

# The week in review

*This week's round-up includes the announcement of Scotland's new HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, planned reforms to the oversight of police use of biometric data, and a report into the prevalence of cyber crime in Scotland.*

## **New Code for police use of biometric data**

✘ Plans for a new code of practice governing police handling of biometric data such as DNA, fingerprints, facial and other photographic images, have been confirmed this week.

An [Independent Advisory Group on Biometric Data](#) recommended a series of changes to how such data is used by Police Scotland.

The group, established by Justice Secretary Michael Matheson last year and chaired by John Scott QC Solicitor Advocate, examined the acquisition, retention, use and disposal of biometric data, and what improvements could be made to the regime governing this.

[Recommendations](#) include a new code of practice on the acquisition, retention, use and disposal of biometric data, and encouraging a 'national debate' to improve public understanding of and confidence in the use of such material.

Mr Matheson said the [Scottish Government accepted the Group's report](#) and the thrust of its recommendations, adding "The public should continue to have confidence in how their information is held and I hope that the publication of this report will kick-start a wider debate on biometric data and how it is best used to help keep our communities safe."

Police Scotland Assistant Chief Constable Gillian MacDonald added: "Any endeavour to strengthen the legislative framework and provide a balance between keeping the public safe from harm whilst ensuring the appropriate consideration of human rights and ethics is welcomed."

## **HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary appointed**

✘ Gillian Imery will succeed Derek Penman as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland in April, the Justice Secretary [announced this week](#).

Mrs Imery is currently Assistant Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland. She will lead HM Inspectorate of Constabulary Scotland (HMICS) to deliver an annual programme of independent inspection, monitoring and evaluation of Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority.

She said: "I am extremely proud to have been appointed to the role of HM

Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland, and am optimistic about the part HMICS can play in supporting improvement in policing for the benefit of the Scottish public. I believe it is important to have independent and objective scrutiny of policing to ensure challenging issues are addressed as well as to highlight the positive contribution policing makes to our communities.”

Michael Matheson welcomed her appointment, saying: “With a career spanning over 30 years in Scottish policing, most recently as Assistant Inspector of Constabulary, Gillian Imery brings with her a wealth of experience to the role of Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland. I am confident that Mrs Imery’s invaluable policing background and time already spent in HMICS will stand her in good stead as the new Chief Inspector.”

## **New Scottish Police Authority board members**

The Scottish Police Authority (SPA) Board will be strengthened by the appointment of seven new members, announced this week.

Welcoming the new appointees, the Justice Secretary said: “These new members will bring a broad range of skills and experience to the SPA, further strengthening it as it continues to scrutinise Police Scotland. Their backgrounds and successful track records in a number of fields will enhance the SPA as we approach the fifth anniversary of police and fire reform. This, coupled with the improvements in governance, engagement, and strategic leadership that the new Chair has initiated, will better enable the SPA to address the many new and evolving demands on Scottish policing.”

Read more about the new appointments on the [Scottish Police Authority website](#).

## **Evidence report on cyber-crime**

✘ A report published this week has drawn attention to the increase in the potential for criminals to exploit the growth in internet-use across Scotland. [Cyber-crime in Scotland: A Review of the Evidence](#), highlights that a number of different types of crime can and likely do involve the use of the internet and cyber-technologies, either as a precursor to a crime or in the committing of a crime itself.

Michael Matheson said: “This report shows how the internet and new technologies can impact on the scale and nature of criminal activity across Scotland. While fraud, online sexual crimes and computer misuse such as hacking might be the most obvious examples of cyber crime, we must remain vigilant at all times while online.

“The Policing 2026 strategy acknowledged the need to respond to new challenges in crime and Police Scotland are committed to recruiting more civilian cyber specialists to ensure they have the right mix of skills in place to counter the threat posed by cyber crime.”

## Strengthening home fire safety

Scotland's Housing Minister Kevin Stewart announced this week that the existing high fire safety standards required in the private rented housing will be extended to all homes.

This includes having at least one smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used, at least one smoke alarm in spaces such as hallways and landings and at least one heat alarm in every kitchen. Additional requirements will include specifying a maximum age of ten years for alarms and a carbon monoxide detector will be required in all homes.

The Minister said: "Fires and fatalities from fires are decreasing but even one death is one too many. Scotland already has rigorous standards for smoke and fire alarms developed over time, with the highest standard currently applied to new-build and private rented housing.

"The tragic events at Grenfell Tower last year emphasised how important building and fire safety is, which is why we brought forward our consultation on this issue. Now everyone will benefit from the same level of protection, whether you own your home, or rent from a social or private landlord."

Read more about the plans on the [main Scottish Government website](#).

## Monthly statistics update

The latest monthly Safer Communities & Justice briefing bulletin, prepared by Justice Analytical Services and containing the latest trends in criminal and civil justice was published this week. You can read the March briefing, including a feature on recent Criminal Proceedings statistics, on the [main Scottish Government website](#). And you can follow JAS on Twitter [@SGJusticeAnalys](#).

Morning cuppa and wee read of [@ScotGovJustice](#) safer [#communities](#) brief. Recorded [#crime](#) and numbers of [#victims](#) down. Positive! But, still more to be done. If you have been a [#victim](#) even if not reported to [@policescotland](#) you can contact [@VSScotland](#) for support 0345 6039213 [pic.twitter.com/rzLGrmFjDY](https://pic.twitter.com/rzLGrmFjDY)

– VSS Policy (@VSSPolicy) [March 22, 2018](#)

## Court improvements

This week the Scottish Courts & Tribunals Service revealed that it will shortly seek planning permission to build a new two-court complex in Fife, co-located with Police Scotland at its existing police station in Kirkcaldy.

The creation of the new courtrooms, supported by Scottish Government funding announced in the recent Budget, will improve efficiency and flexibility in

managing day to day business increasing the number of courtrooms and providing improved accommodation for court users, including victims, witnesses and jurors.

SCTS Chief Executive Eric McQueen said: “Current court performance at Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court remains strong and continues to improve, with summary trials being offered within the agreed 16 week period. However the reporting and detection of crimes, particularly domestic abuse and sexual offences, has increased, not only in volume but in complexity requiring more court time, and the new court facilities will provide the flexibility to accommodate this business.”

Chief Superintendent Colin Gall, Divisional Commander for Fife, added: “As part of Policing 2026, Police Scotland is committed to strengthening partnerships and improving outcomes for local communities. This opportunity will result in a key criminal justice partner being located within Kirkcaldy Police Station along with Police Scotland criminal justice resources and the existing local policing team.”

Read more on the [SCTS website](#).

[@SCTScourtstrib](#)s are planning to build a two court complex to hear sheriff and jury cases and custodies in Kirkcaldy. The proposal is for new criminal courtrooms and a court custody unit to be located in the existing Kirkcaldy [@policescotland](#) building.  
<https://t.co/F1faFappCl> [pic.twitter.com/Wi0bVd0KMr](https://t.co/Wi0bVd0KMr)

– Courtsandtribunals (@SCTScourtstrib) [March 19, 2018](#)

## **Glasgow city centre fire**

Finally, as many of us headed home for the weekend, the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service was continuing its work to completely extinguish fires resulting from the major blaze in Glasgow city centre.

At its height, more than 120 firefighters and 20 fire engines were mobilised to the incident in Sauchiehall Street, after fire took hold within several commercial properties including a nightclub, on Thursday morning.

Atmospheric testing has concluded that there is no risk to the public from asbestos, but the Incident Commander, Assistant Chief Officer Lewis Ramsay said on Friday afternoon that much work remained to be done to prevent further damage to surrounding properties and to ensure the area is made safe.

ACO Ramsay commented: “This was an incredibly difficult and complex incident – but the actions of our firefighters were and continue to be outstanding. This is a historic area of Glasgow – through our aggressive intervention and planning we were able to protect iconic buildings, such as the Pavilion Theatre, from significant damage. I would like to take this opportunity to

thank the hotels, businesses and people of Glasgow who opened their doors to our firefighters and our emergency service partners for their invaluable and continued support.”

An investigation will be carried out in due course to establish the cause of the fire.

Minister for Community Safety Annabelle Ewing, as well as Mr Matheson, and First Minister Nicola Sturgeon were among those paying tribute to the skill and professionalism of the firefighters and the other emergency responders who mobilised quickly to the centre of Scotland’s largest city in order to keep people safe.

Just chaired a meeting of [@scotgov](#) resilience group to be updated on current situation with [#SauchiehallStreet](#) fire. This remains a serious ongoing incident and my sincere thanks go to [@fire\\_scot](#) and other emergency services for their heroic work.

<https://t.co/TTE8UKo9W7>

– Nicola Sturgeon (@NicolaSturgeon) [March 22, 2018](#)

The post [The week in review](#) appeared first on [Justice and Safety](#).