



Council of the
ISLES OF SCILLY



Annual Assurance Statement

**Chief Fire Officer Mark Hewitt
Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service**

2023/24



Contents

1. Governance arrangements	3
2. Our plan	4
3. Isles of Scilly Risk.....	<u>5</u>
4. Overview of the Service	6
5. Your Fire and Rescue Authority	7
6. Our Core Values	8
7. Our Performance	<u>9</u>
7.1 How we performed during 2023/24	<u>10</u>

1. Governance arrangements

We are required to produce an annual statement of assurance as part of the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#), published in May 2018. The purpose of the statement is to provide assurance to communities and the Government that the service is being delivered efficiently and effectively.

The Annual Assurance Statement for the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service provides an opportunity to report on progress against our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2023-24, but also highlight progress against the identified areas for improvement from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) 2021/22 report.

In the production of our Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) we have ensured our responsible elected members, who make up the Fire Authority, have assured themselves of the progress and plans as set out in the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service's CRMP 2023-26.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England, it does not prescribe operational matters as these are determined locally by fire and rescue authorities. The Framework covers the way Fire and Rescue Services are led by central government, which includes inspection through HMICFRS.

The introduction of the inspectorate has continued to influence our direction and future. We have used the outcomes of our inspections and the ongoing national reforms to improve our fire and rescue service and ensure we play our part in fulfilling the government's commitment to deliver greater joint working between public services, which for the Isles of Scilly is already something we do everyday. Our 2021/22 inspection report can be found using the links below.

[Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2021/22 – Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectories.gov.uk\)](#)

Our previously known Service strategic document for 2019-2023 was called an Integrated Risk Management Plan. Our Service strategic document for 2023-26 is now called our 'Community Risk Management Plan' (CRMP) and sets out our vision, risk objectives and our Core Code of Ethics.

This annual Statement of Assurance is a backward-looking document aimed at providing assurance for 2023/24, that we are providing an efficient, effective and value for money service to the communities within the Isles of Scilly in our statutory, financial, governance and operational matters.

2. Our plan

Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) evolves on an annual basis driven by many influences including recommendations following audits, assessments, consultation with staff, elected members and the public. National, regional and local influences including new legislation, HMICFRS recommendations, regulation or identified good practice also play a key part.

Our Service vision is:

'Working together to make Isles of Scilly safer'

Our Service **risk objectives** are:

- Reducing the impact on individuals and the community from fire and other incidents
- Mitigating the social, economic and environmental impact of fires and other incidents through prevention, protection and response activity
- Improving our workforce understanding of diversity and inclusion to better represent the community
- Seeking to reduce vulnerability by improving health and wellbeing within the community.

We will deliver and achieve our risk objectives through:

- **Prevention** – Improving the health, safety and wellbeing of the people and communities
- **Protection** – Protecting businesses, people, the local economy and environment from fire and wider community related risks.
- **Response** – Delivering an effective and efficient emergency response and recovery service
- **People and Resources** – Developing our workforce to ensure we have the right training, skills, competencies and behaviours to deliver our service, and ensure we have the right systems, equipment, vehicles and information to deliver value for money services effectively and efficiently.

3. Isles of Scilly Risk

The Isles of Scilly has a **higher proportion of people aged 65+ than the UK and England average**. Over a **quarter of people living on the islands are aged 65+ (28%)** and are therefore at an increased risk of fire. Of the 379 home fire safety checks carried out over the past five years, 51% of them have been in homes where a resident is aged 65+.

The **increasing number of older people living** on the islands, combined with a **reduction in the working age population**, is one of the key risks facing the fire and rescue service.

Automatic Fire Alarms account for 50% of the most frequently attended incident type for the fire and rescue service. However, the past 5 year trend shows that each year the service is called upon to attend up to four dwelling fires on the islands. Most common dwelling fires are **chimney fires** (linked to the fact that 26% of households on the islands do not have central heating) which tend to be across November to April. In a majority of dwelling fires, alarm systems are not present, suggesting that prevention activity should focus on increasing home fire safety checks as well as messaging around chimney fires.

The alcohol needs assessment for the islands highlights issues with **problematic alcohol use** which also presents a risk for fire and rescue related incidents. However, this is not evident in the information that has been collected about fire and road traffic collisions.

The **majority of incidents occur on the most populated island St Mary's**. Over the past ten years there have only been very low numbers of fire, special service calls and false alarms on the other islands. While the service must continue to be equipped and trained to respond to fires and special service calls on the four other inhabited islands the greatest demand for resources is from the island of St Mary's. During the tourist season the population of the islands significantly increases placing a demand on services and infrastructure. **Incidents are most likely to occur during the summer months** with July the peak time for emergency calls. The increase in population during the summer months has the potential to place a **significant demand on emergency services in the event of a period of adverse weather or a large-scale incident**, which emphasises the importance of Prevention and Protection activities.

Despite the potential risk posed by the water and popular sailing and maritime events on the islands, there is **no evidence of an impact on water related incidents** on the service. Over the past ten years, the service has only been called to attend four incidents where boats have been involved.

A risk for the islands and service is the **potential for a hazardous material or environmental contamination** incident. Over the past ten years the service has been called to attend three of these incidents. The environmental impact this would have on the islands and passing maritime vessels means that the service must be trained and equipped to respond to this risk. Multi agency training was provided to local emergency responders including the Fire & Rescue Service in March 2024.

4. Overview of the Service

We are predominantly an on-call service meaning that operational firefighters have a primary employment elsewhere, but in the event of an emergency are paged and respond immediately to their respective fire station. Given the nature of the service and issues faced in such a remote and isolated community, all fire-fighters are versatile and therefore trained to deal with a range of emergency incidents and humanitarian assistance.

In 2020 we appointed the islands' first ever wholetime station manager for the Isles of Scilly to increase capacity in recognition of the significant and essential demands being placed on the service. The post holder has overarching responsibility for operational efficiency and effectiveness across the islands. The service is also supported by a part time, experienced, island-based business support officer.

In January 2023 we also appointed a uniformed Chief Fire Officer who provided 5 days per month strategic lead and support to the service and reports to the Council's Chief Executive Officer.

The resources for each island provide an appropriate response to their particular risks and are summarised below:

Island	Establishment	Appliance(s)
St Marys	1 Station Manager (wholetime) 1 Watch Manager (B) 2 Crew Managers 10 Firefighters	2008 MAN fire appliance (replaced the previous 1996 Mercedes water tender ladder in 2022) 2010 4x4 Toyota Hilux
St Agnes	1 Watch Manager 1 Crew Manager 5 Firefighters	1991 tractor and water bowser trailer
Bryher	1 Watch Manager 1 Crew Manager 5 Firefighters	1994 tractor and water bowser trailer
Tresco	1 Watch Manager 1 Crew Manager 5 Firefighters	2016 6x6 Mercedes sprinter
St Martins	1 Watch Manager 1 Crew Manager 5 Firefighters	1993 tractor and water bowser trailer

The predominantly on call operating model of the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service is augmented with partnership arrangements with the Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service under a service level agreement. The Isles of Scilly Airport carries out prevention work on

the island of St Mary's as well as equipment maintenance and testing. Cornwall Council provides budgeting, financial management, and IT equipment and support.

5. Your Fire and Rescue Authority

Governance is how the Council operates and makes decisions. It makes sure that decisions take public opinion into account, reflect and respond to the needs of the local risk, local people and are transparent and accountable.

The Council of the Isles of Scilly is also the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Authority. Elected Members of the Council hold the service to account on behalf of the public and ensure adequate scrutiny of our CRMP. The Annual Statement of Assurance is signed off by Members of the Council of Isles of Scilly and provides the public and Government with assurance that the service is being delivered effectively, efficiently and in line with agreed budgets.

The Isles of Scilly have a service level agreement (SLA) with Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service providing services such as specialist training, emergency 999 call handling, incident support, Fire Safety duties and CRMP development. The SLA outlines in detail the level of support Cornwall will provide to the Isles of Scilly. The purpose of this agreement is to provide an efficient and effective way of working in the delivery of support function activities which our fire and rescue service requires.

To provide assurance on the activities within the SLA, the services have a working group which monitors and agrees on the performance of the SLA. The partnership has delivered and continues to deliver an effective and efficient arrangement, however it was recognised through the HMICFRS 2021/22 report that governance arrangements for the partnerships and SLA could be improved to provide better oversight and scrutiny.



6. Our Core Values

We have aligned and embedded the national Fire & Rescue Services Core Code of Ethics and are becoming the heart of service and the way we conduct business.



Putting our communities first

We put the interests of the public, the community, and service users first.



Integrity

We act with integrity including being open, honest, and consistent in everything that we do.



Dignity and respect

We treat people with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.



Leadership

We are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership.

We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.



Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)

We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI, both within the FRS and the wider communities in which we serve.

We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.

The Core Code sets out the ethical principles to help us continuously improve our organisational culture and workforce diversity and assist us in supporting our community in the best way. It is effective only when we all consistently demonstrate the ethical behaviours.

7. Our Performance

The table provides a breakdown of the islands operational activity in the year 2023/24

Island	Incident Category	No. Incidents
Bryher	False Alarm	2
	Fire	0
	Special Service	0
St Agnes	False Alarm	2
	Fire	0
	Special Service	2
St Martins	False Alarm	2
	Fire	2
	Special Service	0
St Marys	False Alarm	6
	Fire	4
	Special Service	4
Tresco	False Alarm	2
	Fire	0
	Special Service	0
Total		26

This represents an overall reduction of 7% in incident call outs from the previous year of 2022-23.

Area of service	Measure	Target	Year end outcome
Prevention	Response to HFSC referrals	No of HFSCs undertaken	117
Protection	Fire safety audits	No completed	35
Response	Failure to mobilise to an incident	90% (across the service; all five islands)	100%
People and resources	Training and development	100% Medical compliance 90% Fitness compliance 90% BA compliance 90% Incident command compliance 100% PDS completions	100% 100% 100% 94% 0% (due to changing of PDS to fall inline with

		100% Mandatory training compliance	CloS) 100%
--	--	------------------------------------	---------------

7.1 How we performed during 2023/24

This is how we have performed against our 2023/24 objectives:

Risk Objectives	Performance
Reducing the impact on individuals and the community from fire and other incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have undertaken 117 Home Fire Safety Checks through this year. • We have met and delivered Home Fire Safety Check awareness to Adult Social Care staff on how to make referrals. • We utilise the national <i>Fire Kills</i> calendar to promote safety messages on social media at appropriate times of the year. • We have worked with our islands Childrens services and delivered a joint safety awareness day, called 'Be a Firefighter for the day'. • We delivered a Duke of Edinburgh scheme which saw 12 students successfully complete the course. • We have maintained review of our Service Level Agreement to ensure that we are delivering our service efficiently and effectively
Mitigating the social, economic and environmental impact of fires and other incidents through prevention, protection and response activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through our Section 101 agreement with Cornwall FRS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 35 Fire Safety Audits have been undertaken - 60 people attended business Fire Safety engagement events - 2 enforcement notices have been issued - 2 prohibition notices have been issued. • We have undertaken joint visits with

	<p>the Environmental Health Officers where there have been identified causes for concern.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have replaced our Breathing Apparatus equipment as part of a 10-year compliance package. (Old equipment donated to the Ukraine Fire & Rescue Services) • We have provided and issued portable backpack style water sprayers for dealing with grass fires with an additive fire suppressant liquid. • We have undertaken our site specific risk visit inspections and updated our risk records. • We have undertaken a full round of Operational Preparedness audits and incorporated Cornwall FRS Critical Control Centre into our live exercises and training scenarios. • We have introduced 2 Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's) to electronically store our premise risk information and standard operational procedures. • We have procured a 4x4 tractor for Bryher Fire Station following some incident debrief outcomes. • We have completed a succession planning template to ensure the ongoing development of firefighters and training required to ensure we have the skills and knowledge necessary to provide our service. • We have exercised our response to a major incident at St Marys Airport. • We had trained some staff in dealing with oil pollution incidents with our multi agency partners.
<p>Improving our workforce understanding of diversity and inclusion to better represent the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have promoted and undertaken pre recruitment 'have a go sessions' • We have undertaken targeted recruitment activity on St Agnes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have provided Equality Impact Assessment training to our managers • We have provided Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training and workshops to our managers • We have attended and supported the local Pride event on St Marys with Firefighters attending from the off islands. • We have introduced the Fire & Rescue Services Core Code of Ethics into the service. • Manager promotion interviews include questions focusing on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
Seeking to reduce vulnerability by improving health and wellbeing within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have provided safeguarding training to all staff to include the identification and referral process for Safeguarding. • We support and attend the safer Scilly meeting. • Where required, we attend multi agency risk mitigation meetings to reduce vulnerability. • We have attended an Adults Social Care drop in session promoting our home fire safety checks.