



# R B F & R S

## news release

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### **RBFRS Signs The Way To Home Fire Safety**

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is supporting Deaf Awareness Week, which takes place this week (5 – 11 May). Deaf Awareness Week aims to promote a greater understanding of the issues faced by people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

People who have difficulty hearing can be particularly vulnerable to fire hazards in the home and RBFRS has been working closely with the deaf community to reduce this risk.

RBFRS has joined forces with local Sensory Needs groups, which provide specialist support for people with hearing, visual and multi-sensory impairment, and the Reading Deaf Centre. Through referrals made by these organisations, RBFRS has been able to provide and install 166 special smoke alarm systems, specifically designed for deaf people. The systems include two smoke alarms, a beacon light receiver and transmitter, and a bed shaker, which will alert deaf and hard of hearing people in lieu of an audible alarm if a fire breaks out in the home.

In addition, two Level 1 British Sign Language (BSL) volunteer signers have been recently recruited to help RBFRS communicate with members of the deaf community. These volunteers, along with three members of RBFRS' Community Safety team who are qualified BSL signers, provide expert home fire safety information, including advice on how to make a fire escape plan.

If you or someone you know is deaf or hard of hearing and would benefit from fire safety advice and/or a special smoke alarm system, please email the Community Safety team:

[community.safety@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:community.safety@rbfrs.co.uk) or call 0118 932 2040.

**ENDS**