

## Project scope

# Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

## An update



AUDITOR GENERAL 

Prepared by Audit Scotland  
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The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 established the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) as a national organisation. The SFRS started work on 1 April 2013. It replaced the eight former fire and rescue services and the Scottish Fire Services College. The service promotes improved fire safety, prevention, protection and provides emergency response throughout Scotland.

### Why are we doing this audit?

In May 2015, Audit Scotland published a [report on the SFRS](#). This report set out the progress the SFRS had made in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of fire and rescue services in Scotland since its establishment.

The report found that the merger of the eight fire and rescue services was managed effectively, with no impact on the public and its performance was improving. The report identified that a long-term financial

strategy was urgently needed to address a significant potential funding gap of £42.7 million in 2019/20. The report also noted that progress was being made towards removing the operational differences across the eight predecessor fire and rescue services and establishing a national service. At the time of our 2015 report, the service was reviewing how it could deliver a sustainable national service that met current and future demands in the context of decreasing budgets.

It is almost three years since our report. This audit will provide an update, to assess and provide public assurance about the progress made by the SFRS on its financial sustainability, its continued transformation to a national service and how effectively it is now performing.

### What will the scope of the audit be?

This audit will assess what progress the SFRS has made since May 2015, how effectively it is currently performing and how well it is placed to meet future challenges. The audit will seek to answer the following questions:

- How effectively has the SFRS responded to the recommendations of our May 2015 report?
- Has the SFRS continued to make good progress with integrating and transforming the service?
- How effectively is the SFRS responding to the Scottish Government's [Scottish Fire and Rescue Framework](#) and does the framework adequately reflect the future challenges for the service?
- How effectively is the SFRS delivering its integrated and transformed arrangements at a local level?

### How will we carry out the audit?

We will obtain evidence for our audit by:

- reviewing strategic documents, including the service's financial plans, its strategic plans, performance reports and board papers

- analysing a range of financial and performance information
- interviewing members of the board and senior officers of the SFRS
- seeking the views of:
  - the Scottish Government
  - Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI)
  - Trades unions representing uniform and non-uniform staff in the SFRS
  - senior officials of partner bodies including the Scottish Ambulance Service and Police Scotland
  - a sample of councillors and officers from local government
- working with HMFSI, to review progress with integration and transformation at a local level and reviewing the findings of recent Inspectorate reports.


### What impact will the audit have?

The audit will assess the progress made with the reform of the SFRS and how effectively it is performing. It will provide assurance to the Scottish Parliament and the public that the SFRS has appropriate arrangements in place to deliver its preventative and emergency responsibilities across Scotland. It will highlight good practice and lessons learned to support continued improvement across the SFRS.

### Audit timetable

We aim to publish in the spring of 2018. Following publication, the Auditor General will present findings to the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee.

### Contact

For further information on the audit contact Kathrine Sibbald, Audit Manager, on 0131 625 1811 or [ksibbald@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:ksibbald@audit-scotland.gov.uk) .



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