

**Working together  
for a safer Scotland**



**SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

# **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Thematic Report**

## **On-Call Duty System Availability and Recruitment in Moray**

**Safety. Teamwork. Respect. Innovation.**



## 1. Background

The On-Call Firefighter Duty System (Previously Retained and Volunteer Duty System RVDS) is a service for the community, provided by the community and we could not keep Scotland safe without our dedicated On-Call crews.

Our On-Call firefighters provide the same full range of emergency services as their Wholetime colleagues – and generally carry out these duties whilst holding primary employment in various other fields.

This can mean our recruits bring a wide variety of experience to the role and an example of these wide ranging of roles include; Electricians, Builders, Joiners, Hoteliers, Bank Managers, Gym Instructors, Project Administrators and Sheep Farmers. In addition to this we have a number of Wholetime firefighters who perform a dual contract role as On-Call firefighters within their communities when not on a wholetime shift.

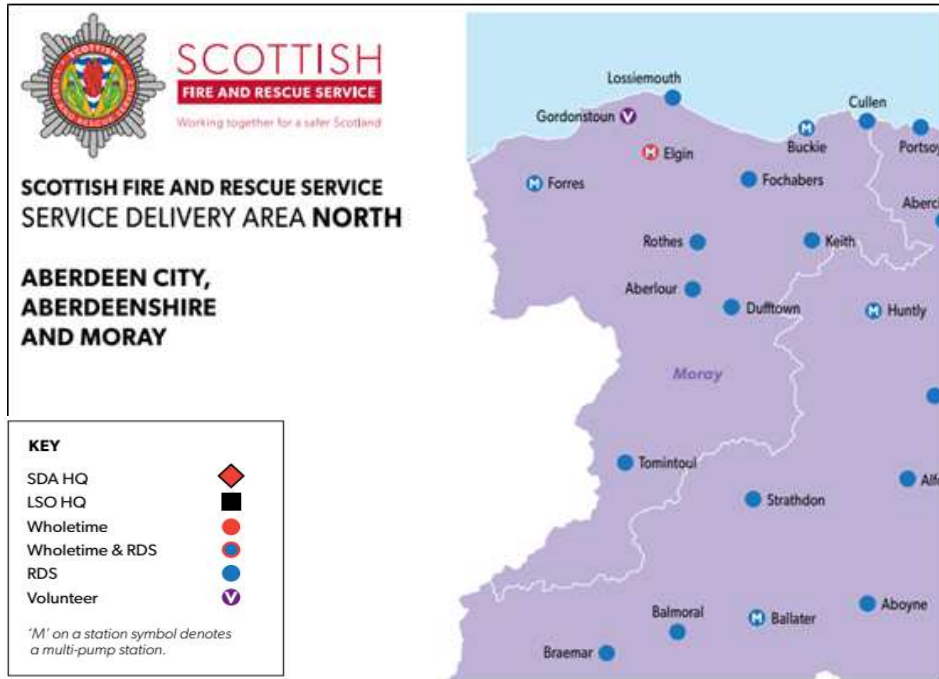
Our On-Call crews not only attend emergency calls, but also contribute to keeping our communities safe through community education activities such as; home fire safety visit, post incident response support, school interventions etc.

They are also extremely active in their communities with on-going charity work such as car washes, food banks, Christmas toy appeals and the Christmas Santa Fire Engine collections. All of which, although supported by the SFRS, is conducted out-with their normal duties on a voluntary basis.

## 2. Crewing and Availability

Our On-Call colleagues undertake a commitment to provide operational cover within their local community on either an 75% (90hrs pw) or 100% (120hrs pw) contract depend on the needs of their primary employment. These availability percentages are based on a rolling three-month average. This allows for fluctuation in their primary employment working and family commitments. This also includes attending regular weekly training events held at their local fire station for 3hrs per session, ensuring training competencies and firefighter safety is maintained.

The Moray Local Authority Area is served by 12 Community Fire and Rescue stations, Elgin Whole-time/On-Call Duty, a volunteer station at Gordonstoun School and the remaining 10 stations crewed via the On-Call duty system.



To ensure effective and sufficient resourcing, our appliance availability is managed utilising the Gartan electronic rostering system. This online system allows SFRS operations control and management teams to make fast strategic decisions about staff and resource availability in real-time.

Due to nature of the On-call environment and changes within how our local communities' function, it has become more challenging in recent years to recruit and maintain appliance availability. This can be evidenced as a greater number of the population no longer work within their local areas due to a decline in traditional local work sectors such as; retail, hospitality, manufacturing etc.

Example of SFRS On-Call availability (01/01/2023-30/09/2023):

<b>On-Call Availability</b>				
Area	Day	Evening	Weekend	Overall
<b>Moray</b>	<b>70.35%</b>	<b>94.87%</b>	<b>82.13%</b>	<b>82.45%</b>
<b>Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray</b>	<b>72.10%</b>	<b>89.90%</b>	<b>81.80%</b>	<b>81.27%</b>
<b>West SDA</b>	<b>61.40%</b>	<b>82.10%</b>	<b>74.50%</b>	<b>72.67%</b>
<b>East SDA</b>	<b>36.50%</b>	<b>57.80%</b>	<b>54.40%</b>	<b>49.57%</b>
<b>North SDA</b>	<b>62.50%</b>	<b>80.40%</b>	<b>73.90%</b>	<b>72.27%</b>
<b>Service Delivery</b>	<b>53.47%</b>	<b>73.43%</b>	<b>67.60%</b>	<b>64.83%</b>

### 3. Recruitment

Due to the nature of the On-Call environment and the aforementioned challenges, the SFRS inherently experiences a high a turnover of employee's year to year.

Our On-Call recruitment programme is a continuous process that is open to candidates all year, thus allowing the SFRS to quickly progress any identified areas of need. Our recruitment process is online which allows for greater sharing and recording of information between candidates and local SFRS management teams.

Our recruitment programme is designed to ensure that all candidates meet the required medical, fitness and educational standards to undertake the role of Firefighter.

Within the Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray LSO area, our management teams continually work to ensure that sufficient area cover be maintained. This has been achieved by local management teams working closely with local crews and On-Call Support Watch Commanders to identify innovative recruitment initiatives. These initiatives have been used to identify the needs of the local communities we serve and how we can change to meet them.

#### Moray Resource Based Crewing (RBC) profile per station:

Station	Appliances	RBC	PREP	Applied
<b>On-Call Duty</b>				
Aberlour	1 Pumping Appliance	11 (-1)	0	0
Buckie	1 Pumping Appliance * 1 Special Appliance	21 (-3)	2	9
Cullen	1 Pumping Appliance	11 (-6)	2	0
Dufftown	1 Pumping Appliance	11 (-2)	0	0
Elgin	1 Pumping Appliance, 1 Special Appliance	15 (-2)	3	3
Fochabers	1 Pumping Appliance	11 (-2)	0	0
Forres	2 Pumping Appliance's	21 (-6)	2	0
Keith	1 Pumping Appliance	11 (-2)	0	1
Lossiemouth	1 Pumping Appliance	11 (0)	1	0
Roths	1 Pumping Appliance	11 (-2)	1	0
Tomintoul	1 Pumping Appliance	11 (-3)	1	0
<b>Volunteer Duty</b>				
Gordonstoun	Pumping Appliance	13 (0)	N/A	N/A

(\*10 Crew Cab)

## **4. How the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Is Working to Improve the On-Call Provision.**

In 2020 the SFRS introduced the National On-Call Leadership forum. The aims and objectives of the forum was to bring together all elements and functions within the SFRS to support and evolve the On-Call, while undertaken continuous consultation with our On-Call colleagues.

Initial consultation with our On-Call colleagues has identified need for change and as such, our service introduced the 'On-Call Improvement Programme'.

Our On-Call Improvement Programme than been divided into three key projects.

1. Attraction & Recruitment Improvement Project.
2. Responding Options & Duty Systems Relationships Project.
3. Variable Contracts and Station Establishments Project.

Actions that have undertaken to date;

- Formation of the On-Call Support Group
- Pre-Recruitment Engagement Programme (PREP)
- On-Call Improvement Programme
- Standardisation of On-Call T&Cs Consultation (ongoing)
- Implementation and employment of On-Call Support Watch Commanders (54 across the SFRS – 7 in ACAM – 2 in Moray).

## **5. Conclusion**

The report provides the Committee with a briefing on the SFRS On-Call Duty System Availability and Recruitment within the Moray Area.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will continue to work towards improving how we delivery our On-Call Duty System and Recruitment programmes.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will continue to improve on prevention, protection and response, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of people throughout Scotland.