

Annual Assurance Statement 2024 - 2025

Council of the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Authority

1. Introduction

This Annual Assurance Statement has been prepared and published in accordance with the requirements set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

It provides assurance to our communities, the Home Office, and other stakeholders that the Council of the Isles of Scilly continues to meet its statutory duties and obligations.

This statement has been jointly signed by the Chair of the Fire Authority and the Chief Fire Officer, confirming that appropriate arrangements are in place for:

- Delivering statutory fire and rescue functions
- Sound governance, financial stewardship, and transparency
- Effective operational preparedness and resilience
- Collaboration with partners to protect and serve our communities

2. Governance

The Council of the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Authority has clear governance arrangements, with oversight provided through the Councils Scrutiny Committee,

Decisions are subject to public scrutiny and published in line with transparency regulations.

Assurance is provided through internal audit, external audit, and risk management processes.

3. Risk Management and Planning (CRMP/IRMP)

We have a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-26 that identifies foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks.

Our prevention, protection, and response strategies are based on risk analysis and ensure resources are proportionately targeted.

We continually review emerging risks through engagement with communities and partners.

4. Financial Assurance

The Authority has robust financial planning, management, and reporting arrangements.

The Council of the Isles of Scilly external auditors have provided assurance that our financial statements for 2023-24 are sound. The external audit for 2024-25 is currently in progress.

5. Operational Assurance and Resilience

The Council of the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Authority maintains operational preparedness to respond to incidents.

We work closely with partners through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and mutual aid arrangements.

Unlike other fire and rescue services on mainland England, the isolated nature of the islands requires specific arrangements for mutual aid. These arrangements exist with Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service for the provision of operational support and specialist advice where required.

6. Collaboration and Partnerships

We fulfil our statutory duty to collaborate under the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

We work alongside police, ambulance, health, and other agencies to improve community safety and efficiency.

Key examples of collaboration in this period include:

- Our shared station facilities with the Ambulance Service and HM Coastguard.
- Joint response with Police, Coastguard and Ambulance to assist with locating a vulnerable missing person.
- Work with local authority adults and children's services to support the wellbeing of vulnerable residents through home fire safety visits.

7. Workforce, People, and Culture

We invest in training and development to maintain a safe and competent workforce.

In order to ensure efficient and accessible training for our staff, a number of our initial skills training and refresher courses are delivered on the main island of St Mary's. This is a change from an historic position where staff were required to attend training on the mainland.

In recognition of the reduced exposure to operational incidents, all operational personnel who are trained in incident command, complete and annual refresher training and assessment delivered on the islands through our service level agreement with Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service.

Specialist courses such as breathing apparatus and driving continue to be delivered on the mainland by Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service.

We are committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion and have invested in the training and education of our workforce in this critical area of workforce culture.

8. Performance and Improvement

Performance is monitored against CRMP objectives and reported through the Council of the Isles of Scilly Scrutiny Committee.

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) 2023-25 inspection report concluded that the Isles of Scilly Fire & Rescue Service has made notable progress since the previous inspection, especially considering the unique challenges of serving a remote island community. While there are still areas for development, the report underlines many strengths and provides a solid foundation for further improvements. The HMICFRS report concluded that the Service demonstrated the following key strengths and improvements.

- The service has developed a thorough Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), using a wide variety of data (population, health, incident data, crime, etc.) to identify risks.

- It has successfully closed a previous area for improvement around gathering risk information from prevention activity and local knowledge, formalising its processes to record and share this information.
- Protection work is now clearly linked with identified risk in the CRMP. Efforts to identify all sleeping-risk premises on the islands are underway, and high-risk premises are being included in the risk-based inspection programme.
- Audits and enforcement are carried out consistently, and the standard of audits is high. The agreement with Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service provides strong support, including regular inspections and follow-ups.
- The Service is meeting its operational standards under its own locally set response targets. Equipment and staffing are aligned to the island risks (e.g. off-island fire engines, adapted kit like aqua backpacks, better PPE) so the service is able to respond appropriately given its resources.
- Incident commanders are all accredited, and there is ongoing focus on maintaining, reviewing and developing command skills.
- There has been improved oversight of service-level agreements, especially with Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service, and clearer arrangements about service provision and costs.
- The budget for 2024/25 shows a modest increase, and the service demonstrates good cost scrutiny, collaborative procurement, and efforts to secure value for money.
- Staff morale is positive. The inspection found a strong sense of pride and that staff understand and model the service's values.
- Training and development have improved. The Service has introduced a competency dashboard to monitor skills, structured training (including with Cornwall FRS), and clearer promotion processes.
- Well-being support is in place, including improved access to occupational health services (reducing travel burden), and staff report confidence in the available policies.

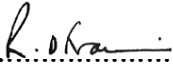
The Service has responded to recommendations from the HMICFRS inspection and will continue to deliver improvements.

9. Conclusion

Through this statement, the Authority confirms that it has acted in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and other relevant legislation.

We are confident that Council of the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Authority has effective governance, financial, and operational arrangements in place to deliver its statutory functions and keep our communities safe.

Signed:


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Chair of Council of the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Authority



Chief Fire Officer

Date: 18 November 2025
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