

News story: Search in Cowes harbour after ferry collides into yachts

Just after 8am Sunday 21 October HM Coastguard received reports that the Red Falcon Ferry had collided with at least two yachts whilst trying to berth at the entrance of Cowes Harbour during heavy fog.

At around the same time we received a 999 call from a member of the public reporting that he'd heard cries for help within Cowes Harbour.

We carried out an extensive search of the area with Cowes RNLI lifeboat, Calshot RNLI lifeboats and Coastguard Rescue Teams from Bembridge, Needles and Ventnor. A Coastguard search and rescue helicopter was searching the area but due to the low visibility in the area had to turn back.

The ferry with 56 persons onboard was grounded at the entrance at Cowes. Those who were onboard are safe and well.

The search is ongoing and we have no further information at this stage.

UPDATED 11.20AM SUNDAY 21 OCTOBER

HM Coastguard can confirm that there is nobody in the water or missing in Cowes Harbour. HM Coastguard has made contact with the person who was initially heard crying for help and he is reported to be safe and well. We have established that the person was onboard his own vessel and crying out to try and alert the master of the ferry of the situation.

The Red Falcon, with assistance of tugs, has been refloated and is now in the process of going alongside in East Cowes where MCA surveyors will make an assessment of the vessel.

All passengers remain safe and well and will disembark when the vessel is safely alongside.

MCA surveyors have completed an initial assessment of the vessel and it has been cleared to be relocated to Southampton, without passengers, to undergo further inspections. Once the in water survey has been successfully completed the vessel will be cleared to return to passenger service.

The vessel is being accompanied by two tug escorts as a precautionary measure and an MCA surveyor is onboard for the short duration of the journey.