



# Inspection Outline

## **Inspection of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's Management of its Operational and Protective Equipment**

Inspectors within HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI) have the scrutiny powers specified in section 43B of The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005. These include inquiring into the state and efficiency of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), its compliance with its duty to secure Best Value, and the manner in which it is carrying out its functions.

HMFSI is a Public Body that operates within, but independently of, the Scottish Government.

Our approach is to support the SFRS to deliver services that are high quality, continually improving, effective and responsive to local needs.

### **Terms of Reference and the purpose of this inspection**

This Inspection Outline sets out the Terms of Reference in respect of a Thematic Inspection into the SFRS's management of its operational and protective equipment, primarily that used in rescue and firefighting. However, as our inspection fieldwork develops we may wish to include other related specialist equipment.

An inquiry by the Inspectorate can be self-directed or can be subject to direction by Scottish Ministers. This inquiry into the SFRS is self-directed by the Chief Inspector. The decision to carry out this inspection was influenced by our findings in previous inspections, the attention that Audit Scotland paid to this issue in its Best Value Report of 2012<sup>1</sup>, and the challenges currently facing the SFRS.

In addition, the purchase and management of its operational and protective equipment is a significant financial investment for the Service and it is therefore important that there is thorough scrutiny within this area.

The aim of this inspection is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Service's governance, procurement policy, asset management, training, routine testing, maintenance and disposal of its operational and protective equipment. In other words an 'inception to disposal' approach to the management of operational and protective equipment within the SFRS.

It will in particular consider in detail the processes which the SFRS applies to:

- The design of and implementation of the operational and protective equipment Management Strategy
- The relationship between equipment manufacturers, suppliers and the SFRS's management strategy
- The rationale for the choice of the overall package in the procurement of equipment
- The role and operation of research and development within the overall process
- 'End User' experience and engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> Best Value in fire and rescue services in Scotland (Overview report)

[www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/best\\_value/2012/bv\\_120719\\_fire\\_overview.pdf](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/best_value/2012/bv_120719_fire_overview.pdf)

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- The repair, replacement and disposal policy of operational and protective equipment
- The asset management process of operational and protective equipment including tracking, repair, maintenance and testing.

### Methodology

When undertaking this inspection, we will follow the same guidelines as those within the Local Area Inspections and previous Thematic Inspection Frameworks. The Inspection Framework will provide a structure to our inspection which will be risk-based, proportionate and focussed on improving the management and maintenance of operational and protective equipment within the SFRS in Scotland. We will structure our inspection around five main functional areas within the Service:

- Operational and protective equipment replacement strategy including R and D
- The procurement process of operational and protective equipment
- Training
- Asset Management, record keeping, testing, maintenance, service and disposal
- End users - fire stations and specialist staff

This inspection will commence with a desktop review of the SFRS's data, procedures and information, requesting information and assistance from the Service to do so. This will be complemented by interviews and site visits. This will include the Director of Finance & Contractual Services, Senior Managers, SFRS staff who have responsibility within the procurement, management and maintenance of operational and protective equipment, end users, the Scottish Government and other relevant stakeholders, including equipment suppliers.

The inspection will be delivered over four stages, some of which will be undertaken concurrently.

SFRS policy, document and data review will commence in \*October 2020 with the fieldwork being undertaken between \*November 2020 and June 2021.

\* above dates are subject to Scottish Government COVID 19 guidelines at the time.

### Stage 1 – Scoping

- Initial engagement with key stakeholders and establishment of single points of contact.
- A review of existing key documents in the management and delivery of the in scope operational and protective equipment within the Service.

### Stage 2 – Fieldwork

The fieldwork phase will focus on Response and Resilience, Procurement, Training & Employee Development, Equipment Workshops, Fire Stations, Health and Safety and areas of risk identified in the initial scoping phase. Specific topics and questions for interviews will be structured around our inspection framework.

It is intended that this fieldwork will be undertaken between the months of \*November 2020 and \*June 2021 and will be undertaken by:

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- ❖ Interviews with Strategic Managers and Directorate specialist staff.
- ❖ Inspection visits to equipment workshops, fire stations and the training and education department.
- ❖ Interviews, where appropriate, with operational support teams, equipment and workshop personnel, corporate staff and end users of their services.
- ❖ Interviews with selected equipment providers
- ❖ Interviews with relevant representatives of the Scottish Government

### Stage 3 – Analysis of Evidence

During this stage, the Inspecting Officers will review and evaluate the information and evidence collected during the inspection, and where necessary expand the area of enquiry to address areas of concern raised.

### Stage 4 - Publication & Reporting

We anticipate publishing a Report of our findings around October to November 2021.

A copy of the Report will be provided to the Board, the Chief Officer and laid before the Scottish Parliament. A copy will also be made publicly available on the HMFSI website.

The Report will outline our methodology and approach, report on our key findings, conclusions, and any recommendations.

The results of our inspection will:

- Provide independent assurance as to the efficiency and effectiveness of the provision, maintenance and management of Operational and Protective Equipment within the SFRS; and
- Highlight areas of good practice and any areas for improvement.

### Timetable

Our proposed timetable is:

October 2020	Data collection & review of key documentation
November 2020 – June 2021	Strategic Managers, Directorate specialist staff interviews and inspection team on-site visits
June 2021 – August 2021	Report drafting and consultation
See above in Stage 4	Report publication

**\* Subject to Scottish Government COVID 19 guidelines at the time**

**The inspection team members will comprise of HMFSI staff, together with other subject matter specialists as required.**

The point of contact for this Thematic Review will be Richard Gorst – Assistant Inspector

## Thematic Inspection Outline – Operational and Protective Equipment

The team's work is reviewed independently for quality assurance.

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 SFRS 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.