



2024-25

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

Fire and Rescue Statement and Annual Report






Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service

Our year in photos



1. Control operators Blue Watch
2. Halstead Ben Nevis climb for Fire Fighters charity
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Welcome to our Fire and Rescue Statement and Annual Report for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

This report covers the financial year 2024-25 and includes:

	Our highlights of the year		How we are working to improve our services to our communities, making Essex a safer place together
	How we spend your money		
	Performance against our targets		The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority's (PFCC FRA's) Fire and Rescue Statement

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 fire and rescue authorities to publish a Fire and Rescue Statement.

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 PFCCFRAs, 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’.

2024/25 Fire and Rescue Statement

Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (EPFCCFRA) is satisfied that its business during the financial year 2024 – 25 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.



ROGER HIRST

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner’s Report

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service continues to go from strength to strength, with 2024 to 2025 marking another year of real progress. The service has made important strides in improving its culture, making it a better place to work, and continuing to deliver high-quality services across our communities. More house fires have been prevented, more vulnerable people have been protected and more businesses supported to reduce fire risk.

Prevention remains the cornerstone of a safer Essex. I was pleased to see the service carry out more than 10,000 prevention and protection visits over the year. This vital work has helped reduce accidental house fires in Essex by 8% over the last five years. Over the past five years, fatalities from accidental dwelling fires have fluctuated, ranging from a low of two in 2020/21 to a peak of seven in 2021/22. While the figures show no clear upward or downward trend, each number represents a life lost and a family forever changed. In the most recent 12-month period 2024/25, five people tragically lost their lives in such incidents. These figures serve as a stark reminder that behind every statistic lies a personal story - and that even a single fatality is one too many.

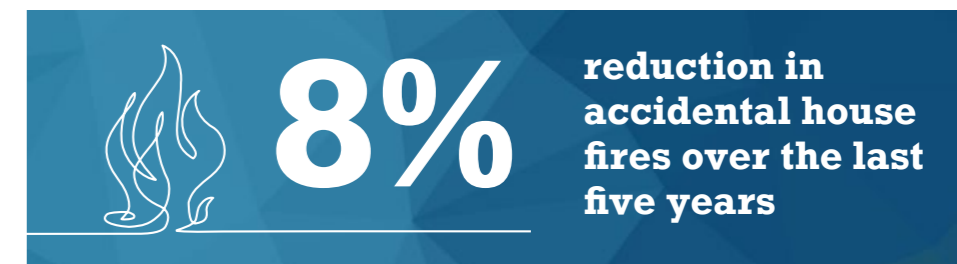
While the Statement of Accounts outlines the financial pressures we face, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service continues to invest in what matters - prevention, protection and an effective emergency response. This year saw investment in new fire engines, electric vehicles, upgraded radios and mobile data terminals, as well as



improvements to fire stations to help crews do their jobs more effectively.

During the year, the service fulfilled their strategic workforce plan and maintained establishment by welcoming 116 new firefighters, five control room operators and 50 new support staff. I was pleased to see more women and people from diverse backgrounds starting their careers with the service, as well as a growing number of younger applicants. This progress reflects ongoing efforts to build a workforce that better represents the communities we serve.

Another key milestone was the appointment of the service’s first dedicated Fire Investigation Team - enhancing our ability to investigate complex fires and positioning Essex as a leader in fire investigation.





Grenfell and building safety

The publication of the final report from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry in September 2024 was a pivotal moment. While 14 of the 46 recommendations were directly aimed at fire and rescue services, I was reassured to see Essex County Fire and Rescue Service go further, reviewing all the recommendations and making changes where needed, in line with national guidance, with regular reviews carried out by the service's relevant departments.

The service has assessed over 150 high-rise residential buildings and continues to address fire safety risks linked to external cladding. A new High-Rise Task Force was introduced in early 2024 to support compliance with new safety laws for buildings over 18 metres. The task force has already taken enforcement action, including issuing Prohibition Notices and, in some cases, asking residents to leave unsafe buildings temporarily.

A total of 159 high-rise residential buildings were initially identified for inspection. Following legislative changes, which now define high-rise status by height (18m or above) or number of storeys (seven storeys or more), all High-Rise Residential Buildings (HRRBs) are being laser measured. More accurate data has resulted in some properties no longer meeting the HRRB definition and a reduction in the number of premises defined as HRRBs. The current number stands at 150, although this may continue to fluctuate as measurements are completed. It must also be accepted that a HRRB that has been prohibited is also not classified as a HRRB while the prohibition is in place and unoccupied and can also cause a change in the total number of HRRBs we have at any one time.



Supporting the most vulnerable

Protecting vulnerable people is a core aim in my Fire and Rescue Plan for 2024 - 2028. The service plays a vital role in identifying those most at risk and working with partners to support them, whether through prevention work, protection measures or emergency response.

There was a rise in safeguarding referrals into the Service and from the Service in 2024, driven by the ongoing social care crisis and the increasing number of high-risk individuals in our communities. While this is concerning, it reflects the service's determination to identify vulnerability and take action.

The Community Wellbeing Officer scheme, launched in December 2023, continues to grow and was recognised nationally with an award at the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Services Awards.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service also proudly achieved White Ribbon Accreditation, underlining its commitment to tackling violence against women and promoting respectful, safe relationships.



Road safety

One of my priorities is to reduce road deaths in Essex to zero by 2040. The service plays a central role in this goal by responding to road traffic collisions, rescuing those involved and delivering education programmes that promote safe driving. Sadly, we have seen an increase in the number of road traffic collisions the service attends over the year, up from 1295 incidents attended in 2023/24 to 1337 in 2024/25, so it is vital we continue the work in promote safe driving.

Recognising that 26% of all fatal and serious injury casualties are motorcyclists, this area of casualty reduction requires renewed focus, especially upon young riders and the gig economy -- defined by short-term contracts and freelance work, where individuals take on discrete jobs, or "gigs".

Over selected weekends, roads policing motorcyclists work alongside Fire Bike instructors delivering 'Better Biking' courses, complimenting additional courses offered by the fire and rescue service, such as an Advanced Machine Skills course and Fire Bike First Aid courses.

Under the day-to-day management of the service, the Community Speed Watch scheme continues to contribute towards efforts in reducing road casualties. Across 106 communities, a total of 1,200 volunteers support the scheme with regular monitoring activity. Monthly newsletters, produced by the scheme co-ordinator, update members on wider road safety policing activity and project updates.



Looking ahead – making Essex safer together

On 1 April 2025, the service launched its new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2025–2030. Aligned with my Fire and Rescue Plan, it focuses on reducing risk, improving efficiency and adapting to the needs of a changing county.

Looking ahead, I remain committed to supporting Essex County Fire and Rescue Service in delivering first-class services that make a difference. Since taking on governance in 2017, we've seen real progress, and we will continue to build on it.

We will continue investing in our people through training and development, helping them to take on more activities in prevention and protection. Modernising the on-call duty system is also a priority, offering more flexibility so availability better matches times of greatest risk. Recruitment and support for on-call firefighters will remain a key focus.

Increasing the number of home fire safety visits and expanding joint Safe and Well Visits with our partners will also be vital in our prevention efforts.

None of this progress would be possible without the commitment and professionalism of everyone in the service. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services has recognised the positive impact of strong leadership in Essex. I would like to thank our Chief Fire Officer, Rick Hylton, his Service Leadership Team, and the whole workforce for their tireless efforts in making Essex safer together.



RICK HYLTON

Chief Fire Officer Review of the Year



I am pleased to share our Fire and Rescue Statement for 2024 - 2025. It explains how we are keeping people safe, protecting our communities, and managing our budgets and spending.

Our mission is to make Essex safer **together**. Our ambition is to be one of the best fire and rescue services in the UK. By continually raising our standards and improving what we do, we will provide our residents, businesses and visitors with a service they deserve.

We have achieved a tremendous amount, not just in the last year, but over the past five years. People in Essex are safer. The number of fires has decreased by 7%, accidental dwelling fires are down by around 8%, and we've seen a 33% reduction in injuries caused by fire in homes and other premises. We've also cleared two causes of concern from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services - Protection and Culture. Both causes of concern have been addressed and discharged.

We've seen significant investment in our training, development, equipment, and infrastructure. From leading the way in fire investigations to finding new ways to engage with our communities, we have demonstrated innovation across our service.

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

At the end of last year, we celebrated being voted UK Fire Service of the Year, and this year we have achieved the following:

Developed our new **Community Risk Management Plan** with our people, partners, and the public



Responded to **over 17,000** incidents

Conducted more than **10,000** prevention visits and protection inspections, contributing to a 33% reduction in injuries compared to 5 years ago and improving compliance rates among high-risk premises

Acted upon legislative changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975) including the development of our approach to DBS checks

Increased safeguarding referrals due to the social care crisis and significant growth in high-risk vulnerability within our communities



Welcomed **116** new firefighters, **5** control room operators, and **50** support staff colleagues



Invested in **pet oxygen therapy masks**

Participated in the **HMICFRS new inspection framework pilot**

Worked with other fire and rescue services and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) on a broad range of fire and rescue service-specific topics as well as professional disciplines such as Human Resources, Information and Communications Technology, and Finance

Opened a new **Fire Cadets unit** at Halstead

Installed **public access bleed kits** across **14** fire stations

Raised thousands of pounds for charity and local causes. This includes over £10,000 raised through our Quarterly Draw which has supported The Fire Fighters Charity, One Beautiful Day Free of Poverty, Lads Need Dads and Farleigh Hospice

Celebrated our people through various events including International Men's and Women's Days, People Awards, our On Call Welcome event, Chief Fire Officer Commendations and other national awards

Became **White Ribbon accredited** and engaged our workforce during the 16 days of action in November

Partnered with the **Royal National Lifeboat Institution** to launch the **Waterside Responder Scheme**



Preventing fires and other emergencies

We want to be a service trusted by our communities and welcomed by those most at risk. Through a public perception survey, **we have spoken to nearly 8,000 residents to help us understand what they think about us**, and to give us feedback on their understanding of the services we provide.

82% of those who responded agree that our service does a good job

We have invested in enhanced safeguarding training for colleagues. We have reorganised our prevention team to better align our resources to meet the needs of our communities.

Our service has launched a new lifesaving water rescue scheme for pubs and restaurants to help reduce drownings. The Waterside Responder Scheme, designed by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), provides lifesaving skills and equipment for businesses near water, particularly those serving alcohol. In partnership with the RNLI, our service offers these businesses a free lifesaving session to teach basic skills and knowledge to help staff safely assist someone in trouble in water before firefighters arrive.



Reducing the impact of fire in the built environment

In May 2024, our service welcomed its first-ever dedicated Fire Investigation Officers.

Additionally, our service has created a new Tier 1 Introduction to Fire Investigation course, accredited by Skills for Justice. The course, available to operational officers, is one of a handful of accredited Level 2 Fire Investigation courses in the country. This positions our service as one of the best in the UK for educating officers on fire investigations. Thorough investigations enable us to identify trends, issue safety messages, and support our partners, such as the police and insurers. You can read more about the work of this team in our case study on page 26/27.

The final report from the Grenfell Tower public inquiry was published in September 2024. Fire and rescue services were required to implement 14 out of 46 safety recommendations aimed at improving fire safety, building regulations, and emergency services' procedures in the first phase of the inquiry. Our service has gone beyond these requirements, making sure every recommendation has been reviewed and changes implemented, if necessary, with regular reviews.



150

Essex has more than 150 high-rise residential buildings

Our service has reviewed them all and is addressing safety issues related to external cladding. Our high-rise task force was set up this year to make sure all premises over 18 metres comply with legislative changes. The task force has issued several Enforcement and Prohibition Notices, including two cases where residents were asked to leave high-rise buildings until safety concerns were addressed. This was putting public safety at the heart of our decisions.

Smoke blocker curtains, recommended in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, were delivered to stations in April this year. These curtains stop smoke and fire gases. Operational colleagues and other teams continue to test our emergency response procedures for high-rise buildings.



Responding effectively to emergencies

We have 50 fire stations strategically positioned across the county. Our Control Room is based at our Service Headquarters.

Together, our control operators and firefighters provide our operational response. While our overall incidents are up by 18% compared with five years ago, fires and injuries from fires continues to decrease. This year we have seen a significant increase in our role to assist other agencies, working together to reach our communities when they need us the most.

We remain committed to delivering a timely and effective emergency response to protect the communities we serve. In 2024–2025, we continued to measure our performance against our established response standards, ensuring transparency and accountability in how we respond to incidents across Essex.

Our average response times in 2024/25, 10 minutes and 56 seconds was slightly lower than in 2020/21 - the Covid pandemic year which led to less traffic on the roads.

Availability across our 50 fire stations currently stands at 67%, a reduction from 84% in 2020/21. Appliance availability has been a challenge, not only for Essex but seen across the country. Our Service has worked to a Core Station Policy. This approach allows us to dynamically move appliances and personnel across the county, ensuring that our most critical locations remain covered. By prioritising core stations, we reduce risk to our communities and improve response times. Core Station Coverage has remained static throughout the reporting period at 97%.



A proud on-call crew at Witham



Inclusive and high performing culture

We are committed to being an employer of choice, advocating equality, diversity, and inclusion. This is particularly important considering His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' 2023 report on values and culture, which indicated more work is needed nationally. In 2024, we held events at our Service Headquarters to celebrate International Women's Day, International Men's Day (alongside Essex Police and the East of England Ambulance Service), International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia and a Global Accessibility Awareness Day.

Diversity across fire services continues to be a national challenge. In 2023, only 8.7% of firefighters nationally were women, and only 8% were from an ethnic minority background. We aim for our service to better represent our communities. In our 2024 recruitment campaigns we included a focus on attracting underrepresented groups including females, people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, people from faith groups, and individuals aged 17 to 25.

Recruitment outcomes in 2024:



Female applicants increased from 11% to 13%



Applicants from a **minority ethnicity** rose from 6% to 8%



Applicants **aged 17 to 25** went up from 33% to 41%



LGBTQ+ applicants increased from 1% to 10%

New joiner data shows representation from all monitored groups has increased - most notably:

27.9%

of joiners were women

5.5%

identified as ethnic minority

6%

identified as LGBTQ+

Our service achieved Silver Inclusive Employers Standard accreditation in March 2024, recognising our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This is the first time a fire and rescue service in the country has achieved the Silver standard. We previously achieved Bronze accreditation two years ago, and this improvement is a testament to everyone's efforts in building an inclusive environment.

Our Director for People Services has been instrumental in removing barriers and enhancing engagement for employees at our service and across UK fire and rescue services. I am incredibly proud that, through this work, she was awarded the Champion for Equality and Diversity at the Asian Fire Service Association Awards in November and was further recognised as the Most Influential Woman in Fire in the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Service Awards.

Our service is now accredited by White Ribbon UK, a charity that aims to prevent violence against women and girls. In a sector where most operational colleagues (more than 90%) are men, our service has shown tremendous leadership in demonstrating how men are key to turning the tide in violence against women and girls.



A resilient and sustainable future

Our service has become the first in the UK to use groundbreaking research, carried out by one of our own Fitness Advisors, to help firefighters return to duty after injury. The Fit for Duty screening tool can help assess a firefighter's readiness to return to operational duties following musculoskeletal injury. This work was shortlisted in the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards. You can read more about this case study on pages 24 and 25.

A key role our fire crews undertake is to carry out risk assessments on buildings. We launched a new Operational Intel Module to improve how we record these risks. Now crews can upload this information, so they are available immediately. This means that, when crews go to an incident, they have the latest information available, improving safety for our personnel and the public.

Our new fire engines allow two sets of breathing apparatus to be released from either side, ensuring crews can access them even in narrow streets or where access is restricted.

We have continued to invest in our service:



Purchased 12 new fire appliances and invested in electric cars and vans to update our fleet, as well as ordering technical vehicles for our specialist services.



Our investment:

£3.7m

on new fire appliances

£524,925

on new thermal imaging cameras

£838,797

on fire station/assets improvement

£128,640

on high-powered PPV fans to ventilate buildings quicker



Replaced our thermal imaging cameras, entry equipment, Positive Pressure Ventilation fans to better ventilate buildings, and purchased electric vehicle make-safe equipment for use at road traffic collisions.



Invested in new radios, mobile data terminals for appliances, laptops, and mobile devices.



Carried out updates at our fire stations and buildings, including air conditioning, new bay doors, lighting improvements, heating, and installing electric vehicle charging points.

Our Service

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is one of the largest fire and rescue services in the country, serving 1.88 million residents over a county of 1,420 square miles.

It is the third-most populous county in England.

We employ approximately 1,500 people and provide prevention, protection, and emergency response services from 50 fire stations. We also host one of the 20 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) facilities and teams that are strategically located across England.

Our core services are focused on our statutory duties to prevent, protect and respond to fires and other emergencies.

They are informed and shaped by our analysis of risk, and we align our resources and focus our activities on the areas of greater risk.

We have a strong focus on safeguarding, making sure we work closely with our partners. Our people know how to spot safeguarding concerns and take correct action to protect the most vulnerable within our communities. We are committed to mitigate the risks of harm or greater harm at the earliest of opportunities.

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and Technical Rescue

We host a National Resilience USAR team which includes multiple specialist national assets that can be deployed locally regionally or nationally to provide bespoke equipment and skills to complex incidents.

Our team also provides the Essex Technical Rescue capability which comprises of Swift Water Rescue, Rope Rescue, Drone Operations, Bariatric Rescue, and Trench Rescue.

Data source: <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/fire-and-rescue-services/essex/>

Service area	1,420 square miles	
Population	1.88m people	
No. of employees	Approx 1,500	
Operational workforce	61% wholetime 39% on-call	
Sites	1 Headquarters 1 USAR 50 Fire Stations	
Incidents	8.8 incidents per 1,000 Essex population	10.4 national
	3.1 non-fire incidents per 1,000 Essex population	3.5 national
	3.6 fire false alarms per 1,000 Essex population	4.3 national

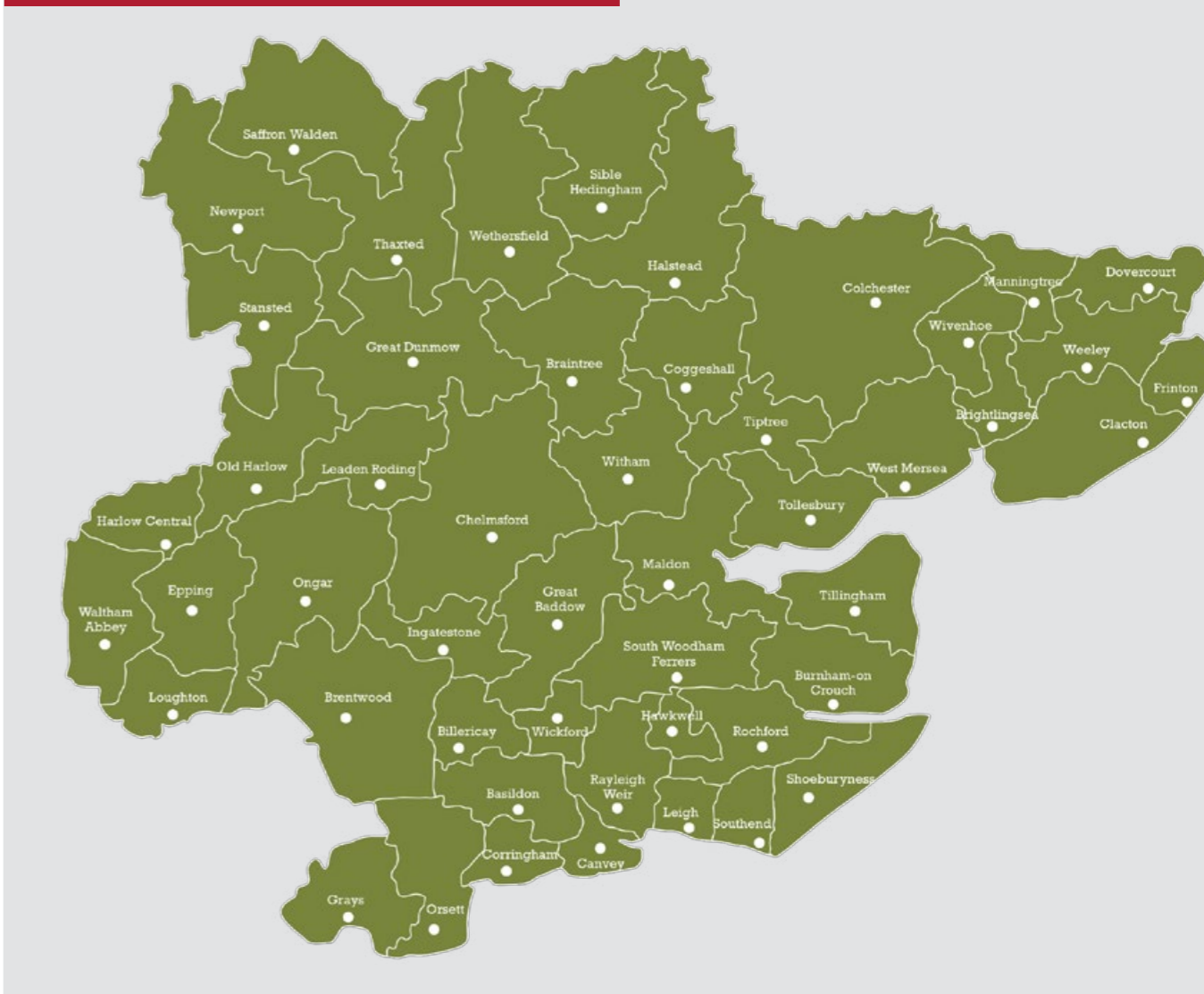
We operate from 50 fire stations, with 66 fire engines and a range of specialist vehicles. We also host one of the Urban Search and Rescue teams that are strategically located across England.

Our fire engines are deployed to meet daily demands and provide resilience and capacity to handle occasional large-scale incidents or multiple, smaller incidents simultaneously.

Urban Search and Rescue is crewed by wholetime firefighters and supported by USAR reserves who are based at other Essex fire stations.

Through risk analysis and consultation, we have reviewed how to increase availability during peak times. Our analysis shows that having 40 fire engine available is our optimum availability. This means we can reach life risk calls quickly, support initial attendance if needed, or respond to periods of high demand.

Map of Essex with ECFRS station locations



The analysis carried out for this Community Risk Management Plan assures us that the current location of our fire stations meet our operational demand. We will review this each year, and will only make any changes once a formal full public consultation has taken place.

Our Vision and Values

Our values make sure we put communities at the heart of all we do. They align with the national Core Code of Ethics and set the expected standards of behaviour from all our people.

PFCC vision

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

Our mission

Making Essex safer together.

Our values

Our values are a set of guiding principles which set the tone for how we will work with each other, our partners, and most importantly our communities. We value:

- Professionalism
- Inclusion
- Teamwork
- Courage
- High performance

Our behaviours

The difference we make in and for our communities is driven by our behaviours.

Our behaviours are:

- Do what is right for the people we serve
- Be accountable for the performance of my team.
- Communicate positively and actively listen.
- Do what I say I will or explain why I have not.
- Inspire, empower, and help others to succeed.
- Prioritise my well-being.
- Promote and role model inclusion.
- Seek feedback and listen to improve.
- Set realistic goals and celebrate success.
- Speak up when something feels wrong.



NFCC Core Code of Ethics

The Core Code of Ethics supports a consistent approach to ethics, including behaviours, by services in England. They are intended to improve organisational culture and workforce diversity of services, ensuring communities are supported in the best way.

Putting our Communities First

Integrity

Dignity and Respect

Leadership

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Our Strategic Priorities

Fire and Rescue Plan

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's (PFCC's) Fire and Rescue Plan 2024 - 2028 sets out the priorities for our service and how we will keep our communities safe.

The commitments set out in the plan build on existing partnerships and seek to develop them in new and ambitious ways. These include greater collaboration between police and fire and closer working with local councils, community safety partnerships and the voluntary, community and health sectors.

Our Areas of Focus

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

☆ 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.

Our six priorities for our county are:

Protect vulnerable people	Improve road safety and reduce road deaths in Essex to zero
Adapt to our changing environment	Make buildings across Essex safer
Promote a positive culture and develop the workforce	Improve efficiency and effectiveness

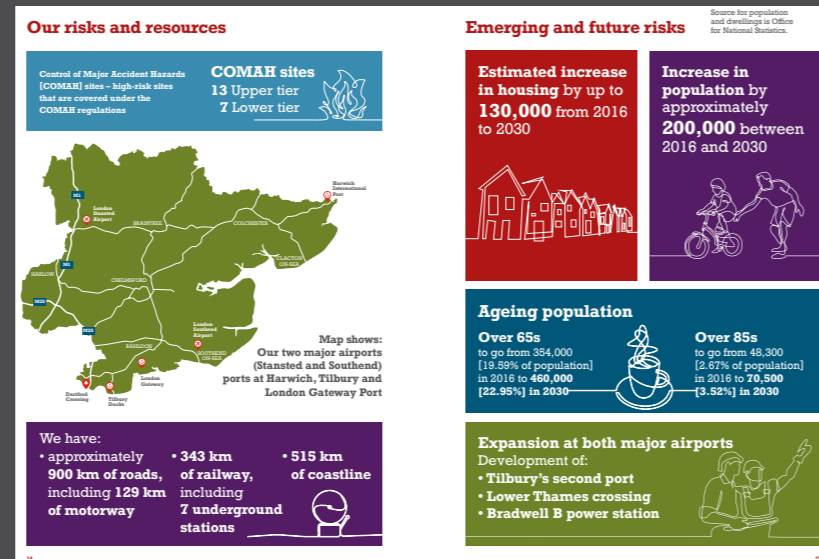
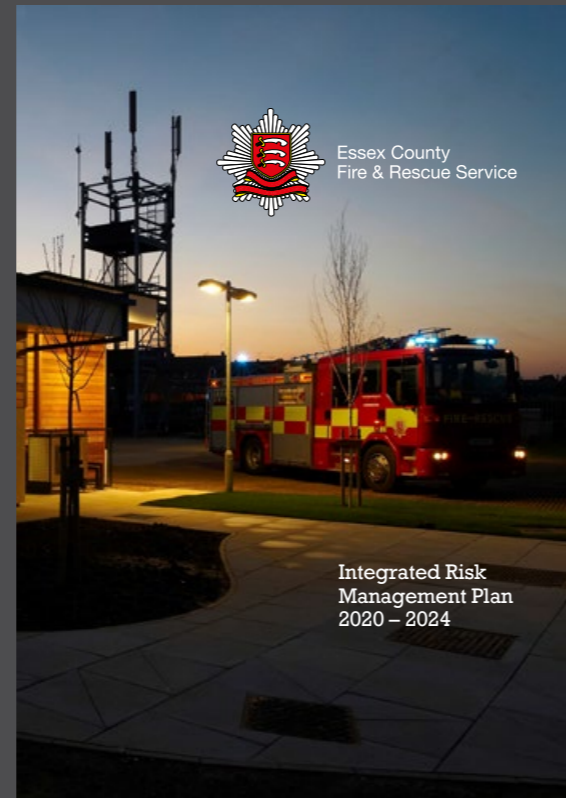
Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020–2024

Between 2020 and 2024, our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) acted as our corporate plan. It explained how we would deliver the Fire and Rescue Plan (FRP) and shaped our annual Strategic Plan, covering areas such as continuous improvement, change programmes, and budget management.

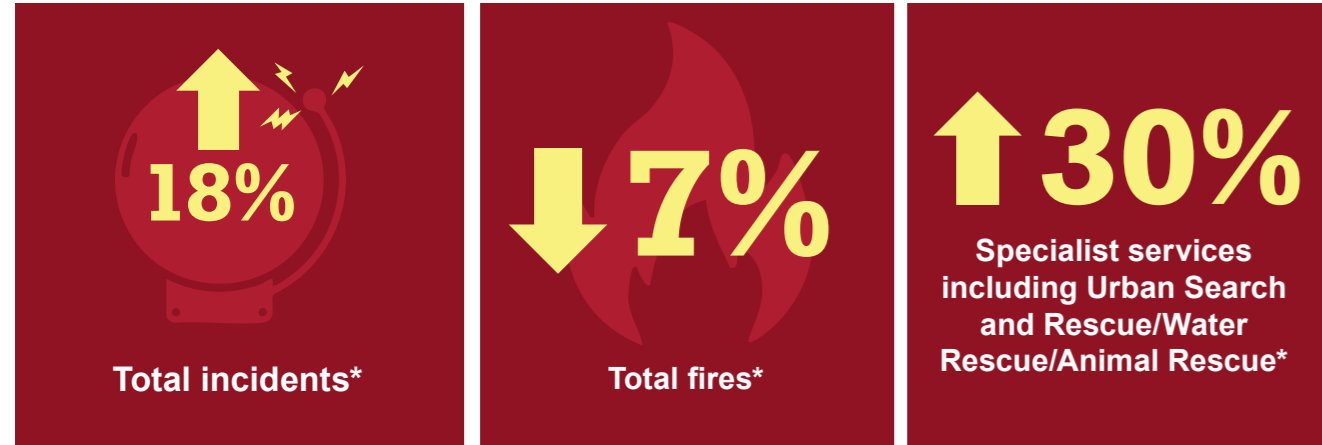
The IRMP set out how we managed risks in Essex, protected local communities, and responded to incidents, all while working within financial constraints. As risks and demands across Essex continued to shift, we regularly reviewed our priorities to ensure we met the changing needs of our communities.

Community Risk Management Plan

Our [Integrated Risk Management Plan \(IRMP\)](#) ran from 2020 to 2024. From April, 2025, the IRMP was replaced by our [Community Risk Management Plan](#).



Our Performance – IRMP 2020-2024



*Compared to 2020-21

	Total Incidents	Total Fires	Total Accidental Fires	Total Special Services	Total False Alarms	Total RTC	People injured by Fire	ADF Injuries*	ADF Injury Rate	ADF Fatalities	Total Calls	Total HFSV	Total Smoke Alarms fitted
2020-21	14,340	4,186	734	3,240	6,052	862	67	45	0.24	2	28,651	4,346	5,865
2021-22	15,426	3,727	718	4,104	6,457	1,138	74	37	0.20	7	30,111	6,224	9,566
2022-23	17,505	5,212	783	4,010	7,063	1,220	43	28	0.15	3	37,950	8,481	10,239
2023-24	16,645	3,782	678	4,279	7,286	1,295	56	30	0.16	5	33,327	10,124	13,850
2024-25	16,971	3,907	676	4,230	7,497	1,337	57	30	0.16	5	33,882	10,701	14,660
% change from 20/21	+18%	-7%	-8%	+30%	+24%	+55%	-15%	-33%	-	+150%	+18%	+146%	+150%

* ADFs are Accidental Dwelling Fires

Animal Rescue Incidents

Responding to animal rescues is an occasional but important part of our wider emergency response role. We are typically called to attend at the request of other emergency services or the RSPCA. Firefighters receive specialist training in animal behaviour, safe handling techniques, and working with animals in distress. Rescues often involve larger animals such as horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, and deer, which can present significant risks and require specialist equipment. These incidents usually occur when animals become trapped in machinery, bogs, slurry pits, rivers, pools, ditches, or as a result of cliff falls and road traffic collisions. In the past 12 months, responding to animal rescues has cost approximately £300,000.



10,701
Home Fire Safety Visits

Carried out by

3,623

Operational Crew

7,078

Volunteers and other community safety staff



Fitting a total of
14,660
Smoke alarms

Workforce Data

DATA AT 31 MAR 2025		
Characteristic	Specific	%
Gender	Female	22.2%
Ethnic Origin	Ethnic Minority	22.2%
Age	Under 25	5.3%
Sexual Orientation	LGBTQ+	4.4%
Disability	Disabled	5.9%



Case studies

CASE STUDY

Engaging with our communities

Our preparations for our Community Risk Management Plan, which is our service's strategy from 2025 to 2030, have gone further than ever before this year.

We have held extensive engagement workshops, we have engaged with over 9,000 people across Essex through our public perception and Community Risk Management Plan surveys.

The feedback from our people, public and partners has been considered, and the plan reflects and incorporates this. It is important that the public have trust and confidence in us as an emergency service.



Over 9000

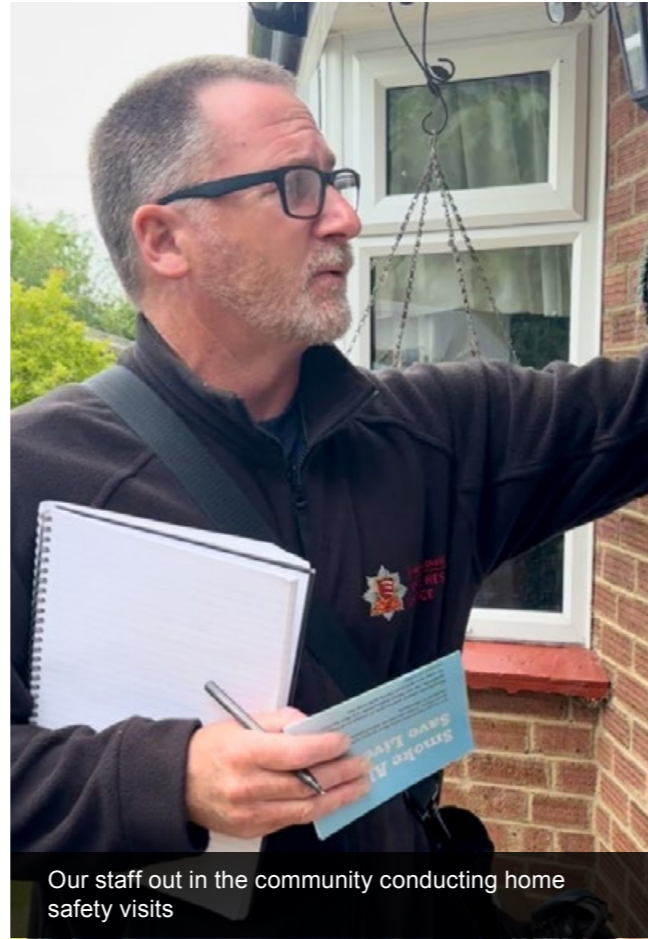
people engaged with across Essex through our CRMP and public perception surveys

Our service is already signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant, promising to support the armed forces and treat its members fairly, but we were looking at ways to demonstrate our commitment further.

It was also suggested that we “wrap” some of our fire engines in remembrance designs. Our Corporate Communications, Marketing and Brand and Fleet Services teams worked together to come up with a design and wrap two fire engines. The design includes silhouettes of soldiers, poppies and the phrase “Lest we Forget”.

The fire engines will initially be based at Colchester Fire Station. The city is home to Colchester Garrison and the 16 Air Assault Brigade.

The initiative has been well-received by our communities, not just in Colchester but across the county, with overwhelmingly positive sentiment received on social media and out and about.



Our staff out in the community conducting home safety visits

We have many firefighters and members of staff that who are former service personnel or have links to the armed forces and this commitment and investment by our service means a lot to them.

We are proud of the awareness the fire engines will help raise to support the armed forces community.

CASE STUDY

Groundbreaking initiative to help firefighters return to work after injury

Our service has become the first in the UK to use groundbreaking research, carried out by one of our own Fitness Advisors, to help firefighters to return to duty after injury.

Liam Noll discovered that, despite having selection and annual fitness tests, fire and rescue services do not have national guidance for returning to duty following injury. As a result, he has spent four years researching and completing a PhD into the topic, with support from our service.

The Fit for Duty screening tool can help in assessing a firefighter's readiness to return to operational duties following musculoskeletal injury.

Tasks can be completed in any order and are carried out under the supervision of one of our Fitness Advisors. Firefighters should pass all tasks before being permitted to return to operational duties.

The return-to-work assessments are now part of our service's Attendance Policy, as part of a 12-month pilot scheme.

Liam's research papers have been published by the MDPI, which publishes medical and scientific journals across the world, and Physical Therapy in Sport journal.

Liam, who has presented his research at the National Fire Chiefs Council's FireFit conference, was named Support Colleague of the Year at our service's People Awards in March 2024 and was shortlisted in the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards.

Tasks include:

- putting on and removing a breathing apparatus set
- a ladder lift simulation
- a ladder carry simulation (using a dumbbell)
- a light portable pump carry simulation (using a barbell or dumbbells)
- a hose run and carry
- a casualty evacuation with a 55kg dummy
- a ladder climb with leg lock

CASE STUDY

Improving how we record risk: our new Operational Intel Module

A key role our fire crews undertake is to carry out risk assessments on buildings. We launched our new Operational Intel Module on our Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) in August, bespoke to our service, to improve how we record these risks.

Our old system took too long – weeks in some cases – before these risk assessments, known as site specific risk plans – were available on mobile data terminals, tablets carried on every fire engine. Our service holds around 900 Site Specific Risk Plans and most of these risks get an annual review. The plans include information such as building layout and potential hazards, such as explosive materials being stored in the building.

Now crews can upload these Site Specific Risk Plans to mobile data terminals so they are available immediately. This means that, when crews go to an incident, they have the latest information available, improving safety for our personnel and for members of the public.

White Ribbon accreditation

Our service is now accredited to White Ribbon UK, a charity which aims to prevent violence against women and girls. We held 16 days of activism, from 25 November to 10 December, to show our commitment and support.

During the 16 days of action, we held a live panel-style discussion on Teams. Our service also held four “Be An Ally” sessions on Teams and two “Ally Intervention” sessions in person, to give colleagues more information about how they can make a real impact.

We held a “White Ribbon takeover” on Viva Engage, one of our internal channels where colleagues can share news. Colleagues who signed up to be White Ribbon ambassadors posted messages explaining why they were supporting the White Ribbon campaign. In total, 19 posts were viewed an incredible 8,038 times (an average of 423 per post).

In a sector where the vast majority of operational colleagues (more than 90%) are men, our service has shown tremendous leadership in showing how men are key to turning the tide in violence against women and girls.

As HMICFRS says:

“Leaders need to make sure their services are diverse and inclusive workplaces. Morally, it is the right thing to do. It also makes organisations more likely to provide effective services and to be trusted by their communities.”

We truly are leading the way.

Fire Investigation Officers

In May 2024, our Service welcomed its first-ever dedicated Fire Investigation Officers. Both officers bring valuable experience from within the fire service and wider emergency services.

They are trained to the same level as fire officers who carry out complex fire investigations, where the cause of a fire needs closer examination. Working alongside the Fire Investigation Manager, they have supported colleagues on incidents and have also led investigations independently.

Introducing dedicated Fire Investigation Officers is a significant step forward for our Service, strengthening our professionalism and ensuring we remain at the forefront of industry standards.

Alongside these appointments, a new Tier 1 Introduction to Fire Investigation course has been created and accredited by Skills for Justice. This course, available to operational officers at Crew Manager level and above, is one of only a handful of accredited Level 2 Fire Investigation courses in the country.

This development places our Service among the best in the UK for fire investigation training. High-quality investigations will help us identify trends, share safety messages with the public, and support our partners such as the police and insurers.



Our response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy

The final report from the Grenfell Tower public inquiry was published in September 2024.

Fire and rescue services were only required to implement 14 out of 46 safety recommendations, aimed at improving fire safety, building regulations, and emergency services' procedures, in the first phase of the inquiry.

We are proud to say that our service has gone much further than required in making sure every single recommendation has been reviewed and changes implemented if necessary and that they are regularly reviewed.

Essex has more than 150 high-rise residential buildings. Our service has reviewed them all and is addressing safety issues relating to external cladding.

Our service's first ever High-Rise Task Force was up and running in early 2024. The team is responsible for the ongoing programme of work to ensure all premises over 18 metres comply with the changes in legislation.

The task force has issued a number of Enforcement and Prohibition Notices, including two cases which resulted in the owners asking residents to leave high-rise buildings until safety concerns are addressed.

Smoke Blocker Curtains, one of the recommendations in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, were delivered to stations in April this year. The curtains, which are made of fibreglass, resistant fabric and steel, can be adjusted to fit to a door frame, and stop smoke and fire gases in a building.

Crews also have fire escape hoods, which provide people with 15 minutes of clean air, and electronic fire survival boards, which keep track of rooms that have been searched in high-rise buildings.

Operational colleagues and other teams have continued to test our emergency response procedures for high-rise buildings.

Waterside responder scheme

Our service has delivered a new lifesaving water rescue scheme to pubs and restaurants to help reduce drownings.

The Waterside Responder Scheme has been designed by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) to provide lifesaving skills and equipment for businesses located near water, particularly those who serve alcohol.

In partnership with the RNLI, our service is offering these businesses a free lifesaving session to teach basic skills and knowledge to help staff safely assist somebody in trouble in water, prior to the arrival of firefighters. Participants are given training on who to call, how to prevent incidents and are shown how to use a throw bag, a length of rope attached to a bag, to pull people to safety.

Every year around 400 people drown in the UK. Many of these deaths could have been prevented if there had been quick response from someone who had the right skills and equipment to help. This is why we are encouraging businesses in Essex who are near water to sign up for a free session.

Additionally, our Water Safety team worked with Tendring District Council to create life ring stickers featuring What3Words locations, which enhance rescue efficiency across more than 100 life ring locations in Clacton, Frinton, Walton, and Brightlingsea.

The team also developed a QR code system for the public to report missing or damaged life rings. The social media campaign promoting this project reached more than 250,000 people.



Our prevention team leading the way in keeping Essex safe

Global Accessibility Awareness Day

We are constantly looking for ways to make inclusivity a default across our organisation. In May 2024, we became the first fire and rescue service nationally to hold a Global Accessibility Awareness Day event at our Service Headquarters.

The event was organised and hosted by our Digital Accessibility and Inclusion Group Chairs, our Digital Skills Officer and our Development Programme Advisor. The purpose of the event was to get everyone talking, thinking, and learning about digital access and inclusion. Our Service Leadership Team supported the event, with colleagues sharing their lived experience of neurodivergence, lightning talks about the value of accessible technology, as well as discussions around the tools, systems and support available to our colleagues.

The event was really well received, and here are just some of the positive feedback comments we have received from attendees →

“The passion and enthusiasm, the expertise and resources, the fact that we are prioritising this area, the energy!”

“Hearing people’s lived experiences. This was really insightful. Good to hear how technology is helping people with neurodiversity traits.”

“Range of topics, great effort by the organisers.”

The event is part of our service being an employer of choice, advocating equality, diversity and inclusion. This is particularly important in the backdrop of the His Majesty’s Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service’s 2023 report into values and culture that there is more to be done nationally.

In 2024, we also held events at our Service Headquarters to celebrate International Women’s Day, International Men’s Day, alongside Essex Police and the East of England Ambulance Service, and International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia and Global Accessibility Awareness Day.

Positive action recruitment

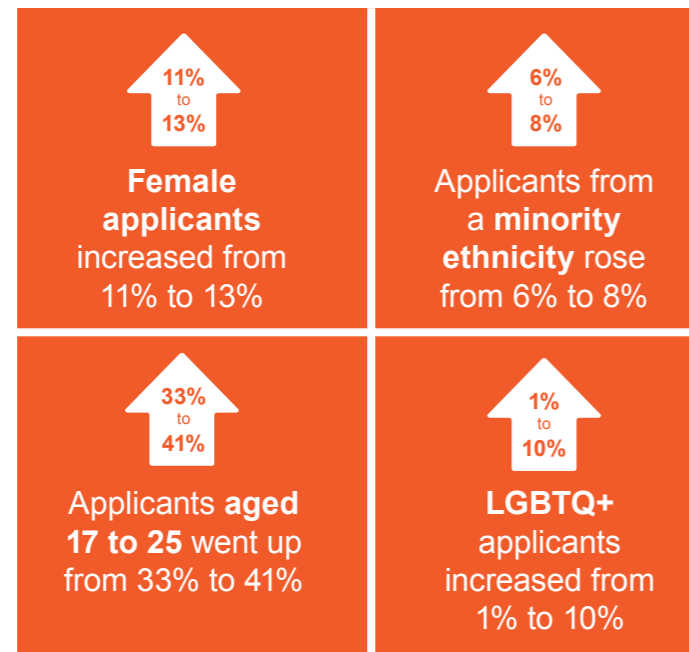
Diversity in fire services is a national challenge. In 2023 only 8.7 per cent of firefighters nationally were women and only 8 per cent of firefighters were from an ethnic minority background.

We want our service to better represent our communities. Our 2024 recruitment campaigns included delivery of activity aimed at underrepresented groups, with a specific focus on attracting females, people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, people from faith groups and people aged 17 to 25 to consider a career with our service.

Campaigns included a focus on challenging outdated stereotypes of a fire service and telling our employees' stories.

The campaign included press releases, case studies, social media banners and posts, a news bulletin sent to 4,000 people who had signed up to updates, public question and answer sessions, careers days to target younger audiences and attended Pride events and linked in with religious leaders.

This work is now showing real results in 2024:



Our latest campaign has seen many colleagues come forward to tell their stories. We see diversity celebrated and people actively looking to be allies. Our people are our biggest asset, and we love using their stories to create real change. The overwhelming majority of our recruitment content receives positive sentiment from our public and lots of engagement too.



Our firefighters – proud to serve Essex



Our firefighters operating an aerial ladder platform

Inclusive Employers Standard: leading the way in our sector

Our service achieved Silver Inclusive Employers Standard accreditation in March 2024, recognising our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

It is the first time a fire and rescue service in the country has achieved the Silver standard. We achieved a Bronze accreditation two years ago and the improvement is a testament to everyone's efforts in building an inclusive environment for all colleagues.

We believe in the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and this accreditation is testament to our ongoing commitment to these principles. To hear from industry experts that we are taking the right steps could not 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 Inclusive Employers Standard accredited have reached Silver levels and only 4% are Gold.

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

Feedback from the Inclusive Employers Standard said:

“It's clear where inclusion and diversity fits in 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 collecting robust diversity data and adapting network groups to meet evolving needs, including a BEING (LGBTQ+) group, a Women's Forum and an Armed Forces Network. These efforts show our Service's commitment to engaging colleagues at every level.

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

This drive to be inclusive comes from the top of our organisation. Our Director for People Services has been instrumental in removing barriers and enhancing engagement for employees at our service and across UK fire and rescue services.

As the National Fire Chiefs Council Lead for Culture Dashboards, the Director of People Services led the development of a national methodology to support services in monitoring their culture and inclusion measures.

Mandatory Inclusive Behaviours training was introduced for all employees, accompanied by strategic leadership development in People Management and Leadership Development programmes that foster an inclusive culture.

The Director of People Services was recognised with the Champion for Equality and Diversity award at the Asian Fire Service Association Awards in November, followed by the title of Most Influential Woman in Fire at the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Service Awards.

CASE STUDY

Protecting our people

Although research shows the risk of contamination from workwear – garments worn underneath firefighter personal protective equipment – is negligible, there is still concern among some firefighters and representative bodies.

Our service has become one of the first in the region to install commercial grade washing machines at stations to launder workwear. The machines were initially installed at our busiest wholtime stations – Basildon, Chelmsford, Colchester, Grays and Harlow. We have now installed washing machines at 39 stations across our service these are available for use by all of our operational colleagues. In addition, our Technical Services Workshop has trialled a new process for cleaning Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets using a state-of-the-art specialist washing machine, to reduce the risk of contamination.

Clearly the impact of these initiatives – reducing the amounts of contaminants firefighters are potentially exposed to - will be long-term, but we are proud to be leading the way on such important initiatives.



Our firefighters taking a lead in making communities safer



Wildfires and field fires are an increasing threat - demanding stronger prevention, preparedness, and community resilience

Transformation Portfolio

Case Studies:

CASE STUDY

Protecting our people – keeping contaminants out of cabs, washing machines, Breathing Apparatus cleaning trial

Our service has received 12 new fire appliances following a £3million investment in 2024/25 and a further £700,00 in the 2025/26 financial year. The rescue pumps (Type B fire appliances) have been produced by a leading manufacturer.

As part of our commitment to keeping our people safe, our service has a desire to keep contaminants out of the cab. We have become the first fire and rescue service in the region to have appliances where Breathing Apparatus sets are kept in a front locker, instead of in the cab.

We have worked with the manufacturers to design the breathing apparatus stowage so that two sets can be released at either side of the appliance. This means that, if an appliance is parked on a narrow street or access is limited, the breathing apparatus sets can still be accessed. In addition, they are stowed on height-adjustable mountings to allow easier removal.

In addition to stowing breathing apparatus set outside the cab, there is separate air conditioning in the rear of the cab to help firefighters to cool down after an incident – again to improve the wellbeing of our crews. The cabs also have wipe-clean seats and surfaces, to reduce the risk of contamination following an incident.



CASE STUDY

Community Wellbeing Officer Project

The partnership formed under this project has run an 18-month pilot which involves four Community Wellbeing Officers (CWO) working across Essex to respond swiftly to members of the public who have had a non-injury fall at home. Without this service, residents who fall without sustaining injuries could face prolonged wait times for an ambulance. The CWOs can assess and assist patients as well as conducting tailored home safety checks. CWO visits to East of England Ambulance Service Trust mobilisations has resulted in 94.3% of the visits being to our 'Gold' residents – our highest risk people. The partnership will continue to be reviewed aligned to the benefits that it continues to bring.

CASE STUDY

Tri-Service Officers

The Tri-Service Project has delivered enhanced relationships across multi-agencies and provided a visible uniformed presence and reassurance within the pilot communities in the Dengie and Uttlesford. Additionally, it provided early identification and prevention of issues, a measurable increase in smoke alarm ownership and opportunities to identify risk factors and other previously unknown and unmet needs. Efficiencies have been seen as Essex Police (EP) and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) have been able to work together avoiding duplication of risk reduction and prevention workshops.

Since April 2024, these two roles have moved into Business as Usual where the deliverables, outcomes and benefits will continue to be tracked.

Each of the two pilot areas have realised the following non-cashable savings:

- **£54,302** saving from tri-service rural officer engagements compared to the cost of these being undertaken by an on-call crew of 4
- **£11,718** benefit of a projected 20% increase in 'Safe and Well' visits conducted by the tri-service rural officer
- **£13,750** saving from tri-service rural officer engagements and activities compared to a PC or PCSO undertaking the same work
- **£5,040** from a projected reduction in frequent callers conveyed to hospital by EEAST

This gives total non-cashable economic project benefits, for two officers, of £169,620 during the 12 months pilot. In addition, as yet unmeasured benefits, are anticipated related to reductions in arson, anti-social behaviour, slips, trips, falls and repeat victimisation.

CASE STUDY

Dovercourt

In October 2024 we received the capital receipt of £300,000 for the sale of a vacant residential structure at Dovercourt to build a new police station.

It will be our service's first collaborative site with Essex Police. As well as making our communities safer by providing a modern police station, it will allow us to work closer and build relationships with our police colleagues.

As part of the project, Essex Police funded a £60,000 redecoration and improvement scheme for the shared areas at Dovercourt Fire Station. This represents a saving for our Service, which would otherwise have needed to fund the work as part of its longer-term estate programme.

The project has also delivered a Council Tax saving for our Service, as the former Station Manager's house on the site is no longer classed as residential and therefore no longer qualifies for Council Tax.

Ambulance Response Points

This change initiative has offered fire stations for parking, ambulance crew meals, rest breaks and recharging of vehicles. This is now in place at Frinton and Dunmow fire stations.

This allows the East of England Ambulance Service (EEAST) to rationalise its estate. There is also a financial benefit for our service, for allowing access to the response post, which provide total annual income of £18,000.

Building on the success of the shared use facility initiative, further opportunities for implementing this model are being developed with EEAST in alignment with their new strategy agreed in May 2025.

Operational Training Project

The Operational Training project was delivered as part of our key investment plans for operational training and as a result the following outputs have been delivered via the project:

- The Operational Command Assessment and Training (OCAT) suite equipment has been upgraded from analogue to digital technology.
- New camera equipment for OCAT was purchased and installed.
- Station-based Road Traffic Collision (RTC) training was delivered.
- ‘Effective Command’, a behavioural marking system for Incident Command training was installed.

This project has ensured that the public will benefit from our Incident Commanders being trained in line with National Operational Guidance (N.O.G). With such modern facilities, the service can also consider whether there could be opportunities to generate income, from leasing the suite to other organisations, enabling us to invest in other areas.

Strategic leadership

We are constantly looking at ways to communicate with colleagues across our organisation, to make sure everyone knows the service’s strategy and priorities.

Every month, our Chief Fire Officer answers colleagues’ questions live on camera. As far as we know, we are the only fire and rescue service whose Chief Fire Officer answer questions live on camera. In 2024, we rebranded the session from Ask Me Anything to The Big Questions – to make sure it focuses on the major issues affecting the service and wider sector - and moved it from Workplace to Teams, to make it more accessible for our colleagues.

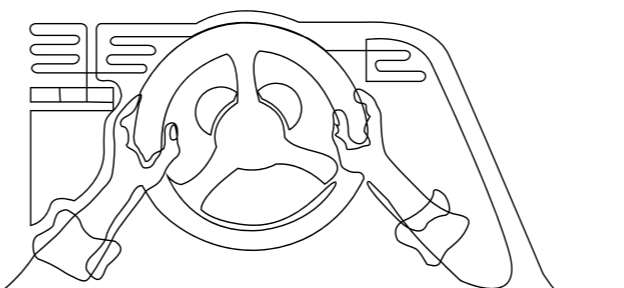
To quote the latest annual state of fire report from His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services: “In a few of our most recent inspections, including Essex, Greater Manchester, Norfolk and Northumberland fire and rescue services, we have seen how strong and effective senior leadership has led to improvements. Their chief fire officers have achieved this by focusing on the fundamental aspects of their services in a strategic and people-centred way.”

Investment in our Service

In 2024/25 we have continued to invest in our Service. We have:

Purchased 12 new fire appliances, invested in electric cars and vans to update our fleet as well as ordering technical vehicles for our specialist services

- Replaced our thermal imaging cameras, entry equipment, PPV fans and purchased electric vehicle make safe equipment for use at road traffic collisions
- Invested in new radios, mobile data terminals to use on appliances, laptops and mobile devices
- Carried out a number of updates at our fire stations and buildings including air conditioning, new bay doors, lighting improvements, heating and installing electric vehicle charging points



Future plans – Making Essex safer together

On 1 April 2025 we launched our Community Risk Management Plan for 2025-2030.

This plan outlines how we will continue making Essex safer together over the next five years by working closely with our communities and valued partners. It sets out how we will identify and respond to risks, protect people and places, and deliver an effective and efficient fire and rescue service for the county.

The CRMP focuses on five strategic goals:

1	Preventing fires and other emergencies	2	Reducing the impact of fire in the built environment	3	Responding effectively to emergencies
4	Building an inclusive and high-performing culture	5	Ensuring a resilient and sustainable future for the Service and the communities we serve		

This plan aligns with the Fire and Rescue Plan 2024–2028, making sure we deliver on shared priorities: protecting vulnerable people, improving efficiency and effectiveness and continuing to adapt to changing risks and challenges.

Over the past five years, the number of fires in Essex has varied, with accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) and related injuries generally showing a downward trend. ADFs have reduced from 734 in 2020/21 to 676 in 2024/25, and injuries from these incidents have fallen from 45 to 30 over the same period. While total fire numbers fluctuate year to year, these reductions in ADFs and injuries reflect the positive impact of our prevention and community safety work.

We are proud of the progress achieved in partnership with our communities and remain committed to building on this success as we continue to deliver our plan and keep people safe in their homes.

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 2025 can be found here:

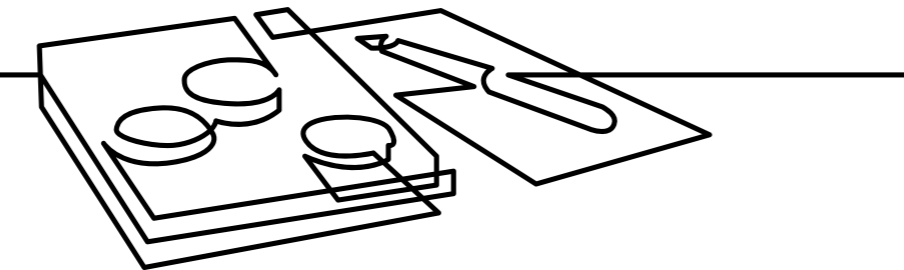
www.essex-fire.gov.uk/accounts

Please note, at the time of publication of this report (Sept 2025) these accounts are unaudited.

The external audit is vital in providing tax payers with assurance that the finances of the Authority are well managed and they are getting value for money. Public sector audit challenges have led to a significant number of other local authorities unable to publish audited statement of accounts. The Authority published its Audited Statement of Accounts 2023-24 in February 2025 with an unqualified opinion by its external auditors. A copy of which can be found here:

[Statement of Accounts 2023 24](#)

The Authority has a private audit contract and is not part of the public sector audit appointment (PSAA) process which has been a key factor in ensuring the external audit has been completed by the statutory deadlines.



Revenue Budget and Expenditure*

2023/24 Total Actuals £'000s	Description	Core Actual £000s	Earmarked Actual £000s	2024/25 Total Actual £000s	Core Budget £000s	Earmarked Budget £000s	2024/25 Total Budget £000s	Core Budget Var £000s	Earmarked Budget Var £000s	Budget Vs Actuals £000s
38,885	WholeTime Firefighters	40,891	337	41,228	39,134	-	39,134	(1,758)	(337)	(2,094)
9,947	On-Call Firefighters	11,014	-	11,014	9,544	-	9,544	(1,470)	-	(1,470)
1,863	Control	1,863	-	1,863	2,304	-	2,304	441	-	441
18,810	Support Staff	19,635	220	19,855	19,353	71	19,424	(282)	(149)	(431)
2,618	Ill health pension costs	2,892	-	2,892	2,581	-	2,581	(311)	-	(311)
72,123	Total Employment Costs	76,295	557	76,852	72,916	71	72,987	(3,380)	(486)	(3,865)
2,212	Support Costs	2,137	11	2,148	1,884	250	2,134	(253)	239	(14)
12,209	Premises & Equipment	11,861	140	12,000	12,019	374	12,393	159	234	393
4,032	Other Costs & Services	3,877	568	4,445	3,420	431	3,851	(457)	(137)	(594)
5,228	Financing Items	5,239	-	5,239	5,459	150	5,609	220	150	370
23,681	Total Other Costs	23,114	718	23,832	22,783	1,205	23,988	(331)	486	156
95,804	Gross Expenditure	99,409	1,275	100,684	95,699	1,276	96,974	(3,710)	1	(3,710)
(3,437)	Operational Income	(3,224)	-	(3,224)	(2,059)	-	(2,059)	1,165	-	1,165
92,367	Net Expenditure before Funding	96,185	1,275	97,460	93,639	1,276	94,915	(2,545)	1	(2,545)
	Funding									
(10,794)	Government Grants	(10,942)	-	(10,942)	(6,185)	-	(6,185)	4,757	-	4,757
(9,706)	Revenue Support Grant	(13,864)	-	(13,864)	(13,835)	-	(13,835)	29	-	29
(17,335)	National Non-Domestic Rates	(18,342)	-	(18,342)	(17,921)	-	(17,921)	421	-	421
(208)	NNDR (surplus)/deficit	(200)	-	(200)	-	-	-	200	-	200
(518)	Council Tax Collection Account	(472)	-	(472)	(300)	-	(300)	172	-	172
(53,238)	Council Tax Precept	(55,404)	-	(55,404)	(55,398)	-	(55,398)	5	-	5
(91,801)	Total Funding	(99,224)	-	(99,224)	(93,639)	-	(93,639)	5,584	-	5,584
566	Funding Gap / (Surplus)	(3,039)	1,275	(1,764)	(0)	1,276	1,276	3,039	1	3,040
-	Cont'ns to/(from) General Bals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(872)	Cont'ns to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	54	(1,275)	(1,221)	-	(1,276)	(1,276)	(54)	(1)	(54)
(872)	Total Contribution to/(from) Reserves	54	(1,275)	(1,221)	-	(1,276)	(1,276)	(54)	(1)	(54)
(305)	Net Gap / (Surplus)	(2,985)	-	(2,985)	(0)	(0)	(0)	2,985	(0)	2,985

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.



Our Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is Roger Hirst

The PFCC must:

- Set a budget and determine the council tax (precept) requirement
- Maintain an efficient and effective fire and rescue service for the county
- Provide a local connection between the fire and rescue service and local communities
- Approve a Community 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.



PFCC Roger Hirst with Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, Rick Hylton



Deputy PFCC Jane Gardner with Essex search and rescue dogs' unit

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

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, the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) (Amendment) Order 2013 and the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) (Amendment) Order 2021. 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 PFCCFRA'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 Fire and Rescue Statement
- 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



Picture taken July 2024

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.

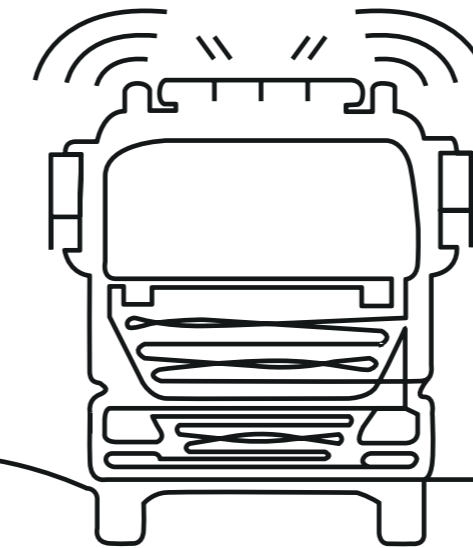
The Act covers a wide range of issues related to local public services, with a particular focus on the general power of competence, community rights, neighbourhood planning and housing.

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.

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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



Strengthening our service: A welcome to our new on-call squad in November 2024.

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.

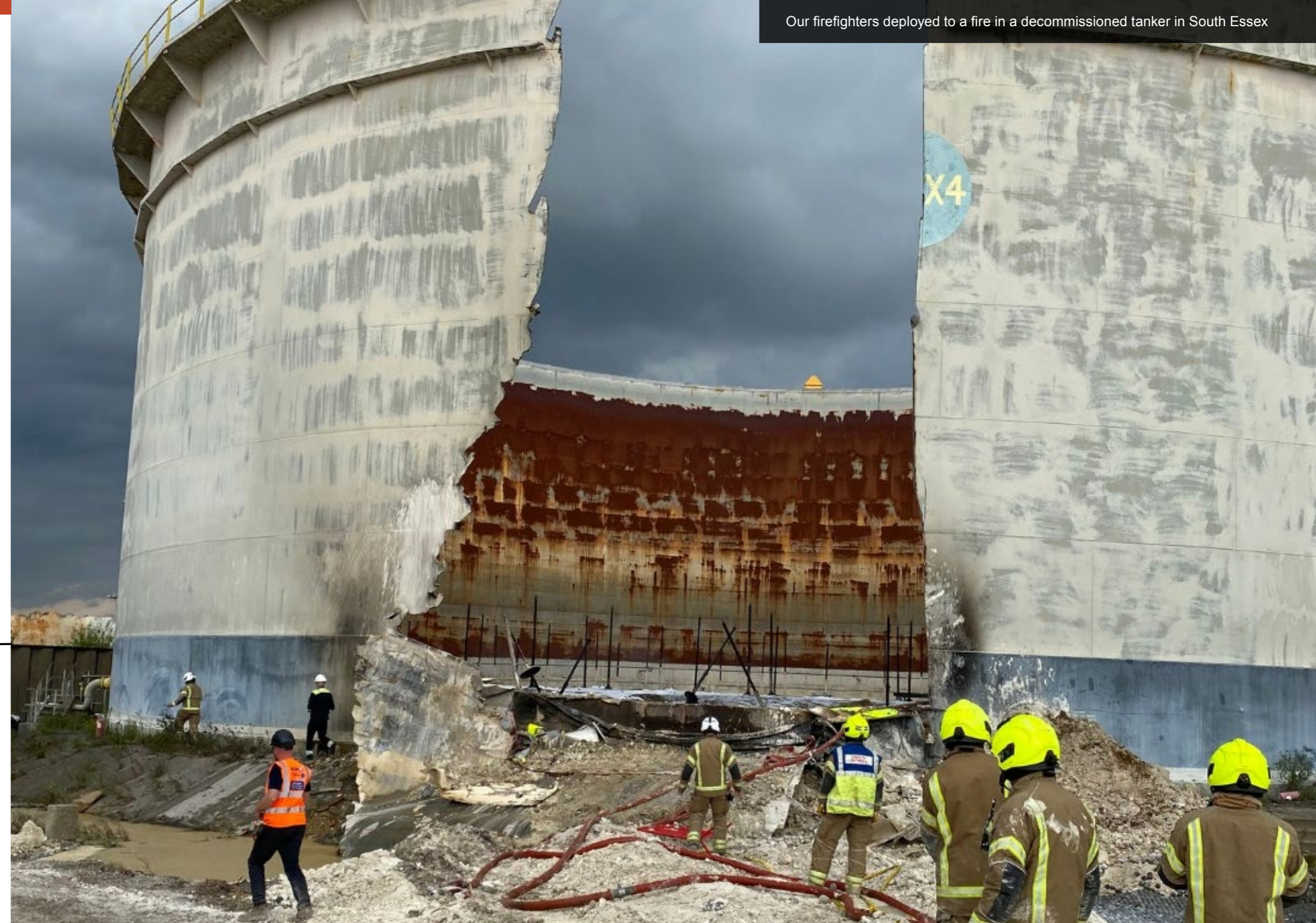
A productive relationship has been established between the Health and Safety Trade Union Safety Representatives and the Health and Safety Team.

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 2024/25 we received 67 complaints.

Of the 67 complaints, we responded and closed the majority within 20 days (our target). Some complaints took longer 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 or call using the details below

✉ feedback@essex-fire.gov.uk

☎ 0300 303 5555



Helpful links

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service website

[essex-fire.gov.uk](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk)

ECFRS Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2024/25

[essex-fire.gov.uk/accounts](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/accounts)

Fire and Rescue Plan

[essex-fire.gov.uk/plan](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/plan)

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

[essex-fire.gov.uk/irmp](https://www.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](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england)

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

<https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/node/16278>



Making Essex safer together

