



Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 4 – Summary of Evidence Published in 2018



CRIME AND JUSTICE

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**The Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR), What Works
Scotland and ScotCen Social Research**

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Contents

Contents	2
Key points	3
Introduction	3
Reform Aim 1: To protect and improve local services despite financial cuts, by stopping duplication of support services eight times over and not cutting front line services.....	4
Police Scotland	4
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.....	5
Key Point	5
Reform Aim 2: To create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity – like murder investigation teams, firearms teams or flood rescue – where and when they are needed.	5
Police Scotland	5
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.....	6
Key point.....	7
Reform Aim 3: To strengthen the connection between services and communities, by creating a new formal relationship with each of the 32 local authorities, involving many more local councillors and better integrating with community planning partnerships.....	7
Police Scotland	7
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.....	7
Key point.....	8
Additional Emerging Themes	8
Training.....	8
Vulnerability	9
ICT (Information and Communications Technology)	9
The widening role of firefighters	10
Scottish Parliament’s Justice Committee: Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012	10
Bibliography.....	11

Key points

The evidence published in 2018 suggests that both Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) are developing long-term financial planning to progress with transformation in response to continuing budgetary pressures.

Inspectorate reports published in 2018 demonstrate progress is being made towards aim 2 of reform for both Police Scotland and SFRS, and identified areas for ongoing improvement at a local and national level with regards to partnerships and governance arrangements in specialist functions for the police, and location and maintenance of specialist equipment for fire.

The reports published in 2018 suggest that both Police Scotland and SFRS are demonstrating a commitment to partnership working in order to deliver more joined-up services at a time of budgetary pressures.

Looking ahead, the published evidence identifies the continuing need for future learning for Police Scotland around a need to further improve communication with the local community, and for SFRS around more evaluation of the impact of community safety and prevention work.

Other evidence from 2018 has highlighted the continuing work of Police Scotland and SFRS to address issues of vulnerability in the community, improve training, and further improve ICT (Information and Communications Technology) capability.

Introduction

This report provides a summary of evidence referring to police and fire reform in Scotland published during 2018 and that are in the public domain. This forms part of a four year evaluation commissioned by the Scottish Government, examining whether the aims of police and fire reform have been met and considering what lessons might be learnt for any future public service reforms.

This is the fourth Summary of Evidence produced as part of the evaluation and collectively these documents provide a unique collation of the published evidence relating to police and fire reform in Scotland. In particular, these summaries offer an accessible and comprehensive compendium of materials that form the evidence-base for reform that can be used to understand the nature, impact and implications of reform from multiple perspectives.

As with the previous reports, this report provides a summary of how the documentary evidence relates to each of the three aims of reform. This latest summary of evidence highlights that progress is being made towards the aims of reform, evidenced in reports published in 2018 by the services as well as HMICS

(HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland), HMFSI (HM Fire Service Inspectorate), the SPA (Scottish Police Authority), Audit Scotland and academics. As well as demonstrating progress towards meeting the aims of reform and their journey into transformation, additional themes are also drawn out of the evidence, including training, vulnerability, ICT and the widening role of firefighters.

A summary of evidence has been produced in each year of the evaluation and the number of published documents relating to reform has decreased each year. In year 1 of the evaluation there were 58 documents, in year 2 there were 43, year 3 included 23 reports and for year 4 of the evaluation (2018) there were 19 reports (12 relating to police, 6 fire and 1 referring to both). These reports were collated through consultation with Police Scotland, SFRS, SPA, HMICS, HMFSI and Audit Scotland, as well as internet searches for relevant evidence.

The evidence review for Year 1 was published in June 2016 and consisted of publicly available evidence produced to the end of November 2015 ¹.

The evidence review for Year 2 was published in August 2017 and presented evidence from between November 2015 and December 2016 ².

The summary of evidence for Year 3 was published in May 2018 and presented evidence from 2017 ³.

Reform Aim 1: To protect and improve local services despite financial cuts, by stopping duplication of support services eight times over and not cutting front line services.

Police Scotland

- Aim 1 is referred to in evidence produced by the SPA as part of the ‘Scottish Police Authority: Three Year Financial Plan 2018/19 to 2020/21’. In the financial plan it sets out how the SPA and Police Scotland can deliver a balanced budget by the beginning of 2020/21 and support the delivery of the Policing 2026 Three Year Implementation Plan. This plan outlines the investment in ICT, transformation and despite the need to make savings that key investments planned over the next three years will lead to the enhancement of operational effectiveness.

¹ Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform: Year 1: Annex 1: Evidence Review
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-1-annex-1-evidence-review/>

² For Police and Fire Reform Evidence Review: Year 2 – see Annex 1
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-2-report-annexes/>

³ For Police and Fire Reform Summary of Evidence in 2017 – see Annex 2
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-3-national-key-informants-report/pages/11/>

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

- The publicly available evidence from 2018 relating to aim 1 for SFRS comes from Audit Scotland.
- The Audit Scotland 'Scottish Fire and Rescue Service: An update' reports that SFRS continue to deliver emergency and prevention services whilst progressing a complex and ambitious programme of reform. The report also notes that SFRS has strong financial management and has developed a good approach to long-term financial planning and is now in a position to progress with transformation.
- Challenges identified early in the reform journey include the financial resources needed to maintain and invest in its property, vehicles and equipment. This challenge is described as 'insurmountable' without transforming its current model for delivering services and additional investment. However, SFRS' current revenue outlook is identified as more positive than in 2015. It is deemed to be imperative that SFRS uses transformation to review and develop options for how it can reshape its property, vehicles and equipment to meet the needs of a modern service while also being financially sustainable.
- The SFRS Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018, acknowledges the financial challenges faced by the service particularly due to austerity facing the public sector but states that a Long Term Financial Strategy 2017-2027 has been prepared which explores opportunities for more collaborative working.

Key Point

- The evidence published in 2018 suggests that both Police Scotland and SFRS are developing long-term financial planning to progress with transformation in response to continuing budgetary pressures.

Reform Aim 2: To create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity – like murder investigation teams, firearms teams or flood rescue – where and when they are needed.

Police Scotland

- HMICS have produced evidence relating to aim 2. This includes inspections of undercover policing, firearms licensing, the Counter Corruption Unit and custody centres.

- HMICS have completed a review of undercover policing which has included examining the contribution made by undercover policing operations towards public safety in Scotland. This includes examining and making recommendations in relation to Policing 2026, partners, financial management, training, ICT and staff wellbeing.
- The HMICS Progress Review of the Assurance Review of Police Scotland's Counter Corruption Unit (2016) found that Police Scotland has made considerable progress with delivery of the thirty-nine recommendations outlined in the HMICS report. In regards to leadership they identified that senior leadership within Police Scotland demonstrated a commitment to preventing corruption and investigating wrongdoing in a professional and ethical manner.
- HMICS has published their Progress Review of Provision of Forensic Medical Services to Victims of Sexual Crime. They have made ten recommendations for improvement, for example, reviewing legal agreements between partners, strengthening governance arrangements and establishing dedicated healthcare facilities across Scotland informed by research and current best practice.
- HMICS completed a Thematic Review of Police Scotland's approach to the development and operational delivery of the Annual Police Plan (2018-19). Some of the recommendations have relevance to aim 2, for example, Police Scotland should develop transparent and consistent reporting of the deployment of specialist or national support resources from Specialist Crime Division and Operational Support Division, and Police Scotland should undertake an immediate review of its approach and delivery structure for analytical support with intelligence analysis aligned to specialist crime division and performance analysis aligned to the strategy function.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

- HMFSI local inspection reports in Highlands and Glasgow discuss specialist functions at a local level.
- In the Highlands, HMFSI highlight the need to maintain operational skills for those carrying out specialist roles, through training opportunities and continuing to use these staff where appropriate in an operational role. Issues are also raised in relation to the location and maintenance of specialist equipment in the Highlands.
- The HMFSI local report on Glasgow, states that they agree SFRS' policy on access to specialist resources is the most appropriate, in which they are geographically spread to reflect varying risk. However, HMFSI do identify some delays with servicing and maintenance at Water Rescue Stations and there are ongoing issues with crewing levels of the rescue boat and the standard of some specialised equipment such as the Ariel Rescue Pumps.

Key point

- Inspectorate reports published in 2018 demonstrate progress is being made towards aim 2 of reform for both Police Scotland and SFRS, and identified areas for ongoing improvement at a local and national level with regards to partnerships and governance arrangements in specialist functions for the police, and location and maintenance of specialist equipment for fire.

Reform Aim 3: To strengthen the connection between services and communities, by creating a new formal relationship with each of the 32 local authorities, involving many more local councillors and better integrating with community planning partnerships.

Police Scotland

- The evidence relating to aim 3 is both internally (completed by Police Scotland) and externally focused (academic research and conducted by partners).
- Police Scotland (2018) have produced a digital strategy outlining the need for improved ICT which will contribute to improved communication with communities and the most vulnerable.
- Academic research has also been carried out by Murray (2018) examining 'Police reform and public confidence in Scottish policing: 2012 - 2015. An analysis of Scottish Social Attitudes survey data'. The analysis found that public confidence fell significantly between 2014 and 2015. Based on the survey data, Murray suggests this may be due to the perceived changes to on the ground police practice, including a perceived reduction in local police presence.
- The Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN), Scottish Government and COSLA completed a report on 'community safety – the emerging landscape and future opportunities'. The report states that Community Safety Partnerships have reported an improvement in relationships over the last 18 months to 2 years with police officers having more autonomy and capacity to participate in local partnership delivery. It is also explained that Policing 2026 does make a clear commitment to partnership working and local policing, however, a perceived high turnover of local police officers (up to local commander level) can make relationship building and the long-term planning process difficult.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

- Evidence relating to aim 3 is externally focused and includes reports by Audit Scotland, HMFSI, and a community safety report by SCSN, Scottish Government and COSLA.

- The Audit Scotland report ‘Scottish Fire and Rescue Service: An update’ suggests that at a local level, work with partners and communities continues to be well received. However, it is stated that the impact of community safety and prevention works needs to be evaluated. At a national level, there is a continuing need for all emergency services, such as SFRS, Police Scotland Scottish Ambulance Service to work more effectively with national partners to make best use of public resources.
- Local inspections in the Highlands and Glasgow carried out by HMFSI outline that partnership working is well embedded and effective. An example is the pilot with NHS Highland regarding SFRS response to falls in the home. In the Highlands, it is highlighted that there is a ‘positive team culture’ within the LSO (Local Senior Officer) management team, with evidence of them collectively working together to improve local service delivery. In Glasgow the Prevention and Protection Manager is said to be delivering a very strategic partnership outcome approach that is shared with all of the LSO’s Management Team.
- The SCSN, Scottish Government and COSLA report on ‘community safety – the emerging landscape and future opportunities’ examines SFRS’ transformation vision and views partnership working as positive with firefighters leading programmes of work they previously would not have been involved in. In regards to scrutiny, the report also explains that there is an opportunity to further support discussions between COSLA, the SFRS Board, the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and the SCSN around linking formal scrutiny to strategic planning.

Key point

- The reports published in 2018 suggest that both Police Scotland and SFRS are demonstrating a commitment to partnership working in order to deliver more joined up services at a time of budgetary pressures. Looking ahead the published evidence identifies future learning for Police Scotland around an ongoing need to improve communication with the local community, and for SFRS around evaluating the impact of community safety and prevention work.

Additional Emerging Themes

The following additional key themes were also identified from the 19 publicly available reports analysed in 2018.

Training

- HMICS identified that Police Scotland have taken a significant step towards delivering a consistent service across Scotland through introducing training on firearms licensing though improvements could still be made. For example,

there is currently no refresher training or continuous professional development for those involved in firearms licensing.

- In the Highlands HMFSI found that there was an overemphasis on theoretical rather than practical training, and a focus on completing training records, which is reducing the amount of time for practical training to maintain competence on core skills, which they believe may affect firefighter safety. A suggestion is made for SFRS to consider streamlining their software and content of training packages to make them more user-friendly.

Vulnerability

Both Police Scotland and SFRS are taking steps to address supporting vulnerable community members.

- The HMICS inspection of custody centres located in Tayside Division stated that the vulnerability questionnaire used when booking a person into custody had been revised and extended which assists in the development of care plans for each detainee.
- HMFSI found in their local inspection of the Highlands, that in the majority of fire stations, personnel have a good awareness of vulnerable members of their communities and target their resources in conjunction with partners to increase the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable individuals. In the HMFSI local inspection in Glasgow, however, some fire station staff indicated that they were less comfortable with some aspects of the shift towards a more proactive and preventative role if this resulted in confused perceptions of the role of the fire and rescue service.

ICT (Information and Communications Technology)

The need for investment in ICT was an issue identified for both Police Scotland and SFRS.

- The HMICS inspections of custody centres in Tayside Division and firearms licensing, found that national IT (Information Technology) systems had been successfully delivered. In regards to call handling HMICS suggest that significant work has been undertaken to further stabilise ICT infrastructure and systems providing an effective medium term environment but that further investment is required.
- The SPA and Police Scotland in the three year financial plan (2018/19 to 2020/21) outlines the need for significant investment in core ICT systems, investing in cyber capability and re-designing the ways in which the public make contact with the Police.

- The HMFSI inspection of the Highlands, highlight issues around ICT connectivity which is causing delays and disruption to training and accessing the SFRS intranet. Station management are also opting to use their personal computers due to the wide variance in the number of computers at the fire stations.

The widening role of firefighters

The SFRS 'Your service your voice: A consultation on the safe and planned future of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service' document outlines their need to widen their role due to changing risks such as climate change, terrorism and the need to carry out partnership work and prevention activities.

- HMFSI found in the Highlands that the majority of firefighters were embracing their widening role, particularly the enhanced medical role when suitable training is provided. In Glasgow HMFSI found that some staff were less comfortable with expanding community safety activity beyond traditional activities.
- SCSN, Scottish Government and COSLA report on 'community safety – the emerging landscape and future opportunities' have found positive examples of SFRS taking the lead on issues they were not previously involved in such as unintentional harm.

Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee: Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012

During 2018, the Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee undertook post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. The Committee examined whether:

- The policy intentions of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 have been realised and are being delivered in relation to the police service and the fire and rescue service; and whether
- Any further policy or legislative changes are required to improve the effectiveness of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

In response to the Committee's call for written evidence, 54 submissions from a range of organisations and individuals were submitted (June 2018). Although outwith the period of this evidence review, the Committee published its report to the Scottish Parliament on 25 March 2019, which included:

- Justice Committee Report on the Police Service of Scotland
- Justice Committee Report on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

For more information on the work of the Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee, see: <https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/108179.aspx>

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