



Annual Assurance Statement

**Chief Executive
Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service**

2018/19

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1. Purpose of this Document

All Fire & Rescue Services 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.

Whilst 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. What the National Framework did prescribe was a significant change to the way Fire and Rescue Services would be led by Central government. Fire and Rescue Services moved to the Home Office government department and with this move came the introduction of Her Majesty Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services.

Other changes and reforms to fire and rescue service policy have also been introduced that are being implemented, which fit into three key themes:

- efficiency and collaboration – we have a statutory duty to collaborate with other emergency services in the Policing and Crime Act 2017, to include co-response, co-location and joint /national procurement;
- accountability and transparency – including the introduction of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescues Services (HMICFRS);
- workforce reform – including the introduction of flexible duty systems, apprenticeships, diverse workforce, attracting and retaining staff, professional leadership, talent pipeline, service culture and staff engagement and national professional standards.

In 2018 the HMICFRS began independently assessing all Fire & Rescue services in England focusing on effectiveness, efficiency and people. These assessments enable the public to compare the performance of their fire and rescue service against others and used to drive improvements in the services that are provided to the public. The Isles of Scilly was in the first tranche of these inspections with the inspection report released in December 2018 and summarised later in this statement.

The changes prescribed nationally will influence the future of the Isles of Scilly Fire & Rescue Service. We will therefore need to ensure that we consider the reforms and how we can 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 every day.

For the period 2018/19, an Interim Risk Management Plan (IRMP) was prepared demonstrating the Fire and Rescue Authority's desire to maintain and improve a high level of service. The IRMP provides the basis and drive for improvement focusing of the HMICFRS redefined priorities and subsequent actions which the Service undertook for the year.

This annual Statement of Assurance is a backward-looking document aimed at providing assurance for 2018/19 that the Isles of Scilly Fire & Rescue Service is providing an efficient, effective and value for money service to the its communities having regard to financial, governance and operational matters.

2. About Us

The Isles of Scilly is an archipelago 28 miles off the south west coast of mainland UK. Comprising 5 inhabited islands with their own distinct character, the population totals 2,310 (Source: Local Insight Profile, Cornwall Council - July 2018), although swells to around 6,000 in the peak of summer, reflecting its significance as a holiday destination. The working age population (16-64), is set to decline from 65% of the population to 52% by 2030. An aged population, with many living alone, and an influx of visitors represents the biggest risk for the fire and rescue service.

The remote location and tiny fragmented population means that the islands face some significant challenges; not least vulnerability and risk of economic and population decline. Many of the issues facing the Isles of Scilly are synonymous with other island communities, including costly infrastructure, high transport and freight costs, limited competition and a population size that is too small to provide economies of scale or generate sufficient income to fund essential services.

In accordance with the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Council of the Isles of Scilly is required to provide a Fire and Rescue Service for the Isles of Scilly (IoSFRS). The IoSFRS is the smallest in the UK comprising on call retained fire-fighters and volunteers based on each inhabited island. Our size, isolated location and limited resources mean that there is limited scope to make savings through economies of scale. As such, collaboration and partnership working with Cornwall Fire, Rescue & Community Safety Service (CFRCSS) and St Mary's Airport Fire & Rescue Service provides the most cost effective solution to ensuring that we have the appropriate capacity and resources to meet the needs and expectations of our community. The service is also committed to improving collaboration and partnership working with other emergency services operational on the islands to ensure that resources are shared where ever possible to improve capacity, resilience and save on costs.

Due to the small size and remoteness of the islands, the Isles of Scilly Fire & Rescue Service faces some specific challenges as summarised below:

- Recruiting and retaining fire-fighters, particularly on the off-islands, given our tiny and rapidly aging population and acute shortage of affordable homes (currently the islands are experiencing a slight population decline coupled with an aging population with predictions indicating that only 52% of the population will be of working age by 2030);
- Making the service more affordable and securing sufficient funds given the costs of providing an effective, resilient and responsive service for each inhabited island is proportionally more expensive than anywhere else in England reflecting our geographically isolated and tiny population spread across 5 islands that all need to be protected and kept safe;
- Providing an operationally effective and modern fire & rescue service that can respond to the needs of the community and its risks given the Council's extremely limited resources, the proportionately high costs of the service (see below) and isolated location;
- Providing an appropriate engineering resource on the islands to maintain, service and repair our vehicles and equipment due to the lack of any commercial engineering businesses on the islands and remoteness from specialist engineering businesses located on the mainland.

3. Our Plan

The IRMP sets out the key actions and priorities for the Fire & Rescue Service and driven by many influences, including national and regional legislation, regulations and policies and recommendations following audit, assessment and review, consultation with staff, elected members and the public. Key actions are grouped in to three service delivery areas.

Fire Safety

The Fire Safety function, with support from all Fire and Rescue Service personnel, co-ordinates effective fire safety advice and education to the general public, business community and visitors to the Isles of Scilly. The purpose of this essential work is to reduce the number of fire related deaths, injuries and property damage.

The fire safety function through inspection and reporting discharges the statutory fire safety functions of the Fire Authority. These include the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and other legislation where a statutory duty to consult the Fire Authority is imposed.

Operations

The requirement of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 will be met through the provision of an effective operational response capability. Standards for fire cover will be maintained through a professional system of emergency call management and effective deployment of trained personnel, equipped with the appropriate fire-fighting resources proportionate and tailored to the respond to the risks on the Isles of Scilly.

Administration, personnel and establishment

To provide and manage personnel, training and establishment administrative functions. To assist in the development and implementation of the Council's personnel policies, procedures and employment practice so that they are appropriate and proportionate to addressing the requirements of the islands Fire & Rescue Service.

4. Isles of Scilly Risk Profile

Of the 2,310 people that live on the islands, 16% are children aged 0-17, 25% are aged 65+ and 7% are aged 80+. The **proportion of older people aged 65+ is much higher** in the Isles of Scilly (25%) in comparison with the UK (16%) and England (17%) average. **14% of people have a limiting long-term illness** compared with 18% across England. The **working age population (aged 16-64), is set to decline** from 65% of the population to 52% by 2030.

People on the islands have to work hard to sustain a living wage. Many individuals have at least two jobs. Various studies of the economy show that self-employed rates are high but **average pay is significantly lower than the regional and national averages**. The limited **availability of affordable housing** is a critical issue for people on the Isles of Scilly, which also affects the sustainability of public services on the islands. 50% of households have no car in comparison with 26% across England.

There are 1,389 households¹ on the Isles of Scilly; 71% of these households have one usual resident and 28.8% have no usual residents. 34% of households are single person households and there are **150 homes (15% of households) with a person aged 65+ living alone**. 21% of households on the islands have a person with a long-term health problem or disability. **26% of households lack central heating compared with 3% across England**.

Of the resident population, 98.8% are white, 0.8% are mixed/ multiple ethnic groups, 0.1% are Asian/ Asian British, 0.1% are Black/ African/Caribbean/ Black British and 0.2% are other ethnic group. The majority of residents (55.3%) stated Christianity as their religion in the 2011 Census with 33.7% stating no religion. A very small proportion of residents on the islands are Buddhists, Muslims, Jewish and Hindu.

A comprehensive review of risk for the Isles of Scilly is published within the Risk Based Evidence Profile set out in the IRMP 2019 - 2022.

¹ NOMIS, Local Area Report, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=1946157350>

5. Overview of the Service

The Isles of Scilly operate a fully retained and On Call Fire & Rescue Service, which means that all of our Firefighters have a primary employment elsewhere, but in the event of an emergency are paged and respond immediately to their respective Fire Station. The resources for each island provide an appropriate response to their particular risks and are summarised below:

| Island (& Population) | Personnel | Appliance(s) |
|------------------------|---|--|
| St Marys | Station Manager 1 Watch Managers (B) 2 Crew Managers 12 Firefighters | 1996 Mercedes Water Tender Ladder 2014 4x4 Toyota Hilux |
| St Agnes | 1 Watch Manager 1 Crew Manager 5 Firefighters | 1986 Tractor & water bowser trailer |
| Bryher | 1 Watch Manager 1 Crew Manager 4 Firefighters | 1986 Tractor & water bowser trailer |
| Tresco | 1 Watch Manager 1 Crew Manager 4 Firefighters | 1990 Dodge 50 Series Rescue Pump |
| St Martins | 1 Watch Manager 1 Crew Manager 5 Firefighters 1 Volunteers | 1986 Tractor & water bowser trailer |

6. Governance arrangements

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 local people and are transparent and accountable.

The Fire and Rescue Service for the islands is delivered by the Council of the Isles of Scilly. The Council is a Unitary Authority and comprises 16 elected Councillors, overseeing the policy and delivery of our fire and rescue services. We have a Lead Member for Place and part of the portfolio responsibilities relate to the fire and rescue service. Scrutiny of our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) is provided through the Annual Statement of Assurance for each year covered by the IRMP. The Annual Statement of Assurance statement is considered by Full Council each year.

7. Our Core Values

The values of the Isles of Scilly Fire & Rescue Service set out the beliefs and behaviours at the heart of our organisation and are integral to the IRMP:



8. Our Performance

For the year 2018/19 and in line with the IRMP, the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service achieved the following specific actions:

Fire Safety

| Specific Actions 2018/19 | £ Cost/ Resource | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|
| Maintain the Home Fire Safety revisit programme to include electrical equipment tests and validation of previous visits (Target - 100 visits per year) Actual Visits: 2018/19 67 Home Fire Safety visits | Included in the Service Level Agreement with the Airport | Acting Station Manager and Airport Lead |
| Fire Safety responsibilities and regulations delegated to Cornwall Fire Rescue and Community Safety Service through a Section 101 Agreement | Supported through the SLA with Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service | Chief Executive |

Operations

The table provides a breakdown of the islands operational activity in the year 2018/19

| Island | Incident type | 2018/19 |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| St Marys | Fire | 8 |
| | Special Service Call | 1 |
| | False Alarm | 1 |
| Bryher | Fire | 1 |
| | Special Service Call | 1 |
| St Martins | Fire | 0 |
| | Special Service Call | 0 |
| | False Alarm | 1 |
| St Agnes | Fire | 0 |
| | Special Service Call | 0 |
| Tresco | Fire | 0 |
| | Special Service Call | 0 |
| | False Alarm | 0 |
| Total | | 13 |

The above included one fire on St Mary's where support was requested from Cornwall FRS; this incident included an Operational Effectiveness Audit, Fire Investigation and a formal debrief.

Administration, personnel and establishment

| Specific Actions 2018/19 | £ Cost/ Resource | Responsibility |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Provided training to the Crew, Watch and Station Managers on incident command | Funding within FRS budget. | Delivered through SLA |
| Continued to implement and maintain a physical fitness testing regime for fire staff to meet the National Framework Agreement | Funding within FRS budget. | Station Manager/Watch managers B |
| Completed a gap analysis of training compliance for mandatory safety critical courses | Funding within FRS budget. | Chief Executive delivered through SLA |
| Breathing apparatus training was undertaken as a priority In line with the gap analysis | Funding within FRS budget. | Chief Executive delivered through SLA |
| Collaborative Agreement with Cornwall FRS revised | Funding within FRS budget. | Chief Executive |
| Prepared and completed all data and document requests and hosted visits for the inspection of the HMICFRS | Funding within FRS budget. | Chief Executive supported through the SLA |
| Preparation of work to produce a three year Integrated Risk Management Plan | Funding within FRS budget. | Chief Executive delivered through SLA |
| Hosted a Collaboration Event bringing together Police, Fire, Ambulance, RNLI, Coastguard and Harbour reps and leading to the establishment of a Task & Finish Group to improve collaboration | Funding within FRS budget. | Chief Executive delivered through SLA |

The Outcome of the HMICFRS Inspection

The Isles of Scilly Fire & Rescue Service was in the first tranche of the HMICFRS inspections and had an impact on capacity during 2018 due to the considerable amount of work involved. The inspection, carried out on July 2018, assessed the service against 3 broad areas of competence:

| HMICFRS Theme | Isles of Scilly Graded Judgement |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Effectiveness - How effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks? | GOOD |
| Efficiency - How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks? | GOOD |
| People - How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people? | Requires Improvement |

Specific to the Isles of Scilly, the findings have concluded that the fire and rescue service is effective at keeping people safe from fire and emergencies and understands the risks the islands community face. It has also found that the service has a good understanding of the risks on the islands and is good at preventing and responding to fires and emergencies. The report recognises that the service provides an efficient service by making good use of resources but concludes it should make its services more affordable - which is extremely challenging given the tiny population base spread across 5 separate islands.

The report acknowledges that the service continues to improve the service, including the way it protects the public through fire regulation by delegating this function to Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service who have the expertise and resources to undertake this specialist work. A key area for improvement is how the authority looks after its firefighters, a shortcoming common to most of the fire services inspected so far. The service is working hard to ensure that improvements in this area are made, including promoting a positive culture, skills, diversity and performance management. There is recognition from the HMICFRS that the service is already improving in this area through a training programme targeted to the needs of Isles of Scilly firefighters and the risks they face.

In summation, the service is proud of the outcome and scoring it achieved, but appreciates there is a significant amount of work to do to maintain these judgements and improve, including implementing the recommendations from the inspection.

The full HMICFRS report on the Isles of Scilly Fire & Rescue Service at can be viewed at:
<https://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/frs-assessment-2018-19-isles-of-scilly/>

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