

Reading Borough Local Safety Plan

2019 - 2020



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in Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service www.rbfrs.co.uk



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* Detailed explanations to support the performance targets infographics can be found in the [appendix](#) at the end of this document.



Introduction

This Local Safety Plan for Reading Borough explains how we identify local risk, the actions we will take to mitigate and respond to that risk and how we measure our performance.

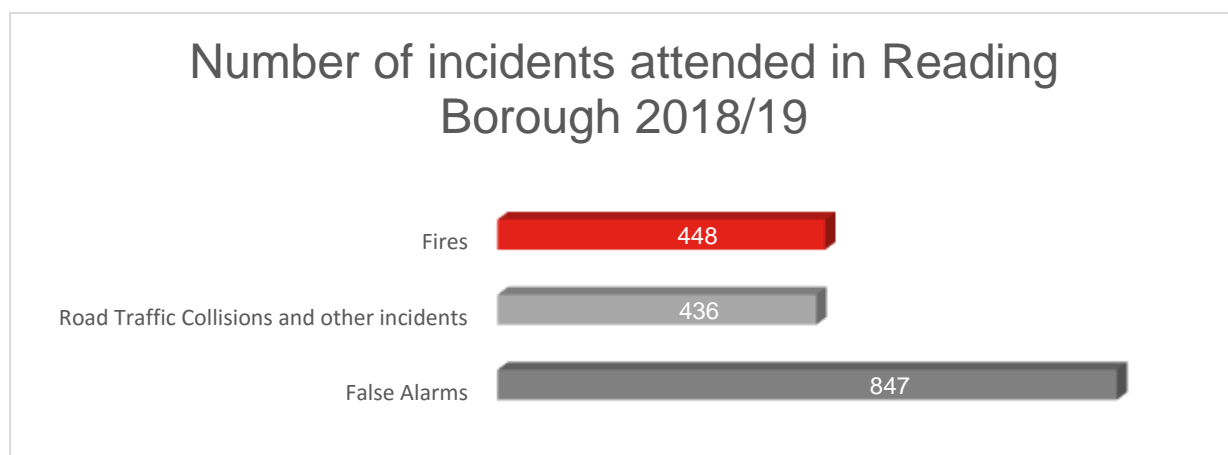
Our West Community Safety [Hub](#) manages the local fire safety resources for Reading, alongside our resources in West Berkshire, delivering services in three key areas:

- Preventing fires and other emergencies;
- Ensuring buildings conform to fire safety legislation; and
- Responding effectively to emergencies when they happen.

Although Reading has a lower proportion of people aged over 65 than other parts of the county and England, the largest long-term growth in population is predicted in this age group. Reading Borough also has a particularly diverse community when compared to Berkshire as a whole. These factors shape our approach to delivering our service.

Our Local Safety Plan links directly to the [strategic commitments](#) set out in the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) [Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2019-23](#) and the annual objectives and performance measures published in the 2019/20 [Annual Plan](#). It also represents our commitment to knowing and working in partnership with our diverse communities, in order to understand their needs and improve the service we provide; please refer to our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) objectives to find out more.

Between April 2018 and March 2019, we attended 1,731 incidents in Reading Borough. These are broken down into the following headline areas: fires, road traffic collisions and other incidents, and false alarms.



These figures help us plan our service for the next year to ensure we are correctly addressing risk in our communities.



Map

The map below shows the fire stations in Reading. A wider map of the county can be found on page 4 of our [Annual Report](#).



>> KEY

- On-call
- ▲ Wholetime/On-call
- Wholetime



Preventing Fires and Other Emergencies in Reading Borough

Preventing Accidental [Fires in the Home](#)

A key purpose of our prevention activity is to reduce the risk of fire. As such, we target our preventative work to those at an increased risk from fire.

Prevention of accidental fire deaths is our number one priority. We use our programme of targeted [Safe and Well](#) home visits to make sure we are visiting those most at risk e.g. those over 65. The relative increase of this section of the population goes hand in hand with other factors affecting the risk profile of the Reading area, including the forecasted rise in those with dementia, living alone and those with sensory (hearing and/ or sight) needs or a learning disability. This has been recognised by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS), and we aim to undertake 7,000 Safe and Well visits across the county to this age group in the next 12 months. 2500 of these visits will take place across Reading. These visits are carried out by our fire crews, and may be followed up by our trained Safe and Well Technicians in complex cases.

Reading also includes a number of areas facing socio-economic challenges such as overcrowding, with some falling into the bottom 10% of areas nationally according to the [Indices of Multiple Deprivation](#). Our evidence indicates that people and communities facing health, financial and housing challenges are more likely to have fires in their homes and become injured. We will target a number of Safe and Well visits to these households. Our local area is also particularly diverse and, whilst there is no evidence to suggest ethnicity impacts fire risk, language and cultural differences can affect access to advice and education on fire safety.

Not only do we focus on residents at greater risk of fire death, but also on the common causes of accidental fires in the home and related injuries. There were 80 accidental fires in the home in Reading in 2018/19. The most common causes of these fires in Reading are cooking and electrical, and account for the majority of fire injuries in Reading. 37 people sustained an injury in accidental fires in the home over the last four years. We are now concentrating on highlighting the dangers of these fires when undertaking Safe and Well visits with residents at greater risk of experiencing an accidental fire in the home. Over the next 12 months we aim to undertake 2500 Safe and Well across the county to this group, and 900 of these visits will take place across Reading.

We balance our resources across the county in consideration of risk and demand. This means we sometimes undertake differing levels of activity across our communities. We regularly review the targeting of our prevention work in response to any changes in community risk.



We will reduce the number of accidental fires in the home in Reading by:

- Continuing to deliver our successful programme of Safe and Well home visits to those most vulnerable and those most at risk of experiencing an accidental fire in the home.
- Prioritising Safe and Well visits based on risk factors such as age, mobility and health.
- Working with partner agencies to ensure we are targeting those most at risk via our [Adults at Risk Programme](#), and increase the number of referrals we receive.
- Using targeted campaigns, community based events and local social media to promote messaging intended to reduce the number of casualties from cooking and electrical related fire injuries.
- Increasing the number of referrals we make to partner agencies, such as Age UK and Reading Falls Prevention Team, for additional support for the elderly.
- Providing specific advice relating to cooking and electrical fires when undertaking Safe and Well visits.



Performance Targets for 2019/20



2,500

Safe and Well visits delivered to those at heightened risk of dying in an accidental fire in the home



900

Safe and Well visits delivered to those at heightened risk of having an accidental fire in the home and being injured as a result



100%

of Safe and Well visits for individuals referred to us completed within agreed timescales

Zero deaths in accidental fires in the home, and a reduction in the number of injuries



Offer fire safety education sessions to all school children in Year 5 with a target of reaching a minimum of 50% of schools



Conduct **12** events promoting home fire safety, with a focus on **cooking fires** and **evacuation plans**

Increase the number of referrals for **Safe and Well** visits from other agencies



Increase engagement on local social media channels to promote safety messages to reduce fires in the home (focus on **cooking** and **electrical** fires)



Reducing Deliberate Fires

There are more deliberately set fires in Reading than in Berkshire as a whole. Most commonly, these fires involve vehicles or refuse.

Vehicle fires generally involve cars and motorbikes and are either set fire to in situ on the owner's property, or stolen and then ignited. Refuse fires make up the vast majority of other types of deliberately set fires across Reading which, while generally are only considered a nuisance, can spread to property of value and potentially pose a risk to life. These fires are taken seriously and we work with communities, partners and schools to reduce them.

Arson can have links with other anti-social behaviour and we work in close partnership with colleagues in Thames Valley Police and the local authority to tackle these issues. Where the suspected cause of a fire may be arson, the police are informed at the time of the incident. We monitor data on deliberate fire-setting, sharing intelligence with the police to assist investigations, prosecutions and prevention. Where there is a specific threat of arson, we work with colleagues in Thames Valley Police to proactively reduce the risk. In such cases, our fire crews or a Safe and Well Technician will visit the relevant person or premises as a matter of priority to put in place additional prevention measures.

We will achieve a reduction in the number of deliberate fires by:

- Sharing information with local authority and blue light partners to address common problems.
- Continuing to react swiftly to high priority arson referrals from Thames Valley Police with a focused Safe and Well visit.
- Focusing attention on monitoring deliberate vehicle fires, and similar types of incidents, to identify trends. We will then work closely with the police and other partners to reduce their impact and identify perpetrators.
- Continuing our commitment to working with fire setters in a structured programme, which has shown that early intervention and education can help to address the issues of fire-setting behaviours.
- Working with local partners on joint targeted campaigns.
- Supporting investigation and successful prosecution of arson perpetrators.



Performance Targets for 2019/20



Reduction in the number of deliberately set fires in Reading



Increase public engagement to report deliberate fires, by highlighting the issue on local social media channels

100%

Completion of Safe and Well visits where there has been a threat, or incidence of arson, within **48 hours** of being informed by Thames Valley Police





Preventing Other Emergencies

We respond to a wide range of incidents, beyond those just involving fire. These range from water rescues involving people and animals, to incidents involving hazardous substances.

One key role is to respond to Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs). Road traffic incidents are a societal risk and a preventable cause of death in young adults and other groups. In 2018/19, the Service attended 45 RTCs across Reading.

To tackle this potential risk, Reading firefighters offer all schools with year 7 students a tailored Fire Safety and Road Safety presentation. Hub managers are also involved in [Safe Drive Stay Alive](#), a road safety programme concentrated on new and prospective drivers in the age range of 15-17. Over 30,000 young people across the Thames Valley are reached by this initiative every year.

With the River Thames running through Reading and the presence of other bodies of open water, the Service attends a higher number of water rescue incidents in this area in comparison with other areas of Berkshire. Around 400 people accidentally drown in the UK per year. In 2018/19, seven water related incidents were attended in Reading, 63% more than the average for the county. The Service has pledged through its Integrated Risk Management Plan to support the [UK Drowning Prevention Strategy 2016-26](#), which aims to reduce drowning incidents by 50% by 2026.

We will reduce the risk presented by other emergencies by:

- Offering water and road safety education sessions to every secondary school across Reading.
- Working alongside other agencies in the delivery of the Safe Drive, Stay Alive campaign.
- Supporting and participating in national campaigns to reduce other emergencies including water-related incidents and RTCs.
- Delivering local road and water safety campaigns.



Performance Targets for 2019/20



Water and road safety education sessions offered to all school students in Year 7, with a target of reaching a minimum of **50%** of schools

Support **4** initiatives during **'Boat Safety Week'** to promote safety messages around boat and water safety



Support **4** initiatives promoting safety messaging around road safety



Increase engagement on local social media to promote messaging around road and water safety



Encourage community engagement with the Safe Drive Stay Alive campaign



Fire Safety Standards in Buildings

Another element of our work is ensuring that businesses in the area comply with fire safety legislation. Our specialist team of Fire Safety Inspecting Officers (FSIOs) will support local businesses in complying with the law, and will enforce such compliance where necessary.

We proactively look at risks to identify and target premises or businesses which present the greatest risk to public safety. In Reading these include complex licensed premises, accommodation linked to commercial premises and care homes where, due to age and infirmity, people may find it difficult to evacuate if there was a fire. As a thriving town with a vibrant University community, Reading has a high concentration of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), where premises are divided into individual accommodation with shared facilities. Many are licensed and provide good quality accommodation, however our experience of fires in these buildings and fire safety audits indicate that they present an increased risk when not managed effectively.

Our FSIOs can enforce the right standards under a piece of legislation called the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005 \(FSO\)](#). They achieve this through a range of planned and reactive work. These include inspections of premises, investigating fire safety concerns raised by members of the public, and responding to local authority building consultations and licensing requests. They will also undertake investigations following a fire where we have concerns about a breach in fire safety measures. As well as reducing the risk of fire, their work ensures that our crews are fully informed of relevant risks when responding to any incidents in commercial premises.



We will improve fire safety standards in buildings by:

- Actively targeting higher risk premises more likely to be contravening the Fire Safety regulations. To do this we use our risk based inspection process to target certain high risk buildings, including [houses in multiple occupation \(HMOs\)](#), care homes, complex licensed premises and premises providing accommodation above businesses.
- Conducting post fire building inspections and analysing fire risk data to identify any emerging trends which might influence our local strategy.
- Responding swiftly to complaints we receive from the public regarding fire safety in buildings.
- Providing advice to business and property owners to encourage self-compliance with fire safety legislation.
- Working with building occupiers to reduce the numbers of unwanted fire alarm activations that occur.
- Working with other agencies to identify premises that fall under fire safety legislation e.g. Local Authority, Care Quality Commission.
- Undertaking additional seasonal activity. For example, at Christmas checking shops additional stock being stored/blocking fire exits.



Performance Targets for 2019/20



400

Number of fire safety audits conducted across Reading



50%

Maximum percentage of completed fire safety audits in premises found to be broadly compliant with fire safety legislation



Proactively monitor our prevention activity to ensure it is reducing risk



2

Number of business events carried out to improve legislative fire safety responsibilities and in turn help reduce the social and economic costs of fire for businesses and local employment



95%

of consultations completed within the required time frame



Responding to Incidents

Although prevention is our priority, we recognise that fires and other incidents, such as road traffic collisions, will still occur and require a swift and effective response.

Reading is served by four wholetime fire stations, supported where necessary by fire engines from other Berkshire and neighbouring county fire stations.

In 2018/19, we attended 1,731 emergency incidents in Reading. 26% of these were fires, 49% were [false alarms](#) and 3% were road traffic collisions with the remaining 22% including special services, such as water and animal rescues and assisting other agencies. We will work to reduce the demand of these false alarm calls, in order to improve the availability of our resources for important prevention activity and emergency incidents.

Across Berkshire, our target is to arrive at emergency incidents within 10 minutes of the initial call on 75% of occasions. To achieve this, our Thames Valley Fire Control Service will send the fire engine that can get to an emergency in the quickest time.

In addition to responding to fire service incidents, RBFRS supports South Central Ambulance Service and Thames Valley Police in responding to emergency calls. During 2018/19, we attended 58 'effecting entry' emergencies (where urgent entry to a premises is required to deal with a medical emergency). This underpins our commitment to work collaboratively, supports the wider health and wellbeing needs of our communities and builds the joint operational working already undertaken across a range of incidents with our emergency service partners.

We will continue to plan, prepare and train to ensure our teams can provide an effective response to all incidents and are able to work well with colleagues across all the emergency services and other organisations. Over the coming year we will undertake a range of assurance activity to support learning and continually improve our response delivery.



We will improve our response to emergency incidents by:

- Striving to improve the response performance at all of the fire stations in Reading by maximising availability to respond and reducing the time it takes to mobilise a fire crew and reach the scene of an emergency incident.
- Undertaking targeted activity to reduce false alarm calls.
- Continuing to provide an 'effecting entry' service to Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service where immediate entry to a premises is required to deal with a medical emergency.
- Increasing the frequency of joint training with other fire and rescue and other emergency services.
- Focusing on training and retaining our new and existing firefighters.
- Maintain and develop operational assurance processes and learning.



Performance Targets for 2019/20

Performance Targets For 2019/20

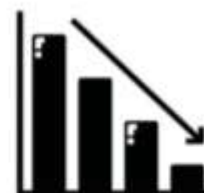


Continue to provide an effecting entry service where immediate entry to a premises is required to deal with a medical emergency



10 minutes

Increase the % of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes of the call being answered



Reduce false alarm calls using social media channels and a targeted campaign



Increase the frequency of joint training with neighbouring fire and rescue services and other blue light partners



Performance Scrutiny

It is important to us that you receive the services we have set out to deliver and that these services are delivered to a high standard.

We have a number of ways we monitor and manage our performance. You can see our Strategic Performance Report as scrutinised and approved by the Fire Authority's Audit and Governance Committee by visiting the [RBFRS website](#).

At a local level, there is a performance management structure built into our service delivery model. We have a Service Delivery Management Team, who meet monthly to scrutinise performance against the Hub-level targets set out in this, and the other, Local Safety Plans. This allows us to ensure the Service is accountable at a local level for driving performance and quality in all we do to serve the people of Royal Berkshire, whilst also allowing us to direct support to where it is needed.

Contact Us

Email West Hub Team: cartern@RBFRS.co.uk

Call RBFRS and ask for the West Hub Management Team: 0118 945 2888

Website: rbfrs.co.uk



Appendix

Fires in the home

Otherwise referred to as a 'dwelling fire'. 'Dwelling' means a property that is a place of residence i.e. places occupied by households such as houses and flats, excluding hotels, hostels and residential institutions including university halls of residence. Includes non-permanent structures used solely as a dwelling, such as houseboats and caravans.

Integrated Risk Management Plan

A document that details the plans of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service for the next four years from a high level, strategic perspective.

Hub

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service operate what is called a 'hub model', whereby the whole area of Berkshire is split into three separate hubs: East (Slough and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), West (West Berkshire and Reading) and Central (Bracknell and Wokingham). These hubs are then able to tailor their services of prevention, protection and response to meet the needs of the local area.

Safe and Well

Safe and Well visits are conducted by either firefighters or Safe and Well Technicians to the homes of people who may be vulnerable. These visits are targeted based on various factors, such as age, mobility, or sensory (hearing and/or sight) needs.

Adults at Risk Programme

A programme run in conjunction with Adult Social Care that provides free training and resources for the protection of adults at risk from fire. This training is available to anyone involved in the care of adults in the community.

At its core, this programme is training people to recognise when a referral to RBFRS is appropriate, and how to make this referral. This helps us target our prevention activity to those who are most at risk.

Houses in multiple occupation (HMO)

A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is a property rented by at least three people who are not from one 'household' (for example a family), but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen. It's sometimes called a 'house share'.



Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO)

Sets out the fire safety requirements for all non-domestic premises. It does not apply to people's private homes, including individual flats in a block or house.

Licensed premises providing accommodation

A premises that has a license to sell alcohol and also offers accommodation. One example would be a pub with rooms to rent.

False alarm

Where we attend a location believing there to be a fire incident, but on arrival discover that no such incident exists, or existed. If the appliances (fire engines) are 'turned around' by Thames Valley Fire Control before arriving at the incident – then the incident is not classed as having been attended and does not need to be reported.

Infographics supplementary details

The number of formal and informal fire safety activities

This is the total number of formal or informal fire safety activities that have been issued one of the below:

- Action plan
- Deficiency Notices
- Enforcement Notice
- Prohibition Notice
- Alternations Notice
- Voluntary Restriction
- Formal Caution
- Prosecution Notice

Number of Safe and Well visits delivered to those who are at heightened risk of having an accidental dwelling fire and being injured as a result

Research has shown that certain groups of people are at heightened risk of having an accidental dwelling fire and being injured as a result. Safe and Well visits will be targeted towards these groups.



Number of Safe and Well visits delivered to those who are at heightened risk of dying in the event of an accidental dwelling fire

Research has shown that certain vulnerable groups are at heightened risk of dying in an accidental dwelling fire. Safe and Well visits will be targeted towards these vulnerable groups.

Number of deaths in accidental fires in the home

Referred to in the annual plan as “number of fire deaths in accidental dwelling fires”. The total number of deaths that occur as a result of an accidental dwelling fire. This includes a person whose death is attributed to an accidental dwelling fire, even when the death occurs weeks or months later.

Total number of fire safety audits carried out

This is the total number of full fire safety audits carried out in premises in Berkshire. This is calculated once the audit has been closed by RBFRS and only includes the initial fire safety audit. A fire safety audit is carried out to enforce the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) 2005, which applies to virtually all non-domestic premises and covers nearly every type of building, structure and open space.

% of statutory fire safety consultations completed within the required timeframes

Statutory fire consultations have a set timeframe in which they must be completed and include:

Licensing

Building regulations

Building regulations approved supplier

% of hours where there is adequate crewing on retained frontline pumping appliances

This is the percentage of hours where there is sufficient minimum qualified firefighters (four personnel) on retained pumping appliances (fire engines). Retained frontline pumping appliances are crewed mainly by on-call firefighters who are based at stations in more rural locations, and are ready to leave their place of work or home when alerted by pager to attend emergencies from the local on-call station, when they receive the call.



% of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes from time the emergency call was answered

This measure looks at the time taken from when the Fire Control Room Operator answers the phone, until the time the first fire engine (appliance) arrives at the scene of the emergency incident, and the percentage of occasions RBFRS does this in under 10 minutes.

