



HM Fire Service Inspectorate

Annual Report 2019/20

HM Chief Inspector Simon Routh-Jones QFSM



Integrity, Objectivity, and Fairness.

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To Contact Us

Telephone +44 (0) 131 244 3275

Email HMFSI@gov.scot

Website www.gov.scot/fireinspectorate

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HM Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland



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Simon Routh-Jones QFSM
Chief Inspector of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Introduction

It gives me pleasure to present my 2019-20 Annual Report which looks at our current inspection programme and reflects on work which has concluded within the past 12 months.

What we do

HM Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland (HMFSI) exists to provide independent, risk-based and proportionate professional inspection of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). Its purpose is to give assurance to the Scottish public and Scottish Ministers that the SFRS is working in an efficient and effective way, and to promote improvement in the SFRS. We also provide independent, professional advice to Scottish Ministers and have functions in relation to non-domestic fire safety.

Although our work is self-determined by the Inspectorate's Chief Inspector, if necessary, we can be directed by Scottish Ministers to look into anything relating to the SFRS as they consider appropriate.

Our values are, Integrity, Objectivity and Fairness

Our guiding principles are that our Inspection Work is proportionate, accountable and transparent. There is a complementary relationship between the Inspectorate and Audit Scotland and with other Inspectorates and Agencies across the public sector to share specific expertise, or jointly examine important areas where SFRS works in partnership and contributes to shared outcomes. We co-ordinate our activities to reduce the burden of inspection and avoid unnecessary duplication. Through our inspection work of the SFRS we offer professional challenge, highlight positive practice and make recommendations to support improvement of the Service.

In the normal course of our work we carry out two types of inspections.

Local Area Inspections

These Local Area Inspections (LAIs) look at the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service delivery within the local areas and how the Service collaborates with external organisations.

Following the inspection and the publication of the Report, together with any recommendations, HMFSI carry out a programme of 6 monthly follow-up reviews. The purpose of this is to establish that suitable progress is being made by SFRS on the recommendations within the inspection report.

Thematic Inspections

Thematic Reviews relate to a more comprehensive inspection focusing on specific themes across the whole of Scotland.

They identify areas for development and provide a mechanism for addressing such areas, support and enhance the Service's learning experience and make recommendations on areas of improvement and good practice. These Reports are laid before Parliament.

A structured follow up approach, similar to the LAIs reviews, has now been introduced for this type of Inspection. The timescale will vary and be influenced by the complexity of a report's recommendations.

Programme of 2018-19 Local Area Inspections

We continue to carry out our programme of inspection of SFRS local service delivery across local authority areas of Scotland.

We undertook and completed during 2018-19 the following Local Area Inspections.

❖ North Lanarkshire	published August 2019
❖ Dumfries and Galloway	published February 2020

During these recent inspections it is noted that issues, similar to those identified in previous LAIs continue to be raised, and HMFSI are in discussion with SFRS to ascertain how they should be addressed. It is recognised that these issues, although similar in nature, affect different areas across Scotland and need a differing solution resulting in significant challenges to the Service.

Programme of 2018-19 Thematic Inspections

During 2018-2019 HMFSI undertook and completed the following Thematic Inspections.

❖ Operational Risk Information	published February 2019
❖ The Management of Fleet Arrangements	published May 2019

The Operational Risk Information Review focused on aspects of how the SFRS fulfils its duty to make arrangements for obtaining operational risk information related to its functions, and making this information available to its operational staff. This is important to assist with incident command and the operation of a safe systems of work.

In the Report, HMFSI made 3 recommendations and a follow up review with SFRS to discuss progress on these recommendations will take place in March 2020.

The Review on the Service's management of their fleet was to assess 'the effectiveness and efficiency of the Governance, Procurement, Management, Delivery, Maintenance and Disposal of the SFRS's vehicle fleet'.

In the 4 main areas below we made a number of recommendations within the Report.

- Vehicle management strategy
- Procurement of vehicles and equipment
- The role and operation of the workshop function
- End Users – fire station and specialist staff

All our reports can be accessed via our website www.gov.scot/fireinspectorate

The inspection of 'The Training of Retained Duty System Personnel' which was initially programmed within the Business Plan 2017-18, was suspended, as the SFRS undertook a review of Operational Training throughout the whole Service. Following the completion of that review, it was agreed that HMFSI would recommence our Inspection which resumed in 2019. It is anticipated that this report will be laid in Parliament in March 2020.

The Outline for this Inspection was to review the efficiency and effectiveness of RDS training systems and consider any potential risk to the Service.

Programme of 2019-20 Local Area Inspections

❖ City of Edinburgh

It will be noted that during the programme for 2019-20 only one local area inspection was undertaken. This was due to the need to undertake the thematic reviews which are detailed below, together with the recommencement of the RDS training review in 2019-20, following the SFRS undertaking its own review of Operational Training throughout the whole of the Service.

For this reason the LAI for Edinburgh City programmed for 2018-19 was postponed due to these other competing priorities. The review commenced in October 2019 and the fieldwork is currently being undertaken during January 2020. It is anticipated that the report will be published in May 2020.

Current Programme of Thematic Inspections

- ❖ Command and Control in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- ❖ Assessing the Effectiveness of scrutiny activity of the SFRS

In addition to the work programme for 2020-21 the above mentioned Thematic Reviews: 'Command and Control', and 'Assessing the Effectiveness of scrutiny activity of the SFRS' are also being undertaken.

Command and Control in the SFRS

This thematic review was added to the programme due to areas of concern raised within the recent LAIs and other National issues, borne out of our inspection programme.

Assessing the Effectiveness of scrutiny activity of the SFRS

By undertaking this review, we will be able to examine the manner in which the SFRS implements our thematic inspection report recommendations and any national issues arising out of Local Area Inspection reports.

By undertaking this Thematic Review it will improve our understanding of the benefit and impacts of our inspection work and may highlight ways in how we conduct and monitor our inspection activity, together with the assurance that recommendations within previous Reports have been effectively introduced and addressed by SFRS.

Programme of Inspections 2020-21

During the next phase of our Local Area Inspections we intend to undertake inspections in the following areas.

- ❖ **Argyll & Bute**
- ❖ **Fife**
- ❖ **Angus**

My main focus for our phase of Thematic Inspections during 2020-21 is to look at three new areas of interest that continue to contribute to firefighter safety.

- ❖ **Management of Resources – Equipment**
 - ❖ **Health and Safety – an Operational focus**
 - ❖ **Organisational Learning**
 - ❖ **Environmental Protection**
- { Carried out and spread across the
2020-21 & 2021-22 Planning period

Additional Work Undertaken at the request of Scottish Ministers

Road Transportation of Defence Nuclear Materials (DNM)

HMFSI was requested to review the planning and response arrangements relating to this type of activity and make recommendations for improvement where appropriate to do so.

HMFSI agreed to work with colleagues from HMICS, the Scottish Government Health Resilience Unit, SoLACE and other Partners to undertake this piece of work, each considering those parts of the Review appertaining to their areas of responsibility.

HMFSI worked with the Nuclear Resilience Team (NRT) from the SFRS and other stakeholders to secure evidence in order to respond on the Fire and Rescue Service's responsibilities and actions in dealing with such incidents.

The full report was published on Friday 28 June 2019 and is available via the link www.gov.scot/publications/road-transportation-of-defence-nuclear-material-in-scotland-preparedness-review

“No Deal” Brexit - Review of SFRS Plans and Preparedness

HMFSI was asked to carry out a reassurance exercise in February 2019 on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's plans and preparedness for a 'No Deal' Brexit.

At that time, HMFSI was able to give assurance that it believed there was good evidence to support the SFRS strategic planning assumptions and necessary mitigation that will enable the Service to deliver its statutory duties.

However, with the ongoing uncertainty as to Brexit implement date and criteria in the lead up to 31 October, it was requested that HMFSI undertook a further, update review. This was a 'light touch review' of the Service's currents plans to deal with any additional concurrent operational risks.

HMFSI met with Officers from the Service again in mid-October 2019 to discuss their European Union Exit – Event Concurrency Analysis Matrix. The Matrix was created to fully assess reasonably foreseeable events weighted against current mitigation policies, procedures and protocols available to SFRS. Once again HMFSI were able to give assurance at that time that suitable plans were in place to deal with the eventualities.

This review will be revisited again towards the end of 2020, in case there are any further changes of circumstances and to give reassurance on the suitability of the SFRS plan.

UN Climate Change Conference COP26

HMFSI has been asked to carry out a reassurance exercise in autumn 2020 on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's plans and preparedness for the COP26 Climate Change Conference.

This review will follow similar lines to that of the Brexit review, in order to give assurance that there is good evidence to support the SFRS strategic planning to deal with the event and manage any foreseeable issues which will arise from the Conference and at the same time deliver its statutory duties.

Northern Ireland

By agreement between the Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Administration, the Chief Inspector provides professional advice and assistance to officials in Department of Health and Public Safety and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service on a wide range of fire and rescue matters.



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HM Fire Service Inspectorate
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

APS Group Scotland
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