



# Annual Report 2019

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# Chapter 1 - Message From The Head of Guernsey Coastguard

I welcome you Guernsey Coastguard's 2019 annual report, after an interesting year.

2019 began with the world's media focusing on Guernsey Coastguard. The loss of the aircraft carrying the footballer Emiliano Sala and the pilot David Ibbotson attracted unprecedented attention and scrutiny into the search that followed for the two men and their aircraft. Sadly, the outcome, following an extensive investigation by the UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB), showed that they likely died on impact with the sea. Nevertheless, what the search did highlight was all organisations, voluntary and otherwise, worked tirelessly searching almost 2000 square miles, in efforts to find any trace of the missing men.

The Bailiwick is blessed to have a considerable number of Search and Rescue Assets at Guernsey Coastguards' disposal. These include three RNLI lifeboats, Channel Island Air Search, Civil Protection Volunteers, St John cliff rescue and marine ambulance. These are supported and operated by volunteers and require continual fundraising efforts. I would like to thank everyone involved in keeping these assets available and ready all year round.

Guernsey Coastguard works with and shares best practice with the French Coastguard, Jersey Coastguard, and the UK HM Coastguard. Regular meetings, peer reviews, and audits all shape the Services' development and direction.

In 2019 training and development was a key priority following the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency's Peer Review of Guernsey Coastguard in 2018. This has increased the confidence and competence of the Coastguard staff at the Joint Emergency Services Control Centre (JESCC) improving their skills and putting them to the test during real emergencies.

During 2019, Guernsey Coastguard launched a number of proactive campaigns to reduce the risk of mariners getting into trouble and requiring our assistance. The '3 Ps' campaign highlighted the need to **Prepare** yourself and your boat, **Provide** the right safety equipment, and **Perform** responsibly on the water. Guernsey Coastguard is also campaigning to inform mariners of the risks of consuming alcohol whilst in charge of a vessel. Only too often, when vessels get into difficulty in our waters, the lifeboat crew arrive to find the occupants worse for wear through alcohol. During 2020, we will be promoting this issue again when the summer season starts.

My thanks to the Guernsey Coastguard staff, and all those volunteers, who remain dedicated to ensuring we can save lives on our coastline and at sea.

Captain David Barker  
**Head of Guernsey Coastguard**

## Chapter 2 - Profile

### 2.1. Purpose

Guernsey Coastguard is the Search and Rescue arm of the States of Guernsey, and staff from Guernsey Harbours act as the duty Search and Rescue Coordinator and/or Director during an incident. Guernsey Coastguard, alongside Alderney Coastguard, cover the Bailiwick's territorial seas and coastal areas. This mission often requires close coordination with our neighbouring Coastguards in Jersey, France and the UK. Guernsey Coastguard aligns itself to the standards set by the United Kingdom Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) through regular training, audit and peer review.

### 2.2. Vision

Guernsey Coastguard provides a national 24-hour maritime and coastal Search and Rescue (SAR) emergency response service throughout the Bailiwick working alongside with the UK HM Coastguard, Jersey Coastguard, and the French Coastguard, and voluntary SAR organisations under established plans agreed by all parties. These plans and arrangements are periodically reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose.

### 2.3. Core Values

The core business of Guernsey Coastguard encompasses the following services:

- Provision of year around 24 hours a day Search and Rescue Coordination/Direction for the Bailiwick of Guernsey.
- Provision of periodic training exercises to test a variety of scenarios in the marine environment or on the Bailiwick's coastline.
- To operate Guernsey Coastguard in accordance with international treaty obligations and latest best practice which have been extended into the Bailiwick. (SOLAS, UNCLOS, IAMSAR).
- Reduce or eliminate the loss of life and suffering by providing SAR coordination facilities and expertise locally.

Other benefits that reinforce Guernsey Coastguard values include:

- Safer and more secure environment for aviation and maritime related industries, commerce, recreation and travel.

- Availability of SAR resources for the provision of initial response and relief capabilities critical in saving lives in early stages of emergency incidents and SAR operations in support of the emergency management system in operation locally.
- Positive publicity through well performed SAR operations and prevention measures.
- Opportunity for promoting cooperation and communication among nation states and jurisdictions through SAR provision.

## **2.4. Relationship With Voluntary SAR Organisations**

The Bailiwick is fortunate to have several SAR assets available to Guernsey Coastguard that are operated on a voluntary basis. Three RNLI lifeboats, two all-weather and one inshore, a fixed wing aircraft (Channel Islands Air Search), Civil Protection Volunteers plus assets with Guernsey Law Enforcement, and the Brecqhou Helicopter. Guernsey Coastguard would like to thank the Bailiwick all voluntary Search and Rescue organisations and other third parties that raise money, provide volunteers and their equipment for air land and sea-based assets for the Bailiwick.



Picture: Guernsey Coastguard

## Chapter 3 – Review Of 2019

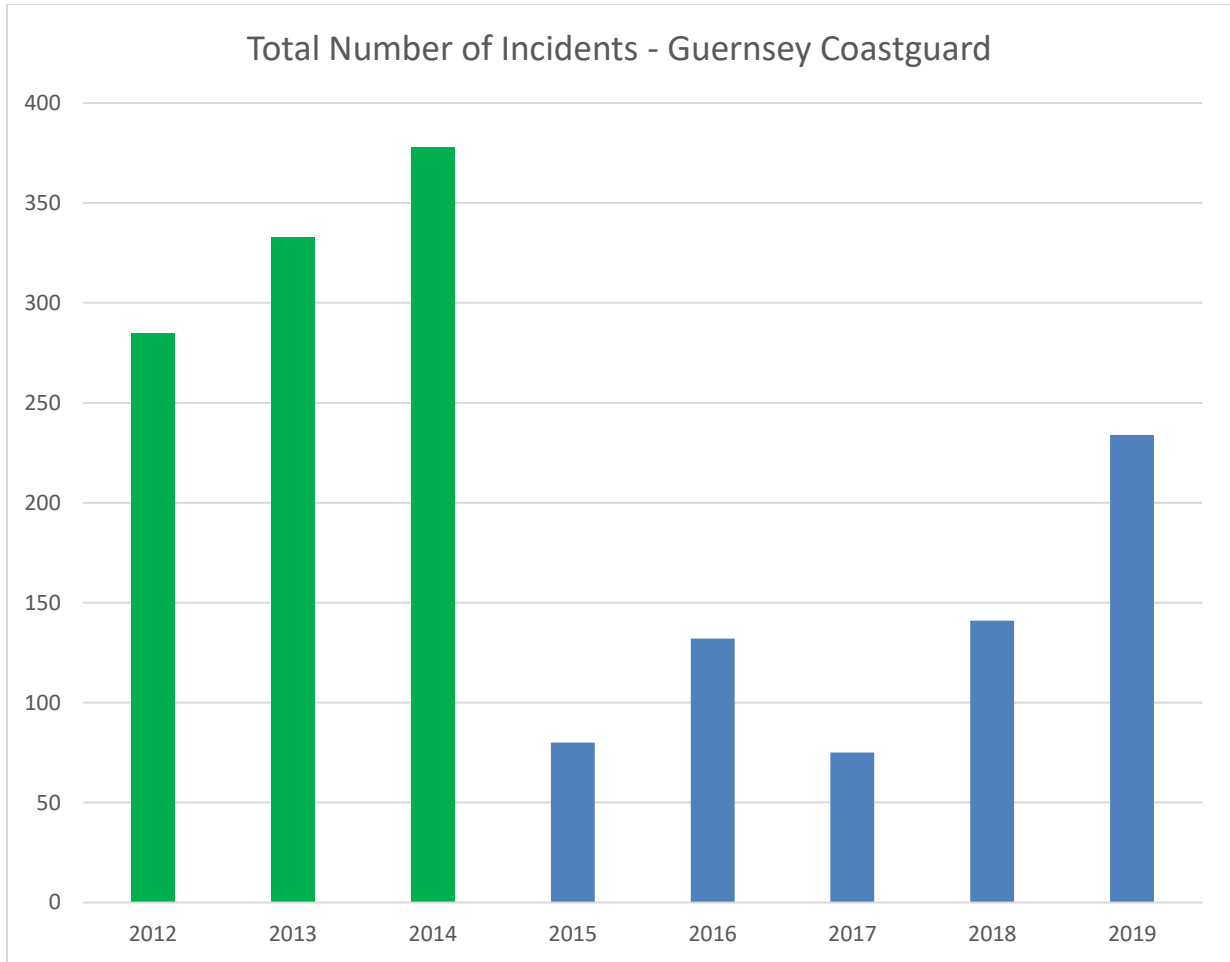
### 3.1. Introduction

Guernsey Harbours' staff also act as the Search and Rescue (SAR) Co-ordinators for Guernsey Coastguard for waters in the Bailiwick of Guernsey. Guernsey Coastguard has staff providing Search and Rescue co-ordination and maritime information through Guernsey Coastguard on VHF Channels 16 and 20.

A continuous watch is kept on these Channels by staff at the Joint Emergency Services Control Centre (JESCC). Guernsey Coastguard is also equipped to receive VHF DSC distress alerts and the Search and Rescue Co-ordinators are trained by the UK HM Coastguard to use the SARIS Search and Rescue IT system. In some circumstances, Search and Rescue operations maybe carried out alongside and jointly with Jersey Coastguard, UK HM Coastguard, and the French Coastguard.

### 3.2. Total Incident Numbers

In total, there were 234 incidents reported to Guernsey Coastguard in 2019. This compares to just 141 in 2018 and 75 in 2017. Clearly, there is an increasing trend in the last three years of incident reporting and occurrences. This could mean more people are reporting incidents to Guernsey Coastguard for further investigation and it could point to underreporting since 2015. The graph overleaf shows the number of incidents Guernsey Coastguard has recorded with the years 2012-2014 before Guernsey Coastguard and its predecessors operated independently (in green), compared to 2015 onwards under JESCC (in blue). It also represents the continuation of a three-year trend of reporting incidents to Guernsey Coastguard. However, sea and coastline safety is one of our highest priorities and anyone in need of help should dial 999/112 or radio VHF Channel 16.



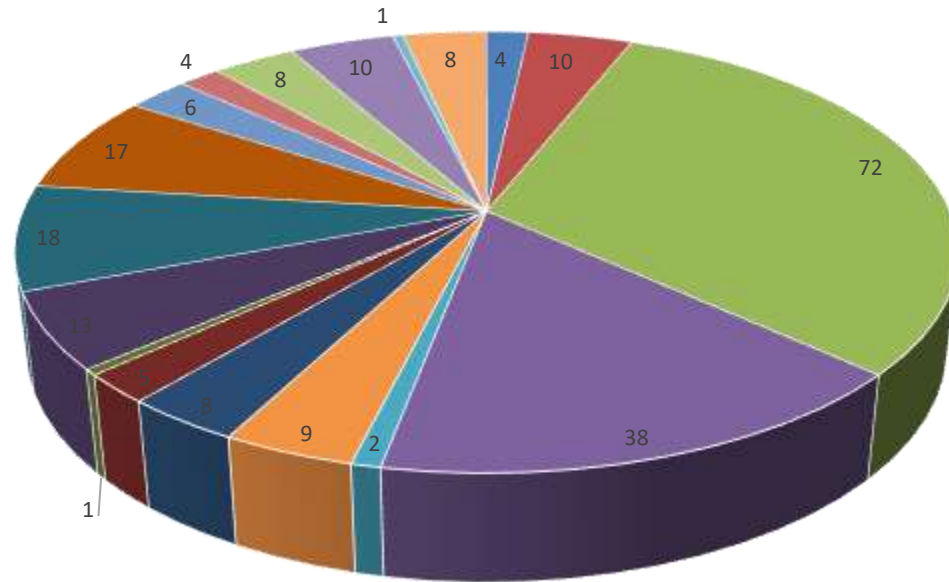
Source: Guernsey Coastguard/JESCC

### 3.3. Incident Types

There were 72 incidents of vessels contacting Guernsey Coastguard requiring towing assistance to Guernsey in 2019. There were 38 monitoring cases. This is when the Coastguard operators at JESCC monitor radar and radio traffic in case a vessel or craft is likely to require assistance of SAR assets. There were 10 cases of overdue vessels or craft arriving later than their due time given to Guernsey Vessel Traffic Service (VTS). Nine cases of persons overboard, eight cases of people stranded of cliffs during 2019. The pie chart gives an illustration of the range and type of incidents Guernsey Coastguard has dealt with in 2019.



Guernsey Coastguard Recorded Incidents -2019



- Vessel Taking on water/Sinking
- Monitor
- Person(s) Stranded/Cliff Rescue
- Medical
- Flare Report
- Navigational Hazards/Pollution
- Overdue Vessel
- Vessel Unsure of Position
- Vessel/PWC/SUP/Kayak/Other in Difficulty
- General
- Spoken word Mayday/Pan Pan
- Missing Person
- Tow assistance
- Man Overboard/Person in Water
- Diver Emergency
- EPIRB/ELT/PLB/SART/121.5MHz Alert
- Object at Sea
- Aircraft Emergency

Source Guernsey Coastguard/JESCC

### 3.4. The Loss of Piper Malibu N264DB

The Argentine and FC Nantes footballer player Emiliano Sala was travelling from Nantes, in France, to Cardiff on 21 January 2019. He had just signed for the English Premiership football team Cardiff City in a £15 million transfer for the club during the January football transfer window. The aircraft carrying him, a single-engine Piper Malibu with the side number N264DB, was piloted by David Ibbotson. Just after 8 pm, Jersey air traffic control lost contact with the aircraft north of Guernsey.



Picture: AAIB

Following the loss of radar contact, Guernsey Coastguard launched Channel Islands Air Search and both Guernsey and Alderney RNLI lifeboats. Later French and HM Coastguard helicopters and fixed wing aircraft joined to look for any survivors and wreckage that night and during the following days. Passing ships and the Brecqhou Developments Limited helicopter were also involved in the extensive search. The search area comprised of 1,150sq miles around Alderney and the Casquets Lighthouse. With little remaining hope of survivors, the search was called off on Thursday 24 January 2019.

The event attracted worldwide media attention and prominence, and there were considerable subsequent efforts to recover any bodies and find the location of the missing aircraft. A private diving team eventually found the wreckage of the aircraft and the AAIB started an investigation into what caused the accident.

Guernsey Coastguard is extremely grateful to all the agencies and voluntary organisations for playing their part in the search for Mr Sala and Mr Ibbotson. After the subsequent investigation into the accident, the AAIB published its 'Report on the accident to Piper PA-46-310P Malibu, N264DB 22 nm north-north-west of Guernsey on 21 January 2019'<sup>1</sup> in March 2020.

The AAIB concluded that Mr Ibbotson lost control of the plane while descending to avoid cloud, and was probably also affected by carbon monoxide. The plane began to break up in mid-air as the pilot tried to regain control, investigators found. His efforts to pull up from its final dive caused the tail fin and then the outer edges of both wings to shear off before it hit the sea near Guernsey at an estimated 270mph (434kph).

### 3.5. Fisherman Rescue



Picture: Maritime and Coastguard Agency

A Guernsey fisherman was rescued in the early hours of a November morning after spending around 12 hours on a remote rocky islet north of Herm. Guernsey Coastguard launched the two Guernsey RNLI lifeboats and requested the assistance of a UK HM Coastguard Search and Rescue helicopter, from Lee on the Solent, shortly after 11pm on November 28th 2019 after a fishing vessel was reported as overdue by seven hours.

<sup>1</sup> The full AAIB report can be viewed here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e579c4ae90e07110a59331f/AAR\\_1-2020\\_N264DB\\_Hi\\_res.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e579c4ae90e07110a59331f/AAR_1-2020_N264DB_Hi_res.pdf)

The fisherman was located on the Cul de L'Autel rocks north of Herm by the HM Coastguard helicopter using thermal imaging cameras on board, and he was winched to safety. The HM Coastguard helicopter crew of four managed to spot the missing fisherman waving his arms from a ridge on the rocks (pictured). He had swum to the Cul de L'Autel rocks after his boat capsized the previous afternoon. The casualty was transferred to Guernsey Airport and then by St John Ambulance to the Princess Elizabeth Hospital, where he was treated for hypothermia.

### **3.6. Inshore RNLI Lifeboat Two Year Trail**

The Elizabeth and Margaret Milligan, a B-class Atlantic lifeboat (pictured overleaf), has joined Guernsey RNLI fleet for a two-year trial period. The Atlantic 85 is a fast-response vessel, with the ability to operate close inshore. It is designed for rapid response in coastal areas, and can access shallower waters than our existing lifeboat. She carries an impressive array of equipment, including night vision aids, GPS and radar systems. The volunteer crew of thirteen (including four fully qualified helms) have been training on the boat for the last six months, before the boat was declared on service in July 2019.



Picture: RNLI/Julie Rainey

### 3.7. Buoy From Canada!

Guernsey Coastguard monitors hazards to shipping in Bailiwick waters, objects in the water can caused serious problems for vessels of all types. Guernsey Harbours staff recovered a Canadian Coast Guard buoy that had travelled across the Atlantic Ocean from Western Canada.





## Chapter 4 - Training And Development

### 4.1. Introduction

Guernsey Coastguard has invested in new technology and the training of coastguard staff at JESCC during 2019. All duty Search and Rescue Co-ordinators and Directors received full training by staff from the UK HM Coastguard on how to utilise and deploy the latest software and technology.

### 4.2. SARIS

SARIS<sup>2</sup> 4 is a search-planning tool designed by coastguards for coastguards. It is designed to operate anywhere in the world and uses in-built oceanographic datasets (based on state-of-the-art tidal and ocean current data) and navigational charts. It incorporates both search area determination (SAD) and search area coverage (SAC) features. SARIS is widely used by coastguards, navies and port authorities worldwide.



Picture: Guernsey Coastguard

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bmtscd.com/products/saris/>

The SAD component predicts the movement of a target (vessel or life raft) under the combined action of winds, tides and tidal currents. It will allow Guernsey Coastguard to narrow down a search area more quickly and deploying SAR resources efficiently.

### 4.3. JESCC Staff Training



Picture: Guernsey Coastguard

Coastguard JESCC operators received training on the latest best practice as part of our Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme. The aim of the programme is to develop their 'sea sense' and to give staff confidence when operating as Coastguard operators at JESCC. The training includes skills in navigational plotting and location finding, verbal radio communication and working within a team. The aim is to offer an enhanced service to users of Guernsey Coastguard, and keep in line with global best practice. Coastguard operators are assessed for skills and competence on an annual basis. This includes a written paper, a chartwork exercise and practical assessment during a real or simulated incident.

Additionally, they are given the opportunity to complete the Royal Yacht Association's<sup>3</sup> recognised courses such as Day Skipper and, ultimately, Yacht Master. 2019 has seen a marked improvement in skill and confidence across the coastguard team, which is a testament to their hard work and dedication.

#### **4.4. Stakeholder Engagement**

Guernsey Coastguard is always looking to improve how it engages with commercial operators, mariners, local boat owners and Search and Rescue organisations whenever possible. Guernsey Coastguard staff regularly engage with marine organisations and other interest groups in meeting the needs of the Bailiwick. Guernsey Coastguard regularly liaises with Jersey and Alderney Coastguard's in the Channel Islands. The French and UK HM Coastguards are also involved in planning for future SAR incidents that could involve most if not all the services.



Picture: Guernsey Coastguard

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rya.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>



## Chapter 5 - Guernsey Coastguard Contact Details

Postal Address: Guernsey Coastguard c/o Guernsey Harbours, P.O. Box 631, St Julian's Emplacement, St Peter Port, Guernsey, GY1 3DL

Tel: +44 (0)1481 720229 / in an emergency dial 999/112 and ask for the Coastguard.

Email: [guernsey.coastguard@gov.gg](mailto:guernsey.coastguard@gov.gg)

Web: <http://www.harbours.gg/guernsey-coastguard-SAR>

If you see anyone or you need help in an emergency telephone 999/112 or use radio VHF Channel 16 and ask for Guernsey Coastguard.