



HM Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland

Annual Operating Plan 2026-2027

Introduction

As Chief Inspector of HM Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland (HMFSI), I have an obligation under section 43F of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 to issue a Plan containing priorities for inspection and information on how inspection will be carried out. The Chief Inspector's Plan covers a three year period and due to the potential for priorities and uncertainties over a three year time period, the Chief Inspector's Plan is written as a situational overview of HMFSI's strategic inspection perspective.

The Chief Inspector's Plan 2025-2028 is complemented by the use of an Annual Operating Plan for each year covered by this document. The use of an Annual Operating Plan facilitates the dynamic nature of inspection planning and is used by HMFSI to identify the specific inspection work to be undertaken each year. The use of an Annual Operating Plan offers flexibility and the ability to respond to changes where necessary.

Each Annual Operating Plan is subject to consultation with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and relevant stakeholders. Each individual inspection has an inspection outline created, for which there is also consultation in line with our communications and engagement strategy.

Inspection 2026-2027

This Annual Operating Plan details the inspection work that HMFSI intends to undertake or commence during 2026-2027. It should be read in conjunction with the Chief Inspector's Plan 2025-2028 which contains our strategic overview of inspection planning.

Robert D. Scott QFSM
HM Chief Inspector of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Inspection Activity 2026-2027

Completion of those inspections which commenced in 2025 and which will run into 2026.

This will apply to:

- The ongoing thematic inspection of Organisational Culture
- The focussed inspection of SFRS preparedness for the Commonwealth Games
- The thematic inspection of Operational Training and Development

New inspection themes to commence during 2026-2027

OPERATIONS CONTROL

This inspection will evaluate key aspects of work within the 3 Operations Control (OC) centres. The OCs are vital for the handling of emergency calls, mobilising relevant resources and supporting the command of an incident. They also ensure the public are provided with safety advice and survival guidance when they most need it.

We will assess the working environment, the roles being performed, the management structure in place, the staffing model utilised, systems used, training and maintenance of skills as well as the manner in which OCs integrate with other parts of the Service.

Our inspection will also aim to consider the recommendations made within the Grenfell Tower Inquiry - Phase 2 report where relevant to OCs within Scotland.

Anticipated commencement date: January 2027

SFRS PROPERTY ESTATE

This inspection will be undertaken in partnership with colleagues from Audit Scotland, and will consider the condition and suitability of the SFRS property estate. The SFRS has acknowledged that many of its 356 fire stations, and other buildings, are in need of repair, refurbishment or replacement. Issues relating to Reinforced Aeriated Autoclave Concrete (RAAC) roofing systems, the adequacy of facilities to allow firefighters to decontaminate following operational incidents, as well as a recognised need to improve dignified facilities have been raised by the Service and the Fire Brigades Union. It is generally accepted that the cost of addressing these issues will be challenging within existing and predicted future Capital Budget allocations.

Key considerations for the combined inspection team will be the efficiency, economy and effectiveness of the capital estate as it fulfils its functional role(s). The inspection will aim to consider the capital shortfall, the level of investment required, and the various implications of failing to address this issue.

Anticipated commencement date: June 2026