

Firework injuries in children

Analysis of COBIS Firework injury audit data

Background

2 Categories of fireworks

(1) In this Act—

- “category F1 firework” means a firework which presents a very low hazard and negligible noise level and which is intended for use in confined areas, including a firework which is intended for use inside domestic buildings,
- “category F2 firework” means a firework which presents a low hazard and low noise level and which is intended for outdoor use in confined areas,
- “category F3 firework” means a firework which presents a medium hazard, which is intended for outdoor use in large open areas and whose noise level is not harmful to human health,
- “category F4 firework” means a firework which presents a high hazard, which is intended for use only by persons with specialist knowledge and whose noise level is not harmful to human health.

21 Prohibition on providing fireworks or pyrotechnic articles to children

(1) It is an offence for a person to knowingly—

- (a) buy or attempt to buy a firework or other pyrotechnic article to which this section applies for a person under the age of 18, or
- (b) give or otherwise make available a firework or other pyrotechnic article to which this section applies to a person under the age of 18.

(2) A person who commits an offence under subsection (1) is liable, on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale (or both).

(3) It is not an offence under subsection (1) for a person to buy or attempt to buy a pyrotechnic article for, or give or otherwise make one available to, a person under the age of 18 if—

- (a) the manufacturer of the pyrotechnic article designed it to be used as a visual distress signal, and
- (b) the person intends that the person under the age of 18 will use the pyrotechnic article only in appropriate circumstances.

(4) This section is subject to section 38 and schedule 1 (exemptions).

Home

Buying fireworks

You can only buy fireworks (including sparklers) from registered sellers for private use on these dates:

- 15 October to 10 November
- 26 to 31 December
- 3 days before Diwali and Chinese New Year

At other times you can only buy fireworks from licensed shops.



You can be fined an unlimited amount and imprisoned for up to 6 months for selling or using fireworks illegally. You could also get an on-the-spot fine of £90.

Firework injuries audit

COBIS Firework injuries audit

- Burn injury data is collected using the Clinical Audit System (CAS), however information on firework injuries is limited.
- Care of Burns in Scotland (COBIS) wanted to identify trends and common themes in firework related injuries.
- The objectives were to create a straightforward survey to determine:
 - the most common type of firework injuries
 - the demographics of those injured
 - identify any linkage with the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

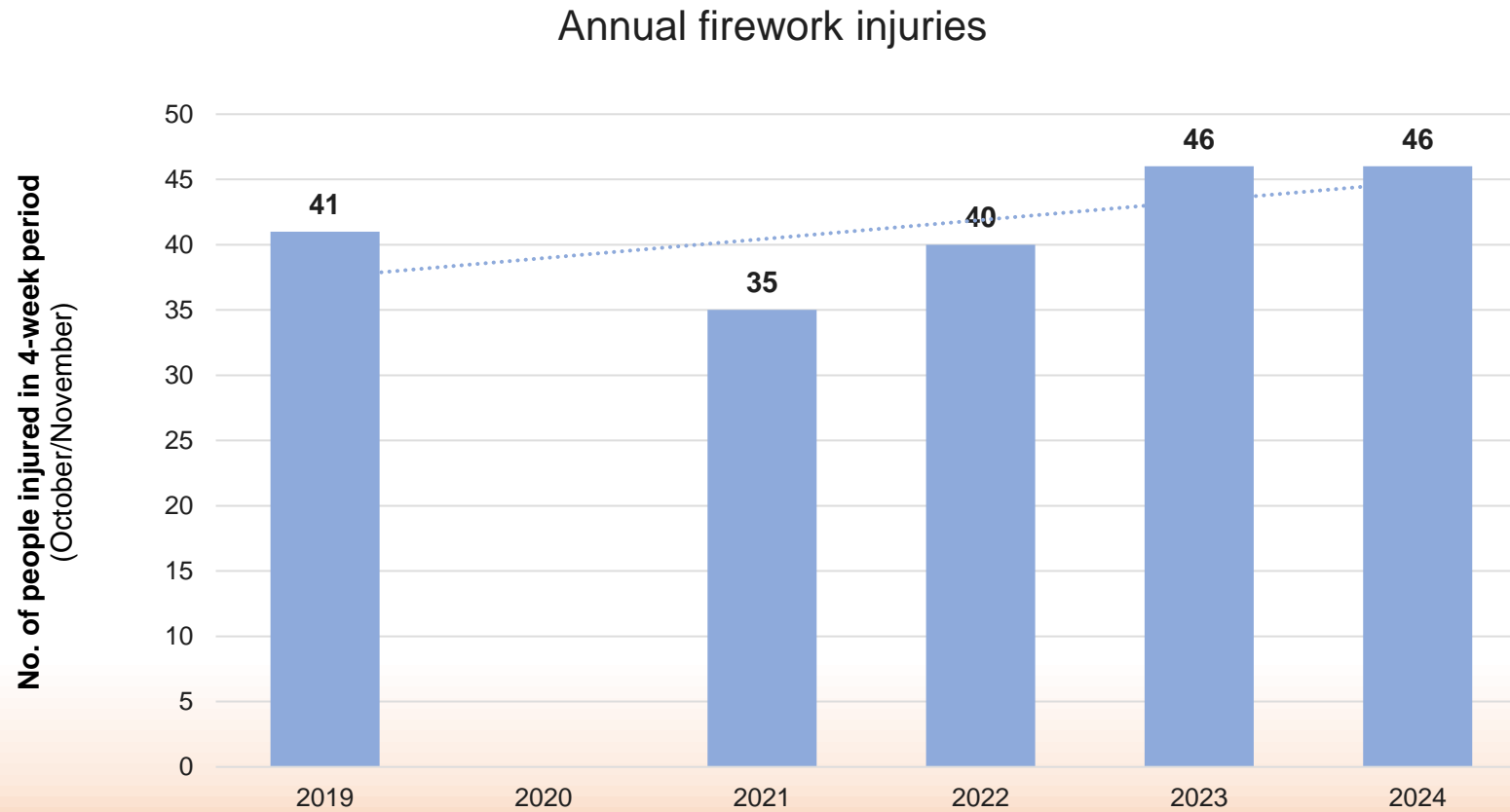
COBIS Firework injuries audit

- COBIS developed an online survey for clinicians to record firework-related injuries, without the need for patient identifiable information (PII).
- Data is captured by Scottish Emergency Departments (EDs) and Minor Injury Units (MIUs) throughout the four weeks around Bonfire Night (5 November).
- A digital survey is used to record the data, accessible via a QR code scanned by clinicians.

A poster for the COBIS Firework injuries audit. It features a colorful illustration of fireworks at the top. The NHS Scotland logo is in the top right corner. The main text reads: 'Please record Scotland's firework injuries from 19 October to 16 November'. Below this, two steps are listed: 'Step 1 Scan the QR code' and 'Step 2 Take 2 minutes to provide details about the injury'. A QR code is positioned to the right of these steps. At the bottom, it states the collection period: 'Sat. 19 October - Sat. 16 November' and mentions that responses will contribute to ongoing work by the Scottish Government to improve firework safety. Logos for 'Care of Burns in Scotland' and 'Safer Scotland' are at the bottom.

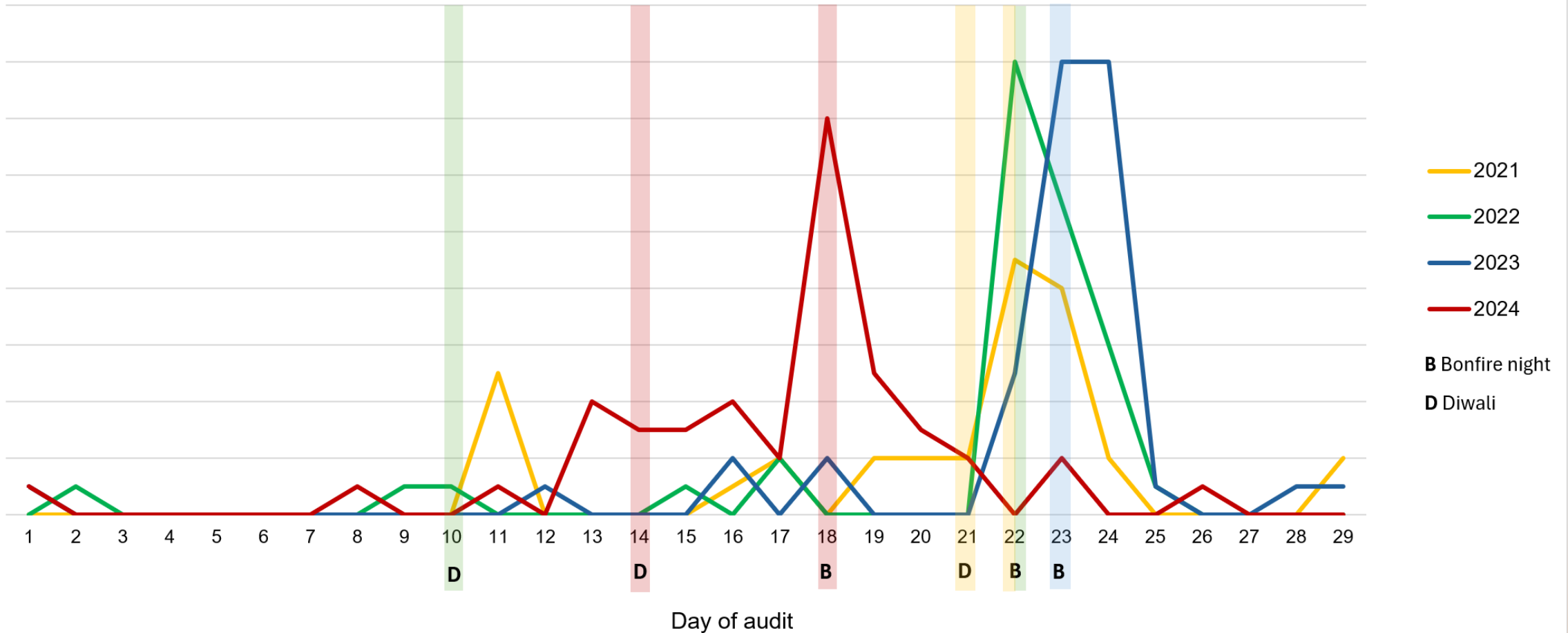
Audit findings (2019-2024)

Audit findings (2019-2024)



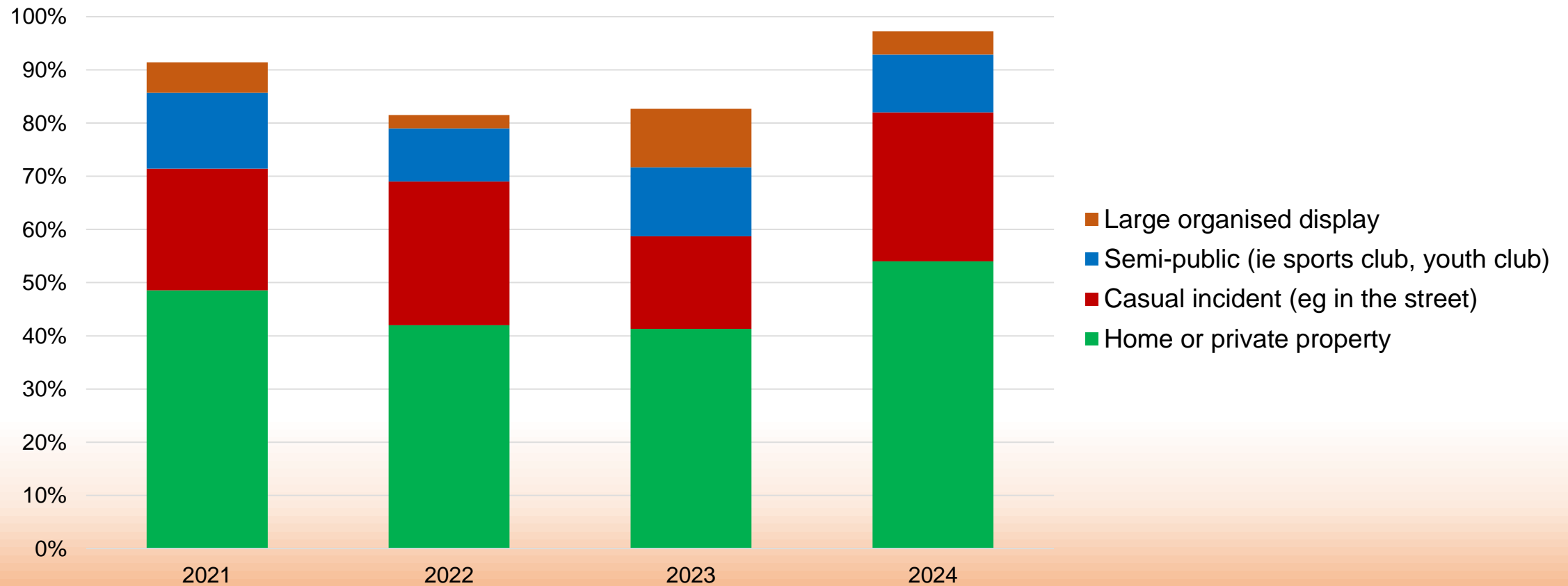
Audit findings (2019-2024)

Trend in firework-related injuries during audit period



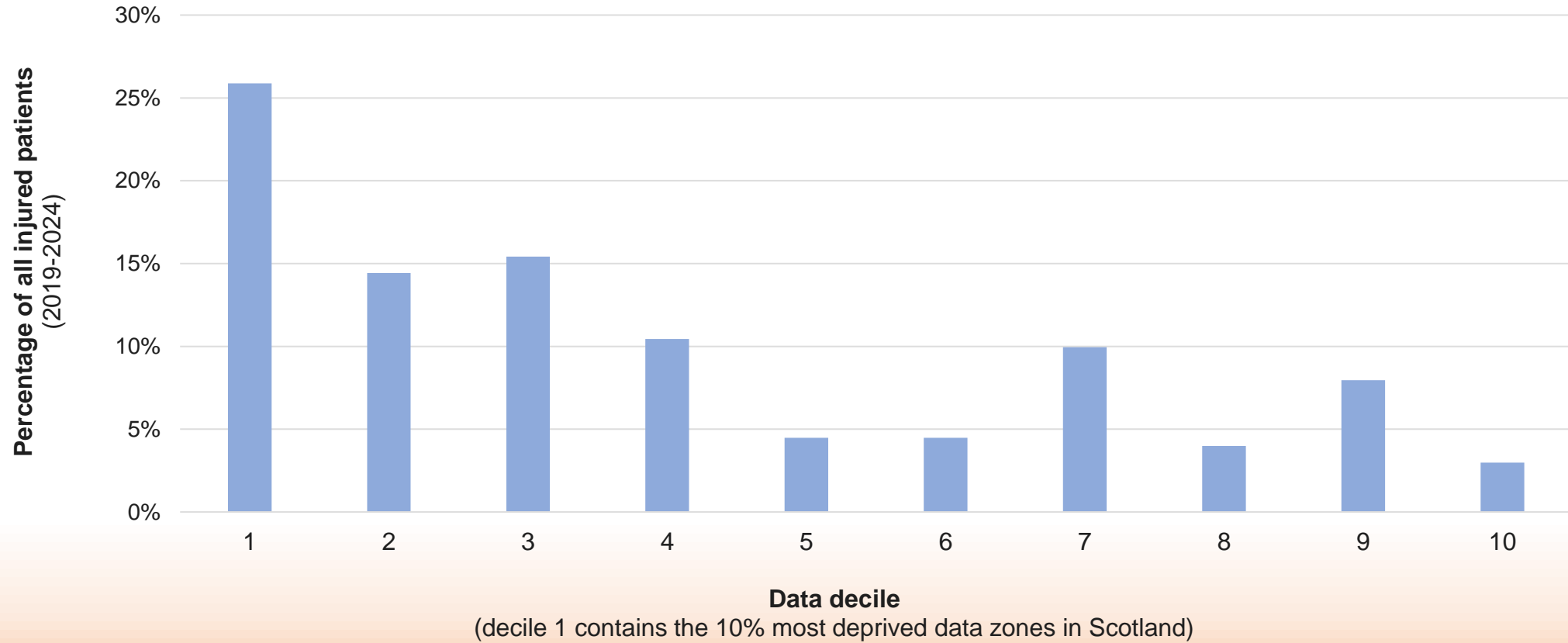
Audit findings (2019-2024)

Where injuries occur

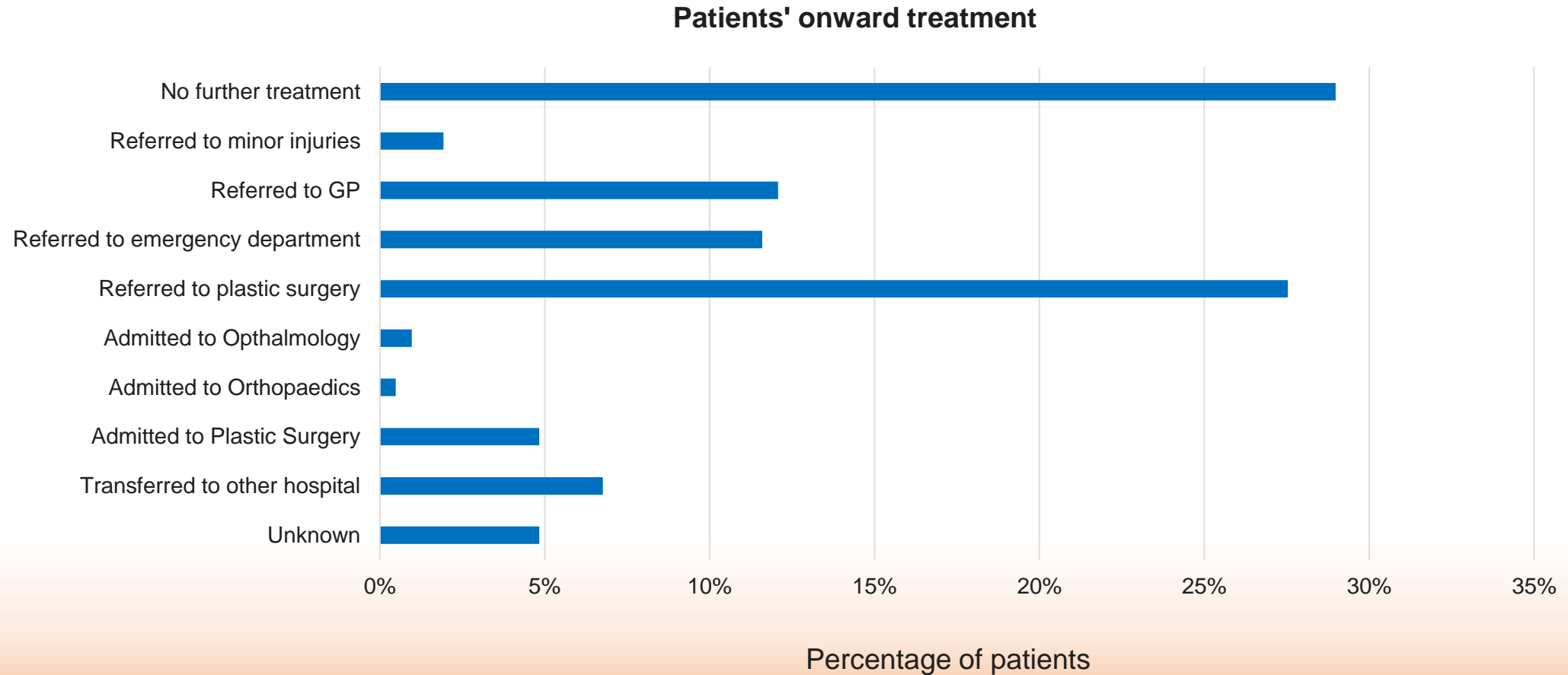


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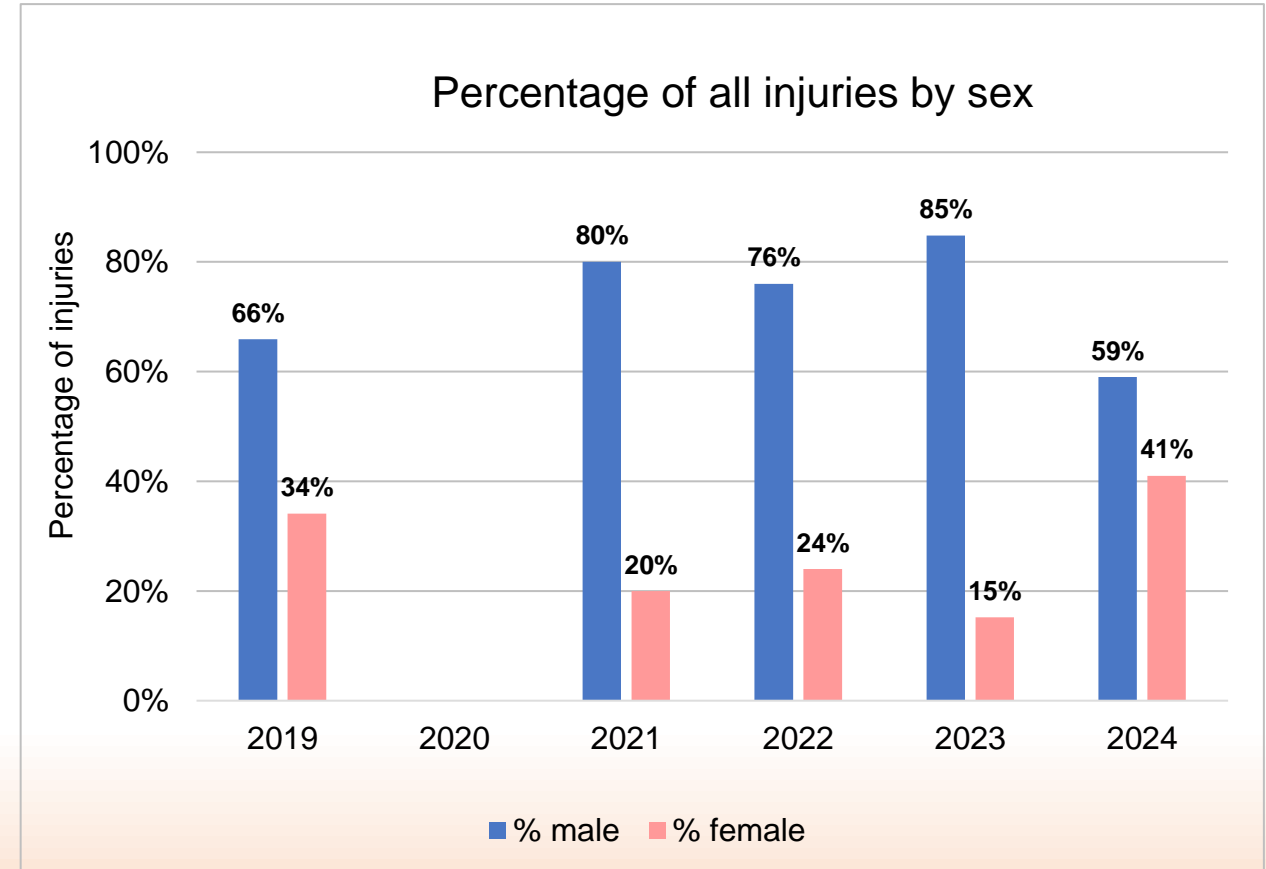
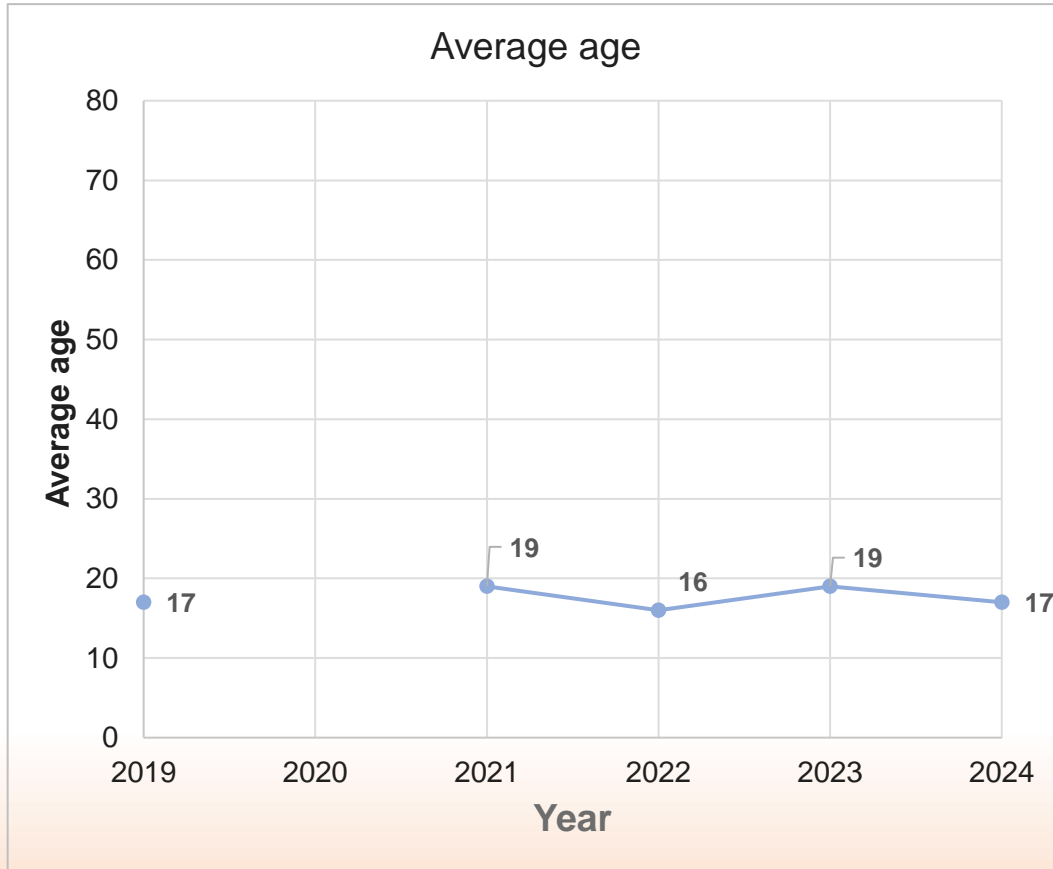
Firework injuries by SIMD



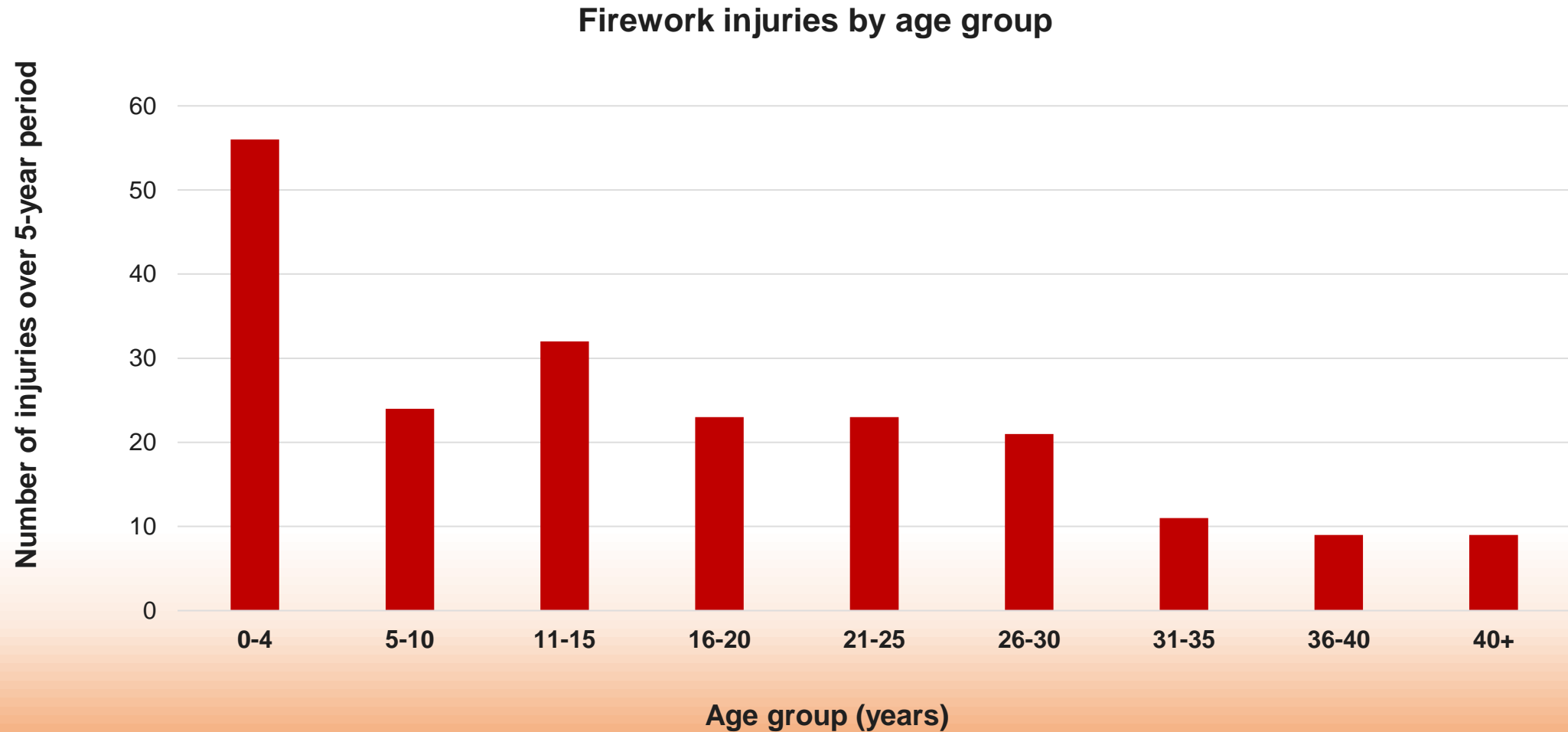
Audit findings (2019-2024)



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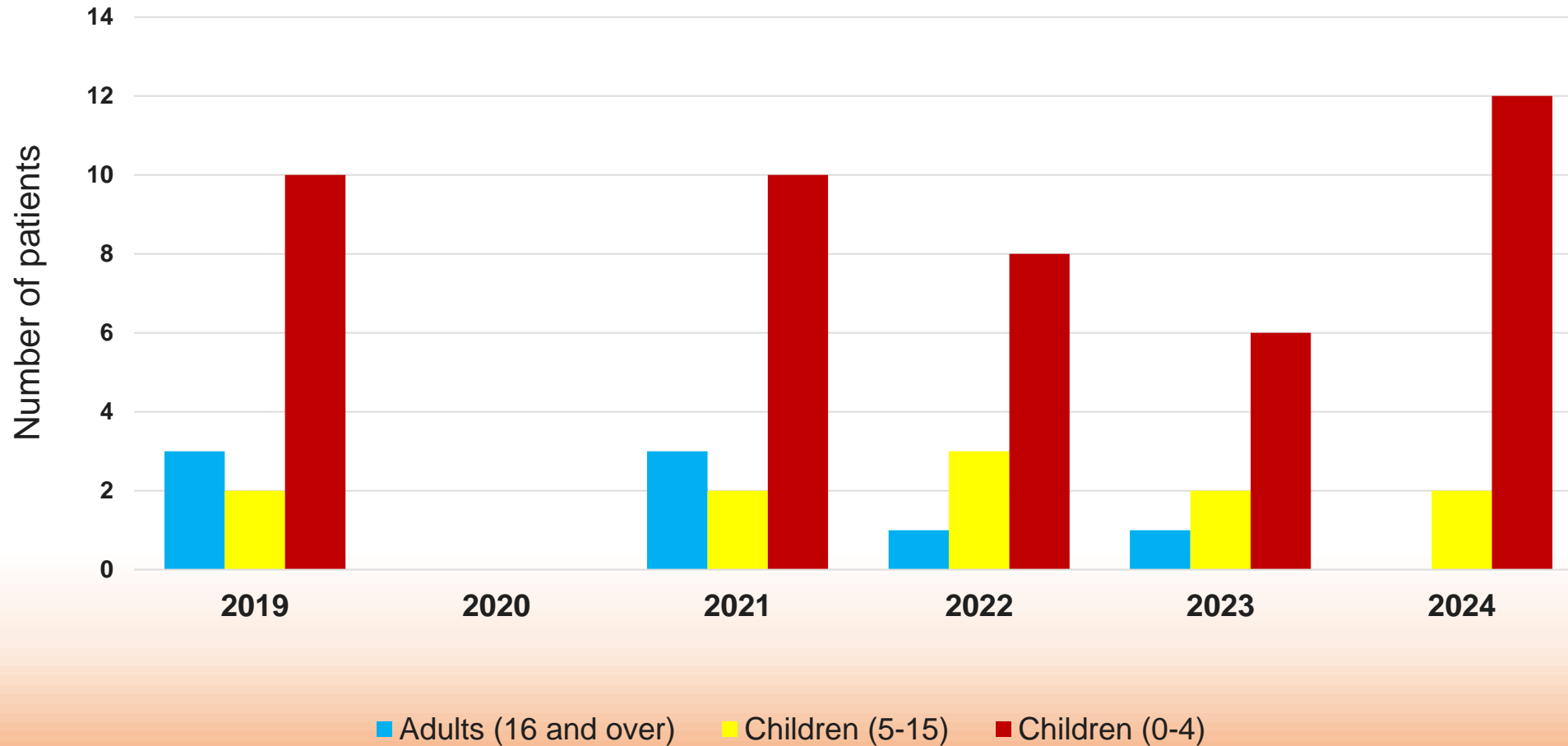


Audit findings (2019-2024)

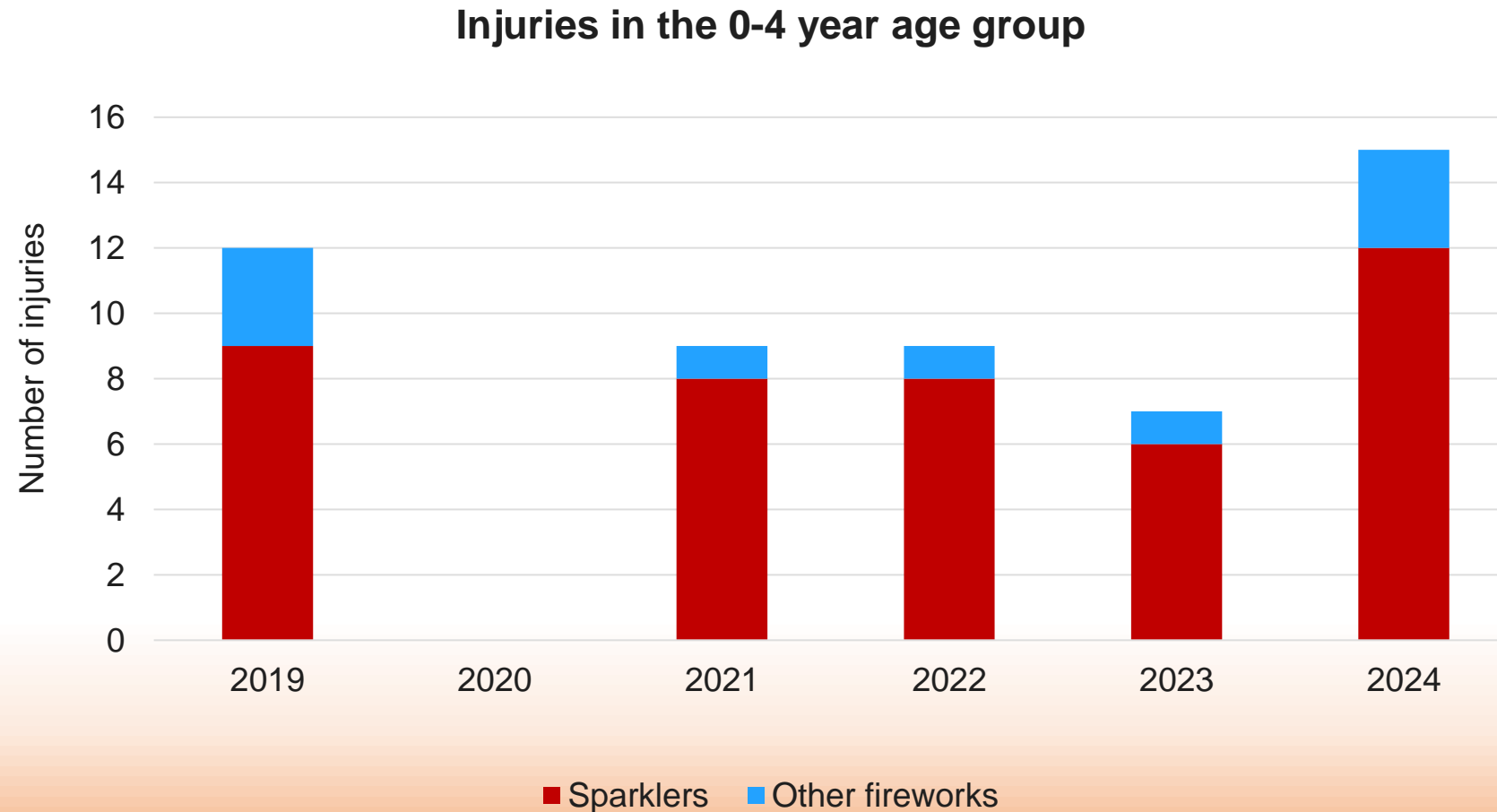


Audit findings (2019-2024)

Sparkler injuries by age during audit



Audit findings (2019-2024)



Final thoughts

Sparklers

- They are classed as F1, the same category as party poppers and Christmas crackers.
- Most common type of firework to injure children aged 0-4 years.
- Sparklers can reach temperatures up to five times hotter than cooking oil.
- Children under 5 should never be given sparklers



How could injuries be reduced?

- Increased awareness in the run-up to Bonfire Night and Diwali
 - Specific campaigns similar to SafeTea... Bright Spark, or “Would you hand your child a boiling kettle? If not don’t give them a sparkler”
- Spreading of safety messages with social media ‘mumfluencers’ eg Stacey Solomon, Giovanna Fletcher
- Standard safety warning on packaging
- Point-of-sale:
 - Verbal warning by staff ie ‘Sparklers shouldn’t be given to children under 5’.
 - Point-of-sale alerts for self-scanners (similar to age-restricted products or pain killers)

Thank you