

Press release: Friday 6 March 2026

The States continue to demonstrate a high level of tolerance of significant risks in respect of the Fire and Rescue Service

Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), Lynn Pamment CBE, has today, 6 March 2026, issued her report on the audit of the Fire and Rescue Service

The States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service (SJFRS) is a key Island workforce responsible for keeping Islanders safe from fires and other emergencies. SJFRS sits within the Department for Justice and Home Affairs (JHA).

The C&AG's audit evaluated how well SJFRS uses its resources to manage risk, and to ensure it delivers an efficient, effective and economic service.

The audit found that SJFRS has identified a large number of extreme risks, associated with operating at current levels. The mitigations recorded against these risks may not address or improve the risks significantly in the short term.

SJFRS has a Community Risk Management Plan, updated for 2025-26, which focusses strongly on risks to operational delivery and less on areas such as training, leadership and culture, staffing levels and budget management. The C&AG found that the Community Risk Management Plan does not set out clear key performance indicators across all areas of activity. A new suite of KPIs has recently been approved which will be integrated into the CRMP 2027-30.

Lynn Pamment CBE noted that, while risks had been raised with the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs in 2021, it was not until 2023 that additional funding was incorporated into the SJFRS budget. This additional funding was approved to increase the workforce and to start to move towards meeting National Operational Guidance (NOG) which is the recognised standard for UK Fire and Rescue services. Since 2022 approved business cases for additional funding have set out the risks clearly. There is still a considerable amount of work that will be required for SJFRS to comply with NOG.

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The financial performance for 2025 shows a marginal overspend position of £35,000 compared to budget. In practice staff vacancy savings have been used to fund non-pay expenditure and in overall terms the budget is not being used to address identified service delivery risks.

SJFRS has been successful in attracting new recruits and at the time of audit was nearing funded establishment. New officers have been appointed at a senior level from the UK, which should bring additional challenge, experience and expertise to SJFRS.

Commenting on the findings of the audit, the C&AG Lynn Pamment CBE, said:

“Since 2022 SJFRS has been strengthening its operations, from a weak foundation. While additional resources have allowed the recruitment of more full time firefighters, including senior officers, much remains to be done to enable a more effective service response and to eliminate occasions where there has been no available capacity.

“SJFRS needs to develop and implement a clear strategic plan incorporating all known risks and setting out key objectives, risk mitigations and measurable performance improvement targets. Until such a plan is in place and has been implemented the States continue to demonstrate a high level of tolerance of significant risks.”

The report on the Fire and Rescue Service is available on the Jersey Audit Office website <https://www.jerseyauditoffice.je>

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