



**Annual Report
and Statement of Assurance
2023-2024**





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1. Celebrating 75 years of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service with event at the Essex Fire Museum in Grays.
2. Supporting 'Be Water Aware Week' by promoting Float To Live safety technique.
3. On-Call Firefighters from Manningtree help their town get ready for the King's Coronation by using their skills to fix the church's flagpole.
4. Celebrating our 35 strong volunteering team who gave more than 6000 hours of their time in a year to help keep Essex safe.
5. One of our many passout parades from the year.
6. Firefighter Les Nicol helps over 130 families receive free school uniforms.



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Our year in photos



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7. Home Safety Administrator, Sally Coleman, potentially saved a woman's life after identifying the sound of a carbon monoxide alarm during a routine phone call.
8. Rescue dog Bailey, now one of our top search dogs, features in inspirational story of his life to support Dog's Trust.
9. Our Fire Cadets learn how our old hoses are used for enrichment at Colchester Zoo.
10. Our Chief Fire Officer Rick Hylton and Group Manager Karen Lockerbie Christmas shopping to fill 170 festive hampers for families in need.
11. Essex fire officers Antony Clement and Tom Jewell head to Morocco to help following devastating earthquake.
12. Supporting Vision Zero Day. From left to right we have....Lorraine Morgan (Safer Essex Roads, Team Lead - Now retired), Sam Wright (Essex Police), Daisy Pearson (Essex County Fire and Rescue Service), Naomi Woodruff (Safer Essex Roads, Road Safety Technician), Sally Bennett (Safer Essex Roads, Road Safety Technician), Laura Bayley, and Liam Collins (Safer Essex Roads, Road Safety Technician).
13. What a team! Celebrating the achievements of our people after a successful year making Essex a safer place for everyone to live, work and travel.

Welcome to our Statement of Assurance and Annual Report for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

This report covers the financial year 2023-24 and includes:

- highlights of the year
- how we spend your money
- performance against our targets
- how we are working to improve our services to our communities
- the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority's (PFCC FRA) Statement of Assurance

Under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authorities must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters.



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Fire and Rescue Statement

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England sets out a requirement for the fire and rescue authorities to publish a statement of assurance.

It says the statement should:

“...outline the way in which the authority and its fire and rescue service has had regard – in the period covered by the document – to this National Framework, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and to any strategic plan (e.g the Fire and Rescue Plan) prepared by the authority for that period.

The authority must also provide assurance to their community and to government on financial, governance and operational matters. For PFCC FRAs, this statement is subject to scrutiny by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

The name of this statement differs across governance models. In the case of PFCC FRAS it is called the ‘Fire and Rescue Statement’.

2023/2024 Fire and Rescue Statement of Assurance

Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (EPFCCFRA) is satisfied that its business during the financial year 2023 – 24 was conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The authority is further satisfied that the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England have been met.

Signed:



Roger Hirst
Police, Fire and Crime
Commissioner for Essex



Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Report Roger Hirst



Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has continued to make progress over the past year with further improvement in its prevention, protection and response services. The latest His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection, published in March 2024, graded the Service as 'good' at preventing fires and other risks.

The service has also improved how it targets prevention activity and was seen to collaborate well with others to reduce the number of fires and other risks. This evidence of continued improvement is mirrored in my own oversight of the service which has shown continued improvement and progression since I took on joint governance in 2017.

Over this time the Service has undergone a significant cultural shift and is now recognised nationally as a service with a strong positive culture. During the year, the Service gained the Silver Inclusive Employers Standard accreditation that recognises our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. By working with communities, the police and other partners across Essex, the Service has successfully driven down the number of house fires over

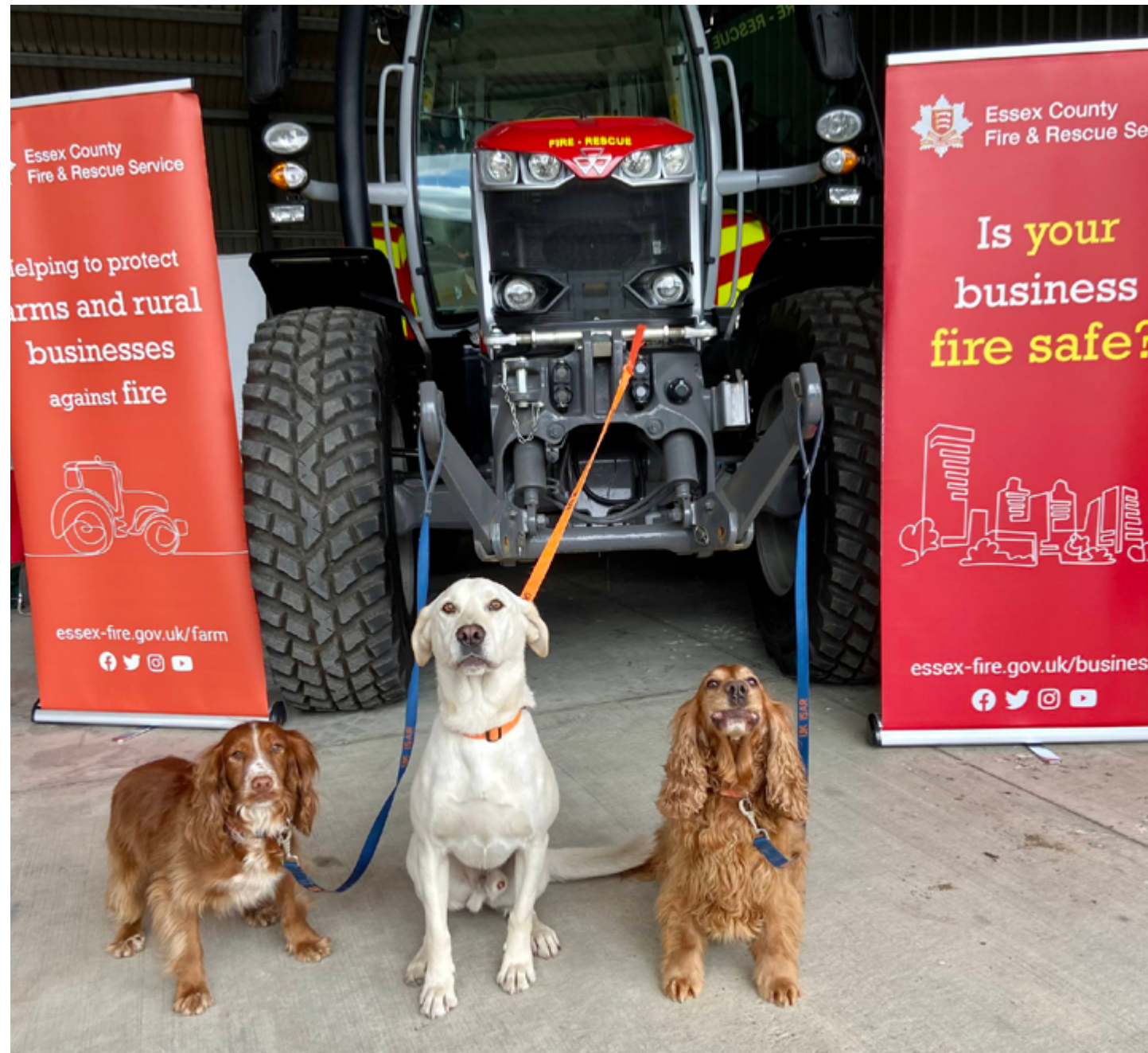
the last five years from 783 to 677, while non-residential fires have decreased by 12.9%. It was also encouraging to see that in the year 2023/24 the Service has carried out 1,640 more Home Fire Safety checks than the previous year; 10,120 in total compared to 8,480 in 2022/23.

Over the last 12-months there has been an increase of 6% in dwelling fires while fatalities have remained static at four. Understanding, identifying and protecting our most vulnerable residents remains a priority, and in December 2023 the Service implemented a 12-month pilot programme, in collaboration with the ambulance service. This involved four Community Wellbeing Officers working across Essex responding to calls from people who had fallen in their homes. We know that the people who are most at risk from falls are also at risk of greatest harm in the event of a fire at home. To be able to visit these people and help them avoid becoming the victim of a fire helps to drive down the number of house fires and risk that residents will suffer injuries and even die.

As part of Vision Zero, the ambition to have no deaths on Essex roads by 2040, the Service continues to take a proactive approach in responding effectively to roads incidents, rescuing people from car

crashes, reducing injuries and deaths as well as carrying out important education around safe driving and road use.

The Service plays an active role in the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) which also includes Essex Police, Essex County Council, Southend on Sea City Council, Thurrock Council, National Highways, East of England Ambulance Service Trust, Essex and Herts Air Ambulance Service Trust, and The Safer Roads Foundation. After a significant increase after COVID, this approach is starting to work and there was a 4.9% decrease (44 fewer) in the number of those killed or seriously injured in Essex for the 12-months to March 2024 compared to the 12-months to March 2023.





School safety visits have also continued with 1,489 programmes delivered by the Joint Essex Education Team in Essex, reaching over 126,547 children and young people. This is an increase of 923 compared to the previous year.

As a result of feedback from the education steering group, the Joint Education Team offered a series of events during March 2024 to target home educated children and children out of mainstream education. This innovation is welcome, and I look forward to the educational interventions continuing to increase so we can reach as many children and young people as possible. These are critical to teach them about the importance of fire prevention, crime prevention, cyber safety, road safety, knife crime, gang awareness, hate crime and healthy relationships.

Looking ahead, we will need to continue the focus on improving our protection work and making the best use of resources. We will do this by continuing investment in the service, focusing on prevention and protection, using technology effectively and ensuring our service is one where people from across our communities want to work and where they can have successful careers.

Finally, I would like to thank the Chief Fire Officer, his team, our firefighters and staff for their hard work over the year. We have seen how good our fire and rescue service can be, and at their best they are the best in the country. Together they help make Essex a safe place to live, work and thrive.



Chief Fire Officer Review of the Year Rick Hylton



I am pleased to share our Statement of Assurance and Annual Report with you. It has been developed to demonstrate how we are keeping you safe, protecting our communities and spending our money.

Our mission is to make Essex a safe place to live, work and travel.

Our people share a common goal in that we want to be one of the best fire and rescue services in the country. By continually raising our standards and improving what we do, we are providing our residents, businesses, and visitors with a service they deserve.

Our Statement of Accounts outlines some of our key financial issues, demonstrating how we continue to drive change, reduce risk, invest in prevention and protection, and continue to provide a first-class emergency response service – with our people at the centre of everything we do.

We are good at understanding and preventing fires and other risks in Essex and we have been rated as good at future affordability.

In March, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published its report following our inspection last autumn. The inspection was our third assessment in as many years and looked at our effectiveness and efficiency as a Service, and how well we look after our people. Overall, the report was positive. The inspectors said we are good at understanding and preventing fires and other risks in Essex and we have been rated as good at future affordability.

Importantly, they determined there was no longer a cause for concern for our protection work, with inspectors highlighting the hard work we are doing working with businesses, high rise buildings and the rural community to reduce risk. This was a positive outcome for us, and an important milestone in our improvement journey. We know there is more to do but we are assured that the work we are doing to keep people, homes, and businesses safer has been recognised.

The inspectorate also rated the service as “good at making the service affordable now and in the future”. We have strong financial plans in place which ensure the public get value for money from their fire and rescue service and our Service is an inclusive and safe place to work. Our Medium-Term Financial Strategy is updated regularly to reflect changes in economic conditions and savings plans are used to reduce the impact of financial risks.



Our People

This year our Service became the first fire and rescue service in the country to achieve the Silver Inclusive Employers Standard accreditation. This highlights our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We achieved a bronze accreditation two years ago and the improvement is testament to our focus to create an inclusive environment for all colleagues.

We want our Service to be an employer of choice that provides an inclusive public service to our communities. We want our Service to better represent and reflect our communities. Our positive action recruitment is one way that we are tackling this, with a specific focus on attracting women into operational roles, and people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, people from faith groups and people aged 17 to 25 to consider a career with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

Our recruitment activity focuses on challenging outdated stereotypes of a fire service and telling our colleagues' stories. The overwhelming majority of our positive action content across our social media channels receives a positive response from our public and lots of engagement too.

Our people are our greatest asset, and it is a pleasure to use their stories in an authentic way.

In 2023/24:

- **female starters increased from 16% to 21%.**
- **starters of a minority ethnicity rose from 2.8% to 6.4%.**
- **there is no disproportionate drop-off for any individual group with a protected characteristic throughout our wholetime recruitment processes.**
- **we received a record number of applications from women, ethnic minorities and under 25s – up by almost 10%.**
- **in the most recent question and answer session, 100% of evaluation forms said they felt more confident about the recruitment process as a direct result of the session.**
- **we have increased our Instagram content as we know this audience is younger. Our engagement rate on this channel is 9.5%, compared to the average Instagram engagement rate of 5%.**

As a result of this work and focus, I am proud that our Positive Action Recruitment Team won the Asian Fire Service Awards Positive Action Award in November.

Inclusion and Diversity

To be an employer of choice, advocating equality, diversity and inclusion across our Service is just as important as our positive action in recruitment. This is particularly important against the backdrop of the HMICFRS 2023 report into values and culture across the fire and rescue sector.

In 2023 we held events at our Service Headquarters to celebrate International Women’s Day, International Men’s Day and International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia.

In addition, our Service’s awards ceremony included an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Award in one of six categories. We are constantly looking for ways to make inclusivity a default across our organisation.



In 2023, we became the first Fire and Rescue Service nationally to create an electronic People Impact Assessment form, to make it even simpler for managers to consider how changes to practices and policies can affect our colleagues and communities.

Our internal communication team produces a monthly newsletter called Inclusion Insights, which is emailed to every colleague. It includes resources, thought-provoking materials and inspiring stories and is read by more than 700 colleagues every month.

Externally, we promote awareness days, equality, diversity and inclusion. We use real stories to highlight the work we're doing in that area. Sometimes we receive negativity from members of the public, but we use this as an opportunity to reinforce our stance.

In fact, a member of our Service responded to the communications team with this message:

“I am really proud to see our comms team responding to comments online on International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. Unfortunately, people in marginalised communities still suffer

discrimination and hate and until we accept all people and allow such openness and visibility to be safe, we need to keep driving inclusion forward.”

Reducing the Gender Pay Gap

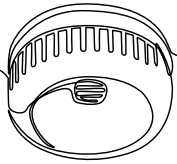
Over the past year we have almost closed our Service's gender pay gap. There is a 2.8% pay gap (median), which is significantly lower than the UK national average of 7.7% for full-time workers. This has been steadily reducing since our Service began reporting in 2018, when the gap was 15.6%. Gender pay gap measures the difference in average earnings across all colleagues in our Service. This is different to equal pay, which look at what men and women are paid for the same role. As our Service uses a pay scale, there is equal pay for equal roles.

Our Service

Over the last 12-months we have continued to reduce the number of fires in the home, deliberate fires and commercial fires. But there's always more to do, and our focus continues to be on preventing incidents from happening, working with the public, our partners, and businesses to keep their homes and businesses safe.

This year we carried out 10,284 Home Fire Safety checks, around 3,000 more than we did in the 12-months before and 50% more than we delivered in 2022. In February our Service recorded the largest volume of Home Fire Safety Checks completed to date with our prevention officers and operational crews carrying out 1,047 visits to people's homes.





The impact of that is a 28% reduction in injuries from accidental dwelling fires.

We know that the people who are most at risk from falls are also at the greatest risk of harm in the event of a fire at home, and that ambulance services nationally often must prioritise high risk calls over falls. However, identifying and interacting with the people most at risk is not always possible. As a result, our Service launched an innovative project with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust to help vulnerable people who have fallen in their homes.



The partnership, launched in December, is a 12-month pilot which will see four Community Wellbeing Officers work across Essex responding to calls from people who have fallen in their homes. They completed three weeks of emergency responder training with the Ambulance service to learn the skills required for their role. Currently, if a person falls at home and has no injuries, they could have a long wait for an ambulance to become available. We aim to send a Community Wellbeing Officer within an hour of the call.

Once the officers have assisted the patient, they will also carry out a tailored home safety check, ensure their smoke alarms are working and will also help to reduce risk of fire or further falls by identifying hazards (loose rugs, old slippers, steps without handrails).

To be able to visit these people and help mitigate these risks will also hopefully reduce the number of house fires and resulting injuries and fatalities.



Recently, we secured £255,000 from the Home Office grant fund to assure our delivery of our Risk Based Inspection Programme and our legislative duties for inspecting buildings. Our programme is currently six months ahead of our five-year High-Risk target and three months ahead of our Very High-Risk target.

We are overcoming significant national challenges in Protection. One of these is that the number of trained fire inspectors is far below the number required. As a result, our Service has started to invest in training and developing our inspectors in-house. We intend to increase this training to provide a strong pipeline of talented well-trained inspectors. The increase in inspectors has had a significant impact on our activities.

Over the last year we have reviewed our risk-based inspection process which is an evidence-based approach to selecting properties on a year-by-year basis to audit across the county. This has led to a reallocation of visits and new targets to ensure our resources are used to make the most impact.

In 2023-24 we undertook 1,667 risk-based inspections, which is a decrease of 307 from the previous year.

In November, we set up a high-rise task force to audit all high-rise residential buildings in Essex to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended) and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations, which came into force in January 2023 as result of the Grenfell Tower fire.

We have set up a dedicated area on our website to provide guidance to affected property owners and an easy-to-follow form on our website to allow the information to be shared with us securely.

We know that 72% of Essex's land area is designated as rural. Field fires during the heatwave in summer 2022 highlighted the need for us to have stronger links with our farming communities. We approached a local agricultural dealership, the Crawfords Group, to provide us with a Massey Ferguson tractor to use as an engagement tool at community events.

In December 2023, we received a tractor, branded with our colours and crest, which we are using to tour the county's farming events and agricultural shows.

We are committed to reducing deaths and injuries on our roads as more people die on our roads than in fires or other emergencies combined. We are sharing data with the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) to understand where collisions are happening on our roads.

We are now focusing on working with SERP to understand where the people at highest risk live. This means we can focus on preventing the collisions from occurring in the first place and can target those areas where we may have higher-risk communities.

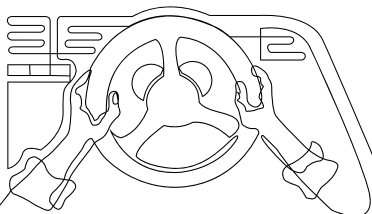


Specialist training and knowledge is required to deal with incidents involving electric vehicles and lithium-ion batteries. The increase in electric vehicles on our road network and lithium-ion batteries charging at home present a new risk for the public and our crews.

To mitigate this risk, we have partnered with Essex Group1Audi to explore the emerging technology and its effect on our response at fires and road traffic collisions. They have developed bespoke sessions which are delivered to all our firefighters and other relevant colleagues. The sessions include an in-depth presentation of electric vehicle technologies, a tour of their workshops by technicians and an opportunity for firefighters to have a first-hand look at the vehicles in more detail. The sessions provided by Essex Group1Audi have provided an informed understanding of risks associated with electrification.

Learning from the sessions has also been incorporated into official road traffic collision training for all operational crews, which we are sharing nationally to other fire and rescue services. The workshops have been very well received by firefighters who found it useful to talk to the vehicle technicians and to look for themselves at the safety features which are vital to use at road traffic collisions.

In addition to the electric vehicle sessions, Essex Group1Audi is continuing to provide a high-performance car to our Road Safety Team to engage with young drivers a part of our role to promote Vision Zero, our countywide campaign to reduce road deaths. Our Road Safety Team won the Collaboration of the Year award for their partnership work with Audi at the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards.





We are using innovation in Essex to keep our county safe and prevent incidents from happening. Our work is being recognised nationally, evidenced by the range of awards we keep winning.

Looking ahead, Our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), which is our corporate plan, expires at the end of this year. We are already working on its replacement, the Community Risk Management Plan, which will set out how we plan to put our Fire and Rescue Plan (FRP) in place and drive our annual Strategic Plan, which includes things like our continuous improvement work, our programmes for change and how we manage our budget.



This plan identifies how we manage risks in Essex, protect our communities and respond to fires, all against a backdrop of financial challenges. Our risks and demands in Essex, like the rest of our country, continue to change, which means that we need to regularly review our priorities and activities so that we actively respond to our community's needs.

Recognising our Service, Recognising our People

Thank you to all our communities and partners for the continued support you offer to our Service. And finally, thank you to all our Essex County Fire and Rescue Service colleagues.

In March, this year I was extremely proud to accept, the Public Sector Transformation Award for the UK's Best Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of our Service. This award is a testament to the work we are doing, our professionalism and our commitment to innovatively keep our county safe.



Our Service

We are one of the largest fire and rescue services in the country.

We serve a county that includes Stansted and Southend airports, Harwich seaport, Lakeside shopping centre, Coryton oil refinery, Tilbury docks plus parts of the M25 and M11 motorways.

Essex is a county of contrasts made up of numerous ecologically important areas, one of the largest coastlines (350 miles) in the country, plus various conservation areas and more than 14,000 listed buildings.

Our Service is administered from our headquarters at Kelvedon Park in Kelvedon which is also where we have our mobilising control centre. We provide prevention, protection and emergency response services from 50 fire stations and an Urban Search and Rescue facility.



Our Vision

Safe and secure communities are the bedrock on which we build success and well-being for all.

Our mission

Essex is a safe place to live, work and travel.

Our Behaviours

How we act and how we treat each other and our communities.

The national Core Code of Ethics sits alongside our values. The five ethical principles provide the basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour.



Our Values

We are open, honest and trustworthy

We respect and honour all we do for the Service and our colleagues, being transparent and consistent in our communications and throughout our work.

We are courageous in everything we do

Having the confidence to always own our part and not be a bystander in order to progress and learn from our experiences. **#JustOwnIt**

We are open, honest and trustworthy

All in it together to deliver a safer Service and a safer Essex.
What part do you play?

We are open, honest and trustworthy

We proudly stay ahead of the game by embracing training and development, continually learning, while delivering professional standards to efficiently serve our community.

We are open, honest and trustworthy

We create an inclusive and non-judgemental environment that respects people as individuals, and embraces diversity. We value everyone equally, create opportunities, and celebrate our successes.

Our Strategic Priorities

Fire and Rescue Plan

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's (PFCC) Fire and Rescue Plan sets out the priorities for our Service and how we will keep our communities safe.

Working with the public and alongside our partners, the PFCC created the plan to make sure we provide efficient and effective prevention, protection and response activities.

The current Fire and Rescue Plan runs until the end of 2024. The PFCC is consulting on a new version of the plan but the current priorities which are relevant to this annual report are:

- Prevention, protection and response
- Improve safety on our roads
- Help the vulnerable stay safe
- Promote a positive culture in the workplace
- Develop and broaden the roles and range of activities undertaken by the Service
- Be transparent, open and accessible
- Collaborate with our partners
- Make the best use of our resources

Our Areas of Focus

Our areas of focus help us deliver our Fire and Rescue Plan priorities and performance metrics.

Equality

To be an inclusive employer, that delivers inclusive services and takes proactive steps to recruit a diverse workforce.

Fire Protection

Deliver our role as part of the Building Safety Regulations and embed the outcomes of the Building Risk Review into our Inspection Programme.

Prevention

To reduce fire deaths to zero and contribute towards the Safer Essex Road Partnership vision zero.

Operational Training

Provide quality training and facilities, to respond to the risks we face with assurance of competence.

Crewing

Increase our recruitment and retention, exploring flexible crewing models to improve response times.

Technology

Improve our systems and hardware to enhance productivity and connectivity.

Leadership Development

Introduce a Service-wide programme for the leaders of today and the potential ones for the future, to support workforce planning.

Fire Standards

Implement national standards to ensure best practice, support cooperative working and provide greater efficiencies.

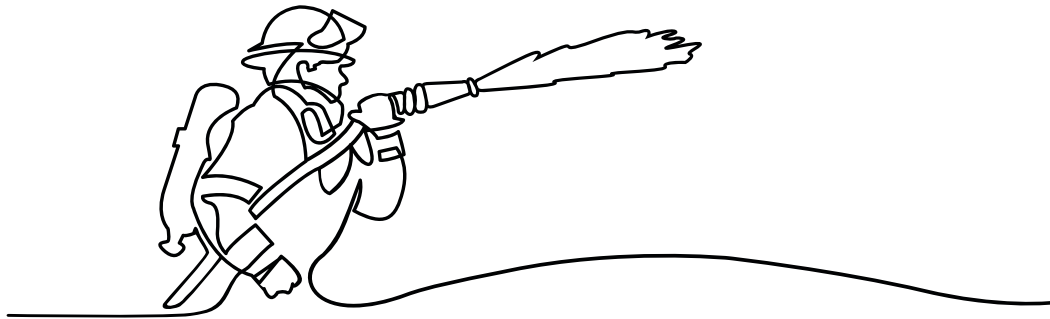
Property and Facilities

Develop our property portfolio to meet and support the well-being needs of our workforce as well as our communities.

Risk

Adopt a performance and data-driven approach to best use our resources to respond to new and changing risks more appropriately.

Fire and Rescue Plan Performance Metrics



Total Incidents attended in last 5 years



2019-20: 15,244
2023-24: 16,645

Home Fire Safety visits



2019-20: 3,593
2023-24: 10,120

People in Essex injured by fire



2019-20: 66
2023-24: 56

Total Special Services (excluding RTC)



2019-20: 3,362
2023-24: 4,279

Fires reported and attended



2019-20: 4,581
2023-24: 3,785

Accidental fires



2019-20: 780
2023-24: 679

Total RTCs (responded to by ECFRS)



2019-20: 1,187
2023-24: 1,295

Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020 – 2024

Our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) is our corporate plan. It sets out how we plan to put our Fire and Rescue Plan (FRP) in place and drives our annual Strategic Plan, which includes things like our continuous improvement work, our programmes for change and how we manage our budget.

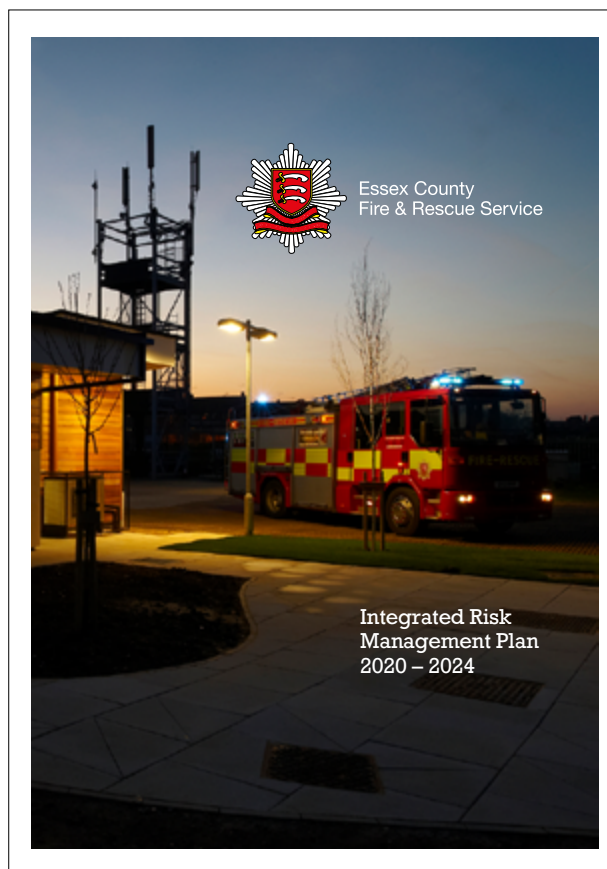
This plan identifies how we manage risks in Essex, protect our communities and respond to fires, all against a backdrop of financial challenges. Our risks and demands in Essex, like the rest of our country, continue to change, which means that we need to regularly review our priorities and activities so that we actively respond to our community's needs.

Community Risk Management Plan

As our current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) runs from 2020-24, it will be replaced with a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) from January 2025.

Our current IRMP for 2020–24 will remain in place until our new CRMP is developed and adopted.

We have a statutory duty to produce a CRMP which sets out the challenges and risks facing our communities and how we intend to meet and reduce them. It will demonstrate how our protection, prevention and response activities will be used collectively to prevent and/or mitigate fires and other incidents.



As an over-arching plan, the CRMP will cover all parts of our service, referencing key documents such as our Service Strategies, Annual Service Plan and team plans. This will help everyone in our organisation to understand risks and how we plan to reduce the impact and respond effectively.

The vision is to produce a CRMP that enables us to become one of the best fire and rescue services nationally and drive what we do.

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Fire Standard desired outcome for the CRMP is:

“A fire and rescue service that assesses foreseeable community-related risks and uses this knowledge to decide how those risks will be mitigated.”

Work has already started on our CRMP, with a public consultation taking place later this year. The document will be published in January 2025.

Our Performance over the last four years covering the PFCC's Fire and Rescue Plan and our IRMP 2020-2024

Here's how we are performing against our Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024.

10,120

Home Safety Visits
in the year 2023-2024.



More than last year



Our safe and well and safety visits continue to rise, targeting the homes of our most vulnerable people, lowering Accidental Dwelling Fires and fire fatalities.

Year	Number of visits	Smoke alarms fitted
2023-2024	10,120	13,850
2022-2023	8,480	10,329
2021-2022	6,224	9,566
2020-2021	4,346	5,865
2019-2020	7,718	8,459

Keeping our communities safe

This year the numbers of Accidental Dwelling Fires in Essex has fallen. Sadly, five people died because of a house fire which is an increase of one person from the year before.

Less accidental dwelling fires than last year



Year	Accidental Dwelling Fires	Accidental Dwelling Fires per 10,000	Casualties per 10,000 population	Fatalities
2023-2024	679	3.56	0.16	5
2022-2023	783	4.33	0.15	3
2021-2022	718	4.24	0.2	7
2020-2021	734	4.32	0.24	2
2019-2020	780	4.57	0.23	2

33,327

Calls into control
in the year 2023-2024.



Less incidents than last year

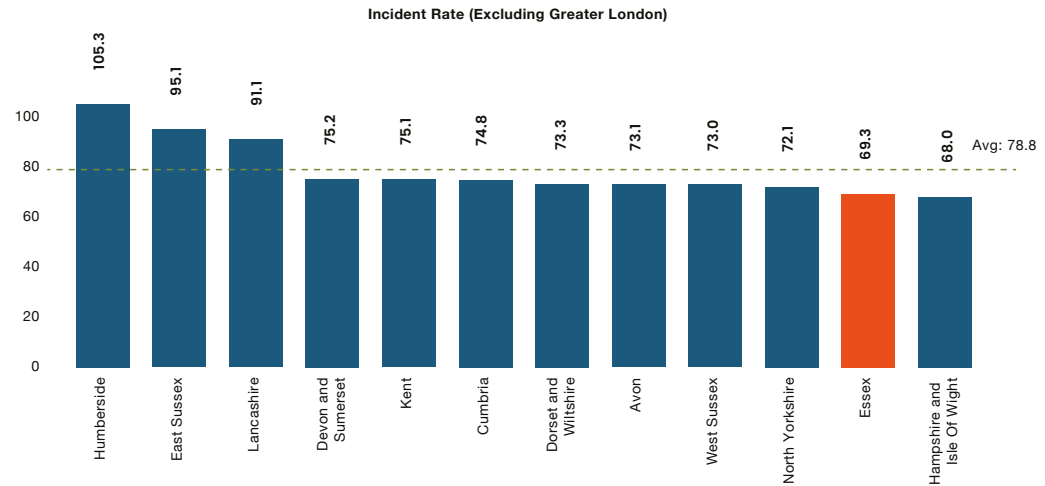


There were less calls into our control room during 2023-24 than the previous year.

Year	999 Calls	Incidents
2023-2024	33,327	16,645
2022-2023	37,950	17,505
2021-2022	30,115	15,426
2020-2021	28,651	14,340
2019-2020	30,542	15,244

Over the last four years, **Essex has had one of the lowest total incident rates per 10,000 population** compared to similar Fire and Rescue Services in our “family group”.* The table on the right shows 2023 to 2024.

* A family group is other FRS who share the same levels of risk.



Less accidental dwelling fires than last year



18%

of all fires in Essex last year were
Accidental Dwelling Fires



Year	Total Fires	Accidental Dwelling Fires	% of Total Fires
2023-2024	3,785	679	18%
2022-2023	5,212	783	15%
2021-2022	3,727	718	19%
2020-2021	4,186	734	18%
2019-2020	4,581	780	17%

People

Our people are at the heart of making sure we keep our communities safe.

Our successes highlighted in the following pages show how we are delivering the Fire and Rescue Plan priorities of:

- Developing and broadening our role and range of activities
- Promoting a positive culture in the workplace
- Working together with our partners
- Helping vulnerable people to stay safe
- Prevention, protection and response

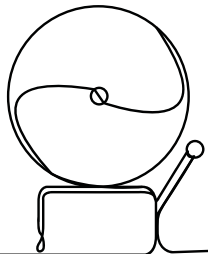
Our People Strategy is key to delivering our Fire and Rescue Plan. It is also a major part of delivering the Integrated Risk Management Plan.



To deliver against our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) we will:

- Continue to invest significantly in training so that all our colleagues have the skills to remain safe in their work.
- Identify and target any gaps in skills for every employee, making sure that training is suitable for all learners and all shift systems.
- Retain specialist and technical expertise and encourage people to add to their skills.

We achieved the Silver Inclusive Employers Standard accreditation, becoming the first fire and rescue service in the country to do so. Our positive action recruitment focuses on attracting diverse candidates and in 2023 we saw significant increases in female starters, minority ethnicity starters and engagement with young people.



Recruitment highlights:

Female starters increased from 16% to 21%

Minority ethnicity starters rose from 2.8% to 6.4%

Record applications from women, ethnic minorities, and under-25s

Inclusion and Diversity

We are committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion. In 2023, we celebrated International Women's Day, International Men's Day, and International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia. We also launched an electronic People Impact Assessment form to simplify how changes to practices and policies affect our colleagues and communities.



Case study: Silver award from IES

In March we achieved a Silver Accreditation from the Inclusive Employers Standard (IES), recognising our Service's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace.



It was the first time a fire and rescue service in the country achieved an IES accreditation at that level.

The accreditation replaced our previous Bronze Accreditation and is a testament to our efforts in building an inclusive environment for all our employees.

The accreditation process involved an 80-page submission document detailing strategies, frameworks and countless examples of our inclusion and diversity work. Examples included recruitment activities, communications, staff networks and data collection and analysis.

Feedback from the Inclusive Employers Standard noted:

“It’s clear where inclusion and diversity fits within the bigger picture of your organisation, and that it forms part of your over-arching strategy. Your submission was full of strong examples of great inclusion and diversity practice. It’s clear that you have been working hard and in a thoughtful and considered way to achieve the great results you have shown so far.”

Of particular significance is our Service's dedication to gathering robust diversity data and adapting network groups to meet evolving needs. These efforts showcase our Service's commitment to engaging employees at every level.

Our Service's formal recognition of contributions to diversity, equity and inclusion was also given a special mention, focusing on active engagement with representative bodies, getting staff feedback on organisational matters and comprehensive support structures ensuring participation from all levels of the organisation.

Colette Black, our Director of People Services, said:

“This recognition reaffirms Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's dedication to fostering an inclusive workplace where all employees feel valued and supported. We believe in the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and this accreditation serves as a testament to our ongoing commitment to these principles.

“Affirmation from EDI industry experts that we are taking the right steps couldn't be more welcome. Not only are we the first fire and rescue service to achieve this level of accreditation, only 18% of those who are IES accredited have reached silver levels and only 4% gold.

“Results like this are always a team effort, so well done to everyone involved in the continuous work and submission.”



Case study: Winning awards for our inclusion and diversity efforts

Our Service was recognised nationally for the work we do to increase and recognise diversity.

We received five nominations in the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) Personal Fair and Diverse Awards, winning one and receiving certificate of merits for the other four.

Our Positive Action Recruitment Team took home the AFSA Positive Action Award at the event in Leeds in November. The award recognised how we make positive action a priority in our recruitment strategy, with recruitment streams including regular online public Q&A sessions and the use of social media to engage with younger audiences.

The four certificates of merits were awarded to:

Champion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award – **Corporate Communications Team**

Equality Role Model of the year Award – **Sarah Thapa, Communications Officer**

Going the Extra Mile – **Dave Bond, Group Manager, Head of Protection**

Partnership of the year – **Scarlett Perrin, Learning and Development Advisor**

Chief Fire Officer Rick Hylton said: **“Our colleagues know how dedicated we are to celebrating and recognising diversity, and this is clear from the number of nominations we received. My sincere congratulations go to all the teams and individuals who were recognised in these awards.**

“Occasionally we are challenged by people when we talk about diversity and told that we should treat everyone the same.

“I want to be clear; equality and diversity isn’t about treating everyone the same - it’s about recognising people are different, which is why it’s so important to understand these differences. When we understand and celebrate diversity it results in everyone accessing opportunities to work in an environment that supports them to be their best.

“At Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, we know the best teams are made up of different kinds of people.

“We also know some communities are less likely to consider our Service as an employer; this might be due to outdated stereotypes or lack of representation or role models. We’ve worked hard to reach those communities with the message that our Service is a place where everyone can thrive.”

During the event, Dr Muhammad Ahsan, Community Safety Officer, also launched a guide about how fire and rescue services can support Muslim colleagues during Ramadan.



Prevention

Our prevention work has helped to deliver the Fire and Rescue Plan priorities of:

- **Prevention, protection and response**
- **Helping vulnerable people to stay safe**
- **Developing and broadening our role and range of activities**
- **Improving safety on our roads**

We are getting into people's homes and are making them safer. We delivered our highest number of home fire safety visits since 2020 last year. This has led to 28% less people being injured because of a fire in their home.

Our Prevention Strategy makes sure we do the following as part of our Integrated Risk Management Plan:

Develop community safety action plans that set out risks in specific areas which we use to target our resources.

Find out who the most vulnerable people are in our communities and help them through our specialist staff.

Assess our prevention activities to make sure they are effective for our communities.

Use our operational staff to help us provide safety advice to more vulnerable people in our communities.

Tell you how we are working with our partners to reduce the number of vulnerable people killed or seriously injured on our roads.



Our progress:

- **Conducted 10,119 Home Fire Safety checks, a 50% increase from the previous year.**
- **Launched a project with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust to help vulnerable people who have fallen in their homes.**
- **Partnered with Essex Group1Audi to train firefighters on electric vehicle technologies.**
- **Collaborated with the Safer Essex Roads Partnership to reduce road collisions and fire incidents.**



Case study: Taking the lead in fire safety education

In a groundbreaking initiative, we were proud to be one of the first fire and rescue services in the country to launch a dedicated education programme tailored for children not in formal education. Recognising the importance of fire safety education for all members of the community, the programme aims to empower children with essential home fire safety knowledge.

With an established education programme currently reaching tens of thousands of schoolchildren in Essex every year, we expanded our offering to those children who do not attend formal educational settings, such as those electively home educated, in care homes or even those moving between schools. This expansion aligns with our commitment to being proactive with safety messages as early as possible.

Children not in formal education historically missed out on the fire safety lessons provided in schools, making this initiative a crucial step towards ensuring that all young people are equipped with the knowledge which will help protect themselves and their families from fire in their homes.

The specially designed education sessions cover a range of topics, including home security, consequences of committing arson or making hoax calls, crime prevention, cyber safety, road safety, knife crime, gang awareness, hate crime and healthy relationships.

In a commitment to inclusivity, we've tailored the content of these sessions to meet the unique needs of the children. Interactive demonstrations, engaging activities, and informative materials are used to make the learning experience both enjoyable and educational for the children.

Aileen Wilson, our Education and Specialist Interventions Manager said:

“Our commitment to keeping the public safe goes beyond responding to emergencies. Our ambition is to ensure that all young people in Essex, irrespective of their educational setting, have access to our vital education programme.”



Case study: Working in partnership to keep our most vulnerable residents safe

We've teamed up with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) to help vulnerable people who have fallen in their homes.

The partnership is a 12-month pilot, launched in December, which has four Community Wellbeing Officers working across Essex responding to calls from people who have fallen in their homes.

The Community Wellbeing Officers completed a three-week emergency responder training with EEAST to learn the skills required for their role.

Falls can account for up to 20% of the ambulance service's calls. Many people who have fallen just need to be helped up and checked to ensure they're safe to be left alone. The new partnership aims to allow ambulance crews to attend the most seriously ill people in Essex.

If a person falls at home and has no injuries, they could have a long wait for an ambulance to become available. This programme aims to send a Community Wellbeing Officer within an hour of the call.

Although some patients will require hospital treatment, many simply need to be helped to their feet and checked over to make sure they are safe to be left at home.

How the scheme works

When a call is received by the ambulance service via 999 or 111 to a person who has fallen it will be clinically assessed by the ambulance service control room. Where appropriate (i.e. if the patient doesn't have any injuries) it's assigned to our Community

Wellbeing Officers. The officers, who work in pairs, are dispatched to the address to safely get the patient off the floor. The officers then discuss the patient's condition with a clinician in the ambulance service control room to ensure the patient can be safely left at home.

Once the officers have assisted the patient, they carry out a tailored Home Fire Safety Check to ensure their smoke alarms are working and will also help to reduce the risk of fire or further falls by identifying hazards (loose rugs, old slippers, steps without handrails).

The aim of the partnership is to allow ambulance crews to be more available for serious medical emergencies while making vulnerable residents safer in their homes.



Claire Monk, Live Safe Manager and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service said:

“We are thrilled to be part of this pilot programme as it provides such a valuable service to our most vulnerable residents.

“We know that the people who are most at risk from falls are also at risk of greatest harm in the event of a fire at home, so to be able to visit these people and help mitigate these risks will also hopefully reduce the number of house fires and resulting injuries and fatalities.”

Tom Barker, EFAST Community Response Manager said:

“We’re delighted to be part of this collaboration with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service which aims to improve the speed of response and increase support for people who have fallen in their homes.

“The people we are responding to are the vulnerable members of our communities who will not only benefit from a quicker response to help them up and off the floor but also the person-centred home safety check that will be carried out at the same time.

“I am confident that this programme will see real benefits, not only for our Service but more importantly to our vulnerable members of our community who we want to make sure are safe in their homes.”



To keep people safe this year we have:

- Fitted 13,850 free smoke alarms, 3,521 more than the previous year**
- Delivered 1,785 joint education sessions, reaching 139,947 young people at 402 different schools in Essex out of a total of 689. That’s 58% of all schools**
- Delivered 15 Firebreak courses**

Protection

Our priority is to protect businesses, people, the local economy and the environment from fire and wider community-related risks.

Our work in protection has helped to deliver the Fire and Rescue Plan priority of:

- **Prevention, protection and response**

Our protection work is guided by the duties placed on us by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

To deliver against the Integrated Risk Management Plan we will:

Review the inspection programme to make sure we are making decisions based on data we have collected, to help us to understand which premises pose the greatest risk and to target our resources appropriately.

Make sure we have the right resources to meet our commitments in the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP).

To deliver against our IRMP we will find opportunities to get involved with more businesses across Essex, leading to an increase in business engagement events.



Our progress:

Secured £255,000 from the Home Office grant fund for our Risk-Based Inspection programme.

Launched a high-rise task force to audit residential buildings for fire safety compliance.

Case study: Sowing seeds of safety

We're gaining traction on our rural engagement thanks to a brand new tractor.

The tractor, a Massey Ferguson, has been generously provided by local agricultural dealership Crawfords Group. The tractor serves as an engagement tool for us to use at various community events held in Essex.

Group Manager Dave Bond, Head of Protection at Essex County Fire and Rescue Service said:

“We are very grateful to Crawfords Group for loaning us a tractor which will certainly draw the crowds with its distinctive fire service livery.”

“Our rural engagement officer attends many agricultural shows and rural events during the year to raise awareness of fire safety for farms and rural communities. We're expecting the tractor, which is an unmistakable symbol of the rural community, to be a crowd-puller, encouraging showgoers to come over and talk to us about fire safety matters which are important to them.”

“Ultimately, it's about building stronger relationships with farmers, landowners and rural communities in Essex. The more people we can attract to talk to us, the more people we can help keep safe from fire.”

Nunzio Rio, Crawfords Group Sales Director said:

“We are absolutely delighted to extend our support to Essex County Fire and Rescue Service by providing them with a tractor to enhance their rural engagement. We are excited about the positive impact this partnership will have, and Crawfords Group is proud to contribute to this important campaign that resonates with the heart of rural life in Essex.”



Case study: High rise task force team formed to keep residents safe

We have a team that has been tasked with auditing all high-rise residential buildings in Essex to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended) and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations, which came into force in January 2023 as result of the tragic Grenfell Tower fire.

We are protecting the public and ensuring they are safe in their home thanks to the work of our high rise task force and are ahead of our five year high rise target.

The team, who are working closely with the fire service's appointed Barrister, is led by Station Manager Tim Rickard.

Tim said:

“The new legislation put additional duties on the responsible persons of high-rise residential buildings, including the requirement for them to share information on the design of the external walls, floor plans and a single-page building plan.

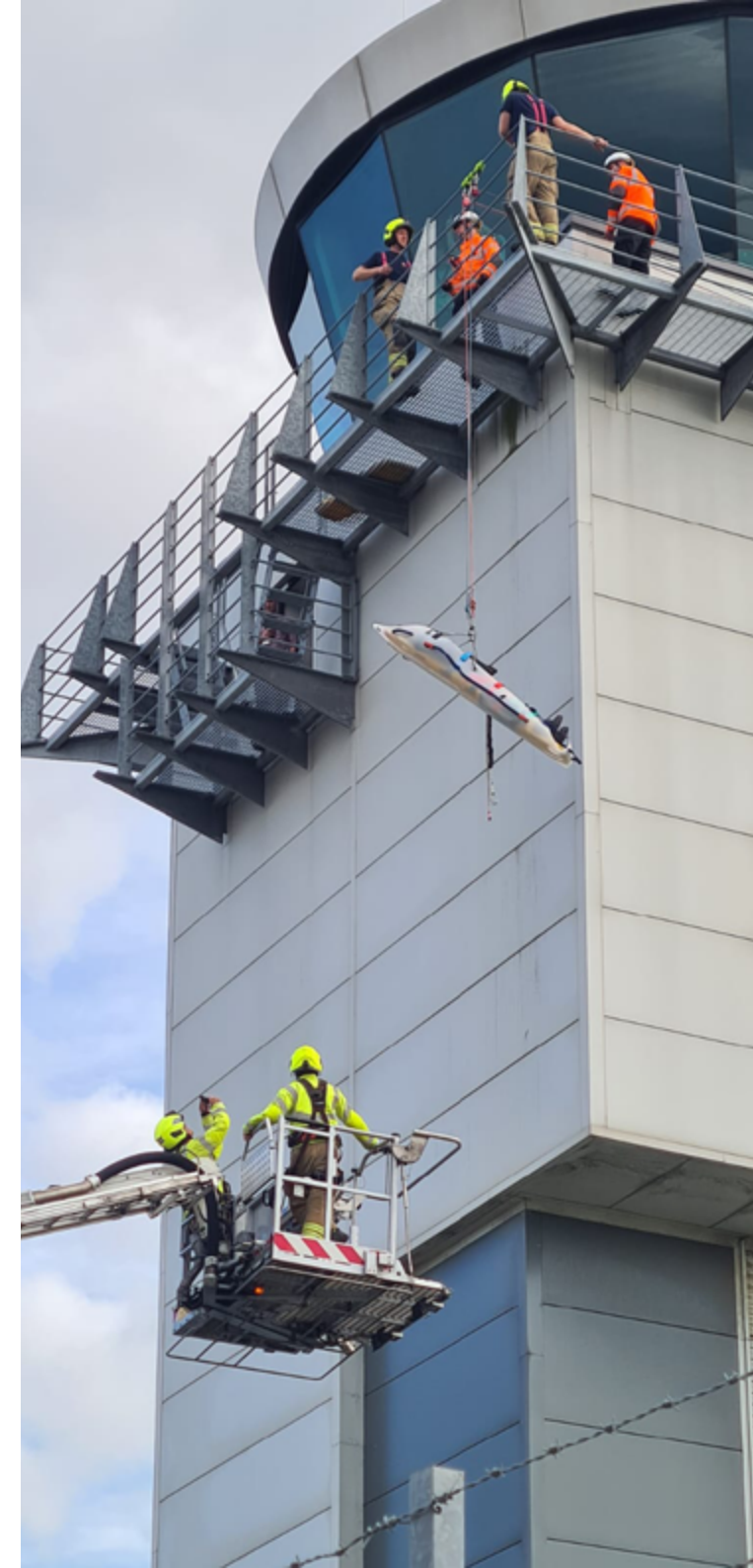
“They’re also required to notify us if they have a fault with a lift for use by firefighters, evacuation lift, essential and key fire-fighting equipment which cannot be rectified within a 24-hour period from the time of discovery.

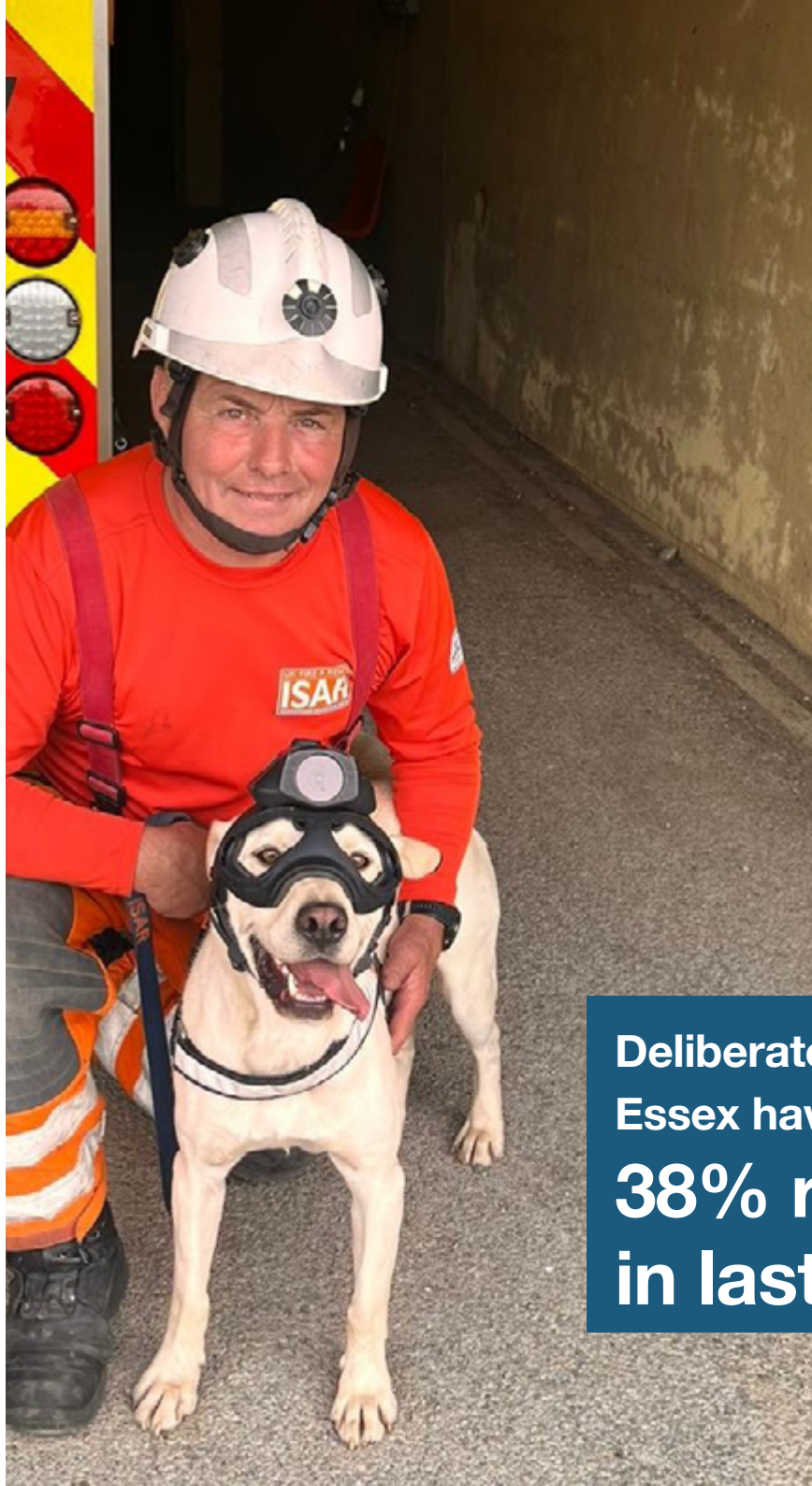
“If we find a building that is non-compliant, then action can be taken to address the fire safety deficiencies. This may be in the form of education, non-statutory notification of deficiencies, enforcement notice (Article 30) or if the fire safety deficiency is so severe an Article 31 – Prohibition Notice”.

In June the team identified a building in Colchester that did not comply with the legislations and issued an Article 31 – Prohibition Notice. Due to the severity of the fire safety concerns and the risk to life, the building was also fully emptied and will not be occupied again until it is deemed safe.

Tim added:

“All the work we’re doing is designed to make high-rise residents safer in their homes and keep our firefighters safe should they need to respond in the event of a fire.”





Deliberate fires across
Essex have seen a
38% reduction
in last 5 years

Response

We respond to a variety of emergencies, including fires, road traffic collisions, specialist rescues, maritime incidents, flooding, and incidents relating to hazardous materials.

Our response work has supported the Fire and Rescue Plan priorities of:

- Prevention, protection, response
- Helping vulnerable people to stay safe
- Developing and broadening our role and range of activities
- Improving safety on our roads

To make sure we can respond effectively we have a modern fleet of fire appliances, including specialist appliances such as aerial ladder platforms, heavy rescue pumps, incident command units and water rescue units.

In the last year we have:

- Recruited 91 on-call firefighters
- Recruited 34 wholtime firefighters
- Introduced new processes to move our appliances around the county which has increased coverage at strategic stations
- Increased productivity and increased Home Fire Safety visits
- improved firefighter safety by purchasing and using drones at incidents



Year	Incidents	Total fires	Special services	False alarm
2023-2024	16,645	3,785	5,574	7,286
2022-2023	17,505	5,212	5,230	7,063
2021-2022	15,426	3,727	5,242	6,457
2020-2021	14,340	4,186	4,102	6,052
2019-2020	15,244	4,581	4,549	6,114

Case study: New fit for the future fire station

Shoeburyness' on-call firefighters now have a newly refurbished fire station.

Roger Hirst, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex, local resident Anne Chalk and retired firefighter Brian Jacobs officially reopened the building following the work to create a modern space fit for the crew.

Building work began on the site in Shoebury Avenue in early 2022, after Essex County Fire and Rescue Service bought the old police station next door and knocked through the two buildings to create one larger space.

Shoeburyness' crew was involved from the initial concept meeting and had the chance to give their views and ideas throughout the process.

Previously, firefighters had to use portable toilets and washing facilities and the building itself could be likened to a small Scout hut. The fire station was also not able to have a new fire engine as it would not have fitted in the bay.

While the refurbishment process took place, firefighters relocated to a temporary home a mile away at TreeFella in Wakering Road where they continued to respond to all types of incidents.

The surprise discovery of a former bomb shelter under the drill yard at Shoeburyness Fire Station presented some complications, although the construction process stayed largely on track.

The new fire station has meant there is more space for the firefighters and a new fire engine as well as an improvement to wellbeing, training and fitness facilities.

Watch Manager Ian Lighton, Shoeburyness Fire Station, said:

“The deteriorating physical condition of the old building was far from ideal for our current crew and off-putting to any potential new recruits. The much-needed improvement not only gives our crew more space but has offered the chance to consider the needs of our community.”

“Our vision is for fire stations to become community hubs. The more closely we work with our communities the safer they are. The refurbished fire station includes much more space for our communities to meet and for us to get to know them.”



Case study: New control system to help us respond to incidents

We launched a brand new and modern Control system in June 2023.

The new system, known as Guardian Command, is used in the Control Room to manage our response to incidents even faster and more effectively than ever before.

One of the benefits of the new system is that it is more reliable and radio communications, mobilising and a management system for audio recording are all in one place.

The change to the new system comes with specialist new equipment and a video wall in the Control Room, which will assist with effective mobilisation and incident monitoring.

Provided by Airwave and Motorola, the system was already being used successfully by other UK Fire and Rescue Services, including Bedfordshire.

Our Control Room is the heart of our operations and needs to be reliable so that every vital piece of information is captured and responded to as efficiently as possible, from the moment a call comes in.

The new system equips us with the highest standard of emergency response software available to protect our Essex communities.

Roger Hirst, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex agreed the upgrade to the new system, as part of his drive to improve the efficiency of the Service and ensure all colleagues have the right equipment and technology to provide the best possible service to the public.



Other progress to highlight

Our progress against the Fire and Rescue Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan in brief:

From 2023 to 2024 we have:

- Delivered fire protection training for our operational staff
- Design and built our Future Infrastructure Risk programme of work
- Maintained the operational competence of day duty operational colleagues
- Developed a dashboard to monitor our safeguarding function
- Adopted and aligned to the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) app and all the JESIP templates
- Network Improvements: Implemented transport circuit and established a SD WAN (what is this?) service
- Improved access to digital devices across all stations
- Reviewed our working practices through transformation
- Reviewed the effectiveness of our core station policy
- Embedded our core Code of Ethics and Values
- Implemented the Eastern Region Building Safety Regulator
- Improved access to Cross Border Risk Information for crews

- Embedded our revised Risk Based Inspection Programme
- Improved our learning and development for our people
- Achieved Silver accreditation from Inclusive Employers
- Developed a three-year plan for PDR Pro to support our people's operational learning

These achievements have supported the Fire and Rescue Plan priorities which are:

- Prevention, protection and response
- Improve safety on our roads
- Help the vulnerable stay safe
- Promote a positive culture in the workplace
- Develop and broaden the roles and range of activities undertaken by the Service
- Be transparent, open and accessible
- Collaborate with our partners
- Make the best use of our resources



Finance

Ensuring that we have an efficient Service that offers value for money underpins everything we do. The Authority is responsible for ensuring that our Service's business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Statement of Accounts includes an Annual Governance Statement that sets out a review of the key financial controls. The Draft Statement of Accounts for the financial year that ended on 31 March 2024 can be found here:

www.essex-fire.gov.uk/accounts

Please note, at the time of publication of this report (Sept 2024) these accounts are unaudited.

Revenue Budget and Expenditure

The Authority's published budget for 2023/24 showed net expenditure before funding of £84.14m. The Authority's core budget spend before funding is £88.4m. The budget included a 4% pay award for all staff in 2023/24, and also funded a 5% pay award for 2022/23. In addition, the Authority committed £1.6m from Earmarked Reserves to fund one-off investments.

The table on the following page shows the results shows the financial outturn for 2023/24. The closing position for 2023/24 is a surplus of £0.3m. The Authority realised £1.53m of funding from Earmarked Reserves to fund specific investments. There has also been a transfer of £0.6m into Earmarked Reserves. This relates to unbudgeted government grants which are to be used for specific purposes and are Earmarked to cover expenditure in the next financial year. The Authority's total expenditure for 2023/24 was £92.3m.

Funding

58% of the Authority's funding is from the Council Tax collections across the districts in Essex, and the unitary authorities of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. Council tax income has been based on the Commissioner's proposal of an increase in the precept of 6.57%, which was agreed at the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel on 7 February 2023 – this incorporated precept flexibility to increase council tax by £5 without a referendum. The precept payable for a Band D Council tax property increased from £75.33 to £80.28, a change of £4.95 per year.



2022/23 Total Actuals £000s	Description	Core Actual £000s	Earmarked Actual £000s	2023/24 Total Actual £000s	Core Budget £000s	Earmarked Budget £000s	2023/24 Total Budget £000s	Core Budget Var £000s	Earmarked Budget Var £000s	Budget Vs Actuals £000s
36,646	WholeTime Firefighters	38,437	448	38,885	37,501	490	37,991	936	(42)	895
9,384	On Call Firefighters	9,947	-	9,947	8,579	-	8,579	1,368	-	1,368
1,729	Control	1,863	-	1,863	1,957	-	1,957	(94)	-	(94)
16,750	Support Staff	18,418	257	18,675	18,200	70	18,270	218	187	405
64,510	Total Employment Costs	68,665	705	69,370	66,237	560	66,797	2,428	145	2,573
2,240	Support Costs	2,220	127	2,347	1,524	400	1,924	696	(273)	423
11,606	Premises & Equipment	11,804	404	12,209	11,287	547	11,834	517	(143)	374
4,287	Other Costs & Services	3,736	297	4,032	3,194	100	3,294	542	197	738
2,287	Ill health pension costs	2,618	-	2,618	2,184	-	2,184	434	-	434
5,379	Financing Items	5,229	-	5,229	5,597	-	5,597	(368)	-	(368)
25,799	Total Other Costs	25,607	828	26,435	23,787	1,047	24,834	1,820	(219)	1,601
90,309	Gross Expenditure	94,272	1,533	95,805	90,024	1,607	91,631	4,248	(74)	4,174
(2,291)	Operational Income	(3,437)	-	(3,437)	(1,602)	-	(1,602)	(1,834)	-	(1,834)
88,018	Net Expenditure before Funding	90,835	1,533	92,368	88,422	1,607	90,029	2,413	(74)	2,340
	Funding									
(9,753)	Government Grants	(10,133)	(661)	(10,794)	(8,343)	-	(8,343)	(1,790)	(661)	(2,451)
(8,780)	Revenue Support Grant	(9,706)	-	(9,706)	(9,671)	-	(9,671)	(35)	-	(35)
(16,283)	National Non-Domestic Rates	(17,544)	-	(17,544)	(16,929)	-	(16,929)	(615)	-	(615)
1,326	Council Tax Collection Impact	-	-	-	(208)	-	(208)	208	-	208
(783)	Council Tax Collection Account	(518)	-	(518)	-	-	-	(518)	-	(518)
(49,384)	Council Tax Precept	(53,238)	-	(53,238)	(53,267)	-	(53,267)	29	-	29
(83,658)	Total Funding	(91,139)	(661)	(91,801)	(88,418)	-	(88,418)	(2,721)	(661)	(3,382)
4,360	Funding Gap/ (Surplus)	(304)	872	568	3	1,607	(1,610)	(307)	(735)	(1,043)
-	Cont'ns to Earmarked Reserves	-	661	661	-	-	-	-	-	-
(3,890)	Cont'ns (from) Earmarked Reserves	-	(1,533)	(1,533)	-	(1,610)	(1,610)	-	77	77
(3,890)	Total Contribution to/(from) Reserves	-	(872)	(872)	-	(1,610)	(1,610)	-	738	738
470	Net Gap/ (Surplus)	(304)	-	(304)	3	(3)	-	(307)	3	(304)

Governance

The Service is governed by the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (EPFCCFRA).

Our Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is Roger Hirst.

The PFCC must:

- Provide a local connection between the fire and rescue service and local communities
- Set a budget and determine the council tax requirement
- Maintain an efficient and effective fire and rescue service for the county
- Approve an Integrated Risk Management Plan
- Develop a Fire and Rescue Plan and Fire and Rescue Statement
- Scrutinise, support and challenge performance against the Plan
- Appoint a Chief Fire Officer to lead and manage the service.
- The PFCC is elected by the public to hold the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable to account, effectively making the fire and rescue service and police force answerable to the communities they serve.

The PFCC ensures that community needs are met as effectively as possible, and local relationships improve through building confidence and trust. They work in partnership across a range of agencies at local and national level to ensure there is a unified approach to preventing and reducing crime.

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, culture and values for the control and management of all activities and how the Commissioner accounts to, engages with and leads the community.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework

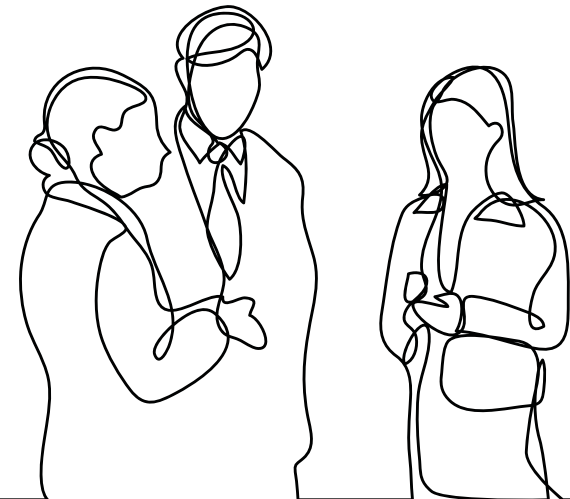
and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Commissioner's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

Copies of these documents are available at

www.essex.pfcc.police.uk

**or can be obtained from the Commissioner's office at:
Kelvedon Park, London Road,
Rivenhall, Witham CM8 3HB.**





The Governance Framework

The Scheme of Governance that operated during the year included the following:

- The Constitution
- The Scheme of Delegation
- The Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) Order
- 2011; the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) (Amendment) Order 2012, and the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) (Amendment) Order 2013. Quarterly audits are undertaken by the PFCC's office to ensure the Service's continued compliance with these Orders
- Information Management Protocol between the PFCC FRA and the PFCC
- Information Sharing Protocol relating to information shared between the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority and the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel
- Revised Financial Management Code of Practice For the Police Forces of England and Wales and Fire and Rescue Authorities created under section 4A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Codes of Conduct applying respectively to the PFCC and their Deputy and to the PFCC FRA's staff
- The Police, Fire and Crime Panels (Precepts and Chief Constable Appointments) Regulations 2012
- Government Security Classifications
- Financial and Procurement Regulations

Governance

HMICFRS

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is responsible for carrying out inspections of fire and rescue services in England and Wales.

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Police, Fire and Crime Panel

- Scrutinise the Fire and Rescue Plan and Statement of Assurance
- Scrutinise senior appointments
- Review the Council Tax precept
- Hear certain complaints against the PFCC and Deputy PFCC
- Confirm the appointment of a new Chief Constable or Chief Fire Officer

Strategic Board

- Strategic oversight of the Service
- Delivery of the Fire and Rescue Plan and IRMP (CRMP)
- Development of the Budget

Performance and Resource Board

- Monitor overall operational and financial performance
- Functions delegated to Chief Fire Officer
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Monitor Financial and Service Performance

Audit Committee

- Overview of financial regulations and contract procedures
- Financial management regulations
- Good governance
- Risk management

Essex Emergency Services Collaboration Board

- Strategic governance of the Emergency Services Collaboration Programme



Blake

SCANIA

Angloco

P 200

KX67 EGE

alarms save lives
ours regularly

Fire and Rescue Service
Make your home safer,
book a free home safety visit.
Search "Every Fire Book"

Statutory responsibilities

As a Fire and Rescue Service we have legal responsibilities under multiple pieces of legislation. We aim here to explain what responsibilities fall under which piece of legislation.

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

The Act replaced the Fire Services Act 1948 with a new legislative framework to ensure fire and rescue services were better able to meet the particular challenges of the 21st century.

The Act clarifies the duties and powers of fire authorities to:

- Promote fire safety
- Fight fires
- Protect people and property from fires
- Rescue people from road traffic incidents
- Deal with other specific emergencies, such as flooding and terrorist attacks
- Do other things to respond to the particular needs of their communities and the risks they face.

Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Under Part One of the Act, emergency services and local authorities (defined as Category One responders) have a legal obligation to assess risk, plan and exercise for emergencies and undertake business continuity management.

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England. It was updated in May 2018.

The priorities within the framework are for fire and rescue authorities to:

- Make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents
- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue risks their areas face
- Collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide
- Be accountable to communities for the services they provide
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 replaces most fire safety legislation with one simple order. It means that any person who has some level of control within a premises must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and make sure people can safely escape if there is a fire. The Order applies to virtually all buildings, places and structures other than individual private dwellings, for example a family home or individual flats in a block.

Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007

This outlines the additional statutory duties of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 for fire authorities.

The duty requires authorities, where provision of resources has been made by central government, to respond to incidents both within and outside the authority area involving Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear hazards (CBRN) and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR).

Localism Act 2011

The aim of the Localism Act was to devolve more decision making powers from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. The Act covers a wide range of issues related to local public services, with a particular focus on the general power of competence, community rights, neighbourhood planning and housing.

The key measures of the Act were grouped under four main headings:

- New freedoms and flexibilities for local government
- New rights and powers for communities and individuals
- Reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective
- Reform to ensure decisions about housing are taken locally.
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England
- The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England. It was updated in May 2018.
- The priorities within the framework are for fire and rescue authorities to:
- Make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents

- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue risks their areas face
- Collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide
- Be accountable to communities for the services they provide
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Equality Act 2010

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Service must have due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristic groups.

Our objectives, published in-line with The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010, are:

- To improve the recruitment, retention, progression, development and experience of the people employed by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service to enable the organisation to become an inclusive employer of choice.
- To promote and encourage employees to voluntarily declare their self-classification diversity data to ensure ECFRS actions as an employer are

- evidence led and improvement focused.
- To improve the mapping, quality and extent of equality information in order to better facilitate compliance with the public sector equality duty in relation to service delivery including IRMP additional activities.
- To review the equality impact of key organisational policies for differential impact in areas such as recruitment and selection, learning and development, absence management, modified duties, talent management, appraisal, disciplinary and grievance.
- To ensure that all staff are treated with dignity and respect and have a workplace that is free from harassment and bullying by changing the culture of the organisation to one that is genuinely inclusive. All employees are high performing because we value their differences, which includes gender or gender identity, race, or religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, pregnancy, caring responsibilities or membership of a trade union.
- To seek external review, challenge and accreditation of ECFRS' actions as an employer by actively participating with relevant equalities standards and benchmarks including the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework.

These objectives were adopted on 1 March 2018. They were approved by the Inclusion and Diversity Steering Group and are in place until 28 February 2022.

We last reviewed these as part of creating our People Strategy 2020-24. The objectives are reflected in our People Strategy.

Data Protection Act 2018

The Act is a complete data protection system, so as well as governing general data covered by the GDPR, it covers all other general data, law enforcement data and national security data.

The Act exercises a number of agreed modifications to the GDPR to make it work for the benefit of the UK in areas such as academic research, financial services and child protection. The Act aims to:

- Make our data protection laws fit for the digital age in which an ever increasing amount of data is being processed
- Empower people to take control of their data
- Support UK businesses and organisations through the change
- Ensure that the UK is prepared for the future now we have left the EU

Health and Safety at Work Act

Our Service recognises and accepts the responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of our employees and undertakes to protect people, assets and the communities in which we work.

To achieve this, we meet all relevant requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (together with all other statutory provisions associated with it) and supports staff in meeting their obligations under the act.

Detailed health, safety and welfare specific arrangements, based on the Health and Safety Executive's methodology, are set out in our Health and Safety Policy and associated framework of policies, which take relevant legislation, guidance and industry best practice into account.

The policies provide employees with relevant and comprehensive information on the risks they face and the preventative and protective measures required to minimise them.

Quarterly inspections are carried out on all our premises and any defects are reported and monitored until completed.

There is a shared common understanding of the Service's mission, values and

beliefs and a positive health and safety culture is fostered by the visible and active leadership of Senior Managers.

Our Health and Safety Team continually develops and improves systems for monitoring and improving the effectiveness of our Health and Safety Management Systems. These processes include peer Health and Safety Audits.

A productive relationship has been established between the Health and Safety Trade Union Safety Representatives and the Health and Safety Team.

Safeguarding

Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment. We have a Safeguarding Children Policy and a Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy.

Both these policies are implemented in conjunction with the NFCC Safeguarding Guidance for Children, Young People and Adults and the Safeguarding Fire Standard.



Feedback and recognition

Feedback

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is fully committed to providing the highest possible levels of service to the communities in Essex.

Compliments

We love to know when you have received especially good service from us. Send us your comments, thank you cards, and emails and we'll share them with our relevant colleagues, teams and firefighter watches.

This feedback is useful because it helps us to learn about the things we are doing right, so we can make sure we carry on doing those things in the future.

Complaints

Sometimes things do go wrong. Hearing about times when we've not met your expectations helps us to improve the service we provide.

In 2023/24 we received 49 complaints. That was down from 50 complaints received the previous year.

Of the 32 complaints, we responded and closed 22 within 20 days (our target). Ten complaints took longer to action than 20 days. This was due to the complexity of the nature of the complaint, including requesting footage.

We will always make sure your complaint is dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently.

Getting in touch

If you would like to send us your feedback, please email compliments.complaints@essex-fire.gov.uk or call: 0300 303 5555



Helpful links

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service website

essex-fire.gov.uk

ECFRS Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2023/24

essex-fire.gov.uk/accounts

Fire and Rescue Plan

essex-fire.gov.uk/plan

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

essex-fire.gov.uk/irmp

**His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
(HMICFRS)**

hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/frs-assessment/frs-2021/essex

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england

Right: Firefighter Chris Kirby at Maldon Fire Station taking part in a charity car wash. It's just one of a number of open days, fundraisers and events we hold or take part in to support charities and communities.



We're recruiting wholetime firefighters

Search: Join Essex Fire

