



# R B F & R S

## news release

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### **RBFRS THANKS UNSUNG HEROES THIS VOLUNTEERS' WEEK**

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is celebrating national Volunteers' Week (1-7 June) by recognising the people who give their time and expertise free of charge to help the organisation. RBFRS works with volunteers from a variety of different backgrounds, and with a multitude of skills and experience, across several areas of the Brigade. These include:

- **Young Firefighter Instructors**

RBFRS currently has seven volunteer Young Firefighter Instructors, who help the permanent instructors deliver a programme of activities for young people at four Young Firefighter units across the county. This enables the instructors to run basic and advanced activities in tandem, providing an enhanced programme for both beginners and more experienced Young Firefighters.

- **British Sign Language (BSL) Volunteer**

A BSL volunteer works with RBFRS to communicate important fire safety advice during Home Fire Safety Checks to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. This is an invaluable service, as information can be missed when relying on lip reading alone.

- **Volunteer Advocates**

RBFRS works with 13 volunteers who act as fire safety advocates within their own communities. The Brigade currently has advocates from Polish, Somali, Pakistani, Dutch, Afghan and Indian backgrounds, who are able to overcome language and cultural barriers that may have historically prevented the organisation effectively communicating fire safety information. RBFRS also has student advocates and volunteers working in rural areas, who raise awareness of fire safety issues within their communities.

- **Hospital Information Stand Volunteers**

A volunteer runs an information stand at the Royal Berkshire Hospital to provide fire safety advice and information to patients and visitors.

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Matt Taylor, Community Development Officer, who co-ordinates the volunteer programme at RBFRS, said: "Our volunteers are a real asset to RBFRS, providing an invaluable contribution to many different areas of the organisation. We would like to take the opportunity during national Volunteers' Week to highlight the work they do for us and to thank them for generously giving their time without financial reward.

"However, volunteering can be just as beneficial for the volunteer as for the organisation, whether it's adding new skills to your CV, meeting new people or simply making a positive contribution to your community."

RBFRS will be expanding its volunteers programme further in the near future. If you would like to find out more about volunteering opportunities at RBFRS, please visit our website: [www.rbfrs.co.uk](http://www.rbfrs.co.uk). You can also contact Matt Taylor on **07771 610 622** or email [taylor@m@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:taylor@m@rbfrs.co.uk).

**ENDS.**