

# Appendix A



## Annual Assurance Statement 2020/21

April 2020 to March 2021

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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 2020/21. This is the last statement specifically focused on Hampshire as following the creation of the new Combined Fire Authority on 1 April 2021, subsequent annual assurance statements will cover both Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Hampshire is a large county based in the South of England which covers an area of more than 1450 square miles. The county is home to a population of 1.85 million people dispersed across rural, urban and coastal areas. Rural Hampshire covers 83% of the county with urban areas accounting for the remaining 17%.

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.

Hampshire is 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 is 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.

The county also has 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 continuous improvement 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.

## COVID-19 Response

In response to the emerging pandemic, in February 2020 we set up an Emergency Management Group to cover Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Services. This group was set up to monitor the situation and ensure appropriate communications, advice and procedures are shared with everyone. As the situation escalated, on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020 the Emergency Management Group agreed to put a Pandemic Management Group together, including representation from a wide range of Directorates and teams, along with the following initial measures:

- **Restrictions to Control to support business continuity:** only Control staff and Control data team having access to Control unless there is an operational requirement.
- **Safety at stations:** guidance provided to restrict non-essential events activities on station.
- **BA cleaning:** we moved immediately to weekly face seal testing on a Sunday for BA sets as per the current on-call staff position. Following the face seal test, personnel will perform a full station clean. At operational incidents, face masks will become personal for the duration of that incident and until a full station clean can be performed.
- **At incidents:** if someone shows symptoms at an incident, withdrawing to two metres and wash hands, notify Fire Control, as per current Operations guidance.
- **Critical Safe & Well visits:** only undertaking safety critical Safe & Well visits. Before conducting any visits, staff ascertaining if a person is in self-isolation and/or if they are showing any symptoms – persistent cough or high temperature – prior to the visit, over the phone (with the introduction of telephone risk assessments). If there are no symptoms a Safe & Well visit will continue, with a proactive approach to deliver all current outstanding referrals. If people are self-isolating and the visit is deemed necessary, then a full risk assessment being undertaken with Community Safety Officer's to decide the best course of action. The appropriate action being decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the risks presented.
- **The creation of an Emergency Staff Cell:** to monitor the impact of staff absences in take action to mitigate any resourcing risks, where required.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight's Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) declared the Coronavirus outbreak a major incident. This enabled a multi-agency response, with the Fire and Rescue Headquarters hosting the Strategic Coordination Centre (SCC). In addition, many Officers were deployed into support roles of the SCC or chairing specific cells on behalf of the LRF, such as Logistics, Business Continuity and others. We had already been providing a multi-agency response for a number of weeks, but the declaration moved us to the next phase of our well-rehearsed plans. This ensured all partners, which includes all the emergency services, could use joint-working arrangements to effectively manage, and where possible minimise, the impact of the virus on our population during these unprecedented times.

This in turn prompted a series of measures from us to maintain operational cover whilst increasing further protections to our staff including working from home arrangements for non-operational staff and utilising our new Office 365 platform to maintain business continuity with extremely effective results.

During 2020/21, we adapted effectively to protect the public by continuing to carry out Safe & Well visits, fire safety audits and our community safety campaign work, such as online safety programmes for young people and two new Fire Cadets schemes. We also continued to respond to calls from the public in a timely manner and effectively responded to fires and other emergencies; and supported neighbouring services and sent specialist resources to support nationally co-ordinated incidents.

As well as performing our statutory functions, wholetime firefighters volunteered for extra activities, including those under the tripartite agreement which was an agreement put in place by the National Fire Chief Council in collaboration with representative bodies and our partner agencies. Our on-call workforce also took on extra responsibilities to cover some of the roles that were agreed as part of the tripartite agreement. And non-operational staff gave support in the control room and critical COVID-19 groups supporting the Strategic and Tactical co-ordination of the LRF response, as well as internal FRS groups, which we set-up to support our response and, more latterly, recovery.

In addition to this, we further extended our collaboration with the police and the ambulance service and looked at ways in which our workforce could support these organisations more permanently, especially during periods of high demand. An overview of the additional activities we have carried out is provided below, and covers activity by both HFRS and IWFRS staff. These activities were underpinned by extensive internal consultation and risk assessments.

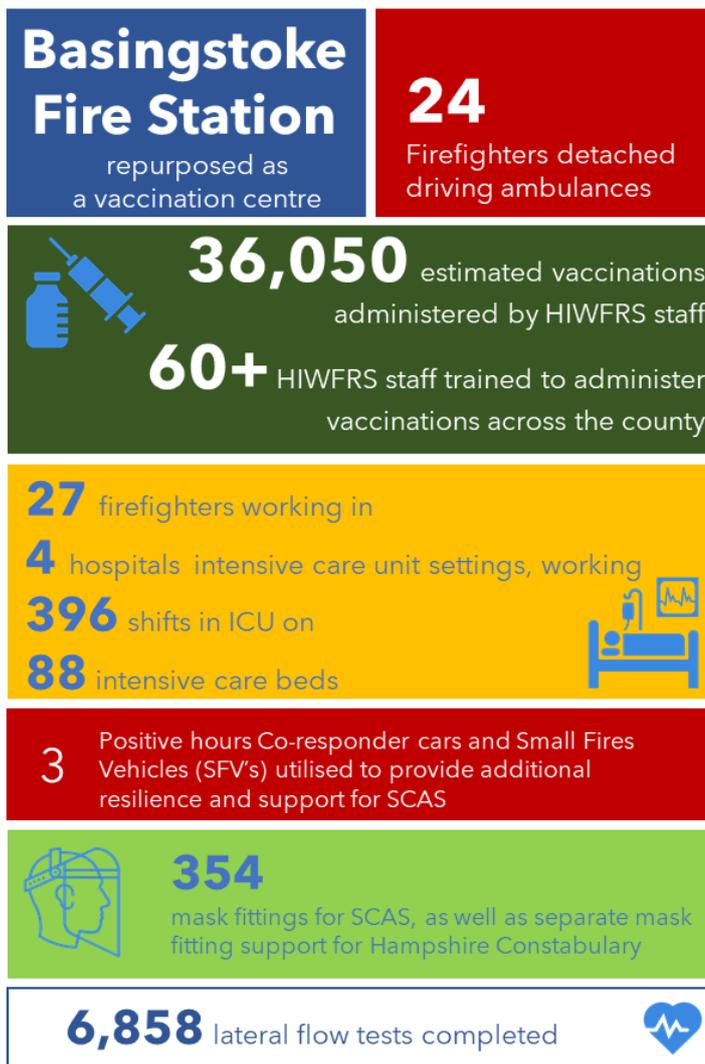
Furthermore, following HMICFRS’s 2020 COVID-19 inspection of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Services’ response to the pandemic, the inspectorate published a report in January 2021 that concluded they were impressed with how effectively we responded to support both our communities and our people: “In summary, we are impressed by how the service adapted and responded to the pandemic effectively to fulfil its statutory functions, protect the public and support staff wellbeing” (HMI Matt Parr).

We also quickly implemented changes to how we operate, such as enabling our staff to work remotely and accelerating the purchase of extra software licenses for Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service staff to ensure they could access service information and briefings ahead of combination in April 2021.

Staff wellbeing was a key priority for us during the pandemic. Following a wellbeing survey to understand staff needs, support such as counselling, mental health first aiders, a bereavement guide, access to wider wellbeing, financial and legal advice (through an external employee assistance programme), webinars on topics such as exercise, healthy eating, and mindfulness, and more were put in place. There was also regular communication to our staff on various areas, including wellbeing, through different channels, including a weekly Chief’s briefing and other manager’s briefings on MS Teams, a regularly updated COVID-19 FAQs document, and a new Wellbeing Portal on our intranet. These and other communications mechanisms meant that our staff provided positive feedback – on how the Service has communicated to our staff – in both our wellbeing survey and a staff survey by HMICFRS

Staff most at risk of COVID-19 were identified effectively, including those from a BAME background and those with underlying health problems and we worked with them to develop and implement processes to manage the risk. We also provided regular, relevant and more engaging communication to all staff, including virtual team meetings and virtual corporate briefings.

We also devised the ‘PPE on – Bluetooth off’ guidance, which is now national practice across all blue light services. This was so that our staff engaging in frontline activity wearing full and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) would not be subject to extensive



periods of isolation, following notifications from the Government's 'Track and Trace' mobile application.

The latest Strategic Coordinating Group stood down from a 'major incident' for COVID-19 on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and concurrently recovery planning was initiated within the LRF and its partners. From a recovery perspective, the HLOWLRF set-up a Recovery Coordinating Group, as did HIWFRS. The HIWFRS Recovery Coordinating Group has been supported by a Recovery Working Group to support strategic recovery decisions for the Service. The overarching recovery objectives have been:

- To plan for and deliver a Recovery command and control structure for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service.
- To maintain oversight and governance in the decisions to restore activities in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic whilst recognising the changes to working practices.
- To keep HIWFRS Executive Group sighted on the delivery of this strategy and to escalate any issues where appropriate.
- To maintain links into national and regional recovery co-ordination to share learning and understanding of other FRS's recovery to COVID-19.
- To ensure the health and safety, and welfare and wellbeing of staff is maintained.
- In preparation for the HMICFRS inspection in 2022 gather any learning and be able to describe our recovery.
- To plan for and deliver a communications strategy.

## Summary

2020/21 has been a challenging year for the Service and our communities, with the escalation and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This unprecedented situation has given rise to a challenge faced by all emergency responder agencies to ensure that they can keep communities safe. The COVID-19 pandemic has dominated the year and impacted the working practices of the Service in various ways, but operational and corporate performance have remained strong, illustrating how both the Service and its workforce have adapted to the unparalleled circumstances the pandemic has created.

The Service has played a critical role within the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (HLOWLRF) and its response to COVID-19 - for example, chairing the Strategic Coordination Group and hosting the Strategic Coordination Centre at our Eastleigh Headquarters; leading work around logistics, media activity and business continuity; and delivering additional activities, such as ambulance driving, hospital ICU care, the successful establishment of Basingstoke fire station as a vaccination centre, and detached and voluntary vaccinators. We have also led the HLOWLRF work to ensure any surplus vaccines on Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are made available to LRF partners – and as a result around 15,000 vaccines had been utilised as at the end of March 2021.

We harnessed and utilised our ICT infrastructure, ensuring we were, and continue to be, able to maintain critical and other activities with many staff working from home or having to work differently.

Whilst the pandemic continues, there remains uncertainty of its overall impact, including on the Services' financial position and the medium- and long-term impact on the health and wellbeing of our people, whom we continue to provide extensive support and communications to. We have operated effectively, with new working practices and comparably low COVID-19 sickness levels (which have been monitored regularly to ensure business continuity).

The Service has a wide range of assurance mechanisms in place to identify risks, areas for improvement, and good practice to disseminate. As the 2020/21 end of year performance report noted, number and types of incidents have varied throughout the year, reflecting the pandemic lockdowns and their impact on both commercial and domestic activity, and behaviour. However, overall the number of incidents decreased when compared to last year, as did the number of non-fatal casualties, and our on-call availability has improved. We have also made positive improvements in our prevention and protection activity (which had to be delivered differently for parts of the year), and in our learning from operational incidents. We continue to monitor, and develop our understanding of, the impact of COVID-19 on our Services, as we move through into recovery.

It is also vital to understand the performance of other areas across the Service, including in terms of people, finances and corporate services. Despite COVID-19, our average sickness went down slightly – which is testament to our staff and the organisational focus on the health and wellbeing of our people. Separately, we have seen the female representation of our workforce improve in the last year – with ongoing focus in this, and equality, inclusion and diversity more widely, as part of the People & Organisational Development (POD) framework. In terms of our finances, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in additional spend on during financial year 2020/21. This spend was offset by Government grant, meaning that there was no impact on the bottom line. Despite the challenges of the past year, the service delivered an underspend that will be contributed to reserves to fund future change and capital investment.

Furthermore, our overall internal audit opinion was ‘reasonable’ (the same assurance level as last year, albeit with a different definition owing to CIPFA guidance changes), which is testament to our extensive focus on risk-based internal audit planning and internal audit more widely. 2020/21 saw a wide range of ‘substantial’ (top level) rated audits too, including on our COVID-19 risk assessments and our Change Management Framework. However, some audits required management actions were identified to help us continually improve. These are monitored regularly internally, including within Executive Group, with quarterly reporting into the Standards and Governance Committee.

Our new Safety Plan, covering both Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, was launched in April 2020 and sets our strategic priorities and specific in-year activity objectives to achieve our priorities over the five-year period. There was, and continues to be, regular scrutiny of our progress in delivering Safety Plan improvements, with reporting internally, including to the Executive Group, and to the Fire Authority.

Finally, with the new Combined Fire Authority, the activity of the CFA Programme Board, its accountable owners, and workstream leads, and related assurance of this activity has been a crucial part of 2020/21. 2020/21 saw the continued and extensive preparations for the new Combined Fire Authority. In advance of the combination, we built upon the existing partnership and increasingly embedded aligned working practices, integrated services and technology, and continued our organisational focus on policies, procedures and guidance.

## **Governance**

The Hampshire Fire & Rescue Authority (the Authority) is a combined authority made up of 10 elected members who collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries in delivery of the Fire Service Act 2004. Our Fire Authority is made up of 8 Hampshire County Council members, 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 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:

[2020-06-HFRA-Constitution.pdf \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](#)

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 Fire & Rescue Authority Committee 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 & Governance Committee, which includes 5 members and now 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 group aligned to our new Directorate structure. In addition to this, we also set up a Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority Shadow Board to run alongside the existing Authority Committee in preparation for combination with the Isle of Wight.

The details of our framework are presented in our Annual Governance Statement, which is an essential part of our financial Statement of Accounts. For more details of our Governance Statement, please see: [Information we publish - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service, Official website of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Combined Fire Authority (CFA)**

Significant work has been undertaken to combine the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority with the Isle of Wight. This was agreed by both Authorities on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019 and a combination order request was subsequently approved by the Home Office. This was then put forward for any parliamentary objections for a period of 40 days (COVID-19 lead to parliamentary delays) which concluded on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020 with no objections. With the combination order in place, the combination was able to commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

The combination will enhance public safety, support and enable us to make life safer across the geographical areas and work to reduce risk for members of the public. This is the main driver for the initiative, which builds upon an existing partnership which has already delivered benefits across the communities served by both authorities.

There are many benefits that the creation of a new CFA will bring organisationally, both in terms of operational delivery and for the safety of our public.

The new CFA will be one organisation with a single purpose, *Together we make life safer*. Local accountability of the FRS on the Isle of Wight will transfer from the Isle of Wight

Council into a larger Combined Fire Authority. This new governing body will have a single focus on fire specific issues for the Isle of Wight (and the other constituent authority areas), rather than a wider range of complex public services for the Council to consider.

A single organisation with a dedicated focus on public safety is better equipped to provide efficient and effective scrutiny around decision-making on fire and rescue related matters.

A new CFA will also create greater resilience, remove duplication, enhance capacity and ensure continuous improvement, whilst enabling a common approach consistently applied across a wider area. Such an approach will offer improved learning opportunities and greater scope for the sharing of specialisms across the area. This will all support improved public safety.

The business case for the proposal was approved by the Home Secretary, and a Shadow Fire Authority was established from April 2020, with a view to full implementation and 'Go-Live' of the new Combined Fire Authority for the areas of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton in April 2021.

Prior to April 2021, progress towards the new Combined Fire Authority was overseen, managed and assured by the CFA Programme Board, which includes a wide range of Accountable Owners who were responsible for ensuring progress in preparatory and alignment activity. CFA Programme updates were also regularly provided to the Executive Group for additional assurance, and an external peer review of the Programme was also undertaken – with the recommendations considered by the CFA Programme Board and the Executive Group, with appropriate action taken in response to the review.

## **Directorate Review**

Further to the significant alignment work undertaken in preparation for the combination with the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, we also reviewed the organisational directorates to maximise our effectiveness and ensure continuous improvement is at the heart of our organisation. To do this, we adopted a 'Plan', 'Do', 'Review' operating model that looked to give greater emphasis to setting clear policy and evaluating the benefits of our operational activity. This has now evolved to provide the following directorate structure:

- Policy, Planning & Assurance
- Operations
- Corporate Services
- People & Organisational Development

In support of the new directorates, we also reviewed the governance arrangements in respect of Directorate Boards as detailed in our Annual Governance Statement. This enables the Executive Group to maintain assurance of all organisational activities through greater reporting at directorate and team levels.

## **Safety Plan**

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, a new combined Safety Plan (covering both Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service) was launched following approval by the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority and the Isle of Wight Council.

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 informed our Strategic Assessment (of risk) which adds context and detail to aid our planning process.

For more details about our Strategic Assessment of Risk please see:

[Strategic Assessment of Risk 2019/20 \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/strategic-assessment-of-risk-2019-20)

Using this assessment, we then developed an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) in 2019/20, which identifies potential dangers that could affect communities and how we can address them. We then used the IRMP combined with the risks to our organisation, to pull together our Safety Plan following public consultation, which will be launched in April 2020.

This has been available on our website since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020:

[Safety Plan - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service, Official website of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/safety-plan-hampshire-isle-wight-fire-rescue-service)

## **Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)**

To inform our Safety Plan an IRMP was developed in 2019/20. This process involved the new methodology as articulated above and followed a period of consultation with the public and our own teams, with the IRMP public consultation commencing in the autumn of 2019. This IRMP is a joint IRMP with the Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service as we establish greater alignment in preparation for the Combined Fire Authority and is the first joint IRMP to be delivered in the country.

We have purposefully set out our IRMP to firstly explain the current landscape and risks within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight in the context of Places and People. We then explain how we plan to mitigate those risks. We call it integrated risk management planning because it brings together a range of ways we can help make you safer from fires and other emergencies. This starts by understanding the communities we serve.

In this plan we reflect on risks in the community which could make the public susceptible to harm. We focus on people and how their individual needs can be best served. We look at these alongside broader issues in our society such as how population changes and climate affect our communities, fires and our landscape. Bringing all these risks together we then use various analytical tools to work out how many fire stations, firefighters and specialist resources (equipment and teams) we need.

We look at what work we can do to prevent fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies by helping people adopt safer behaviours, and also what we can do to make buildings safer. We consider a number of key components to support our purpose of making Hampshire and Isle of Wight safer and use the following elements to build our risk management approach:

- You, our communities: Analysis of data on age profiles, health indicators and other factors that can impact levels of vulnerability. More information on how we do this is set out in this plan.
- The environment: Buildings in which we live, work, visit and stay. The infrastructure within an area including transport arrangements and our climate and weather which create their own risks and demands on the fire and rescue services.
- Local intelligence: Our staff and teams work and live within our communities and their local knowledge, understanding and information sharing through partnerships is invaluable.

- Community and National Risk Register: Hampshire and Isle of Wight fire and rescue services are a key agency within the Local Resilience Forum. Through that forum a community risk register is established which sets out high level risks or issues that need to be considered and planned for (including large scale events such as music festivals) to ensure our communities are prepared.
- Partners: We work closely with a wide range of partners both centrally at a strategic level and locally.
- Research: Ongoing research locally, nationally and internationally is constantly reviewed, and indeed many of our own staff undertake research, which informs our approach and understanding of risks and issues.
- Learning from each other: We constantly strive to learn from our own experiences and those of others. Lessons learned from incidents are shared nationally and internationally to inform our plans.

To view the IRMP consultation document please see:

[Integrated Risk Management Plan 2019 Consultation \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk)

Following the outcomes of the IRMP we have developed the new Safety Plan that not only includes our priorities and commitments as set out in the IRMP but also takes consideration of our organisational risks and outlines our organisational values. This Safety Plan was published on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

## Risk Management

On 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020, a new Risk Management Policy was approved by the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority. This new 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 responding and mitigating activities in accordance with the Fire Service Act 2004 and other associated legislation. These risks to communities, such as that of a fire or road traffic collision, are termed *Community Risk*. We also identify risks to our staff, assets, budgets, operations and change activity, which can have a significant impact on our ability to carry out our core functions and deliver our strategic objectives. This is termed *Internal Risk*.

Considering both the Community Risk and Internal Risk shapes priorities, which drive all the Organisation's activity. 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.

Where there is legislation in place for the management of specific risks, such as Occupational Health and Safety, this does not relieve the Organisation of its responsibility to comply with that legislation.

Each Directorate is responsible for maintaining a Directorate Risk Register. Any risks deemed to have a significant impact on the delivery of our Safety Plan priorities are escalated up into an Organisational Risk Register agreed by the Executive Group, which is then routinely reported to the Fire Authority.

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

<https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=178&MId=6612&Ver=4>

## **Our Communities**

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

### **Prevent & 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 Risk Based Inspection Programme and a Local Based Inspection Programme.

Our Risk Based Inspection Programme forms part of the Service's overall integrated approach to risk management for Protection activities, by prioritising buildings most likely to experience a fire, a potential occupant sleeping risk and those buildings most likely to have fire safety compliance issues. We use data to target these premises that have not been audited or where a premise's is due for a revisit. Revisit dates of 1, 3 or 5 years are applied to premises by the inspector dependent upon the risk and levels of compliance found following an inspection. Some premises will not require re-inspection due to the high level of compliance and the low risk found within the building.

We also understand that premises present a risk to the organisation and to those in and around non-domestic premises due to a multitude of factors, such as 'sleeping risk', the previous history of business and contact with HFRS on enforcement issues. This understanding of risk forms a Locally Based Inspection Programme (LBIP). These operationally significant premises can be considered as those presenting issues for Protection, Prevention or Response. They are inspected by Locally Based Inspection Teams in priority order.

Using these two targeted programmes, we are then able to support 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; and
- taking further action if all the risks are not considered.

In 2020/21, we carried out 530 targeted fire safety audits (a decrease of 56% compared to 2019/20) of business premises owners fire risk assessments and control measures to ensure compliance with the Fire Safety Order 2005. To ensure we maintained our inspection programme during the COVID-19 pandemic we prioritised high risk premises with particular focus on high-rise buildings and those with potentially dangerous cladding. We also

investigated 340 alleged fire risks reported to us from members of the public which was an increase of 9% compared to 2019/20 (311).

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 2020/21, we carried out 1,173 Business Regulation consultations.

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

[The workplace - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service, Official website of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/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 & 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 & Well visits are primarily delivered to individuals who have been referred to us by our partners in Health, however, we also use historic incident data, demographic profiling tools and externally provided data sets to identify those who may benefit from an intervention.

The overall volume of Safe & Well activity (all closed jobs) increased by around 10% (to over 9,500 jobs) in 2020/21 compared to the previous year, however activity was delivered differently owing to COVID-19. For part of the pandemic, Safe and Well visits were downscaled to just cover safety critical visits to the most vulnerable, supplemented by a significant amount of work and engagement activity including telephone risk assessments and sourcing referrals by providing information to communities at Basingstoke vaccination centre. In Hampshire, there were 2,200 telephone risk assessments, over 2,000 COVID-19 safety critical visits in 2020/21.

Our Safe & Well Falls Risk Assessment uses National Institute of Health & Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines, go direct to General Practitioners and establishes eligibility for our 'Safety through Education Exercise and Resilience (STEER)' course, by identifying vulnerable people and preventing harm.

Another tool in which we provide home safety advice is through our 'Safe & Sound' survey. This online tool takes individuals through a series of questions to assess potential risks and provide useful information. If an individual is assessed to be at high risk, then a Safe & Well visit may be required.

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

[At home - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service, Official website of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/at-home)

We also deliver a range of interventions through our Children and Young People Teams:

- Fire Education within schools;
- Princes Trust programme; and
- 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 also provide interactive safety messages through our fun educational website: [KidZone and Schools - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service, Official website of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/kidzone).

Furthermore, a significant amount of activity has been delivered by our CYP team – despite COVID-19 – through, in part, the use of technology and new methods of delivery. One specific example is Susie the Childminder and the Pandemic book that was launched in July 2020 and is the most downloaded resource on the NFCC StayWise website page.

CYP Schools Education, Cadets, Princes Trust and FireWise continued to deliver face-to-face or virtually. Our ICT capability and systems have been a major factor in 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 take a lead on 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: [Reducing risk of arson - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service, Official website of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/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 a number of locations including 51 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 county's fire stations consist of:

- 5 fire stations staffed 24 hours a day by firefighters based at the station;
- 38 fire stations with around the clock cover provided by on-call firefighters who live or work within four minutes of the station and respond at the time of an incident; and
- 8 fire stations with both firefighter crews based at the station and on-call staff cover.

As well as our frontline fire appliances, we also have a number of 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. Specialist capabilities in Hampshire 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

In 2020/21, we attended 3,944 fires, 8,186 non-fire emergency ('special service call') incidents (such as road traffic collisions) and 7,029 false alarms. In 2020/21, we have been able to maintain a critical response time below eight minutes despite operating within our degradation plan on various occasions; and we have done this whilst managing peaks of COVID-19 related absence and supporting HIOWLRF partners with a wide range of activities, as outlined earlier in this response. Further information on our performance is outlined in our mid-year and end-of-year performance reports to HFRA, and now HIWFRA.

## **Resilience**

Emergency services are facing an increased variety of demanding situations such as that of the COVID-19 pandemic. 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 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. For the last 5 years we have been the Community Resilience leads. This role includes:

- Strategic co-ordination of all Community Resilience activity in the Local Resilience Forum.
- Maintaining an overview of Community Resilience activity and expected outcomes.
- Coordinating activities and identifying Community Resilience opportunities.
- Ensuring key messages are produced by risk owners and integrated into Community Resilience interactions with individuals and communities.
- Ensuring engagement with communities is risk focused so the Forum is prioritising geographical areas or vulnerable communities by potential impact on them.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic we have been heavily involved in the Local Resilience Forum's multi-agency Strategic Coordination Group, which is chaired by our Chief Fire Officer, Neil Odin – with the Strategic Coordination Centre based at our headquarters. Our teams have been working within the Tactical Coordinating Groups and in a number of LRF cells to effectively manage, and where possible minimise, the impact of the virus on our population during these unprecedented times. This includes providing cross-agency support to ensure operational cover can be maintained and critical services resume accordingly.

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, 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 during periods of disruption and high demand.

## **Collaboration**

We work closely, on a daily basis, with our blue light colleagues from other fire and rescue, police and ambulance services – regularly discussing cross-cutting issues and coordinate a range of joint initiatives to deliver greater partnership working. We also have excellent relationships with our colleagues in Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council, Portsmouth City Council, Isle of Wight Council, and other local authorities and agencies across Hampshire. 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 & 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 best resource for an incident is identified and despatched. Devon & Somerset, Dorset, and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services joined Hampshire to form the Networked Fire Control Services Partnership, which means all of 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.

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. In 2020/21, we attended 4,862 medical co-responder calls. 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.

Building on our successful partnership arrangements with the Ambulance Service, we also carried out a range of activities, including ambulance driving, logistical support and setting

up the 'Grayson site' temporary mortuary at Southampton Airport. These activities were made possible by a tripartite agreement that enabled greater collaborative working to better support our communities in response to the pandemic.

Our Senior Officers also lead the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS) as their Chief Officers, in a unique partnership arrangement, the first of its kind in the country. We worked closely with IWFRS to align the delivery of services together in preparation for combination. One of these ways includes handling 999 calls and mobilising IWFRS appliances through our Control centre. Since April 2021, the two Fire and Rescue Services have now combined.

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 Constabulary
- Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Highways England

For more details please see:

<https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/keeping-safe/ontheroad/>

We share many of our premises across these partners but most significantly we share our headquarters with Hampshire Constabulary. 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, reduce premise related costs.

Hampshire 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 and Hampshire Constabulary 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 & Organisational Development (POD) Strategy**

In support of the new IRMP and subsequent Safety Plan that was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, we have developed a new People & Organisational Development Directorate which is accompanied by a new strategic framework. This strategy encompasses the following areas and has built based on feedback from our staff through various surveys:

- Inclusion and Diversity.

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

## Values & Behaviours

In addition to the launch of the new Safety Plan, we also developed a new set of Values that were published in the Safety Plan. These values were created by our workforce through a series of workshops and a staff survey to find out what matters to them. We worked with an expert partner who facilitated the sessions across both Services and a high proportion of our staff engaged in the process.

Through everyone living the agreed values across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, we believe there will be improved trust and leadership, and everyone will feel proud of our Service. In Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, we believe in:

- Showing respect
  - Fairness, honesty and integrity in everything we say and do
- Supporting others
  - Listening and acting with compassion and empathy
- Everyone playing their part
  - Recognising the contribution we all make
- Reaching further
  - Inspiring and challenging ourselves and others

Following an evaluation in 2020/21, we found that our values have been incorporated in many critical activities, such as firefighter recruitment, a newly launched Personal Development Review Programme and leadership training courses delivered through our Learning and Development Team. Further work in this area will be ongoing in 2021/22.

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

[Safety Plan - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service, Official website of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/safety-plan)

## Health and Safety

Our Health & Safety team carried out various activity to support staff during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic – providing expert advice and support beyond business as usual and project activities.

We have conducted active monitoring across the Service incorporating business as usual safety and COVID management either by MS Teams, phone or in person. Our Health & Safety team has been carrying out a range of activity to support the Service, including, but not limited to:

- making Green Book Health and Safety induction available on Moodle;
- manual handling training has been produced for, and undertaken by, Green Book staff with a wider project covering all departments that have manual handling as part their role;

- there has been a DSE/Agile training/assessment roll out of a new platform to cover all of personnel that may not just work from an office, i.e. working from home, other areas of the Service or on the move;
- Health and Safety policy and procedures has been reviewed and aligned, where possible; and
- A new H&S tool is currently being implemented to further support the Service.

Furthermore, our health and safety risk assessments have been reviewed by our internal auditors who assurance rated our activity as 'Substantial' (the highest audit rating) and an independent peer review by Kent Fire and Rescue Service who provided positive feedback.

## **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 at 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 (FireOUT, FireREACH, FireABLE 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 HFRA have received additional reporting and insights covering our people performance. This has included a focus on the size and diversity of our workforce compared to previous years; sickness levels with an increased focus on mental health and our Employee Assistance Programme provision; fitness test performance; and qualifications and competency. We also carried out a wellbeing survey in the summer of 2020, which received 526 responses, with the data analysed and communicated to our staff through various mechanisms. This has helped us identify areas of good practice and areas for further consideration, including what support we signpost and provide to our people. We have followed this up with a pulse staff survey, which received over 300 responses that we are in the process of analysing.

For more detail, please refer to our mid-year and end-of-year performance reports:

[Agenda for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority on Tuesday, 15th June, 2021, 10.30 am | About the Council | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

## 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 in financial management and in staying ahead of the curve in response to a sustained period of austerity that has had a major impact on the public sector.

Medium Term Financial Planning on a mid to worst case scenario basis has enabled us to put savings plans in place that have not only successfully balanced the budgets over a period of six years but have also provided surplus resources to fund the cost of transformation and improvements in support of the Service Plan deliverables. It also includes funding arrangements for the maintenance of our vehicles, equipment and estates.

Our Medium-Term Financial Plan is regularly updated and reported to the Executive Group and the Hampshire Fire & Rescue Authority Committee. Progress reports monitor the outcomes of any income generation or cost saving improvements and are used to make appropriate adjustments to future budgets.

In addition to this, it is important that public money is used well and appropriately managed. We do this by using proper accounting practice within our own set of Financial Regulations. This means that when we plan our budget or require additional funds, there are protocols to give appropriate scrutiny on how public money is to be used and to ensure there is clear justification to do so. This includes policies and procedures in place for the prevention of fraud & corruption and a Register of Interest and a register of Gifts & 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 for 2020/21, please see:

<https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=736&MId=7370>

## Financial Performance

Ensuring that funding is appropriately accounted for is vital for all public sector organisations. Our financial performance is reported to the Executive Group and the Hampshire Fire & Rescue Authority every year:

<http://democracy.hants.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=179&MId=5594&Ver=4>

Each year our financial accounts are audited by an external body. Once approved by the external auditor our Statement of Accounts is published and contains more detail regarding our expenditure. As noted earlier in this Statement, despite the challenges of the past year, the service delivered an underspend that will be contributed to reserves to fund future change and capital investment.

For more details of our Statement of Accounts, please see: [Information we publish - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service, Official website of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](#)

Also, the Executive Group and HFRA, and now HIWFRA, receive additional reporting and insights covering our financial performance. These are discussed at each Directorate Boards with, as another example of our robust management of finances, an additional Financial Management Team meeting, held specifically to look at one of our largest areas of spend within our Operations Directorate. Each Directorate then submits quarterly finance reports for review and scrutiny within the Executive Group.

## **Transparency**

The Local Government Transparency Code 2014 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 Data Protection Act 1998 and future General Data Protection Regulations due to come into effect May 2018.

For more details please see: [Transparency - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service, Official website of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/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:

[Contact Us - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service, Official website of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service \(hantsfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/Contact-Us)

## **Carbon reduction**

The Service has historically taken 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. Significant analysis and work have been undertaken in this area, and we provide additional information in next year's assurance statement.

## **High Performance**

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

## Inspection

In July 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) remit was extended to include inspections of fire and rescue services in England. It is now called Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and they were tasked with providing an inspection programme to begin in the financial year 2018/19. To help us prepare for and comply with the inspection we have a Service Liaison Officer who is our Organisational Assurance Manager. The Service Liaison Officer represents Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Services through regular engagement with the HMICFRS representative (Service Liaison Lead) in the collation of information and the coordination of engagement visits and producing the Inspection schedule.

Our first inspection took place in June 2018. The inspection looked at three overarching pillars which are supported by many diagnostics and more detailed sub-diagnostics. The outcome of the inspection, reported in December 2018, was as follows in terms of ratings:

- Effectiveness - good
- Efficiency - good
- People – requires improvement

The inspection identified many areas of good practice but also made several recommendations for areas that could be improved. There was one 'Cause for concern', which was as follows:

*Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service doesn't do enough to be an inclusive employer. We found signs of low morale in the workforce. People have little confidence that they will be treated fairly or that senior leaders have their best interests at heart. By June 2019 the Service should:*

1. *Embed a programme to ensure that inclusion, fairness, equalities and professional development are priorities for the service;*
2. *Ensure that its recruitment activities are open and accessible to all of Hampshire's communities;*
3. *Treat employees according to their needs so they feel valued;*
4. *Ensure that each person's potential can be developed so they can perform to their very best;*
5. *Ensure that the chief officer team leads the programme, promoting the values of the organisation; and*
6. *Ensure that everyone knows how they contribute to the values.*

To see the full report, please see:

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/frs-assessment-2018-19-hampshire/>

Following the publication of the report in December 2018, we were required to submit an action plan to address the 'Cause for concern' by 30 June 2019. Our action plan, which focused on more than just the 'Cause for concern' is monitored at the Executive Group and the Standards & Governance Committee on a regular basis.

There was a total of 41 actions against 21 diagnostics of the HMICFRS framework. As of March 2021, all actions have been completed. Furthermore, in December 2020, we provided the Inspectorate with a range of detailed information on the progress we have made in response to the 2018 inspection and the cause for concern raised. For example, a

Leadership Framework, which was signed off by the POD Board, articulates the Service's commitment to professional development by mandating both inclusion and diversity training for all our employees, and appropriate management and leadership development for all those in managerial roles.

The new values framework has been created through extensive workforce engagement and is actively supported and promoted by the Chief Fire Officer and the Executive Group. A working group was established and has played a key role in developing, implementing and embedding our values across the Services. Our new values are also core to recruitment, promotion and other processes, and the Safety Plan 2020-25, and also form a fundamental part of the new PDR process. Following a successful pilot which concluded in May 2019, the new Personal Development Review (PDR) process has been developed, incorporating the new set of statements in respect of values and behaviours, and was rolled out in April 2020. In support of this new process, a Personal Development Review (PDR) data capture tool was developed in early 2020, with a refreshed tool produced in March 2021.

The POD Board also continues to promote and support the health, wellbeing and safety of our employees.

There has been significant investment in supporting the mental health of our employees through access to psychological screening and increased numbers of mental health first aiders. We have also worked with partner agencies to provide support and guidance in respect of menopause and men's health issues, both from a personal and managerial perspective. We undertook a wellbeing survey in the summer of 2020, which we discussed as part of the recent COVID-19 inspection. This had many positive findings, including on staff's views on the support they have received from their line managers, as well as areas for consideration – which are being well-communicated to staff through a series of communications and updates, along with any subsequent activity undertaken in response to the findings.

The next inspection was planned to take place week commencing the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020, however, due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, HMICFRS (in liaison with the Home Office) decided to postpone all inspection activity. The full inspection activity since restarted in January 2021 with the commencement of the first tranche of Services. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service has now been moved to tranche 3 with a start date of January 2022 (for the provision of documents and data) followed by inspections visits later in 2022.

## **COVID-19 Inspection**

In addition to the normal inspection programme, the Home Office commissioned HMICFRS to proceed with a COVID-19 inspection of all fire and rescue services and their response to COVID-19 with particular focus on:

- What is working well and what is being learnt
- How the fire sector is responding to COVID-19
- How fire services are dealing with the problems they face
- What changes are likely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

The inspection was conducted entirely virtually for two weeks from 26 October 2020. There was also, however, various information we have provided to them in early September in advance of the inspection.

Given our coordinated response, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service were inspected collectively. Following the completion of inspection activity, the inspectorate generated a findings letter for each fire and rescue service accompanied by a national report.

The letter does not provide a graded judgement such as that provided against the normal inspection programme; but it did include various positive findings about our response to the pandemic – concluding that it was impressed by how the service adapted and responded to the pandemic effectively to fulfil its statutory functions, protect the public and support staff wellbeing.

It also identified, amongst other positive findings that the service had in place up-to-date plans that were sufficient to give an initial response to the pandemic. The service reviewed these plans as it understood more about the risks it faced. It continued to carry out safe and well visits and do fire safety audits (although it did fewer of both face to face). It was proactive in offering support to others. All groups of staff did additional work, especially to support the local ambulance service. The work varied based on local demand across the two service areas and meant that the people of Hampshire and Isle of Wight were better supported through the pandemic.

The inspection also included that resources were well managed. It found the service responded quickly to protect staff and support their wellbeing. Staff told HMICFRS the service communicated well with them and used technology to help reach the widest staff audiences. The service made extra efforts to understand individual needs of staff (particularly those who are at higher risk from COVID-19) and put in place tailored support.

The inspection did however, flag three areas of focus for us, which we will be focusing on throughout 2021/22, partly within our programme of assurance activity:

- 1. determining how we will adopt for the longer-term, the new and innovative ways of working introduced during the pandemic, to secure lasting improvements.*
- 2. making sure all wholetime firefighters are fully productive, while continuing to minimise the risk of them contracting or spreading the virus.*
- 3. evaluate how effective our extra activities have been.*

To see the full COVID-19 Inspection letter, please see:

[COVID-19 inspection: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Services - HMICFRS \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/covid-19-inspection-hampshire-and-isle-of-wight-fire-and-rescue-services-hmicfrs/)

## **Fire Standards**

As part of the reforms for fire and rescue services in England, the Fire Standards Board were 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”.

In 2020/21, we saw the launch of 4 new Fire Standards with a further 11 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, we are then able to take appropriate actions to ensure we are compliant against the proposed Standard. This will form a core part of our assurance activity in 2021/22 (and beyond).

For more information of the Fire Standards, please see:  
[Fire Standards Board](#)

## **Performance Management**

Our strategic performance is reported to the Executive Group regularly, and to the Hampshire Fire & Rescue Authority committee twice a year. These reports show our performance across a wide range of Service area measures. These measures are made up of the Service-wide impacts, our response standard to critical incidents and other areas, including staff wellbeing. These measures helped us focus our change activity across all our Service Plan priority areas, and now of Safety Plan priorities.

For more information on our performance reporting, please see:

<https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=749&MId=7769&Ver=4> and  
[https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about/transparency/information-we-publish/?\\_sft\\_document\\_type=performance-docs](https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about/transparency/information-we-publish/?_sft_document_type=performance-docs)

## **Learning & 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.

## **Policy, Procedure and Guidance**

In 2020/21, we have worked to further embed a new Policy Framework following a significant review of our Service's policies. Our Policy, Procedure and Guidance (PPG)'s are documents that capture and define the way our organisations operate and how we deliver services and functions.

They ensure our people have the necessary reference tools required to do their job with the information presented and communicated in a way which is simple and easy to use which forms a safe system of work.

- Policies:
  - Are owned by the Service and provide the overarching authority by which the organisation delivers their operations or service's.
  - They are statements of the what and the why, ensuring the Service is compliant with legislation and are non-negotiable.
- Procedures:
  - Are owned by the relevant Directorate and support the policies in place.
  - They are subject to change and continuous improvement and clearly state what individual actions should be taken.
- Guidance:
  - Are owned by the relevant Directorate and provide our people with help and advice on how they can complete tasks.

- The guidance is more general and can apply to either everyday business or operational incidents.

Other types of procedure or guidance includes:

- National Operational Guidance (NOG).
- Tactical Operational Guidance (TOG).
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
- Additional Hazard Information Sheets (AHIS).

## **National Operational Guidance**

National Operational Guidance is developed through the National Fire Chiefs Council in collaboration with each of the UK Fire and Rescue Services. Their aim is to provide a one-stop shop for good practice operational guidance that can be tailored to local needs. When new guidance becomes available, we assess the gaps in our own current 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 will continue in 2021/22 in response to National Operational Guidance developments.

This is overseen by our Policy, Planning and Assurance directorate who regularly monitor are progress in policy development to ensure compliance. 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 industry. This includes making our own contributions 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 clearly defined policies and procedures. An Operational Assurance team work hard to capture lessons of our effectiveness and look to make improvements where possible. They do this using a number of 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. Operational Assurance Assessments were due to commence from March 2020 but due to the COVID-19 pandemic these have were put on hold for part of the year, recommencing in October 2020 and then paused again in January 2021, owing to the second wave of the pandemic. The assessments recommenced again in April 2021. 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 Operational 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 Operational 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.

To further support the debrief process and to widen the potential opportunity for improvements, we launched a new 'Submit Learning' application in 2019/20. This tool enables any member of staff to provide feedback at any time on a number of different platforms including mobile phones and mobile data terminals in appliances. This enables us to capture real time feedback but also allow people to reflect on situations and feedback at a later time. The tool has been designed to gather feedback in other areas across the Service, such as lessons learned from Project delivery or feedback on HR related investigations. This additional development was undertaken in 2020/21.

Our Operational Assurance Team also support multi-agency exercises as part of our contingency planning and business continuity. By assessing the effectiveness of these exercises, we are able to identify ways of working more effectively with our partners and make the necessary plans to ensure that should a major incident occur, we are able to deal with them accordingly.

We also 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/>

## **Audit**

Hampshire 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 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority 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.

Details of our internal audits are reported to the Authority through our Standards & Governance Committee. This includes the progress of management actions resulting from observations of improvements required, which we monitor closely and also report on internally. Our overall assurance rating for 2020/21 was 'Reasonable'; which is a continued improvement compared to previous years. Furthermore, we have seen an improvement in the number of open and overdue actions throughout the course of 2020/21; and continue our positive relationship with SIAP (based on a Memorandum of Understanding between HIWFRS and SIAP).

For more details please see papers submitted to the Standards & Governance Committee, available at: <https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=178>

## **Assurance Programme**

In 2020/21, we launched a new Assurance Procedure to provide a framework of assurance for our activity. This framework establishes a series of assurance activities to ensure

services are delivered effectively. To ensure assurance activities are independent and objective, we have adopted the 'three lines of defence' model which is essential to the overall framework of control:

- The first line of defence can be described as the day-to-day management processes and controls that teams or Directorates have in place, including performance management.
- The second line of defence is the governance and oversight arrangements that exist and are specified within clear and signed-off terms of reference for decision-making bodies, such as the Directorate Boards and the Executive Group and the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA).
- The third line of defence is the independent assurance you obtain from Internal Audit and third-party assurance providers, such as HMICFRS.

In respect of second- and third-line assurance activity we carry out a range of evaluations, assessments and externally led reviews that are commissioned by Service Directorates to provide additional assurance in targeted areas. These reviews are based on a range of quantitative and qualitative data, and include key findings, an overall conclusion, and recommendations for improvement. In 2020/21, we carried out an evaluation on the newly launched Values and Behaviours to see where they had been integrated into the Service.

Individual Directorate Boards are responsible for recommendations, with overall evaluation findings and recommendations (and the response to them) discussed regularly at the Integrated Performance and Assurance Group and subsequently reported to the Executive Group.

## **Feedback**

We also encourage feedback from our communities to help us improve our performance. Any issues raised are assigned 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/>