



## Inspection Outline Service Delivery Area Inspections

*Integrity, objectivity and fairness*

### 1. Introduction

HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI) publishes a Chief Inspector's Plan under the provisions of the *Fire (Scotland) Act 2005*, which sets out Inspectors' priorities for inspection of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS).

The Plan contains a twin approach to inspections. HMFSI will from time to time carry out thematic inspections of issues that have been risk-assessed as being particularly significant. Additionally, HMFSI has a rolling programme of inspections of local fire and rescue service delivery, based on the three SFRS Service Delivery Areas (SDA), North, West and East. This Inspection Outline sets out the reasons for undertaking the SDA programme and the way in which Inspectors go about that work.

By undertaking inspections of SFRS service delivery within the SDA, HMFSI:

- can provide assurance to Scottish Ministers and the public that the SFRS is making adequate provision for local service delivery;
- can take a detailed look at the nature and quality of service provision, including working with partner organisations, within local areas and can draw attention to significant matters and areas of good practice;
- maintains a good level of awareness of the Service's functions and builds a record of information gathered; and
- can gather intelligence that may inform, or cause to be undertaken, more strategic, thematic inspections of the SFRS.

The Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland sets out how Scottish Ministers expect the SFRS to operate and contains strategic priorities for the Service. We take the Framework into consideration when structuring and prioritising our inspection programme.

Our SDA inspections are carried out under the authority of s43B(1) and (3)(c) of the *Fire (Scotland) Act 2005* and aim to examine the manner in which the SFRS is carrying out its function of delivering fire and rescue services within the area in question.

The reporting provisions of s43C of the *Fire (Scotland) Act 2005* require the Chief Inspector to publish a report of any inspection of matters falling within s43B(3)(c). He may also give a copy to Scottish Ministers. The SFRS is required to have regard to any published report and, having had regard to it, to take such action as it thinks fit.

Because the reports of our SDA inspections will generally be relevant to a specific geographic area of the SFRS, we consider that the primary audience for the report within the SFRS will be the Deputy Assistant Chief Officer (DACO), who has oversight of the area, and the Local Senior Officers (LSOs), who manage service delivery within each constituent local authority within the relevant SDA. We would expect that the DACO and the LSOs will consider the content of the report as it affects their area and will arrange for any necessary action in response to it – including engagement with the

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relevant local authority and other local partner bodies. We think that it is reasonable to expect that the LSOs will formally discuss our report with their local partner bodies.

There may be occasions when our SDA inspection will highlight broader issues that are nationally significant. When we do so, we will make it clear within the report that it is a national issue. By arrangement with the SFRS, scrutiny of national issues highlighted in our reports is carried out by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee of the Board.

## 2. Areas of interest

Our SDA area inspections are intended to be tied to the priorities defined within the Fire and Rescue Framework and also aligned to the Service's own Strategic Plan and other relevant SFRS strategies. For this reason we have adopted an approach to inspection work which aligns with the strategic priorities in the Framework which cover:

- Prevention and Protection
- Response
- Innovation and Modernisation
- Climate Change
- Effective Governance and Performance
- People
- Partnership

We will consider these Framework areas under our own theme headings of Prevention and Protection; Response; Partnership; and People.

When we come to prepare our report it will be set out so as to give a judgement on the effectiveness of the SFRS in carrying out its functions.

## 3. Who we would like to talk to and documents we would like to review

In carrying out our SDA inspections it is our aim, broadly speaking, to look at the same issues in each area we visit. This provides a measure of transparency about what it is we intend to look at, and at the same time makes it possible for our reports on different LSO areas to be broadly compared, taking account of the differences that exist between LSO areas. While we may choose to look more closely at a particular issue if it appears to be of special significance in a given locality, in general we will carry out our inspection using the following methodology.

- Review and comment on local fire and rescue plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) for the local authority area in question (to the extent that the LOIP is relevant to the work of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service).
- Obtain current year and trend line data for performance indicators and targets.

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- Meeting with LSOs, to cover general background and issues relating to the local plan;
- Meeting with relevant managerial and front-line staff working in the Prevention and Protection, Response, and other business areas as required to obtain a comprehensive picture of SFRS service delivery in the area.
- Station visits in the area: we will visit a representative sample of fire stations in each LSO area. We will not only look at the state of the buildings and equipment, and the integrity of records kept locally, but will also wish to meet with as many members of staff as practicable. We will discuss with them a list of issues which will include general satisfaction with the services provided by them, management support, training and development opportunities, and understanding and availability of information about risk within the area.
- Meet with representatives of the local Community Planning Partnership at strategic and operational levels.
- Understand local scrutiny arrangements and meet with representatives of the local scrutiny committee (to include elected representatives) as nominated by the local authority.

## 4. Timetable

The outline timetable for a Service Delivery Area Inspection is as follows. An inspection should be completed inside 12 months, with publication of a report in month 12.

2 months before start	Notify DACO, LSOs and local authorities of our intention to inspect the area
Month 1	Pre-planning of the inspection including planning of interviews and visits
Month 1	Inspection team request for documents and data
Months 2 - 9	Inspection team on-site visits and review of documents and data
Month 10/11	Report drafting and consultation
Month 11/12	Report submission to SFRS/publication

## 5. The inspection team

The inspection team members are drawn from HMFSI's permanent staff and secondees from the SFRS. We will avoid a situation arising where a secondee is inspecting service delivery in an area for which they are directly responsible in their role in the SFRS. Whether a member of the inspection team or not, the Chief Inspector takes sole responsibility for the inspection report, its contents and conclusions.

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HMFSI's service delivery inspection work is reviewed for quality assurance. A peer reviewer will be selected as appropriate.

## 6. Responding to this inspection outline document

This inspection outline document has been prepared to describe why we are carrying out an inspection and how we will go about the work. It is also intended to support our consultation with Ministers, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, management team and representative bodies. If you wish to make any comments or observations, these should be submitted to the Chief Inspector by emailing [HMFSI@gov.scot](mailto:HMFSI@gov.scot)

The team members can also provide clarification on any of the content and can be contacted through the same email address.