

# False alarm callouts for fire service increase in Midlothian

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

**The number of false alarms firefighters were called to in Midlothian over the last year was the highest for five years.**

A report by area commander, Stephen Gourlay from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, said firefighters were called to 385 false alarms between April 2019 and March 2020.

That was up from 375 the previous year and compares to just 306 five years ago.

However, the number of deliberate fires started outside of homes fell to its lowest number in five years, with 234 incidents last year compared to 312 the previous year.

The report said that nearly a third of false alarm calls were due to the alarm being contaminated by dust, insects or steam. One in five were caused by people burning toast, with 18 per cent caused by unknown factors and 11 per cent by controlled burning outside the alarmed building.

It added that one in 10 cases were 'carelessly set off', with three per cent malicious.

The fall in deliberate fires was welcomed by Mr Gourlay, whose report revealed that in the last quarter of the last year there were 27 deliberate fires – a "significant decrease of 55 when compared to the same quarter in the previous year".

The report said: "It is pleasing to note the significant reduction for quarter four and the overall year figures which

also show a reduction of 92 incidents when compared to the figures from 2018/19.

“The trend line highlights that this is the lowest figure for Year To Date and quarter four in the last five years. Midlothian is currently performing below the trend line for East of Scotland and Scotland averages.”

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