

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Thematic Report

Retained Volunteer Duty System and Recruitment Programme

Safety. Teamwork. Respect. Innovation.

1. Background

The 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 RVDS crews.

Our RVDS 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; Hoteliers, Bank Managers, Gym Instructors, Project Administrators, Joiners and Sheep Farmers.

Our RVDS 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.

2. CREWING AND AVAILABILITY

Our RVDS 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. This also includes attending regular weekly training events held at their local fire station for 2.5hrs per session, ensuring competencies and firefighter safety is maintained.

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



To ensure effective and sufficient resourcing, our appliance availability is managed utilising the Gartan roster 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 RDS 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 RDS availability (01/12/2021-31/12/2021):

RDS Availability					
	Day	Evening	Weekend	Overall	MoM
Argyll and Bute, East & West Dunbartonshire	75.0%	87.0%	82.0%	81.0%	↓-9.0%
Dumfries & Galloway	64.0%	89.0%	79.0%	78.0%	↓-6.0%
East, North and South Ayrshire	49.0%	72.0%	69.0%	64.0%	↓-10.0%
East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire & Inverclyde	81.0%	95.0%	79.0%	85.0%	↓-3.0%
Lanarkshire	37.0%	68.0%	65.0%	57.0%	↓0.0%
City of Edinburgh	0.0%	4.0%	16.0%	7.0%	↑2.0%
Falkirk, West Lothian	38.0%	66.0%	63.0%	57.0%	↓-7.0%
Midlothian, East Lothian, Scottish Borders	59.0%	82.0%	74.0%	72.0%	↓-6.0%
Stirling, Clackmannanshire & Fife	50.0%	77.0%	66.0%	65.0%	↓-4.0%
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Moray	70.0%	89.0%	81.0%	80.0%	↓-2.0%
Highland	55.0%	73.0%	66.0%	65.0%	↓-4.0%
Western Isles, Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands	62.0%	79.0%	76.0%	73.0%	↓-4.0%
Perth Kinross, Angus & Dundee City**	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↓0.0%
West SDA	61.2%	82.2%	74.8%	73.0%	↓-5.0%
East SDA	36.8%	57.3%	54.8%	49.6%	↓-4.4%
North SDA	62.3%	80.3%	74.3%	72.7%	↓-4.3%
Service Delivery**	53.3%	73.4%	68.0%	65.3%	↓-4.2%

3. Recruitment

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

Our RVDS 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 an online process 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 RVDS Support

Watch Commander 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.

Example of SFRS RVDS Establishment:

Personnel - Retained Duty

	TOM	Current	Comp	Dev			
West Service Delivery	813	760	227	52	-53	●	93%
East Service Delivery	563	528	514	142	-35	●	94%
North Service Delivery	1,933	1,491	1428	251	-442	●	77%
Argyll and Bute, East & West Dunbartonshire	210	194	158	36	-16	●	92%
Dumfries & Galloway	194	188	163	25	-6	●	97%
East, North and South Ayrshire	244	219	182	37	-25	●	90%
East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire & Inverclyde	54	53	38	15	-1	●	98%
Lanarkshire	111	106	86	20	-5	●	95%
Stirling, Clackmannanshire & Fife	219	199	169	30	-20	●	91%
Midlothian, East Lothian, Scottish Borders	210	208	165	43	-2	●	99%
City of Edinburgh	10	7	7	0	-3	●	70%
Falkirk, West Lothian	124	114	101	13	-10	●	92%
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Moray	470	410	361	49	-60	●	87%
Perth Kinross, Angus & Dundee City	242	226	204	22	-16	●	93%
Highland	693	480	371	109	-213	●	69%
Western Isles, Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands	528	375	329	46	-153	●	71%

Moray Resource Based Crewing (RBC) profile per station:

Station	Appliances	RBC
Retained Duty		
Aberlour	1 PA	11 (-1)
Buckie	1 PA* 1 SA	21 (-3)
Cullen	1 PA	11 (-4)
Duffton	1 PA	11 (0)
Elgin	1 PA, 1 SA	15 (-2)
Fochabers	1 PA	11 (-2)
Forres	2 PA's	21 (-10)
Keith	1 PA	13 (-1)
Lossiemouth	1 PA	11 (+1)
Roths	1 PA	11 (-4)
Tomintoul	1 PA	11 (-4)
Volunteer Duty		
Gordonstoun	1 PA	13 (0)

PA: Pumping Appliance (*10 Crew Cab)

SA: Specialist Appliance

4. How the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Is Working to Improve The RVDS

In 2020 the SFRS introduced the National Retained and Volunteer 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 RVDS, while undertaken continuous consultation with our RVDS colleagues.

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

Our RVDS 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 RVDS Support Group
- Pre- Employment Engagement Programme (PEEP)
- RVDS Improvement Programme
- Standardisation of RVDS T&Cs Consultation (ongoing)
- Implementation and employment of RDVS Support Watch Commanders (54).

5. Conclusion

The report provides the Committee with a briefing on the Retained Volunteer Duty System and Recruitment

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will continue to work towards improving how we delivery our Retained Volunteer 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.