

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	4
Report No	CC/16/26

Committee: Caithness Area Committee

Date: 20/07/2026

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, scrutinise and note 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 1st October 2025 to 31st March 2026. 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 1st October 2025 to 31st March 2026.

- There were **8 Accident Dwelling Fires (ADF)**.

This is an increase from the last reporting period. The majority are classed as low severity, requiring little intervention from SFRS and minimal fire damage.

There was 2 Non-fatal Casualties 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 **19 Non-Fire Casualties** over this reporting period which is an increase from last report, made up from 1 Fatality and 18 Non-Fatal casualties. (Further breakdown within report)
- There were **8 Deliberate Fires within this period**. A significant decrease to previous report. Further breakdown within report). Referrals are made to other agencies for those at work within our communities.
- There were **5 Non-Domestic Building Fire**. An increase from previous report.
- We attended **20 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 **10 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)** which is a slight increase upon last report.
There were 0 RTC related fatalities and 9 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 82 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 3 & 4.

Designation: Local Senior Officer for Highland

Date: 20/07/2026

Author: Station Commander Keith Ettles

Background Papers: Highland – Caithness Area Committee – Performance Report



Highland Caithness Committee

2025-26 Q3 & Q4 Scrutiny Report



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**

Highland Caithness Committee

2025-26 Q3 & Q4 Scrutiny Report

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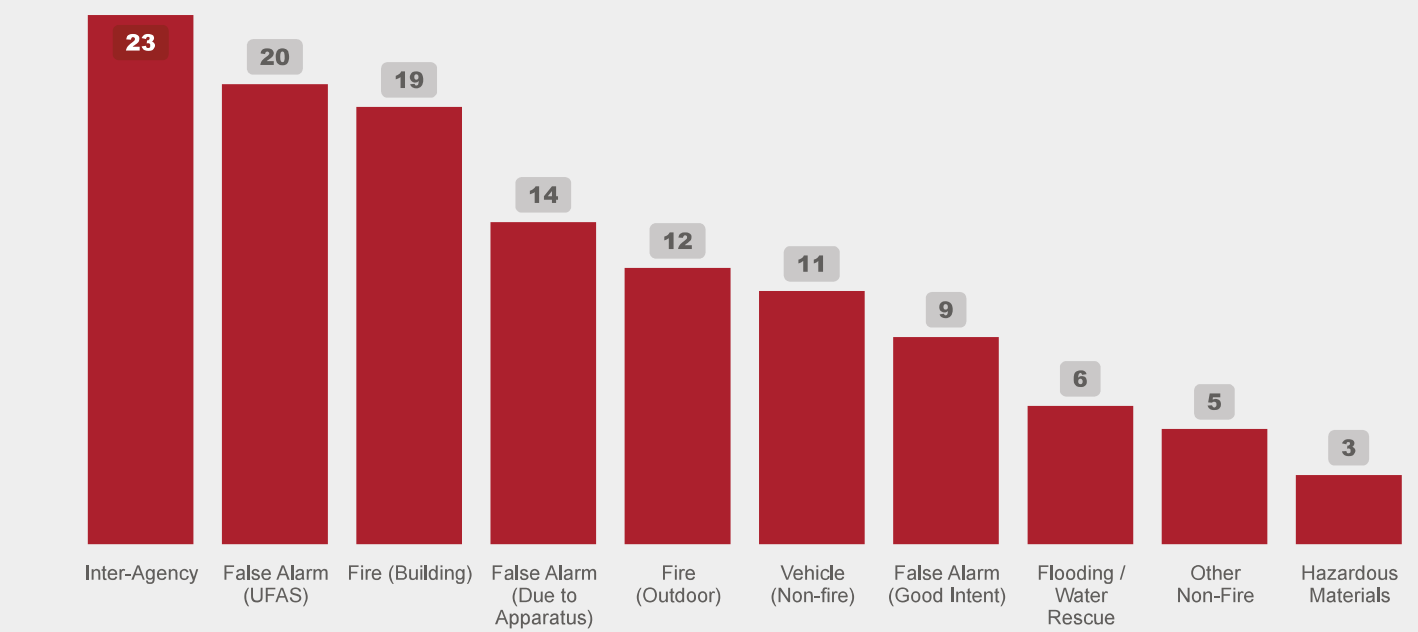
1	Summary
2	Trends
3	Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)
4	Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties
5	Non-Fire Casualties
6	Deliberate Fires
7	Non-Domestic Fires
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About the statistics within this report

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.

 130 Total Incidents (Incl. Incompletes)	 33 Fires	 54 Non-Fire Incidents	 43 False Alarms	 20 UFAS
 13 People Rescued by Firefighters	 3 People Receiving First Aid or Hospital Treatment (Fires)	 0 Fire Fatalities	 18 People Receiving First Aid or Hospital Treatment (Non-Fire)	 1 Non-Fire Fatalities
 82 Home Fire Safety Visits	 20 Fire Safety Audits			

Top 10 Incident Types

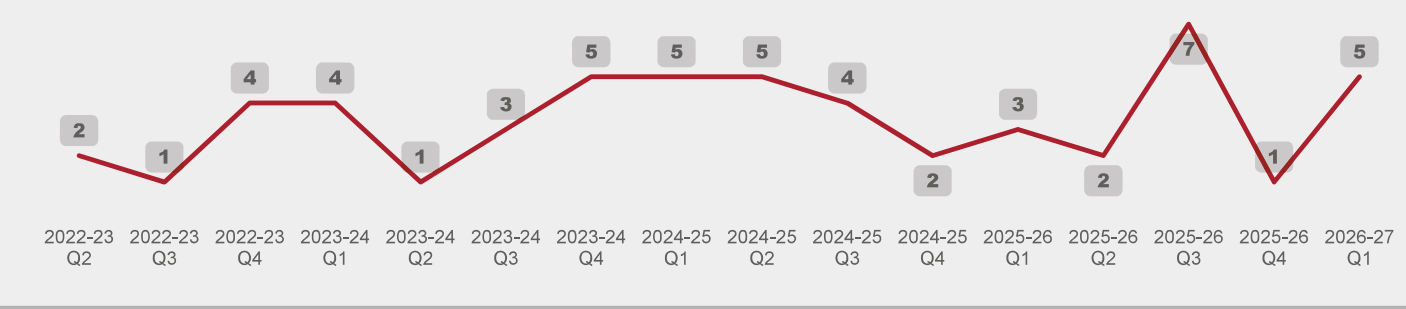


The information above provides a summary of the six-months (1 October 2025 - 31 March 2026) activity against headline indicators. It aims to provide - at a glance - our direction of travel during the current reporting period.

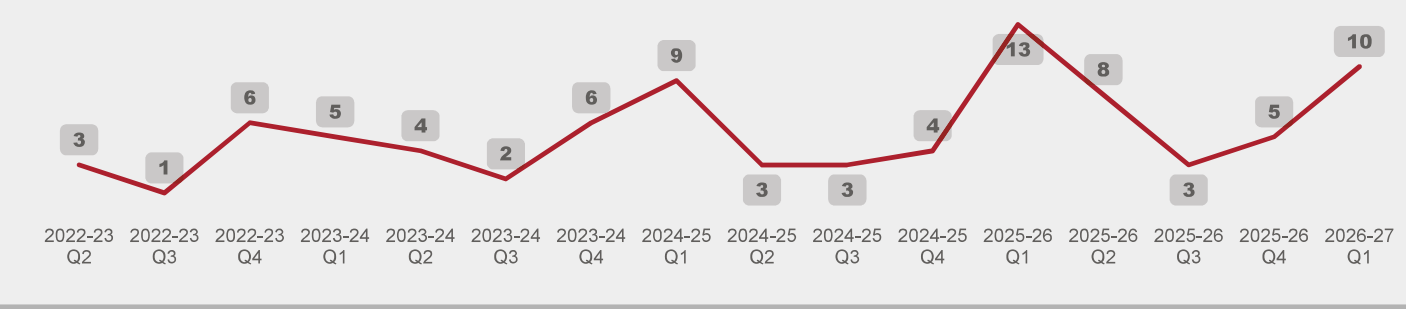
2. Trends

Previous 16 quarters (4 years)

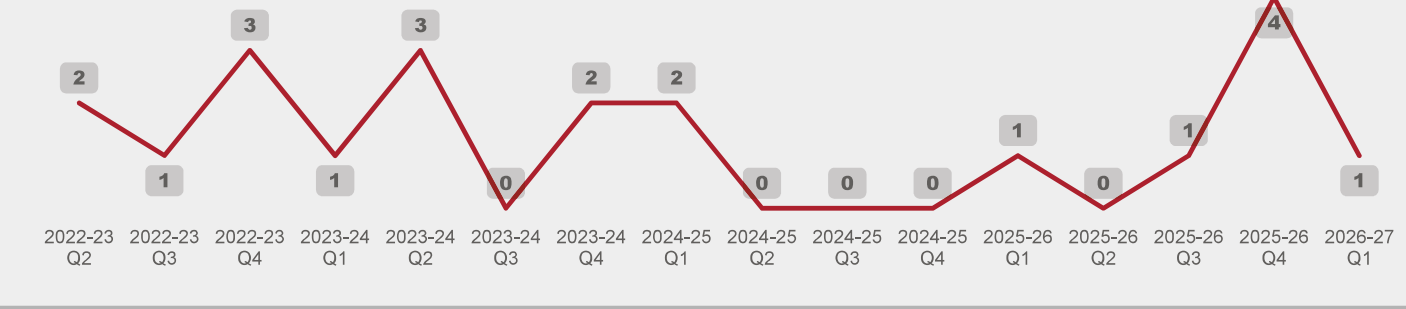
Accidental Dwelling Fires



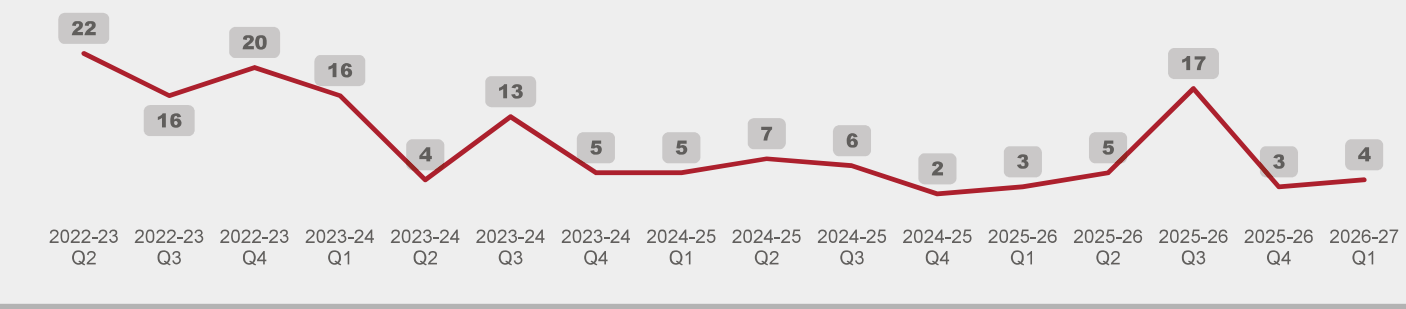
Deliberate Fires



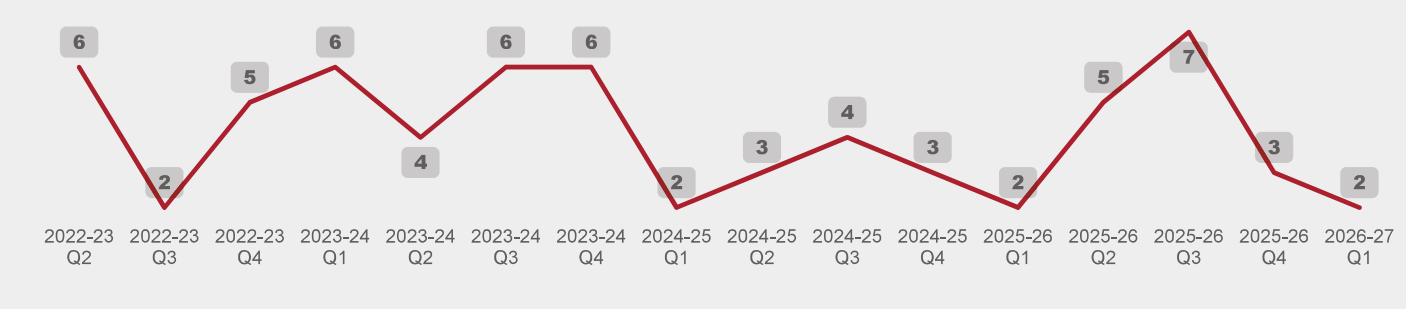
Non-Domestic Fires



Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals



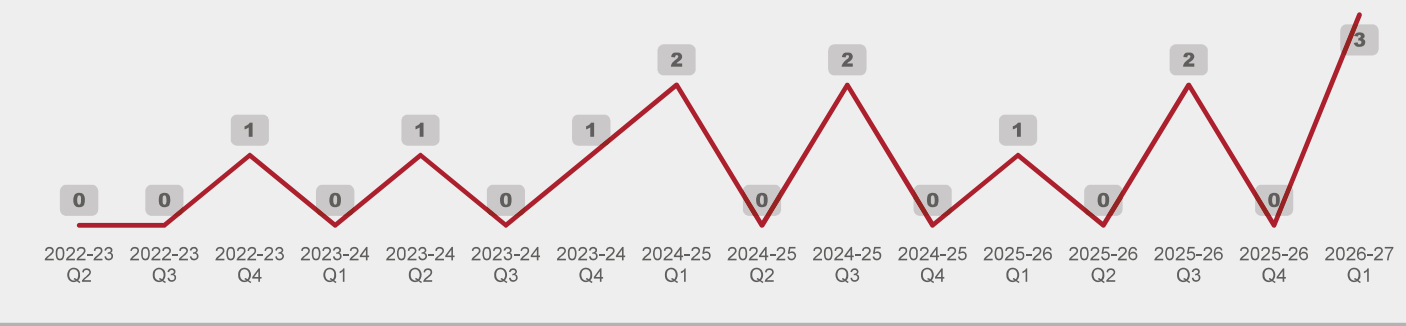
Road Traffic Collisions



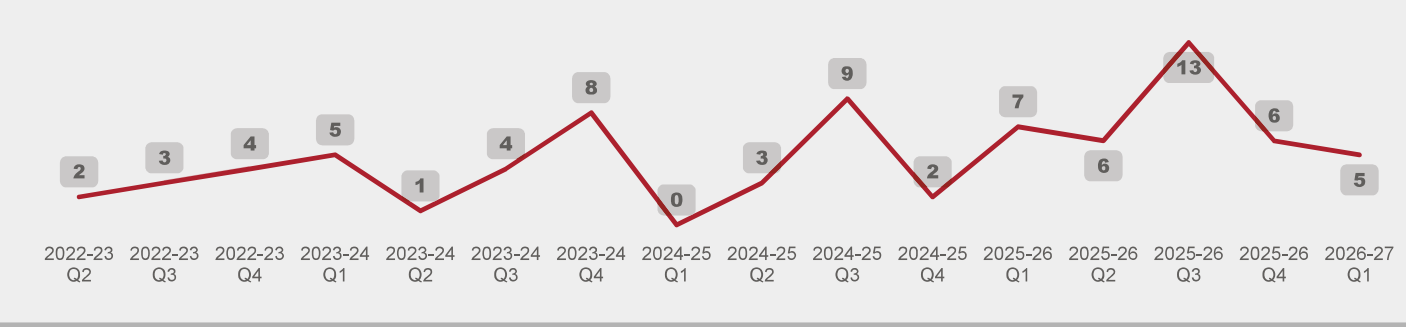
2. Trends

Previous 16 quarters (4 years)

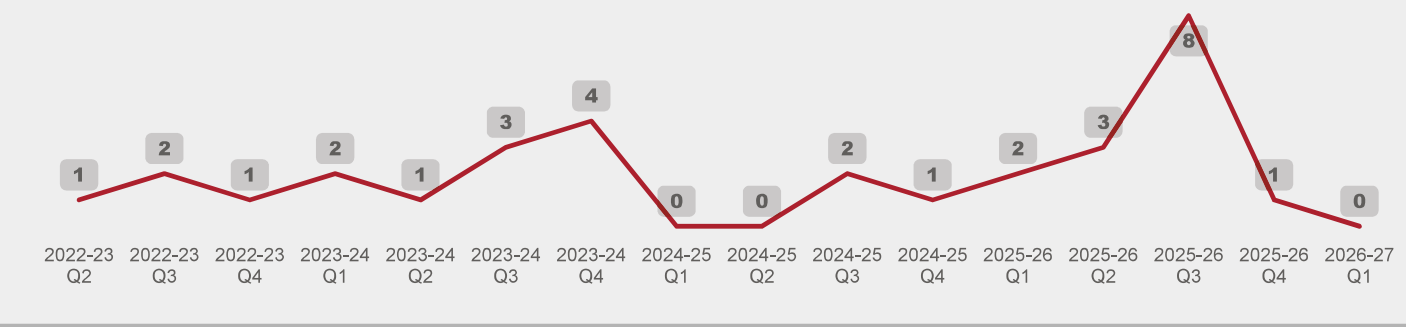
Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties



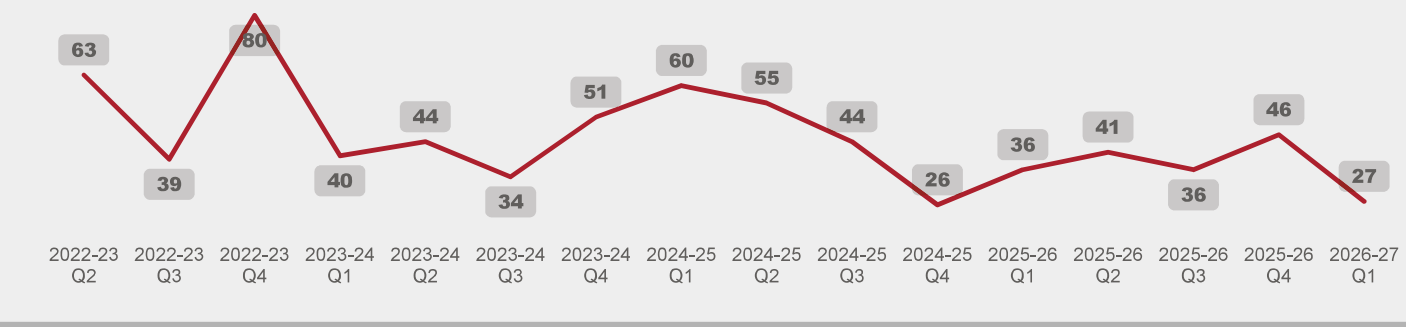
Non-Fire Casualties



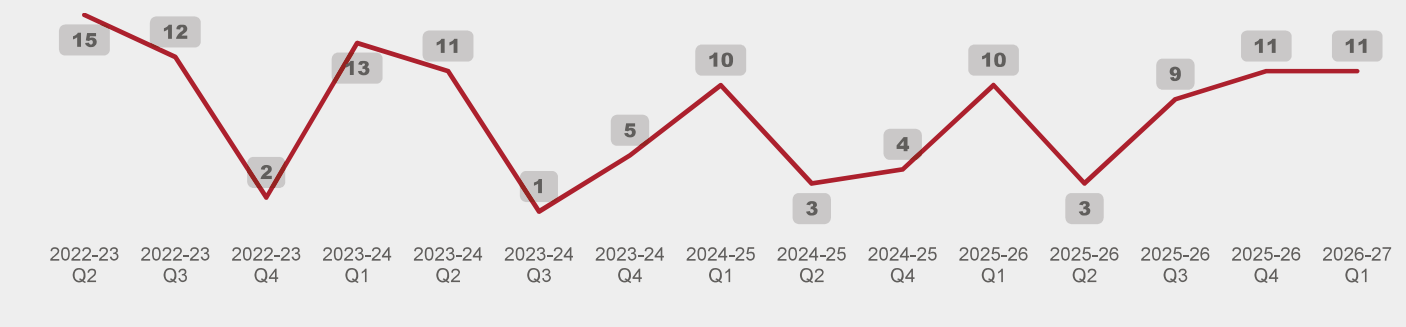
Road Traffic Collision Casualties



Home Fire Safety Visits



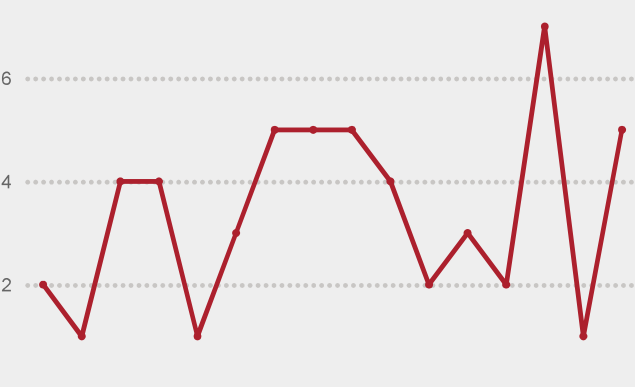
Fire Safety Audits



3. Accidental Dwelling Fires

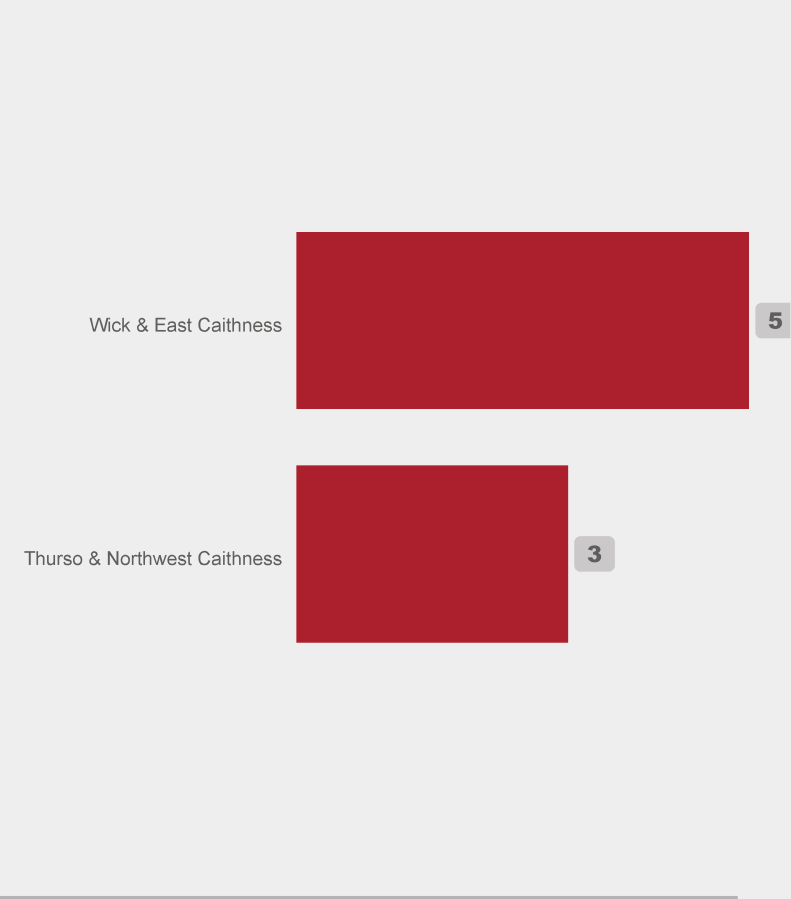
2025-26 Q3 & Q4

Trend by Quarter (4 years)

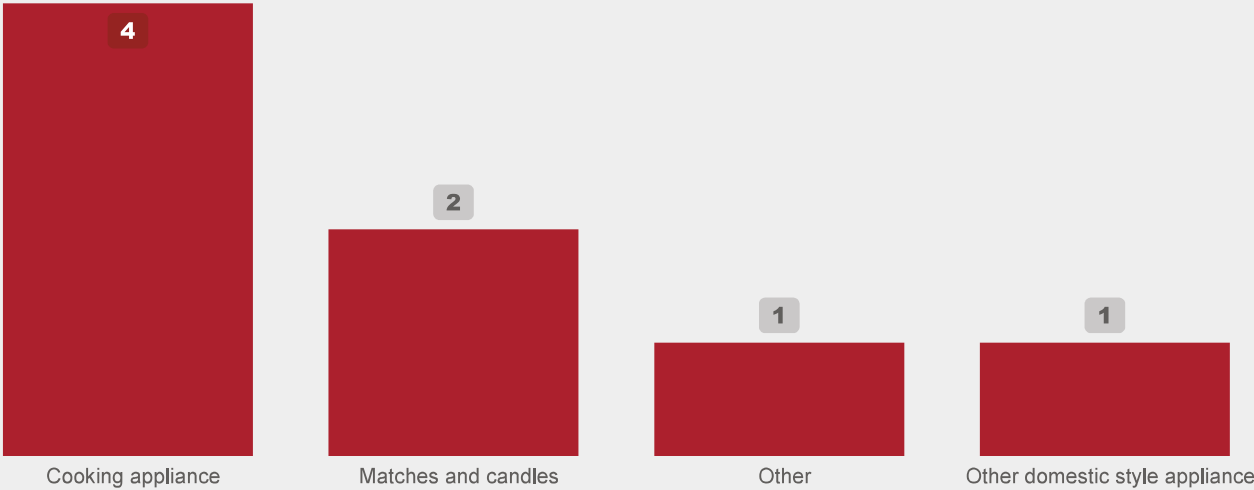


Extent of Damage	Incidents
Limited to item 1st ignited	3
Limited to room of origin	3
Limited to floor of origin (not whole building)	1
Not applicable	1

Incidents by Ward



Source of Ignition (Top 10)



8

Accidental Dwelling Fires
in this period

There were **8 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)** within this reporting period, which is an increase, when compared to the previous reporting period. The majority are classed as low severity, requiring little or no intervention from the Service and minimal fire damage.

All ADFs are offered Home Fire Safety Visits and agency referrals where required.

4. Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties

2025-26 Q3 & Q4

Trend by Quarter (4 years)



Nature of Injury/Cause of Death	Casualties
Overcome by gas, smoke or toxic fumes; asphyxiation	2

Casualties by Ward



2

Non-Fatal Casualties

0

Fatal Casualties

2

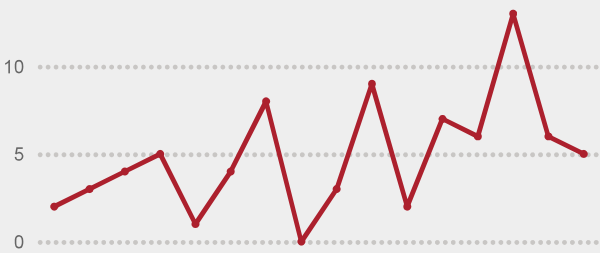
People Rescued by Firefighters

Extent of Harm (Non-Fatal)



During this reporting period there were **2 Non-Fatal Casualties**, which is a slight increase when compared to the previous reporting period.

Trend by Quarter (4 years)



Nature of Injury/Cause of Death	Casualties
Bruising	4
Back / Neck injury (spinal)	3
Chest / Abdominal injury	2
Fracture	2
Head injury	2
Other	2
Collapse	1
Hypothermia	1
Not known	1
Other medical condition	1

Casualties by Ward



18

Non-Fatal Casualties

1

Fatal Casualties

11

People Rescued by Firefighters

Extent of Harm (Non-Fatal)

3

First Aid Given at Scene

11

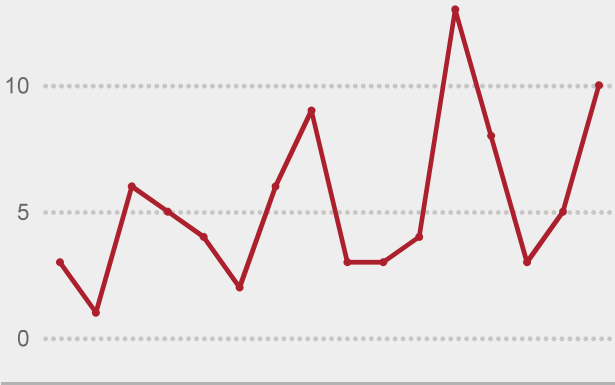
Hospital Slight Injuries

4

Hospital Serious Injuries

During this reporting period there was **1 Fatal Casualty** and **18 Non-Fatal Casualties**. This is an increase in Non-Fatal Casualties when compared to the previous reporting period.

Trend by Quarter (4 years)



Property Type	Incident
Grassland, woodland and crops	5
Dwelling	1
Non Residential	1
Refuse	1

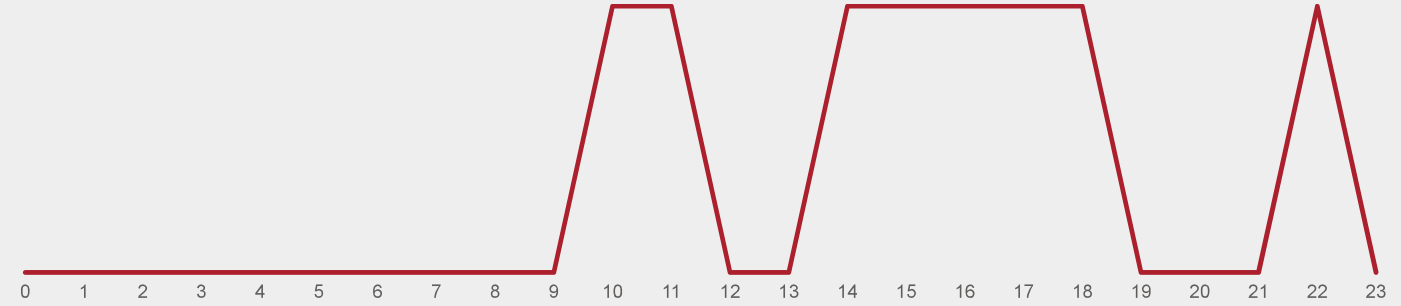
Incidents by Ward



8

Deliberate Fires
in this period

Hour of Day

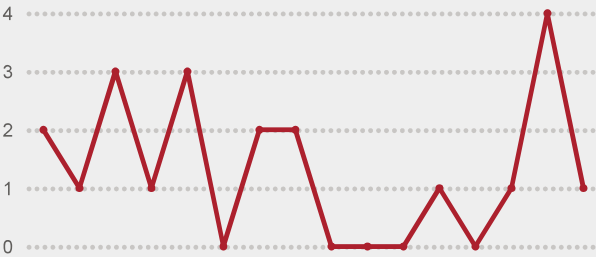


Within this reporting period, we had **8 Deliberate Fires**, this a significant decrease when compared to the previous reporting period. Referrals are made to other agencies for those at work within our communities.

7. Non-Domestic Fires

2025-26 Q3 & Q4

Trend by Quarter (4 years)



Top 15 Property Types

Property Type	Incidents
Permanent Agricultural	2
Retail	2
Food and Drink	1

Incidents by Ward



- Accidental
- Deliberate

5 (100.0%)

5

Non-Domestic
Fires in this
period

Extent of Damage

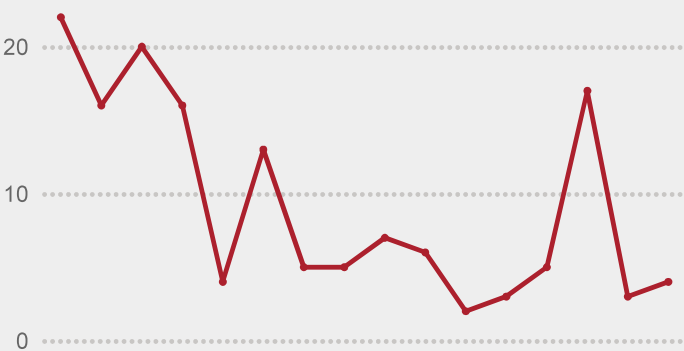


We have seen an increase in this reporting period with **5 Non-Domestic Fires**, when compared to the previous period.

8. Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

2025-26 Q3 & Q4

Trend by Quarter (4 years)



Incidents by Ward



Top 15 Property Types

Property Type	Incidents
Residential Home	9
Education	3
Hotel/motel	3
Public admin, security and safety	2
Hospitals and medical care	1
Sheltered Housing - not self contained	1
Sporting venues	1

20

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals in this period

We attended **20 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS)** within this period, which is an increase compared to the previous period. The figures continue to remain low following the Service's changed to attend at commercial business and workplace premises.

9. Road Traffic Collisions

2025-26 Q3 & Q4

Trend by Quarter (4 years)



10

Road Traffic Collisions in this period

Property Type	Incidents
Car	8
Van	2

Incident Type	Incidents
Vehicle (Non-fire)	10

Incidents by Ward



9

Non-Fatal Casualties

0

Fatal Casualties

3

People Rescued by Firefighters

Extent of Harm (Non-Fatal)



3

First Aid Given at Scene



5

Hospital Slight Injuries



1

Hospital Serious Injuries

We attended **10 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)** during this reporting period which is a slight increase when compared to the previous period.

There were **9 Non-Fatal Casualties** which is a slight increase in comparison to the previous reporting period.

Out Prevention Teams continue 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 Q3 & Q4

HFSVs by Ward

82

Home Fire
Safety Visits

Thurso & Northwest Caithness



44

Wick & East Caithness



38

11. Fire Safety Enforcement

Job Type	Count
Audit	20
Specific Visit	1

Audits by Ward

Thurso & Northwest Caithness



12

Wick & East Caithness



8

We undertook **82 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs)** within this reporting period. With the introduction of the new, modernised Home Fire Safety Visits 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.

Our Fire Safety Enforcement Officers and Auditing Officers have conducted **20 Audits** together with **1 Specific Visit** within this period.

12. Station Availability and Establishment

2025-26 Q3 & Q4

- 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	Oct 25 – Nov 25 Availability* %	Staff 30/11/25	Dec 25 – Mar 26 Availability* %	Staff 31/03/26
Dunbeath	28.94%	7	65.44%	7
John O'Groats	71.50%	11	70.62%	11
Lybster (CRU)	N/A	6	80.17%	6
Thurso – 1 st Appliance	98.74%	15	98.53%	15
Thurso – 2 nd Appliance	54.44%		40.93%	
Wick – 1 st Appliance	99.80%	16	97.81%	15
Wick – 2 nd Appliance	71.64%		61.35%	

Due to a change in systems the availability has been split into two time periods to account for the change over date.

Operation Moonbeam

As part of Operation Moonbeam, the Fire Service and Police Scotland were raising awareness of firework safety and legislation, particularly with local retailers.

Brew with the Crew

In November, there was a Brew with the Crew events held in Wick and Thurso, where everyone who attended received home fire safety advice, a free car seat safety check, free screen wash top ups and carbon monoxide advice as well as a tour of the station.

Community Pop-Up Hub at Wick Library

In November we attended the Community Pop-Up Hub in Wick Library which was organised by NHS which included a range of statutory agencies and third sector groups offering assistance to the community.

New Driver Early Intervention

Throughout this reporting period we have delivered New Driver Early Intervention to schools in Wick and Thurso. Police Scotland produced a presentation on road safety for new drivers, focussing on hazard perception and speed.

Giving Santa a Helping Hand



Thurso Fire Station had the pleasure of helping Santa make some delivery's in December. With Santa's sleigh still in his workshop, the crew at Thurso came to the rescue with an alternative. Even the Grinch made an appearance.



Winter Safety Advice

The Fire Service had stands in Tesco at both Wick and Thurso during December distributing Winter Safety leaflets and offering home fire safety visits.

Fire Safety Talks

During this reporting period we had fire safety talks which were delivered to Befrienders' Group – Caithness and a lunch group at the Dunbeath Centre, which were a show and tell-style chat.

Highland Council Tenants Information Day

We attended an event which was organised by Highland Council Tenant Participation offering home safety advice to the tenants.

Visit to Thurso Station from Mount Pleasant Primary School



Children from Mount Pleasant Primary School came along to Thurso Fire Station in March. They got a hands-on look at life in the fire service, trying on kit and climbing aboard the fire appliances to learn how the Service respond to emergencies and keep the community safe. There were lots of great questions asked by the children with hopefully some future firefighters in the making.

Fire Safety Talk – Highland Senior Citizens Network

In March was held a Tea Break talk on fire safety to Highland Senior Citizens Network which was held online, covering a network of members from across the Highlands. This was followed up with a 600 word article for their newsletters which was published in the March edition.

14. 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.



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BUSINESS
INTELLIGENCE

Design, figures and charts by the Business Intelligence team.