



HM Fire Service Inspectorate Inspection Outline

Organisational Culture within the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Inspectors within HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI) have 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 operates within, but independently of the Scottish Government.

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

Purpose of inspection and Terms of Reference

This outline has been prepared to describe why we are carrying out this inspection and how we will go about the work. It is also intended to be utilised as part of our pre-inspection consultation. This revised inspection outline has been developed following consultation with the SFRS and other relevant stakeholders.

The Chief Inspector's Plan 2022-25, indicated that we may wish to carry out an inspection of HR/workforce planning – recruitment, attrition, diversity and skills within the SFRS. The decision to look at wider organisational culture has been influenced by the findings of several other reports conducted as a result of serious high-profile incidents regarding the conduct of staff within the emergency service sector, both fire and police, across the United Kingdom.

Whilst the majority of the cases involving the fire and rescue service have related to services outside Scotland, we believe this is an area of significant public interest and worthy of inspection. As such, we have amended the scope of our proposed inspection and decided to focus on an assessment of the organisational culture within the SFRS.

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 HM Chief Inspector.

The approach we will take is to consider the issue of organisational culture as a series of inspections rather than as a single report. The first of these inspections will focus on SFRS corporate policies and arrangements for determining, articulating, and reviewing organisational values and how these are fully embedded in workforce activity.

HMFSI recognises that whilst SFRS is a single national body having a single set of stated values, it is unlikely that any organisation of this size and scale would have a single national culture, but a number of cultures and subcultures representative of its workforce type, legacy Service, and the communities served.

The SFRS has an ambition to be a world class public service. It has the stated values of: Safety; Teamwork; Respect; and Innovation. In relation to equality and diversity it wants to exceed the minimum legal requirements placed on public bodies and employers, and to be recognised as a champion of equality. In its Strategic Plan 2022-25 the SFRS has committed to ‘Promoting a culture that values inclusion, promotes fairness, equality and respect for all...’

In carrying out this inspection HMFSI has had discussions with the SFRS’s Internal Auditors regarding their audit of the Service’s arrangements to meet its statutory obligations regarding equality and diversity legislation. The internal audit is intended to consider the extent to which these areas are being embedded within the Service. HMFSI will aim to avoid any unnecessary duplication, although in focusing on the appropriateness of policies and procedures, there may be times when our inspection will consider issues around equality, inclusion and diversity.

Proposal

The aim of this inspection is to assess the organisational culture of the SFRS and how successful it is in achieving its aims and stated ambitions. Specifically, within this first report, we will consider how SFRS corporate policies create the appropriate foundations for a working environment in which it;

- promotes a positive workplace culture
- develops and communicates its’ values among all its staff groups
- develops and trains its staff and managers to implement relevant policies and procedures
- considers monitoring and ongoing assessment of compliance of relevant policies.

Methodology

This inspection will follow the lines used for previous thematic inspections. It will be risk based and proportionate.

There will be engagement with the SFRS and establishment of a single point of contact for coordination of our work. The inspection will then comprise of four key stages:

1. Consult and carry out a desk top analysis of data - We will request workforce related information from the Service and a copy of relevant policies, procedures, strategies and frameworks. We will carry out a desk top data analysis and assessment of this information.
2. Interviews - We will speak with key SFRS staff who are involved with the formulation of policy; the creation and delivery of related training and development; monitoring and performance reporting and those providing human resource management advice.
3. We intend to carry out fieldwork interviews with a sample of the SFRS workforce, involving all duty groups and employees from non-operational departments. This is intended to assess knowledge and understanding of the policies and procedure of the organisation in relation to those which articulate the values.
4. Where appropriate, we will work with other Inspectorates currently conducting similar work and with external, sector competent, individuals and organisations to provide an opportunity for benchmarking and quality assurance.

Reporting

We will compile a report on the findings of our inspection, which will comply with our consultation and engagement strategy. As stated above, we intend to complete our inspection of organisational culture as a series of reports covering individual discrete themes. The themes of subsequent reports and the sequence of these inspections will emerge from the outcomes from our initial report.

The draft report will be reviewed for quality assurance by independent sector professionals. Throughout the inspection we also propose to engage and seek guidance from relevant parties outwith HMFSI as we deem necessary and helpful.

A copy of the final report will be provided to the SFRS Board, the SFRS 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 and will contain the Inspectorate's key findings, and may include; recommendations, areas for consideration and good practice as the Chief Inspector believes appropriate.

Timetable

The provisional timetable is:

Date	Progress
August 2023 - March 2024	Pre-planning and consultation on the inspection outline
April 2024 – August 2024	Data collection and review of documentation
August 2024 – October 2024	Fieldwork
October – November 2024	Analysis of evidence
November – January 2024	Report development and consultation
February 2024	Report publication

Inspection Team

The inspection team members will comprise of HMFSI staff and will include other subject matter specialists as required.

Robert Scott QFSM - HM Chief Inspector

Graeme Fraser – Lead Inspector

Lynne Gow (SFRS Secondee)

Shirley Hartridge (SFRS Secondee)

Professor Paresh Wankhade, (Professor of Leadership and Management & Director of Research, Editor-In-Chief, International Journal of Emergency Services, Edge Hill University)

Mark Cashin (Former Chief Officer, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service)

A nominated representative from Audit Scotland.

The point of contact for this inspection is Robert Scott – Chief Inspector (Robert.Scott2@gov.scot) or any other member of the inspection team can be contacted by emailing HMFSI@gov.scot.

This Inspection Outline

Our consultation for this inspection has included; the SFRS Board and management team, staff representative bodies, Scottish Government, other inspectorates, and sector competent individuals.