



ISLE OF WIGHT
**FIRE AND
RESCUE**
SERVICE

Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service **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.

The Isle of Wight covers an area of 147 square miles, with a coastline that runs for 57 miles. The Island features a wide variety of natural, rural and urban landscapes. Over 50% of the Island is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 28 miles of coastline is designated as Heritage Coast. In addition, the Island also includes a very high number of internationally, nationally and locally important nature conservation sites. 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. Newport is the County Town of the Island and is the main employment centre. Outside of these settlements there are around 30 villages and hamlets.

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 2.34 million people have visited the Isle of Wight in the past year. Newport is the largest county town by population (17,200) and is home to the Isle of Wight Council (IWC), St Mary's Hospital, courts and the headquarters of the emergency services.

The Isle of Wight Council is a unitary authority providing the widest range of local authority services to its residents and businesses. It is also home to Her Majesty's Prison Isle of Wight, which is a category B prison. The prison holds approximately 1,100 prisoners on two sites with central administration. Manufacturing, ship building, agriculture and tourism are among the industries on the Island which is also home to a COMAH site.

Our purpose is *Together we make life safer*, for everyone on the Isle of Wight. 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. Despite this we continue to look for more ways to improve the safety of people on the Isle of Wight as we through 2021 and beyond. We are also passionate about collaborating and working ever more closely with our partners 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 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 Service plan.

We are proud of our past performance; but always look for continuous improvement through particular initiatives and seeking ways to deliver the best services with greater value for money.

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 13th 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 initial measures that were outlined in last year's (2019/20) annual assurance statement. This included but was not limited to restrictions to Control to support business continuity; guidance provided to restrict non-essential events activities on stations; and creating an Emergency Staff Cell to monitor the impact of staff absences in take action to mitigate any resourcing risks, where required.

On the 19th 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, firefighters and other staff 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. 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. This support was also more accessible to island personnel following the advanced work on our ICT infrastructure (and access to SharePoint) as part of the Combined Fire Authority Programme.

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 10th March 2021 and concurrently recovery planning was initiated within the LRF and its partners. From a recovery perspective, the HIOWLRF 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, and detached and voluntary vaccinators. 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, and our on-call availability has improved slightly. 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 – which is testament to our staff and the organisational focus on the health and wellbeing of our people. Separately, we have ongoing focus on the representation of our workforce and equality, diversity and inclusion, as part of the People & Organisational Development (POD) framework. In terms of our finances, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in some additional spend during financial year 2020/21, but there was a strong focus on financial management throughout the year, through various mechanisms, including the island Financial Management Team and the IWFRS leadership team meetings.

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 Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS) is a directorate within the IWC who take decisions in delivery of the Fire Service Act 2004. Councilor Dave Stewart is the Community safety and public protection lead and is the policy and strategy lead for IWFRS within the Cabinet; through a strategic partnership arrangement the council, discharges responsibility for running the IWFRS to the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) Chief Fire Officer, Neil Odin who is accountable to the IWC Chief Executive John Metcalfe for the delivery of the partnership arrangements.

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

For more details on our Constitution, please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/transparency/The-Council/Democratic-Services/Constitution1>

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.

The Isle of Wight Council's local governance framework is designed to be consistent with the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government good governance code of practice. The framework summarises the council's internal arrangements that have been put in place to ensure that there is effective governance. The overarching aim of good governance is to ensure that the council always achieves its intended priority outcomes while acting in the public interest.

The details of our framework are presented in our Annual Governance Statement. For more details of our Governance Statement, please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/OtherServices/Financial-Management/Audit-and-Governance>

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 24th 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 1st May 2020 with no objections. With the statutory instrument in place, the combination was able to commence on the 1st 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.

Progress towards the new Combined Fire Authority has been 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.

Safety Plan

On 1st 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 1st of 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)

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/Integrated-Risk-Management-Plan-2019-Consultation)

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 1st April 2020.

Risk Management

On 19th 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:

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 key messages to potentially high-risk business premises. We do this 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 65 targeted fire safety audits (a decrease of 58% compared to 2019/20 (155) owing to the impact of COVID-19) 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 our high-risk premises.

In addition to this, our teams work to reduce risk on the Isle of Wight to occupants and firefighters by, for example, 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 62 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/)

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 reduced by around 200 closed jobs, to around 400, and 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.

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-Hampshire-Isle-of-Wight-Fire-Rescue-Service)

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-Schools-Hampshire-Isle-of-Wight-Fire-Rescue-Service)

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-Hampshire-Isle-of-Wight-Fire-Rescue-Service)

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. Our frontline resources and fire appliance are spread across these stations according to the local risk factors. Based throughout the Island we have ten fire stations with a headquarters in Newport.

Newport Fire Station is a whole-time facility which is crewed 24 hours in addition to a retained duty system crew. Ryde Fire Station has a whole-time crew during the day and a retained duty system at night. All other stations have retained duty system personnel.

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. Specialist capabilities in IWFRS include:

- Rescue Tender
- Water Rescue Units
- Animal Rescue Units
- Water Carriers
- Aerial Ladder Platforms
- Land Rovers

In 2020/21, we attended 327 fires, 458 non-fire emergency ('special service call') incidents (such as road traffic collisions) and 650 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. 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.

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 more information on our Local Resilience Forum, please see:

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.

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

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/council/OtherServices/Emergency-Management/About-the-Emergency-Management-Team>

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

Collaboration

We work closely on a day-to-day basis, with our blue light colleagues from other fire and rescue, police and ambulance services. We also have excellent relationships with our colleagues across the Isle of Wight Council as we work together to deliver a shared Corporate Plan. As part of the council all of our support services (e.g. payroll, HR, accountants, and property services) are shared with other council services. We believe that through collaboration we can maximize the benefits of our collective offering to the public.

The Isle of Wight has cross border arrangements with HFRS and other neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services. Being an island means that we need to maintain a high degree of self-sufficiency, however, being able to call upon our neighbours for additional support and operational assets is a critical part of our emergency response plans should a major incident occur. There are standard agreements in place to formalise these arrangements under the Fire Service Act (2004) and the Civil Contingencies Act (2004). These plans include our arrangements with the ferry companies to ensure mutual aid can be reached across the Solent.

In 2015 a 'Delivering Differently in Partnership' agreement was put in place to effectively outsource certain aspects of IWFRS to HFRS, in response to the significant financial challenge facing the IWC. This arrangement included the HFRS Senior Officers leading the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS) as their Chief Officers. This unique partnership arrangement was the first of its kind in the country. We continue to work closely with HFRS to find new ways of delivering services together more efficiently and support them in dealing with large and complex incidents. One of these ways includes handling 999 calls and mobilising IWFRS appliances through HFRS's Control centre. Further alignment will continue under these arrangements until April 2021, when the two Authorities combine.

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 lead the Isle of Wight Road Safety, on behalf of the IWC and other partner agencies.

For more details please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/fire-and-rescue-service/Road-Safety/About>

Our People

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

Close working between Isle of Wight Council and HFRS People and Organisational Development (POD) Directorate

Owing to DDiP, as mentioned above in this report, and in advance of the new Combined Fire Authority, there continues to be an ongoing close working relationship between Isle of Wight Council, Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service in various areas, including our support to our people.

While there have been various people-related Council initiatives and support in place for IWFRS staff, such as the implementation of the 'Believe in Great' (BIG) organisational development plan; and a wide range of internal and external support available to IWFRS staff, such as occupational health provision, an employee assistance programme and mental health first aiders, and COVID-19 specific support. There have also been joint recruitment campaigns for HFRS and IWFRS. This has all been supplemented by HFRS's POD Directorate and its activity, some of which is outlined below. The support the Service provides to our people and their wellbeing was also scrutinised as part of the joint COVID-19 HMICFRS inspection, which had various positive people related conclusions, and can be found here: <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/covid-19-inspection-hampshire-and-isle-of-wight-fire-and-rescue-services/>. The report concluded, for example, that:

“Resources were well managed. The service responded quickly to protect staff and support their wellbeing. Staff told us 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 service also made sure all staff had the resources they needed to do their jobs effectively. This included giving personal protective equipment (PPE) to all who needed it, and extra IT (particularly for staff on the Isle of Wight, so they could access Hampshire systems and information ahead of the planned combination in April 2021). The service has used learning from the first phase of the pandemic to inform its future decision making. It has also shared its learning nationally, and with other local and regional organisations.”

People & Organisational Development (POD) Strategy

In support of the new IRMP and subsequent Safety Plan that was launched on 1st 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-19 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.

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.

We also carried out a wellbeing survey in the summer of 2020, which received 526 responses across HFRS and IWFRS personnel, 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, available via: <https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about/transparency/information-we-publish/>

Public Value

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

Financial Management

Our Medium-Term Financial Plan is regularly updated and reported to the Corporate Management Team and the IWC Cabinet. 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. Performance against this framework is assessed using an Assurance Framework Survey, the recording and investigation of suspected incidents and a review from our Internal Auditors into directorship of external companies that the IWC has made payments to. Based on these controls, no changes have been made to the strategy, which we have assessed to be working appropriately.

For more details please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/OtherServices/Financial-Management/Accounts1>

Financial Performance

Ensuring that funding is appropriately accounted for is vital for all public sector organisations. Our financial performance is reported to the Corporate Management Team and the IWC Cabinet every year.

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

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/documentlibrary/view/draft-statement-of-accounts-2019-20-subject-to-audit->

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: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/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:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/MyAccount/login.aspx?return=https%3a%2f%2fwww.iow.gov.uk%2fCouncil%2fOtherServices%2fFreedom-of-Information-Requests%2fFOI&serviceType=5>

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 this inspection we employed a Group Manager to operate as our Service Liaison Officer and provided additional support from various teams across the Service.

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:

Isle of Wight 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/frs-assessment/frs-2018/isle-of-wight/>

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 IWC Corporate Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis.

There was a total of 25 actions against 8 diagnostics of the HMICFRS framework. As of March 2020, we have closed all 25 (100%) IWFRS actions with an action plan closure report taken to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 7th July 2020. 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, 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, 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 launched in March 2021.

The Isle of Wight Council and 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 27th April 2020, however, due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, HMICFRS (in liaison with the Home Office) decided to postpone all further inspection activity until further notice. HMICFRS's Service Liaison Lead does, however, continue to review the documentary evidence and data returns that we provided them with earlier in the year and engagement with the Service Liaison Lead continues to take place.

To view the improvement plan, please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Meetings/committees/Corporate%20Scrutiny%20Committee/9-7-19/PaperC-FireServiceImprovementInspectionPlan.pdf>

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 concluded 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, with separate reporting into IWC around various agreed measures, such as our response standard to critical incidents and other areas, fatalities and injuries, and the number of primary and secondary fires and false alarms attended. 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://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about/transparency/information-we-publish/>

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

The IWC 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 IWC that these arrangements are in place and operating effectively. Our internal audits are carried out in partnership with Portsmouth City Council (acting for the Isle of Wight Council) who also assist us in the development of future audit plans.

Details of our internal audits are reported through our Audit 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 assurance'. Whilst there were no specific fire and rescue service audits, there were 14 Corporate Services audits and 5 Finance audits, which cover and support all IWC departments.

Moving forward, following the combination, HIWFRS, working with its internal auditors (Southern Internal Audit Partnership, SIAP) will deliver the 2021/22 risk-based audit plan.

For more details please see Internal Auditing Service, available at:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/council/OtherServices/Audit/Internal-Auditing-Service>

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 annual reports are discussed at our Executive Group meeting.

For more details regarding feedback, please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Business/Fire-and-Rescue/Fire-and-Rescue-Service/Contact>