



Improving  
Policing  
Across  
Scotland



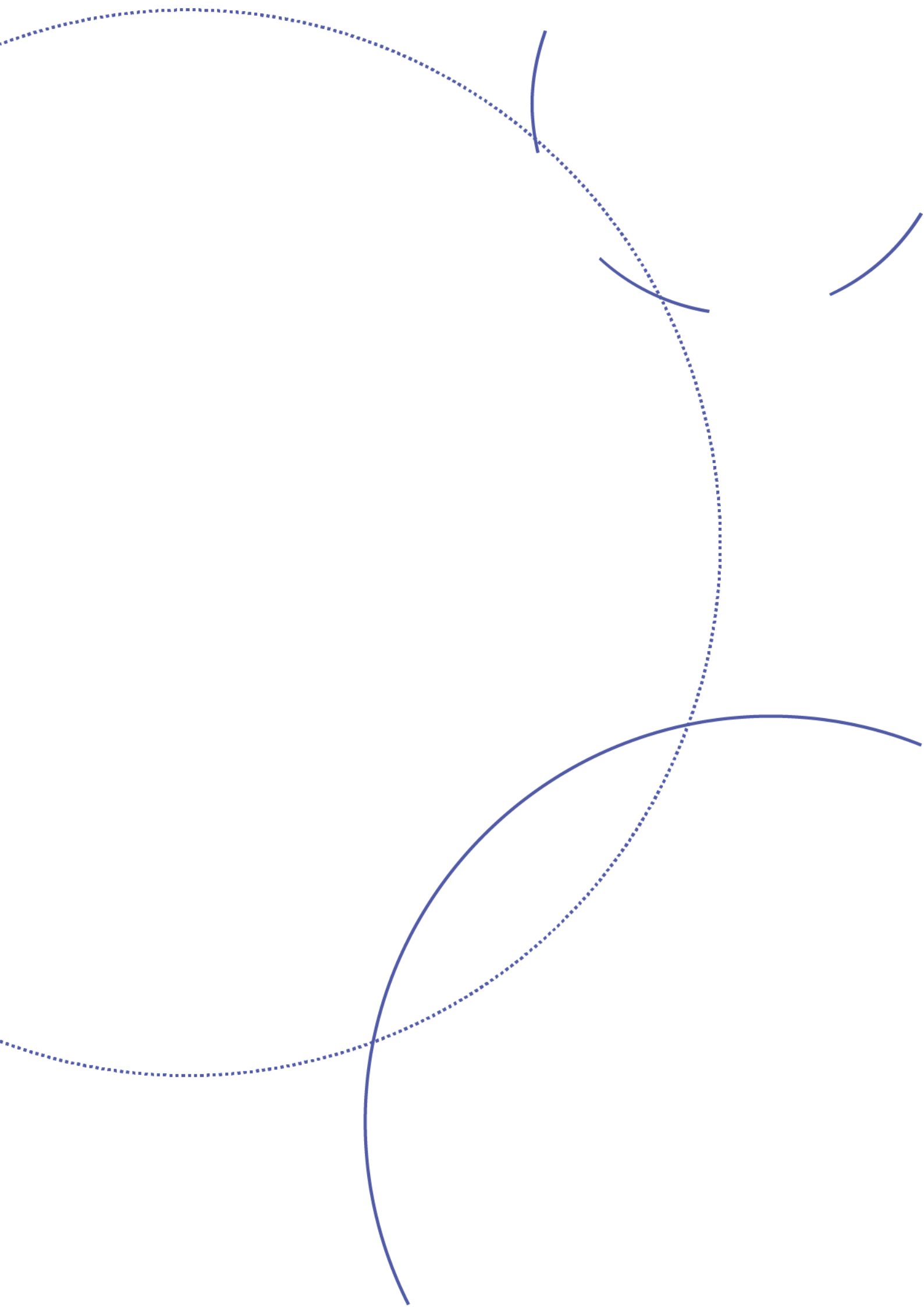
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

# Corporate plan 2025-28

---

March 2025


















# Contents

---

	<b>Page</b>
 <a href="#">Foreword</a>	2
 <a href="#">Our purpose</a>	4
 <a href="#">Our vision</a>	4
 <a href="#">Our values</a>	5
 <a href="#">Who we are</a>	6
 <a href="#">What we do</a>	7
 <a href="#">Our framework</a>	8
 <a href="#">Our approach to scrutiny</a>	11
 <a href="#">Follow-up and update reports</a>	14
 <a href="#">How we will maximise our impact and measure our performance</a>	15
 <a href="#">Our strategic objectives for 2025-28</a>	17



## Foreword

---

I am delighted to present the HMICS corporate plan for the period 2025-28. As the Chief Inspector of Constabulary since April 2022, I have sought to apply the same ethos of continuous improvement and best value within HMICS that I expect from the areas of policing in which we undertake our scrutiny activity. Over the past three years, HMICS has continued to evolve – in both organisational structure and methodologies employed – to ensure we remain at the forefront of supporting improvement across policing.

Notwithstanding our modest size and scale, we have always aimed to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of our resources to achieve the greatest impact. During the period covered by our last Corporate Plan, we have undertaken a range of activities (not least, an organisational restructure) to create a more robust and flexible team – both in terms of scrutiny activity and the supporting activity that contributes to the publication of our reports, and monitoring and management of the recommendations made. This enhanced resource is now being utilised by partner scrutiny bodies to reduce costs in the design and publication of reports.

This enhanced capacity and capability means we can project with greater accuracy the level of scrutiny activities that can be undertaken in the next three-year period. This will take the form of a three-year scrutiny plan (a statutory requirement), which will be published separately to this corporate plan. Both can be accessed via our website at [www.hmics.scot](http://www.hmics.scot).

In our approach to scrutiny we adhere, not just to our own values, but also to those principles of external scrutiny set out in the [Crerar review](#), and to the priorities set out in the Christie report on the development of effective and sustainable public services. I firmly believe that the complexity of those challenges faced by policing is mirrored in other public services, and that any increased collaboration between such services would benefit from joint scrutiny activity. Over the past three-year period, HMICS has worked in partnership with various scrutiny bodies, and I am committed to developing this approach further.



We will continue to adapt our inspection activity, identifying the most appropriate type of review (as outlined below) for the policing area under scrutiny. This is underpinned by our established methodology, where each phase and stage of inspection is subject to a rigorous quality assurance process, ensuring that our published reports and recommendations (where appropriate) are supported by a robust evidence base.

Any improvement within HMICS relies on a positive workplace culture and I will always ensure that our team is supported and developed in line with personal and organisational needs, so that we can continue to deliver scrutiny activity of the highest quality, helping to improve policing across Scotland.

**Craig Naylor**

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

March 2025



## Our purpose

---

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland's (HMICS) statutory purpose is to inquire into the state, efficiency and effectiveness of both the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Police Scotland, and arrangements made by the SPA and Chief Constable to secure best value.

Scottish Ministers may also direct HMICS to make inquiries about any matter relating to the SPA or the police service as they consider appropriate.

## Our vision

---

Through effective independent scrutiny and engagement, support the continuous improvement of policing across Scotland.



## Our values

---

### Independent

We will always act independently and publish impartial and objective reports. Our professional advice will be informed and unbiased.

### Accountable

We will be accountable for what we do and will justify our actions and reports by evidence.

### Proportionate

We will ensure our scrutiny is proportionate and will only inspect what is necessary to achieve our statutory purpose.

### Transparent

We will be open in what we do and give reasons for our decisions. We will publish our reports and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.

### User-focused

We will align our scrutiny to the needs of those for whom the service is provided and co-operate with other scrutiny authorities. We will meet our responsibilities under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, by continuously improving our user focus, including obtaining the views of those with lived experience, in the design and operation of our functions. We will promote equality, respect for diversity and inclusion in everything we do. Within all our inspections and reviews, we will consider inequality and, where identified, make recommendations to improve experiences for service users and in support of the public sector equality duties.



## Who we are

---

HMICS comprises 16 members of staff. HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland (HMCIC) is:

- appointed by Royal Warrant;
- independent of government and policing bodies; and
- responsible for the strategic leadership of HMICS and accountable for its activities.

HMCIC is supported by an Assistant Inspector of Constabulary (AIC), who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of HMICS. The five HMICS lead inspectors are responsible for the planning, management and delivery of inspections and other scrutiny work, with input and support from the wider HMICS team.

HMICS also utilises a cadre of associate inspectors who come from a range of backgrounds. Their professional experience and skills supplements the core team, providing additional capacity to carry out scrutiny activities.





## What we do

---

HMICS is established under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. As set out in our purpose (above), we have wide-ranging powers to look into the state, effectiveness and efficiency of both Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. We have a statutory duty to inquire into the arrangements made by the SPA and Chief Constable to meet their obligations in terms of best value and continuous improvement. If necessary, we can be directed by Scottish Ministers to look into anything relating to the SPA or Police Scotland, as they consider appropriate. We also have an established role in providing professional advice and guidance on policing in Scotland.

Our powers allow us to do anything we consider necessary or expedient for the purposes of, or in connection with, the carrying out of our functions. The SPA and the Chief Constable must provide us with such assistance and co-operation as we may require to carry out our functions and must comply with any reasonable request that we make. When we publish a report, the SPA and the Chief Constable must consider what we have found and take such measures, if any, as they think fit. Where we make recommendations, we will follow them up and report publicly on progress.

We will identify good practice that can be applied across Scotland. We work with other inspectorates and agencies across the public sector and co-ordinate our activities to reduce the burden of inspection and avoid unnecessary duplication. We aim to add value and strengthen public confidence in Scottish policing and will do this through independent scrutiny and objective, evidence-led reporting about what we find.

Our approach is to support Police Scotland and the SPA to deliver services that are high-quality, continually improving, effective and responsive to both national and local needs.

HMICS also has a role in inspecting other UK policing agencies that operate in Scotland, such as the British Transport Police, National Crime Agency, and Ministry of Defence Police and Civil Nuclear Constabulary, working with HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (England and Wales) under relevant UK legislation as required.

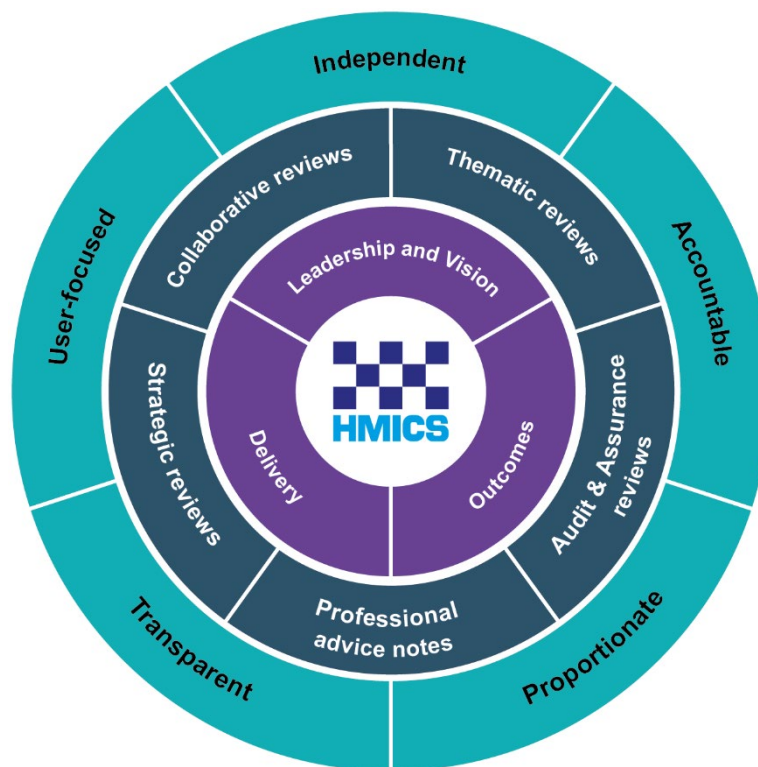


## Our framework

---

Our Inspection Framework has been developed using the EFQM Excellence Model with an increasing focus on the management of change. The model has been adapted to provide a high-level framework suitable for the scrutiny of elements of policing or its governance.

It underpins all our scrutiny activity and is sufficiently flexible and adaptable to develop bespoke key lines of enquiry, depending on the work to be undertaken. The framework, set out below, provides a structure within which we can ensure a consistent and professional approach to our work.



### Leadership and vision

This examines the purpose of the organisation, why its work is important and considers how it creates and delivers sustained value for its stakeholders. It assesses organisational vision and what it is attempting to achieve in the long term, through the choices it has made for current and future courses of action. It considers the organisation's primary purpose and priorities, its strategy to achieve those aims, and any improvements it could make to be more effective.



It looks at how well the organisation identifies and understands:

- its stakeholders' needs;
- the wider context within which it operates;
- its own capabilities;
- major challenges; and
- opportunities.

As with our previous framework, there is a strong focus on implementing effective governance and performance arrangements to support delivery of the purpose, vision and strategy.

It examines how well the service or organisation is led, looking at organisational culture and values, and how well leaders steer and nurture these. We consider how collaboratively leaders work to create conditions supporting change, creativity and innovation, enabling the organisation to meet its aims.

## Delivery

This considers how the organisation identifies and engages with specific types and categories within each of its key stakeholder groups, and how its understanding of the needs and expectations of those groups is integral to building sustainable relationships. It assesses the levels of involvement of stakeholders (e.g. service users, officers and staff, governance bodies, partners and suppliers, business and wider society) in deploying strategy and delivery and examines the contributions they make. It looks at whether these relationships are based on transparency, accountability, ethical behaviour and trust.

It examines in detail how the organisation attracts, engages, develops and retains both officers and staff (fundamental to this is workforce planning and its alignment to purpose, vision and strategy). It also looks at building and sustaining valuable relationships with our various partner stakeholders, and how the organisation contributes to wider societal wellbeing.



This also now defines for whom the organisation should be creating 'best value', including expectations of environmental sustainability and associated strategy and delivery.

In examining how best to drive performance and transformation, it focuses on successfully providing current business operations while managing constant internal and external organisational change. To remain successful, both must be addressed in parallel, delivering for today while preparing for tomorrow. This will involve:

- clever use of innovation and technology;
- an awareness of the ever-increasing importance of data, information and knowledge;
- active risk management; and
- agile use of critical assets and resources.

## Outcomes

This focuses on the overall performance of the organisation or service in relation to its purpose, vision and strategy, and perceptions of the organisation by stakeholders (both current and past). We look at success in delivering demonstrable, high-quality and improved outcomes for service users, communities and the public in general. Evidence for this could be obtained from various sources such as reports and datasets, public surveys, focus groups, research, press or social media, external recognition or compliments/complaints.

We also look at how an organisation or service area's strategic priorities, aims and objectives have been achieved, including those that are nationally or locally determined. Evidence of demonstrable outcomes includes trends over time, target measures and other aggregated data that provide an indication of success in maintaining or improving the quality of the service provided, both overall and when benchmarked with similar services or organisations. The organisation should use such results to monitor, understand and improve its overall performance and to forecast the impact its performance will have both on the perceptions of its stakeholders and its future strategic ambitions.



## Our approach to scrutiny

---

### Scrutiny plan

We publish a scrutiny plan outlining our priorities and scrutiny activities over a three-year period. The plan is developed through consultation with our stakeholders and informed by an objective assessment of policing performance and risk. We keep the plan under continuous review and make it accessible to those who are likely to have an interest in it – maintaining an up-to-date copy on our website.

Our scrutiny activity will follow an approach that takes account of the five principles of external scrutiny set out in the Crerar review, namely: public focus; independence; proportionality; transparency; and accountability, and the priorities set out in the Christie report to support the development of effective and sustainable public services capable of meeting the challenges ahead.

### Thematic reviews

We will continue to use thematic reviews to scrutinise cross-cutting issues that benefit from a more holistic review. We publish full reports for each of our thematic reviews, capturing innovation and good practice and, where relevant, making recommendations for improvement. In future, our thematic reviews may also reveal opportunities to work with others (to consider new issues or emerging threats) and provide evidence for future policy development.

### Audit and assurance reviews

Our audit and assurance reviews allow for more detailed scrutiny. This is for areas where we believe there is a specific need to audit critical systems to ensure accurate and ethical recording, or provide some external assurance over key processes in high-risk areas. These reviews will also provide opportunities for HMICS to undertake short assignments to provide independent assurance over specific aspects of policing.

We publish concise reports for each of our audit and assurance reviews, highlighting our findings and any recommendations. These reviews will also inform our wider assessment of how well Police Scotland and the SPA have met their obligations to secure best value and continuous improvement, which we will publish in our annual report.



## Strategic reviews

We conduct these reviews in key areas where we believe that giving a strategic overview will add value. Such reviews give a high-level assessment of services, in terms of current performance against national policies and standards, highlighting strategic issues for consideration by key stakeholders, as well as informing future scrutiny of that area.

## Collaborative reviews

We will continue to work with other scrutiny bodies and undertake joint inspection activity in areas where Police Scotland or the SPA work in partnership and contribute to shared outcomes with others.

## Professional advice notes

HMICS may issue professional advice notes (PANs) to Police Scotland, the SPA and Scottish Government. These more formal forms of advice are produced by us as part of our established role in providing professional advice and guidance on policing in Scotland, and are provided directly to the Chair of the SPA, the Chief Constable and Scottish Government Police Division for consideration. We expect that a PAN will be given due consideration (in the context that inspection may follow).



## National Preventive Mechanism

HMICS is a member of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), a group of organisations designated under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) to monitor places of detention and report on the treatment of and conditions for detainees. OPCAT recognises that detainees are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent ill treatment through establishing a system of regular visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate an NPM to carry out such visits to places of detention, to monitor treatment of and conditions for detainees, and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill treatment.

The UK NPM is made up of 21 bodies who monitor places of detention across Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. These include police custody, prisons, court custody, immigration and military detention, secure children's homes, and places where people are detained under mental health legislation. The NPM members have the power to enter places of detention and speak to detainees and staff in private. As a member of the NPM, HMICS carries out regular inspections of police custody in Scotland using the HMICS custody inspection framework. This framework focuses on the treatment of and conditions for detainees, and includes a range of indicators setting out what we expect to find during our custody inspections.





## Follow-up and update reports

---

We will undertake follow-up inspection work and produce update reports on previous inspection areas where recommendations are outstanding. We believe that further work will highlight both where progress has been made, and where improvement is still required. Reports and progress against recommendations are available via our website – [www.hmics.scot](http://www.hmics.scot).





## How we will maximise our impact and measure our performance

---

Our corporate plan sets out our purpose, vision, values, approach and strategic objectives for the next three years, building on over 165 years of history as a credible, competent and collaborative inspectorate that adds value and strengthens public confidence in Scottish policing. By setting out our key objectives for the next three years it will help us to keep on track with what we want to achieve and how we are going to achieve it. We will review this plan regularly to ensure our objectives are supporting us to fulfil our purpose of improving policing across Scotland.

We aim to maximise the impact our work in terms of:

- Providing assurance regarding the governance and delivery of policing services
- Providing quality advice and support
- Assessing the effective use of public resources in policing
- Supporting an increase in public confidence and trust in policing.

We build impact assessment into all our work, from scrutiny risk assessment and planning, through delivery and reporting, to recommendations, follow-up and repeat inspection. At all stages of our planning and inspection processes, we will consider the positive outcomes we want to deliver.

To increase confidence in HMICS, provide visibility and ensure transparency of the scrutiny work we undertake, we produce an annual report. This sets out where we have added value and supported the continuous improvement of policing in Scotland, using success measures such as:

- The reports we deliver in support of our scrutiny plan
- The specific assurances we provide to the public, the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Ministers and the SPA over those aspects of policing we inspect



- The direct support we provide to the SPA and Police Scotland to build on our recommendations to achieve the necessary improvement
- The successful and timely discharge of our recommendations
- The collaborative work and joint inspections we undertake
- The feedback from Scottish Government, SPA and Police Scotland (and other key stakeholders) that our inspection process and its results add value and drive improvement.

HMICS is entirely funded by the Scottish Government. We set out in our annual report how this public money is spent supporting the delivery of our statutory purpose, vision and strategic objectives.



## Our strategic objectives for 2025-28

---

Over the next three years HMICS will focus on the following five strategic objectives:

### Strategic objective 1

Increase awareness and confidence in the work of HMICS by:

- Undertaking stakeholder analysis; developing a communications and engagement strategy that provides a clear and consistent approach to internal and external communications, supports effective engagement with all our stakeholders and contributes to the delivery of our vision, values and strategic objectives; encouraging professional dialogue to stimulate interest and understanding, and further promote our work.
- Having a transparent and clearly-understood inspection framework, supported by clear evidential standards against which we will assess.
- Providing independent, objective and rounded assessments, which are transparent about how we reach our findings, supported by a strong evidence base and rationale for professional judgements.
- Having effective models in place for each type of scrutiny intervention, which focus on service delivery and those involved directly in service provision.

### Strategic objective 2

Work collaboratively with others, and share expertise, to maximise the impact of our scrutiny work by:

- Carrying out thorough and robust environmental scanning and consultation to identify emerging risks and issues that may need to be considered for scrutiny to support the delivery of a high-quality policing service across Scotland.
- Working with other scrutiny bodies to jointly assess risk, and plan and deliver scrutiny that adds value, reduces the burden of inspection, and provides assurance about services delivered in partnership across Scotland.



- As required, reviewing and refreshing memorandums of understanding with our scrutiny partners to set out our respective powers and responsibilities, and our framework for collaborative working.
- Working with other members of the NPM to share information and good practice to ensure our approach to detention monitoring is consistent with international standards.
- Regularly engaging with public and private sector bodies, universities and others with an interest in policing to identify opportunities for collaborative working to inform and increase the effectiveness of HMICS.

### Strategic objective 3

Drive continuous improvement and learning through effective evidence-led inspections and implementation of recommendations by:

- Focusing our inspection activity on those areas that will add the greatest value to policing or tackling the areas of highest risk or concern to the communities of Scotland.
- Publishing information on delivery/action plans and progress, and engaging with relevant business areas responsible for the discharge of recommendations.
- Promoting and supporting strong internal assurance and innovation mechanisms in the bodies we scrutinise to develop organisational learning.
- Encouraging the SPA and Police Scotland to critically evaluate their own performance and capability through self-assessment, to support continuous improvement and best value.

### Strategic objective 4

Provide credible professional advice and assurance on policing by:

- Producing an annual report setting out HMCIC's view of the state of policing, details of our work and views on how policing and associated criminal justice or public sector practice should develop for the future.



- Demonstrating a sound understanding of the policing environment, strategic assessment and outcomes, policy priorities and risks, and (where appropriate) learning from our scrutiny partners regarding both policing and wider public sector risks and issues.
- Retaining an appropriate blend of skills and experience to maintain our currency and validity, providing high-quality professional advice on all aspects of policing.
- Reporting clearly, concisely and authoritatively, adapting our reporting to the needs of our stakeholders, and offering insights that add value to policing and associated criminal justice or public sector practice.
- Undertaking regular assurance reviews on aspects of operational delivery that will influence policy and legislation.

### Strategic objective 5

Invest in our own continuous improvement to ensure we operate as a professional and highly efficient and effective organisation by:

- Pursuing relevant accreditation, ensuring effective documented standards and quality assurance are in place to further strengthen the consistency of our scrutiny approach.
- Implementing an organisational improvement plan to ensure we have optimal governance, policies and processes in place, making the best use of our resources.
- Reviewing our inspection framework to ensure we are taking a consistent and professional approach to our work.
- Ensuring the highest professional and ethical standards are in place.
- Identifying and supporting training, learning and continuous professional development opportunities for our highly-skilled and dedicated staff to ensure they continue to have the right skills and knowledge to do their job.



**HMICS** HM INSPECTORATE OF  
CONSTABULARY IN SCOTLAND

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland  
1st Floor, St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Tel: 0131 244 5614

Email: [hmic@gov.scot](mailto:hmic@gov.scot)

Web: [www.hmics.scot](http://www.hmics.scot)

### **About His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland**

HMICS operates independently of Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and the Scottish Government. Under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, our role is to review the state, effectiveness and efficiency of Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. We support improvement in policing by carrying out inspections, making recommendations and highlighting effective practice.

© Crown copyright 2025

HMICS/2025/03