

## HMFSI Consultation and Feedback Protocol

This paper sets out how HMFSI engages with its broad range of stakeholders and in particular with the SFRS.

- By agreement, the distribution for all HMFSI Thematic Review Reports will be sent directly to the Chief Officer's Business Support Team [SFRS.ChiefOfficerSupport@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:SFRS.ChiefOfficerSupport@firescotland.gov.uk) for the attention of the Chief Officer. Thereby additional circulation of documents will be dealt with internally by the Service.
- Any documents of a sensitive matter regarding the SFRS may be passed to the Chief Officer through the Business Support Team initially and the Chair of the Board through the [SFRS.BoardSupport@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:SFRS.BoardSupport@firescotland.gov.uk) as required. Confidential items will be dealt with as appropriate.
- When HMFSI seeks feedback on a draft document (for example, a Business Plan revision or an Inspection Outline) it will do so from a broad range of stakeholders and, in respect of the SFRS, from the Executive (SLT) through the Business Support team, and from the Board and/or relevant Committee through its Board Support Team. Feedback will be requested within three business weeks unless a document is particularly complex or significant.
- Throughout the course of the inspection process, HMFSI seek, and welcome, ongoing dialogue with the Service and make a particular effort to engage with relevant senior officers/managers early on in our inspection process. Inspection reports are therefore a combination of our findings, information provided and engagement with officers/managers and staff which produces a holistic document.
- By agreement, a member of the Inspectorate will attend the Board's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and Service Delivery Committee (SDC) on a quarterly basis and provide an update on ongoing HMFSI business. The Inspectorate will also aim to attend and observe regular Board meetings and any other such meetings deemed relevant.
- HMFSI will not normally seek feedback from the Board on draft reports but may decide to do so when appropriate.
- HMFSI will request feedback from the SFRS Executive on draft thematic inspection reports allowing a period of three weeks for response. The SFRS Business Support Team will be responsible for distributing draft documents to the relevant Executive staff and collating their feedback. SFRS feedback will be the feedback of the Service, not of individuals (other than when we are engaging early with senior officers/managers over emerging findings).

- In relation to service delivery area-based inspections, HMFSI will seek SFRS feedback via the relevant Deputy Assistant Chief Officer and Local Senior Officers copied to the Chief Officer's Business Support Team for the Chief Officer's information. In recognition of the possibility that we may wish to raise national issues, which are having a local impact, a four week period will be provided to allow clearance of feedback from senior management. These national issues will be annotated as such in the reports.
- SFRS will provide feedback within those timescales. If it is unable to do so for any exceptional reason, SFRS will advise HMFSI of this and of the date when feedback will be available. HMFSI reserves the right, after giving notice of its intention to do so to the SFRS, to proceed with publication of a document once the period for feedback has elapsed, regardless of whether feedback has been received.
- HMFSI will consider feedback in two categories, factual, and professional judgement. HMFSI will always undertake to correct factual error. Where feedback suggests that factual information provided by the Service in the course of an inspection was incorrect, that may be noted in the final report and relevant conclusions drawn. Where feedback challenges a matter of judgement, HMFSI will always consider that challenge, but the judgments in the final report will be the independent judgements of the Chief Inspector.
- HMFSI will acknowledge but will not as a rule respond in detail to feedback on draft reports, as the intent is not to enter into debate about the issues in the report. HMFSI may in its discretion respond to advise that a factual error has been corrected or a judgement modified as a result of feedback. Where feedback suggests additions to a report (for example explanatory text) HMFSI will consider the suggestions put forward but does not undertake to adopt them or provide reasons why a suggestion is or is not adopted.
- Where HMFSI undertakes local inspections or visits or is involved in observing exercises or training events we will provide informal feedback to Local Senior Officers and managers where appropriate.