

PREVENTION STRATEGY AND UNDERPINNING RISK ANALYSIS

Integrated Risk Management Plan
2019-23





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» INTRODUCTION

Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority is required to promote fire safety in its area, which is underpinned by the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The National Framework sets out the expectations of fire and rescue authorities in relation to prevention activities and these include:

- Making appropriate provision for fire prevention activities;
- As part of an Integrated Risk Management Plan, demonstrating how prevention activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities, through authorities working either individually or collectively, in a way that makes best use of available resources;
- Targeting prevention resources on those individuals or households who are at greatest risk from fire in the home, those most likely to engage with arson or deliberate fire-setting;
- Working closely with other organisations in the public and voluntary sector, as well as the police and ambulance service, to identify those at greatest risk from fire;
- Where appropriate, developing partnerships to support risk reduction services to those identified as vulnerable, including from exploitation of abuse, and wherever possible to share intelligence and relevant risk data.

The National Framework recognises the important contribution fire and rescue services can make in increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of public services and alleviating pressures on local response resources. However, it is clear that this should not be at the expense of effective delivery of statutory core duties.



Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has undertaken numerous public consultations on its Integrated Risk Management Plan, the details of which are available on the [RBFRS website](#). This Prevention Strategy supports the delivery of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's [Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2019-2023](#). The proposals contained within this document will form part of the five Priority Projects as set out in the Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2019-2023. Our Integrated Risk Management Plan, and its underpinning strategies, informs our strategic planning across the Service notably through Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services' [People Strategy](#) and the Authority's [Strategic Asset Investment Framework](#). This means that investment in our staff, for example through learning and development programmes, and the infrastructure that supports the delivery of our services, is aligned to our Integrated Risk Management Plan and targeting our resources at local community risk.

In 2016/17, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, on behalf of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, consulted with the public on the Integrated Risk Management Plan 'Service Redesign'. The consultation was the final stage in a series of consultations throughout 2016/17, to help us understand the views of the people of Royal Berkshire to shape the way we deliver services for you.

Our core service delivery functions of Prevention, Protection and Response fulfil our statutory duties to manage risk in Royal Berkshire. As part of the Service Redesign consultation, we shared with you three evidence bases for each of these areas, together with a number of evidence-based proposals for how we intended to deliver our services.





The Fire Authority carefully considered the outcome of the consultation, together with the evidence presented, and agreed eight key areas of prevention activity that would inform our Prevention Strategy. These were:

1. **To reduce the number of vulnerable people dying due to accidental fires in the home.**
2. **To reduce the number of fires occurring in homes and the injuries that result from them.**
3. **Through working with our partners, we aim to reduce road deaths and injuries by 20% in Royal Berkshire over the next five years.**
4. **Aligning to the UK Drowning Prevention Strategy 2016-26, with the stated aim of reducing the number of drowning incidents by 50% by 2026.**
5. **Fire and Rescue staff completing normal Home Fire Safety Checks would expand the scope of the visit to look out for other vulnerabilities to the resident.**
6. **Continue to expand our schemes to deliver a range of services to support children's health and wellbeing on a cost recovery basis.**
7. **Developing relationships with countywide organisations to progress pathways to employment and apprenticeships for young people.**
8. **Introduce counselling to reduce fire-setting activity amongst adults. We would do this as a mainstream activity rather than as a pilot.**



>> **PREVENTION STRATEGY 2017-2019**

In this section, we will review and evaluate our activity since 2017 in order to inform our Prevention Strategy 2020-2023.

Accidental Dwelling Fire Deaths

In 2016, we examined information from 20 accidental fire deaths, covering a period of five years. We measured our outcomes against similar national reports and drew consistent conclusions. We found that:

- 90% of accidental fire deaths occurred in the home;
- 60% of victims were aged over 60;
- Physical disability, lack of mobility, living alone and lifestyle choices, such as alcohol and smoking, significantly influenced an ability to escape from fire even where suitable and sufficient smoke detection was present;
- We had responded effectively to these incidents but individuals still lost their lives; and
- 90% of the individuals who lost their lives were known to other agencies.

Through our review of evidence, a key finding from research undertaken by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service was that those who were most vulnerable to losing their lives in fire were not the same group who were most associated with the volume of fire incidents occurring. They separated people into two key groups:

- People at 'Risk of Death' – these people could live anywhere and it was the person who was at risk, due to factors such as age, disability, or mental health conditions.
- People at 'Risk of Injury' – these people were at risk of injury because of factors often related to the location of the property and the demographic circumstances involved.

Following public consultation, informed by the Prevention Evidence Base, the Fire Authority agreed two proposals related to accidental dwelling fires. These were:

1. **To reduce the number of vulnerable people dying due to accidental fires in the home; and**
2. **To reduce the number of fires occurring in homes and the injuries that result from them.**



In setting these commitments, we aimed to carry out 35,000 Home Fire Safety Checks suitable for the 'Risk of Death' target group over the next five years. Within the first two years, we aimed to reach 14,000 of the most vulnerable people within this target group. We exceeded the two-year target, completing 14,323 Home Fire Safety Checks for the most vulnerable people.

For those at 'Risk of Injury', we undertook to complete 12,500 Home Fire Safety Checks over a five-year period. Two years into this commitment, we have completed 5,690 and we are continuing to make positive progress towards this target in 2019/20.

In undertaking this work, we committed to making the reduction of fire deaths our number one priority, with the aim of zero fire deaths. Since April 2017, we have seen a reduction in deaths in accidental dwelling fires, with a total of five deaths occurring. This is an average of 1.7 deaths per year, compared with the four deaths per year in the four-year timeframe that was examined in the previous Evidence Base.

Information from five fatalities in accidental dwelling fires in Berkshire since 2017/18 was examined. We measured these outcomes against similar national reports, which were examined in our previous Evidence Base and continue to draw consistent conclusions. These included:

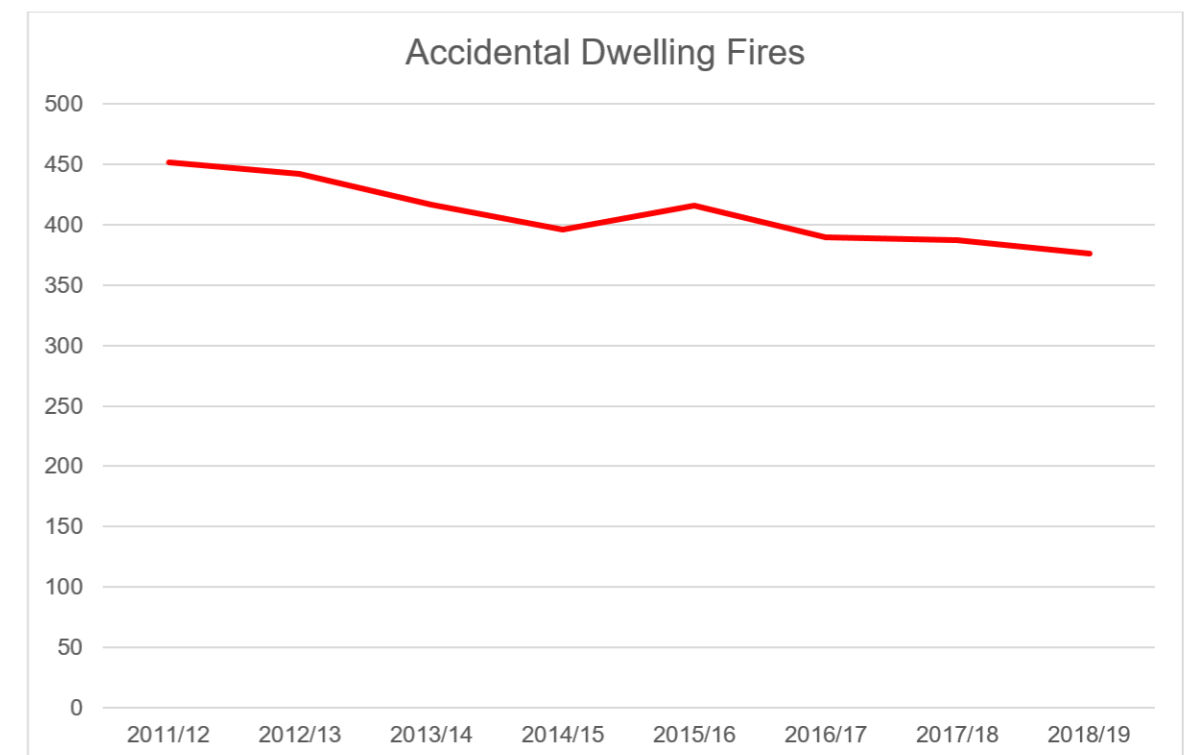
- That we responded to all incidents within our Response Standard;
- 100% of these accidental fire deaths occurred in the home;
- 60% of the victims were aged 60 and over;
- Physical disability, limited mobility, living alone and lifestyle choices significantly influenced an ability to escape fire;
- 100% of those individuals were known to other agencies with referrals made for Safe and Well Visits; and
- Safe and Well Visits were carried out for four of the five individuals with the fifth unable to be completed due to us being unable to access the property.

Whilst we recognise that the number of cases we are looking at is small, individuals still lost their lives. We are still aiming for zero accidental fire deaths in dwelling fires. As a result, we intend to introduce risk-based follow-up visits for our most vulnerable cases. These visits will allow us to work with those individuals to gain further assurance that the required preventive measures have been taken within these homes.



As part of the previous Evidence Base, we committed to aiming to reduce the number of accidental dwelling fires by 20% over a five-year period. Between 2016/17 and 2018/19, we have seen a 3.6% reduction in accidental dwelling fires and we remain focused on this commitment going forward.

Graph 1 – Accidental Dwelling Fires



Moving forward, we are proposing to rename our two categories from 'Risk of Death' and 'Risk of Injury'. This will not change how these categories are defined; however, it will provide greater understanding of the risk associated with each target group.

We intend to refer to the previous 'Risk of Death' as 'Risk to Individuals'. The definition of this risk will continue to be determined by vulnerability factors such as age, health conditions or lifestyle choices, such as smoking, which are specific to the individual rather than their surroundings.

We now propose to refer to 'Risk of Injury' as 'Risk to Households' as the demographic factors identified by the national research are most readily available at a household level. This clarifies that although the risk of death to these residents is not as high, it remains a possibility.



Road Safety

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service has a statutory duty to respond to road traffic collisions as defined in the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004. Road traffic incidents are a societal risk and a leading cause of fatality in young adults. In 2016, we were able to identify who is at greatest risk in Berkshire and when and where they are at risk. This research and collaborative working also identified a clear gap in road safety education in the high-risk 11-15 year age group. The assumption being that, by targeting this age group, we would be able to provide educational awareness before these young people move into the highest risk group for being killed or seriously injured in Berkshire, which at that time was 20-24 year olds. In targeting the 11-15 year age group, we were also recognising that pedestrian casualties in this age bracket was relatively high when compared to all other age groups.

Following public consultation, informed by the Prevention Evidence Base, the Fire Authority agreed one proposal related to road safety. This was:

- 3. **Through working with our partners, we aim to reduce road deaths and injuries by 20% in Royal Berkshire over the next five years.**

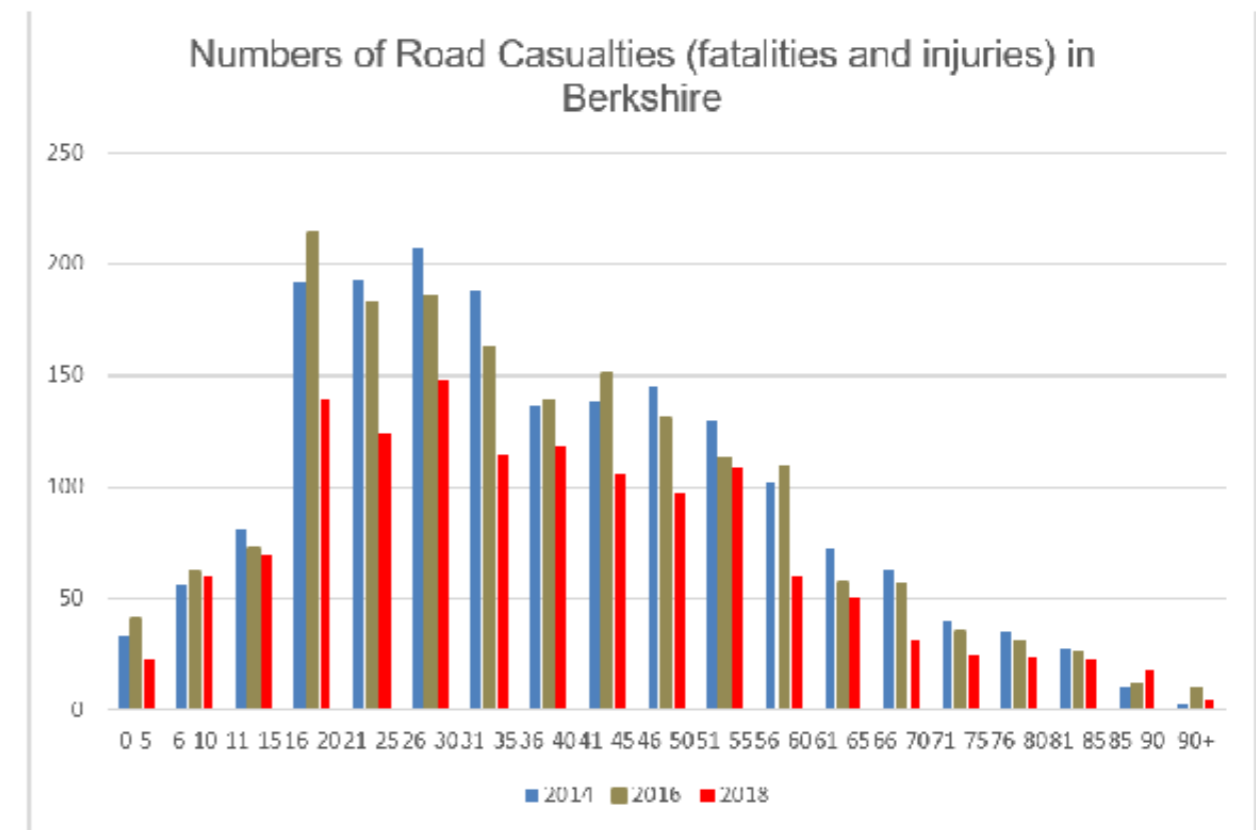
We proposed to deliver a comprehensive road safety programme filling the identified gap at the 11-15 year group, introduced via Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE). We have developed an approach working collaboratively with Berkshire’s Road Safety professionals to deliver a consistent, unified and targeted approach. We have worked to educate young people on the dangers that the roads can pose. We have continued to support Safe Drive Stay Alive, reaching approximately 4,000 young adults each year. We have developed our Local Safety Plans to include offering road safety education to children in Year Seven in schools in each of the six areas within Berkshire. In 2019/20, every area currently has a target of reaching 50% of the schools in their areas. This will provide early preventative advice for young people, before they move into the high risk age groups.

In preparing this Evidence Base, we have undertaken an analysis of the most recent data available for the Thames Valley area and have validated that conclusions reached in the 2016 Evidence Base remain appropriate.

In undertaking this analysis, there are some areas of note. The data for road injuries

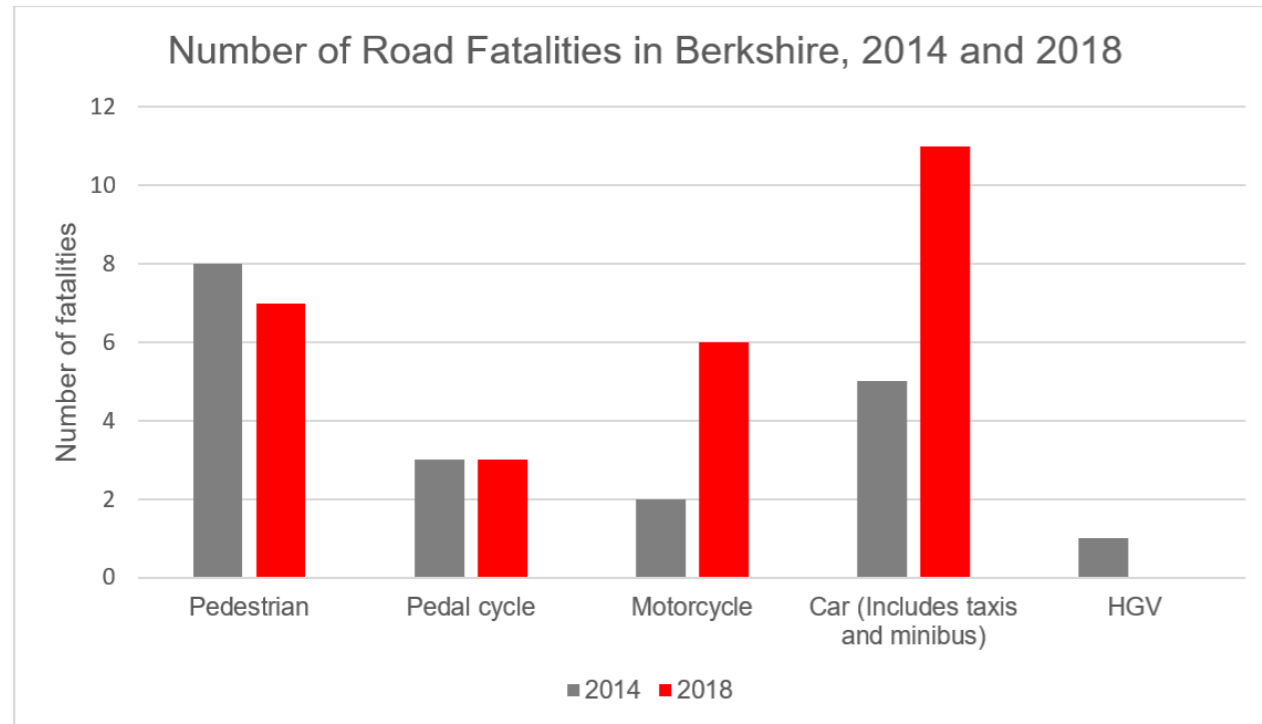


and fatalities in 2018, when compared with 2014, shows an overall drop of 28%. There is a drop in casualties (fatalities and injuries) for the majority of age groups. However, the highest-risk groups for road casualties are still young people, although we have seen some variation in the highest risk group between 2014, 2016 and 2018.



Overall and by a significant amount, the highest number of casualties nationally occur in cars. However, the Department for Transport report consistently finds that per road user mile, pedal cycles, motorbikes and to a less extent pedestrians, are at most of risk of injury. Motorcyclists are at particular risk of death. Nationally, approximately 2% of households have access to a motorcycle.¹ However, we can see from our own data that they made up approximately 10% of the total road casualties in 2018, which is supported by national data.

¹ DfT Motorcycle use in England 2016



We can see that, in 2018, motorcyclists made up 22% of our total fatalities, despite making up 10% of casualties overall and accounting for approximately 2% of the population. In response to this, we have started to offer Biker Down workshops. These are part of a national programme and offer first aid and road safety advice specifically for motorcyclists. These are run in collaboration with Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service to help prevent motorcycle accidents across the Thames Valley.

Overall, we can see that our preventive strategy, which targets school aged children to prevent accidents occurring in young adults, is sound. We will continue to monitor our performance in this area in line with the proposal agreed by the Fire Authority in 2016.



Water Safety

At the time of the Service Redesign in 2016/17, 400 people on average drowned accidentally in the UK each year.² It was also estimated that 44% of the people who drowned had no intention of entering the water.³

Due to the severity and impact of such events on our community, we believed supporting the National Water Safety Forum's Drowning Prevention Strategy (2016-2026) would be highly valuable, despite the fact that the fire and rescue service has no statutory responsibility for water safety education.

Following public consultation, informed by the Prevention Evidence Base, the Fire Authority agreed one proposal related to water safety. This was:

- To align to the UK Drowning Prevention Strategy 2016-26, with the stated aim of reducing the number of drowning incidents by 50% by 2026.**

Since the work in 2016 was carried out, the national figures of those drowning each year have fallen. In 2018, 263 people in the UK lost their lives in accidental drownings.⁴ This suggests that, nationally, the Drowning Prevention Strategy is working to reduce the number of accidental drownings.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service does not attend all incidents where people get into difficulty in water, so our figures may not reflect overall trends, but in 2018/19, we were called to 12 incidents where people needed to be rescued from water after entering accidentally. Whilst this is a reduction in the number of incidents attended in 2017/18 (20), these numbers do fluctuate year-on-year so it would be too early to draw any conclusions from this data.

Our operational response includes personnel that are highly trained and knowledgeable in the behaviour and risks associated with bodies of open water. This is further supported by a dedicated team who both develop and deliver a programme of education, which will influence the knowledge and behaviours of our young people and wider communities.

² [The UK Drowning Prevention Strategy 2016-2026](#)

³ [The UK Drowning Prevention Strategy 2016-2026](#)

⁴ [National Water Safety Forum 2018 Water Fatalities Report](#)



We worked to include water safety messaging in our school visits, which are offered to every school in the local area, as set out in the Local Safety Plans. Alongside road safety, in 2019/20 we set ourselves a target to offer water safety education to all school students in Year Seven, with a target of reaching a minimum of 50% of schools.

We will continue to work to reduce accidental drowning events by 50% by 2026.

Health and Wellbeing of Berkshire's Communities

The trusted brand of the Fire and Rescue Service has, over many recent years, allowed us to gain invited access to people's private dwellings to provide Home Fire Safety Checks. The Home Fire Safety Check was initially designed to help keep residents safe through the provision of information, advice and, in appropriate circumstances, the provision of 10-year smoke alarms.

As a result of the research undertaken for the 2016 Service Redesign consultation, we recognised that areas of the population which the Fire Service can gain access to, through programmes such as Home Fire Safety Checks, had a risk profile and contributory risk factors which were also of interest to partner agencies, such as health and social care. Following public consultation, informed by the Prevention Evidence Base, the Fire Authority agreed one proposal related to health and wellbeing of Berkshire's communities. This was:

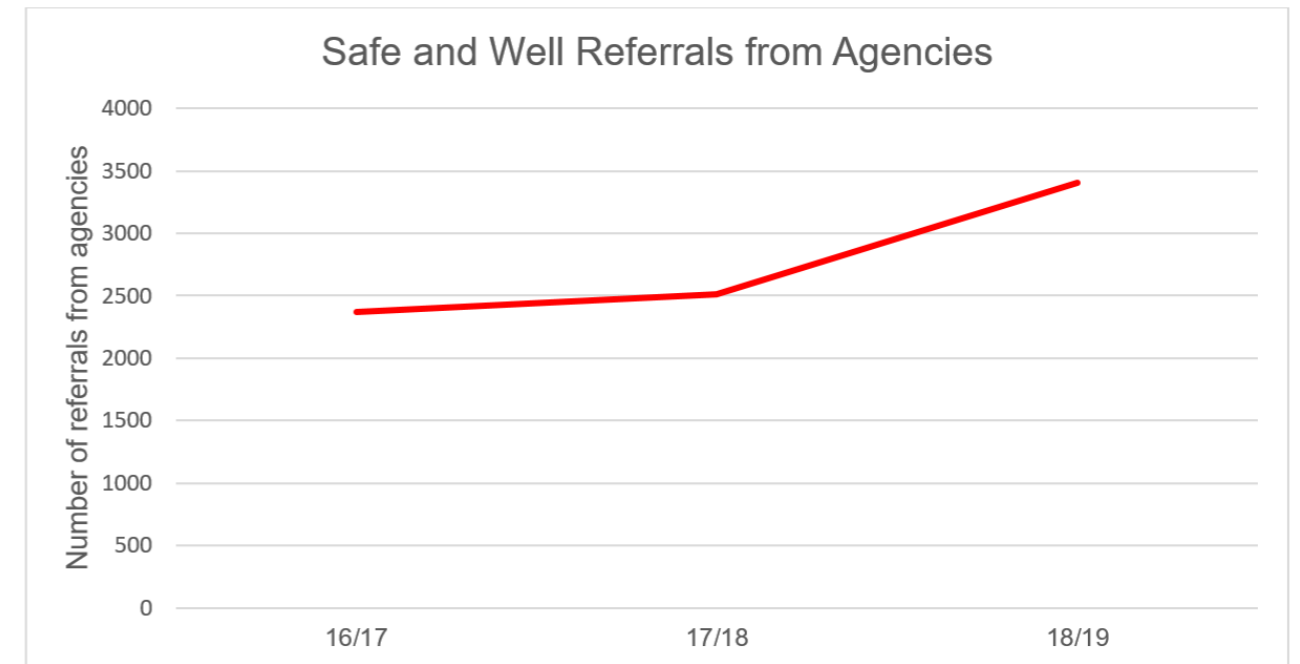
5. Fire and Rescue staff completing normal Home Fire Safety Checks would expand the scope of the visit to look for other vulnerabilities to the resident.

We have widened the scope of the Home Fire Safety Check to encompass other areas of wellbeing and, when appropriate, aiding residents ourselves or referring them to other agencies better placed to help them. These visits, now known as Safe and Well Visits, help us to identify a multitude of other factors that may be detrimental to a resident's wellbeing and enables us to address these. We also look for lifestyle factors that may be detrimental to the wellbeing of firefighters who may need to attend in an incident, such as hoarding.

Additionally, we developed the Adults at Risk programme, providing training to external agencies that may encounter vulnerable adults, enabling them to work more effectively



with us to provide a more efficient service to our communities. This includes an awareness of the ways in which a vulnerable adult's fire risk is increased, who is more at risk and how they can refer individuals to us. Moving forward, we propose to continue working with partners in order to increase referrals to us to help target those most at risk. As set out in the chart below, we have seen an increase in the number of agency referrals being received since 2017, which inform our programme of Safe and Well Visits.



Between 2017 and 2018, we fitted approximately 19,000 smoke detectors, 3,400 sensory alarms, 290 sets of fire retardant textiles and 34 locking letterboxes. We will continue to provide assistive technologies to those who need them as part of our Safe and Well Visits. If we identify an issue during a Safe and Well Visit, we will ask the individual concerned if they are happy for us to refer them to another agency. This, for example, could be referring an elderly person to Age UK or a Falls Prevention pathway for additional support. We will only do this if we have the individual's consent, or unless our duty of care outweighs the need for consent - for instance in cases of abuse.

We currently provide mandatory training for all staff on safeguarding both adults and children. This ensures that all staff are aware of the signs of abuse and/or neglect and are aware of the process to deal with concerns.



As part of the 2019-2023 Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan, the Fire Authority set a Strategic Commitment, following public consultation, to seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions. This Strategic Commitment supports the National Framework position on prevention activity. In our previous Evidence Base, we intended to explore the feasibility of developing Critical Intervention Teams. However, to resource such a function would be at the detriment of our core functions. We also believe we can positively contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda through the delivery of Safe and Well Visits supported by signposting and referrals to appropriate agencies. We intend to continue this approach as part of our ongoing Prevention Strategy.

Developing Young People

In 2016, we found that there are a range of health and social factors which affect children and young people. If left unchallenged, these will last through into adulthood.

According to estimates from Public Health England, one in five children are obese by the time they leave primary school.⁵ Obese children are more likely to become overweight adults and to suffer premature ill health and mortality.⁶ Over 10,000 hospital admissions each year are directly attributable to obesity.⁷

Although youth unemployment levels are currently relatively low, at approximately half a million, we recognise the need for pathways to employment for the young people in our communities. The costs of long-term youth unemployment are enormous, both for the young people themselves and their communities. It means lower earnings, more unemployment, and more ill health later in life.

Because of this, we identified in 2016 that we needed to ensure that the young people in our communities have a holistic approach to their health and wellbeing and options for employment.

⁵ [National Child Measurement Programme, England 2018/19 School Year](#)

⁶ [Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet, England, 2019](#)

⁷ [House of Commons Library Youth Unemployment Statistics, October 2019](#)



Following public consultation, informed by the Prevention Evidence Base, the Fire Authority agreed two proposals related to the health and wellbeing of Berkshire's communities. These were:

- 6. To continue to expand our schemes to deliver a range of services to support children's health and wellbeing. We aimed to do this on a cost recovery basis; and**
- 7. To develop relationships with countywide organisations to progress pathways to employment and apprenticeships for young people.**

In relation to proposal six, we undertook a range of pilots to determine the most effective and efficient way of delivering against this commitment on a cost recovery basis. In undertaking this work and following review, we focused on the delivery of two specific programmes for children and young people – Fire Cadets (previously known as Young Firefighters) and FireSafe.

Fire Cadets

We recognised that we can use our influence to challenge poor health and social factors by developing a range of activities designed for young people, building their personal qualities and attributes, making them more attractive to prospective employers. Since then, we have developed our Fire Cadets programme, which is now accredited by the National Fire Chiefs Council. The programme is designed for young people aged between 12 and 16 and runs throughout term time at four fire stations: Newbury, Crowthorne, Whitley Wood and Maidenhead.

Since its inception, the programme has been delivered to over 500 young people and is now in its 20th year.

Throughout the programme, cadets not only learn about fire safety and get to practise their skills running out hoses and putting out pretend fires, they also take part in a broader programme of wellbeing.

The programme also equips them with many of the interpersonal skills that will be useful later in life in their future employment. The cadets are able to take part in team exercises, which help to strengthen their social skills, and are given the opportunity to improve their leadership abilities, working within a supportive group of peers and instructors.



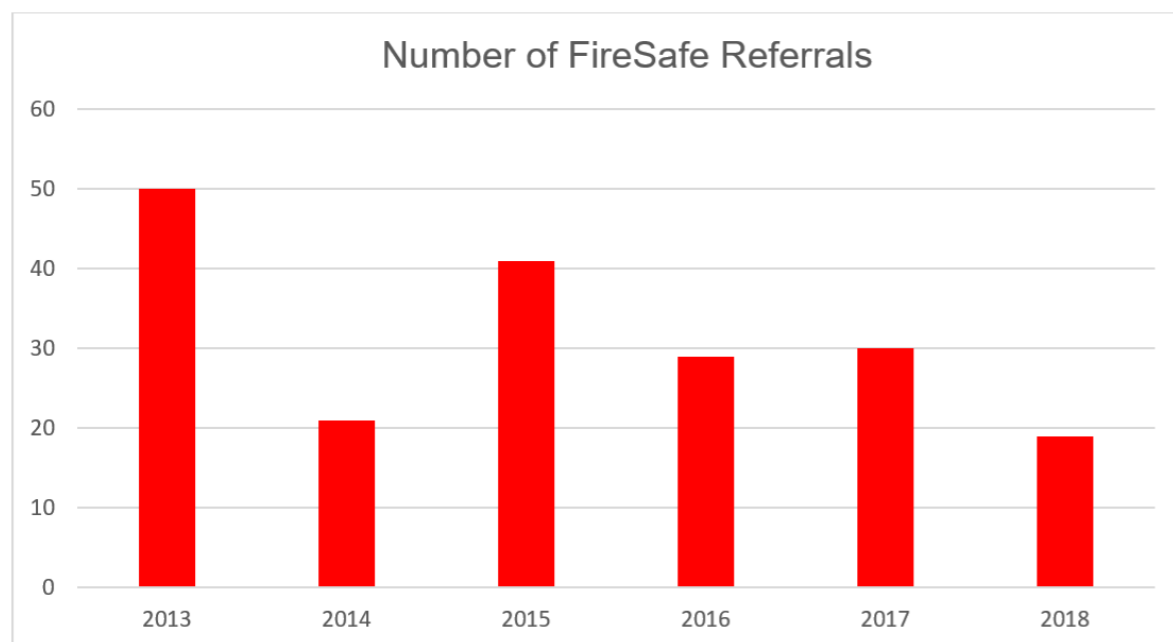
FireSafe

We also worked to develop our FireSafe initiative. Our experience has shown us that early intervention is key in preventing fire-setting behaviours in young people. Therefore, our FireSafe programme aims to make the young people exhibiting these tendencies aware of the impact of their behaviour and, through discussion, gives them the opportunity to explore different ways of dealing with difficult situations.

We have trained and experienced safety education professionals who can offer help at an early stage to those needing support and education.

The programme will usually commence with a priority Safe and Well Visit for the family home/s. This helps to make sure that everyone knows how best to keep safe and that they know what to do in the event of a fire. Following this Visit, an assessment is made to consider the young person's needs, and an individual action plan is formulated and tailored to the young person.

The programme is delivered in a combination of educational input and/or a series of visits to ensure that the consequences of fire setting behaviours are understood. The programme can be delivered in a variety of ways and in a number of locations, for example at home or at school.



Pathways to Employment

We have also introduced apprenticeships across areas of the Service, within departments such as Human Resources, Business Support, Information Technology and Facilities. These apprenticeships give the young people in our County a pathway into employment and on-the-job training, which will greatly benefit them in later life. We have had seven apprentices so far within the Service.

Our apprenticeships provide the opportunity to gain an additional qualification; enhancing individual knowledge and skill sets and increasing the capacity, capability, and resilience of our workforce; further improving the service we provide to the communities of Berkshire. The apprenticeships offer an opportunity to increase confidence and to learn valuable skills for later life, whether this be within the Service or elsewhere. Apprentices are able to learn from experienced staff who can pass on their knowledge and skills, enabling the integration of a new generation of workforce.

We have also become the first Fire and Rescue Service to take part in the Change100 programme, run by Leonard Cheshire Disability. The programme gives talented students and graduates, who have a disability or long-term health condition, the opportunity for 100 days of paid employment, including mentorship throughout the programme. So far, we have welcomed 12 interns into the Service. We are looking to continue to work with the programme to provide even more young people with the opportunity to gain paid work experience.

This commitment is embedded within our People Strategy. We are continuing to look for opportunities to expand our apprenticeship programme and alternative pathways to employment.





FireSafe Adult Specialists

Building on our FireSafe Programme, and following public consultation, the Fire Authority agreed to:

8. **Introduce counselling to reduce fire-setting activity amongst adults as a mainstream activity rather than as a pilot.**

We have undertaken pilot activity previously and recognise adult fire setting is a complex area that will require specialist training. We are currently undertaking further staff development and recommend that we continue to pilot activity in this area to understand the implications of deliver this specialist service. Following further pilot activity, we propose to undertake an evaluation to review the benefits and implications of offering this service longer-term.



» PREVENTION STRATEGY 2020-2023

Moving forward, we intend to continue to deliver against the original proposals, as agreed in 2017, in the areas outlined in this document. However, we intend to refine our Strategy where we believe it can further mitigate local risk. To summarise:

1. **We propose to introduce a risk-based programme of follow-up Safe and Well Visits for the most vulnerable cases;**
2. **We propose to rename our target groups for Safe and Well Visits to better reflect the type of risk posed to 'Risk to Individuals' and 'Risk to Households';**
3. **We propose to within our Road Safety Programme include targeted activity for motorcyclists based on risk;**
4. **We propose to focus our activities in support of Children and Young People through our road and water safety education programmes, Fire Cadets and FireSafe; and**
5. **We propose to continue to pilot an Adult FireSafe programme to fully understand the implications and potential benefits of this activity.**



» BOOK A SAFE AND WELL VISIT

A Safe and Well Visit is a free service that we provide to eligible residents. Safe and Well Visits are tailored to individual needs, relating to health and wellbeing, as well as fire risk reduction. A Safe and Well Visit will take place in the home and can be arranged at a convenient time.

During the Visit, we will:

- Ask a series of fire risk assessment questions.
- Check each room of your property to identify any potential hazards.
- Check that you have working smoke alarms on each level of your home and where appropriate, fit free ten-year smoke alarms.
- Provide fire safety advice and show you how to test your smoke alarms.
- Work with you to create an escape plan for you and your family.
- Provide advice, signpost or refer you to our partner agencies that can support you with health or wellbeing needs.

Find out if you or a someone you know qualifies for a free Safe and Well Visit at rbfrs.co.uk/safeandwell.



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