

# Community Safety 2025/26 – Year Review

The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority remains committed to protecting and supporting the communities of Royal Berkshire. Through its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), the Authority continues to deliver against key strategic commitments to enhance community safety, including:

**Prevention** – reducing risk to our communities through partnership working and effective prevention education, ensuring services are accessible to all.

**Protection** – supporting those responsible for premises to understand and meet their duties under fire safety legislation, while maintaining accessible services.

Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Authority has a statutory duty to promote fire safety within its area. In addition, under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, the Authority is responsible for enforcing fire safety legislation and supporting responsible persons to understand and comply with their legal duties, particularly in relation to higher-risk and complex premises.

## Prevention

Prevention activity during 2025/26 has continued to focus on targeting risk, improving accessibility, and maximising the impact of partnership working to reach those most vulnerable to fire and other home safety risks.

### Data Led- Prevention and NHS Pilot

The Service continues to deliver Safe and Well visits as its primary intervention for reducing fires in the home. During 2025-26, a total of 5,898 safe and Well visits were delivered to the most vulnerable members of the community, ensuring prevention activity is targeted where it can have the greatest impact.

To further strengthen this targeted approach, the service is currently trialling a pilot project with the NHS focused on improving data sharing and referral pathways. This initiative aims to better identify individuals at greatest risk from fire within the community. The pilot is being delivered in the Slough area, where historically the Service has received lower levels of prevention referrals compared to other parts of the county.

Shared intelligence arising from this pilot is being used to support a more targeted and proactive approach to the delivery of Safe and Well visits, ensuring that prevention activity is directed toward those who are most at risk.

As part of this work, the Service is also exploring technology-enabled and simplified referral mechanisms, including opportunities for GPs to refer directly to the Service. These approaches aim to reduce barriers to referral, improve accessibility for health professionals, and support timely intervention.

Looking ahead, learning from this pilot will inform whether the approach can be expanded more widely. The Service also intends to explore the use of additional partner data sources to enhance its understanding of community risk further and support the development of an intelligence-led, risk-based prevention model.

## **Partnership Working and Community Collaboration**

RBFRS continues to work closely with Community Safety Partnerships, police, local authorities, and safeguarding teams to address risk factors associated with both accidental and deliberate fires. Information sharing has enabled early identification of emerging trends and supports coordinated multi-agency responses to vulnerability and anti-social behaviour.

## **Carbon Monoxide Alarm Initiative – SGN Partnership**

A key prevention success this year has been the delivery of a partnership project with SGN to provide free carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to residents at increased risk.

Over the past year, and thanks to the collective efforts of Safe and Well technicians, Community Safety Advisors (CSAs), and operational crews, approximately 2,500 CO alarms have been issued across Royal Berkshire. This represents a significant intervention to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and demonstrates the value of effective partnership working.

The initiative has also created opportunities for wider engagement, allowing staff to reinforce broader home safety messages and identify additional risks during visits. This work reflects a strong prevention culture across the Service and highlights how empowered frontline staff contribute directly to improved community outcomes.

## **Education and Engagement**

Safety education remains a core element of prevention activity. Schools' engagement, targeted campaigns, and self-led education resources continue to deliver consistent and accessible safety messaging, while supporting efficiency and ensuring effective learning outcomes.

## **Protection**

Protection activity during 2025/26 has focused on risk-based regulation, strengthened governance, and increased enforcement effectiveness.

## **Building Safety and Remediation**

The Service has expanded its work to support the remediation of unsafe buildings with flammable external wall systems. Protection teams work closely with Local Authorities and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to identify medium-rise buildings, understand the associated risk, and monitor progress against remediation programmes.

This engagement ensures that local risks are understood and managed appropriately while supporting national building safety objectives.

## **Protection, Restructure and Business Fire Safety**

During the year, the Protection function has undergone a significant restructure designed to strengthen management, governance, and consistency across fire safety activity.

As part of this restructure, the Service will be developing a Business Fire Safety team to provide targeted support and engagement with local business owners. The team will focus on educating and supporting businesses to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, helping to create safer working environments.

Where necessary, the team will also make appropriate use of enforcement powers to address non-compliance and ensure that responsible persons are meeting their statutory duties. This balanced approach supports both prevention and regulation, while maintaining public and workforce safety.

## **Enforcement and Operational Resilience**

A continued focus has been placed on identifying non-compliant premises and increasing the use of formal enforcement outcomes where informal measures are ineffective.

The Service will also be implementing fire investigation capability, alongside more robust out-of-hours arrangements, providing 24/7, 365-day access to Fire Safety Inspectors (FSIs). This will improve resilience, enhance response to serious incidents, and strengthen regulatory oversight outside of normal working hours.

## **Ongoing and Looking Forward**

The Service will continue to strengthen its risk-based, intelligence-led approach to prevention, using learning from the NHS pilot in Slough and broader partner engagement to inform future delivery models.

In Protection, enhanced governance, the development of the Business Fire Safety team, and continued collaboration with regulators and duty holders will support higher levels of compliance and safer buildings across Royal Berkshire.

RBFRS remains committed to continuous improvement in community safety, ensuring that prevention and protection activity delivers clear, measurable outcomes for residents, businesses, and partners.

**Cllr Owen Jeffery,**  
**Community Safety Member Champion**