

Emergency Services News Briefing

May 2025



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Introduction

In this edition of our news briefing, we draw attention to some of the key developments and publications in the sector, including significant updates from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in relation to inspection programmes and frameworks. We also cover updates on fire safety governance, the ongoing challenges of cladding remediation, and the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) role in international fire safety efforts.

Police

Police inspection programme and framework 2025 - 2029

HMICFRS has published its policing inspection programme and framework 2025-29, which sets out the strategic direction for how police forces in England and Wales will be inspected over a four-year period starting in April 2025. It builds on the inspectorate's recent approach to longer-term planning and incorporates feedback from a recent public consultation. The programme outlines a continued focus on thematic inspections that address issues of national importance and public concern, while also maintaining HMICFRS's independence and commitment to evidence-based assessment.

Although the framework is already established, HMICFRS has planned a review at the programme's midpoint to ensure it remains aligned with evolving priorities and operational realities. Budgetary concerns are also acknowledged, with a recommendation for increased funding to match the growing remit of the inspectorate's work. The document reflects a balanced approach, addressing government priorities where appropriate, but through the lens of independent oversight and public accountability.

PEEL assessment framework (PAF) 2025 – 2027

HMICFRS has published its assessment framework for the police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) programme for the 2025-2027 cycle. The framework focuses on several core questions and topic areas to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and legitimacy of police forces. Areas included are:

- **Leadership and management:** This looks at how well police forces plan and manage their resources, including the use of technology and data, and ensuring high standards of behaviour among officers.
- **Service to victims:** This area assesses how effectively police handle calls, respond to incidents, record crimes, and support victims throughout investigations.
- **Public interaction:** This evaluates how police communicate with the public, ensuring interactions are fair, respectful, and considerate of community needs.

Police integrity inspection programme methodology – 2025 onwards

HMICFRS has published the terms of reference and methodology for the new cycle of the police integrity inspection programme. HMICFRS will focus on evaluating three key areas within police forces in England and Wales:

- **Vetting:** Ensuring thorough background checks and continuous monitoring of police personnel.
- **Professional standards:** Assessing adherence to ethical guidelines and conduct within the force.
- **Counter-corruption:** Inspecting measures to prevent, detect, and respond to corruption.

Each police force will receive separate graded judgments for these areas to ensure transparency and accountability.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Is the Audit Committee assured that the Force has sufficient action tracking capabilities to ensure that recommendations by the inspectorate are tracked, implemented and remain implemented?
- Is the Audit Committee regularly sighted on progress in relation to recommendations from the inspectorate and is there a mechanism for reported progress through the governance structures?

An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime

HMICFRS has published a report following an inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime. Key findings include:

- Police efforts are hampered by ineffective ways of recording, assessing, allocating and investigating crime.
- Over the past decade, the demand on police has grown significantly. Recorded crime rates per 1,000 people have risen, but the number of officers has not increased proportionately. Investigators are overwhelmed by high workloads, complex cases, long investigation times, and a lack of experience and training.
- Some recent operational models have discouraged officers and staff from developing an investigative mindset, leading to missed investigative opportunities.
- Victims often withdraw their support due to delays in the criminal justice process, caused by high workloads, slow charging decisions, and lengthy court proceedings.
- Despite challenges, police forces have implemented positive initiatives, such as digital toolkits, retired detectives as coaches, and victim updates through the My Police Portal app.

HMICFRS has made 11 recommendations to build a better understanding of their crime-related demand, and the resources needed. Recommendations include:

- The National Police Chiefs' Council, with the College of Policing, should develop a model to help police forces better understand and assess their crime-related demand, including future projections.
- Chief constables should ensure efficient processes for handling online crime reports from start to finish.
- Chief constables should ensure that the process for receiving, assessing, and allocating crime reports in their force minimises delays in investigations and reduces the time before investigators contact victims.
- The Home Office and the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for the Police National Database should assist forces in enhancing officer and staff awareness of the Police National Database's capabilities, particularly in facial recognition.
- Chief constables should establish and implement a system to monitor the proportion of recorded crimes allocated for investigation within their force. This should include a process to ensure that decisions not to allocate a crime for investigation are appropriate.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Is the Audit Committee sighted on the Force control framework in place to manage demand?
- Does the Audit Committee undertake deep dives or receive assurance on crime recording / assessment / allocation / investigation?

Enterprise Risk Management Services

Effective risk management is the bedrock of all successful organisations. If this goes wrong, the ramifications can be deeply damaging; from financial loss to harm to individuals to reputational damage.

Where organisations get it right, however, they can become more efficient and more effective at delivering what their customers want.

Our enterprise risk consulting team is here to create a robust framework to manage your risk exposures effectively. We maximise the value of your risk management programme through refining, designing and implementing practical and proportionate solutions. These range from workshops and training through to wholesale entity risk management change programmes, including access to Insight4GRC, our own risk management software. Taking a holistic approach enables us to create a watertight programme.

Our Emerging Risk Radar Survey results were recently published and explore key emerging risks across sectors.

[Read more](#)



Questions for committee's consideration

- Is this Audit Committee assured that there are sufficient controls surrounding payroll to ensure that the changes to pay rates, leave and allowances are accurately applied?

Public Authorities VAT webinar

Wednesday 11 June 2025

1-2pm

This webinar will be an excellent opportunity for you to hear and raise questions on sector related VAT issues within a trusted forum.

As well as hearing about technical updates, our sector specialists will be on hand to provide feedback on recent developments.

In our session we will cover:

- Recent case law and legislative changes affecting the sector.
- HMRC VAT and tax policy changes including sector activity.
- Commercial considerations and VAT saving opportunities.
- VAT-tax back2basics 'snippets'.

[Register now](#)

More details announced on the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee

The Home Office has announced further details of its Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, aiming to enhance community safety across England and Wales. The initiative includes the deployment of 3,000 additional neighbourhood police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) within the next 12 months, contributing to a total of 13,000 new officers by 2029, an over 50% increase in neighbourhood policing personnel. Communities will also have named, contactable officers to address local issues and each police force will have a dedicated lead to work with residents and businesses on tailored action plans to tackle antisocial behaviour.

Circular 003/2025: Annex F, O and U, Police Regulations 2003

The Home Office has published a circular outlining key amendments to Annexes F, O, and U of the Police Regulations 2003. These updates reflect changes to police pay, annual leave entitlements, and allowances as part of the 2024–2025 police pay award. From 1 April 2025, updates to annual leave entitlements for federated ranks will take effect, alongside increases to allowances such as London weighting, the dog handlers' allowance, and the on-call allowance. Additionally, from 1 September 2025 revised pay rates will come into force, and from 1 April 2025, chief officers will have the discretion to appoint new constables at either pay point 1 or 2. These changes are intended to modernise employment conditions, improve recruitment flexibility, and support the retention and wellbeing of officers across England and Wales.

Transforming leadership of police investigations

The College of Policing are introducing new training that aims to improve the supervision and management of police investigations across England and Wales. The Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP1) will strive to improve skills to enable criminal investigation to be overseen more effectively. The training will be piloted with 13 forces initially and is built from evidence-based research and consultations with partners such as the Crown Prosecution Service. The training's main aims include:

- Improving the quality of investigation supervision.
- Improving the management of investigation teams.
- Directly impacting on improving outcomes for victims and holding officers to account.



Fire

Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 recommendations progress update

HMICFRS has published a letter that provides its general assessment of the progress made by 25 of England's 44 fire and rescue services on the implementation of the recommendations in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report. It highlights positive steps made and identifies areas that require further improvement. The letter also outlines how future inspections will address recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report.

The letter highlights several positive steps taken by the fire and rescue services (FRSs), such as improved communication protocols and enhanced training programs. It also identifies areas needing further improvement, including better coordination during major incidents and more comprehensive training for all staff.



Questions for committee's consideration

- How does your Fire Service align to the areas of improvement identified by the inspectorate?

The Remediation of Dangerous Cladding

The Public Accounts Committee has published a report assessing the government's progress in addressing unsafe cladding on residential buildings, a critical issue highlighted by the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017. The report reveals that the scale of the cladding crisis is significantly larger than initially estimated, with between 9,000 and 12,000 medium- and high-rise buildings potentially requiring remediation. The projected total cost for these efforts ranges from £12.6bn to £22.4bn, encompassing both public and private sector expenditures. At this stage, the government does not appear to have an estimate of all the necessary fire safety works including the removal of flammable cladding.

Key recommendations in relation to fire safety include:

- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) should provide the Committee with an update clearly setting out when it is going to produce proposals to ensure that all fire safety defects, irrespective of whether they are related to cladding issues, are properly addressed.
- MHCLG should bring forward, by the end of 2025, detailed proposals as to how construction manufacturers should be required to pay a share of the fire safety remediation costs and how this will relieve the pressure on leaseholders and tenants.

Fire Service Policy and Operations Industry White Paper

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has published a new Industry White Paper on Remediation which explores the role and responsibilities of the FRSs in supporting the government's Remediation Acceleration Plan to remediate unsafe buildings, with the report also outlining some of the barriers preventing NFCC from meeting their targets.

The NFCC has called for a centrally coordinated programme to address the barriers to remediating unsafe residential buildings. Despite progress since the Grenfell Tower fire, significant challenges remain, including funding shortages, workforce limitations, and complex ownership structures. Other key points includes:

- Fire and rescue services lack sufficient capacity and trained specialists to inspect all mid-rise residential buildings, which could take up to 24 years to complete.
- A centrally coordinated, government-led programme is essential to overcome barriers and ensure timely remediation.
- Fire chiefs advocate for more sprinklers in existing residential buildings over 11 metres, based on risk assessments.
- The pressure on fire services to manage remediation efforts while protecting other high-risk premises, such as care homes and hospitals, is significant.

The NFCC has emphasised a need for a cross-departmental Construction Skills Strategy to address chronic shortages in fire engineers, risk assessors, and other key professionals.

Responsibility for all fire functions moves to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The UK government has announced that responsibility for all fire functions will move from the Home Office to the MHCLG effective from 1 April 2025. This change aims to bring greater clarity and accountability to fire and building safety by consolidating these responsibilities under a single department. The transfer is expected to strengthen coordination and improve policy implementation, ensuring a more coherent approach to fire and building safety. This move delivers on a key recommendation from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 2 report, which advised that fire and building safety should be overseen by a single department.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Does your Fire Service have programmes in place to develop and train staff to meet the future skills requirements?

Independent panel reports to NFCC with calls to action on culture and inclusions

The NFCC published a report from an Independent Challenge and Support Panel, highlighting the need for disruptive change to make FRSs more inclusive and open workplaces. The panel emphasised the importance of sustained focus and courageous leadership to address issues like racism, misogyny, and other unacceptable behaviours.

Panel Chair's Statement: Anthea Sully, Chair of the panel, stressed the need for tangible actions beyond rhetoric and urged NFCC, Government, and national FRS bodies to prioritize culture and inclusion. "Despite progress, we are clear that further action is still needed to root out racism, misogyny, and other unacceptable behaviours in the workplace. This will require leaders and staff to challenge traditional ways of working and embrace tangible action, going beyond rhetoric. NFCC, Government, and other national FRS bodies, have a key leadership role in driving this change, and we urge that culture and inclusion remain a top priority. Our final report outlines clear calls to action, and we look forward to continuing to see meaningful progress in the years ahead."

NFCC Response: NFCC Chair, Mark Hardingham, expressed gratitude for the panel's support and committed to incorporating the calls to action into the next phase of the NFCC Culture Action Plan, to be published in May.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Is your Fire Service able to clearly demonstrate the action that it is taking to combat culture and inclusion matters?

References

Police



[Police inspection programme and framework 2025 - 2029](#)



[PEEL assessment framework \(PAF\) 2025 – 2027](#)



[Police integrity inspection programme methodology – 2025 onwards](#)



[An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime](#)



[More details announced on the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee](#)



[Circular 003/2025: Annex F, O and U, Police Regulations 2003](#)



[Transforming leadership of police investigations](#)

Fire



[Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 recommendations progress update](#)



[The Remediation of Dangerous Cladding](#)



[Fire Service Policy and Operations Industry White Paper](#)



[Responsibility for all fire functions moves to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#)



[Independent panel reports to NFCC with calls to action on culture and inclusions](#)

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