

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



 RoyalBerksFRS  @RBFRSOfficial  RoyalBerkshireFire
 Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service www.rbfrs.co.uk



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» WELCOME

Welcome to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Annual Report.

2020-2021 has undoubtedly been a challenging year for everyone. The devastating impact of COVID-19 has been well documented and brought an unprecedented challenge for all organisations across the globe.

While everyone faced and met unrivaled pressures and demands, we established our priorities to maintain our critical core services and the health, safety and wellbeing of our teams, while supporting our communities and partners, through additional activities.

Throughout the year, the Service undertook notable additional activities to support our colleagues across the Thames Valley and an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) confirmed that RBFRS has "adapted and responded to the pandemic effectively."

Last year, we supported the delivery of over six-million pieces of PPE to frontline care workers, on-call firefighters supported Slough Borough Council to visit over 200 vulnerable residents, a group of firefighters drove ambulances for South Central Ambulance Service and we supported Slough Borough Council's mass rapid testing sites, alongside the community vaccination roll out programme.

In addition to adapting and delivering our services, we also marked some important milestones. In May 2020, firefighters began to serve the local community from the new Crowthorne Community Fire Station, and the build of Theale Community Fire Station has continued at pace.

The following report highlights a snapshot of the significant amount of work that has been completed this year and we are extremely proud of all Members, staff, volunteers and members of our local communities who have made this possible. As we begin to emerge from the restrictions, we believe that the compassion shown will ensure that we come out of this crisis as an even stronger and more united community across Royal Berkshire.



Councillor Colin Dudley
Chairman
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority



Trevor Ferguson QFSM
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service



» YOUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is responsible for an area of around 488 square miles, from Slough and Langley in the east to Lambourn and Newbury in the west. It employs more than 600 members of staff, who serve a population of approximately 917,000 people.

The Service's highly-trained fire crews deal with incidents ranging from road and rail accidents to fuel and chemical spills, aviation and waterway accidents, collapsed buildings, large animal rescues and, of course, fires.

Along with providing a swift and effective response to incidents, one of the Service's aims is to educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies. It works with schools, businesses, residents and community groups throughout Royal Berkshire to raise awareness and educate people about a wide variety of safety issues.

The Service has joined forces with Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service to establish a shared emergency call handling centre.



» YOUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

KEY



Fire Engine



Number of times mobilised in 2020-21
(including incidents over the border)

Dee Road

West Hub



1 Fire Engine



1 Heavy Rescue Unit



909

Pangbourne

West Hub



1 Fire Engine



1

Lambourn

West Hub



1 Fire Engine



1 Off Road Vehicle



19

Hungerford

West Hub



1 Fire Engine



151

Newbury

West Hub



2 Fire Engines



1,037

Wokingham Road

West Hub



1 Fire Engine



861

Whitley Wood

West Hub



1 Fire Engine



1 Aerial Appliance



1 Hazardous Material and
Environmental Response Unit



1 Mass Decontamination Unit



1 Operational Support Unit



671

Pangbourne

Dee Road

Headquarters

Lambourn

Hungerford

Newbury



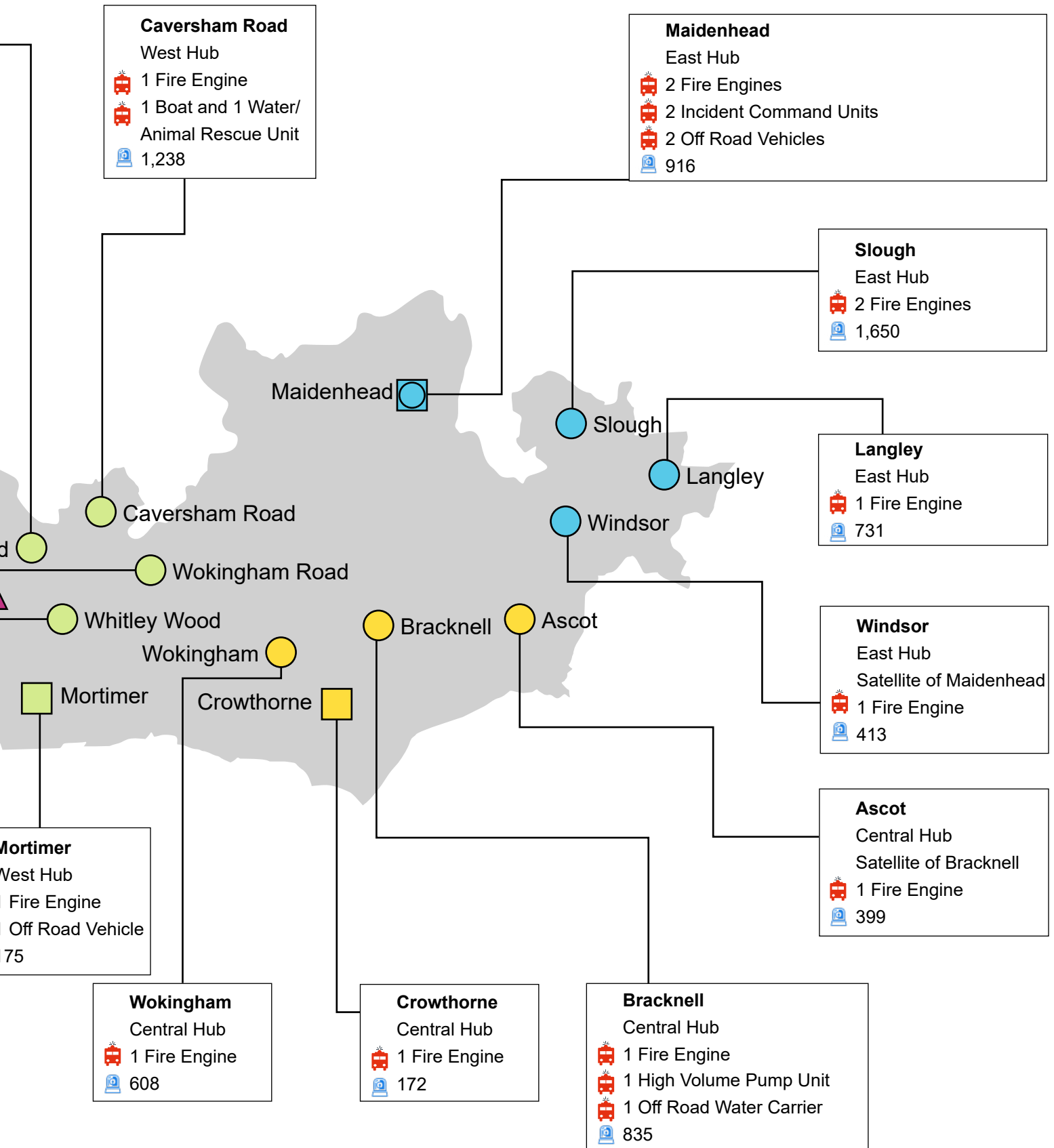
West Hub



Central Hub



East Hub



□ Retained

◻ Wholetime / Retained

○ Wholetime

△ Headquarters



» ABOUT US

In our [Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019-23](#), Royal Berkshire Fire Authority set RBFRS six public facing commitments:

1. We will provide education and advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.
2. We will ensure a swift and appropriate response when called to emergencies.
3. We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.
4. We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.
5. We will ensure that RBFRS provides good value for money.
6. We will work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.

For 2020-21, RBFRS set an additional four objectives:

7. We will recruit, train and develop our people to ensure we create a safe, professional and capable workforce that are supported to become the best public servants they can be for the residents of Berkshire.
8. We will manage RBFRS in accordance with best practice, understanding and continuous improvement, learning from events and being transparent in our compliance.
9. We will be strong and visible in our leadership in developing a diverse and inclusive 'one team' culture where everyone's contribution is valued and positive behaviours are recognised.
10. We will explore collaboration opportunities to ensure we deliver effective and efficient services to the people we serve.



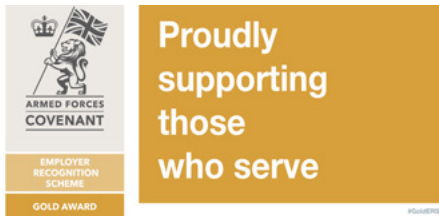
» AWARDS AND ACCREDITATIONS



We are proud to have joined the Business Disability Forum, further solidifying our commitment to supporting disabled people within the Service and our communities.



We are proud to have received the Asian Fire Service Association Corporate Membership.



We were awarded the Gold Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme, in recognition of our commitment to supporting the Armed Forces.



We are now a Stonewall Diversity Champion, building on our commitment to further building a diverse and inclusive place.



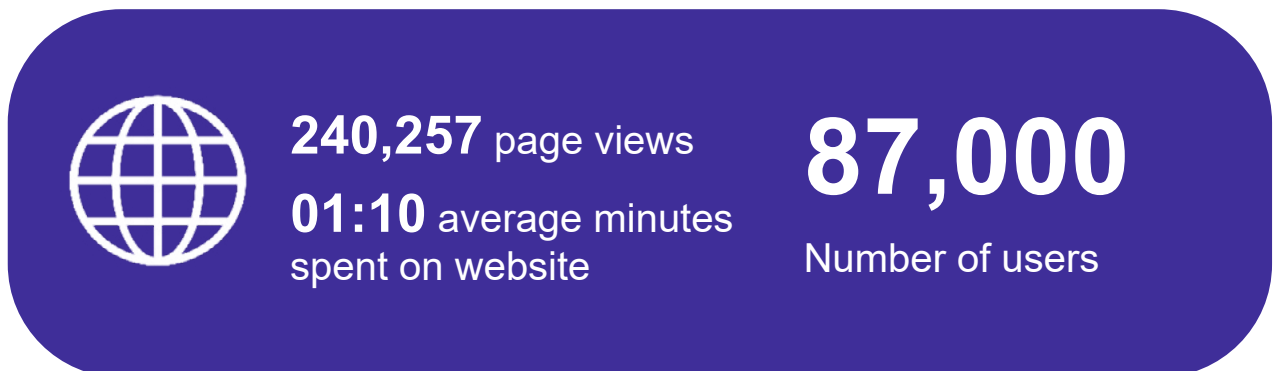
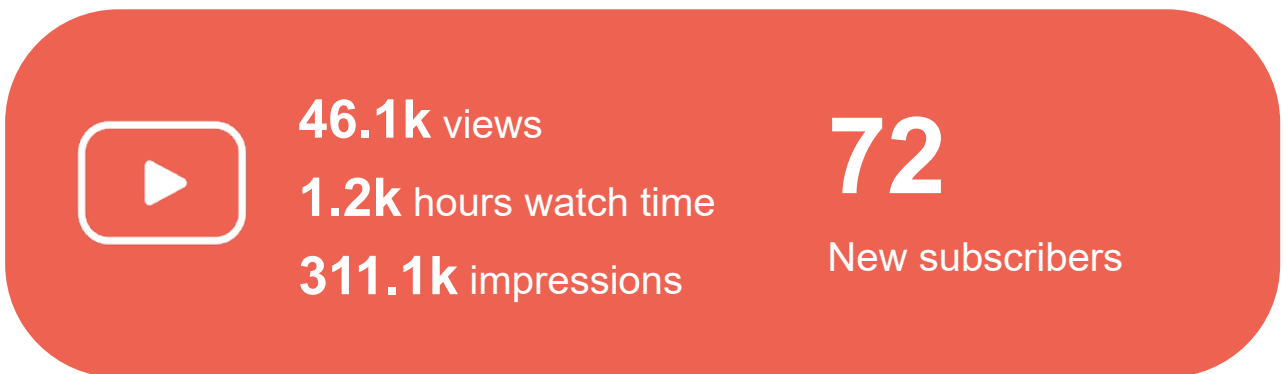
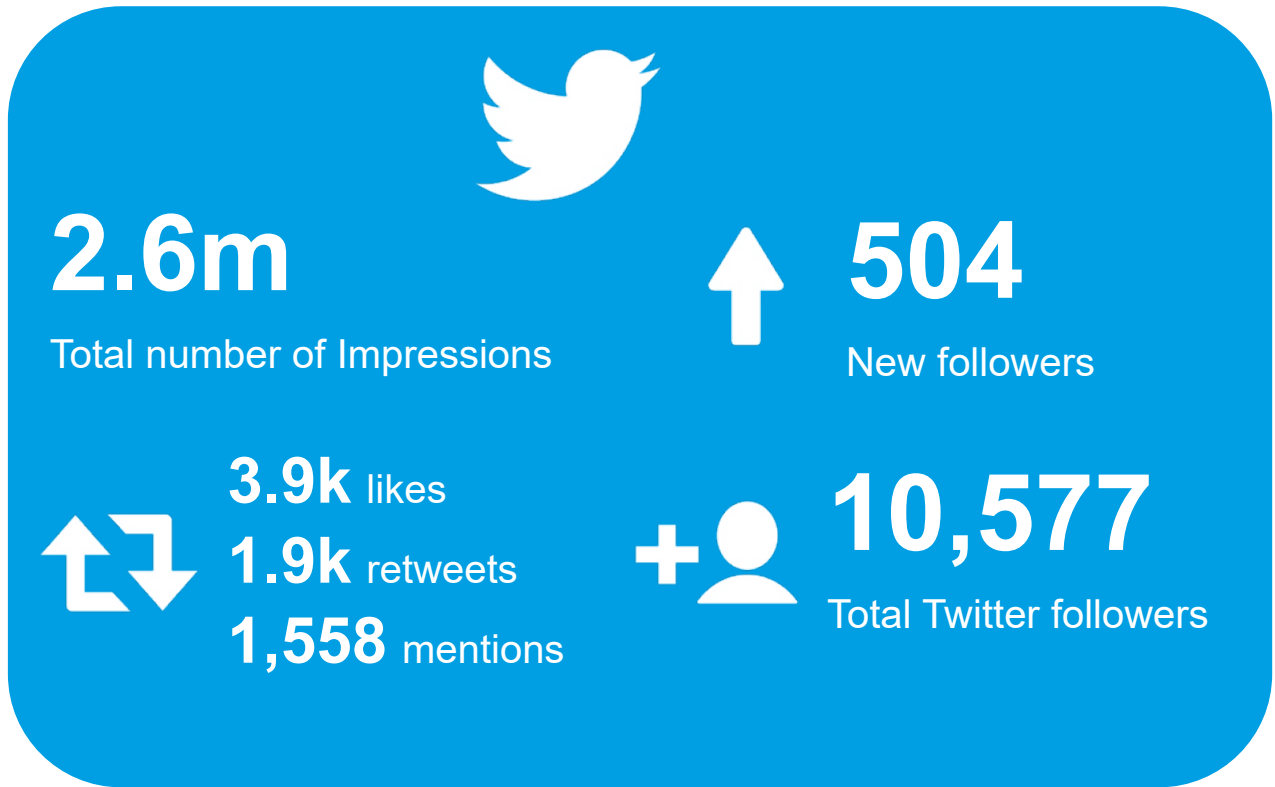
One of our members of staff was nominated for a High Sheriff Award in recognition of the work with the Armed Forces Community.



The work of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) was again recognised in the Queen's New Year Honours list and Chief Fire Officer, Trevor Ferguson, was awarded the Queen's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service (QFSM) for services to the fire and rescue sector.



» SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS - 2020-21





» SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS - 2020-21



1,590

Total followers

359

New followers



1,811

Total followers

474

Total number of posts



240k

Reach



762

New followers



12,566 reactions

3,294 shares

1,447 comments



5,312

Total followers



» TIMELINE OF THE LAST YEAR (APRIL 20 - MARCH 21)



APRIL

In April 2020, we began to adapt the way we delivered our services to the people of Royal Berkshire in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Where the role permitted, staff moved to homeworking under the Government's 'stay home' order.

Members of the RBFRS team begun work as part of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Logistics Cell which saw the delivery of over six-million pieces of PPE to frontline health care workers.

APRIL

MAY

MAY

On 1 and 2 May, firefighters began serving the community from the newly built Crowthorne Community Fire Station. The facility became the second tri-service community station in our Service, alongside Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service.

The Integrated Risk Management Plan Strategy Consultation closed on Monday, 11 May and Friday, 8 May was VE Day in which our teams joined the nation paying tribute to those serving during World War II.



JUNE

2020 marked the third anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire. We have continued our work within the Built Environment Programme as a priority.

Despite not being able to physically celebrate Pride this year, we showed our support virtually and we welcomed a new cohort of Change100 interns, as part of the Leonard Cheshire programme.

On-call firefighters began delivering welfare visits to support our communities and partners from Slough Borough Council and the first virtual Fire Authority meeting was held on 25 June.

JUNE

JULY

JULY

In July, RBFRS successfully brought a prosecution against Mr Sharhan Safie of Paya Restaurant under the Fire Safety Order.

Two children were safely rescued by crews from a fire in their home in Reading after receiving Fire Survival Guidance from Thames Valley Fire Control Service and crews also tackled a blaze covering approximately 40 acres of crops in Swallowfield.

We also welcomed new Fire Safety Inspecting Officers in July supporting our ongoing commitment to provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.



AUGUST

In August we were awarded the Gold Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme, in recognition of our support of the Armed Forces.

August also marked five years since the official opening of Thames Valley Fire Control Service and we began to provide free flu vaccinations to staff to reduce the winter pressure on the NHS.

AUGUST

SEPT

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday, 9 September, was Emergency Services Day. Staff across the Service showed their support by taking part in the national two-minute silence, remembering the more than 7,500 NHS and emergency services staff who have sadly died as a result of their duties.



FEBRUARY

Two members of the RBFRS team were dedicated full-time to support the project team of five with setting up the mass vaccination site that was at the Madejski Stadium.

As part of Race Equality Week (1-7 February), we launched a project to tackle inequalities with several other fire and rescue services.

Theale Community Fire Station also reached it's highest point and a virtual 'topping out' ceremony was held.

DECEMBER

Chief Fire Officer, Trevor Feguson, was awarded the Queen's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service for his service to the fire and rescue sector in December.

This year's Change100 cohort also celebrated their graduation from the programme in December.



NOVEMBER

In November 2020, we launched our Armed Forces Veterans' Hub virtually. The launch event coincided with Remembrance Day, which our staff marked by joining the national two-minute silence and highlighted our ongoing commitment to the Armed Forces community.

We also launched our Trans Equality Policy in November.

JANUARY

On 22 January, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) confirmed that the Service had adapted and responded to the pandemic effectively."

Our work with our partners continued, with nine Berkshire firefighters deployed to drive South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) ambulances. Also in January, a member of the RBFRS team worked with Slough Borough Council for over eight weeks, managing the set-up of Lateral Flow Testing Sites in Slough.

MARCH

In March 2021, Wayne Bowcock was appointed the new Chief Fire Officer.

We also became Stonewall Diversity Champions and together with Stonewall, we will build on commitments to LGBTQ+ inclusion.

The new Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) has arrived into our Service ahead of its deployment, after passing acceptance testing.



>> OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS 2020-21



6,642

Emergency incidents responded to



78.2%

of occasions we responded within 10 minutes



772

Number of primary fires



933

Number of secondary fires



326

Special services (road traffic collisions)



1,053

Special services (other)



1,949

Number of Safe and Well Visits completed



397

Number of full Fire Safety Audits carried out



99%

of eligible staff successfully completing fitness test



3.1%

Working time lost to staff sickness across all groups



100%

Compliant spend as a % of overall spend

COVID-19 Pandemic - COVID-19 posed challenges to some areas of delivery. In some of our key areas of service, we did not set delivery targets as normal, instead committing to monitoring performance and re-introducing monthly targets when this was appropriate. Due to restrictions in place, we were unable to issue and report on customer satisfaction surveys this year.



>> OUR PERFORMANCE

In order to monitor performance and ensure we are working towards our Annual Objectives and IRMP commitments, a number of performance measures were agreed by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the [Annual Plan 2020-21](#).

These measures monitor the delivery of our statutory obligations and services we provide, along with how key resources are managed, including staff, finance and health and safety. At the time of publication of our 2020-21 Annual Plan, the COVID-19 pandemic was in its early stages. Whilst we made some amendments to our plans and targets, we did not know then what the full impacts would be on our ability to deliver the plan. Early in the pandemic, in line with Government guidance, RBFRA suspended non-essential activities to protect our communities, staff and critical functions. Since then, we have continually risk-assessed our activities, reintroducing services when case levels and restrictions have allowed.

Performance is usually monitored on a quarterly basis by the Strategic Performance Board and by the Audit and Governance Committee. However, this year, we suspended the Strategic Performance Board for quarters 2 and 3 in order to focus on our response to the pandemic. Our year end performance against the Corporate Measures can be

seen on pages 40-42.

Our strategy to prevent fires and other emergencies includes the provision of Safe and Well Visits to those who are at heightened risk of dying or being injured as a result of an accidental dwelling fire. During 2020-21, this was an area where we had to take a risk-based approach due to the pandemic. We continued to deliver Safe and Well Visits where the risk of fire outweighed the risk of COVID-19. As a result, we have delivered 1,949 visits this year, around a fifth of the number we usually provide.

We have now completed over 32,000 Safe and Well Visits since April 2017, however the pandemic has made it unlikely that we will be able to meet our five-year IRMP commitment.

In 2020-21, we continued to work closely with our local authority partners to ensure vulnerable members of the public are protected and supported, which has been even more important than usual





>> OUR PERFORMANCE



Over 32,000

Safe and Well Visits delivered since April 2017



95.3%

of turnouts met the 90 second target in 2020/21



479

safeguarding referrals made during 2020/21

during the pandemic, due to impacts on domestic violence, mental health and substance and alcohol misuse. We made 479 safeguarding referrals in the year, an increase of 39%. 100% of these were made within our 24-hour target.

Fire Safety Inspecting Officers completed 397 full Fire Safety Audits in premises falling under the Regulatory Reform Order 2005, which outlines our duty to enforce fire safety in non-domestic premises. This was another area where the pandemic has had a significant impact on our delivery of services. Again, we took a risk-based approach to our decision-making in this area, which resulted in the number of audits completed being around a quarter of the level achieved last year.

In 2020-21, there were 6,642 emergency incidents within Berkshire. This is around 9% fewer incidents than in 2019-20. Road traffic collisions and other special service numbers have fallen due to the reduction of activity during the pandemic. The

number of primary fires have also fallen, but not by as much. However, secondary fire numbers were 5% higher than in the previous year, partly as a result of an increased number of rubbish and refuse fires during the first lockdown when local amenity sites were closed.

In 2020-21, we achieved our Response Standard target of attending 75% of all emergency incidents in under 10 minutes from the time of call. Our overall performance for the year was 78.2%. Our performance in this area may have been assisted by COVID-19 restrictions during lockdown periods – fewer cars on the road mean quicker travel times. However, our performance was consistent across the year, with the target achieved every month.

Although we have been fortunate to have only seen a small number of COVID-19 cases amongst our staff, these, and requirements to self-isolate, have resulted in an impact on the availability of our



wholetime crews, which this year was 96.8%, compared with 99.6% in 2019-20. Fortunately, the pandemic has contributed to an improvement in our on-call crew availability, which was 56.7% compared with 32.9% last year. Many of our on-call firefighters were able to be available more often due to changes in circumstances relating to their primary employment, for example, being on furlough. This improvement in on-call availability has helped to ensure we exceeded our Response Standard target, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Our performance measures and targets enable us to manage our performance and demonstrate our effectiveness at preventing and protecting against potential risk and responding to incidents to ensure that we provide value for money to the communities that we serve.

Audits

A number of internal audits were conducted in 2020-21:

- Fleet Management
- Firefighter Pension Administration
- Payroll Provider – DataPlan
- Capital Projects
- Key Financial Controls (Annual Pension Return)
- Governance and Risk Management.

Our auditors found substantial assurance

on all six of these audits. In addition, an advisory audit was conducted for Cyber Essentials.

A final audit of Performance Development Appraisals was postponed until June due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All audit actions are monitored through the Strategic Performance Board and Audit and Governance Committee.

Statement of Assurance

The annual Statement of Assurance is produced to formally confirm to Government, stakeholders and the communities we serve, the adequacy of arrangements for the effective management of financial, governance and operational matters in RBFERS.

The Statement confirms the extent to which the requirement of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England have been met.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMIFCRS) COVID-19 Inspection

Following our COVID-19 inspection in October 2020, the Inspectorate published its findings in January 2021. RBFERS was found to have effectively adapted and responded to the additional challenges posed by the pandemic. See page 18-19 for further information about the inspection findings.



>> ADAPTING AND RESPONDING TO COVID-19 EFFECTIVELY



6 million

pieces of PPE were provided to healthcare workers through the Logistics Cell



218

visits were completed with the vulnerable and shielding in Slough Borough Council



9

Firefighters worked with South Central Ambulance Service driving ambulances

An inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) confirmed that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) has "adapted and responded to the pandemic effectively", highlighting the additional support the Service has been offering its communities throughout the public health crisis.

In August 2020, the Home Secretary commissioned HMICFRS to examine how fire and rescue services are responding to the pandemic. The inspection focused on activities undertaken by the Service between April and June 2020.

The findings highlight that the Service maintained its critical core services, adapted to the challenges posed by the pandemic, supported its communities and partners through additional activities, continued to manage its resources well and prioritised the wellbeing of its staff



throughout.

Between April and June, notable additional activities that the Service undertook included working with our colleagues across the Thames Valley to deliver over six million pieces of Personal Protective Equipment to frontline health and care workers (further details on page 36) and on-call firefighters supported Slough Borough Council by visiting over 200 residents that were vulnerable and shielding to check on their welfare (further



details on page 38) and supported the Reading coroner with the possibility of a large number of deaths from COVID-19 (further details on page 37).

Since June, this work has continued, with a number of additional activities now underway. These included supporting the community roll out of the vaccination programme, supporting Slough Borough Council with their mass rapid COVID-19 testing and training a group of firefighters to drive ambulances in support of South Central Ambulance Service. For more details, please read page 39.

Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, Councillor Colin Dudley, said: “The COVID-19 inspection provides our residents with a clear and independent view on how the Service is responding to the pandemic. The inspection findings highlights a number of areas of good practice from within the Service demonstrating the work we have undertaken to play our part in the response to this dreadful virus.

“I believe that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides a fantastic service. This inspection has highlighted the great work of the amazing staff at RBFRS in ensuring we maintain the delivery of our critical services, providing enhanced and tailored support to our staff, whilst also supporting our partners in the wider response.”

The Service continues to work in support of our local communities, and we have already built on the positive work highlighted in the COVID-19 inspection to ensure that our residents continue to receive the best possible service.



“ The COVID-19 inspection provides our residents with a clear and independent view on how the Service is responding to the pandemic. ”

Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, Councillor Colin Dudley



>> ENSURING A SWIFT AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

In the [Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019 – 2023](#), one of the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments is to ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies.

Responding to Emergencies - Tackling Outdoor Fires

This year marked 10 years since the devastating Swinley Forest fire, the single the largest incident ever dealt with by our Service in terms of resources and length of operations. The forest fire affected 300 hectares of land, 55% of which was damaged by fire and forestry clearing operations.

10 years on, our Service continues to face the same threat posed by outdoor fires and must act swiftly and effectively to control fires in the open before they spread and threaten lives, property and the local environment.

In the first quarter of the year, from 1 April to 30 June, we attended a total of 300 fires in the open in Berkshire. This is a 50% increase compared to the previous year. In the week commencing 18 May, we attended 38 outdoor fires, meaning that on average we attended more than five outdoor fires per day. This increase in

outdoor fires was attributed to the closure of refuse sites during the first lockdown, combined with the warm weather. Further details about our work to prevent these fires is on page 23.

Improved knowledge, training and equipment ensures that our firefighters are better prepared to face outdoor fires and efforts to educate the public help to reduce the likelihood of a devastating fire taking hold again.

On 7 August 2020, our crews dealt with a number of significant incidents in quick succession, including a fire in the open in Dorney, a house fire in Warfield and assisting Surrey Fire and Rescue Service with a large fire in Chobham Common which they would support over the course of the following days.

At the incident in Dorney, thanks to the quick work of the crews, the fire was brought under control and crews left the scene after just over an hour and a half, which is a remarkable effort from our teams to control a fire which could have quickly escalated.

Maintaining Our Emergency Call Handling Services

As COVID-19 developed, plans were put in place to maximise the availability of Control staff. This included restricted access to the Control Room, enhanced



50%

increase in number of outdoor fires between 1 April and 30 June, compared to the same time period in 2019



hand sanitisation and room cleaning regimes and making the Control room COVID-19 Secure. This led to safe crewing levels being maintained at all times through the pandemic.

TVFCS Give Life-Saving Advice

TVFCS are a critical link between crews mobilised to an incident and the person calling 999. They provide a reassuring voice to people experiencing a great deal of distress and often, life-saving guidance.

In the last year, TVFCS responded to 13,886 calls.

An example of one of the many calls received by TVFCS occurred in July 2020, when a call was taken to reports of a house fire in Reading.

Before crews arrived, they were informed by Control that two children were trapped in the property, as smoke left them unable to get out of the building.

TVFCS Crew Manager, Claire Moyses, who took the emergency call maintained contact with the young caller by telephone throughout the incident. Whilst keeping the boys safe, she asked questions to establish where the fire was and where

they were in the property so that this could be relayed to the attending crews.

They were given vital instructions and fire survival guidance, instructing them to go to the furthest bedroom at the back of the property, close the door, place clothing against the bottom of the door to prevent smoke entering the room and go to the open window. This vital advice enabled the children to be rescued by crews using a ladder.

In recognition of this outstanding act of professionalism, Claire was recognised at the annual staff [Awards Ceremony](#) that took place virtually this year. Claire received the 'Emergency Responder of the Year Award'.



This was a truly frightening experience for the family involved but, thanks to the professionalism and dedication of TVFCS and RBFRS attending crews, the family are safe and well. I would like to express my gratitude to everyone for their excellent work to resolve this incident.



Paul Thomas, Group Manager for Response, Resilience and Assurance



13,886

number of calls TVFCS has taken in the last year



>> PROMOTING COMMUNITY SAFETY

The first Strategic Commitment outlined in the [Fire Authority's Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019-23](#), is that RBFRS will provide education and advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the safety of staff and communities has been paramount. As such, Prevention activity was reviewed in line with Government guidance and risk assessed.

Adapting the Delivery of Our Services

Our commitment to preventing fires and other incidents includes the provision of Safe and Well Visits to those who are at heightened risk of dying or being injured in an accidental dwelling fire.

During the first wave of the virus and national lockdown, 314 Safe and Well Visits were completed. 71 telephone assessments were also conducted, which, subject to the level of risk may have resulted in a physical visit being completed. When a Safe and Well referral was received, the Prevention team risk assessed the referral in order to prioritise those most at risk.

One firefighter who made support calls, said: "I spoke to a lady as her mother was waiting for a Safe and Well Visit and during the call, we spoke about her own situation and personal circumstances. I explained to her the process for if she felt there was a threat of arson and she later called to express that she did feel a threat. As a result, a crew from Newbury carried out a threat of arson referral which was reassuring to the resident."

Over the year we have seen an increase in the number of Threat of Arson and Safeguarding referrals. A key example of how the Service worked to keep residents safe throughout the pandemic by working

collaboratively with other agencies can be seen in the response to several incidences of car fires in Reading.

A spate of car fires occurred in which eight cars across Reading were set alight. The Service successfully worked with Thames Valley Police in order to investigate the incidents, resulting in the arrest of three people.

In total, we made 479 safeguarding referrals in the year, an increase of 39% and 100% of these were made within our 24-hour target.

Adults at Risk Programme

We offer an Adults at Risk Programme where free training is offered to professionals across Berkshire, supporting them to protect people from a fire in the home.

In line with COVID-19 guidelines, face to face delivery of the programme was suspended in March.

Overall 25 virtual talks were held, attracting a total of 320 people, including representatives from East Berkshire and Ascot, including staff from East Berkshire Primary Care, Social Care and Mental Health teams.



320

people attended the 25 Adults at Risk Programme meetings in 2020/21



33

Fire Cadets attended 18 virtual sessions in 2020/21



314

Safe and Well Visits were carried out during the first national lockdown

Fire Cadets

Fire Cadets is a youth initiative run for 12-16 year olds to help improve physical and mental wellbeing by increasing confidence and developing team working skills.

Usually, Fire Cadets would take part in practical and theoretical fire service activities, but as the sessions had to be suspended, virtual sessions were set up to touch base with the Cadets. These sessions took place weekly and allowed them to continue their training online, covering prevention, first aid, special appliances, water safety and road safety. Overall, 33 Fire Cadets attended 18 virtual sessions during this period.

Delivering Safety Messages

During the COVID-19 period, social media was a key platform for communicating with residents. Our channels were used not only to reassure our communities that we were still responding to incidents, but also to urge them to take care around their homes by following our fire safety advice.

As described on page 20, as we progressed into the lockdown, with people spending much more time at home, coupled with refuse sites being closed

and warm weather, we saw an increase in people using bonfires as a means to dispose of household waste.

On this basis, we issued proactive communications across our social media channels to spread the message that bonfires create an additional unnecessary burden for blue light services, during an already challenging period. This message generated a large amount of support and one single post on the RBFRS Facebook page reached 77,440 people and was shared 455 times.

Our Corporate Plan and IRMP also sets out a commitment to providing Road and Water Safety to our communities.

We promote water safety all year round, but provided increased messaging in line with COVID-19 guidelines as people started to spend more time outdoors again.

We took part in the November 2020 Road Safety Week run by Brake and as part of the #ItsNotWorthTheRisk national campaign, which focuses on the dangers of drinking and driving, crews at Wokingham Road Fire Station once again created an impressive visual display. We shared this on our channels to encourage people to think twice about drink driving.



>> FOCUS ON FIRE SAFETY

One of the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments in the [Fire Authority's Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019 – 2023](#) is to ensure we provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.

Fire Safety in the Built Environment

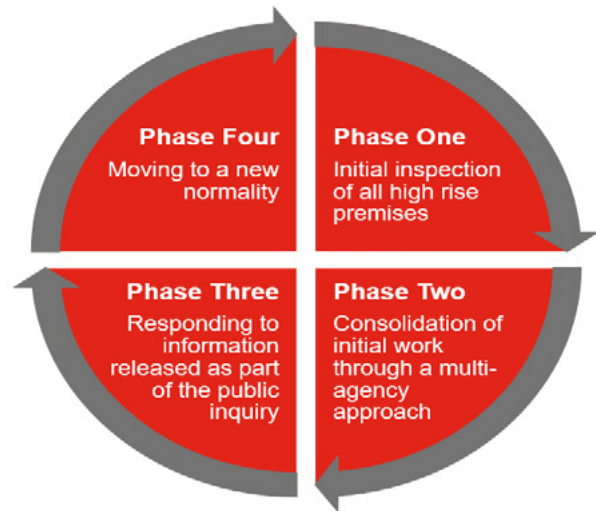
With the Grenfell Tower Inquiry continuing to examine the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the fire on the night of 14 June 2017, our Service has been following proceedings closely to ensure we are putting the safety of our residents and buildings across Berkshire at the heart of everything we do.

In Phase 2 the Public Inquiry is examining the causes of the events, including how Grenfell Tower came to be in a condition which allowed the fire to spread in the way identified by Phase 1.

In previous Annual Reports, we have outlined our own four phase plan firstly for responding to the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, and then learning from and responding to the emergent picture of risk associated with high rise buildings and Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding.

In Phase 1, our Service inspected high rise buildings and gave 4,700 residents valuable fire safety guidance. In Phase 2, we worked with building owners, Local Authorities and residents to ensure compliance with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) guidance and interim measures.

We remain in Phase 3 of our plan,



where we are learning from the Inquiry and specifically progressing three workstreams: tactics and equipment, call management and risk and information.

Each recommendation from the Public Inquiry is being assessed through a gap analysis in our workstreams. Where areas of improvements are identified, our teams are establishing new processes and providing assurance that the recommendations are correctly embedded in the Service.

A total of 198 High Rise Residential Buildings (HRRBs) have been visited by our Fire Safety Inspecting Officers. Where necessary, enforcement action is being taken and interim measures can be applied where appropriate. Our teams continue to work with the Building Owners and Responsible Persons, alongside our



partners in Local Authority Housing Teams and Building Control Bodies as part of this process.

A number of recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry have been progressed during the past year. One practical improvement that has been made is the introduction of fire escape hoods, which assist the evacuation of occupants through smoke-filled exit routes. With the introduction of this equipment, training has been provided to ensure that operational crews are able to evacuate occupants effectively from complex and high-rise buildings.

Other areas of focus include information flows between the incident ground and our Control staff and ensuring our operational crews have the knowledge and training required to effectively react to fires which take hold in the external walls of high rise buildings.

We are committed to learning every lesson possible from the findings of the Inquiry and our thoughts remain firmly focused on the victims, families and communities devastated by the Grenfell fire.

Fire Safety Activities

In an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19, the number Fire Safety Audits has been impacted during this past year. However, a total of 397 Fire Safety Audits have been completed and enforcement activity has continued to ensure that business owners comply with fire safety legislation.

Whilst we will always work with business owners to support, promote and ensure

fire safety standards in premises, if we find that anyone is being put at risk by inadequate fire safety standards, we will use our enforcement powers and prosecute.

A total of 22 Enforcement Notices have been issued during the past year, under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. These are notices served against business premises to require them to meet adequate fire safety standards.

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) brought a successful prosecution against a restaurant in Cookham, which resulted in a £85,000 fine following a number of serious fire safety breaches under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

On 23 October 2020, Reading Magistrates' Court heard that a serious fire broke out in the early hours of 6 December 2016. An investigation found that there were a number of fire safety deficiencies found in the property, including insufficient fire alarm and detection in the residential part of the building and a lack of compliant fire doors.

Separately, in January 2021, a landlord was issued a £66,000 fine over safety breaches including plug sockets next to the shower, and repairs that risked residents being trapped in a fire. Fire Safety Inspecting Officers supported Reading Borough Council with this successful prosecution, following joint inspections and supporting the prosecution.





>> PRIORITISING HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

In our [People Strategy](#), we set out our objective to support both the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff. During the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of staff remained a priority and a number of offerings were made to support this area of focus.

Protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our communities and staff was a key priority for the Service from the outset of the coronavirus pandemic.

As part of the initial steps, we took a proactive approach to reviewing access to our sites to ensure that we were protecting our critical emergency functions. In June 2020, our sites were confirmed at [COVID-19 Secure](#).

These control measures not only reduced the risk of members of staff becoming unwell with COVID-19, but also reduced sickness rates in other areas. In 2020/2021, the working time lost to sickness across all staff had reduced by almost a third.

While it is challenging to target exactly why the reduction has occurred, it could be partly attributed to the national trend which has seen an overall decrease in sickness absence* since the commencement of homeworking.

This may have also been supplemented by the additional support and wellbeing offerings given to RBFRS staff.

During the pandemic, in addition to RBFRS' existing policies and sources of support that include a dedicated Health and Safety Team, Health and Fitness

Advisor, employee assistance programme and occupational health, guidance and support was increased to mitigate the uncertainty and health and wellbeing risks that the pandemic posed.

This additional support included guidance tailored around managing bereavement, domestic abuse, financial hardship, living with a vulnerable person and homeworking. A Facebook workplace group was set up specifically for staff to keep in touch and share advice and guidance directly with one another on practical ways they were managing their health and wellbeing throughout the pandemic. Tailored advice and guidance was also offered around marking religious observances during COVID-19 restrictions, including Ramadan, Eid-Al-Adha, Yom Yippur and Rosh Hashanah.

In addition to the guidance offered, RBFRS also provided practical ways to support staff through the pandemic.

Financial uncertainty can also have a marked effect on people's mental health, so, at the end of March, provision was made for staff to apply for an advance of salary loan of up to £1,500. The loans are

* Source: ONS Statistics - Sickness absence in the UK labour market: 2020



14

members of staff applied for the salary loan scheme



165

Flu vaccination vouchers were issued to staff



15

members of staff received alternative accommodation

repaid over 12 months, starting in June 2020. A total of 14 staff applied for a loan.

It was recognised that offering free flu vaccinations to staff would have two benefits. Not only would this benefit the wellbeing of staff and reduce the potential winter pressures on the NHS, but it would also reduce the impact on critical functions if fewer members of staff were absent from the workplace due to flu. Every member of staff was presented with this offering and 165 vouchers were issued.

Additionally, the Service provided alternative accommodation where roles required members of staff to be in the workplace, and they lived with someone who was shielding. A total of 15 members of staff received this wellbeing support.

This offer had a two pronged effect, whereby members of staff were able to continue to remain available to provide a critical emergency response during the height of the first wave of the public health crisis, and it also supported their wellbeing by reducing their anxiety about coming to work and then going home to a family member who could be clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19.

During the pandemic, one of the members of staff who received this wellbeing offer from the Service shared:

“My son has a respiratory condition and was considered very high risk by his respiratory care specialists. He was in the care of his mother along with his twin brother. His mother had lost her permanent accommodation at that point and had nowhere to go.

“No hotels were operating and no flats were available to rent. So she moved into my flat with the children. As I was still working, there was significant risk to my son and I needed to relocate.

“As I am an on-call firefighter, the Service managed to provide me accommodation close to the fire station so I could still make my attendance time when the pager went off.

“I am really grateful for the accommodation provided and the whole system was very easy for me to use a time when things were very hectic.”

During the initial response, this offering was just one part of a wider continued focus on the physical and mental wellbeing of our staff.



>> INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN STRATEGY CONSULTATION

In March 2020, we launched our Integrated Risk Management Plan Strategy consultation, which allowed our communities to have their say on three strategies for Prevention, Protection and Response.

Integrated Risk Management Planning is how we safely and effectively manage risk for the people of Royal Berkshire. With finite resources, we have to make judgements on how best to deploy these resources to most effectively respond to local community risk.

The strategies built on three evidence bases that were produced in 2016/17, and incorporated the data collected in the years since. In order to see that we, as a Service, continue to move in the right direction, we produced and consulted on these three strategies.

However, face-to-face engagement was limited by the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown measures, which began three weeks into the pandemic. In deciding whether to proceed or postpone the consultation, we followed guidance issued by the Consultation Institute. As a result, we decided to proceed with the consultation and extended the consultation period by an extra two weeks and increased digital engagement to ensure that everyone in our communities could have their say on our proposals.



We adapted our approach to engaging with our residents in the face of a dynamic situation. We increased the amount of content produced in order to reach more people and changed the way we used social media in order to reach different groups of people within Berkshire, which led to 141,918 engagements across our social media channels during the consultation period. We were able to use videos that we had recorded before restrictions occurred, which were released in order to engage residents. In addition, we used Facebook community groups to make sure we were targeting local people.

In addition, we wanted to make our consultation accessible to everyone in our communities. To this end, we worked with an Easy Read specialist to produce Easy Read versions of all three strategies, which were trialled with a group of adults with learning disabilities to ensure that they were fit-for-purpose.

The consultation received a total of 312 responses, which was a positive response given the limits on engagement and the pressures placed upon our services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



>> COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

In our [People Strategy](#), there is a commitment to focus on excellent communication, using a wide range of methods. The coronavirus pandemic sped up the adoption of some planned communication and technology developments across the Service.

The ICT Strategy 2019-2024 sets out the Service's ICT areas of focus, which include simplification, collaboration, and virtualisation. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the progress of these areas due to the increased need.

When restrictions were imposed, the ICT team were able to supply mobile phones, monitors and additional equipment to staff to support the wellbeing of staff working from home. The ICT team delivered technology to staff who needed to work from home but could not collect the equipment due to being clinically vulnerable.

Our charitable donation work continues with further equipment donations to local schools, and a donation of old mobile phones to a national programme designed to enable families of patients in care home to speak and see their loved ones.

A specific coronavirus area was set up on the staff intranet, which received a total of 2,341 page views. The number of active users on Facebook Workplace also increased by 100%. This included the

establishment of an on-call workplace group, which has more than 90 members across our on-call workforce, which means that nearly all on-call firefighters now use this forum. This is because it was identified early on that on-call firefighters do not work from a fire station and therefore a new strategy would be needed to keep on-call colleagues up to date.

Additionally, a project was delivered which digitised the capture and upload of Safe and Well Visit data rather than the previous paper based processes. All Safe and Well Visits since October 2020 have been carried out using the new technology.

Video technology was introduced and standardised across the Service.

Throughout 2020, RBFRS staff took part in a total of 3,024 virtual meetings between March-June 2020. The Service adapted its use of technology throughout the pandemic to protect staff and the public, as well as engaging with communities in new ways which will certainly be taken forward in the future.



100%

increase in the number of Facebook Workplace users



90

on-call members of staff joined the on-call Workplace group



3,024

virtual meetings took place between March - June 2020



>> MODERNISING OUR SERVICE

In our [Strategic Asset Investment Framework](#), the Fire Authority has set out how we will maintain and renew our vital capital assets. This is supported by the more detailed Property Asset Management Strategy and Fleet Strategy, which provide a high level statement on the overall approach to providing property, fleet and equipment to meet the needs of the Service. Our collaboration work through the sharing of facilities is important in enabling us to provide the best possible service to the people of Royal Berkshire.

Crowthorne Community Fire Station

The rebuild of Crowthorne Community Fire station completed in 2020. Headed by Knights Brown, and directed by the RBFRS Capital Projects Team, the build took just under a year, beginning on Thursday, 9 May 2019 and the practical completion and handover occurring on Tuesday, 28 April 2020.

On-call firefighters moved into the station on Friday, 1 May and Saturday, 2 May, after working out of temporary accommodation in Wellington College while observing COVID-19 guidelines.

One of our main goals with the project was to create a modern space with many facilities for community use, such as a community room available for use by members of the public or community groups, a gym for the firefighters to use to maintain their fitness standard, and a larger fire engine bay that gives enough space to accommodate an extra vehicle, such as a 4X4.

The station also has various energy-efficient features, such as charging points for electric vehicles and roof-mounted solar panels.

It is also the second tri-service community



fire station, after the opening of Hungerford Community Fire Station in July 2017, becoming a shared location for RBFRS, Thames Valley Police (TVP) and South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS).

Crowthorne Community Fire Station serves as one aspect of the Fire Authority's plans to modernise the fire and rescue service's buildings over the forthcoming decade, providing purpose-built, high-quality, community-based fire stations across the County.

Theale Community Fire Station

Plans for a new fire station in Theale were approved in December of 2019, and construction on the station began in May of 2020. It will become the third of our tri-service community fire stations.

Once complete, Theale Community Fire Station will offer a shared location for



RBFRS, Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service.

As well as improvements for all Services in the efficient use of public funds, the relationships and opportunities of working more closely together is expected to support greater collective effectiveness for the services we provide to the public.

The site for the new station was identified during a search to optimise the locations of RBFRS' fire stations, and



We are delighted with the progress at Theale Community Fire Station. During an extremely challenging year, we are really grateful for all the support we've received from the local community.

The progress made with the build in 2020 means that the local community, and indeed communities across Berkshire are much closer to benefitting from a modern, fit-for-purpose blue light hub.



Councillor Angus Ross, Strategic Asset Lead for the Fire Authority

offers improved access to the M4 and A4 corridors. This new location formed part of a public consultation completed in April 2017.

Knights Brown also led construction on this project while observing social distancing measures.

The steel infrastructure of the building was put in place in September of 2020, and the construction topped out (reached its highest point) at the beginning of February 2021. Work is continuing at great pace with external panels, appliance bay doors, staircases, ventilation and air conditioning due to be installed next.

The building is on track to be complete and operational by spring 2022.

Aerial Ladder Platform

The new Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) arrived in Service in March and is being commissioned before driver and operator training commences in April and May respectively.

The specialist appliance was procured in collaboration with Oxfordshire and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services and will replace the existing aerial appliance, bringing with it improvements in height, manoeuvrability, reach and serviceability.





>> EDI AND VALUING OUR PEOPLE

Our Service is committed to supporting and making a positive difference to the communities we serve. Equality and diversity is about understanding differences and ensuring that the right people receive the right services. Our [EDI Objectives](#) are also available on our website.



12

awareness documents produced to aid greater understanding and educate

Our Service is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) for all our employees and the wider community. But this is more than just a statement – it's about how we can work towards the society we want to see, both within and outside of our Organisation.

For us, this means valuing every employee as a unique individual. We want to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people, regardless of their background, and make best use of their talents to deliver effective services to our communities.

We also want to work together to create a truly inclusive work environment, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and where everyone's contributions are recognised and valued.

Over the past year, we've taken a number of steps to make our Service more equal, diverse and inclusive, both within the



12

members of staff and Fire Authority took part in the Reading Pride #DigitalTogether submission video

Organisation and in our communities.

This work has been recognised with a number of Awards and accreditations this year, including gaining the Gold Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme, and becoming members of the Business Disability Forum and a Stonewall Diversity Champion.

Within the Service, we have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum, which aims to support developing an inclusive culture by raising awareness of EDI. The group has also set objectives to focus on the broad areas of inclusiveness, leadership, knowing our communities and culture. The published [objectives are available on our website](#).

In June, following the murder of George Floyd, the forum met to discuss ways in which we, as a Service, could work to listen, learn and work to make our Service



the most inclusive, diverse organisation it can be.

As a result, we made a number of commitments which we have delivered on in the past year. These included sharing resources and learning on evolved EDI pages on our intranet, sharing EDI focused article in our staff magazine each month, and reinforcing the importance of our Behaviour Competency Framework in performance reviews for all staff. We continue to look for ways in which we can combat racism and prejudice in our society.

In addition to this work, we also produce awareness documents and articles for staff for a range of religious festivals with the aim of creating a broader understanding of the religions and cultures within our communities, as well as broader awareness months such as LGBT+ History Month. These awareness documents also help us to understand when people may face a greater risk of fire, such as when using candles to celebrate, and help inform our Prevention activity.

Supporting Our LGBTQ+ Communities

We have also taken a number of actions to support LGBTQ+ people in our communities within the past year. In November, to coincide with Trans Awareness Week, we launched our Trans Equality Policy, which sets out the actions and provisions required to ensure that our workplaces are trans-inclusive, and reminds us all of our individual roles in making sure that every one of our colleagues and service users feels welcomed and included in our Service. Although COVID-19 control measures meant that Reading Pride was unable to take place this year, we were proud to contribute a video submission to their virtual #DigitalTogether celebration. In addition to this, we have supported a number of events, such as International Pronouns Day, and featured articles in our staff magazine to raise awareness of the issues that many LGBTQ+ people still face in our communities today.



Disability Inclusion

We were also delighted to welcome Change100 interns into the Service for the fourth time. The Change100 scheme is a three-month internship scheme for talented students or graduates with a disability or long-term health condition, which is run by Leonard Cheshire Disability and provides valuable paid internship placements in a range of organisations. Despite the unique challenges that COVID-19 posed, we were happy to be able to take on seven interns in a range of roles across the Service, including in the Communications and Engagement Team, Finance Team, and Fire Safety Legal, Technical and Enforcement Team.

In addition to our work with Change100, we have also set up a Disability Awareness Network within the Service, which aims to help provide support and raise awareness for anyone who has, knows someone or cares for someone who has a long-term health condition or disability. The group is

open to all, and includes staff volunteers who have, know or care for someone living with a long-term health condition or disability. The group meets monthly to discuss a wide range of disability-focused topics, as well as providing the opportunity for staff to gain advice and support from colleagues across the Service.

On 23 September 2020, new Government accessibility regulations came into effect. These regulations aim to ensure that people who have a disability or health condition are not disadvantaged during their online experience. We have worked to ensure our website and intranet comply with these regulations, and you can read our [accessibility statement](#) on our website. We've also worked to create new accessible document templates for our corporate materials, as well as accessibility training for our teams to ensure that everyone knows how and why accessibility is important in our communities.



7

Change100 interns joined the Service in 2020



March 2021

The Disability Awareness Network is set up



Armed Forces

Our EDI work means ensuring that we are accessible to everyone in our communities. As part of this, we have been working to find new ways to support our Armed Forces community.

In 2018, we signed the Armed Forces Covenant and, in doing so, formalised this commitment. Since then, we have worked to make sure that our Service is inclusive of and supportive of all those who have served their country.

On 7 November 2020, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, with the support of James Sunderland MP, launched the Armed Forces Veterans' Hub in Royal Berkshire. The Armed Forces Veterans' Hub has been designed to offer a place for veterans to come together, listen to speakers and meet organisations who can provide them with advice or support them and meet each

other. Due to COVID-19 control measures, the events have been run virtually, but it is hoped that when restrictions ease, we will be able to welcome veterans into our fire stations for the Hub meetings.

So far, we have been privileged to have had speakers including Colonel Bob Stewart, MP for Beckenham, and organisations such as SSAFA, the Association of ex-Service Drop in Centres, and the Veterans' Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service to provide advice and support to attendees.

As well as the Armed Forces Veterans' Hub, we have supported the Armed Forces through a number of other events, such as Armed Forces Day.

We continue to work closely with the Armed Forces community in order to ensure that we continue to support our veterans, as well as those still serving in the Armed Forces.



10

Organisations attended the launch of the Armed Forces Veterans' Hub in November 2020



>> WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Our Service worked with a number of partners across the Thames Valley, providing support and guidance to assist the response to the pandemic. This was alongside ensuring delivery against [Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's six strategic objectives](#).



Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum Logistics Cell

As part of our ongoing commitment throughout the pandemic to support our partners, a team of seven members of RBFRS staff, with a variety of skillsets and attributes to offer the project, were seconded to support the partnership efforts.

The Logistics Cell was established in April 2020 to coordinate, oversee and manage the PPE supply across the Thames Valley at a time when PPE stock was a national challenge.

The team, alongside partners from Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) worked together to set up processes for receiving and managing deliveries, completed stock checks, and sorted PPE ready for pick up by the authorities.

The team developed and implemented the structure to assure that we would meet our

goals of turning around and giving stock to partners within 48 hours (earlier if necessary).

The Hub became a central point of contact for many of our partners, allowing for close collaboration and the easy collection of critical data on existing stock, rates of consumption, and expected stock, allowing us to ensure all partners had an adequate seven-day supply.

During the Logistics Cell's operating period, over six-million items of PPE were distributed amongst the many partners, providing crucial support in times of critical shortage.

The team remained in place for five months on a virtual, full-time schedule, gradually reducing as demand for PPE decreased before the Cell finally closed in September 2020.

“

PPE was really difficult to secure in the early days of the pandemic, so it was really helpful to have a coordinated group that was reviewing systematically what was needed and how we might support each other - as partners - to a system in securing and meeting that need.

”

Hannah Mills, Deputy COVID
Director, Oxfordshire Clinical
Commissioning Group



Mass Vaccination Site Set Up

Throughout the pandemic, RBFRS supported the community roll out of the mass vaccination programme, both by offering a RBFRS site and also staff to set up the Madejski Stadium site.

In January 2021, two members of RBFRS staff were redeployed from their roles to serve as the Project Manager and the Logistics Manager on the set up of a mass vaccination site at Madejski Stadium, Reading.

Other key stakeholders involved in setting up the vaccination centre were the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, the West Berkshire CCG and the NHS Commissioning Support Unit.

RBFRS played a vital part in the project set up to make sure the site was staffed, managed and processes were in place to ensure its ongoing management. The Protection Team audited the stadium before the vaccination centre was opened to the public, offering suggestions on how to improve the fire safety and ensure that sufficient evacuation procedures were in place.

The vaccination centre opened on 22 February 2021.

RBFRS was able to support our partners to ensure that the vaccination centre was not only opened on time, but also safe and compliant with fire regulations, supporting with the nation's fight against COVID-19.

By the end of March 2021, the site had

administered over 100,000 vaccinations, supporting the biggest mass vaccination programme in the history of the NHS.



Supporting and Advising Partners

RBFRS entered into discussions with the Reading Coroner in the midst of the first lockdown in 2020 to explore how RBFRS could offer support should there sadly be a large number of deaths in the Berkshire area from COVID-19.

A member of RBFRS staff was assigned to provide emergency planning expertise in an assurance capacity to assess and examine if the current processes in place would be suitable.

This required a member of the team to attend meetings with the Reading Borough Council Emergency Planning Officer and a representative from Wexham Park Hospital.

Following the review, the team was able to provide the required assurance to the Coroner that effective processes were in place.





Lateral Flow Test (LFT) Site Set Up in Slough

At the start of 2021, RBFRS offered assistance to Slough Borough Council and Public Health England to help set up Lateral Flow Test (LFT) sites.

Following initial discussions, a member of RBFRS staff was appointed as the Logistics Manager for the project and he started his eight-week redeployment with Slough Borough Council in January 2021.

As Logistics Manager of the LFT project, the role consisted of sourcing and distributing PPE, stock and testing kits to all of the LFT sites across Slough. They were also responsible, alongside partners, for setting up all 16 of the mobile testing centres in Slough that were moved around the town to sites such as community centres, places of worship and places of work.

RBFRS worked alongside several groups as well as Slough Borough Council and Public Health England.

During the eight-week period that the member of RBFRS staff worked on the project, over 10,000 Lateral Flow Tests were carried out across the sites in Slough.



over
10,000

Lateral Flow Tests carried out across the sites in Slough between January-March 2021



218

Shielding Residents Visited in 2020

Firefighters Deliver Welfare in Slough

During the first national lockdown, we received a request from Slough Borough Council, through existing partnership relationships to visit shielding residents that the council were unable to contact.

Five of our on-call firefighters supported Slough Borough Council by visiting 218 shielding residents.

Ketan Ghandi, Service Lead for Communities and Leisure at Slough Borough Council, shared: “The fire and rescue service worked really closely with the Council. The Council were supporting just under 5,000 residents and we managed to contact most of those residents, with the exception of around 250, so it was really important for us to have trusted source, knocking on the door to help residents feel safe and that’s what the fire and rescue service did for us.”

Jo Herring, one of our on-call firefighter who visited these shielding residents, explained: “It was really important that Slough Borough Council had our support to contact these residents. They were busy during this time and we were able to offer a physical presence within the local community to check that these shielded residents were safe and that they were getting everything that they needed.”



Firefighters Support South Central Ambulance Service

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our regular partners at South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) requested assistance from firefighters to crew as ambulance drivers, in order to help relieve pressures on their emergency response due to the pandemic.

RBFRS is a co-signatory to a Joint Deployment Plan alongside SCAS, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Services, which is an arrangement covering the detachment of firefighters to assist SCAS in these types of situations.

The Service received 23 volunteer

applications over two requests for support, which led to nine firefighters being trained and deployed for the second COVID-19 wave.

RBFRS staff assisted as ambulance drivers from the period of Monday, 11 January 2021 to Sunday, 28 February 2021, being called to 639 cases and logging a total of 1,174 hours.

One of the firefighters who worked with SCAS, Beckie Hamilton, said: "I was detached for eight weeks during the winter period. During my detachment, I thoroughly enjoyed working with such wonderful and accommodating paramedics and emergency care assistants.

"Working alongside them, I was exposed to a variety of different medical situations ranging from falls to panic attacks. We also responded to incidents involving alcohol-induced anxiety, mental illness and cardiac arrest. Every shift brought something different.

"I now understand more about the human body in a medical sense and hope that I can take this forward and use it confidently in any situation I come across, including in my role as a firefighter."



639

Cases assisted during the secondment



1,174

Hours worked during the secondment



» CORPORATE MEASURES

Here is a summary of our Corporate Measures and how we have performed this year.

In addition, we publish our [Response Standard and key performance measures](#) on our website every month.

Measure	2020/2021 Target	2020/2021 Actual
Number of fire deaths in accidental dwelling fires	0	0
Number of fire casualties in accidental dwelling fires	20 max	24
Percentage of safeguarding referrals made to local authorities within 24 hours	100%	100%
The number of deliberate primary fires	Reduce (from 165)	130
The number of deliberate secondary fires	Reduce (from 269)	265

Prevention

Number of Safe and Well visits (S&W's) delivered to those who are at heightened risk of dying in the event of an accidental dwelling fire	No target	1,915
Number of Safe and Well visits delivered to those who live in households with demographic characteristics associated with higher risk of injury in accidental dwelling fires	No target	34
Percentage of home safety referrals, where there has been a threat or incidence of arson, completed within 48 hours	100%	99.1%

Protection

Total Number of Full Fire Safety Audits carried out	No target	397
Percentage of audits where the results were satisfactory	60% max	49.9%
Percentage success rate when cases go to court	80%	100%
Percentage of statutory fire safety consultations completed within the required timeframes	95%	96.8%
The number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received	Monitor	2,935



Measure	2020/2021 Target	2020/2021 Actual
Response		
Percentage of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes from time the emergency call was answered	75%	78.2%
Percentage of full shifts where there is adequate crewing on all 'wholetime' frontline fire engines	100%	96.8%
Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on all retained frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)	60%	56.7%
Customer Feedback		
Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the overall service	100%	Could not be completed
Percentage of commercial respondents satisfied with the overall service	95%	Could not be completed
Percentage of respondents satisfied with the services with regards to Fire Safety Audits	90%	Could not be completed
Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the service regards their safe and well visit	100%	Could not be completed
Number of complaints received	Monitor	22
Number of compliments received	Monitor	8
Human Resources and Learning and Development		
Percentage of working time lost to sickness, across all staff groups	4% max	3.1%
Percentage of eligible operational staff successfully completing fitness test	100%	99.2%
Percentage of eligible staff with Personal Development Appraisals	100%	99.7%
Percentage of eligible operational staff in qualification	100%	96.4%
Number of formal grievances	Monitor	2



Measure	2020/2021 Target	2020/2021 Actual
Health and Safety		
Number of RIDDOR accidents	6 max	1
Finance and Procurement		
Percentage of spend subject to competition	85%	93.3%
Compliant spend as a % of overall spend	100%	100%
Information Rights		
Number of Information Commissioner assessments finding that the Service has breached Information Rights Legislation (Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations).	0	0

**RIDDOR is the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. Under RIDDOR we have a duty to report certain events, those events being accidents that led to a person being unfit for their normal work for more than 7 days, or 'specified injuries' which are more serious types of injuries. These include injuries such as broken bones, crush injuries and amputations.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 7SD
rbfrs.co.uk