



# Wokingham Borough Local Safety Plan

2023 - 2024





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# Introduction

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

Our Central Hub manages the local fire safety resources in both Wokingham Borough and Bracknell Forest, delivering services in three key areas:

- » **Prevention** - Preventing fires and other emergencies.
- » **Protection** - Ensuring buildings conform to fire safety legislation.
- » **Response** - Responding effectively to emergencies when they happen.

Our Local Safety Plan links directly to the [Strategic Commitments](#) in the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) [Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan 2023 - 2027](#) and the annual objectives and performance measures published in our [Annual Plan](#). It also represents our commitment to knowing and working in partnership with our diverse communities to understand their needs and improve our service. We work closely with other emergency services and partners within the unitary authority to ensure we appropriately target our resources.

## Our Local Communities

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) has four objectives for [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) (EDI) linked to our Strategic Commitments. To fully realise these objectives, we must understand the diversity and specific needs of our workforce and local communities.

The demographic of our local community is forever changing, and the services we provide must be accessible to the whole community. The Hub Team will review available data and evaluate our activities to understand the representation in our local areas regarding age, disability, ethnicity, and religion. We will work closely with partner agencies to ensure we provide the best service to the public.

Wokingham Borough has a growing population of 177,500 people, with 30,000 aged over 65. Over the last ten years, Wokingham Borough has become more diverse with an increase in people of Muslim and Hindu faith and people speaking Polish or Nepalese as their first language. Working within the heart of the community, our teams will continue to work with partners whilst engaging with groups to effectively listen to them and understand how we can adapt our approach to meet their needs. In addition, we recognise the diversity within our community, which will inform our strategy for delivering the service in Wokingham Borough.

Building trust and confidence within our communities is essential. To do this, we must strive to be a service representative of our local communities, and we encourage people from currently under-

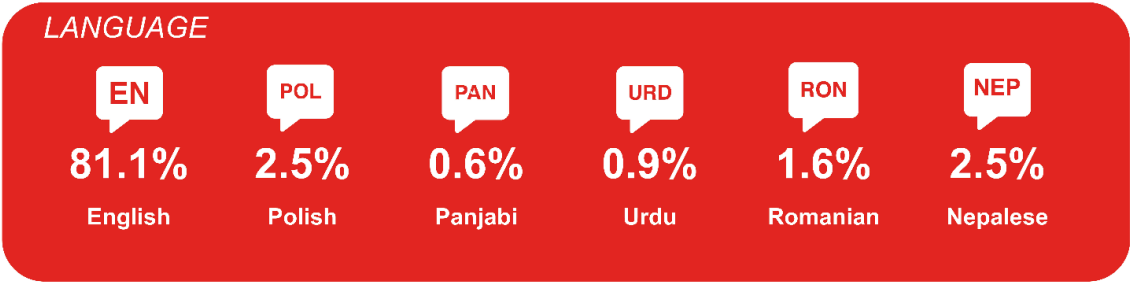
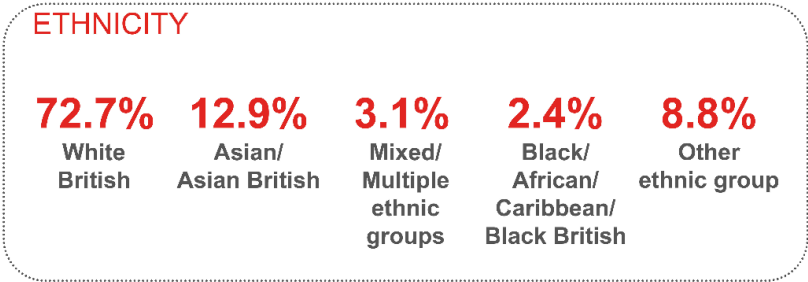
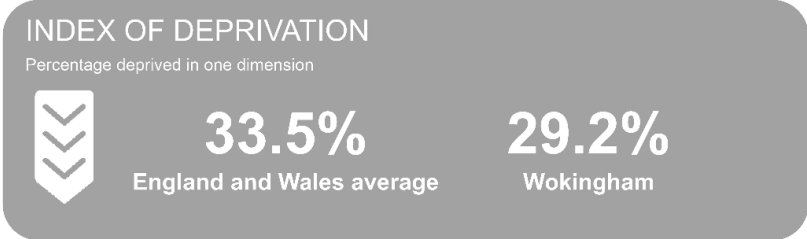
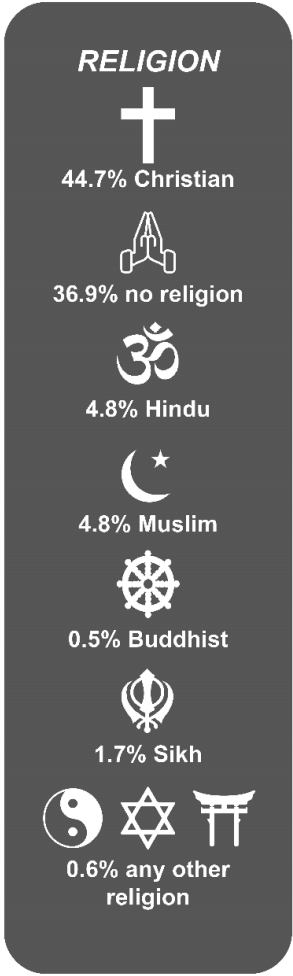
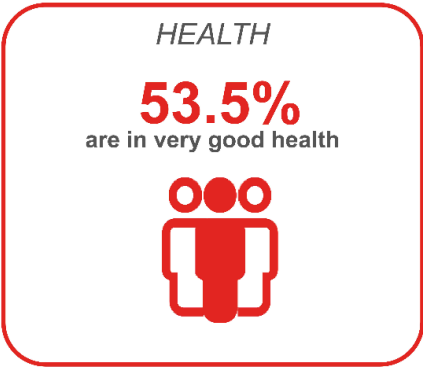


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represented groups to attend recruitment and engagement activities across the County to see how a career in the fire service is a fulfilling and rewarding opportunity.



# Wokingham



Demographic data includes the use of 2021 census data where more up-to-date data sources are unavailable.



## We will increase diversity amongst our workforce by:

- » Supporting the Summer internship.
- » Providing opportunities for under-represented groups to attend 'Have a Go' events on stations.
- » Attend local events such as Pride to showcase RBFRS as an employer of choice.
- » Maintain our 'disability-confident' employer status.
- » Maintain our 'Gold' status with the Armed Forces Covenant.

## Culture in the Fire and Rescue Service and RBFRS

Ongoing focus on building and developing a positive culture in RBFRS is a priority for us to create positive community relations, improve the diversity of our workforce and deliver an effective service.

This year we will embark on the next stage of our 'RBFRS Development Programme'. We will engage with staff members to embed our Behavioural Competency Framework and Employee Code of Conduct, as we are committed to actively developing a culture where everyone feels accepted and treated with dignity and respect. We expect all staff to contribute and participate in building a 'One Team' culture to enable us to deliver excellent service to the local community.

## Serious Violence Duty

[The Serious Violence Duty](#) (SVD) requires local authorities, police, fire and rescue authorities, specified criminal justice agencies and health authorities to work together to formulate an evidence-based analysis of the problems associated with serious violence in a local area and then produce and implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to those particular issues. As a result of this duty, partner agencies will have to work together to identify and publish what actions they need to take collectively to reduce violent crime, including domestic abuse and sexual offences.

RBFRS have a legal and moral obligation to collaborate with partners and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, as outlined in legislation under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022. To that end, RBFRS fully supports the SVD and remains committed, through a collaborative approach, to preventing and reducing serious violence.

RBFRS will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda whilst delivering our core functions.



We are committed to stopping serious violence before it begins. By approaching the issue as a public health problem, we will aim to achieve sustainable reductions in serious violence and improve the health and quality of life of the communities we serve by appropriately understanding the issue and local needs, addressing the risk factors that increase the likelihood of somebody becoming an offender or a victim of serious violence. As such, prevention will be central to our approach. Through effective partnership, we will aim to prevent serious violence from occurring, intervening early to prevent it from damaging lives.



# Map

The map below shows the fire station in Wokingham Borough. A wider map of the County is included in our [Annual Report](#).







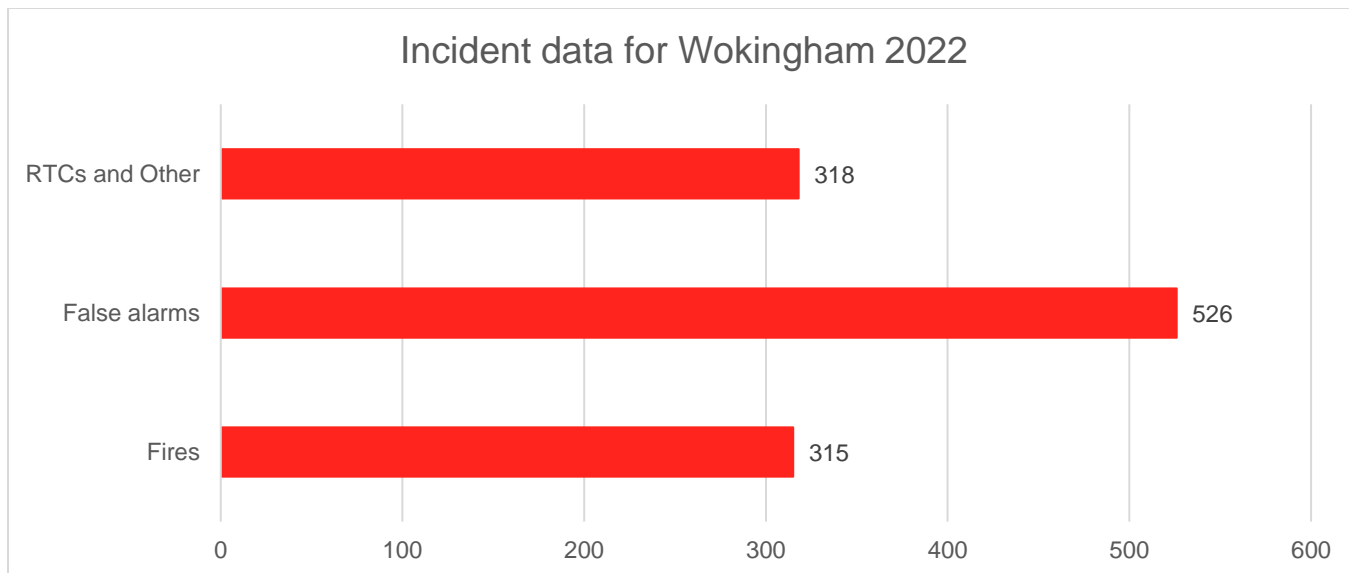
## Post-COVID / Cost of Living Crisis

Post-COVID, despite many challenges, our aim to support local communities by seeking to identify and support those most at risk remained. We have worked hard to deploy resources to deliver our services to those most vulnerable within our communities. Some will face financial challenges as we enter a period of rising living costs. We recognise this may further isolate some members of our society and have experienced increased referrals relating to hoarding or individuals living in isolation. We will work with partners to share information and signpost to appropriate support services.

Our performance management processes allow us to track and monitor the continued impact of these challenges against our objectives whilst adapting plans to ensure we are responding to the highest risks locally.

## Identifying Risk

Our priority is to reduce risk; therefore, we must adopt a risk-based approach. Our performance management processes for Prevention, Protection and Response activities allow us to understand the specific areas of focus required for each location. In 2022, we attended 1,159 incidents in Wokingham Borough. We categorise incidents into the following headline areas:



When we break the incident types down further and consider the most significant risk, these figures help us plan our service for the next year to address our community risks correctly.

In addition to setting objectives based on previous incident data, we monitor current activity to identify emerging risks. Incident data from UK fire and rescue services show a sharp increase in



incidents involving e-bike and e-scooter batteries, which is concerning as many e-bikes and e-scooters are stored, and on charge, inside homes.

These fires are particularly dangerous as the batteries can fail catastrophically and explode without warning, leading to a rapidly developing fire giving off toxic gasses.

Areas of focus in Wokingham Borough will be:

- » Reducing accidental dwelling fires.
- » Reducing outdoor refuge fires.
- » Reducing deliberate car fires.
- » Reducing e-bike and e-scooter battery fires.



# Preventing Fires and Other Emergencies in Wokingham Borough

We adopt a proactive approach to prevent fires and other emergencies from occurring. We achieve this by providing information, education, and advice and working with partner agencies to increase the safety and wellbeing of our communities. We also work to reduce the impact of fires and other emergencies, should they occur.

With the introduction of refugee hotels in some areas of the UK, we must work with local authorities to engage with occupants to deliver vital fire safety messages and ensure the premises are fit for purpose under our fire safety legislation, [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#) (FSO).

It also provides an excellent opportunity to build positive relationships with new community members and promote our services as accessible to all. This work has already begun at a site in Wokingham and will continue alongside partners within Wokingham Community Safety Partnership.

## Preventing Accidental Fires in the Home

The focus of our Prevention activity is to reduce fire risk. We target our preventative work based on potential risks specific to communities within Wokingham Borough.

Prevention of fire deaths is our number one priority. We work with partners and review data on previous, current and emerging risks to ensure we reach those most at risk, for example, those above the age of 65, who often live alone, or those with sensory (hearing and/or sight) or mobility impairments. We will continue to target this group in the next 12 months.

Our fire crews predominantly conduct these visits, with our Safe and Well Technicians addressing more complex or involved cases. When available, we use our trained volunteers for low risk safe and well visits and replace faulty smoke alarms.

Recognising the increased vulnerability to fire experienced by adults living alone, we will work with partner agencies via our [Adults at Risk Programme](#) (ARP) to increase the number of Safe and Well Visits delivered to this section of our community. We have trained partner agencies in the community to identify individuals at risk from fire. Our referral pathway allows our partners to share information, allowing us to make contact and deliver a Safe and Well Visit.



Our quality assurance process allows us to continually improve our services and ensure they remain targeted towards the most vulnerable members of our community. The number of partners referring through our ARP in Wokingham is high. So where in some areas of Berkshire, the focus will be on increasing the number of referring agencies. In Wokingham, we will focus on evaluating referrals to ensure they continue to identify those most at risk and support partners through training and feedback.

As society and behaviours change, we must recognise the associated risks and share this information with our partners. For example, there is an increase in older adults receiving care at home. This increases the number of people who require oxygen supplies on their property or use emollient creams. Combining either of those with someone who smokes at the property or in bed poses a significant fire risk.

Our partners must recognise this and signpost it to us so we can provide appropriate advice and resources to mitigate that risk.



## Performance Targets for 2023-24



**10%**

Increase in Safe and Well referrals received from partner agencies



**35%**

Of Safe and Well Visits for individuals most at very high risk completed within agreed timescales

**50%**

Of Safe and Well Visits for individuals at high risk completed within agreed timescales

Aim for zero deaths in accidental fires in the home



Offer fire safety education sessions to school children in Year 5 and 7 with a target of reaching a minimum of 50% of schools



Highlight the potential dangers of smoking, cooking and faulty electrical appliances during Safe and Well Visits

Provide safety information relating to electric scooter/bike fires, via social media and targeted campaigns





## Reducing Deliberate Fires

Primary fires are fires that harm people or cause property damage. Over the last five years, Wokingham Borough has attended 92 deliberate 'primary fires'. 14% of these were related to vehicle fires, the most common target of serious, deliberate fires.

The number of deliberate secondary fires involving material of lower value, such as fences and refuse, is consistent with other areas of Berkshire. Reducing primary and secondary deliberate fires will be an area of focus for the teams across Wokingham Borough. These fires affect the environment, can spread to properties of value and potentially pose a risk to life.

Arson can have links with other anti-social behaviour. We work closely with colleagues in Thames Valley Police and the local authority through the Wokingham Borough Community Safety Partnership to tackle these issues. Where the suspected cause of a fire may be arson, we inform the police at the time of the incident and 'Arson Awareness' boards are displayed at the scene providing an anonymous route for members of the public to provide information to the police as well as a visual deterrent.

We monitor data on deliberate fire-setting, sharing intelligence with the police to assist in investigations, prosecutions and prevention. Where we identify 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 priority to put additional preventive and protective measures in place.



## Performance Targets for 2023-24



Reduction in the number of deliberately set fires in Wokingham of 10%



Identify areas where multiple incidents of deliberate fires occur and, where appropriate, post 'arson awareness boards'



**100%**

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



## Preventing Other Emergencies

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

Wokingham Borough has a significant road network, including the M4 via the A329M. One key role is to respond to Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs). In 2022, RBFRS responded to 80 RTCs in Wokingham Borough. Traffic levels will increase over the next ten years, as Central Government has set Wokingham Borough a target of building between 850 - 900 new houses annually.

Central Hub service delivery teams offer all schools with Year 7 students a tailored Fire Safety and Road Safety presentation to tackle this potential risk. We will continually review our safety education programme with schools to ensure it remains effective.

Additionally, as part of our overall road safety strategy, RBFRS intends to target prevention activities towards motorcyclists. 2020 data shows that motorcyclists made up 20% of road fatalities, despite only accounting for approximately 1% of the population (Department of Transport). In 32% of motorcycle accidents, riders sustained severe injuries. To help improve motorcyclist safety, we will continue to support the delivery of [Biker down](#) Workshops in Wokingham Borough and facilitate 'Be a Better Biker' courses in our Community space at Wokingham Fire Station.

Over 200 people accidentally drown annually in UK waters (The Water Incident Database, 2022). Prevention teams will continue to support the [UK Drowning Prevention Strategy 2016-26](#) and water safety partnerships in other areas to reduce drowning incidents by 50% by 2026.





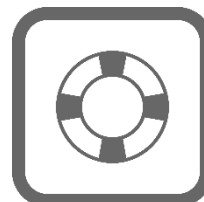
## Performance Targets for 2023-24



Water and road safety education engagement offered to secondary schools across Wokingham with a target of reaching a minimum of 50% of schools



Host at least one 'Be a Better Biker' course at Wokingham Fire Station



Work with partners to create a Water Safety Partnership to address the increasing trend of young people entering the water in the Sonning area

Review our safety education packages to ensure they remain effective



# Fire Safety Standards in Buildings

We have legal responsibility to ensure businesses in Wokingham Borough comply with the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#) and the recent implementation of the [Fire Safety \(England\) Regulations 2022](#).

Our specialist Fire Safety Inspectors (FSIs) are available to support local businesses in complying with the legislation and enforce its compliance where necessary.

They achieve this through a range of proactive and reactive work. These include inspections of premises identified on our Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP), which identifies the highest-risk premises in the County.

Additionally, we investigate fire safety concerns raised by members of the public and respond to local authority building consultations and licensing requests and undertake post-fire inspections 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.

Since the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017, RBFRS have prioritised visits to residential high-rise buildings, identifying those presenting the highest risk for inspections to ensure the effective management of Fire Safety. Following an initial inspection process, all high-rise buildings are managed in line with our Risk-Based Inspection Programme. We will continue to audit the highest-risk premises to ensure the safety of members of the public.

RBFRS believes sprinklers and suppression systems are the most effective way to control or extinguish fires before the Fire Service arrives. Sprinklers can be included in the design of new buildings and retrofitted during the refurbishment of existing ones. Sprinklers save lives, reduce injuries, protect firefighters who attend incidents, and reduce damage to both property and the environment. Research has identified that sprinklers have been highly effective in controlling and suppressing fires in converted and purpose-built flats. Therefore, we will continue to actively promote installing sprinkler systems in all appropriate new buildings and, where practical, retrofitting sprinklers in existing buildings.



## Performance Targets for 2023-24



Actively target and inspect the highest risk premises in Wokingham in accordance with our Risk Based Inspection Programme



**60%**

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



Proactively monitor changes in Fire Safety legislation, ensuring our teams can adapt and service delivery is not compromised



Working closely with the local authority to ensure that offices to flats conversions comply with the Fire Safety Order to keep people safe from fire



**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 RTCs, will still occur and require a swift and effective response. Our approach to emergency response ensures we have the right numbers of firefighters and fire engines in the right place at the right time, delivering the correct response standard.

One Wholetime fire station in Wokingham provides 24-hour coverage, 365 days a year. In 2022, we attended 1159 emergency incidents in Wokingham Borough. A large percentage of calls were responding to false alarms. RBFRS will work with businesses and premises to reduce the burden of Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS). The aim is to maximise resource availability to respond to other emergency incidents, provide prevention activities, minimise road risk, and reduce the cost of disruptions to the fire and rescue service and the communities of Berkshire.

RBFRS will:

- » Work with Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) to ensure that calls arising from automatic fire detection are appropriately call-challenged and only send an attendance when defined criteria is met.
- » Proactively engage with communities to raise awareness of the burden of false alarms and how premises can decrease the likelihood of a false alarm from an automatic system occurring, reducing the number of occasions where the Fire and Rescue Service is called.
- » Wherever possible, at every attended UwFS incident, help the relevant person at the premises understand what led to the false alarm and how to prevent a recurrence.

Operational preparedness is essential to ensure our teams respond effectively to all incidents and work well with colleagues across emergency services and other organisations. Central Hub teams will regularly visit and familiarise themselves at the highest-risk sites across the County. We will assess our response activity through our response monitoring process, aligned to National Operational Guidance. In addition, our service exercise planner will detail a schedule for operational exercise at our highest-risk sites.

Across Berkshire, our target is to arrive at emergency incidents within 10 minutes of the initial call on 75% of occasions. To achieve this, Thames Valley Fire Control Service will send a fire engine to get to an emergency quickly. In response to climate change, we recognise in the summer, we attend an increasing number of wildfires, and in the winter months, we are more likely to attend flooding incidents. We will address seasonal challenges by prioritising specialist vehicle availability to meet incident demand. For example, during spate conditions in the summer months, we may choose to crew off-road Firefighting vehicles in some key areas.



In addition to responding to fire service incidents, RBFRS supports South Central Ambulance Service and Thames Valley Police in responding to emergency calls. This activity underpins our commitment to work collaboratively, supports our communities' broader health and wellbeing needs, and builds the joint operational work undertaken across various incidents with our emergency service partners.

We recognise that we are responsible within the community and can support vulnerable people in times of need. Therefore all our buildings are 'Safe Spaces' and provide additional training to staff to support any members of our community in need.

## Performance Targets for 2023-24



Review and test emergency plans and risk information of all 'high risk' sites in Wokingham Borough



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



Engage with building owners to raise awareness of the burden of false alarms and how premises can decrease the likelihood of them occurring

**10 minutes**



Maintain a response standard where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes of the call being answered on 75% of occasions



# Our Community Engagement

RBFRS recognises the importance and value of knowing and being known within the communities we represent. We aim to provide fully inclusive, accessible, efficient and effective services by working with community leaders to understand how to offer a flexible service to meet the community's needs.

We welcome the opportunity to engage in community settings and welcome people onto Fire Stations to ensure equality of access for all of our services.

## Continue to deliver 'Have a Go' days – Commitment to positive action

We are committed to having a fire and rescue service that is representative of the communities we serve. In line with our [People Strategy](#), we are keen to attract new talent to the service. 'Have-a-Go' events offer people interested in joining the Fire and Rescue Service an opportunity to gain greater insight into the role of a Firefighter. Whether their interests are for an on-call or wholetime role, the Have-a-Go day will allow them to discuss the role with serving firefighters and try the fitness tests and other related activities.

## Continue to deliver blood donation sessions

To support the National Health Service Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) service, we host routine blood donation sessions at fire stations. We will add value to these sessions by offering a range of safety guidance to blood donors.

## Other community activities

Finally, we will seek to explore opportunities to deliver other community-based events and activities in line with local and national campaigns. These events and activities will allow us to reach our diverse communities to have targeted Prevention messages concerning areas of local need or risk.



# Performance Scrutiny

You must receive the services we have set out to deliver to a high standard.

We have several ways to 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.

A performance management structure is built into our service delivery model locally. Our Service Delivery Management Team meets monthly to scrutinise performance against the Hub-level targets set out in 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 while also allowing us to direct support to where it is needed.

## Contact Us

Call us on 0118 945 2888 and ask for the Central Hub Management Team

Alternatively email us at [reception@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:reception@rbfrs.co.uk) and mark it for the attention of the Central Hub Management Team.

Website: [www.rbfrs.co.uk](http://www.rbfrs.co.uk)





# Glossary

## Fires in the home

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

## Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

Our CRMP document contains information on RBFRS' commitment over five years and is supported by annual action plans.

## Hub

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service operates a 'hub model' whereby the area of Berkshire is split into three separate hubs:

- » Central Hub (Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Borough)
- » East Hub (Slough and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead)
- » West Hub (West Berkshire and Reading)

The hubs tailor their Prevention, Protection, and Response services to meet the local area's needs.

## Safe and Well

Firefighters and Safe and Well Technicians conduct Safe and Well visits for the most vulnerable members of our community. We carry out Safe and Well visits in the home, identifying the most vulnerable through various factors such as age, mobility, or sensory (hearing and/or sight) needs.

## Adults at Risk Programme

This scheme provides free training and resources to protect adults at risk from fire in partnership with Adult Social Care. Training is available to anyone involved in the care of adults in the community.

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



## Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO)

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

## Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO)

Identifies fire safety requirements for all non-domestic premises. It does not apply to private homes, including individual flats in a block or house.

## Licensed premises providing accommodation

Premises that have a license to sell alcohol and also offer 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, we class the incident as not attended and does not need to be reported.

## Infographics supplementary details

### The number of formal and informal fire safety activities

The total number of formal or informal fire safety activities that have been issued. Can be any one of the following:

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



## **Number of deaths in accidental fires in the home**

Referred to in the annual plan as the "number of fire deaths in accidental dwelling fires". The total number of deaths that occur due to 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**

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

## **Percentage 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.

## **Percentage of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes from the 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 first fire engine (appliance) arrives at the emergency incident scene and the percentage of occasions RBFRS does this in under 10 minutes.

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

-  RoyalBerksFRS
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-  Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
-  rbfrs.co.uk