

# Appendix A



## Annual Assurance Statement 2022/23

April 2022 to March 2023

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## Introduction

This Statement seeks to provide an accessible way in which communities, central government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of our Fire and Rescue Authority's performance for the financial year 2022/23. It aims to provide assurance that the Authority is meeting the priorities it has set itself in the Safety Plan 2020-2025. The publishing of the Annual Assurance Statement is a requirement of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018.

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority is a large Authority based in the South of England which covers an area of more than 1600 square miles. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight is home to a population of just over 2 million people dispersed across rural, urban and coastal areas. Rural Hampshire covers 83% of the county with urban areas accounting for the remaining 17%. Whilst the overriding character of the Island is rural, about 60% of the Island's population live within the main towns of Newport, Cowes, East Cowes, Ryde, Sandown and Shanklin.

Hampshire is bordered to the west by Dorset and Wiltshire, to the east by West Sussex and Royal Berkshire and Surrey to the north. The county is bordered by the Solent to the south which is one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world served by the commercial ports of Southampton and Portsmouth.

During the height of the summer season the population can double with visitors to the Island which causes a large volume of vehicles on the roads. It is estimated that, in non-pandemic times, around 2 million people visit the Isle of Wight each year. Newport is the largest county town by population (around 17,000) and is home to the Isle of Wight Council (IWC), St Mary's Hospital, courts and other public services.

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are rich in history with national parks, significant places of interest and heritage sites of international importance. The cities of Southampton and Portsmouth are urban areas of growing populations with universities that are seeing significant growth in student numbers and accommodation requirements. The growth in industry around Winchester and Basingstoke highlights the changing landscape. Balanced with this are large numbers of remote villages with many thatched and listed buildings.

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are home to several significant military bases and ports. There are also several businesses that are classified as Control of Major Accidents and Hazard (COMAH) sites. These locations have specific plans in place to manage the risks they have on site. There is a large and diverse range of commercial and industrial elements across Hampshire with heavy industries, including Fawley Oil Refinery and BAE Systems.

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight also have several major transport hubs including airports, ferry terminals, commercial ports, major motorways and several major hospitals, prisons and key infrastructure.

Our purpose is *Together we make life safer* for everyone in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and for our people. We work hard to educate people to take the right action

to reduce the risk of fires and other incidents happening. But if they do occur then we ensure we have the best equipment and skilled people available to respond accordingly.

Over the last decade we have successfully driven down the number of fires and fire-related casualties to around half the level of 10 years ago. Despite this we continue to look for more ways to improve the safety of people in Hampshire. We are also passionate about collaborating and working ever more closely with our partners and our communities to further enhance the safety of the county.

We believe in learning and improving and constantly look to develop what we do for our communities, as well as ensuring that we provide value for money. To achieve this improvement, we encourage feedback from our communities, staff, partner organisations, and other professionals.

We gather information from members of the public after incidents and undertake a range of audits, evaluations and assessments, both internally and by external bodies. All of these are used to assist us to understand our strengths and weaknesses and inform our strategic assessment and Safety plan.

We are proud of our past performance; however, we will not stand still and are always seeking ways to deliver Public Value.

## **Summary**

We are incredibly proud of what the Service has achieved over this last year – through the potential for industrial action, increased sickness levels, an His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection and commencing our Safety Plan 2025-2030 process, we have seen the same passion and drive for making life safer.

For the past couple of years, the Annual Assurance Statement has focused heavily on the COVID-19 Pandemic and how we have worked with our partners, however this year, alongside continuing to support our partners through a wide range of activities, we have started to look forward, ensuring are in the best position to effectively manage risk in our communities in the future.

In the Summer of 2022, the Authority agreed to start the production of our next Safety Plan 2025-2030 by using the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) methodology. The CRMP methodology will result in the creation of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority Safety Plan 2025-2030. The plan will outline the key risks our communities face and how the Service plan to mitigate those risks.

Alongside looking forward, the Service continued to work on delivering the commitments made in the Safety Plan 2020-2025. 2022-2023 moved us into year three of the plan and much progress has been made including the completion of a new On Call fire station in Bishops Waltham, the creation of our Inclusive Strategy to progress our equality, diversity and inclusion activity and the roll out of a new risk

based process for Safe and Well visits. In February 2023, [the Authority approved year four Safety Plan improvement activity](#) which have a strong focus on further investing in, and supporting, healthy workplaces and staff wellbeing. The Authority and Executive Group continue to provide oversight and scrutiny of Safety Plan activity.

A refreshed Performance Report was presented to the Authority in June 2023. The Performance Report highlights the hard work and dedication of the workforce whilst navigating a particularly challenging and eventful year during 2022-2023. The Performance Report is a particularly important aspect of our assurance framework.

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service Performance Report](#)

## **Governance**

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is a combined authority made up of 11 elected members who collaborate and make collective decisions. Our Fire Authority is made up of 8 Hampshire County Council members, 1 Isle of Wight Council member, 1 Portsmouth City Council member and 1 Southampton City Council member. The Authority delegates responsibility for a wide range of decisions relating to operational delivery to the Chief Fire Officer (or other officers). Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) is the name given to the operational fire and rescue service led by the Chief Fire Officer. The Service staff and officers are employed by the Authority to deliver the day-to-day operational functions.

To support this, we have a Scheme of Delegation, Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations combined into the Authority's Constitution. The Constitution sets out in a single place and in clear language, how the Authority works with the Service and how it makes decisions.

For more details on our Constitution, please see:

[HIWFRA Constitution July 2023](#)

To support our Constitution, it is essential for us to have an appropriate and robust governance framework. The framework operates with clear reporting lines and streamlines decision making. It also enables us to monitor the achievement of our priorities and to consider whether they have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective and efficient services.

As part of the framework, we have several boards where decisions are made and performance managed. At the highest level we have the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority meeting. This is a public meeting where all high-level decisions are discussed and made by the Authority, with the Authority supported by its Standards and Governance Committee, which includes 5 members and meets quarterly. Before items are brought to the Authority they are first discussed by the service in the Executive Group. This meeting is a crucial part of

the governance framework and is supported by several sub-committees and groups aligned to our Directorate structure.

The details of our framework are presented in our Annual Governance Statement, which is an essential part of our financial Statement of Accounts. Alongside the publishing of the Governance Statement, the Service publish information on our website as part of the Transparency Code 2015.

[Information we publish - Transparency Code 2025](#)

## **Safety Plan**

Our plans and strategies are formed around the large amount of data we collate and analyse. We also review risk regularly, so we can work out how to best protect our communities. This then informs our Strategic Assessment (of Risk) which adds context and detail to aid our planning process.

During 2022-2023, the Service developed an interactive and dynamic Strategic Assessment of Risk that is updated regularly and will be used to inform the new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) methodology (formerly known as Integrated Risk Management Plan – IRMP)

Our current Safety Plan 2020-2025 was developed using the IRMP methodology. Through this methodology, which identifies potential risks that could affect communities and how we can address them, our Safety Plan 2020-2025 was launched.

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service Safety Plan](#)

The 2022-2023 year saw us move into year three of the five year Safety Plan. During this year, there was regular scrutiny of our progress in delivering Safety Plan improvements, with reporting internally, including to the Executive Group and to the Fire Authority. The latest Performance Report highlights the achievements of year three.

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service Performance Report](#)

### **Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)**

In Summer 2022, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (HIWFRS) agreed a business case to produce the next Safety Plan covering 2025-2030. In support of this HIWFRS intend to carry out the work of the CRMP in two stages. Stage one commenced from September 2022 until June 2023. Stage one gave a clear understanding of, and identified, the risks we face in our communities. Stage two began shortly after and has started to develop options to meet the risks identified in stage one. The plan will be produced in line with the recently approved CRMP Fire Standard.

The CRMP will utilise our refreshed approach to the Strategic Assessment of Risk and use modelling to simulate potential scenarios for our future fire cover, ensuring

our resources are allocated appropriately to the risks within, and around, our service boundaries.

For more information about CRMP, please see the approved Fire Standard from the Fire Standards Board, as well as its associated guidance documents:

[Community Risk Management Planning | Fire Standards Board](#)

## **Risk Management**

Our Risk Management Policy drives a risk-based approach through directorates and teams to identify both external community and internal organisational risks.

We review the risks to our communities and undertake various mitigating activities in accordance with the Fire Service Act 2004 and other associated legislation.

Risks are effectively managed by the Organisation through the implementation of various controls, examples being:

- Activities grounded in risk assessment, where service delivery decisions are supported by an evidence base.
- Maintenance of risk registers.
- Implementation of risk-based systems and processes, such as internal audit, impact assessments, the change management framework, organisational learning and risk evidenced business cases, policy and procedures.
- Ongoing monitoring of statutory and regulatory obligations.

Risks are now managed through our Risk Management tool, JCAD. All risks from organisational risks to station and team risks are tracked, monitored and escalated where appropriate, through this tool.

Each directorate is responsible for maintaining a Directorate Risk Register using the risk management tool. Any risks deemed to have a significant impact on the delivery of our Safety Plan priorities are escalated up into an Organisational Risk Register which is managed by our Executive Group with progress routinely reported to the Fire Authority.

For more information on our Organisational Risk Register, please refer to the latest Standards and Governance Committee minutes and papers, available at:

[Standards and Governance Committee 22 March 2023 Organisational Risk Register update](#)

## **Our Communities**

We work together to understand different community needs and deliver accessible, local services which build safer places.

## Prevent and Protect

Our main operational aim is to prevent incidents from occurring and protect people from harm should an incident occur.

In the workplace, this is the responsibility of the business owners, however, to support businesses we deliver a High-Risk Residential Based Inspection Programme, Risk Based Inspection Programme and a Local Based Inspection Programme.

These targeted programmes enable the support to businesses by:

- telling businesses what they need to do to comply with fire safety law.
- helping businesses carry out a fire risk assessment.
- helping businesses identify the general fire precautions they need to have in place.
- challenging all or parts of a fire risk assessment where concerns are identified.
- taking further action if all the risks are not considered.

In 2022/23, we carried out 945 targeted fire safety audits (31% fewer than in 2021/22). This reduction is owing to staff turnover and the resulting impact on productivity as new staff are in development and cannot deliver the same volume of audits as fully competent staff as they require supervision, which also impacts on the supervisors ability to deliver audits. Over time, more staff will become competent, helping to improve the volume of audits delivered against our risk based inspection programme. However, despite the reduction in audits, it is important to note that our enforcement activity has not reduced at the same rate and we have had a successful prosecution. This shows the value of our protection work.

In addition to this, our Fire Engineering and Consultation Team reduce risk in Hampshire to occupants and firefighters by working alongside a wide group of stakeholders to contribute to building regulation consultations that are received from building control bodies locally and nationally. In 2022/23, we carried out 1,896 Business Regulation consultations, which is a similar number compared to the previous year. We also delivered 619 Licensing Consultations (down 13% versus 2021/22). To view more information on keeping safe at work please see:

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service The Workplace](#)

To help mitigate the risk of fire in homes and the subsequent harm these can cause, our firefighters, designated Community Safety Officers, volunteers and partner agencies carry out 'Safe and Well' visits to our targeted risk groups. Recognising that our most vulnerable risk groups align with that of our partners in Health, we have tailored our traditional Home Fire Safety Check to include an intervention on slips, trips and falls as well other potential hazards that may affect our community's wellbeing. Our Safe and Well visits are primarily delivered to individuals who have been referred to us by our partners, however, we also use historic incident data,



demographic profiling tools and externally provided data sets to identify those who may benefit from an intervention.

In 2022/23, we undertook 11,927 Safe and Well visits, a significant 21% increase from 2021/22. This is testament to the continued focus of the Service on our prevention activity, and the recruitment of 5 Community Safety Advisors. Building on this progress we aim to deliver 15,700 visits in 2023/24.

2022/23 also saw the launch of our risk-based prevention programme, which refined how we target visits, and the launch of an electronic Safe and Well form, which has removed various inefficiencies. In January 2023, HMICFRS rated our prevention activity as 'good' and highlighted our work with Children and Young People as impressive. 2022/23 also saw the Service create a risk-based inspection programme for the Schools Education Team on the Isle of Wight and new Fire Cadet Units opened. Our volunteer network has also received external accreditation. We also partner with the Blue Lamp Trust a not-for-profit organisation promoting and enhancing community safety.

To view more information on keeping safe at home please see:

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service At Home](#)

We deliver a range of interventions through our Children and Young People (CYP) Teams. These include:

- Fire education within schools.
- Princes Trust programme.
- Range of children and young people initiatives (including fire cadets).

These initiatives seek to deliver fire safety information but also help build confidence and support wider social issues facing young people today. We provide interactive safety messages through our fun educational website:

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service KidZone and Schools.](#)

Our ICT capability and systems have supported the delivery of these programmes. Home learning pages within our KidZone on our website are also being kept up to date with new products for children, parents and teachers.

Additionally, our Arson Task Force lead investigations post incident to determine the cause of fires. To help secure convictions we have a full time Police Officer working within our team. This enables us to share timely information and effectively support the investigation through to its conclusion. We also have highly trained dogs who are a vital part of the investigation team and play a pivotal role in securing convictions. To prevent fire setters from reoffending we deliver a Fire Setters programme to educate offenders of the potential dangers and damage that can be caused by reckless behaviour.

To view more information on arson reduction, please see:

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service Reducing Risk of Arson](#)

## Respond

We work hard to keep our communities safe through education and safety measures. However, we accept incidents will still occur, and in the event of a call to an emergency we have effective strategies in place to respond to numerous different types of incidents. We operate from several locations including 61 strategically positioned fire stations. Our fire stations are purpose built and located in cities, towns, and villages and are close to residential, commercial and industrial areas. Our frontline resources and fire appliances are spread across these stations according to the local risk factors.

The Service's fire stations consist of:

- 5 fire stations staffed 24 hours a day by firefighters based at the station.
- 1 fire station staffed 12 hours a day by firefighters based at the station and then the other 12 hours covered by On Call firefighters who live or work within four minutes of the station and respond at the time of an incident.
- 46 fire stations with around the clock cover provided by On Call firefighters, and
- 9 fire stations with both firefighter crews based 24 hours at the station and On Call staff cover.

As well as our frontline fire appliances, we also have several specialist capabilities which assist us in dealing with a variety of different incidents. Our specialist capability teams provide us with an enhanced range of equipment, skills and knowledge for dealing with a wide range of unusual and complex incidents. They can respond to emergency incidents within our county and, as part of a national mutual assistance arrangement, anywhere in the United Kingdom. Our specialist capabilities include:

- Urban Search and Rescue Unit
- Water Rescue Units
- Animal Rescue Units
- Arson Task Force Unit
- Wildfire Units
- Environmental Units
- Marine Response Team
- Hazardous Materials and Detection, Identification and Monitoring Unit
- Water Carriers
- High Volume Pump
- Aerial Ladder Platforms
- Land Rovers

In 2022/3, we attended 4,737 fires, 3,251 Special Service calls, 2,904 Co-Responder incidents, 961 Road Traffic Collisions and 8,451 False Alarms.

In 2022/23, we were able to maintain an average critical response time of 7 minutes and 41 seconds which is comfortably below 8 minutes.

Further information on our performance is outlined end-of-year performance report:

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service Performance Report](#)

## **Resilience**

Emergency services are facing an increased variety of demanding situations. Major incidents caused by natural disasters, industrial accidents and the threat of terror attacks are challenges that we need to prepare for at a national level. These incidents could potentially have an impact on our daily lives. For this reason, there is a need for high levels of preparedness by the emergency services and our communities, including improved ability to operate effectively together. We hold many assets and deliver a response capability to national incidents that may arise in support of this initiative.

To support our local communities, we are members of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum comprises of local Emergency Service Responders (Police, Fire, Ambulance), Local Authorities, as well as associated businesses, organisations and voluntary sector representatives. Through the Local Resilience Forum, these organisations work together to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

Our Chief Fire Officer took the role of Chair of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) in March 2023 and the LRF Partnership Team now work from Service Headquarters. The Resilience Team also hold roles within the LRF such as Chair of the Budget and Assurance Group and key roles within the LRF Workstreams as Lead and Deputy.

An assurance activity is to test business continuity plans through exercising. Throughout 2022-2023, a number of exercises took place. These include Industrial Action Exercises in September 2022 and January 2023 to validate Industrial Action Procedures with our Emergency Management Group (EMG) and Industrial Action Response Team (IART). The Resilience Team also facilitated an internal Business Continuity Exercise as part of Exercise Mighty Oak, a national exercise testing a National Power Outage (NPO) scenario in March 23.

For more information on our Local Resilience Forum, please see:

[www.hampshireprepared.co.uk](http://www.hampshireprepared.co.uk)

As well as supporting our communities prepare for widespread incidents through the Local Resilience Forum, we also have an Island Resilience Forum to focus on specific risks that can affect us and our partner agencies on the Island. Through this partnership we have a programme of work, which is achieved through engagement with all internal departments and with our partners across the Island.

We must also ensure we have the necessary arrangements in place to maintain our service delivery. Our Service Resilience Team provide the Contingency Planning and Business Continuity for the Service. This programme of work is achieved through engagement with all internal departments and with our partners in the Local Resilience Forum to:

- Identify and assess risk within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
- Identify mitigation to the risks in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (including Community Resilience).
- Produce individual department, service wide and Multi Agency response plans.
- Undertake a programme of training and exercising at Operational, Tactical and Strategic levels.

This work enables the Service to meet its mission critical activities and still respond to the communities of Hampshire and Isle of Wight during periods of disruption and high demand.

There has also been significant and ongoing focus, accelerated by industrial action, on directorate and department business continuity planning – with plans across the Service being updated with support from the Service’s Resilience team, as well as ongoing regular assurance reporting around business continuity.

### **Collaboration**

We work closely, on a daily basis, with our blue light colleagues from other fire and rescue, police and ambulance services. We also have excellent relationships with our colleagues in Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Southampton City Council, Portsmouth City Council and other local authorities and agencies across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. We believe that through collaboration we can maximise the benefits of our collective offering to the public and, therefore, *Together we make life safer.*

Hampshire borders with Wiltshire, Dorset, Berkshire, Surrey and West Sussex. As incidents arise, we assist other fire and rescue services working across the border and neighbouring fire and rescue services will also assist us. There are standard agreements in place to either support the neighbouring fire and rescue service resolve an incident or to attend the incident on the other fire and rescue service’s behalf.

Furthermore, we have come together with three other fire and rescue services to form an innovative partnership that revolutionises the way the closest resource for an incident is identified and despatched. Devon & Somerset and Dorset & Wiltshire fire and rescue services joined Hampshire and Isle of Wight to form the Networked Fire Services Partnership (NFSP), which means all the Services use the same technology in their Control centres. This allows us to be able to take 999 calls and mobilise appliances for each other, offering greater resilience and saving millions of pounds across the partnership. The integrated system allows the services to work together even more effectively, providing greater protection to the public and enhancing firefighter safety. Kent Fire and Rescue Service is also an active partner within the current NFSP and the operational control futures project which is planned for implementation in 2026 will connect the four services enabling each of the partners to support each other, provide resilience, business continuity and disaster recovery and provide operational resilience.

In addition to this, we deliver a co-responding scheme which launched in 2004 in partnership with South Central Ambulance Service. Co-responders are firefighters with training in basic life support including resuscitation and defibrillation, who attend life critical incidents such as cardiac arrest, anaphylactic shock, strokes and asthma attacks. Supporting our ambulance colleagues in this way helps to provide an immediate response to incidents across the county and relieves the pressure on ambulances. We are the first fire service to hold clinical governance framework for our health-related work, which includes Immediate Emergency Care, Emergency Medical Response and Falls Response.

We also seek to capitalise on our proven ability to reduce deaths and injuries in fires, by applying the same educational and experiential strengths to the road safety agenda as part of a partnership approach. We are proud to be part of the Hampshire Road Safety Partnership, made up of:

- Hampshire County Council
- Portsmouth City Council
- Southampton City Council
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service
- Highways England

For more details please see:

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service Road Safety](#)

We share many of our premises across these partners but most significantly we share our headquarters with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary and our health partners. The NHS Integrated Commissioning Board signed a lease in December 2022 and will be working from Service Headquarters during 2023. By co-locating in this way, we hope to seek further opportunities for closer working and look to make efficiencies where possible. We also share many of our remote stations with police and ambulance colleagues. Making use of our estates in this way helps all partners involved, to reduce premise related costs.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service's Human Resources, Finance and Procurement functions are delivered by Hampshire Shared Services. Shared Services also delivers services for Hampshire County Council, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary and other public sector organisations through an agreed partnership. The partnership continues to seek new members and grow its capability to increase resilience and deliver high quality services by combining expertise across a broad number of public sector services.

## **Our People**

We look after each other by creating great places to work and promoting the health, wellbeing and safety of our people.

### **People and Organisational Development (POD) Strategy**

In support of the IRMP and the current Safety Plan 2020-2025, we developed a new People and Organisational Development (POD) Directorate which is accompanied by a new strategic framework. This strategy encompasses the following areas and has been built based on feedback from our staff through various surveys:

- Inclusion and Diversity.
- Culture, Values and Behaviours.
- Health and Wellbeing.
- Workforce transformation and engagement.
- Learning and Development.
- Leadership and Management.

### **Values and Behaviours**

During 2022-2023, we developed our inclusive Service Strategy which builds on the implementation of our Service Values and Behaviours. This work supports the embedding of the Service Values and Behaviours and links the Core Code of Ethics to our Equality Diversity and Inclusion objectives. Throughout 2022-2023, we have strengthened and developed our governance through an Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, Wellbeing and Culture Board which oversees a Delivery Group and further work in this area is being planned for 2023-2024.

Our Peer-to-Peer recognition scheme is well established and this continues to show our teams that they are valued by the Service and assists in telling positive stories about how great our people are and the difference they make to the community and our organisation.

During 2022-2023, we have developed a new Personal Development Review (PDR) process which is facilitated through a new app. This has recently been enhanced with a 9 box grid talent matrix to assist leaders and individuals in development conversations. This includes recognition of that individual's contribution to the service and their ability to demonstrate the service Values and Behaviours.

Recruitment, promotion and selection processes have included criteria linked to our service Values and Behaviours. This has improved peoples understanding of the Values and Behaviours and their ability to demonstrate how they are role modelling them in their daily work.

We are committed to delivering against the Fire Standards in relation to Leading the Service and the Core Code of Ethics which has resulted in on going improvement to our Leadership Development offerings at all levels. The actions are driving our Directorate Plan in People and Organisational Development for the future.

Three sixty feedback is focussed on ensuring that our leaders have the opportunity to learn and improve in relation to demonstrating our behaviours to our teams. This is further supported by the development of a coaching culture within our Leadership Development offering to staff.

Our work is ongoing in relation to the development of a Wellbeing Strategy which will continue to support our staff and be linked closely to our Service Values and Behaviours.

In 2022/23, the supporting set of behaviours have been embedded underpinning our Service Values. Our behaviours are the day-to-day embodiment of our values and all of them support all four of our values. They fall into five key groups that align with the National Fire Chief Council's Code of Ethics:

- Dedicated
- Openness
- Caring
- Empowering
- Inclusive

For more information on our Values, please see our Safety Plan:

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service Safety Plan](#)

## **Health and Safety**

In February 2023, the Fire Authority agreed its annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Statement of Intent including putting health, safety and wellbeing at the heart of everything the Service does. To support this, it provided additional funding to permanently increase the size of the Service's Health and Safety function. Recruitment was completed in June 2023.

[HIWFRA 21 February 2023: Health and Safety Statement 2023-2024](#)

A recent priority has been to appropriately respond to the threat posed by contaminants. In November 2022, new guidance was published setting the expectation for how we manage contaminants and providing staff information about the risks and how they should be handled. Better management of contaminants is also included in building and vehicle improvement plans and will be factored into future upgrades. For example, we are considering how we can improve zoning and flows in fire stations so that contaminated equipment and clothing is stored away from communal areas and we are working with manufacturers to consider how we can remove breathing apparatus and other dirty equipment from the cab area.

## **People Performance**

We strive for excellence through delivering outstanding training and support people to achieve their full potential. Developing a skilled workforce begins with recruitment, training and development programmes, leading into our Maintenance of Competence Scheme. We ensure our staff competencies are regularly assessed and core

competencies such as safe working at heights, the use of breathing apparatus and applying incident command are assured at an appropriate competent level.

To ensure all our operational staff are fit to carry out their duties we undertake two fitness assessments every year. This includes an output test and either a multi-stage fitness test/bleep test or a Chester Treadmill Test.

We also monitor staff sickness through regular reporting and national benchmarking, with performance in this and other people-related areas regularly reviewed by our People and Organisational Development (POD) Directorate Board. We also monitor our operational establishment and vacancies within our Resource Management Team. This team considers all aspects of resource management and staff wellbeing to ensure teams are appropriately supported and to maximise our availability. This includes developing new and innovative ways of recruiting and maintaining On Call staff.

We believe having an inclusive, engaged workforce means better outcomes for our communities. We run various engagement activity, including with our staff network groups (FirePROUD, FireREACH, FireENABLE and FireINSPIRE) to understand and discuss the issues facing our staff, as well as regularly engaging – both formally and informally with representative bodies. The results of these, and other activity, help to shape our people strategy and provide our leaders with crucial insight into how we can better support and equip our teams.

The Executive Group and HIWFRA have received additional reporting and insights covering our people performance. This has included a focus on sickness, availability and health and safety data.

For more detail, please refer to our end-of-year performance report:

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service Performance Report](#)

Our POD Performance Group reports into the Directorate Board and reviews a wide range of people metrics, such as sickness levels, fitness test performance, qualifications and competency. We also have a Strategic Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board who review the size and diversity of our workforce compared to previous years and monitor our performance against our equality objectives. At our POD Directorate Board, performance in respect of HR and Occupational Health services is considered and data relating to misconduct and grievance cases. Wellbeing of staff is prioritised and we have conducted a series of focus groups exploring the impact of workloads on mental health and are considering actions to address the findings. We are making good progress against the recommendations from HMICFRS in respect of culture and values within fire and rescue services and are committed to improving our understanding of the cultural health of HIWFRS through further surveys and focus groups.



## Public Value

We plan over the longer-term to ensure our decisions and actions deliver efficient and effective public services.

## Financial Management

The Authority has an excellent track record of financial management. Directors and their teams across the organisation scrutinise spend to make sure that our financial resources support delivery of our priorities and that value for money is delivered.

Prudent Medium Term Financial Planning has enabled us deliver balanced budgets while continuing to invest for the future and make reasonable allowances for risk.

Our Medium-Term Financial Plan is regularly updated and reported to the Executive Group and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority. Monitoring reports are taken quarterly with an outturn position at year end. Financial risks are also considered as part of the Organisational Risk Register as appropriate.

Our approach to financial governance is set out within the Authority's financial regulations, which forms part of the overall Constitution. These regulations set out budgetary approval limits and the approach to changing budget plans and drawing from reserves. The Authority also has policies and procedures in place for the prevention of fraud and corruption and a Register of Interest and a register of Gifts and Hospitality. These robust systems are used for identifying and evaluating all significant financial and operational risks to the Authority on an integrated basis.

For more details on our budget, please see our Authority report:

[Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority 21 February 2023](#)

## Financial Performance

Public sector bodies publish draft accounts which are then audited. Our accounts for financial year 2022/23 were published by the statutory deadline of 31 May 2023. Our external auditors are Ernst and Young, who attend the Standards and Governance Committee to provide updates on audit progress and results. The external audit for the current year is delayed due to wider issues in public sector audit.

For more details of our Statement of Accounts, please see:

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service Information we publish](#)

Financial performance is also considered as part of our annual organisational performance report, where the focus is on comparative costs and our reserves position.

## Transparency

The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 is designed to ensure greater transparency of local authority data. In compliance with this code, we publish the following public data:

- Expenditure exceeding £500

- Procurement card transactions
- Procurement information
- Contracts register
- Tenders
- Local Authority Land
- Grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- Organisation chart
- Trade Union facility time
- Senior salaries
- Constitution
- Pay multiple

We ensure that the publication of any data complies with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which came into effect in May 2018.

For more details please see:

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service Transparency](#)

We also facilitate the request for any additional information through a well-managed Freedom of Information request process. For more details on how to make a request for information please see:

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service Contact Us](#)

## **Carbon Reduction**

The Service takes a proactive approach to reducing our environmental impact, not just in response to the Government's Climate Change Act, but predominantly to protect our communities and reduce the consequences of inaction, since the Service acts as a first responder to these extreme weather events. Due to this HIWFRS has committed to a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and has developed a Carbon Reduction Strategy to meet this. From this, improvement projects on both the estate and the vehicle fleet have been undertaken, as well as an analysis of the building estate. Updates on this and associated activity are reported into the HIWFRA on an exception's basis. Sustainability also forms a core part of our wider design principles, which are a set of key expectations which govern investment into the estate, whether it be for small refits, large-scale refurbishments, or complete new build.

## **High Performance**

Our diverse teams are trusted, skilled and feel equipped to deliver a leading fire and rescue service today and into the future.

## **HMICFRS Round 2 Inspection**

In January 2023, the HMICFRS published the Round 2 inspection report for HIWFRS. A national Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England was also published. The HMICFRS inspection, much like internal audit, is a crucial

part of our wide-ranging assurance programme and we are committed to using inspection as an opportunity to learn. The report also provides our communities with a view of how we are performing across the Service, for example in terms of how we understand, prevent and respond to fires and other incidents and risks.

The HMICFRS round 2 inspection took place between April and July 2022. We received the following outcome: 'Good' for effectiveness, 'Requires Improvement' for efficiency, 'Required Improvement' for people. However, our 'cause for concern' from the previous inspection, for not doing enough to be an inclusive employer, has been removed because of the significant progress we have made in this area. The Service is providing ongoing reporting into the Authority's Standards & Governance Committee on our progress against the findings of the inspectorate report:

[Standards and Governance Committee 22 March 2023: HMICFRS Inspection report round 2](#)

## **Fire Standards**

As part of the reforms for fire and rescue services in England, the Fire Standards Board was created to introduce new standards to the fire sector. The intention being to help drive continual improvement across the services alongside the re-introduction of inspection arrangements. The mission for the new Fire Standards Board is to oversee the development and maintenance of a suite of professional standards that set out "what good looks like".

Currently there are 16 approved Fire Standards with many more in development. When a new Standard is being developed, we take a proactive approach by engaging with the consultation process. This gives us an early opportunity to review the proposed Standard and begin to assess our own organisation to identify any gaps. Once the Standard has been approved, it will form a core part of our assurance activity whereby we will seek to substantiate our compliance with a particular standard, identifying strengths, opportunities and gaps and action plans. This formed a core part of our assurance activity in 2022/23.

For more information on the progress on the Fire Standards see here:

[Standards and Governance Committee 22 March 2023 Fire Standards update report](#)

## **Learning and Improving**

We have the support of policy and guidance with the freedom to use our discretion to do the right thing, learning from ourselves and others.

Learning comes from many different internal and external sources. Our Learning and Assurance Team provide the mechanisms and tools for capturing learning, assigning to relevant departments, and tracking and monitoring any improvement actions as well as publishing and communicating learning across the organisation. They also analyse trends and report on all learning captured.

## **National Operational Guidance**

National Operational Guidance was produced by the National Fire Chiefs Council in collaboration with each of the UK's fire and rescue services to provide a single way of working.

In December 2022, HIWFRA agreed a programme of work to fully align the Service with tactical National Operational Guidance. Funding was agreed up until December 2024 for this work with implementation beginning in Autumn 2023 to begin the necessary cultural change.

When new national guidance becomes available, we assess the gaps in our own guidance and then work to ensure that we adopt, adapt and embed these practices in line with the National Fire Standards. Significant ongoing work and assurance activity continues in response to National Operational Guidance developments. While this is principally overseen by our Policy, Planning and Assurance directorate, this is ultimately a cross-Service endeavour to ensure the necessary improvements. In addition to adopting any guidance, we also review any National Operational Learning or Joint Operational Learning to ensure we stay at the forefront of the sector. This includes contributing to national learning by submitting our own operational learning to the National Operational Learning Group.

For more information please see:

[Homepage | NFCC CPO \(ukfrs.com\)](https://www.ukfrs.com)

## **Operational Assurance**

Our operational activities are supported by policies and procedures. A Learning and Assurance team work hard to capture lessons of our effectiveness and look to make improvements where possible. They do this using several key assurance mechanisms that test the performance of our operational staff but also test the effectiveness of Service policies and procedures.

One of the assurance mechanisms is Operational Assurance Assessments. This is where a Group Manager will visit a Station and run an operational exercise with the crew to assess their performance and address any areas of concern. These assessments are to ensure standards are being met and procedures being followed appropriately. These mechanisms also provide crews with an opportunity to feedback any improvements that could be made to policies and procedures. All this information is then assessed by the Learning and Assurance team and improvements made where required.

To provide assurance at incidents we use Tactical Advisors, which attend critical incidents to support our crews. The role of the Tactical Advisor is to monitor the decisions being made by the Incident Commander and provide assistance if required. We have a post incident a debrief process, which also includes any significant events that could impact on our service delivery. Feedback is gathered from all those involved and the Learning and Assurance team will analyse any trends. This information is then presented back to the individuals involved to highlight any areas of performance and to discuss potential solutions. This leads to

improvement actions at a policy level as well as the identification of possible risks that may occur again should similar incidents occur in the future.

The Service utilise a submit learning tool to provide a mechanism for feedback to be provided after operational incidents. This is a widely used tool and has been really effective in enabling the identification of learning and subsequent sharing and communication of that learning.

We contribute our learning to the National Operational Learning Group. This Group provide National Operational Guidance to support a common approach across fire and rescue services. We provide our technical expertise to help shape this guidance, which is regularly reviewed and widely adopted. For more details on the National Operational Learning Group, please see: <https://www.ukfrs.com>.

Our most recent HMICFRS inspection report highted three key 'Areas for Improvement' relating to cross border exercising, multi agency exercising and learning from debriefs. We acknowledge that operational assurance is an area that needs strengthening and we have plans in place to ensure this happens, creating greater performance throughout 2023-2024.

## **Audit**

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority is responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate risk management processes, control systems, accounting records and governance arrangements. Internal audit plays a vital role in advising HIWFRA that these arrangements are in place and operating effectively. Our internal audits are carried out by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) who also assist us in the development of future audit plans.

The Service has a wide range of assurance mechanisms in place to identify risks, areas for improvement, and good practice to disseminate. Our overall internal audit opinion for 2022-2023 was 'reasonable' (the same assurance level as last year – 2021-2022). This assurance level indicates that there is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and controls in place with some areas where there is scope for improvement identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the audited area. This assurance level is testament to our extensive focus on risk-based internal audit planning and internal audit more widely.

Details of our internal audits are reported to the Executive Group and the Authority through our Standards and Governance Committee. This includes the progress of management actions resulting from observations of improvements required, which we monitor closely and report on internally – with Heads of Service accountable for the delivery of actions.

For more details, please see papers submitted to the Standards and Governance Committee, available at:

[Agenda for HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee on Wednesday, 22nd March, 2023, 10.00 am | About the Council | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#).

## **Feedback**

We also encourage feedback from our communities to help us improve our performance. Any issues raised are assigned to an investigating officer who carries out a comprehensive investigation to determine the cause and recommend any remedial actions. Learning from this feedback is exceptionally important to us and reports exploring performance and data in this area are discussed at our Executive Group. For more details regarding feedback, please see:

<https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about-us/contact-us/get-in-touch/>