



Fire Services Examinations Board

REPORT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT
AND THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS ON THE QUALIFYING
EXAMINATION FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF SUB-OFFICER
PART II - PRACTICAL TEST 2001

1. This was the fifteenth occasion on which the practical test was conducted by the Board in accordance with the rules and syllabuses published in May 2000.

It consisted of three sections:

SECTION A	The conduct of one composite drill.
SECTION B	Fireground procedure: taking charge of the situation and controlling the exercise.
SECTION C	An instructional talk on a specific fire risk within the candidate's brigade area.

2. Mr H E Wright was the Lead Assessor and Mr Ian Kerr (CFO Shropshire) the Assessor for the practical tests.
3. The tests were held at local examination centres during the months of April, May and June.
4. The organisation of the tests was undertaken by 21 local examination boards.
5. 549 candidates initially entered for the examination as at the Board's closing date for entries (1 February). However, the final number of candidates entering the examination was 499 after late entries and withdrawals had both been accepted. 36 (7.2%) absented themselves from the examination. Thus, the number of candidates who attended the examination was 463.

RESULTS

6. Of the 463 candidates who attempted the test 317 (68.5%) were awarded a pass and 146 (31.5%) failed. The 317 successful candidates are now qualified for promotion to the rank of sub-officer.
7. Of the 9 female candidates who attempted the test, 6 were successful.
8. 36 candidates were absent from the examination and under the Restriction of Entry Scheme 6 candidates (16.7%) appealed to the Board against their automatic barring from next year's examination. Under the delegated authority given to the Chairman the appeal was considered and all 6 were upheld.

GENERAL COMMENTS

9. The practical test for the qualifying examination for promotion to the rank of Sub-Officer held during 2001 was the fifteenth held under the auspices of the Fire Services Examinations Board.
10. Of the 499 who entered the tests, 36 (7.2%) absented themselves leaving 463 candidates actually taking the test. 317 (68.5%) were awarded a pass and are now qualified for promotion to the rank of Sub-Officer.
11. When compared to the figures relating to last year's test, the figures for 2001 indicate a severe decrease of 216 (-30.2%) in the number of candidates entering the examination, a slight decrease in the number, but increase in percentage terms of the number absenting themselves, and a resulting severe decrease of 211 (-31.3%) in the number of candidates taking the test. The number of candidates passing the test reduced by 111 although the pass rate increased by almost 5%.
12. The Assessor for the practical tests, the Lead Assessor and the Secretary of the Board visited a number of the examination centres to assess the facilities provided and observe the tests in progress. Where improvements associated with the organisation and arrangements made by the local examination boards were considered necessary, advice was given. Examiners were observed and questioned regarding assessments and were considered competent and fair.
13. The test consists of three parts. Section A requires candidates to organise a composite drill for two crews using their appliances and equipment. In this section of the test 87.5% of the candidates obtained a pass mark which is very similar to that achieved last year. It is difficult to identify any common causes of failure applicable to all failed candidates, but the inability to control the crew members, cover necessary safety aspects, effectively observe and interact with the crews, and poor de-briefing were all mentioned by more than one Senior Examiner as reasons for failure.

14. In Section B of the test, candidates are required to demonstrate their ability to take charge of a simulated operational incident, control the work of two crews and disperse the appliances and equipment satisfactorily. In this section of the test the recorded pass rate was 82.5% which is higher than that achieved last year. Once again, it is difficult to identify common weaknesses applicable to all failed candidates, but the most common recorded by Senior Examiners were inadequacies in information gathering at the scene, risk assessment which led to inappropriate plans of action being applied, command of and communication with the crew members, and de-briefing of the crews at the completion of the test.
15. Section C of the test requires candidates to provide an instructional talk on a specified risk within their brigade, as determined by the examiners from a list of three such risks provided by the candidate's brigade. In this section 83.2% of the candidates achieved a pass mark which is higher than that achieved last year. The weaknesses identified with all failed candidates related to inadequate preparation on their part.
16. The majority of candidates who failed to obtain an overall pass did so due to failure in one of the three sections. Most brigades provide pre-examination training for their candidates which may be attended on a voluntary basis. It is reported that not all candidates avail themselves of this opportunity or fail to complete the course. It is generally thought that with a little more determination and effort from these failed candidates, a success could be achieved.

ASSESSORS' REPORT

17. Detailed comments of the national assessor in connection with the practical test have been prepared and issued to brigades.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

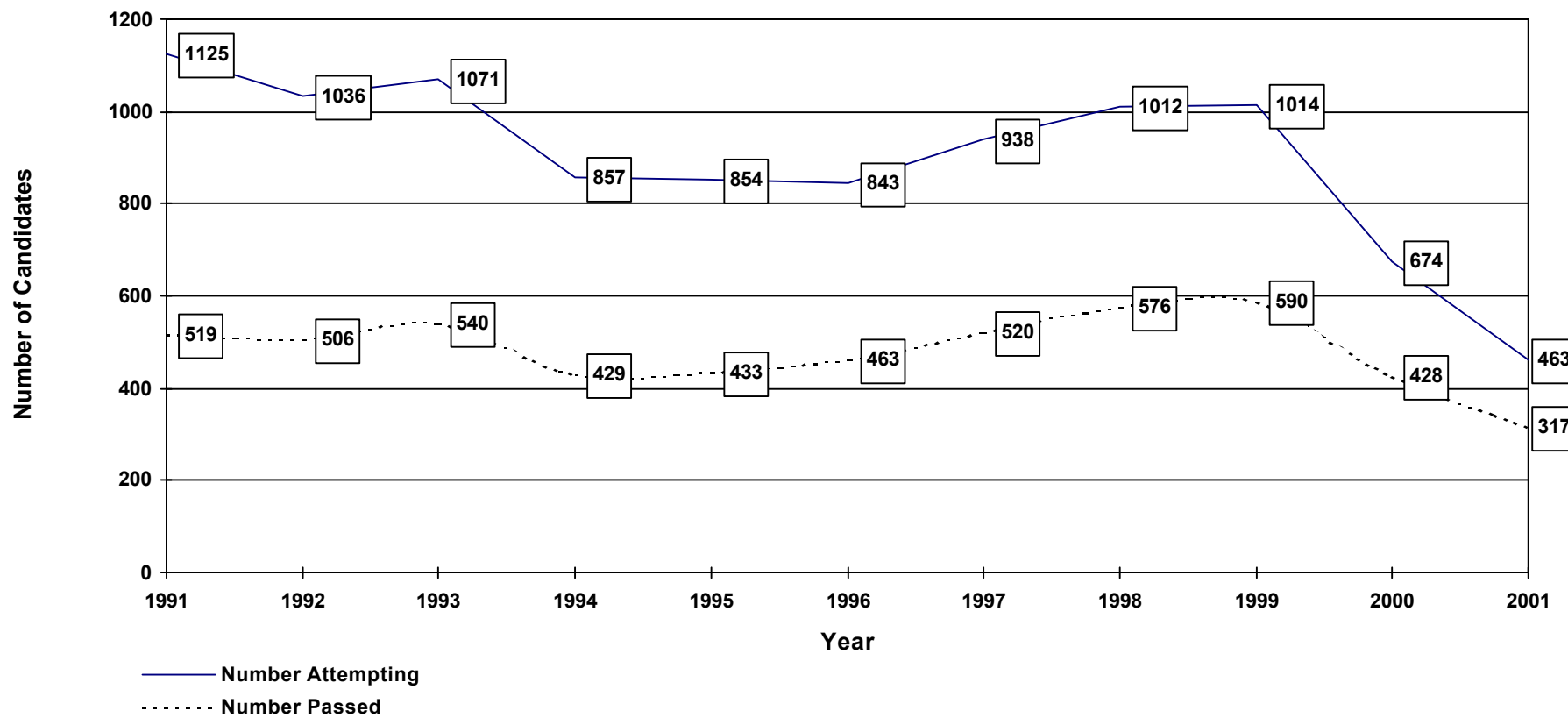
18. The following tables show the results of the examination as a whole in both graphical and tabular format. Graphs showing the numbers attempting and passing the examination and the percentage passing is attached at Appendix A. A summary of the results as a whole and by individual sections of the examination is attached at Appendix B and a full statistical report for the examinations, including an analysis by brigade is attached at Appendix C.

G Meldrum
Chairman

D Stanley
Secretary

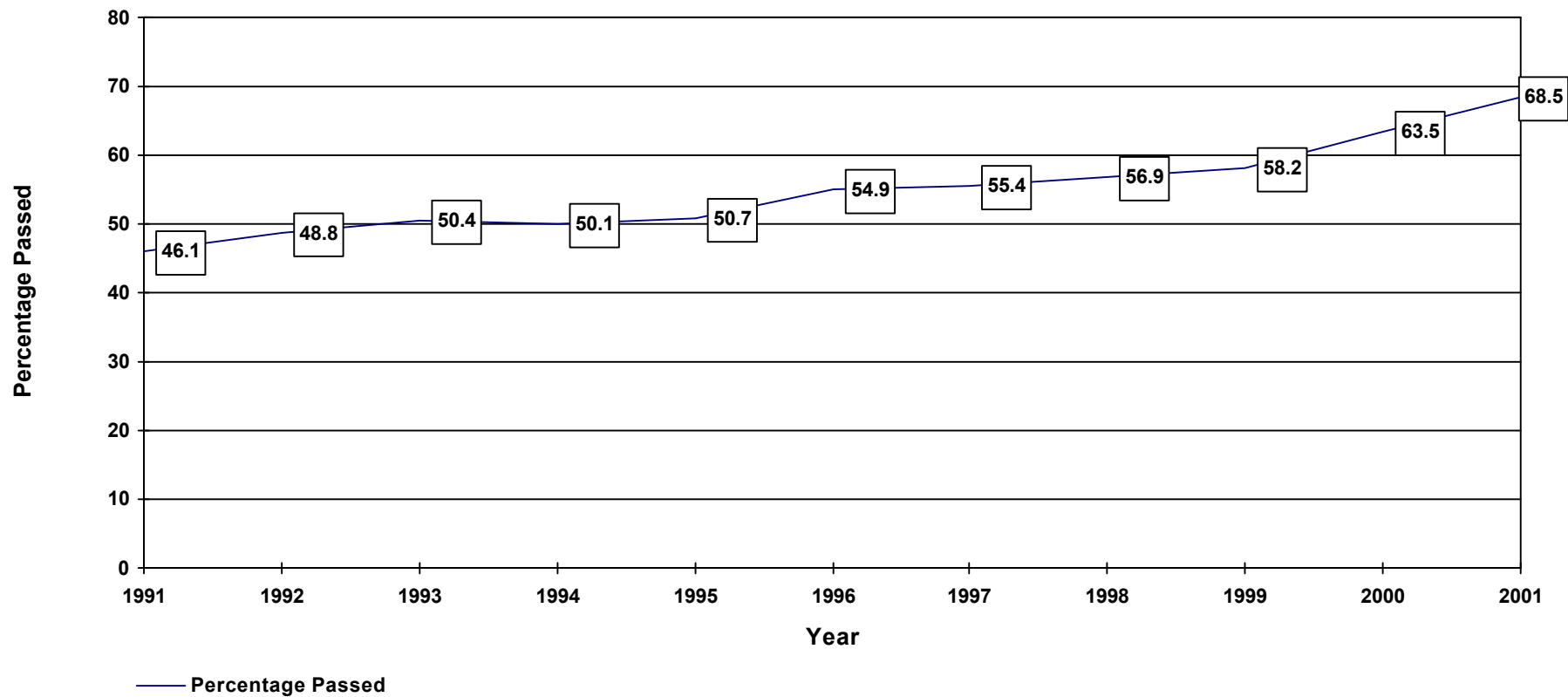
Sub-Officers' Practical Test 1991 to 2001

TABLE I



Sub-Officers' Practical Test 1991 to 2001

TABLE II



Results in Test as a Whole

Table I shows the results in the test as a whole.

TABLE I

	2001		2000		1999		1998		1997		1996		1995		1994		1993		1992		1991	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Passed	317	68.5	428	63.5	590	58.2	576	56.9	520	55.4	463	54.9	433	50.7	429	50.1	540	50.4	506	48.8	519	46.1
Failed	146	31.5	246	36.5	424	41.8	436	43.1	418	44.6	380	45.1	421	49.3	428	49.9	531	49.6	530	51.2	606	53.9
TOTAL	463		674		1014		1012		938		843		854		857		1071		1036		1125	

Performance in each Section

Table II shows the distribution of candidates by section and their performance in the 2001 test.

Table II

Section	Subject	Passed		Failed		Total
		No	%	No	%	No
A	The conduct of one composite drill	405	87.5	58	12.5	463
B	Fireground procedure: taking charge of the situation and controlling the exercise	381	82.5	81	17.5	462
C	An instructional talk on a specific fire risk within the candidate's brigade area	385	83.2	78	16.8	463



Fire Services Examinations Board

Qualifying Examination for Promotion to the Rank of Sub-Officer 2001 Practical Test

FULL STATISTICAL REPORT

ANALYSIS OF ENTRIES BY AGE GROUP

The following table shows the distribution of candidates by age and their performance in the above examination.

Table I

Age Group	Passed		Failed		Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
	No	%	No	%	No	No	
Up To 20 Years	0		0		0	0	0.00
20 To 24	6	66.67	3	33.33	9	9	1.80
25 To 29	69	69.00	31	31.00	100	103	20.64
30 To 34	154	72.30	59	27.70	213	224	44.89
35 To 39	67	66.34	34	33.66	101	117	23.45
40 To 44	17	51.52	16	48.48	33	36	7.21
45 To 49	3	50.00	3	50.00	6	9	1.80
50 +	1	100.00	0	0.00	1	1	0.20
TOTALS:	317	68.47	146	31.53	463	499	100.00

ANALYSIS OF ENTRIES BY RANK

The following table shows the distribution of candidates by rank and their performance in the above examination.

Table II

Rank	Passed		Failed		Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
	No	%	No	%	No	No	
Firefighter	210	67.74	100	32.26	310	333	66.73
Leading Firefighter	107	69.93	46	30.07	153	166	33.27
TOTALS:	317	68.47	146	31.53	463	499	100.00

ANALYSIS OF ENTRIES BY GENDER

The following table shows the distribution of candidates by gender and their performance in the above examination.

Table III

Gender	Passed		Failed		Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
	No	%	No	%	No	No	
Female	6	66.67	3	33.33	9	9	1.80
Male	311	68.50	143	31.50	454	490	98.20
TOTALS:	317	68.47	146	31.53	463	499	100.00

ANALYSIS OF ENTRIES BY LENGTH OF SERVICE

The following table shows the distribution of candidates by length of service and their performance in the above examination.

Table IV

Length of Service Years	Passed		Failed		Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
	No	%	No	%	No	No	
0	0		0		0	0	0.00
1	1	100.00	0	0.00	1	1	0.20
2	25	73.53	9	26.47	34	35	7.01
3	53	82.81	11	17.19	64	66	13.23
4	38	65.52	20	34.48	58	61	12.22
5	31	67.39	15	32.61	46	48	9.62
6	29	64.44	16	35.56	45	47	9.42
7	24	66.67	12	33.33	36	41	8.22
8	19	57.58	14	42.42	33	36	7.21
9	18	69.23	8	30.77	26	27	5.41
10	13	59.09	9	40.91	22	24	4.81
11	10	83.33	2	16.67	12	14	2.81
12	18	81.82	4	18.18	22	24	4.81
13	5	55.56	4	44.44	9	11	2.20
14	5	55.56	4	44.44	9	9	1.80
15	9	81.82	2	18.18	11	13	2.61
16	2	40.00	3	60.00	5	5	1.00
17	5	50.00	5	50.00	10	12	2.40
18	3	100.00	0	0.00	3	3	0.60
19	1	20.00	4	80.00	5	6	1.20
20	0		0		0	0	0.00
21	3	60.00	2	40.00	5	5	1.00
22	0		0		0	4	0.80
23	3	100.00	0	0.00	3	3	0.60
24	2	100.00	0	0.00	2	2	0.40
25	0	0.00	1	100.00	1	1	0.20
26	0	0.00	1	100.00	1	1	0.20
TOTALS:	317	68.47	146	31.53	463	499	100.00

ANALYSIS OF ENTRIES BY ETHNIC ORIGIN

The following table shows the distribution of candidates by ethnic origin and their performance in the above examination.

Table V

Ethnic Origin	Passed		Failed		Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
	No	%	No	%	No	No	
Black-Caribbean	2	50.00	2	50.00	4	4	0.80
Declined To Say	6	46.15	7	53.85	13	15	3.01
Indian	3	100.00	0	0.00	3	3	0.60
Other	1	100.00	0	0.00	1	1	0.20
White	305	69.00	137	31.00	442	476	95.39
TOTALS:	317	68.47	146	31.53	463	499	100.00

ANALYSIS OF ENTRIES BY BRIGADE

The following table shows the cumulative results achieved in each brigade (grouped in local examination boards).

Table VI

Board	Brigade	Passed		Failed		Absentees	Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
		No	%	No	%	No	No	No	
A	Cleveland	2	100.00	0	0.00	0	2	2	0.40
A	Durham & Darlington	7	100.00	0	0.00	1	7	8	1.60
A	Northumberland	4	80.00	1	20.00	0	5	5	1.00
A	Tyne & Wear	6	75.00	2	25.00	0	8	8	1.60
	Sub-Totals:	19	86.36	3	13.64	1	22	23	4.61
B	Humberside	7	70.00	3	30.00	0	10	10	2.00
B	North Yorkshire	4	100.00	0	0.00	0	4	4	0.80
B	South Yorkshire	11	84.62	2	15.38	0	13	13	2.61
B	West Yorkshire	5	62.50	3	37.50	1	8	9	1.80
	Sub-Totals:	27	77.14	8	22.86	1	35	36	7.21
C	Cumbria	6	54.55	5	45.45	0	11	11	2.20
C	Greater Manchester	14	40.00	21	60.00	1	35	36	7.21
C	Lancashire	7	77.78	2	22.22	3	9	12	2.40
	Sub-Totals:	27	49.09	28	50.91	4	55	59	11.82
D	Cheshire	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	3	3	0.60
D	Isle of Man	0	0.00	2	100.00	0	2	2	0.40
D	Merseyside	8	61.54	5	38.46	0	13	13	2.61
	Sub-Totals:	10	55.56	8	44.44	0	18	18	3.61
E	Shropshire	3	60.00	2	40.00	0	5	5	1.00
E	Staffordshire	5	55.56	4	44.44	3	9	12	2.40
E	Warwickshire	4	100.00	0	0.00	2	4	6	1.20
E	West Midlands	14	48.28	15	51.72	4	29	33	6.61
E	Hereford and Worcs	1	25.00	3	75.00	1	4	5	1.00
	Sub-Totals:	27	52.94	24	47.06	10	51	61	12.22
F	Derbyshire	2	100.00	0	0.00	0	2	2	0.40
F	Leicestershire	6	85.71	1	14.29	0	7	7	1.40
F	Nottinghamshire	4	80.00	1	20.00	0	5	5	1.00
	Sub-Totals:	12	85.71	2	14.29	0	14	14	2.81
G	Cambridgeshire	7	77.78	2	22.22	0	9	9	1.80
G	Lincolnshire	3	60.00	2	40.00	0	5	5	1.00
G	Norfolk	6	100.00	0	0.00	0	6	6	1.20
	Sub-Totals:	16	80.00	4	20.00	0	20	20	4.01
H	Bedfordshire & Luton	1	50.00	1	50.00	1	2	3	0.60
H	Northamptonshire	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	3	3	0.60
H	Oxfordshire	2	50.00	2	50.00	0	4	4	0.80
	Sub-Totals:	5	55.56	4	44.44	1	9	10	2.00
I	Essex	3	27.27	8	72.73	1	11	12	2.40
I	Hertfordshire	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	3	3	0.60
I	Suffolk	2	50.00	2	50.00	0	4	4	0.80
	Sub-Totals:	7	38.89	11	61.11	1	18	19	3.81
J	London	37	68.52	17	31.48	8	54	62	12.42
	Sub-Totals:	37	68.52	17	31.48	8	54	62	12.42
K	East Sussex	5	71.43	2	28.57	0	7	7	1.40
K	Kent	7	63.64	4	36.36	2	11	13	2.61
K	Surrey	4	100.00	0	0.00	0	4	4	0.80

Board	Brigade	Passed		Failed		Absentees	Total Sat	Total Entered	% of Grand Total
		No	%	No	%	No	No	No	
K	West Sussex	4	66.67	2	33.33	0	6	6	1.20
Sub-Totals:		20	71.43	8	28.57	2	28	30	6.01
L	Berkshire	2	40.00	3	60.00	1	5	6	1.20
L	Buckinghamshire	4	80.00	1	20.00	0	5	5	1.00
L	Hampshire	4	66.67	2	33.33	0	6	6	1.20
L	Isle of Wight	0		0		0	0	0	0.00
Sub-Totals:		10	62.50	6	37.50	1	16	17	3.41
M	Cornwall	4	100.00	0	0.00	0	4	4	0.80
M	Devon	14	93.33	1	6.67	0	15	15	3.01
Sub-Totals:		18	94.74	1	5.26	0	19	19	3.81
N	Dorset	1	100.00	0	0.00	0	1	1	0.20
N	Somerset	1	100.00	0	0.00	0	1	1	0.20
N	Wiltshire	4	100.00	0	0.00	0	4	4	0.80
Sub-Totals:		6	100.00	0	0.00	0	6	6	1.20
O	Avon	3	75.00	1	25.00	0	4	4	0.80
O	Gloucestershire	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	3	3	0.60
Sub-Totals:		5	71.43	2	28.57	0	7	7	1.40
P	Mid & West Wales	7	87.50	1	12.50	2	8	10	2.00
P	North Wales	7	77.78	2	22.22	1	9	10	2.00
P	South Wales	7	87.50	1	12.50	0	8	8	1.60
Sub-Totals:		21	84.00	4	16.00	3	25	28	5.61
Q	Strathclyde	23	85.19	4	14.81	1	27	28	5.61
Sub-Totals:		23	85.19	4	14.81	1	27	28	5.61
R	Fife	2	50.00	2	50.00	0	4	4	0.80
R	Grampian	1	100.00	0	0.00	0	1	1	0.20
R	Highlands and Islands	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	3	3	0.60
R	Tayside	6	54.55	5	45.45	0	11	11	2.20
Sub-Totals:		11	57.89	8	42.11	0	19	19	3.81
S	Central Scotland	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	3	3	0.60
S	Dumfries & Galloway	1	100.00	0	0.00	0	1	1	0.20
S	Lothian and Borders	9	81.82	2	18.18	2	11	13	2.61
Sub-Totals:		12	80.00	3	20.00	2	15	17	3.41
T	Northern Ireland	4	80.00	1	20.00	1	5	6	1.20
Sub-Totals:		4	80.00	1	20.00	1	5	6	1.20
U	Guernsey	0		0		0	0	0	0.00
U	Jersey	0		0		0	0	0	0.00
Sub-Totals:		0		0		0	0	0	0.00
TOTALS:		317	68.47	146	31.53	36	463	499	100.00

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