

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Annual Report 2017-18





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» WELCOME

Welcome to the 2017-18 Annual Report, which details our performance and key achievements from April 2017 to March 2018. It corresponds to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's (RBFRS) [Annual Plan](#) which defined the range of activities to be undertaken during this period.

We have continued to work alongside partners in Social Services, Thames Valley Police (TVP), South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) and Public Health to improve the safety and wellbeing of communities across Royal Berkshire, as well as strengthening partnerships with neighbouring fire and rescue services.

This year saw the opening of Hungerford Community Fire Station, Royal Berkshire's first tri-service community fire station, providing shared facilities for RBFRS, TVP and SCAS, as well as the arrival of new fire engines which had been bought in partnership between the three fire and rescue services of the Thames Valley.

Over the last year there has been continued volatility, not only in relation to the Fire Authority's own budgetary position, but also in the wider economy. The Authority has also incurred and will continue to incur significant additional costs in relation to fire safety activities following the Grenfell Tower fire.

Despite these challenges, we have been putting plans in place to provide our Service more efficiently and effectively.



Councillor Colin Dudley
Chairman
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority



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



» ABOUT US ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

In the [Corporate Plan 2015-2019](#), Royal Berkshire Fire Authority set RBFRS six public facing commitments:

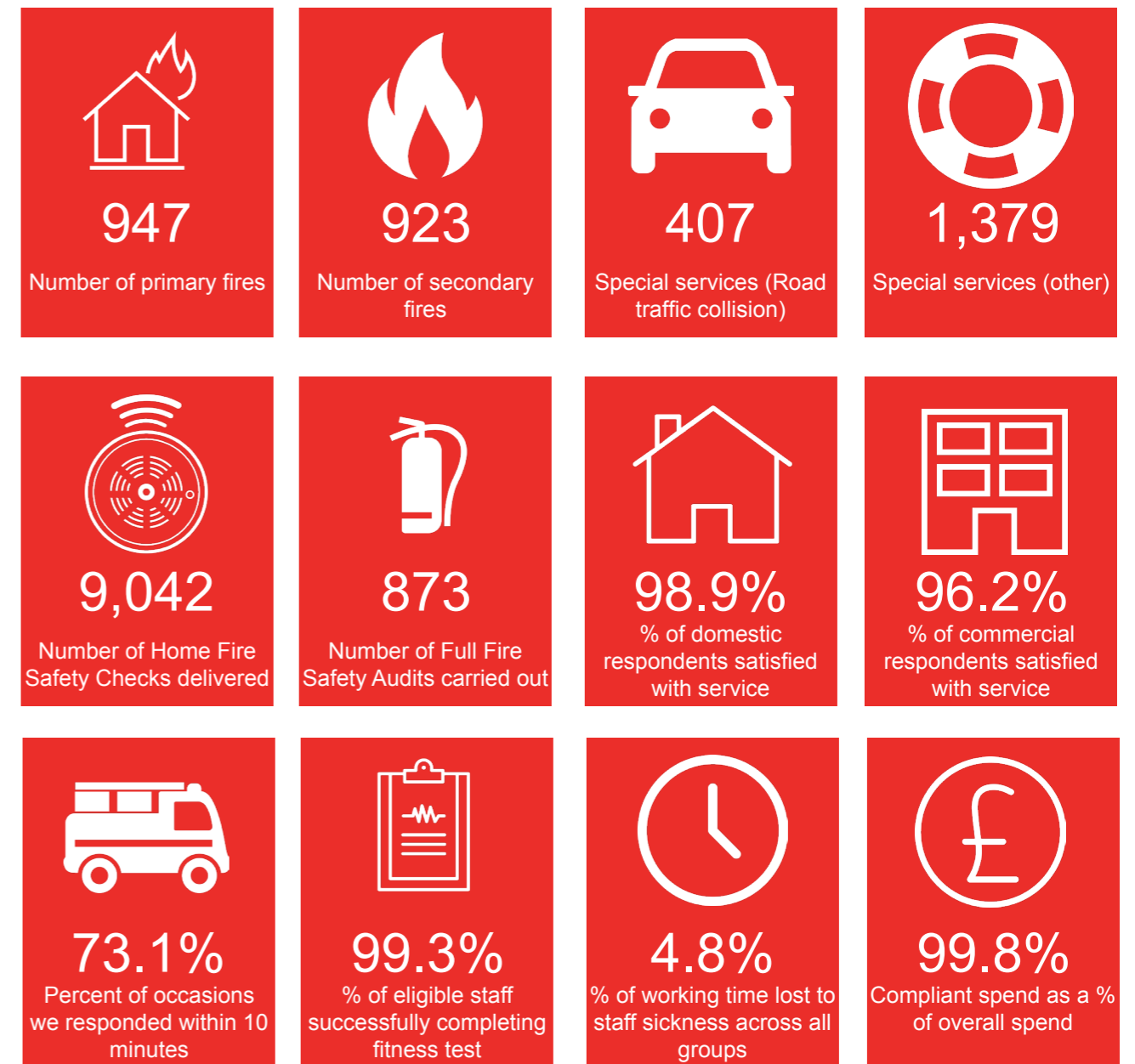
1. We will educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies, and what to do when they happen.
2. We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies.
3. We will ensure appropriate fire safety standards in buildings.
4. We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda.
5. We will ensure that RBFRS provides good value for money.
6. We will work with Central Government to ensure a fair deal for Royal Berkshire.

In addition, RBFRS set an additional four objectives for 2017-18:

1. We will value and invest in our staff to build a capable, resilient and customer focused workforce.
2. Manage RBFRS in accordance with appropriate legal requirements, financial standards and associated guidance.
3. We will balance trust with accountability in the way we manage RBFRS.
4. We will explore and maximise new ways of working to deliver service excellence.



» OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS 2017-18





» TIMELINE OF THE LAST YEAR (APRIL 2017- MARCH 2018)

Here is a summary of some of the main events that have taken place in the past year at RBFRS.



OPENING OF HUNGERFORD COMMUNITY FIRE STATION

Case study on page 23. Berkshire's first Tri-Service Community Fire Station which opened in Hungerford, after a major refurbishment.

The new state-of-the-art station provides shared facilities for RBFRS, Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service, as well as facilities for the community to book.



SERVICE RESPONDS FOLLOWING GRENFELL TRAGEDY

Case study on pages 14-15. Fire and rescue services across the UK undertook significant work in the aftermath to assess existing building stock and provide reassurance to residents.

A new Community Safety Team was established and 10 new Fire Safety Inspecting Officers were recruited by the Service to manage increasing demand.



NEXT GENERATION OF THAMES VALLEY FIRE ENGINES

Case study on page 22. Following a joint procurement process, Thames Valley fire and rescue services celebrated the arrival of new fire engines, to further improve the way we work together.

Fifteen vehicles were ordered in the first year of the four-year contract, with eight for Buckinghamshire, three for Oxfordshire and four for Royal Berkshire.



SIGNING OF ARMED FORCES COVENANT

Case study on page 21. RBFRS signed the Armed Forces Covenant, to formally pledge its support to members of the Armed Forces community.

The covenant recognised the Service's commitment to ensure the fair treatment of all staff who have served, or will serve in the Armed Forces, and their families.

April

May

June

July

August

Sept

Oct

Nov

Dec

Jan

Feb

March

OUTCOMES OF SERVICE REDESIGN CONSULTATION

The Fire Authority met to discuss the outcome of the Service Redesign consultation, which gathered over 1,050 responses from across Berkshire.

SERVICE JOINS CHANGE 100 PROGRAMME

The Service welcomed young people for a three month paid placement, providing work experience as they begin their careers.



YOUNG FIREFIGHTERS CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Since it began more than 800 young people have taken part across the County.



AWARDS CEREMONY

Staff, Fire Authority Members, partners and the public were recognised for their achievements and long service.



NEW ON-CALL FIREFIGHTERS

Our Service welcomed new on-call (retained) firefighters following changes to improve recruitment and retention of retained staff.



FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

A strategy was approved to promote good mental health. The Service were named runners-up for a Workplace Mental Health award and efforts are continuing.

FIRE AUTHORITY BUDGET APPROVED

The budget for 2018-19 is approved, including the Council Tax precept increasing to 2.99%.

PLANS SUBMITTED FOR REBUILD OF CROWTHORNE FIRE STATION

Plans were submitted for the rebuild of Crowthorne Fire Station to make it Royal Berkshire's second Tri-Service Community Fire Station.

RANSOMWARE ATTACK

The IT department worked quickly to deal with a ransomware attack on the Service.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RDS PROJECT BOARD

A Retained Duty System (RDS) Project Board was set up to help maximise operational availability of on-call (retained) fire stations for the benefit of their local communities and the wider service.

SAFEGUARDING TEAM SET UP

A Safeguarding Coordinator was appointed and a specialist safeguarding team was set up to help promote the welfare of children through our Service. Training sessions were planned for all staff to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding.

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

Apprenticeships were introduced for support roles within the Service, providing new and existing staff with additional qualifications and knowledge.



NEW WHOLETIME RECRUITS

Eight new wholetime firefighters were welcomed to the Service after completing an intensive 14-week training course.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND RISK AND PERFORMANCE RESTRUCTURE

Prevention, Protection and Response services began to be delivered from three hubs, located in the East, West and Centre of the County, and there is a restructure of the Risk and Performance Team.

PLANS FOR THEALE COMMUNITY FIRE STATION

Following consultation with residents and staff, a planning application was submitted to West Berkshire Council for the construction of a new fire station in Theale.

LEADERSHIP FORUM

A new leadership development programme was launched, as part of the organisation's leadership strategy to develop the skills and teamwork of future leaders.

LAUNCH OF NEW WEBSITE

A new website was launched for the Service, with a number of improvements which enhance the experience of visitors and improve RBFRS's online presence.

SERVICE HOSTS MORE BLOOD DONATION SESSIONS

Eight fire stations began to host blood donation sessions, with each holding six per year.

ASIAN FIRE SERVICE ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Our Service hosted the ninth AFSA conference in Slough, which focused on sharing best practice and how to make UK fire services' workforce reflect the diversity within the British population.

PEOPLE STRATEGY DEVELOPED

The 2018-2021 People Strategy aims to support our people to become the best public servants, for the people we serve.

CO-LOCATION AT HEADQUARTERS

Several members of staff from Thames Valley Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner relocated to our Service headquarters in Calcot.

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The Fire Authority Member Development strategy and action plan were approved.



» OUR PERFORMANCE

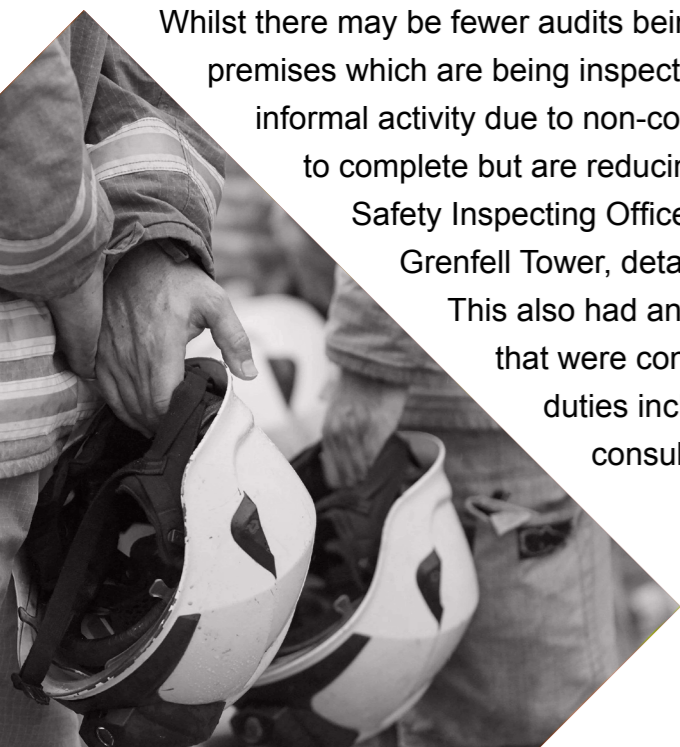
In order to monitor performance to ensure we are working towards our Strategic Objectives and [Integrated Risk Management Plan \(IRMP\)](#) commitments, a number of performance measures were agreed by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the [Annual Plan 2017-18](#). These measures monitor the delivery of our statutory obligations and services we provide, along with how key resources are managed, including staff, finance and health and safety. Performance is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Strategic Performance Board and by the Audit and Governance Committee. Our year end performance against the Corporate Measures can be seen on pages 26 and 27.

During 2017-18, we continued to target Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) to those individuals who are at risk of dying or being injured as a result of an accidental dwelling fire. Working with partner agencies, using local knowledge and available data sources we were able to deliver over 9,000 HFSCs. The slight shortfall from the overall target of 9,500 has been added to the 2018/19 target in order to achieve the IRMP commitments.

Following the fire at Grenfell Tower, crews provided advice and guidance to over 4,700 Berkshire residents living in high rise accommodation. An improved safeguarding process and the creation of a safeguarding team and training has had a positive impact on our safeguarding of the vulnerable individuals we meet during HFSCs.

Fire Safety Inspecting Officers conducted 873 fire safety audits in premises during 2017-18 and 61.7% of these were found to be satisfactory, compared to 80.4% of 1,588 audits in 2016-17. The risk based inspection programme, which was agreed in April 2017, is ensuring higher risk premises and those which are less likely to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) are targeted for inspections.

Whilst there may be fewer audits being conducted compared to previous years, those premises which are being inspected are proving to be those requiring formal or informal activity due to non-compliance with the RRO. These actions take longer to complete but are reducing the risk for those in local communities. Fire Safety Inspecting Officers were also involved in work following the fire at Grenfell Tower, details of which can be found in this report (page 14). This also had an impact on the capacity and volume of inspections that were conducted. The Officers also carry out other statutory duties including, building regulations consultations, other consultations and licensing applications.



Every year, we set targets for our performance to ensure we are delivering what we have promised in our Corporate Plan. We are transparent in the way we report on our performance, as well as our governance processes. We do all this to ensure that we demonstrate to the communities that we serve how effective we are at preventing and protecting against and responding to incidents, that we provide value for money and that we train our staff to promote and embed a positive working culture.

AUDITS

Five internal audits were conducted in 2017-18: Risk Management and Governance, Cyber Security, Procurement Advisory Review, Timesheets and Timekeeping and Key Financial Controls. A further two were carried over to Q1 2018-19 (Pensions and Payroll). 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 RBFRS.

The statement confirms the extent to which the requirement of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (July 2012) have been met. This

includes information about our assurance arrangements regarding prevention, protection and response; how we ensure local and national resilience; as well as an introduction to our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

FORTHCOMING INSPECTION BY HMICFRS

In 2017 it was announced that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's remit was extended to include fire and rescue services.

The inspection will hold all 45 fire and rescue services in England accountable under three key pillars: efficiency, effectiveness and leadership. From this, a graded judgement of performance will be provided as part of two reports: our own individual graded judgement and a national report on fire and rescue services as a whole. This ensures that we highlight areas of good practice and recognise areas of improvement which will form part of our commitment to continuous improvement.



» OUR PERFORMANCE



Customer feedback questionnaires are being sent out following fires in domestic and commercial buildings to see if those affected were satisfied with the service they received from RBFRS. 98.9% of domestic and 96.2% of commercial respondents were satisfied.

Of the 7,451 emergency incidents in Berkshire during 2017-18, the first fire appliance arrived on scene within 10 minutes on 73.1% of occasions. There are a number of factors that contribute to achieving this standard:

- o Time taken by Thames Valley Fire Control Service to ascertain the location and type of incident and mobilise a fire appliance.
- o The time taken by fire crews to start travelling to the incident.
- o The amount of time taken to travel to the emergency incident.

Service delivery teams are constantly reviewing performance in each of these three areas and working together to improve performance where possible. Adverse weather can affect performance. In the adverse weather during March, travel time of appliances to incidents increased slightly, reducing performance of this measure.

Crew availability is another key factor in achieving the response standard. Wholetime Fire Crews were available for 99.3% of shifts and Retained Duty Station (RDS) Crews for 39.0% of available hours. Initiatives as part of the RDS project will continue into 2018-19 to increase recruitment and availability of retained crews (page 17).

90.5% of spend was subject to competition, exceeding the target of 70% by 20.5 percentage points. Where possible contracts have been consolidated, standardised and put together in collaboration with other emergency service partners such as TVP and other



fire and rescue services. Examples of collaborative working include the procurement of new fire appliances (see page 22) and the opening of Hungerford Fire station which is the first tri-service station in Berkshire (see page 23).

Sickness increased during 2017-18, with the main causes being musculoskeletal, respiratory, mental health related and gastrointestinal issues. Support is provided by the Movement Specialist, health promotion activities and we have a mental health strategy. Employees can also access services from Benenden Employee Healthcare for a swifter diagnosis of ailments and, in some cases, treatment. TVFCS staff were offered the Flu vaccination in 2017. Further evaluation of this will be conducted, but early indications show this was successful and there were 15 fewer sick days for respiratory conditions compared to the same period in the previous year. The health and wellbeing pages in this report have more information on these activities (page 25).

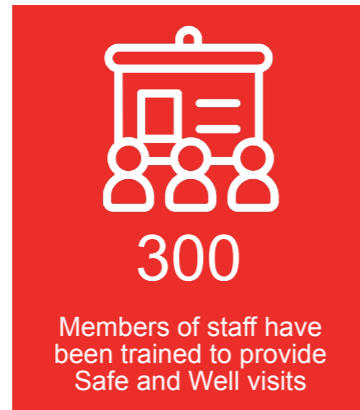
Operational staff holding key qualifications in the nine core areas of the Fire Professional Framework rose by 4.2 percentage points to 99.2% by the end of year. The Learning and Development team have worked with managers to discuss competence issues and to ensure there is flexibility to attend/ deliver training. The development of the People Strategy (page 18) and leadership programme will both contribute to the continued improvement of this measure.





» PREVENTION

We are committed to enabling the people of Berkshire to lead safe and fulfilling lives. A part of this is focused on how we educate people on how to prevent emergencies, and what to do when they happen.



PROVING THE VALUE OF OUR HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKS

One way we are working to prevent emergencies from happening in the first place is through our HFSC service.

During these visits, our staff visit homes to provide advice to support our residents to stay safe in their home.

A HFSC is an excellent preventative measure that can help keep our residents safe, this was the case for a resident who had received a HFSC a couple of years prior to when a fire broke out in her home.

In 2018, our crews were called out to a tumble dryer fire. Our firefighters promptly arrived and extinguished the fire.

The HFSC visit from her local fire station crew prior to the fire and this proved to be the catalyst that prevented the fire from spreading and causing serious damage to her home.

During the visit, a smoke alarm was fitted in the utility room and this was the alarm that alerted the occupant.

We regularly reinforce the importance of having working smoke alarms in the home, but this incident also proves the value of the HFSC service that we offer to those who are most vulnerable in the community.



HFSC Technician Daniel Rosamond speaks to a resident



It is reassuring to know that more than ever before, the most vulnerable people in our County, are being protected from potential harm or abuse through the referrals that our staff are providing.

Chelsea Bridges, Safeguarding Coordinator

FURTHER DEVELOPING OUR PREVENTION SERVICES

We continually look to build a capable, resilient and customer-focused workforce. One of the ways we have done this is through our transition from Home Fire Safety Checks to Safe and Well visits.

Safe and Well visits see staff, including firefighters, not only delivering fire safety guidance, but offering advice directly to people and/or partner agencies on issues of health and crime prevention.

Throughout 2017-18, we provided Safe and Well training to over 300 members of staff. We committed to join up prevention activity with other organisations, so that every professional contact with vulnerable people addresses as many risk factors as possible. The Safe and Well training is part of our journey to further improve the preventative service that we provide to our communities.

CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK FOR THE BETTER

This year we also implemented a more robust safeguarding provision. Whilst we do not have a statutory duty to report concerns, we do have a duty of care to the people of Royal Berkshire and safeguarding them ensures that we support our commitment to contribute to a wider health, safety and wellbeing agenda.

We have introduced a corporate measure around our safeguarding provision, further proving our commitment to keeping the people of Berkshire safe. To support our commitment, we implemented a comprehensive mandatory training package for our staff to enable them to be the best public servants that they can, which will enable them to recognise when safeguarding is required to protect those most vulnerable in our communities.



» PROTECTION

In the early hours of 14 June 2017, a fire took hold in Grenfell Tower, a high rise residential tower block in London. The fire started in a flat and spread quickly outside and then up and across the external Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding. The fire resulted in the deaths of 72 people. The fire and subsequent loss of life were so significant that a public inquiry and an independent Review into Building Regulations and Fire Safety were commissioned by the Government.

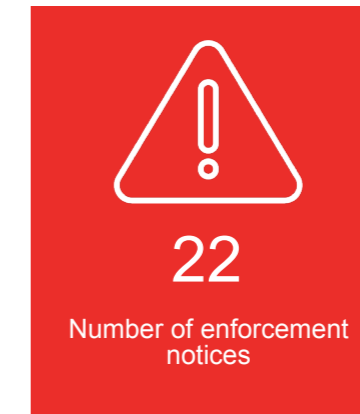
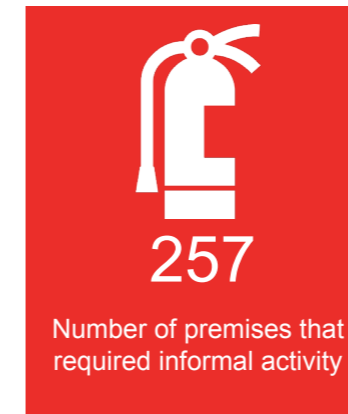
Due to the additional, unforeseen work following the fire, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has faced extra costs of £180,000 with increasing costs over the next three years. The additional pressures due to the fire at Grenfell Tower has contributed to our Service not meeting our target of 1,400 Full Fire Safety Audits in 2017-18 (873 were completed).

As a result of the Grenfell Tower tragedy we established a specialist team to lead and coordinate work in Berkshire. The team, once established, was further supported by colleagues across the organisation. Due to the additional work identified, the predicted development



expected throughout Berkshire and to provide resilience and succession planning, we recruited and trained additional Fire Safety Inspecting Officers. We then implemented a phased approach to ensure the safety of communities in Berkshire who live in Residential High Rise Buildings (RHRBs).

Following the tragedy our Service took immediate action to ensure the safety of the residents of 157 RHRBs. Fire Safety Inspecting Officers inspected every RHRB and teams collated vital information relating to the individual buildings and their fire safety measures. At the same time our fire crews engaged with residents and local communities to provide home fire safety advice and reassurance. This work involved contacts with over 4,700 residents where information and guidance was provided regarding how to avoid a fire and what to do should one start.



CASE STUDY

Following the inspections that were undertaken at all RHRBs in Berkshire, six were found to have ACM cladding. At the end of June, we became aware that Nova House in Slough had received a category three failure from the Building Research Establishment. The team worked with the responsible persons of the building to ensure that the interim measures set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had been met. These measures help to prevent the spread of fire and ensure that if a fire starts, residents can easily evacuate the building.

One of the concerns our inspectors had with the building was the ventilation of the basement car park, so this was closed in case of a fire, which could spread to the ACM cladding. Following further surveys the ventilation of the flats was also a concern for the Service so Slough Borough Council paid for a private fire company to provide a 'Waking Watch', a 24/7 presence of a fire appliance and crew.

This resource meant that if a fire was to break out then the crew could ensure swift evacuation of the building.

In March 2018, the building was bought by Slough Borough Council to ensure that the interim measures were being put into place, and to help with growing costs. Since the council have taken over the building, heat detectors have been put into every flat to ensure an early detection, should a fire start.

Our staff will continue to work with the responsible persons for this building, and all other buildings with ACM cladding, as the residents' safety is our main concern.



» RESPONSE

Whilst a modern fire service is focused on preventing incidents occurring in the first place, when incidents do happen, a swift and effective response is needed.

We must therefore do all we can to prepare our firefighters to face a range of emergencies that could occur: including fires, road traffic collisions, water rescues, large animal rescues, aviation incidents, collapsed buildings and chemical spills.

ESTABLISHMENT OF HUBS IN THE SERVICE

In September 2017, a Service wide restructure was completed to coordinate services in line with the unitary authorities within Berkshire.

The hubs bring together the delivery of Prevention, Protection and Response from three hubs, located in Reading, Wokingham and Maidenhead.

This change enables our Service to analyse and manage risk at a local level in line with the needs of local communities.

It will also help us to drive performance and help us meet corporate measures.

Local Safety Plans support the delivery of these measures and identify local risks and appropriate actions within each of its operational 'hub' areas.

Another key focus area is ensuring that our fire stations are at the heart of the community. This runs throughout the core of our community based activities and is evidenced in the plans.



RESPONSE STANDARDS

As an emergency service, people depend on us reaching them as soon as we possibly can. That's why one of our response measures is to measure the time taken for our firefighters to arrive at every incident.

Our target is within 10 minutes, from the time the emergency call was answered, to the arrival time of the first fire engine.

During this year, we responded within 10 minutes on 73.1% of occasions, slightly below our target of 75%. However, this target of 75% has been modelled assuming perfect conditions, however, this is not always the case and we are required to adapt to the conditions we are faced with.

Our ability to meet the target is complex but it primarily depends on three main factors, the time taken to take the emergency call, mobilise our firefighters to the fire engine and travel time to the incident.

We aim to provide a suitably qualified crew for all our wholtime fire engines 100% of the time and 50% availability at our on-call (retained) stations.



IMPROVING THE AVAILABILITY OF ON-CALL (RETAINED) FIRE STATIONS

Ensuring that we have enough firefighters to crew our fire engines is fundamental to ensuring that we can provide a swift response to emergencies.

The Retained Duty System (RDS) has been reviewed locally and nationally in recent years. A peer review in 2017 examined our RDS system in detail and the provision of RDS staff was examined in the Thomas review. It forms a key strand of the English fire reform programme.

The corporate target for crewing on 'retained' frontline fire engines is 50%. As you can see on page 26, we continue to strive to meet this availability. There has been a concerted effort across various departments to improve crewing availability, which now stands at 39%. This work has been coordinated through an RDS Project Board, which was established in September 2017.

The Board's overarching aim is to build a sustainable, resilient

and motivated RDS workforce and maximise RDS stations operational availability for their local communities and the wider service.

Recruitment is one part of addressing this issue. A recruitment campaign began which aims to attract more candidates, while increasing the diversity and inclusion of our RDS workforce by reaching out to new groups. We have created more focused taster sessions to better connect with local people. These taster sessions are now run at their local on-call fire station, enabling more people to attend and giving them the chance to meet firefighters already in the role.

The Board has also been reviewing existing arrangements for RDS staff, particularly training and development to streamline the process to become qualified as a on-call firefighter. Once qualified, trying to improving retention in order to maintain crewing numbers across the County.

Overall we have seen a net increase in the number of RDS staff, from 61 in March 2017 to 75 in March 2018 and we continue to drive recruitment to sustain this ongoing increase.





» DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE STRATEGY

Throughout 2017-18 a new People Strategy was developed, which has now been published in June 2018.

The new People Strategy will replace the 2015-19 strategy and action plan identified as part of the Organisational Development Programme. This has been created within the context of a number of both internal and external influencing factors, such as the NFCC People Strategy and the Home Office Reform Programme.

The purpose of our People Strategy is to support our staff to become the best public servants they can be, creating a workforce that can deliver an efficient and effective service on behalf of the Fire Authority, to manage all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the people of Berkshire.

One of the key themes in the Organisational Development programme was leadership and learning. The aim of this section was to enhance capability and capacity in order to maximise future organisational performance and enhance employee engagement. The Leadership Development Programme for middle managers was outlined in our Annual Plan 2017 to 2018 as a project that would be taken forward this year. This was introduced in October 2017.

Collaborative working is a key part of the programme, so officers from Oxfordshire County Council Fire

and Rescue Service and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service are also taking part in the programme.

CASE STUDY: STATION MANAGER MICHAEL GRIFFITHS

“Having already completed many leadership development courses, this was an excellent chance to refresh my memory.

“During this course, I was given the tools in how to manage effectively and how to get my staff to be their best. It also made me look at the skills of my team and how to bring the best out of them in the workplace, which in turn will help to increase moral in the station.

“Since completing the course, I realised that although I currently have meetings with the Watch Managers, there wasn’t a meeting which included both Watch and Crew Managers.

“I have now set up quarterly meetings which all Watch and Crew Managers from the station will attend. The aim of the meetings will be to look at how Watches can work together effectively to help achieve the station’s targets and objectives.

“By creating more inclusive meetings across the station it is reflecting one of our Vision’s key themes, ‘one team working collaboratively for the people we serve’.

“To initiate this project I held a day for all of the management positions at Bracknell



644

Members of Staff



19

Number of different sites our staff work across



420

Members of staff working on a shift pattern

Fire Station. During this day I picked out some of the most worthwhile exercises and lessons from the Leadership Programme, to pass the knowledge onto the level of management below me.

“The feedback from this day was all very positive, and now this model may be rolled out at other stations across the Service.”

CASE STUDY: BUSINESS APPLICATIONS MANAGER MATT PINTO

“The leadership programme introduced me to ideas and concepts about leadership I had not thought about or had knowledge of previously. It was also an opportunity to work with peer colleagues who I may not have otherwise interacted with. This to me was hugely important, as we then began to understand how others in the organisation thought and worked.

“Part of the course involved talking through management issues with a set of colleagues, which I, and the rest of my cohort found very useful, so we have decided to continue these type of sessions on a regular basis.

“The main things I took out the programme were:

“Learning to listen and ask open questions as previously I was prone to asking closed questions.

“Encourage your team to provide answers to their own issues and questions.

“Delegate work and try not to do things myself. In allowing my team to take responsibility and learn from any mistakes it gives them a greater knowledge and allows me to spend more time managing more effectively.

“I learnt how to interact with colleagues with different personality profiles.

“Try and think “outside the box” – just because that’s the way we have done things in the past, why not try something different. A slight shift in the way we think may have a big, positive benefit.

“I have started to put into practice the above, and hopefully my team are finding their roles more rewarding and fulfilling.

“This in turn will help us to evolve into a more People-centric Employer of Choice organisation, where we can develop people. If colleagues feel included, respected and appreciated, this will definitely have a positive impact in the wider community.”



» DEVELOPING AND VALUING OUR PEOPLE

During 2017-18, we have continued to work to develop our people to enable them to be the best public servants they can be to the people of Royal Berkshire.

Part of this work has looked at how we can further develop and value our people, drive personal leadership, attract talent and increase the diversity of our workforce to reflect the communities we serve.

Our [People Strategy](#) developed in 2018 aims to develop our leadership and capability, supported by a comprehensive action plan. Significant strides have already been made to deliver key elements of the action plan as shown by the following case studies.



3

Number of apprentices we have employed



Bronze

The Armed Forces Accreditation we have received



2

Number of interns we have had from the Change100 programme

OUR APPRENTICES

Central Government has recently introduced changes to encourage employers in England to take a more proactive approach in employing apprentices. In August 2017, we made

a decision to introduce apprenticeships within the organisation. Apprenticeships are now more widely accessible, allowing businesses not only to recruit through this method, but also use them to develop and upskill current staff.

Our Apprenticeships provide new and existing staff the opportunity to gain an additional qualification; enhancing individual knowledge, skill set and increase the capability, capacity and resilience of our workforce; further improving the service, we provide to the communities of Berkshire. In 2017, we recruited three Apprentices.



Ellie, Business Support Apprentice



ARMED FORCES COVENANT BRONZE ACCREDITATION

We signed the [Armed Forces Covenant](#), to formally pledge our support to members of the Armed Forces community. The covenant recognises the Service's commitment to ensure the fair treatment of all staff who have served, or will serve in the Armed Forces, and their families.

The covenant contains a number of commitments, including supporting employees who choose to be members of the reserve forces, promoting the fact that we are an Armed Forces friendly organisation.

A number of reservists and former Armed Services staff already work within RBFRS, across a range of departments and we continue to provide a pathway for them into the fire service. We are now working towards our Silver accreditation.

CHANGE100 PROGRAMME

In 2017, we collaborated with [Leonard Cheshire's Change100 programme](#) to work with talented graduates on a 100-day intern programme.

Since, our partnership, we have taken on two interns through the programme. In December 2017, the commitment was made that over the next year we will double this figure to enable us to provide different pathways into the fire and rescue service. This has enabled us to be credible in our commitment to attract talent and increase diversity in our workforce.



Ellece and Maisie, Apprentices with RBFRS.



» WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP IN THE THAMES VALLEY

We work alongside teams in the six unitary authorities of Berkshire, as well as TVP, SCAS, Public Health, and other public service providers in Berkshire. In doing so, RBFRS is helping to reduce community risk and contribute to the overall safety of the communities we serve, whilst still providing a value-for-money service to the local taxpayer.

DELIVERY OF NEW FIRE ENGINES

The next generation of fire engines arrived in the Thames Valley this year, following a project run in a partnership between Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service, Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service and RBFRS.

A total of 15 fire engines were delivered during the first year of the contract, with eight for Buckinghamshire, three for Oxfordshire and four for Royal Berkshire.

Over the next four years, a further 22 fire engines are due to be delivered in the Thames Valley.

During the procurement process, firefighters gave feedback alongside specialist research and equipment officers and the fire engine supplier, to create a fire engine that is standardised between

the three services, whilst still working with each service's legacy fleet.

There are several benefits to a standardised equipment inventory. The services benefit from being able to share training and technical expertise, whilst the suppliers benefit from being able to produce items in volume. At incidents the standardisation of equipment leads to shared procedures and seamless integration of crews.

The new fire engines have replaced existing vehicles at stations close to the three services' shared border. In Berkshire, the new fire engines have been deployed at Caversham Road (Reading), Slough, Maidenhead and Langley. A delivery program was put in place to bring the vehicles on the run with a minimum delay and they have been serving the community of Berkshire continuously since July 2017.



18 months
Since the collaborative project began



37
New fire engines arriving in the Thames Valley over 4 years



£720,000
Estimated savings from the project



HUNGERFORD COMMUNITY FIRE STATION

In our Strategic Asset Investment Framework, the Fire Authority has set out how we will maintain and renew our vital capital assets. The efficiency of these assets has been highlighted as having a significant impact on our revenue budget. Our collaboration work in sharing of facilities, running joint procurement arrangements and joint Thames Valley Control Service is important in enabling us to provide the best possible service to the people of Royal Berkshire.



Hungerford Community Fire Station opened in July 2017, following a major refurbishment, which began in November 2016.

The refurbishment has not only delivered a modern, fit-for-purpose fire station, but it has also delivered Royal Berkshire's first community tri-service station, providing shared facilities for RBFRS, TVP and SCAS.

A number of new key features were installed as part of the refurbishment: an enlarged appliance bay to accommodate a modern fire appliance, a gym to support

firefighters in maintaining their fitness, an upgraded drill tower, a new training tower facility that allows for ladder transfer practice, and a community room inside the station for local people to use.

By working in collaboration with relevant partners – particularly those from the blue light services – RBFRS can deliver greater monetary and non-monetary benefits for the communities we serve.

As a result of the opening of Hungerford Community Fire Station, there will be opportunities to collaborate further and deliver greater efficiency and effectiveness for the future of the Service.



» BLOOD DONATION SESSIONS AT FIRE STATIONS

Our Service is helping people to become lifesavers by providing fire stations as venues for NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) blood donation sessions. This formal regular arrangement began in April 2016 and has proved so successful that in August 2017, it was announced that eight fire stations across the County would be hosting six sessions each during the coming year.

Since April 2017:



A total of 5,000 blood donations have now been made during sessions held at our fire stations in the two years of the scheme. The 5,000th donation was made by local resident Ken Butcher during a recent visit to Slough Fire Station.

After giving blood, Ken said: "I'm delighted to have given blood today to help others in need. Visiting the local fire station to do so was easy and convenient."



Ken Butcher, with Philip Holdford, Watch Manager at Slough Fire Station

During all sessions held at fire stations, the appliance bay is temporarily adapted while the sessions take place, with health screening areas and a number of beds so NHS staff can take blood donations. The fire engine is parked on a different part of the site, but the crew are still available to attend incidents as usual.

Our staff have been supportive of the sessions and the idea to start a formal regular arrangement with the NHSBT originally came from our Red Watch crew based at Bracknell Fire Station.

Two years later and local people can now visit Wokingham, Caversham Road, Langley, Slough, Newbury, Maidenhead, Whitley Wood and Bracknell Fire Stations to give blood.



» HEALTH AND WELLBEING

During 2017/18 we have continued to focus on the Health and Wellbeing of our staff by introducing a number of different initiatives.

As part of one of the strategic commitments in Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's [Corporate Plan](#) 'We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies', the Service will increase the fitness and health of firefighters.

Throughout the year 4.8% of working time across all staff groups was lost to sickness. In order to help reduce this in the coming years guides have been published on our intranet site for managers on managing long or short term sickness, return to work interviews and sickness triggers.

Due to the nature of the shift patterns that TVFCS do, in previous years they have had higher sickness than other staff groups. In order to reduce the amount of time lost to sickness TVFCS were provided with flu vaccinations.

Mental Health is currently one of the biggest causes of sickness in RBFRS. In January 2018 the Mental Health Strategy and Action Plan was published. Work is currently being done across the Service to raise awareness of Mental Health and we will continue to do so in coming years. In February 2018 a Leadership Forum was held for middle managers to help raise awareness of mental health and how they can provide support for their peers and

staff members.

Of the eligible operational staff 99% passed their fitness test in 2017/18. In order to ensure that operational staff pass their fitness test a number of measures are in place, including:

- Allocated time for crews to do fitness training
- Fitness equipment on stations
- Trained fitness personnel on each watch at each station
- A trained Movement Specialist who supports all personnel across the Service

If operational staff do fail their fitness test then they are supported by our Health and Wellbeing Advisor who will provide them with tailored individual support.

BENENDEN

In March 2017, our Service signed up to Benenden, a discretionary healthcare service that supports the NHS. Within a year of signing up to Benenden, 396 members of staff had signed up with 24% using services through Benenden, equating to 98 cases.





» 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	2017/2018 Target	2017/2018 Actual
Number of fire deaths in accidental dwelling fires	0	2
Number of fire casualties in accidental dwelling fires	29 max	22
Percentage of safeguarding referrals made to local authorities within 24 hours	100%	100%
Prevention		
Number of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) delivered to those who are at heightened risk of dying in the event of an accidental dwelling fire	7000	6,002
Number of HFSC's delivered to those who are at heightened risk of having an accidental dwelling fire and being injured as a result	2500	3,040
Percentage of dwelling fires attended where no working smoke alarm is installed, against the total number of dwelling fires	Max 41%	31.4%
Percentage of category 1 HFSC referrals, where there has been a threat or incidence of arson, completed within 3-days	100%	84.2%
Protection		
Total Number of Full Fire Safety Audits carried out	1400	873
Total number of Audits and follow-up visits carried out	Monitor	Not available
Percentage of Audits where the results were satisfactory	50% max	61.7%
Percentage of Audits requiring informal activity	45% min	29.3%
Percentage of Audits requiring formal activity	5% min	2.0%
Percentage success rate when cases go to court for non-compliance with the Regulatory Reform Order 2005	95%	No cases
Percentage of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes, from time the emergency call was answered	75%	73.1%



Measure	2017/2018 Target	2017/2018 Actual
Percentage of full shifts where there is adequate crewing on all 'wholtime' frontline fire engines	100%	99.3%
Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on 'retained' frontline fire engines (based on 24/7 crewing)	50%	39.0%
Customer feedback		
Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the overall service	100%	98.9%
Percentage of commercial respondents satisfied with the overall service	95%	96.2%
Percentage of commercial respondents satisfied with the services with regards to their Fire Safety Audit	90%	100%
Human Resources and Learning and Development		
Percentage of working time lost to sickness, across all staff groups	3%	4.8%
Percentage of eligible operational staff successfully completing fitness test	100%	99.0%
Percentage of eligible staff with Personal Development Appraisals	100%	92.0%
Percentage of eligible operational staff in qualification	100%	99.2%
Health and Safety		
All accident related injuries, including RIDDOR (RIDDOR & Total)	5 & 81 max	7 & 52
Finance and Procurement		
Percentage of spend subject to competition	70%	89.5%
Compliant spend as a % of overall spend.	100%	99.8%
Freedom of Information		
Percentage Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) referred to the Information Commissioner	0%	0%

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