives in Caithness, with the aim of engaging with all persons within the district. We have also been actively working to identify and target specific trends which have been identified and allow us to focus specifically on identified topics such as ADF'S, RTC's, Deliberate fires, etc...

Please see some examples of our Community Engagement opportunities within Section 13 of the report.

## **5 Operational Incidents**

5.1 As per our previous reporting, the contained information has been collated over a six-month period, this allows for a more accurate analysis of the figures for comparison against previous reports.

The following summaries will also break down the content into additional reporting headings which will allow for more specific comparisons to be made.

The figures which are low in comparison to other districts, make it inappropriate to provide more detailed data analysis which could compromise personal information.

Of the KPIs, the following performance should be noted for the six-month period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> September 2025.

- There were **5 Accident Dwelling Fires (ADF)**.

The majority are classed as low severity, requiring little intervention from SFRS and minimal fire damage.

There was 1 Non-fatal Casualty resulting from these ADF incidents.

As standard procedures, all ADF's are offered Home Fire Safety Visits and agency referrals completed where required.

- There were **13 Non-Fire Casualties** over this reporting period, made up from 1 Fatality and 12 Non-Fatal casualties. (Further breakdown within report)
- There were **21 Deliberate Fires within this period**. (Further breakdown within report)  
Referrals are made to other agencies for those at work within our communities.
- There was **1 Non-Domestic Building Fire**.
- We attended **8 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS)**.

From 1 July 2023, we have stopped attending AFA call outs to commercial business and workplace premises, such as factories, offices, shops and leisure facilities unless a fire has been confirmed. Our control room operators now ask anyone who reports a fire alarm to check whether there is an actual fire or signs of fire, before sending the nearest fire appliance. This does not apply to sleeping premises, such as hospitals, care homes, hotels or domestic dwellings who will receive the full pre-determined attendance (PDA). This change follows the SFRS public consultation in 2021.

- We attended **7 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)** which is a slight increase upon last report.  
There were 0 RTC related fatalities and 5 RTC related injuries.

Our Prevention teams are working with partner agencies through the Highland Road Safety group, also specific Older Driver Virtual Reality Scheme and Road Safety Scheme for new drivers. We are also very active with our preventative measures to target specific groups such as 16-18 year olds within our Schools.

- We completed 77 Home Fire Safety Visits, please see 4.2.

## 6 **Station Availability and Establishment**

SFRS continues to actively deliver and refine its On-Call RDS/VDS recruitment and training processes to meet national and local requirements. Recruitment and Retention is constantly being promoted within all areas of Caithness utilising local crews, banner advertising, leaflet drops, partner agencies, third-sector groups, local employers, and other key community contacts.

## 7. **Community Safety and Engagement**

Throughout the reporting period, we have been working continuously to ensure we maintain and build upon all engagement opportunities within our communities. Section 13 within the report contains a sample of some of the engagement opportunities we have undertaken within Quarters 1 & 2.

## 8 **Questions and Answers**

Within Section 14, we have included some Frequently asked Questions and Answers regarding some of the current topics being dealt with by SFRS within our communities.

Designation: Local Senior Officer for Highland

Date: 09/01/26

Author: Group Commander Jamie Thrower

Background Papers: Highland – Caithness Area Committee – Performance Report



**Highland  
Caithness Committee**

**2025-26 Q1 & Q2  
Scrutiny Report**



**SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

**Working together  
for a safer Scotland**

**Highland**  
**Caithness Committee**  
  
**2025-26 Q1 & Q2**  
**Scrutiny Report**

**Contents**

- 1      Summary
- 2      Trends
- 3      Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)
- 4      Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties
- 5      Non-Fire Casualties
- 6      Deliberate Fires
- 7      Non-Domestic Fires
- 8      Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS)
- 9      Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)
- 10     Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs)
- 11     Fire Safety Enforcement
- 12     Station Availability and Establishment
- 13     Community Safety & Engagement
- 14     Recent Questions and Answers
- 15     Glossary of Terms

**About the statistics within this report**

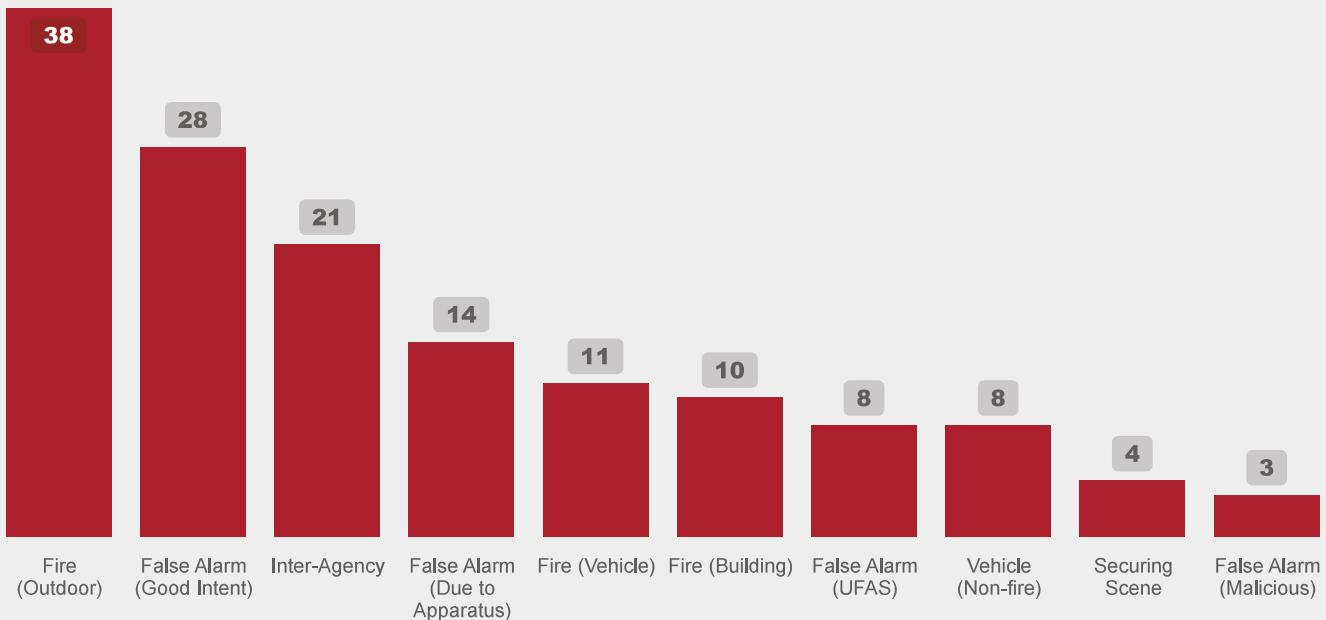
The activity totals and other statistics quoted within this report are published in the interests of transparency and openness. They are provisional in nature and subject to change as a result of ongoing quality assurance and review. Because all statistics quoted are provisional there may be a difference in the period totals quoted in our reports after local publication which result from revisions or additions to the data in our systems. The Scottish Government publishes official statistics each year which allow for comparisons to be made over longer periods of time.

## 1. Summary

2025-26 Q1 & Q2

				
<b>151</b> Total Incidents (Incl. Incompletes)	<b>59</b> Fires	<b>39</b> Non-Fire Incidents	<b>53</b> False Alarms	<b>8</b> UFAS
				
<b>11</b> People Rescued by Firefighters	<b>2</b> People Receiving First Aid or Hospital Treatment (Fires)	<b>0</b> Fire Fatalities	<b>12</b> People Receiving First Aid or Hospital Treatment (Non-Fire)	<b>1</b> Non-Fire Fatalities
				
<b>77</b> Home Fire Safety Visits	<b>13</b> Fire Safety Audits			

### Top 10 Incident Types

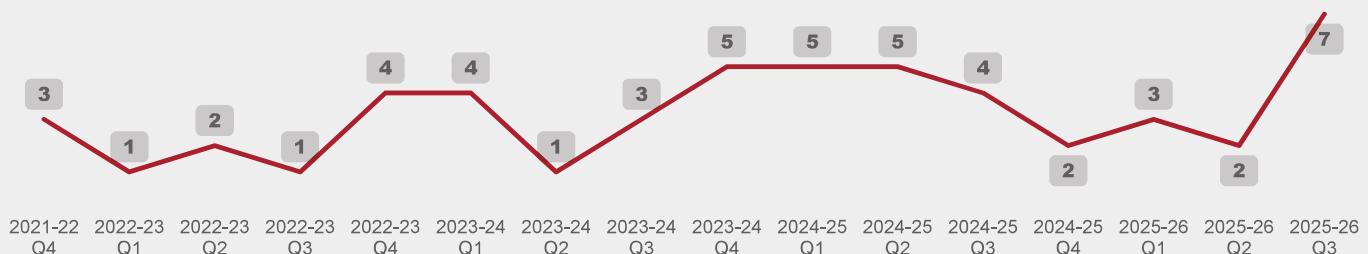


The information above provides a summary of the six-months (1 April - 30 September 2025) activity against headline indicators. It aims to provide - at a glance - our direction of travel during the current reporting period.

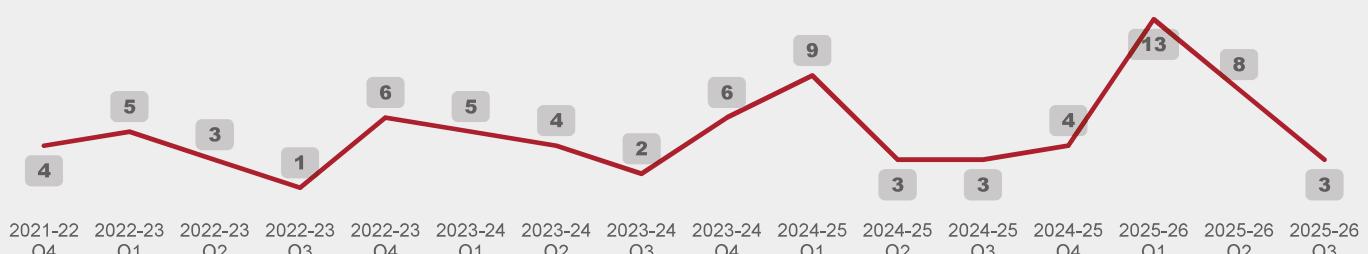
## 2. Trends

Previous 16 quarters (4 years)

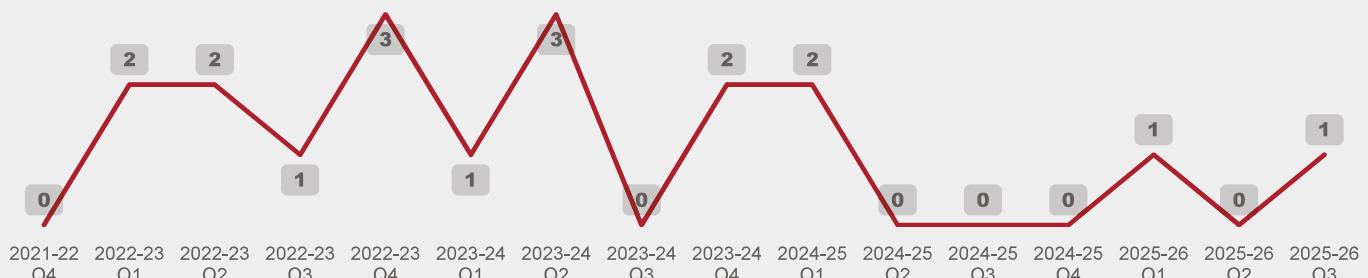
### Accidental Dwelling Fires



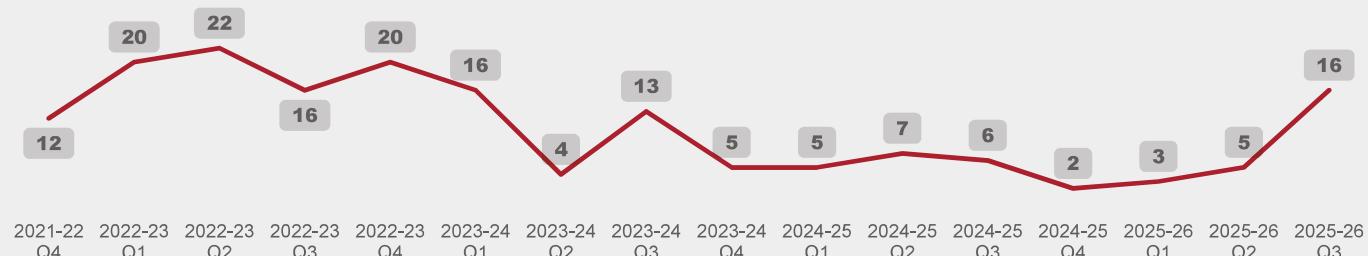
### Deliberate Fires



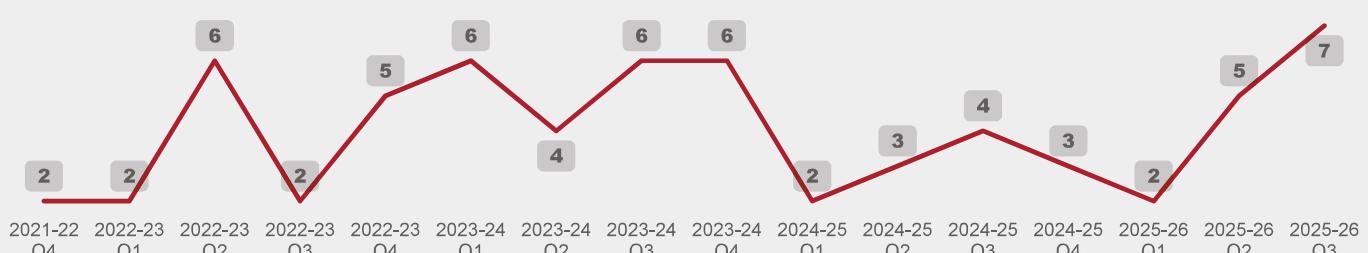
### Non-Domestic Fires



### Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals



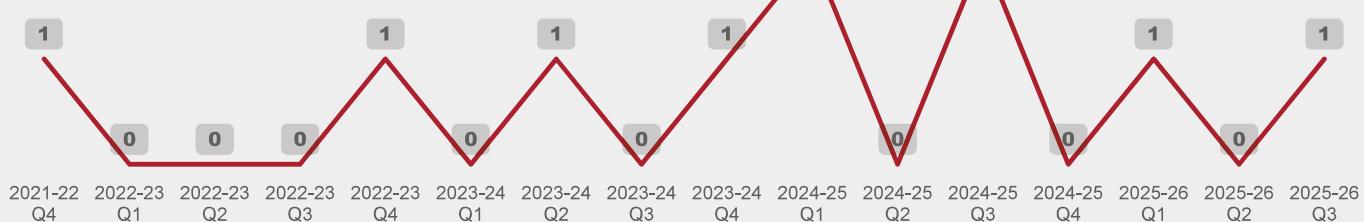
### Road Traffic Collisions



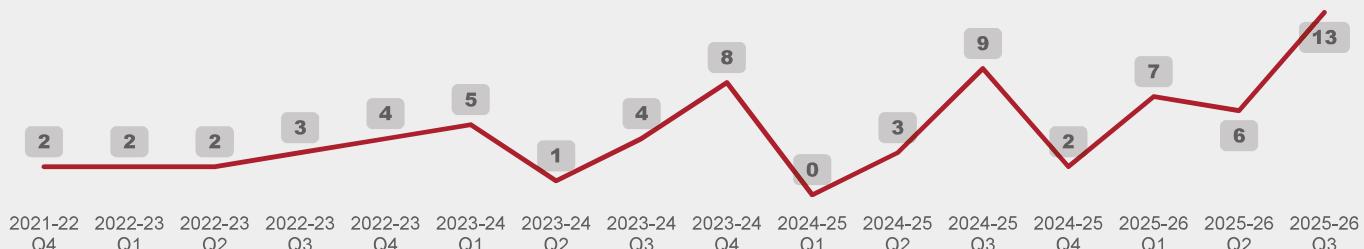
## 2. Trends

Previous 16 quarters (4 years)

### Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties



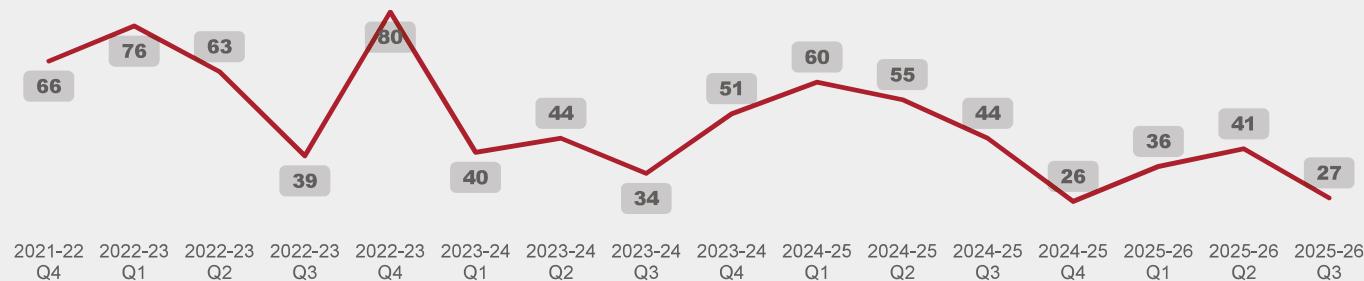
### Non-Fire Casualties



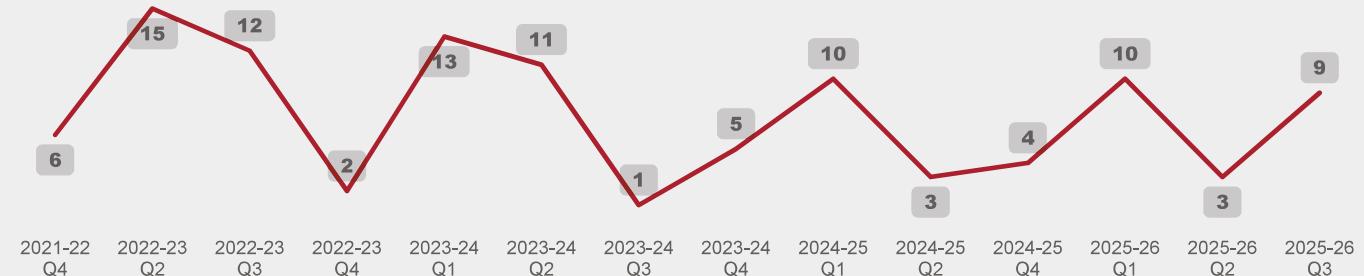
### Road Traffic Collision Casualties



### Home Fire Safety Visits



### Fire Safety Audits



#### Trend by Quarter (4 years)



#### Incidents by Ward

Wick & East Caithness

4

Thurso & Northwest Caithness

1

Extent of Damage	Incidents
Limited to item 1st ignited	3
Limited to room of origin	1
Not applicable	1

5

#### Accidental Dwelling Fires in this period

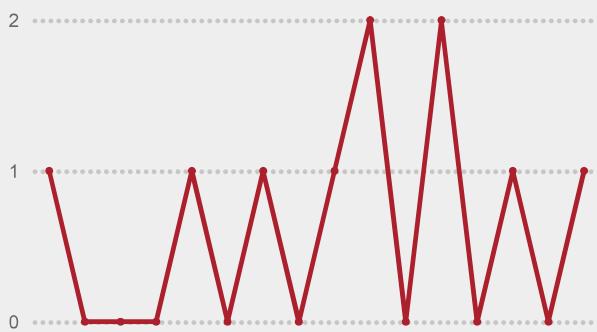
#### Source of Ignition (Top 10)



There were 5 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF), whilst the majority are classed as low severity, requiring little or no intervention from the Service and minimal fire damage.

All ADF's are followed up with a HFSV's and agency referrals where required.

### Trend by Quarter (4 years)



### Casualties by Ward

Nature of Injury/Cause of Death	Casualties
Overcome by gas, smoke or toxic fumes; asphyxiation	1

Wick & East Caithness

1

**1**

**Non-Fatal Casualties**

**0**

**Fatal Casualties**

**1**

**People Rescued by Firefighters**

### Extent of Harm (Non-Fatal)



**0**

**First Aid Given at Scene**



**1**

**Hospital Slight Injuries**



**0**

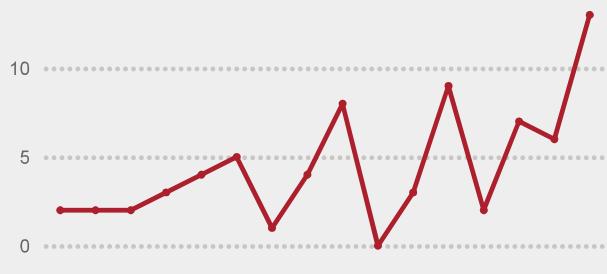
**Hospital Serious Injuries**

During this reporting period there was **1 ADF Casualty**. It should be noted that these figures do not include those who have been recommended to have a precautionary check up.

## 5. Non-Fire Casualties

2025-26 Q1 & Q2

### Trend by Quarter (4 years)



### Casualties by Ward

Wick & East Caithness

10

Thurso & Northwest Caithness

3

Nature of Injury/Cause of Death	Casualties
Not known	4
Back / Neck injury (spinal)	3
Cuts/Lacerations	1
Fracture	1
Head injury	1
Impalement	1
Other physical injury	1
Unconscious, fitting or unresponsive (no other evident significant injury)	1

12

Non-Fatal Casualties

1

Fatal Casualties

10

People Rescued by Firefighters

### Extent of Harm (Non-Fatal)



1

First Aid Given at Scene



7

Hospital Slight Injuries

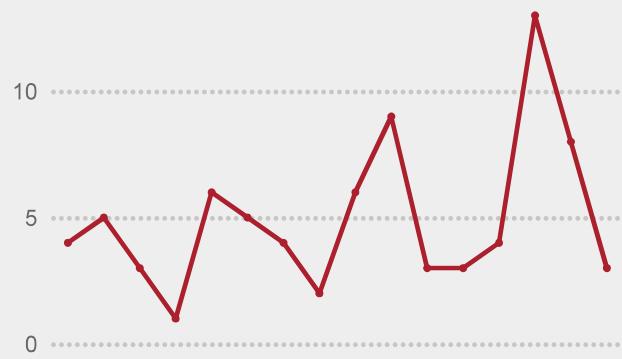


4

Hospital Serious Injuries

There was 1 Non-Fire Fatality and 12 Non-Fire Casualties during this period. This is a slight increase in Non-Fatal Casualties when compared to the previous reporting period.

### Trend by Quarter (4 years)



### Incidents by Ward

Wick & East Caithness



Thurso & Northwest Caithness

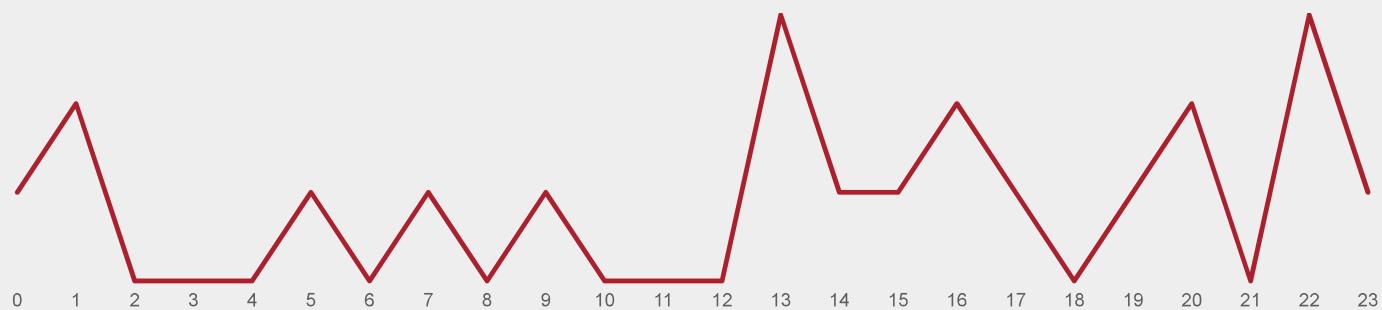


Property Type	Incident
Grassland, woodland and crops	11
Refuse	8
Dwelling	1
Outdoor structures	1

21

**Deliberate Fires  
in this period**

### Hour of Day



There were **21 Deliberate Fires** during this reporting period. This is an increase when compared to the previous reporting period. Referrals are made to other agencies for those at work within our communities.

### Trend by Quarter (4 years)



### Incidents by Ward

Thurso & Northwest Caithness

1

### Top 15 Property Types

Property Type	Incidents
Retail	1



● Accidental  
● Deliberate

1

**Non-Domestic  
Fires in this  
period**

### Extent of Damage



Limited to room of origin

There was 1 Non-Domestic Fire during this reporting period.

### Trend by Quarter (4 years)



### Incidents by Ward

Thurso & Northwest Caithness

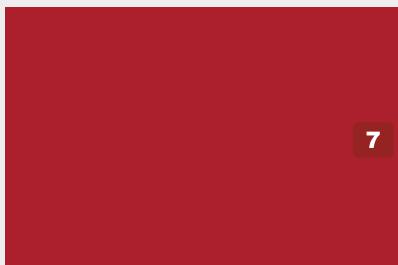
7

### Top 15 Property Types

Property Type	Incidents
Hospitals and medical care	4
Hotel/motel	2
Residential Home	1
Sheltered Housing - not self contained	1

Wick & East Caithness

1



8

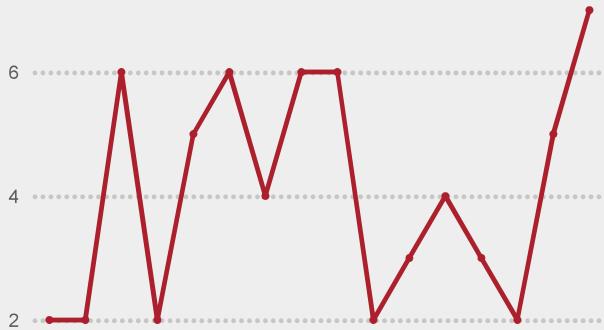
**Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals in this period**

We attended **8 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS)** during this period, which is comparable when compared to the previous reporting period. The figure continues to remain low following the Service's change to attendance at commercial businesses and workplace premises.

## 9. Road Traffic Collisions

## 2025-26 Q1 & Q2

### **Trend by Quarter (4 years)**

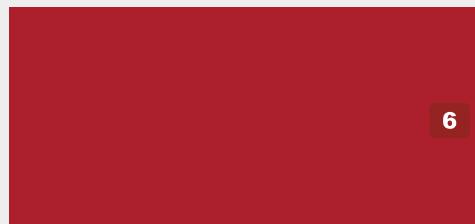


7

# Road Traffic Collisions in this period

Property Type	Incidents
Car	4
Motorcycle	2
Multiple Vehicles	1

## Incidents by Ward



Incident Type	Incidents
Vehicle (Non-fire)	7

## **Extent of Harm (Non-Fatal)**



We attended **7 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)** within the reporting period which is comparable to the previous period.

There were **5 Non-Fatal Casualties** which is a slight increase in comparison to the previous reporting period.

Our Prevention Teams continues to work with partner agencies through the Highland Road Safety group, older driver Virtual Reality Scheme and Road Safety Scheme of new drivers.

## 10. Home Fire Safety Visits

2025-26 Q1 & Q2

### HFSVs by Ward

**77**

#### Home Fire Safety Visits

Thurso & Northwest Caithness

**40**

Wick & East Caithness

**37**

## 11. Fire Safety Enforcement

Job Type	Count	Audits by Ward
Audit	13	

Wick & East Caithness

**7**

Thurso & Northwest Caithness

**6**

Our Community Safety Advocates and Station personnel undertook **77 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs)**. With the introduction of the new, modernised Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) system that enhances how we identify, assess and support the most at risk from fire, we may see an initial decline in referrals and HFSVs whilst the new system and referral pathways are embedded in.

- 6 x On-Call Retained Duty System appliances across 4 Stations
- 1 x On-Call Volunteer Duty System vehicles/Community Response Units across 1 Station

These Stations serve the Caithness population

**\*Please note the availability figures do not include Joint Mobilising availability.**

Station	Apr – Sept 26 Availability* %	Male	Female	Staff
Dunbeath	63.04%	7	0	7
John O'Groats	61.90%	9	0	9
Lybster (CRU)	N/A	5	1	6
Thurso – 1 <sup>st</sup> Appliance	97.75%	13	2	15
Thurso – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Appliance	49.44%			
Wick – 1 <sup>st</sup> Appliance	99.59%	17	0	17
Wick – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Appliance	70.56%			

### Fire Safety Day at Vulcan

50 staff from Vulcan attended a Fire Safety Day held at their workplace. They received advice on general domestic fire safety, information about the new detection regulations and requirements, along with some road safety advice.

### Fire Safety Day at Dounreay

Following the success of the event held at Vulcan, a similar event was held at Dounreay, again receiving advice on domestic fire safety, the new detection regulations and road safety advice, with 70 staff from Dounreay attending.

### Highland Council Tenants Event

An event hosted by Highland Council Tenant Participation was held at Park Hotel, Thurso, which saw a variety of groups there offering advice. The Fire Service provided general domestic fire safety advice and also offered home safety visits. The event was well attended with 40 people in attendance

### Wick Macular Society

A talk was delivered at the Wick Macular Society at Nucleus, Wick. They were provided with home fire safety advice and also advised of the availability of home fire safety visits.



### Thurso Fire Station Open Day

In September, Thurso Fire Station held an Open Day, which gave everyone who came along the opportunities to take a look around the various appliances, watch various demonstrations by the crew, take part in raffles and games and purchase some home bakes.

### Freshers Fayre at UHI Thurso Campus

In September, the Service had a stand at the freshers event at UHI Thurso Campus, where 50 students were in attendance. Both careers and home safety advice was delivered, as well as information sharing with other organisations who were also in attendance.

### Pop-Up Hub

NHS Caithness held a pop-up Hub in Thurso library in September. The Service, along with other organisations were there providing information about the various support options available across Caithness.

### Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs)

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service continues to embed our new, modernised Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) system that will enhance how we identify, assess, and support those most at risk from fire.

Throughout 2025, we have been finalising our application platforms to enable efficient referral pathways from partners.

We are working hard at a local level to ensure we continue reaching the most vulnerable in our communities with targeted prevention activity. We are actively encouraging new and existing partner organisations to sign up to our Data Sharing Framework (DSF), which enables secure, GDPR-compliant referrals and supports timely, person-centred interventions.

Our Community Action Team can support partners throughout this sign-up process. Please share this information with your networks to encourage organisations to participate in establishing a secure referral pathway.

[Home fire safety visits | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service](#)

### Wildfire

We continue to advance our [Wildfire Strategy](#), launched in 2023 and backed by a £1.6 million investment over three years. This includes acquiring all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), trailers, specialist equipment, and four 4x4 support vans, which will be deployed as part of a comprehensive response package aimed at enhancing our capability to manage and mitigate wildfires across Scotland. We are committed to improving wildfire prevention, response, and partnership efforts, ensuring both local communities and natural landscapes are better protected.

This year Highland saw the most [wildfire warnings](#) issued in one year in recent times with eleven wildfire warnings issued in this reporting period. This also marked the first September wildfire warning since 2020.

While wildfire alerts in early autumn are not unprecedented, this year's warning reflects exceptional conditions across Scotland.

SFRS are currently engaged in a review of the Operational Learning from the recent Wildfires affecting Highland with various partners participating in multi-agency debriefs and meetings. This will help shape our plans for dealing with these challenging incidents.

### Training and Resources

- **Tiered Approach:** All SFRS operational personnel are trained to at least Tier 1 in wildfire response.
- **Tier 2 Stations:** Stations have received additional training and specialist PPE, with four stations also set to receive the new 4x4 support vans, this includes Dornoch Station who received their 4x4 support van.
- **Tier 3 Stations:** Stations will be equipped with Ford Rangers, trailers, and ATVs, with Invergordon and Ullapool have received their ATV.
- **Flexi Duty Officers:** These officers have undergone Wildfire Tactical Advisor training and will support wildfire incidents across the country.

### Community Asset Register

The Community Asset Register is a Scotland wide database of volunteers willing to help during an emergency. The database plots assets on a map so if an emergency incident occurs we can identify those who could help. Assets can be people with either skills or equipment.

There's no obligation on volunteers to provide support, as we will always respond to deal with emergencies. However, if we believe a volunteer could help with their assets we ask if they're available. If they are, we explain where they should go and what they should do.

To **register**: <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-area/community-asset-register/>

### Service Delivery Review (SDR)

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has undertaken a significant piece of work to understand the risk and demand of our Service in Scotland. This SDR review has developed 23 options for public consultation.

This has resulted in the proposal to close the 3 long term dormant stations in Highland:-

Ratagan,  
Nethy Bridge, and  
Muck

A public consultation process was undertaken in July with the communities of these areas invited to provide comment to these proposals.

This consultation closed in September with the report, including recommendations to be submitted to our Board for decision in December 2025.

[Service Delivery Review: public consultation closes](#)

We would like to thank everyone who participated in our public consultation.

## 15. Glossary of Terms

### Term - What it means

#### **ADF**

Accidental Dwelling Fire.

#### **HFSV**

Home Fire Safety Visit.

#### **PDIR**

Post Domestic Incident Response, a term used to indicate actions taken following attendance at a fire or other incident in the home. PDIRs include amongst things the offer of a free follow up home fire safety visit.

#### **RTC**

Road Traffic Collision.

#### **Special Service**

Calls to incidents which are not fires or false alarms such as RTCs, rescues, flooding, incidents involving hazardous materials or the provision of assistance to other agencies.

#### **UFAS**

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals. When an automatic fire detection and alarm system is activated as a result of anything other than an actual fire the activation is classed as a false alarm. If an attendance is made to such an event by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, then the event is recorded as an UFAS incident.

#### UFAS Policy Change

*In response to COVID, on the 6th May 2020, the SFRS decided to send 1 pump to UFAS premises that did not have their own Predetermined attendance (PDA).*

*As of 1st July 2023, the COVID interim 1 pump response was ended and a new UFAS policy was implemented.*

*The new policy is to call challenge all UFAS incidents with the intention of non-attendance. Hospitals, care homes, and sleeping risk premises are all exempt and receive either 2 pumps or their premise specific PDA.*



# SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland



Design, figures and charts by the Business Intelligence team.