



Implementation of Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Recommendations

Progress Update 3 – Spring 2022

For further information please visit [RBFRS-High-rise Guidance](#)



Contents

»»	Introduction	3
»»	Methodology	5
»»	Recommendations Overview	9
»»	Progress Summary	16
	Knowledge and understanding of materials used in high-rise buildings	16
	Visits under section 7(2) (d) of Fire and Rescue Services Act	16
	Building Plans	17
	Communication between control room and incident commander	17
	Emergency Calls	18
	Emergency calls – transition from stay put to get out	19
	Emergency Call – Other Control Rooms	20
	Command and Control – breathing apparatus crews	20
	Command and Control – Communication	21
	Equipment	22
	Evacuation	23
	Evacuation – Smokehoods	23
	Cooperation between emergency services – Joint Doctrine	23
	Cooperation between emergency services – information sharing	25
»»	Non-Fire Service Recommendations	26
»»	High Rise Residential Buildings Project	30
	Table 3: The RBFRS’ performance dashboard as of 6 th May 2022 in regards to the HRRB32	
»»	Next Steps	33



Introduction

On 14th June 2017, a fire took hold in Grenfell Tower, a high rise residential building within London. This sadly resulted in 72 people losing their lives.

On 30th October 2019, The Grenfell Tower Inquiry ('the inquiry'), chaired by Sir Martin Moore-Bick, published its phase 1 report. This highlighted a number of serious issues and provided 46 recommendations for Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) and other stakeholder groups including building owners and Government.

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has provided significant investment to ensure the Service is able to respond appropriately to the recommendations. Ultimately, we can no longer fully rely on the buildings we attend to behave in the way they were designed to and how we might have expected them to in the past.

We must ensure that we have the correct arrangements in place to keep residents and staff safe, not just in incidents in high rise residential buildings, but all incidents across the complex built environment. Furthermore, where we can support others in acting on the recommendations and making improvements for the benefit of resident safety, we will.

This is our 3rd edition of this report which seeks to provide an update on the progress being made against the recommendations through the Service's Built Environment Programme (BEP) including an update on our High Rise Residential Building (HRRB) project. Our intention is to provide further progress reports every six months until the completion of the programme.

We acknowledge the announcement on the 18th May 2022 to commence the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the introduction of Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 and will include updates on these within our next edition of the report.





Following the Grenfell Tower incident Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) introduced a four phase plan to manage immediate and anticipated implications as shown in fig 1.



Fig 1: Four phase approach to Grenfell

The BEP was established as part of Phase 3 with the following key objectives:

- 1- To provide assurance that the 46 recommendations within the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1 report are assessed and that any areas of concern identified are appropriately addressed to help mitigate risk
- 2- To provide assurance that targeted 'high risk' premises have been audited and are compliant with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and where areas of concerns have been identified a joined up approach (Protection, Prevention and Response) will be taken to help mitigate the risks
- 3- To ensure a coordinated response to both internal and external impacts including; legislative changes, further Grenfell Inquiry recommendations and additional areas of improvements identified within the programme.*

Our aim is to complete objective 1 and 2 by December 2022. It was always our intention to work on objective 1 and 2 first as we believe these pose the most risk to residents and our staff.

Some areas requiring significant sector wide change maybe beyond the direct control of RBFRS. Where this is the case we will continue to work and engage with others to support, and influence wider change where we can.

*We have simplified four original objectives into three since our last progress report.



Methodology

Gap Analysis

In early 2020 a gap analysis was carried out assessing the inquiry recommendations against the organisational position at the time. This involved engaging and triangulating evidence across a number of stakeholders, including; frontline crews, fire control, Fire Safety Inspectors and prevention staff as well as a complex network of external sources including NFCC working groups, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) (known as MHCLG at the time) and an array of reviews such as the Hackitt Report, Raising the Bar and State of Fire and Rescue report. This allowed us to properly understand the challenges we face locally.

The approach we have taken to systematically identify, prioritise, deliver and monitor actions to date include;

- Completion of gap analysis between the 46 recommendations and current evidenced organisational position
- Establish a structured programme of work, supporting existing governance structures and change approaches
- Translating identified gaps/recommendations into risks, using the recognisable RBFRS organisational risk management approach. This has allowed us to address both the specific recommendations and underlying issues where appropriate
- Identify and commission appropriate treatments/tasks with responsible owners and resource
- Peer reviews within the sector and external associates
- Established an assurance approach to verify results of actions taken so far, whilst linking into the organisational assurance framework to support longer term continuous learning
- Identified, engaged and directly supported a wide network of groups and individuals to ensure we learn from and provide learning to the wider sector. (see figure 3)
- Responding to new information from internal and external sources and adapting our plans as required
- Ensure visibility, scrutiny and performance management of progress through a number of internal and external reporting arrangements.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

To ensure the Programme is delivering effective change which is aligned to the Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives and meeting our duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010, a series of actions have been taken to establish a consistent and proactive approach to conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EIA).

EIAs are a useful tool that can help to identify any groups or individuals who could be impacted either positively or negatively by a planned activity or change, for example when policies are amended or new training is delivered.



Implementation of Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Recommendations

An EIA Matrix has been set up within the Programme which has enabled us to identify the activities that require an assessment, assign owners and ensure regular reviews of the EIA and activities are conducted. EIA is a standing agenda item at all of our work stream and programme board meetings allowing time for consultation and discussion. These are also captured using our organisational register.

The work we are doing with EIAs within the programme has enabled us to identify areas of work that need adjusting to meet various needs this has included how we communicate with the residents of high-rise residential buildings. We have made adjustments to our [high-rise guidance pages](#) on our website and will make these easily accessible via a QR code poster which will be sent to all HRRBs to be over the coming weeks.

Currently, we are in the process of collating materials such as the NFCC's Equality of Access Guidance Documents and additional workforce data to support these assessments and consultations of activities in their developmental stages. We plan to collate further information on the demographics of our communities using the 2021 Census data as it becomes available.

Evaluation and Assurance

Many of the recommendations directed at Fire and Rescue Services within the inquiry phase 1 report are aimed at the training and upskilling of our staff. To provide confidence that our changes are having the positive impact we expect and that these can be measured and assured a learning assurance framework has been created by the Programme. The basis of this is to set out key criteria during the development of learning which enables us to measure 'success' at the end. These criteria or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are defined and then tracked throughout the process to give a clearer overview of the impact of the training.

We evaluate what we have achieved within the Programme using our organisational evaluation toolkit. Table 1 within this report provides a RAG rating showing the progress we have made against the 29 recommendations directed towards Fire and Rescue Services. We review these monthly and do not mark any of these as complete until we are entirely satisfied that our crews have a thorough understanding of what we are trying to achieve and we can see it is making a difference.

We have a programme of assurance exercises, with further planned between now and the end of the year, looking at areas such as communications, Incident Command, testing of new equipment and mass evacuation. These will provide us with learning and assurance of the improvements we have implemented to date. These include our own staff including Thames Valley Fire Control Service and our partner agencies

We have delivered crew engagement sessions where we are taking the opportunity to meet with all watches so they can gain a better understanding of what the Programme is doing but more importantly so that we can capture their feedback on the work we have done so far and what they would like to see in the future.

Our current assurance methodology is designed so that activity can continued to be assured and developed continuously well after the programme has closed.



Programme Structure

Within the structure we have a central programme coordination team which is led by Noosha Churchill and will span all work streams. This acts as an escalation and monitoring forum and is responsible for coordinating common features, including;

- Training
- Policy
- Assurance
- Communications
- New Information Management

The Programme has senior leadership sponsorship from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. To manage the scale of change we have arranged the Programme into five work streams (see fig 2).

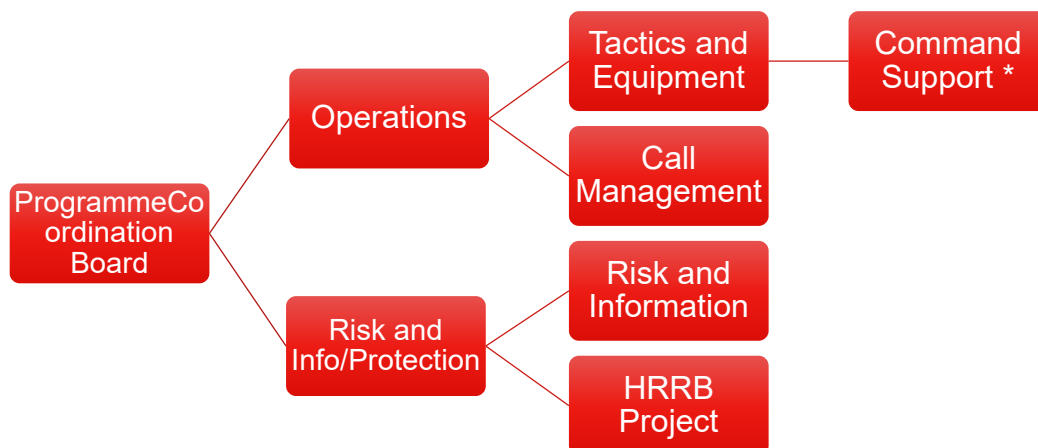


Fig 2: Programme work stream structure.

*additional work stream added January 2022

Collaboration

Throughout the Programme we ensure we are working with others at both regional and national levels across a complex network of stakeholders to ensure we can support and benefit from wider sector learning and activity. Fig 3 illustrates some of the groups we are working with. We have taken part in cross border exercises with both Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue and London Fire Brigade which has allowed us to capture learning to support further improvement and assurance. We have a programme of assurance exercises planned between now and the end of year and we will be inviting our partner agencies including Local Authorities to take part.

The work we are doing with our HRRBs within Berkshire ensures that we are working closely with the Building Owners and Responsible Persons as well as our partners within Local



Authority Housing teams. We start communications at the earliest opportunity when we identify a potential prohibition of a building. Our aim is to make joint decisions with our partner agencies where possible and offer joint visits to assist with this. We are working to develop this further by creating a memorandum of understanding with the 6 local unitary authorities in how we deal with situations within our high and medium rise blocks of flats.

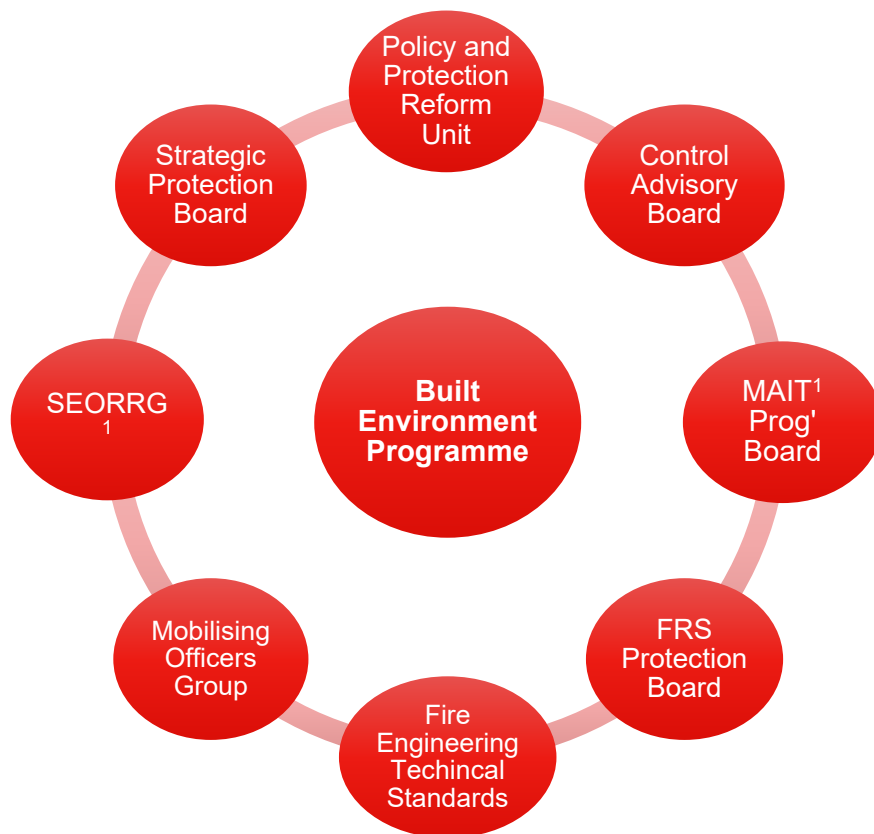


Fig 3: Current network of external support groups

1: MAIT: Multi Agency Incident Transfer / SEORRG: South East Operational Response and Resilience Group

We continue to want to help lead the sector and have a number of middle and senior managers actively participating in national NFCC groups. For example we have a senior user representative and a strategic lead at the NFCC MAIT hub procurement project board. The Service is working with the Protection, Policy & Reform Unit within NFCC and the Building Regulations Advisory Committee in regards to becoming a delivery partner for the Golden Thread. This will provide us with an excellent opportunity to lead the sector and gain a better understanding of the future requirements within this area.

We are also contributing by developing and sharing a number of online training packages including specialist learning where we have identified a sector gap including modules on external wall systems, for example. These are available for other Fire and Rescue Service via a shared portal known as FRS learn.



Recommendations Overview

From the 46 phase 1 inquiry recommendations there are 29 aimed at Fire and Rescue Services. 14 of these are solely aimed at London Fire Brigade with the remaining 15 directed to Fire and Rescue Services more broadly.

A further 11 recommend a change to the law to put new requirements on building owners and managers. This process is underway with the introduction of clarifications to the Fire Safety Act and the introduction of the Building Safety Act. A further 3 recommendations are aimed at building owners and managers but do not require legal changes.

RBFRS believe that it is appropriate to not only consider the specific Fire Service recommendations, but seek to consider and support other stakeholders in improving safety across the built environment for the benefit of Berkshire communities. Therefore, we have included all 46 recommendations within our risk assessment methodology and have risk treatments and tasks in place beyond those directly aimed at fire and rescue services.

Table 1 provides an overview of the recommendations directed towards fire and rescue services, including those for London Fire Brigade specifically. Other non-fire service specific recommendations are addressed in Table two from page 26.

While Table 1 (pages 11-15) provides a high-level status overview this is followed by further supporting narrative on pages 16-25.

The progress key supports an understanding of each recommendation's current status, with table 1 also illustrating our position as of our second progress report in February 2021.

Progress Status Key	
R	Has significant issues that are affecting deliverable/timescale
A	Has issues that may affect deliverable/timescales
G	On track, no issues or risks identified
C	Task completed
NS	Task not started



Implementation of Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Recommendations

No	Grenfell Tower Inquiry's phase 1 recommendation	W/S	Feb 2022	May 2022	Anticipated completion Date
2	All fire and rescue services ensure that their personnel at all levels understand the risk of fire taking hold in the external walls of high-rise buildings and know how to recognise it when it occurs.	Tactics & Equip			May - 93% completed. This will be complete when we achieve 100%
3	The LFB review, and revise as appropriate, Appendix 1 to PN6336 ² to ensure that it fully reflects the principles in GRA 3.2. ³	Risk & Info			Complete
4	The LFB ensure that all officers of the rank of Crew Manager and above are trained in carrying out the requirements of PN633 ² relating to the inspection of high-rise buildings.	Risk & Info			May - 79% completed. This will be complete when we achieve 100%
7	All fire and rescue services be equipped to receive and store electronic plans and to make them available to incident commanders and control room managers.	Risk & Info			Complete
10	The LFB review its policies on communications between the control room and the incident commander.	Tactics & Equip			Complete
11	All officers who may be expected to act as incident commanders (i.e. all those above the rank of Crew Manager) receive training directed to the specific requirements of communication with the control room.	Tactics & Equip			May - 92% Ops/78% TVFCS completed. This will be complete when we achieve 100%



Implementation of Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Recommendations

No	Grenfell Tower Inquiry's phase 1 recommendation	W/S	Feb 2022	May 2022	Anticipated completion Date
12	All CROs ⁴ of Assistant Operations Manager rank and above receive training directed to the specific requirements of communication with the incident commander.	Tactics& Equip			Complete
13	A dedicated communication link be provided between the senior officer in the control room and the incident commander.	Tactics& Equip			July – Awaiting training
14	The LFB's policies be amended to draw a clearer distinction between callers seeking advice and callers who believe they are trapped and need rescuing.	Call Mngt			Complete
15	The LFB provide regular and more effective refresher training to CROs ⁴ at all levels, including supervisors.	Call Mngt			Sept 2022
16	All fire and rescue services develop policies for handling a large number of FSG calls simultaneously.	Call Mngt			TBC - Awaiting publication of NOG
17	Electronic systems be developed to record FSG information in the control room and display it simultaneously at the bridgehead and in any command units.	Command Support			March 2023 – This is likely to run beyond the current anticipated length of the programme
18	Policies to be developed to manage the transition from 'Stay Put' to 'Get Out'	Call Mngt			Complete



Implementation of Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Recommendations

No	Grenfell Tower Inquiry's phase 1 recommendation	W/S	Feb 2022	May 2022	Anticipated completion Date
19	Control room staff receive training directed specifically to handling such a change of advice and conveying it effectively to callers.	Call Mngt			Aug 2022
20	Steps be taken to investigate methods by which assisting control rooms can obtain access to the information available to the host control room.	Call Mngt			Complete
22	The LFB develop policies and training to ensure better control of deployments and the use of resources.	Tactics& Equip			July 2022
23	The LFB develop policies and training to ensure that better information is obtained from crews returning from deployments and that the information is recorded in a form that enables it to be made available immediately to the incident commander (and thereafter to the command units and the control room)	Tactics& Equip			July 2022
24	The LFB develop a communication system to enable direct communication between the control room and the incident commander and improve the means of communication between the incident commander and the bridgehead.	Command Support			March 2023 – This is likely to run beyond the current anticipated length of the programme
25	The LFB investigate the use of modern communication techniques to provide a direct line of communication between the control room and the bridgehead, allowing information to be transmitted directly between the control room and the bridgehead and providing an integrated system of recording FSG information and the results of deployments.	Command Support			March 2023 – This is likely to run beyond the current anticipated length of the programme



Implementation of Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Recommendations

No	Grenfell Tower Inquiry's phase 1 recommendation	W/S	Feb 2022	May 2022	Anticipated completion Date
26	The LFB urgently take steps to obtain equipment that enables firefighters wearing helmets and breathing apparatus to communicate with the bridgehead effectively, including when operating in high-rise buildings.	Tactics& Equip			Nov 2022
27	Urgent steps be taken to ensure that the command support system is fully operative on all command units and that crews are trained in its use.	Command Support			March 2023 – This is likely to run beyond the current anticipated length of the programme
29	Fire and rescue services develop policies for partial and total evacuation of high-rise residential buildings and training to support them.	Tactics& Equip			May - 99% Ops/98% TVFCS completed. This will be complete when we achieve 100%
34	All fire and rescue services be equipped with smoke hoods to assist in the evacuation of occupants through smoke-filled exit routes.	Tactics& Equip			Complete
40	That each emergency services must communicate the declaration of a Major Incident to all other Category 1 Responders as soon as possible.	Call Mngt			Complete



Implementation of Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Recommendations

No	Grenfell Tower Inquiry's phase 1 recommendation	W/S	Feb 2022	May 2022	Anticipated completion Date
41	That on the declaration of a Major Incident clear lines of communication must be established as soon as possible between the control rooms of the individual emergency services.	Call Mngt			Complete
42	That a single point of contact should be designated within each control room to facilitate such communication.	Call Mngt			Complete
43	That a "METHANE" ⁵ message should be sent as soon as possible by the emergency service declaring a Major Incident.	Call Mngt			Complete
44	Steps be taken to investigate the compatibility of the LFB systems with those of the MPS and the LAS with a view to enabling all three emergency services' systems to read each other's messages.	Call Mngt			TBC: Reliant on national MAIT programme
46	The LFB, the MPS, the LAS and the London local authorities all investigate ways of improving the collection of information about survivors and making it available more rapidly to those wishing to make contact with them.	Tactics& Equip			Dec 2022



Implementation of Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Recommendations

- 2: Policy number 633 (PN633) is the brigade's policy on high-rise firefighting.
- 3: Generic risk assessments 3.2 (GRA 3.2) is national operational guidance on high-rise firefighting.
- 4: Control room officers (CROs) work in fire and rescue services' control rooms.
- 5: 'METHANE' message is the recognised common model for passing incident information between the emergency services and their control rooms
- 6: MAIT –Multi Agency Incident Transfer



Progress Summary

Further detail of the Service's progress against each of the 29 recommendations aimed specifically at Fire and Rescue Services can be found below.

Knowledge and understanding of materials used in high-rise buildings

- 2. that all fire and rescue services ensure that their personnel at all levels understand the risk of fire taking hold in the external walls of high-rise buildings and know how to recognise it when it occurs.*

Initial guidance was delivered during 2019/2020 to operational crews.

Fires in Tall buildings Operational Information Note (OIN) was published in December 2020. This sets out procedures that firefighters should follow when responding to a fire in high-rise buildings. This also covers 'buildings with external cladding' and operational considerations when attending an incident.

RBFRS has developed an online assessable training package which has been quality assured by an external associate as well as peer reviewed by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). We believe we are one of the first FRS' to have produced a training package in this area and have made this available to other Fire and Rescue Services to use. The package includes; Legislation, cladding systems and materials, mechanism of fire spread and fire performance testing. This has been made available to all of our operational crews as well as our Fire Safety Inspectors.

The Programme will deliver a number of assurance exercises during 2022 which will look to test and assure crews understanding within this area.

Visits under section 7(2) (d) of Fire and Rescue Services Act

- 3. that the LFB review, and revise as appropriate, Appendix 1 to PN633 to ensure that it fully reflects the principles in GRA 3.2⁶;*
- 4. that the LFB ensure that all officers of the rank of Crew Manager and above are trained in carrying out the requirements of PN633 relating to the inspection of high-rise buildings.*

7(2)(d) visits enable Fire Fighters to learn about buildings and be more familiar with local risk. They help us prepare for incidents and check the risk information we hold is accurate.

Recommendation 3 has been implemented – The Service has completed a review of its current policy and a new Operational Risk Information policy has been developed and aligns with National Operational Guidance (NOG). The Service is currently reviewing its wider operational risk approach.

Recommendation 4 – Initial guidance was delivered to our crews in July 2020. The service has developed an online Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI) Visits training package for all



operational crews alongside a new data collection form. We are in the process of ensuring that all crews have completed the training and the associated knowledge test.

The Service has also introduced joint visits between our operational crews and our Fire Safety Inspectors providing an opportunity to share knowledge, experience and understand the risks each of the areas are looking for.

6: *The Government has now withdrawn Generic Risk Assessment 3.2 as its content has been incorporated in National Operational Guidance. GRA 3.2 is available as legacy guidance here:*
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/generic-risk-assessment-32-fighting-fires-in-high-rise-buildings>

Building Plans

- 7. that all fire and rescue services be equipped to receive and store electronic plans and to make them available to incident commanders and control room managers.*

The Service is able to receive and store electronic plans and can access these via our Incident Command Unit. Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) are able to access floor plans via a mobile data terminal if they should require them.

To fully implement this recommendation there needs to be a consistent national approach to enable FRS' to prepare for the volume, frequency and format of information that building owners and managers will be required to share with FRS'. We expect The Building Safety Act and associated regulations to address this.

Communication between control room and incident commander

- 10. that the LFB review its policies on communications between the control room and the incident commander;*
- 11. that all officers who may be expected to act as incident commanders (i.e. all those above the rank of Crew Manager) receive training directed to the specific requirements of communication with the control room;*
- 12. that all CROs of Assistant Operations Manager rank and above receive training directed to the specific requirements of communication with the incident commander*
- 13. that a dedicated communication link be provided between the senior officer in the control room and the incident commander.*

These recommendations are about improving the communication between the control room and the Incident Commander in charge at the incident ground. TVFCS is a joint control room funded by RBFRS, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services.

The Service has carried out a review of its policies and training against current processes. A comprehensive gap analysis was completed with minor changes being made to policies and a number of our existing training packages being updated as well new ones being introduced. A radio procedures online training package has been developed and made available to all RBFRS operational crews and Thames Valley Fire Control staff.



In January 2022, the BEP introduced an additional workstream to review Command Support seeking to ensure RBFRS has effective and resilient 'end to end' arrangements in place. This work goes beyond the original scope of the BEP, but the recommendations provided an opportunity for continued improvement in the area.

The way in which TVFCS delivers control room services differs from the approach taken by London Fire Brigade (LFB) in a number of ways. All TVFCS staff are given training on communicating with incident commanders and incident command points in their initial training and this training is refreshed on a regular basis. More frequent refresher training on Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) will be available, which contains specific content relating to the information required by incident commanders when dealing with an incident where persons trapped by fire require rescue.

An Evacuation Commander Operational Information Note has been published which specifies that a single point of contact within TVFCS needs to be established to liaise with the evacuation commander on the incident ground. If this creates a capacity issue then a L2 or L3 officer will be mobilised to TVFCS to perform this role. There is also a dedicated radio operative who will liaise with the incident ground, usually the driver of the appliance or command unit if in attendance. A training package to support this process will be developed and rolled out to all operational staff.

The Programme is planning a number of assurance exercises during 2022 which will look to test and assure the communication between TVFCS and the Incident Ground.

Emergency Calls

- 14. that the LFB's policies be amended to draw a clearer distinction between callers seeking advice and callers who believe they are trapped and need rescuing;*
- 15. that the LFB provide regular and more effective refresher training to CROs at all levels, including supervisors;*
- 16. that all fire and rescue services develop policies for handling a large number of Fire Survival Guidance calls simultaneously;*
- 17. that electronic systems be developed to record FSG information in the control room and display it simultaneously at the bridgehead and in any command units;*

A Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) policy has been published in line with Control National Operational Guidance. A training package has also been developed and this is planned to be delivered to all control staff by June 2022. All previous training packages that relate to FSG are being amended to incorporate the new policy.

The National Operational Guidance – 'Multiple Calls and Multiple Incidents' has been out for consultation which the Service has responded to. We will now wait for this to be published so we can fully implement recommendation 16.

TVFCS have an ongoing programme of refresher training, which requires staff to undergo training in a number of key areas regularly. The system used to manage this training has recently been reviewed and it has been determined that a new system will be introduced



which prioritises high risk activities which occur rarely over other subjects. This change has been captured in the TVFCS Service Plan.

To assist with these recommendations and the challenge of handling large call volumes 'National Talk Group 20', a dedicated radio channel has been implemented within Thames Valley Control. This allows the sharing of risk critical information, including evacuation strategies, with other FRS' during an incident should they receive a call on our behalf. Our assisting control rooms are also in the process of upgrading to 'Vision 4' software which will enable them to view our system during an incident, if required. This is tested on a weekly basis and we take part in a national assurance exercises as they happen.

Thames Valley Fire Control has agreed to take part in Operation Willow Beck. Operation Willow Beck can be initiated when the number of emergency calls being received exceeds the capacity of the host control room and its normal 'buddy arrangements'. During Operation Willow Beck, calls for the affected Fire Control will be filtered by BT and distributed amongst participating fire control rooms nationally, with call information then being passed back to the affected fire control via pre-arranged routes. Operation Willow Beck is intended to preserve capacity within the affected Control room to allow for more effective incident management and communication with the incident ground and multi-agency partners.

To enable the implementation of recommendation 17 a technological solution is required. The Programme have been investigating options including Microsoft Teams which will allow us to share Fire Survival Guidance information between TVFCS, bridgehead and the command unit simultaneously. We will include this within our assurance exercises to provide a proof of concept, any findings will be fed into the Command Support workstream to inform the work they are doing. We continue to monitor wider market and FRS activity for opportunities to enhance or further collaborate on this solution.

Emergency calls – transition from stay put to get out.

- 18. that policies be developed for managing a transition from “stay put” to “get out”;*
- 19. that control room staff receive training directed specifically to handling such a change of advice and conveying it effectively to callers.*

The Service published the 'Evacuation and Rescue of Persons OIN' in December 2020. This sets out the procedure for a transition from 'stay put' arrangements to a 'get out' evacuation strategy. This completes recommendation 18.

An online training package 'Evacuation Management in complex buildings' has been rolled out as part of our Control Development and Assessment Pathway (DAP). We are in the process of incorporating the handling the change of advice and conveying it effectively to callers into this training.

The Service will be looking to test and assure both of these training packages within assurance exercises planned during 2022.



The Service already has a translation service available which enables them to communicate with callers should English not be their first language. We are also looking to identify translation services which can be easily used on the incident ground. Following a suggestion made from a member of staff we have loaded the 'live transcribe' app onto every service wide mobile device. This allows us to communicate with members of the public who may have a hearing impairment.

Emergency Call – Other Control Rooms

20. that steps be taken to investigate methods by which assisting control rooms can obtain access to the information available to the host control room

This has been implemented by the introduction of National Talk group 20. This enables services to share risk critical information quickly during an incident. Within Thames Valley Fire Control, all control room operatives have now received training and national testing of this takes place regularly. National assurance exercises are coordinated by NFCC and Home Office and we take part in these as they happen.

Command and Control – breathing apparatus crews

- 22. that the LFB develop policies and training to ensure better control of deployments and the use of resources;*
- 23. that the LFB develop policies and training to ensure that better information is obtained from crews returning from deployments and that the information is recorded in a form that enables it to be made available immediately to the incident commander (and thereafter to the command units and the control room).*

Our 'Fire in Tall Buildings' Operational Information Note was published in December 2020, this is aligned to National Operational Guidance. This document sets out the procedures firefighters should follow when responding to a fire in a high-rise building.

The Service has introduced High Rise Information Boards which are available on all appliances. These enable crews to collate information including progress on searches, allocation of teams during searches, causalities/fatalities and additional comments during an incident. These have been tested during a number of exercises and feedback is continuing to be assessed.

We are currently developing an online training package for our crews which includes deployment structure as well as guidance for briefings and debriefing. We plan to make this available to operational crews by summer 2022.



Command and Control – Communication

- 24. that the LFB develop a communication system to enable direct communication between the control room and the incident commander and improve the means of communication between the incident commander and the bridgehead*
- 25. that the LFB investigate the use of modern communication techniques to provide a direct line of communication between the control room and the bridgehead, allowing information to be transmitted directly between the control room and the bridgehead and providing an integrated system of recording FSG information and the results of deployments.*

Recommendations 24 and 25 have overlaps with recommendation 13 which recommends a dedicated communications link between the control room and incident commander and recommendation 17 which requires the service to display information simultaneously at control and in the command units.

The Service has completed an assurance exercise which tested the communication between TVFCS and the Incident Commander/incident ground. A number of recommendations have arisen from this exercise which have been reviewed by the BEP and will help inform the new Command Support workstream's activity.

We are investigating options for a technological solution including Microsoft Teams to allow us to share FSG information between control, bridgehead and command unit simultaneously. We will be looking to include this within our assurance exercises to provide a proof of concept, any findings will be fed into the Command Support workstream to inform the work they are conducting.

The Service have purchased 3 portable radio signal boosters which sit within our Incident Command Unit and Multi-Role-Vehicle (MRV). These will allow us to strengthen our radio effectiveness if required which can improve communication at the scene of operations and ultimately with TVFCS.

A Radio Procedures online training package has been made available to all crews which provides them with an understanding of the radio procedures that should be adopted when communicating with TVFCS. In addition to this, a presentation has been developed for our crews on how to increase the performance of our radios in various situations, we are currently developing this into an online training package.

An Evacuation Commander Operational Information Note has been published which specifies that a single point of contact within TVFCS needs to be established to liaise with the evacuation commander on the incident ground. If this creates a capacity issue then a L2 or L3 officer will be mobilised to TVFCS to perform this role. There is also a dedicated radio operative who will liaise with the incident ground, usually the driver of the appliance or command unit if in attendance.

In January 2022 the BEP introduced an additional workstream to review Command Support seeking to ensure RBFMS has effective and resilient 'end to end' arrangements in place.



This work goes beyond the original scope of the BEP, but the recommendations provided an opportunity for continued improvement in the area.

We are in the process of developing an online training package for Command Support which will include the purpose of the command support function based on best practice and National Operational Guidance, how we use it to support the Incident Commander and how we apply it within RBFRS. This is planned to be made available to all operational staff by summer 2022.

Equipment

- 26. that the LFB urgently take steps to obtain equipment that enables firefighters wearing helmets and breathing apparatus to communicate with the bridgehead effectively, including when operating in high-rise buildings*
- 27. that urgent steps be taken to ensure that the command support system is fully operative on all command units and that crews are trained in its use.*

Our current Breathing Apparatus (BA) equipment is designed to connect to our fire ground radios and allow the BA wearer to communicate with other fire ground radios. This is via a Draeger system that connects directly to our radios.

We are currently procuring new radios as part of our BA replacement project alongside Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire FRS', although these will not be available until November 2022. Radio compatibility has featured in recent BA replacement procurement exercises. There will be a second part to this project whereby we look at our wider fireground radio communication.

The Service has conducted radio tests within our all of our High Rise Residential Buildings to identify and flag any issues within our site specific risk information and EPIPS to ensure that this is easily available to crews on arrival at an incident. The Service has purchased three portable radio signal boosters as well as having internal boosters available on our Incident command unit and MRV. These will allow us to strengthen our radio signals if required.

An operational bulletin has been issued which describes to crews how they can increase the performance of radios in various situations. We are developing this into an online training package.

The Service will be testing and assuring this area within assurance exercises planned during 2022.

An Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) refresh and upgrade was carried out on our Incident Command Unit during 2020 as well as a conversion from satellite to GSM 4G broadband data to improve our connectivity. We conducted an assurance exercise in spring 2021 which showed our current process to be effective but there was potential for it to be more efficient. Our crews both Whole-time and On-Call at Maidenhead Fire Station are trained on how to operate the Command Unit. Our Command Support workstream have liaised with other fire



and rescue services to identify best practice, provide assurance of existing arrangements and have recommendations of further improvements which are being reviewed currently.

Evacuation

29. that fire and rescue services develop policies for partial and total evacuation of high-rise residential buildings and training to support them;

The Service published an 'Evacuation and Rescue of People' Operational Information Note in December 2020 which sets out the procedures for how firefighters should plan and carry out a safe and effective evacuation of a building.

An online training package 'Evacuation from Complex Buildings' was published in September 2020 and made available for all crews and TVFCS staff.

The Programme will be looking to carry out a series of exercises during 2022 to fully test and assure our evacuation procedures and training.

A national steering group has been established by the Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to support a research project on means of escape and the stay put policy. We are expecting a report outlining the initial findings in the near future.

Evacuation – Smokehoods

34. that all fire and rescue services be equipped with smoke hoods to assist in the evacuation of occupants through smoke-filled exit routes.

Smokehoods, also known as Escape hoods, have been introduced to the Service and are now available on all full time fire engines and the Aerial Ladder Platform should they be required.

Training has also been rolled out across the county. As part of our assurance process we tested our staff understanding and found that it had not been fully embedded or understood so we have now retrained our staff within this area.

Cooperation between emergency services – Joint Doctrine

- 40. that each emergency service must communicate the declaration of a Major Incident to all other Category 1 Responders as soon as possible;*
- 41. that on the declaration of a Major Incident clear lines of communication must be established as soon as possible between the control rooms of the individual emergency services;*
- 42. that a single point of contact should be designated within each control room to facilitate such communication;*
- 43. that a "METHANE" message should be sent as soon as possible by the emergency service declaring a Major Incident.*



These recommendations are aimed at all emergency services and are about the content of the JESIP Joint Doctrine. This is an interoperability framework setting out the standard approach to multi agency working. It is developed by the national Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP).

METHANE refers to a model promoted by JESIP for managing information in initial stages of an incident. It stands for:

- **M**ajor Incident
- **E**xact Location
- **T**ypes of Incident
- **H**azards
- **A**ccess
- **N**umber of casualties
- **E**mergency Services



The Service has a Major Incident OIN which details the procedures to be followed during initial attendance which includes Thames Valley Fire Control advising all relevant agencies and having a designated single point of contact to facilitate such communication.

Communication will be carried out using our interagency control room talk group which was introduced in November 2020. This is covered in the guidance note held on the Vision system.

JESIP principles, where the need for M/ETHANE comes from, are imbedded in the SFJ incident command standards. JESIP is specifically referenced in the learning outcome document for incident command L2, L3 and we send all L2's to multi agency JESIP training. We have reviewed the online training package from JESIP and this is now available to crews.

The Service is well represented and a proactive participant in with the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum and there are procedures in place to initiate a partner activation teleconference (PAT) which is activated to share risk critical information with Category 1 and 2 responders. The PAT enables an early multi-agency assessment and monitoring of the situation and decision on the appropriate level of multi-agency response to be made. This could result in an escalation to a Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) / Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) or the incident being coordinated through the PAT. Training events for middle managers, to increase awareness and confidence of this approach were held in late 2021.



RBFRS have volunteered to lead the Thames Valley JESIP strategic group to further embed JESIP principles and support shared understanding and closer interoperability.

The Programme will be looking to carry out a series of exercises during 2022 to fully embed and assure working with other emergency services.

Cooperation between emergency services – information sharing

- 44. that steps be taken to investigate the compatibility of the LFB systems with those of the MPS and the LAS with a view to enabling all three emergency services' systems to read each other's messages*
- 46. that the LFB, the MPS, the LAS and the London local authorities all investigate ways of improving the collection of information about survivors and making it available more rapidly to those wishing to make contact with them.*

We are reliant on the Multi Agency Information Transfer (MAIT) facility being introduced to complete recommendation 44, this is a system used for the sharing of information between control rooms. This is an area being looked at both locally and nationally. RBFRS has a senior user representative and a strategic lead at the NFCC MAIT hub procurement project board.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service have liaised with the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum Humanitarian Assistance Programme, Thames Valley Police, and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in regards to the collection of survivor information.

We are working the Thames Valley Development Liaison Group to develop training for our crews in the awareness of current Local Resilience Forum procedures in setting up reception areas and timeframes involved as well as the Police MIPP system which allows survivor information to be recorded.



Non-Fire Service Recommendations

The Service’s response to the remaining 17 recommendations which include those aimed at Government and/or building managers and owners which will require legislation changes.

RBFRS believe that it is appropriate to not only consider the specific Fire Service recommendations, but seek to support other stakeholders in improving safety across the built environment for the benefit of Berkshire residents.

Many of the recommendations below are aimed at building owners and managers and will require the new legislation to complete these. The Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Safety Act 2022 and government regulations are expected to address these.

(Numbers are from the original report so not always consecutive because not all apply to Fire and Rescue Services)

No	Grenfell Tower Inquiry’s phase 1 recommendation	RBFRS Progress to date
1	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to provide their local fire and rescue service with information about the design of its external walls together with details of the materials of which they are constructed and to inform the fire and rescue service of any material changes made to them;	<p>HRRB Project set up to inspect all HRRBs within Berkshire.</p> <p>All buildings have been issued with ‘Article 27’ letters requesting information on external walls.</p> <p>All information received on external walls is included within our site specific risk information which is available to crews during an incident.</p>
5	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law: to provide their local fire and rescue services with up-to-date plans in both paper and electronic form of every floor of the building identifying the location of key fire safety systems;	<p>Electronic premise information plates (EPIP) have been developed for our High Rise Residential buildings within Berkshire and we are looking to introduce these across other high risk buildings.</p> <p>An EPIP is a simple ‘one page’ overview of key operational risk information available to crews in initial attendance.</p>



Implementation of Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Recommendations

No	Grenfell Tower Inquiry's phase 1 recommendation	RBFRS Progress to date
6	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law: to ensure that the building contains a premises information box, the contents of which must include a copy of the up-to-date floor plans and information about the nature of any lift intended for use by the fire and rescue services.	<p>Standard letters have been amended to <i>recommend</i> the implementation of premise information boxes within all High Rise Residential Buildings.</p> <p>Premise information boxes are checked to see if they are present during our audits and inspections.</p> <p>We are using the Code of Practice guidance that was developed by NFCC and Fire Industry Association (FIA) to recommend and check what documents should be included within a Premise Information Box.</p>
8	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to carry out regular inspections of any lifts that are designed to be used by firefighters in an emergency and to report the results of such inspections to their local fire and rescue service at monthly intervals;	<p>Fire Safety Inspecting Officers do check maintenance and inspection reports during our audit process.</p> <p>Amended our site specific risk information form so our crews can note information around lifts such as location, activation, access etc.</p> <p>An LMS training package on lifts has been developed for all operational crews.</p>
9	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to carry out regular tests of the mechanism which allows firefighters to take control of the lifts and to inform their local fire and rescue service at monthly intervals that they have done so.	<p>Fire Safety Inspecting Officers do check maintenance and inspection reports during our audit process.</p> <p>Amended our site specific risk information form so our crews can note information around lifts such as location, activation, access etc.</p> <p>An LMS training package on lifts has been developed for all operational crews.</p>
21	that the LAS and the MPS review their protocols and policies to ensure that their operators can identify FSG calls (as defined by the LFB) and pass them to the LFB as soon as possible.	<p>TVFCS have developed alongside Hampshire Fire and Rescue services a FSG policy/training for South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) and Thames Valley Police (TVP). We are now working on ways we can test and assure this.</p>
28	that the government develop national guidelines for carrying out partial or total evacuations of high-rise residential buildings, such guidelines to include the means of protecting fire exit routes and procedures for evacuating persons who are unable to use the stairs in an emergency, or who may require assistance (such as disabled people, older people and young children);	<p>A national steering group has been established by the Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to support a research project on means of escape and the stay put policy. We are expecting a report outlining the initial findings in the near future.</p>



Implementation of Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Recommendations

No	Grenfell Tower Inquiry's phase 1 recommendation	RBFRS Progress to date
30	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to draw up and keep under regular review evacuation plans, copies of which are to be provided in electronic and paper form to their local fire and rescue service and placed in an information box on the premises	<p>Started to identify how we would receive such plans, where we would store them and how we make them accessible during an incident.</p> <p>We have amended a number of our standard letters to include a recommendation that evacuation plans should be sent to local Fire and Rescue Services and also stored within a Premise Information Box.</p>
31	that all high-rise residential buildings (both those already in existence and those built in the future) be equipped with facilities for use by the fire and rescue services enabling them to send an evacuation signal to the whole or a selected part of the building by means of sounders or similar devices;	<p>NFCC have produced an online training package which we have made available to all of our crews. We are in the process of ensuring that all crews have completed the training and the associated knowledge test.</p>
32	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to prepare personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) for all residents whose ability to self-evacuate may be compromised (such as persons with reduced mobility or cognition)	<p>We have PEEPS for buildings within interim measures with a waking watch and have amended our standard letters to recommend that we are supplied with PEEPS where required.</p> <p>We have responded to the PEEPs consultation.</p>
33	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to include up-to-date information about persons with reduced mobility and their associated PEEPs in the premises information box;	<p>We do currently have PEEPS for all buildings within interim measures with a waking watch and have amended our standard letters to recommend that we are supplied with PEEPS where required.</p> <p>We have responded to the PEEPs consultation.</p>
35	that in all high-rise buildings floor numbers be clearly marked on each landing within the stairways and in a prominent place in all lobbies in such a way as to be visible both in normal conditions and in low lighting or smoky conditions.	<p>The Service has updated its standard letters to include a recommendation around implementing internal signage.</p> <p>We have updated our site specific risk information form used by crews to include 'signage for Fire Fighters' giving an opportunity to detail if signage is available and potential hazards.</p>



Implementation of Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Recommendations

No	Grenfell Tower Inquiry's phase 1 recommendation	RBFRS Progress to date
36	that the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not it is a high-rise building) be required by law to provide fire safety instructions (including instructions for evacuation) in a form that the occupants of the building can reasonably be expected to understand, taking into account the nature of the building and their knowledge of the occupants.	The Service has amended its data collection proforma used during an audit to include the checking of Fire Safety instruction forms and the accuracy of the information provided.
37	that the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not they are high-rise buildings) carry out an urgent inspection of all fire doors to ensure that they comply with applicable legislative standards;	Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service are checking fire doors within our audits. In addition we have produced an LMS package for our crews covering basic information in regards to fire doors.
38	that the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not they are high-rise buildings) be required by law to carry out checks at not less than three-monthly intervals to ensure that all fire doors are fitted with effective self-closing devices in working order.	Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service are checking fire doors within our audits. In addition we have produced an LMS package for our crews covering basic information in regards to fire doors
39	that all those who have responsibility in whatever capacity for the condition of the entrance doors to individual flats in high-rise residential buildings, whose external walls incorporate unsafe cladding, be required by law to ensure that such doors comply with current standards.	Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service are checking fire doors within our audits. In addition we have produced an LMS package for our crews covering basic information in regards to fire doors.
45	that steps be taken to ensure that the airborne datalink system on every NPAS helicopter observing an incident which involves one of the other emergency services defaults to the National Emergency Service user encryption	An assurance exercise has been carried out to ensure that we are able to download and receive images from the TVP helicopter. We have produced an online training package to inform crews how they can request this service (and other aerial support) which is currently being quality assured by subject matter experts.



High Rise Residential Buildings Project

Our High Rise Residential Buildings (HRRB) project came into being in August 2020, since then we have embarked on an ambitious schedule of audits of an identified 198 HRRBs taking into account all types of cladding systems in buildings over 6 floors or 18m in height.

The project was set up in alignment with the NFFC Building Risk Review (BRR) and reported their progress on a monthly basis, complying with the requirements of the BRR several months ahead of Government's deadline. The HRRB team comprises of existing resource supported by a number of specialist external associates to help with the demand and more complex issues that arise.

It has become increasingly apparent that the majority of cladding systems, not just ACM (the type used at Grenfell Tower) have or will fail the safety tests in terms of external fire spread. During phase 1 of our project we had a clear focus on cladding however Fire Safety Inspecting Officers (FSIO) were also instructed and better equipped to take a more intrusive approach to the investigation of internal compartmentation.

During Phase 1 of the project, which was successfully completed in July 2021, the team visited 187 buildings (the remaining 8 identified were either duplicates, demolished or not yet built). This provided RBFRS with a clear understanding of the risks associated with these premises and enabled us to ensure appropriate regulatory activities were in place.

We have now moved into phase 2 of the project where 97 buildings are identified as needing further management due to cladding, internal compartmentation or other fire safety concerns. This phase of the project will see further regulatory activity leading to remediation and is due to run until December 2022. The other HRRBs of less concern will be managed through business as usual protection activity by local protection staff following a comprehensive information and education transfer. We have introduced joint visits between our operational crews and our Fire Safety Inspectors providing an opportunity to share knowledge, experience and understand the risks each of the areas are looking for. In addition our operational crews are visiting these buildings on a regular basis for operational risk awareness and to provide information and community confidence.

The team continues to work closely with Building Owners and Responsible Persons, alongside our partners in Local Authority Housing Teams and Building Control Bodies ensuring, where necessary, enforcement action is taken and interim measures are applied as appropriate. Whilst we recognise that the full remediation of a building can be a long process, there are already several examples of premises where fire safety has been significantly improved as a result of the RBFRS' work with Building Owners and Responsible Persons. Now that we have moved into Phase 2 of the HRRB project, the HRRB Team continues to support a number of high-rise buildings through to the completion of their remediation work.



Currently within Royal Berkshire;

- **13 buildings have had their cladding removed**
- **20 buildings are in the process of having their cladding removed**

Interim measures, which have been applied, vary depending on the circumstances at each building. It is ultimately the responsibility of the Responsible Person to ensure safety standards are met. For some buildings, Automatic Fire Detection Systems (AFDs) have been installed, there have been changes to the evacuation strategies from 'stay put' to 'simultaneous evacuation' and the car parks of some buildings have been removed from use where there were concerns about fire spread to the building. In some circumstances, a 'waking watch' was put in place, a dedicated resource with the responsibility of patrolling the building, identifying fire, raising the alarm and managing the evacuation.

Throughout this process, the safety of those living in high-rise premises has remained our priority.

We now await the commencement of the Building Safety Act, which will set the legislative landscape for high-rise fire safety moving forward. As a Service, we will continue to monitor this closely and we will need to remain adaptive in our approach to any changes introduced by this legislation

Table 3 provides a summary of HRRB project phase 2 findings.





Table 3: The RBFRS' performance dashboard as of 6th May 2022 in regards to the HRRB (Phase 2)

HRRB UPDATE IN NUMBERS





Next Steps

This remains a significant programme of work within a complex and changing environment.

We are committed to learning and acting on the lessons from the Grenfell Tower incident and subsequent inquiry and are fully aware that our objectives and priorities will change and adjust along the way. Furthermore, we recognise the broader challenges associated with the built environment. Our desire to continuously learn and improve in these areas will mean further investment and focus for many years to come.

As a Service we have continued to work extremely hard to accomplish what we have to date, but recognise we still have more to do. We will continue to liaise with external groups to ensure we align to national opportunities and that the Service is well placed in understanding and addressing issues that arise. Where possible we want to be at the leading edge of improvements in this area and share our learning with others.

We will be focussing our efforts over the coming months to assure and embed some of the changes we have already implemented. We have a programme of practical assurance exercises planned between now and the end of the year.

We are preparing for objective 3 and the many upcoming legislative changes that will impact the sector. As described, many of the recommendations are aimed at building owners and managers and will require the new legislation to address these. The Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Safety Bill Act 2022 and proposed government regulations are expected to address a number of the recommendations and we are well placed to understand these and respond quickly when they do.






The proposed new Building Safety Regulator will create new challenges for fire services to respond to, but RBFRS welcome the strengthening regulatory framework to make buildings and residents safer.

We continue to monitor the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 which is due to finish in summer 2022. We do expect further recommendations to arise from this which we will need to review and consider.

The Programme will provide a further review and evaluation of milestones in summer 2022 which will enable us to continue to assure that we are on track to achieve our priority objectives and provide assurance to residents through transparent progress updates.

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