



**Agenda  
for the Meeting  
of the  
Audit and Governance Committee**

**Thursday, 28th July 2022**

**At**

**6.30 pm**

RBFRS Headquarters  
Lynda Kenyon Suite  
Newsham Court  
Pincents Kiln  
Calcot  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG31 7SD

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact:

Committee Team

0118 938 4611

E-Mail at [committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk)

Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD



**MEETING:** Audit and Governance Committee Meeting

**DATE AND TIME:** Thursday, 28th July 2022 at 6.30 pm

**VENUE:** Lynda Kenyon Suite  
RBFRS Headquarters  
Newsham Court  
Pincents Kiln  
Calcot  
Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD

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## S U M M O N S

You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority at the time, date and venue indicated above, when it is proposed to deal with the business set out in the enclosed Agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Britten'.

**GRAHAM BRITTEN**  
Monitoring Officer

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**To: Members of the Audit and Governance Committee:**

Councillor Christine Bateson	Councillor Mike Smith
Councillor Tricia Brown	Councillor Morag Malvern
Councillor Haqeeq Dar	Councillor Sandra Malik
Councillor Biyi Oloko	Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
Councillor Tony Linden	

**Copy to: Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service**

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact:

Committee Team  
0118 938 4611

E-Mail at [committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk)

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## **AGENDA**

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**

Purpose:

To receive Declarations of Interest from Councillors relating to items to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, and any from Officers.

- 3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 March and 30 June 2022** (*Pages 5 - 16*)

Recommendation:

That the minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 23 March and 30 June 2022, be confirmed, as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

- 4. Consideration of any matters properly referred to this Committee for decision**
- 5. Internal Audit Update** (*Pages 17 - 104*)

Purpose:

To note the findings in the Progress Report, Annual Report and, approve the Audit Plan for 2022/23.

- 6. External Audit Update** (*Pages 105 - 106*)

Purpose:

To receive for note the External Audit Update.

**7. Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme Verbal Update**

Purpose:

To receive for note a verbal update on Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.

**8. Local Pensions Board - Annual Report (Pages 107 - 114)**

Purpose:

To receive for note Pensions Board Annual Report.

**9. Annual Report 2021/22 (Pages 115 - 164)**

Purpose:

To receive for note Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Annual Report prior to external publication.

**10. Quarterly Performance Report 2021/22 Quarter Four ( January - March 2022) (Pages 165 - 232)**

Purpose:

To receive for note an overview of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's (RBFRS) quarter four performance for the 2021/22 financial year.

**11. Date of next meeting**

Monday 17 October 2022, at 6.30pm, RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**



Held on Wednesday, 23 March 2022, at 6.30 pm  
 Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Headquarters  
 Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD

- Members:**
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(*present)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Councillor Christine Bateson</li> <li>* Councillor Jane Stanford-Beale</li> <li>* Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle</li> <li>* Councillor Alison Swaddle</li> <li>Councillor Avtar Cheema</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Councillor Tony Linden</li> <li>* Councillor Harjinder Minhas</li> <li>Councillor Garth Simpson</li> <li>Councillor Simon Werner</li> <li>* Councillor Helliard-Symons (substitute)</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

- In Attendance:**
- Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
  - Andrew Brittain (External Auditors, Ernest and Young, EY)
  - Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
  - Doug Buchanan (Area Manager Response and Resilience, AM R&R)
  - Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
  - Becca Chapman (Data, Performance and Risk Manager, DP&R)
  - Sam Faulknall-Mills (Performance and Planning Officer, P&PO)
  - Dan Harris (Internal Auditors, RSM)
  - Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)
  - Allison Kennett (External Auditors, Ernest and Young (EY)
  - Andy McLenahan (Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment (HFF&E)
  - Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
  - James Pinchin (Business Support Lead, BSL)
  - Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, Dep ChEx)
  - Hannah Sheehan (Democratic Support Assistant, DSA)
  - Angela Smith (Programme Office and Inspection Manager, PO&IM)
  - Tregear Thomas (Area Manager Prevention and Protection, AM P&P)

**44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bateson, Cheema and Simpson. Councillor Helliard-Symons attended as a substitute for Councillor Simpson.

**45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**Action**

There were no Declarations of Interest from Councillors relating to items to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, and any from Officers.

**46. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2022**

The Chairman proposed the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Linden.

Two actions were recorded at the last meeting and were included in the post meeting notes for clarity.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2022, be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**47. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS PROPERLY REFERRED TO THIS COMMITTEE FOR DECISION**

Item 13 Strategic Asset Investment Framework ICT Business Case was referred by the Fire Authority on 15 February 2022.

**48. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE**

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P), introduced the report, stating that two audits, relating to firefighter pension administration and payroll had been completed since the last meeting. Both were issued the highest assurance opinion.

Dan Harris, Internal Auditor (RSM), highlighted page 23 of the agenda, which summarised the final report. He stated that both audits were issued the highest assurance opinion and that there were four low priority actions arising. Two actions were applicable to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) and the other two actions were for West Yorkshire Pension Fund, to implement.

Dan highlighted the progress against the audit plan 2021/22 on page 25 and explained that each audit thus far had resulted in the highest assurance opinion. He also stated that page 26 outlined the remaining audits. Both the audits on Value for Money and Key Financial Controls would have a draft report by the end of the week, with no significant issues identified. The Cyber Essentials audit was pushed back slightly to June/July.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Linden.

**RESOLVED** that the findings as presented in RSM's Progress Report, be noted.

Dan Harris left the meeting.

**49. EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE**

Conor Byrne, HFRP, introduced the report stating that it was hoped that the audited Statement of Accounts 2020/21 would be presented at the meeting. Due to the ongoing delays with the audit of Berkshire Pension Fund, this was not possible. It was anticipated the Statement of Accounts 2020/21 will be brought to the July meeting for sign off.

Andrew Brittain, External Auditor (EY), stated the Draft Audit Result Report was attached at Appendix A. The Executive Summary on page 85 was the same as what was brought to the Committee on 24 January, with one update on Materiality. The change was an update to the planning materially assessments uses draft results and reconsiders risk assessments.

Andrew also explained that the delay in pensions reporting was due to EY awaiting conclusions from Deloitte. Section 5 of the report outlines the unadjusted differences in pension data.

Allison Kennett, External Auditor (EY) stated that EY were still awaiting the Whole of Government Accounts return from the National Audit Office (NAO), so were unable to yet complete that audit. There was one remuneration for Officers to provide a document in relation to investment properties, this had been provided and was sent to EY Real Estate for assurance.

Allison added that page 116 outlined the position in relation to audit fees. The proposed increase in the fee was awaiting determination by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA).

Councillor Helliar-Symons highlighted page 87 of the report and emphasised it stated Royal Berkshire Fire Authority do provide value for money.

The Chairman asked which stage had been reached with Deloitte? Andrew explained that EY have received the assurance letter from Deloitte but it was caveated, due to the audit of the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund was still open, which formed part of the overall audit. Andrew stated that he hoped this would be concluded as soon as possible.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Linden.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the Draft Audit Results Report in Appendix A be noted.

Andrew Brittain and Allison Kennett left the meeting.

**50. ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2020/21**

Angela Smith, Programme Office and Inspection Manager (PO&IM), introduced the report explaining it was an annual requirement the Authority publish their Statement of Assurance. The report outlined the summary judgements for the

four key areas; Finance, Governance, Operations and the delivery of the National Framework. The internal assessment by RBFRS Officers concluded that the framework criteria was fully met in each of the four areas.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Linden.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The summary judgements within the Statement of Assurance for each of the four key areas of Finance, Governance, Operations and delivering the National Framework, be noted.
- 2) The RBFA Statement of Assurance 2020/21, be approved.
- 3) The Statement of Assurance will be finalised and re-published by the Director of Corporate Services, following the conclusion of the audit of the Statement of Accounts 2020/21, in consultation with the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, be agreed.

**51. MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT REVIEW AND CONSULTATION RESULTS**

Graham Britten, Monitoring Officer (MO), introduced the report, stating that in November the Committee recommended that the Fire Authority note the findings and actions from the audit against the 15 best practice recommendations by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL). Following this, in January the Committee agreed that subject to the gifts and hospitality threshold being amended, a six-week consultation on the adoption of the Draft RBFA Members Code of Conduct commence, on 28 January 2022. The results can be seen on pages 150-151 of the cover report.

Councillor Linden stated that the consultation had a positive response from the public and that it was important that the RBFA Code of Conduct is updated regularly.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Stanford-Beale.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The results of the Draft RBFA Member Code of Conduct consultation (Appendix B); be noted and
- 2) It be recommended to the Fire Authority for approval the adoption of the RBFA Member Code of Conduct (Appendix A).

**52. PROTOCOL ON MEMBER OFFICER RELATIONS**

Graham Britten introduced the report, stating that it was seeking approval for the revised Protocol on Member and Officer Relations. The changes were highlighted in yellow for ease of reference in Appendix A. Graham added his thanks to Fayth Rowe for revising the draft protocol who had looked at comparisons with other Local Authority protocols.

Councillor Helliar-Symons said that she had been involved in the revising of the protocol and that the changes highlighted in yellow made perfect sense.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded by the Councillor Linden.

**RESOLVED** that the amendments to the Protocol on Member and Officer Relations and that it be published on the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service website, be agreed.

### **53. COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS POLICY REVIEW**

James Pinchin, Business Support Lead (BSL), introduced the report explaining the Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy had been reviewed and updated to provide a more efficient and effective service for complainants as well as reducing administrative burden on the Service.

The main changes outlined in the report included the removal of a secondary appeal to Fire Authority. Complaint handling should focus on the outcomes for the complainant and while a secondary appeal might appear beneficial to a complainant, it actually increases the time for the complainant to receive a final resolution.

Another addition was the Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour Policy, which sets out clear examples of what constitutes as unreasonable complainant behaviour, with a range of actions the Service can take. Even though there are only a small minority of cases where people pursue their complaints in a way that was unreasonable or vexatious, they can impede the investigation of their complaint and can have a significant resource issue for the Service.

Other changes include an adjustment to out-of-hours provision, with duty officers performing a triage function to assess whether a complaint needs to be investigated urgently or can wait for usual business hours, and the response time has been changed from 7 working days to 10 days. This is to reflect differing working patterns within the organisation and remove any ambiguity.

A new internal reporting system has been included within the policy based on a recommendation from our HMICFRS inspection, this will make it easier for the senior leadership team to track issues and identify any trends.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out to ensure that the Service has identified potential impacts and accessibility checks and guidance have been added to the policy.

Overall the changes recommended aim to improve customer service experience for complainants and alleviate unnecessary administration burden for the Service.

Councillor Helliar-Symons asked who completes the Complaints Form on page 229. James explained that the Officer who receives the complaint would complete in the form.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Linden.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The proposed changes to the Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy, be agreed; and
- 2) It be noted that staff and representative bodies will be consulted on the proposed changes, and if further amendments are proposed will be presented to the next Audit and Governance Committee. If no further changes are required following publication, the Policy will be published.

#### **54. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT AND PROGRESS AGAINST ACTION PLAN**

Councillor Helliar-Symons introduced the report and stated that in October 2019 the Fire Authority approved its three-year Member Development Strategy, which aligned to the Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan. The coming year will be the final year of the Strategy, but it would be useful to know Members thoughts and if there was anything they would like added.

As outlined at 3.9 of the report, courses and activities listed in the Action Plan have become business as usual. Courses will be reviewed as part of the development of a new Strategy.

Councillor Helliar-Symons also emphasised 3.12 and 3.15 of the report and encouraged all Members to visit Fire Stations.

She stated only 13 responded to the survey, and while it would've been useful to have 100% of responses, the feedback was valuable and has been used to update the skills questionnaire.

There were three suggested revisions to the skills questionnaire. Only 11 Members said that they had a good understanding of how RBFRS works, this was vague, and to gain a better understanding, further detail has been added to this question. The questionnaire now outline areas Members can tick if they understand them well or if they would welcome more information. This can then be followed up in their 1:1 with their Group Leader. Another addition was a question that asked Members what areas of the Fire Authority they would prefer to be involved with, this will be useful to the Chairman when assigning roles, based on Member skills and expertise. The final change is in regard to the timing of 1:1s, it's suggested that new Members undertake their 1:1 as soon as

they are appointed, as part of their induction and existing Members have theirs in September/October.

The Chairman stated that the success of Member Development highlights how Officers and Members work together.

The Chairman moved the recommendation.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The Member Development Annual Report, be noted;
- 2) The progress of the 2020-23 Member Development Action Plan (Appendix A), be noted; and
- 3) The results of the Member Development Survey (Appendix B), be noted.

## **55. ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE**

Katie Mills, Head of Corporate Services (HCS), introduced the item, explaining the report outlined Member Attendance and Allowances from 1 June 2021 to 28 February 2022.

The Chairman moved the recommendation.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The report be noted; and
- 2) It be recommended that the Fire Authority:
  - Note Members' Allowances received from 1 June 2021 – 31 May 2022;
  - Note the 2021/22 attendance record of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members from 1 June 2021 – 31 May 2022.

## **56. ICT CLARIFICATION AND BUSINESS CASES**

Nikki Richards, Deputy Chief Executive (Dep ChEx), presented the report on behalf of Tony Vincent, Head of Business and Information Systems (HBIS). The report followed a request made at Fire Authority on 15 February, that further detail be provided in regards to the mandatory and discretionary spending proposals included in the ICT SAIF. Tony Vincent prepared the report which provided additional information and business cases for clarity.

The Chairman moved the recommendation.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report, the appended business cases and associated Equality Impact Assessments, be noted.

## **57. CIPFA FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CODE REPORT**

Conor Byrne, HF&P introduced the item, explaining that the CIPFA have published a financial management code, which the Authority are required to

demonstrate compliance with from 2021/22. Appendix A outline the six principles, the associated seventeen standards and how the Authority has complied in the current year.

The Chairman asked whether this will bring all financial elements under one report? Conor explained that this was the case and it also provided a summary of where we are.

The Chairman moved the recommendation.

**RESOLVED** that the contents as presented in the CIPFA FM Code report (Appendix A), be noted.

### **58. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER THREE**

Sam Faulknall-Mills, Performance and Planning Officer (P&PO), introduced the quarter three report, stating that progress has been made against plans in all four quadrants.

Tregear Thomas, Area Manager Prevention and Protection (AM P&P) gave an update on item 8, page 12 of the report, total number of full fire safety audits carried out in premises in Berkshire. He stated that the total number of audits carried out was below the expected target, this was due to the impact of the Omicron Variant and a number of Fire Safety Officers (FSO) staff extractions to work on HRRB Programme. He stated, the number completed was to the end of Q3, therefore there was a quarter remaining to complete the target of 1100.

Doug Buchanan, Area Manager Response and Resilience, (AM R&R) explained items 15 and 16 on page 13 of the report. Wholetime and On-Call crewing had been impacted by pandemic related pressures. There was 10.7% sickness over the Christmas period. So far, in Quarter 4 it was starting to take a more positive direction of travel. Recruitment activity for both On-Call and Wholetime continued.

Councillor Stanford-Beale asked when On-Call availability would be expected to improve? Doug explained that On-Call availability had already improved so far in quarter 4. A recruitment drive was ongoing, but it will take some time to get those Firefighters in the role.

Councillor Stanford-Beale highlighted page 14 and asked why there were no returns received from respondents satisfied with the Service Safe and Well visits? Becca Chapman explained that it was a satisfaction measure, the data was extracted from questionnaires completed after the visits and no responses were received in quarter 4.

Councillor Helliard-Symons highlighted page 39-42 of the report on Performance Management and asked whether the PDR audit to quality check objectives had taken place yet, and how many PDRs had taken place? Nikki Richards explained that the audit had taken place and smart objectives were identified

and additional training provided. Currently 98.2% of staff had completed their PDRs.

Becci Jefferies provided further information on page 20, explaining that sickness increased in quarter 3, this was due to Covid and a significant proportion of respiratory problems following Covid. 26% of sickness in quarter 3 was due to Mental Health. To address this, a Mental Health Strategy and Action Plan was in place. It has also been recognised that Mental Health has been more long term with Green Book staff. Further investigations were ongoing to look at the best way to seek early intervention.

Nikki Richards explained the number of RIDDOR accidents on page 20, the target remained red due to progress and where we are in the year. The annual target was a maximum of 6 and to date, there have been 4, so the target at the end of quarter 4 should be achieved.

Councillor Helliard-Symons asked why there was no data in the report for near misses. Nikki explained that near misses were reported to Heads of Service and Directors on a monthly basis.

Sam Faulkner-Mills highlighted page 22 Priority Programmes and explained that the final two appliances which RBFRS purchased became fully operational at Slough Fire Station.

Tregear Thomas explained why the target for ensuring a high standard of service through the quality assurance of our Protection activities, remained red for quarters 1-3. This is due to limited progress, as a result of other programmes taking priority.

Katie Mills provided an update on progress against CRMP Project 4, Response Resource Deployment, Specialist Water Rescue and stated it remained red due to vacancies, but will go green once the positions were filled.

Jim Powell explained Appendix A the percentage of occasions where time to mobilise is within 90 seconds.

Councillor Linden asked a question in relation to the number complaints received in the quarter. Katie explained that there hadn't been a significant spike in complaints received and that all complaints had been dealt with in line with the Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

The Chairman moved the recommendation.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The performance against Service Provision and Corporate Health measures for the targets agreed by the Fire Authority for 2020/21, be noted.
- 2) The progress made on the four priority programmes, be noted.
- 3) The position of corporate risk, be noted.

**59. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, 28 July 2022, at 6.30pm, Lynda Kenyon Suite, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

*(The meeting concluded at 19:47)*

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**



Held on Thursday, 30th June, 2022 at 7.00 pm  
 Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Newsham Court,  
 Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD

- Members:** (\*present)
- \* Councillor Christine Bateson
  - \* Councillor Tricia Brown
  - \* Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
  - \* Councillor Haqeeq Dar
  - \* Councillor Sandra Malik
  - \* Councillor Morag Malvern
  - \* Councillor Tony Linden
  - \* Councillor Biyi Oloko
  - \* Councillor Mike Smith

- In Attendance:**
- Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
  - Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
  - Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
  - Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
  - Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)
  - Andrew Mclenahan (Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment, HFF&E)
  - Katie Mills (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)
  - Jim Powell, (Area Manager, Collaboration and Policy, AM C&P)
  - Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, Dep ChEx)
  - Christian Riley (Communications and Engagement Assistant, C&EA)
  - Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)
  - Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Systems, HBIS)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None received.

**2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23**

The 2021/22 Vice-Chairman opened the meeting and asked Graham Britten, Monitoring Officer (MO), to preside over the meeting.

**Action**

## Agenda Item 3

### Appendix A

#### Action

Graham Britten stated he had received two nominations for the position of Audit and Governance Committee Chairman, from Councillors Tina McKenzie-Boyle and Tricia Brown.

On being put to the vote, **RESOLVED** that Councillor Tricia Brown be elected as 2022/23 Audit and Governance Committee Chairman.

#### 3. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23**

The Chairman asked for nominations for the position of Audit and Governance Committee Vice-Chairman. Two nominations were received from Councillors Tony Linden and Morag Malvern.

On being put to the vote, **RESOLVED** that Councillor Morag Malvern be appointed as 2022/23 Audit and Governance Committee Vice-Chairman.

#### 4. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 28 July 2022, 6.30pm at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

*(The meeting concluded at 19:57)*

## ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AUDIT &amp; GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>28 JULY 2022</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR NOTE AND APPROVAL</b>

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Committee will receive an update on audits completed since the last Committee meeting.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

That Audit and Governance Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the findings as presented in RSM's Progress Report;  
 2.2 **NOTE** RSM's Annual Report; and  
 2.3 **APPROVE** the Audit Plan for 2022/23.

### 3. REPORT

- 3.1 RSM's Progress Report is attached as **Appendix A** and shows that four audits has been completed and finalised since the last Committee meeting. The audits were on value for money, key financial controls, governance and risk management and cyber essentials.
- 3.2 RSM issued its highest assurance opinion in relation to the first three audits stating that, "taking account of the issues identified, the committee can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective."
- 3.3 The Cyber Essentials audit was advisory so did not receive an assurance rating.

## Agenda Item 5

- 3.4 RSM's Annual Report is attached as **Appendix B**. The report states that the organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. However, RSM has identified further enhancements to the framework to ensure that it remains adequate and effective.
- 3.5 RSM have been awarded a contract to continue to provide internal audit services from 1 April 2022 until 31 March 2025. The contract was awarded via a framework set up by East of England NHS Collaborative Procurement Hub.
- 3.6 Following the procurement process, RSM have produced their Audit Plan for 2022/23 which is attached as **Appendix C**. The Plan is based on an analysis of the Authority's corporate objectives, risk profile and assurance framework as well as other external factors that are affecting the sector. Members are asked to approve the Plan.
- 3.7 A representative from RSM will attend the meeting to provide further detail and answer any questions from Members.

### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The work of the internal auditors assures Members that the Authority's finances are in good order.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 In accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Head of Internal Audit is required to provide an annual opinion, based upon and limited to the work performed, on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, control and governance processes. The opinion should contribute to the Authority's Annual Governance Statement.

### **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None.

### **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The internal audit programme aims to identify key risks and report on the effectiveness of controls and mitigating actions.

### **9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

- 9.1 Internal audits will consider how the Authority is meeting this requirement where applicable.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 No issues for statutory officers.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 2021/22 Internal Audit Plan.

**12. APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix A - 2021/22 Progress Report

12.2 Appendix B - 2021/22 Annual Report

12.3 Appendix C - 2022/23 Audit Plan

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Conor Byrne - Head of Finance and Procurement

Email: [byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk)

Tel: 07585 991602

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# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

## Internal Audit Progress Report

### For the Audit and Governance Committee on 28 July 2022

This report is solely for the use of the persons to whom it is addressed.  
To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP  
will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party.

Agenda Item 5  
Appendix A

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Agenda Item 5  
 Appendix A

# Introduction

The internal audit plan for 2021/22 was approved by the Audit & Governance Committee at the 31 March 2021 meeting. This report provides an update on progress against that plan and summarises the results of our work to date. This completes the 2021/22 Internal Audit plan.

# Reports

## 1.1 Summary of final reports being presented to this committee

We have **finalised four reports** since the last meeting, which completes the 2021/22 internal audit plan. This section summarises these reports.

Assignment	Opinion issued	Actions agreed		
		L	M	H
<p><b>Value for Money: Effectiveness of the management of pension arrangements by RBFRS (5.21.22)</b></p> <p>Overall, we found that the processes and controls in place relating to the effectiveness of the management of pensions by RBFRS were generally well-designed and complied with. There was sufficient guidance on the administration of pensions, adequate pension records were retained, and regular performance reporting was also in place. We could see evidence that significant risks relating to pensions were being escalated to the corporate risk register and arrangements were in place to action any legislative changes or updated guidance that may be received relating to pensions.</p>	Substantial Assurance	6	0	0
<p><b>Key financial controls – creditors (6.21.22)</b></p> <p>We found that there was a well-designed control framework in place with regards to payment of suppliers and changes to supplier details. Staff were supported by local procedures which were consistent with working practice and clearly signalled to staff where segregation of duties was necessary.</p>	Substantial Assurance	1	0	0



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Appendix A  
Agenda Item 5

Assignment	Opinion issued	Actions agreed		
		L	M	H
<p><b>Governance and risk management (7.21.22)</b></p> <p>Overall, our review found that there were well-designed and consistently applied governance and risk management arrangements at the Service. Strategic plans and objectives are clearly set in the approved Corporate Plan and Annual Plan, there is a well-documented and applied governance structure in place to monitor performance against these objectives. The Organisational Risk Management Policy outlines the Service’s risk management approach and has been communicated to staff. The CRR is consistently reviewed and actioned by the SLT, with highlights of the CRR shared with the Audit and Governance Committee and SPB.</p> <p>We have, however, identified scope for improving efficiency and/or quality in relation to the clear documentation of responsibilities for review of the CRR, the recording of risk descriptions in line with Policy including linking strategic risks and objectives, ensuring that risk treatments are updated on the full risk register in a timely manner and assigning a refresher date for the risk management training.</p>	Substantial Assurance	5	0	0
<p><b>Cyber Essentials (8.21.22)</b></p> <p>RBFRS completed a self-assessment questionnaire in March 2022. Based upon the evidence available at the time of our fieldwork, we found that 25 of the 50 requirements from the five Cyber Essentials control themes had evidence to support the self-assessment that controls were established.</p> <p>Of the remaining 25 requirements within the scope of the assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13 were self-assessed by RBFRS as implemented but were not tested in our review due to lack of evidence provided;</li> <li>six were not started;</li> <li>five were not applicable.</li> </ul> <p>Issues were identified from our testing in the remaining case and a medium priority management action was agreed to address the issue.</p>	Advisory	0	1	0



## 1.2 Themes arising from control observations in 2021/22

Theme*	Low	Medium	High
Planning	0	0	0
Policies and / or procedures	3	0	0
Non-compliance with policies / procedures	6	0	0
Design of the control framework	0	0	0
Training / awareness for staff	1	0	0
Management or performance information	4	1	0
Terms Of Reference	4	0	0
Lack of segregation of duties	0	0	0
Security	0	0	0
Governance weaknesses	8	1	0
Information technology	0	1	0
Sucession Planning	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

\* The themes arising above relate to the finalised 2021/22 reports only

## Appendix A – Progress against the internal audit plan 2021/2022

Assignment and Executive Lead	Status / Opinion issued	Actions agreed			Actual Audit & Governance Committee
		L	M	H	
<b>Performance Management 1.21/22</b> Doug Buchanan – Director of Service Delivery	FINAL – Reasonable Assurance	9	1	0	October 2021
<b>Vetting and Employment Checks</b> Becci Jefferies – Head of HR & Learning and Development	FINAL – Reasonable Assurance	2	1	0	January 2022
<b>Firefighter Pension Administration</b> Becci Jefferies – Head of HR & Learning and Development	FINAL – Substantial Assurance	3	0	0	March 2022
<b>Payroll Provider – Dataplan</b> Becci Jefferies – Head of HR & Learning and Development	FINAL – Substantial Assurance	1	0	0	March 2022
<b>Value for Money: Effectiveness of the management of pension arrangements by RBFRS</b> Conor Byrne – Head of Finance and Procurement Services	FINAL - Substantial Assurance	6	0	0	July 2022

Assignment and Executive Lead	Status / Opinion issued	Actions agreed			Actual Audit & Governance Committee
		L	M	H	
<b>Key Financial Controls - Creditors</b> Conor Byrne – Head of Finance and Procurement Services	FINAL – Substantial Assurance	1	0	0	July 2022
<b>Risk Management and Governance</b> Katie Mills – Interim Director of Corporate Services	FINAL – Substantial Assurance	5	0	0	July 2022
<b>Cyber Essentials</b> Tony Vincent – Head of Business Information and Systems	Advisory	0	1	0	July 2022
	<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	

## Appendix B – Other matters

### Changes to the audit plan

There were no changes to the 2021/22 internal audit plan.

### RSM External reviews of quality

One of the key measures of quality is an independent third-party assessment and, as a firm we are required to conform to the requirements of the International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF) published by the Global IIA. Under the Standards, internal audit services are required to have an external quality assessment (EQA) every five years. The RSM UK Risk Assurance service line commissioned an external independent review of our internal audit services in 2021, to provide assurance as to whether our approach continues to meet the requirements.

The external review concluded that RSM 'generally conforms to the requirements of the IIA Standards' and that 'RSM IA also generally conforms with the other Professional Standards and the IIA Code of Ethics. There were no instances of non-conformance with any of the Professional Standards'. The rating of 'generally conforms' is the highest rating that can be achieved, in line with the IIA's EQA assessment model.

### Information and briefings

Since the last A&GC we have issued the following client briefing, which we have appended:

- Emergency Services news briefing June 2022

## For more information contact

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The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Actions for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

Our report is prepared solely for the confidential use of Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service and solely for the purposes set out herein. This report should not therefore be regarded as suitable to be used or relied on by any other party wishing to acquire any rights from RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP for any purpose or in any context. Any third party which obtains access to this report or a copy and chooses to rely on it (or any part of it) will do so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party and shall not be liable for any loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature which is caused by any person's reliance on representations in this report.

This report is released to you on the basis that it shall not be copied, referred to or disclosed, in whole or in part (save as otherwise permitted by agreed written terms), without our prior written consent.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – VALUE FOR MONEY – EFFECTIVENESS OF MANAGEMENT OF PENSION ARRANGEMENTS

## Why we completed this audit

An audit of 'Value for Money: Pensions' was undertaken as part of the agreed internal audit plan for 2021/22 at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS). The objective of the review was to allow the Service to take assurance over the effectiveness of controls in place with regards to managing its pension arrangements within the fire service (separate to the work conducted by West Yorkshire Pension Fund ((WYPF)) and its preparation for any changes to legislation and guidance.

The Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 is a statutory, defined benefit, public service pension scheme that came into force in April 2015. As a result, 'immediate detriment' cases have arisen for firefighters that have retired since the scheme was introduced or will do so before further legislation to provide a remedy is introduced. This has led to the HR department within the service taking on additional responsibilities. These firefighters fall into two categories:

- Category 1 – members who have not yet had benefits brought into payment; and
- Category 2 – members who have had benefits brought into payment.

The Service has 29 Category 1 and 12 Category 2 members.

A contract has been in place since 2016 between the Service and West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) to provide payroll and pension services, with the initial term running until January 2019. This was initially extended for further two years by the Service until May 2021, followed by a further three-year extension that was approved by the Management Committee until May 2024. The contract sets out the pension administration services to be provided by WYPF, along with the service offer and key performance indicators (KPIs) against which WYPF's performance is measured. The payroll services are further outsourced by WYPF to provider Dataplan.

The Force has a Pensions Board in place to provide governance and oversight to pension arrangement and reports into the Audit and Governance Committee every six months on activities and performance of the Board. Contract performance is also monitored through quarterly contract meetings between the Force and WYPF.

## Conclusion

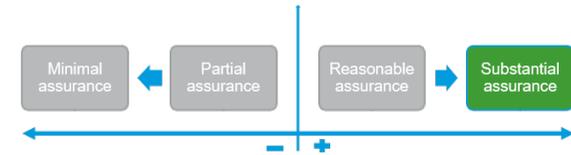
Overall, we have found that the processes and controls in place relating to the effectiveness of the management of pensions by RBFRS are generally well designed and complied with. Guidance was in place with sufficient guidance on the administration of pensions, adequate pension records were retained, and regular performance reporting was also in place. We could see evidence that significant risks relating to pensions were being escalated to the corporate risk register and arrangements were in place to action any legislative changes or updated guidance that may be received relating to pensions.

However, we have identified issues in relation to the contract terms not being updated since inception, to account for any additional responsibilities or duties that have emerged and are being undertaken by HR, and the KPIs documented within the contract not being updated to account for these.

Additionally, we found that updates on pension risks are not being regularly documented within the Pension Board risk register, the Pension Board Terms of Reference has not been subject to regular review and approval, and updates on overdue actions within the Pensions Action Log were not being provided.

**Internal audit opinion:**

Taking account of the issues identified, the Authority can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.



**Key findings**

We noted the following controls to be adequately designed and operating effectively:

**Guidance on the Administration of Pensions**



Through review of the Payroll and Pension Services Contract we found that guidance had been provided regarding the administration of pension services that were to be provided by WYPF. Additionally, we were provided with a Monthly Payroll Instruction Guide and through review we found that this documented tasks to be completed for pensions management including monthly pension checks and a quarterly pensions audit. Further guidance on pension administration can also be found through external sources such as the Home Office and Local Government Association (LGA).

**Immediate Detriment Guidance**



The LGA and Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has issued a framework for the handling of Immediate Detriment cases for members who have not yet had benefits brought into payment (Category 1) and for members who have had benefits brought into payment (Category 2). Through review of a report to the December 2021 Management Committee regarding the Immediate Detriment Framework we found that it recommended the Management Committee adopt the framework on behalf of the Authority, with details provided on the framework and guidance that had been issued by the LGA for Fire and Rescue Authorities.

**Processing and Providing Information**



Through review of the completed Pensions Matrixes for the most recent three individuals processed we found that all had been fully populated and completed and had been signed off by the HR Adviser. In addition to this, we were provided email correspondence between the Service and Dataplan evidencing the joint review of the matrixes prior to submitting to WYPF, and we confirmed that these had been signed off by the HR Adviser.

**Pension Records**

Through review a sample of 20 Officers receiving pensions from the Service we found that in all cases employment records were on file, details of the pension scheme were on file, dates the individual joined the scheme and their expected retirement/maturity date were recorded, scheme payment details were on file and details of additional allowances and career breaks had been recorded, however this only related to one individual. We also found that in 15 cases location details and details of promotions were on file.

For the five cases where location details and promotion details were not on file, we were informed by the Senior HR Adviser that these pension records would have been archived due to the length of time that the individuals had been retired for, which in all cases exceeded 20 years. We noted that this was in line with the Service's Records Retention Schedule.

**Reporting on the Management of Pensions**

Through review of the Audit and Governance Committee meeting minutes and Board papers for January and July 2021 we confirmed that a Pensions Board regular update had been provided at these meetings. Through review of the reports we found that they included reporting on the activities of the Pension Board, as well as performance of the WYPF and included a summary of their performance against KPIs.

We also reviewed the draft Local Pensions Board Six-Monthly Report that was due to be issued to the Audit and Governance Meeting in January 2022 and confirmed that the activity of the Pensions Board was reported on, as well as other significant issues including supporting immediate detriment cases for active service members.

**Corporate Risk Register**

Through review of the January 2022 Corporate Risk Register we confirmed that two pension risks had been escalated to it, being Pension Case Law (ID 685) and Pension Governance (ID 686). For each risk we found that risk descriptions and impacts had been recorded, inherent and current risk scores had been assigned, mitigations for the risks had been identified and updates on the progress of these had been documented within the register, with this last taking place in December 2021. We confirmed that both risks had been assigned a risk owner and each mitigation had also been assigned an owner.

**Arrangements for Actioning Changes Required by Guidance or Legislation**

We were provided with communications from the Home Office, LGA and HM Treasury surrounding changes to pension legislation and guidance including key messages of the prospective changes consultation, updates on the framework for managing immediate detriment issues, and advice on processing immediate detriment cases before new legislation was passed that could result in further complications in calculating pension payments. Through review of the Pensions actions log we found that actions to be taken identified from each reviewed communication had been recorded on the Pensions action log, with action owners and completion dates recorded.

Through review of the Pensions Board Action and Decision Log we found that actions and decisions had been recorded, with descriptions provided where necessary, updates provided, owners assigned as well as open dates, due dates and closed dates for all actions. We noted the Log had one open action at the time of review which had a due date of October 2021, however updates had been provided in December 2021 regarding its status and a rescheduled due date had been assigned.

**In addition, six low priority management actions have been agreed and can be found below in the detailed findings section of this report.**

## 2. DETAILED FINDINGS AND ACTIONS

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

Area: Contract with West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF)				
<b>Control</b>	A contract is in place for Payroll and Pension Services between RBFERS and WYPF and originally ran from January 2016 to May 2019. The option to extend the contract was taken (to January 2021), before it was agreed by the Management Committee to further extend this until May 2024.	<b>Assessment:</b>		
	The contract sets out the Terms and Conditions of the agreement, with the services to be provided by WYPF in respect of pension services documented within the specification in Appendix A of the document.	<b>Design</b>	✓	
		<b>Compliance</b>	×	
<b>Findings / Implications</b>	<p>Through review of the Payroll and Pension Services contract, we found that it had been signed by an authorised signatory from WYPF as well as by the Head of Finance and Procurement. We also confirmed that a contract extension was in place between January 2019 and January 2021 and had been signed by the Head of Finance and Procurement and the Director of Support Services.</p> <p>In addition to this, the contract was further extended for an additional three years until May 2024. Through review of the July 2020 Management Committee meeting minutes, we confirmed that this was approved.</p> <p>While we found the contract had been extended, we noted that it had not been updated since its introduction in 2016 to account for any additional responsibilities or duties that have emerged since then, such as the requirement to review the immediate detriment calculations that are completed by Dataplan, a task that is currently being completed by the RBFERS HR team.</p> <p>If the Payroll and Pension Services contract is not updated to account for additional responsibilities and duties that have emerged since the original contract was established in 2016, there is a risk that RBFERS is not receiving value for money for the services they are currently paying for, as well as a lack of clarity regarding which tasks are required to be completed by each organisation which could lead to duplication or omission of tasks.</p> <p>It should be noted that WYPF undertakes additional action (based on not yet finalised legislation) for no additional charge to RBFERS. This, in addition to the outcomes of the initial tendering process (WYPF had the lowest price for a number of functions) reflects how the WYPF contract represents value for money</p>			
<b>Management Action 1</b>	The Payroll and Pension Services contract will be reviewed to establish any additional responsibilities and duties surrounding pension administration that have not been documented and RBFERS will consider whether the contract needs to be updated to include these.	<b>Responsible Owner:</b> Becci Jefferies & Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement	<b>Date:</b> 31 October 2022	<b>Priority:</b> Low

**Area: Key Performance Indicators**

<b>Control</b>	WYPF's performance of pension administration and pensioner payroll services is measured against KPIs that are outlined within Appendix A of the Payroll and Pension Services contract.	<b>Assessment:</b>	
	The contract outlines 30 separate KPIs which document the performance standard and the minimum target that is required to be met.	<b>Design</b>	✓
		<b>Compliance</b>	×

**Findings / Implications** Through review of the Payroll and Pension Services contract we found that KPIs relating to pension administration had been documented in Appendix A of the document. Through review of the KPIs recorded, we found that these were reflective of the responsibilities set out in the contract such as setting up new entrant's pension records within ten days, providing an annual statement of benefit entitlement to active and deferred members within legislative timescales, and implementing annual pension increases by payment due date.

We also noted that each of the KPIs recorded in the contract were specific, measurable, attainable, realist and time-based.

However, as the contract had not been updated since its introduction in 2016, we noted that no new KPIs had been introduced to take account of any new responsibilities and duties that had arisen since the original contract was entered into such as the management of immediate detriment cases, which raises a risk that WYPF's performance will not be subject to adequate monitoring which could lead to underperformance that is not addressed.

<b>Management Action 2</b>	The revised KPIs for pension administration (provided by WYPF) will be reviewed, agreed and implemented.	<b>Responsible Owner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Priority:</b>
	This review will consider whether any additional KPIs need to be introduced to account for additional responsibilities and duties that have arisen since the contract was initiated. The KPIs in use will also be subject to annual review to ensure that they remain relevant.	Becci Jefferies & Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement	31 October 2022	Low

**Area: Contract Monitoring**

<b>Control</b>	<p>Performance against KPIs is reported on through monthly performance reports. These are reviewed and discussed as part of the quarterly contract monitoring meetings held between RBFRS and WYPF.</p> <p>Where KPIs have not been met, discussions with WYPF will occur to identify why this has occurred and actions are set to resolve any underperformance issues. The monthly performance reports are also reviewed by the Pensions Board who retain a dashboard to monitor progress against KPIs throughout the year.</p>	<b>Assessment:</b>	
		<b>Design</b>	✓
		<b>Compliance</b>	×

**Findings / Implications**

We obtained the agendas for the November 2020, April 2021 and August 2021 Contract Meeting minutes and through review we confirmed that KPIs and management information was a standing agenda item.

Through discussions with the Senior HR Adviser, we were informed that meetings were not minuted which meant that we were unable to confirm the extent to which KPI performance was scrutinised especially where targets were not met, however we were further informed that actions arising from the meetings were recorded within the Pensions Action Log. We noted through review of the September 2021 monthly KPI report that all reported KPIs had been achieved, however we found for the October and November 2021 reports that for each month two of the reported KPIs had not been achieved. With regard to October KPIs, the KPIs not met were 'Deferred Benefits Set Up on Leaving' where two of four cases were not met, and 'Spouse Potential' where there was a single case during the month which was not met. For November, the KPIs not met were 'Refund Quote' and 'Death Grant Nomination Form Received', both of which had a single case in the month which had not been met.

We were informed by the Senior HR Adviser that this had not been addressed with WYPF yet as no contract meetings had occurred since the reports were issued.

Through review of the December 2021 Pensions Board meeting agenda, we noted that performance monitoring was a standing agenda item for the meeting, however we found that no actions relating to KPIs not being achieved been documented within the Pensions Board Actions and Decisions Log.

Through discussions with the Senior HR Adviser, we were informed that where KPIs had not been met this was usually picked up through discussions with WYPF during the contract meetings and explanations given as to why they had not been achieved, however this was not formally documented.

If the reasons behind underperformance with KPIs in the Payroll and Pensions Services contract is not adequately documented there is a risk that this is not being adequately monitored and actions may not be put in place to address this.

<b>Management Action 3</b>	<p>Records of questions and responses raised during WYPF Contract Meetings relating to underperformance with contract KPIs will be recorded within the Pensions Actions and Decisions Log.</p>	<b>Responsible Owner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Priority:</b>
		Emma Scott, Senior HR Advisor	Implemented	Low

**Area: Contract Monitoring**

Where required, actions to address this will be set and documented within the log.

**Area: Risk Management**

<b>Control</b>	<p>A risk register is in place to monitor the risks associated with pensions and is managed by the Pensions Board where it is reviewed as a standing agenda item at each meeting. The risk register documents each risk as well and the following other information against each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptions and impacts;</li> <li>• Inherent and current risk scores;</li> <li>• Risk owners;</li> <li>• Risks treatments; and</li> <li>• Review dates.</li> </ul>	<b>Assessment:</b>	
		<b>Design</b>	✓
		<b>Compliance</b>	×

**Findings / Implications** We obtained the Pensions Board Risk Register and through review we found that for all five risks documented:

- Descriptions and impacts had been recorded and these were clear;
- Inherent and current risk scores had been assigned;
- Risk owners had been assigned; and
- Treatments for each risk had been recorded.

Through review of the Pension Board meeting agendas for April, September and December 2021 we confirmed that Risk Register updates were a standing item, however as the meetings were not minuted we were unable to confirm the extent of the updates.

While we noted the Risk Register included review dates for each risk, we found that the previous review recorded was March 2021 and the next date for review was June 2022. We also noted that the register did not record updates regarding the progress of each risk, which we were informed by the Senior HR Adviser was due to verbal updates being provided at the Pension Board.

If updates on risks are not documented within the Risk Register, risks and actions taken to mitigate them may not be appropriately monitored which could increase the likelihood of risks materialising.

<b>Management Action 4</b>	Updates on individual risks that are provided at the Pensions Board meetings will be recorded within the Pensions Board Risk Register.	<b>Responsible Owner:</b> Chair of the Pensions Board	<b>Date:</b> 31 October 2022	<b>Priority:</b> Low
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**Area: Pensions Board**

<b>Control</b>	A Pensions Board is in place to ensure that pension schemes comply with governance and administration requirements, and to monitor the performance of WYPF as the Service's pension administrator. The Board meets on a quarterly basis.	<b>Assessment:</b>	
		<b>Design</b>	✓
	The Board has a Terms of Reference (TOR) in place that sets out its responsibilities, membership details and meeting frequency of the group. The TOR is subject to approval from the Fire Authority.  Pension Board meetings are not minuted but an Actions and Decisions Log is in place where actions and decisions made during meetings are recorded.	<b>Compliance</b>	x

**Findings / Implications**

We obtained the Pensions Board ToR and through review confirmed that the purpose of the board, which is to assist Royal Berkshire Fire Authority in its role as a scheme manager of the Fire Fighters Pension Scheme, had been recorded as well as a description of the duties of the Board. Further review of the ToR confirmed that the membership, meeting frequency, and quorum requirements have also been documented.

We noted that the ToR did not state when they had last been subject to review or the date at which they were next required to be reviewed. Through discussions with the Senior HR Adviser, we were informed that the ToR had not been reviewed since 2018 and there was no planned date for the next review, however the Board Chair was looking into the protocol for this.

If ToR are not subject to regular review, there is a risk that they may not reflect the current responsibilities of the Board which could result in it being less effective or not achieving its goals.

We obtained the agendas for the April, September and December 2021 Local Pensions Board meetings and through review we found that the Board was meeting its terms of reference duties with conflicts of interest reviewed, updates from Board members on activities provided, updates from the Scheme Manager representative and performance monitoring carried out.

We also obtained the Local Pensions Board Actions and Decisions Log and through review we confirmed that actions and decisions arising during meetings were being recorded.

<b>Management Action 5</b>	The Pensions Board Terms of Reference will undergo review and approval by the appropriate members to reflect current practice.	<b>Responsible Owner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Priority:</b>
	The date of next review will also be recorded.	Chair of the Pensions Board	31 October 2022	Low

## Area: Management of the Impacts of the 2015 Pension Scheme

<b>Control</b>	<p>The Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 is a statutory, defined benefit, public service pension scheme that came into force in April 2015. As a result, 'immediate detriment' cases have arisen for firefighters that have retired since the scheme was introduced, or will do so before further legislation to provide a remedy is introduced. These firefighters fall into two categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category 1 – members who have not yet had benefits brought into payment; and</li> <li>• Category 2 – members who have had benefits brought into payment.</li> </ul> <p>The Service has 29 Category 1 and 12 Category 2 members.</p> <p>To manage to the short-term impacts of the 2015 pension scheme, the Service looks at guidance that has been made available regarding the management of immediate detriment cases. With respect to guidance that has been issued, and subsequently withdrawn, by the Home Office, the Service has partially adopted the Immediate Detriment Framework for Category 1 employees only.</p> <p>To manage the long-term impacts of the 2015 pension scheme, the Service has put additional resources in place to address this. Additionally, records of actions and decisions made on cases and related pensions matters are retained within the Pensions Action Log, including evidence of how these decisions were informed.</p> <p>The Service has also set up a members working group that includes members of the fire authority to send responses to a government consultation regarding the 2015 pension scheme.</p>	<b>Assessment:</b>	
		<b>Design</b>	✓
		<b>Compliance</b>	×

<b>Findings / Implications</b>	<p>We obtained the Pensions Actions Log V13 and through review we found that it documented actions that had been raised, the scheme the action related to, the subject the action related to, the action owner, the date it was added to the log and the timescale for completion, along with any additional comments.</p> <p>While we found that all open actions had owners and timescales for completion identified, we noted that two open actions had timescales for completion of August 2021 and December 2021 respectively, with no additional comments provided as to why they were still open. Through discussions with the Senior HR Adviser we were informed that both actions had been kept on the log for review as completion was still ongoing, however no further comments regarding this had been documented.</p> <p>If updates are not provided for actions where they exceed their completion dates, there is a risk that they are not being monitored effectively or are not being completed in a timely manner.</p> <p>Through review of the October 2020 Management Committee meeting minutes and papers we found that a report was issued to the Committee that documented the Pension Consultation Task and Finish Group's responses to HM Treasury and to the Ministry of Housing, Commuting and Local Government following their meetings in September and October 2020.</p>
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**Area: Management of the Impacts of the 2015 Pension Scheme**

Through review of the report we found that it laid out the group’s responses to the consultation questions around Public Service Pension Schemes: Changes to the transitional arrangements of the 2015 scheme, as well as around Local Government Pension Scheme (England and Wales) Amendments to the statutory underpin. Through review of the meeting minutes we found that the report had been discussed and noted by the Management Committee.

<b>Management Action 6</b>	Where actions on the Pensions Action Log are not completed in line with the timescales set out, updates will be recorded regarding their progress and revised timescales for completion will be put in place.	<b>Responsible Owner:</b> Emma Scott, Senior HR Adviser	<b>Date:</b> Implemented	<b>Priority:</b> Low

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – KEY FINANCIAL CONTROLS - CREDITORS

## Why we completed this audit

We undertook a review of the Creditors function at Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service as part of the agreed internal audit plan for 2021/22. The objective of the review was to ensure that payments to suppliers are correctly processed and recorded on the main accounting system and that controls are in place for supplier maintenance.

The Services Finance team is responsible for the payment of suppliers using the Sage system, the Service’s primary finance system for maintaining accounting records. A requisition is required to be raised on Sage by a member of the Finance Team with level 1 access and subsequently approved by a member with level 2 access (Budget holders and Line Managers). Approval limits for requisition approvers are built into the Sage system, in line with the Electronic Ordering and Authorisation Register. Once a requisition is authorised, a purchase order is automatically raised by Sage and is then sent to the supplier by the requisitioner.

RBFRS utilises SAGE as its primary finance system for maintaining accounting records, producing POs and matching invoices for accounts payable activities undertaken; exceptions are made for BACS runs, which are processed through the PTX system (linked into both SAGE and Barclays Online Banking), and for one-off payments made to suppliers, which are completed directly through the Barclays Online Banking system.

The Finance team completes a three-way match between purchase order, goods receipt and invoice before processing invoices for payment via BACS. Payment runs are prepared every Wednesday by the Management Accountant/Pay and Pensions with the Finance Manager or the Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement responsible for review and approval prior to processing.

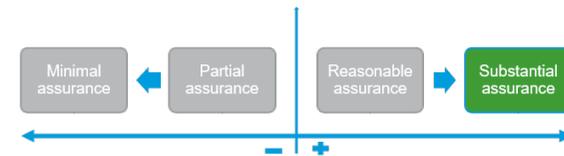
The Service has recently implemented a new software (v1) to the SAGE 1000 finance system in order to fully automate the invoice processing procedure, and as such creditors procedures and expectations at the Service have changed.

## Conclusion

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service has a well-designed control framework in place with regards to payment of suppliers and changes to supplier details. Staff are supported by local procedures which are consistent with working practice and clearly signal to staff where segregation of duties is necessary.

### Internal audit opinion:

Taking account of the issues identified, the Authority can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.



## Key findings

We noted the following controls to be adequately designed and operating effectively:



### Financial Regulations

The financial regulation is available on the Service's website and last updated in November 2020 therefore is still in date. The financial regulations covered key AP staff responsibilities and we confirmed that the FRs had been approved and reviewed at the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Committee.



### Authorised signatories

Within the Sage system, RBFRS has in place an authorised signatories' matrix for the inputting and approval of purchase requisitions. We found this to be aligned with the Electronic Ordering and Authorisation Register maintained by the Finance Team. For a sample of ten staff members detailed on the Register, we confirmed that all were active employees and the limits provided were reasonable given their job role and demonstrated adequate segregation of duties.



### Barclays Connect user access

Access to approve payments is administered in the Barclays Connect system by the Exchequer & Systems Manager.

We confirmed through our testing that the authorisation granted within the system provides adequate segregation of duties and that this was in line with the bank mandate.

## Three- way Matching



### Requisitioning

We tested a sample of 20 paid invoices and confirmed that in each instance these had been matched with an original requisition, which had been approved by the budget holder in line with the Sage authorisation matrix.

Our testing also confirmed that for all 20 paid invoices, the requisition had been raised prior to the receipting of goods on the Sage system, and that all suppliers were included on a listing of all suppliers taken from the Sage system.

### Receipting of Goods and processing of Invoices

Invoices received are automatically sent to the V1 system, which automatically matches invoices to authorised purchase orders and receipted goods marked in the system. Where an invoice has been received and goods have not yet been receipted on Sage, V1 flags this, and the original requisitioner is informed of this by the Accounts Officer to be investigated and this needs to be completed or the invoice will not be paid.

For our sample of 20 paid invoices, we confirmed that goods had been receipted on Sage prior to payment, and that a three-way match could be demonstrated between invoice, requisition, and receipt. We also confirmed through review of the respective weekly BACS payment run files and Service bank statements that for all 20 paid invoices payments were made in line with the payment allocated date detailed on the Sage system.

Our testing noted that in 14 instances, payment was made in line with the payment terms stated on the invoice, whilst in the remaining six instances reasonable explanations were provided as to why the payment terms were not met.

### Orders without a purchase order

In exceptional circumstances orders may be made without a purchase order. RBFRS has a payment request form which must be completed in order to do this. For a sample of five payments made through Barclays Connect, we confirmed that this form was in place and signed by managers or the deputy of Finance and Procurement depending on the nature of the payment and in line with the Payment Request procedure. Approval was also obtained prior to the payment being made. In all five instances the rationale for not having a purchase order was reasonable.

### Credit Notes

For a sample of five credit notes applied to supplier accounts, we found that in all instances, this could be traced back to an original credit note issued by the supplier. Through review of email correspondence, we noted that in all five instances, the relevant Budget Holders had investigated and ensured that the credit note had been applied against a corresponding purchase order number. We also confirmed through review of the Sage system that the full amount of all credit notes had been correctly applied, and that they had been processed within 30 working days of the credit note being sent to the Accounts Officer or 'InvoiceforPayment' inbox.

### New Suppliers

For a sample of five instances where a new supplier was created in the period between 1 April 2021 and 3 February 2022, we confirmed that a Supplier Request Form had been completed, checked and signed off by the Procurement team before being handed over to Finance for input into Sage. For each of the five instances, we also noted that a bank verification form had been completed and returned by the supplier and found that the Service had completed independent verification of supplier details prior to upload into Sage and that the supplier's information in Sage was accurate with this verification. In addition, we confirmed that a new supplier form had been completed by the Accounts Officer detailing the checks performed to verify the supplier prior to inclusion on the weekly payment run.

We noted that in each instance the new supplier form had been reviewed by the Management Accountant and authorised for inclusion in the payment run file by the Finance Manager. We noted that for each of our sample, segregation of duties was adequately maintained throughout the process.



### Supplier Amendments

For a sample of five amendments to supplier details on Sage, we confirmed that an independent verification check of supplier information was completed and documented in a supplier amendments form. We also noted that in all five instances the supplier amendment forms were reviewed and approved by the Finance Manager prior to any invoices being included in the weekly BACS file for payment, and that the details had been subject to a further independent verification check by the Accounts Officer prior to inclusion in the respective BACS file.

## Payment Runs



### Batch reconciliation checks

BACS payment runs are completed weekly every Wednesday. For a sample of five payment runs, we confirmed that the batch spreadsheet was reconciled with the payment report on Sage and checked under adequate segregation of duties and that this reconciliation cast before the payment was approved on the Bottomline BACS system.



### Over £10k checks

For a sample of five payment runs, we found that as per the Payment Runs Procedure the Finance Manager/ Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement had checked all suppliers with total payments with balances of over £10k and signed each off before the payment was approved.



### BACS payment authorisation

For a sample of five payment runs, we confirmed that the BACS payment in the Bottomline system had been approved under adequate segregation of duties. In all five instances a BACS payment authorisation form was completed by the Finance team. Following this, BACS Payment was completed by the Deputy Head of Finance or Finance Manager.



### BACS supplier information check

For a sample of five payment runs, we confirmed AP staff had completed an independent check of supplier information. This was signed off by the Finance Manager/ Deputy Head of Finance before payment in order to confirm no changes to bank details had been made from the original batch file.



### Creditor Reconciliations

On a monthly basis, the AP ledger is reconciled to the Creditors ledger in accordance with a monthly reconciliation timetable. For a sample of three months, we confirmed that a creditors reconciliation had been prepared and reviewed under adequate segregation of duties in a timely manner with exceptions explained and resolved.

## 2. DETAILED FINDINGS AND ACTIONS

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

### Area: Desktop Accounts Payable Procedures

<b>Control</b>	<p>RBFRS has desktop procedures in place covering the key tasks undertaken by the Accounts Payable (AP) team, guidance covered processes linked to accounts payable functions such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for completing creditors reconciliation;</li> <li>• Guidance for the payment request procedure which includes when a payment request is required and how to raise a payment request;</li> <li>• Guidance for setting up suppliers and amending supplier accounts;</li> <li>• Guidance for raising a purchase requisition;</li> <li>• Guidance for receiving, checking, identifying and sending invoices which includes updates with the implantation of the new V1 software; and</li> <li>• Procedure for weekly payment runs.</li> </ul> <p>The Procedures are not subject to periodic review but are updated by the Accounts Officer as and when processes change.</p> <p>The procedure documents are available to Finance staff via a shared drive.</p>	<b>Assessment:</b>	
		<b>Design</b>	✓
		<b>Compliance</b>	×

<b>Findings / Implications</b>	<p>We obtained five AP Desktop Procedures, confirming by screenshot evidence that these were accessible to staff via the Finance Department shared drive. We obtained five AP Desktop Procedures and confirmed through screenshot evidence that these were accessible to staff via the Finance Department shared drive.</p> <p>The guidance included clear instructions and screenshots demonstrating the expected processes. We confirmed all processes were up to date with current working practice in place at the time of our review, as assessed through observations of working practice as part of our testing in other areas.</p> <p>We noted that four of the procedure documents had been subject to recent review as they were dated 2022, however the Purchase Requisition procedure document was dated November 2016.</p> <p>We were advised by the Accounts Officer that procedure documents are reviewed and updated as and when changes in processes occur (such as the implementation of the V1 software), and that the purchase requisition procedure remains the same as in November 2016.</p> <p>We were also advised by the Accounts Officer that the Deputy Head of Finance is informed of major changes to procedure documents, with this evidenced through review of email correspondence, for the recent update to the invoice processing and payment run procedure.</p> <p>Through review of the purchase requisition procedure document, we confirmed that the content still reflected current practice.</p>
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**Area: Desktop Accounts Payable Procedures**

We also noted that all five procedures detailed a last reviewed date, however, the version controls within all procedure documents did not detail a next review date nor was anyone assigned to review the documents.

Where versions controls do not include information such as next review date and who is responsible for reviewing the document, there is a risk that reviews may not be completed in line with expectations which may lead to them not being updated to be aligned with current practice and may result in incorrect processes being followed by staff.

<b>Management Action</b>		<b>Responsible Owner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Priority:</b>
<p>As part of this, all Accounts Payable procedure documents will also be updated to include a version control which consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the changes/review</li> <li>• Details of who carried out the changes/review;</li> <li>• Date of update; and</li> <li>• Next review date</li> </ul>	<p>The Service’s Purchase Requisition procedure document will be reviewed to ensure the content reflects current practice and expectations.</p>	<p>Irene Kema Onyeri, Systems and Exchequer Manager</p>	<p>Actioned and completed</p>	<p>Low</p>

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – GOVERNANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

## Why we completed this audit

We undertook a review of Governance and Risk Management as part of the agreed internal audit plan for 2021/22 at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS). The objective of this review was to allow the Service to take assurance regarding the adequacy and appropriateness of its governance arrangements and to ensure that the risk management framework and associated processes were embedded within operations. This review also assessed the progress in addressing actions from the 2020/21 audit.

The governance structure within the organisation consists of the Fire Authority and two standing committees, the Audit and Governance Committee and Management Committee. Ordinary meeting dates are agreed as part of the municipal calendar at the beginning of the year, with forums expected to undertake duties as outlined within the respective terms of reference documents. Overall responsibility for governance and risk management lies with the Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services within the organisation.

The Corporate Plan defines the strategic objectives for the period 2019-2023 and the Performance Management Framework (PMF) outlines how performance is monitored. An Annual Plan is also prepared to set out the actions and targets for the year to assist in the achievement of strategic objectives. Current, inherent, and treated risk scores are identified based on the matrix outlined within the organisation's Organisational Risk Management Policy. Scores of six and below are rated low, between seven and 16 are medium, whilst 17 and above are high rated.

The Corporate Risk Register (CRR) comprises of strategic risks as well as those risks with current and treated scores equal to or greater than 17. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) discusses the CRR on a monthly basis as a standing agenda item, while highlights from the CRR are also included within the performance reports reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee and Strategic Performance Board (SPB).

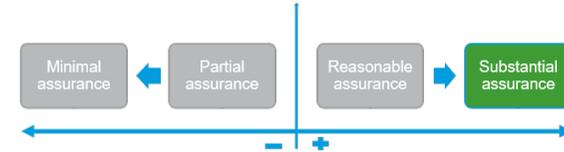
## Conclusion

Overall, our review found that there were well-designed and consistently applied governance and risk management arrangements at the Service. Strategic plans and objectives are clearly set in the approved Corporate Plan and Annual Plan, there is a well-documented and applied governance structure in place to monitor performance against these objectives. The Organisational Risk Management Policy outlines the Service's risk management approach and has been communicated to staff. The CRR is consistently reviewed and actioned by the SLT, with highlights of the CRR shared with the Audit and Governance Committee and SPB.

We have, however, identified scope for improving efficiency and/or quality in relation to the clear documentation of responsibilities for review of the CRR, the recording of risk descriptions in line with Policy including linking strategic risks and objectives, ensuring that risk treatments are updated on the full risk register in a timely manner and assigning a refresher date for the risk management training.

**Internal audit opinion:**

Taking account of the issues identified, the Service can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.



**Key findings**

We noted the following controls to be adequately designed and operating effectively:



**Corporate Plan**

The Corporate Plan 2019-2023 includes the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), the Service's mission and six strategic commitments and also outlines how it monitors performance. We reviewed the November 2018 Fire Authority meeting minutes and confirmed that the Authority approved the Corporate Plan and confirmed that the document was available on the public facing website. We reviewed the current legislations reported in the Corporate Plan and found that all legislations, such as the Policing and Crime Act 2017, were up to date. We reviewed the PMF, Corporate Plan, and the Organisational Risk Management Policy. We confirmed that the contents within the documents were consistent with regards to the responsibilities of the organisations key committees and performance and risk management approaches.



**Annual Plan**

The Service produces an Annual Plan in order to set out the actions, projects, and performance targets that the Fire Service wishes to monitor over the course of the year. We confirmed that the Annual Plan was suitably approved by the Fire Authority and noted that it included 10 objectives linked to the strategic commitments. We also noted that the Plan outlined the Service's corporate measures of which there were 31, including measures relating to service provision and corporate health.



**Performance Metrics**

On a quarterly basis the corporate measures (KPIs) are reported to the Audit & Governance Committee, SLT and SPB for review. We selected a sample of ten KPIs outlined in the Annual Plan and confirmed that they were reported to the relevant groups as part of the quarterly performance reports for Q1 and Q2 2021/22. We reviewed the performance against target for each figure and the supporting commentary within the reports. We confirmed that for all 10 metrics there was sufficient commentary where there was adverse performance. For our sample of 10 metrics, we selected 10 instances of reporting within the last three quarterly performance reports and confirmed that in each case the figures reported agreed to source data.



### Committee Meetings

We obtained the meeting minutes and supporting papers for the last three Audit and Governance Committee, Fire Authority, and the Management Committee meetings dated between June 2021 and January 2022. Based on our review, we confirmed that each meeting was operating in line with its Terms of Reference. We reviewed the upload reports which confirmed that the nine meeting packs were made available to the public at least five working days before each meeting.

We confirmed that in all nine cases an action was raised in the minutes where this was implied by the discussions and we confirmed that any decisions were also clearly outlined within the resolved section at the end of each agenda item. Actions that were raised within the previous meeting minutes were also discussed and stated at the start of the next meeting. We therefore confirmed that management action one from our 2020/21 audit had been implemented.



### Terms of Reference

We obtained the Terms of Reference for the Fire Authority, Management Committee and Audit and Governance Committee. Through review of each we confirmed that key responsibilities and authorities were outlined, which were consistent with the Corporate Plan and PMF. We confirmed that membership and quoracy requirements were outlined in each.

We confirmed that all three Terms of Reference stated that they are to be reviewed every four years and were in date having been approved by the Fire Authority in November 2020. We reviewed the Standing Orders and confirmed that they outlined that agendas and reports should be sent to all members of the Committees at least five working days before the meeting is conducted. We confirmed that all three Terms of Reference included a reference to the Standing Orders, which evidenced the implementation of management action two from 2020/21 audit.



### Member Development

The Service has a Member Development Strategy for 2020 to 2023, through review of the Strategy we confirmed that it outlined the approach to equip members with the skills and knowledge necessary to fulfil their roles and ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities. We confirmed that the Strategy was approved by the Fire Authority in October 2019 through review of the minutes and noted that it was scheduled for 2022/23 review at the March 2022 Audit and Governance Committee meeting through review of the agenda and papers.

We reviewed the Member Development Action Plan and confirmed that it was aligned to and assessed the progress with the Member Development Strategy as it recorded progress with actions outlined in the Strategy. We confirmed that the Action Plan included key areas such as e-Learning and feedback from training sessions.

We reviewed the Skills Summary Spreadsheet and found that 18 members were on the spreadsheet. As member development is optional, 14 of 18 applicable members had signed up to 1-2-1 sessions whereas four had chosen not to. We confirmed that all 14 members had completed and signed a Members Skills Sheet.

## Risk Management



### Organisational Risk Management Policy

The Service has an Organisational Risk Management Policy which outlines its approach to risk management, the key responsibilities for staff, the risk scoring matrix and includes the risk assessment criteria. We confirmed that the Policy was updated in March 2022 and was approved by the Deputy Chief Executive, as only minor changes were made no formal consultation was required. We reviewed an email from the Data, Performance and Risks Manager dated October 2019 which confirmed that the original Policy had been communicated with key staff. We also confirmed that the updated Policy was available to staff on Siren through review of a screenshot.



### Corporate Risk Register Review

The SLT is the Service's main group responsible for review of the CRR. We reviewed the SLT action logs for November 2021, January, February, and March 2022. We confirmed that in all three meetings the CRR was reviewed and the actions assigned demonstrated that new risks, risks for closure and amendments to existing risks were consistently discussed.

We reviewed three SPB action logs and three Audit and Governance Committee meeting minutes and papers dated between July 2021 and February 2022. We confirmed that the documentation evidenced that the highlights of corporate risk had been presented to both meetings.



### Full Risk Register Details

The full risk register is contained within a MS Access Database. We selected a sample of 20 risks, including 10 from the CRR and confirmed that each was assigned a risk type and risk owner in line with Organisational Risk Management Policy.

We reviewed an output of the full risk register dated March 2022 and confirmed that all 95 risks had been assigned inherent, treated, and current risk scores. We also confirmed that all 30 applicable risks, strategic in nature or have a current score of 17 or higher, had been included on the latest Corporate Risk Register.



### Risk Treatments

Risk treatments outline the mitigating controls and assurances in place or due to be implemented to reduce risk scores from the inherent score to the desired treated score. We selected a sample of five risk treatments from the full risk register, which included strategic risks. We confirmed that each treatment was agreeable to supporting evidence such as Policies, the Annual Plan and relevant email trails as well.

**In addition, five low priority management actions have been agreed and can be found below in the detailed findings section.**

## 2. DETAILED FINDINGS AND ACTIONS

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

### Governance

Area: Documenting Responsibilities				
<b>Control</b>	The Service has a PMF which outlines its approach to the delivery of strategy and objectives will be monitored. The Framework includes the responsibilities of the Audit & Governance Committee, the SLT and the SPB.	<b>Assessment:</b>		
		<b>Design</b>	✓	
	The Framework also defines the categorisation of performance measures and how the Fire Service's 'four quadrant' approach. This is mapped to the objectives outlined within the Corporate Plan (2019-23).	<b>Compliance</b>	×	
<b>Findings / Implications</b>	We obtained the PMF. Through review of the document, we noted the responsibilities of the SLT and SPB.			
	We found that an outlined responsibility of the SPB was to review the CRR. However, we found through work conducted as part of the review that SLT was the main group responsible for review of the CRR in practice and this was not clearly outlined in the Framework. Therefore, the PMF did not fully reflect current practice.			
	There is a risk that the PMF may not operate as intended if the responsibilities are not clearly outlined.			
<b>Management Action 1</b>	The Performance Management Framework will be updated to clearly outline that the SLT is the main group responsible for review of the CRR.	<b>Responsible Owner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Priority:</b>
		Sam Faulknall-Mills (Performance & Planning Officer)	31 <sup>st</sup> July 2022	Low

**Risk Management**

Area: Risk Descriptions				
<b>Control</b>	<p>The Organisational Risk Management Policy outlines a template for risk documentation so that the cause and effect of each risk are clearly articulated, see below:</p> <p><i>“If [Event] happens, which may become [Likelihood] given [Causes], then we can expect the following [Consequences] which are significant in respect to our [Objectives].”</i></p>	<b>Assessment:</b>		
		<b>Design</b>	✓	
		<b>Compliance</b>	x	
<b>Findings / Implications</b>	<p>We reviewed an output of the full risk register dated March 2022 and selected a sample of 20 risks, which included 12 strategic risks. We reviewed the risk description for each to confirm that they risk clearly articulated the event, likelihood, causes, consequences, and link to objectives in line with the Operational Risk Management Policy.</p> <p>We confirmed that eight risks were clearly documented in line with Policy. However, we identified the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six risk descriptions did not include the likelihood or cause of the risk;</li> <li>• Three strategic risks did not include a clear link to strategic objectives;</li> <li>• Two risks did not include the likelihood, cause, or link to objectives; and</li> <li>• One risk description did not include the cause of the risk event.</li> </ul> <p>We were advised by the Performance &amp; Planning Officer that small updates could be applied to the risk descriptions outlined above. We were advised by the Head of Corporate Services that the gaps could be attributed to the fact that training has recently been rolled out and will need time to embed, there has also been turnover and vacancies within the team responsible for monitoring the full risk register.</p> <p>Although we noted that each risk in our sample outlined the event and consequence, if the likelihood, cause, and link to objectives are not clearly documented for each risk then certain risks may not be managed as effectively. Additionally, if strategic risks are not clearly linked to strategic objectives, then there is an increased risk that objectives may not be fully achieved.</p>			
<b>Management Action 2</b>	<p>RBFRS will work with risk owners, through training and quality assurance to ensure that all risks are documented in line with the Organisational Risk Management Policy.</p>	<b>Responsible Owner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Priority:</b>
		Sam Faulknall-Mills (Performance & Planning Officer)	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2022	Low
<b>Management Action 3</b>	<p>RBFRS will review how the strategic risks can be clearly linked to strategic objectives.</p>	<b>Responsible Owner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Priority:</b>
		Sam Faulknall-Mills (Performance & Planning Officer)	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2022	Low

**Area: Risk Treatments**

<b>Control</b>	<p>Within the full risk register, individual risks are assigned treatments, which are the controls currently in place or to be implemented to mitigate the identified risks. Individual risks are also assigned review dates, upon which Risk Owners must provide an update within the system.</p> <p>Treatments are assigned owners (Treatment Owners) by the overall Risk Owner and are responsible for monitoring and reviewing the treatments/controls/actions, as well as providing update in-line with the risk review dates.</p>	<b>Assessment:</b>	
		<b>Design</b>	✓
		<b>Compliance</b>	×

**Findings / Implications**

We selected five risks from the full risk register and confirmed that in four cases there were sufficient updates for each treatment and the treatments were SMART. However, in the remaining case, which was for risk ID 163, we found that there was a treatment regarding the creation of a 'legal register' which had not been updated since October 2019, where it outlined that the legal register was not in place.

We were advised by the Performance & Planning Officer that the treatment had been reviewed by the risk owner but had not been updated on the risk register. Additionally, the treatment related to creating a register of laws that apply to the service and was not a legal requirement.

If risk treatments are not regularly updated, then there is a risk that the current score of a risk may not reflect the actual mitigations in place to reduce the risk score. This could result in risks materialising.

<b>Management Action 4</b>	<p>RBFRS will review the full risk register and work with risk owners to ensure that all treatments are up to date.</p>	<b>Responsible Owner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Priority:</b>
		Sam Faulknall-Mills (Performance & Planning Officer)	31 <sup>st</sup> July 2022	Low

**Area: Risk Management Training**

<b>Control</b>	There is a Risk Management training package within the Learning Management system (LMS), which was developed by the Data and Performance Team.	<b>Assessment:</b>	
	The Service have undertaken an exercise to identify which staff are required to complete this training and have rolled it out in March 2022, training is due for completion in June 2022.	<b>Design</b>	x
	Risk owners and SLT members are also provided with individual ad hoc training, based on experience and knowledge with regards to risk management.	<b>Compliance</b>	N/A
	There is currently no refresher timeframe set for the risk training.		

<b>Findings / Implications</b>	We reviewed the LMS Risk Management training material and confirmed that the content contained coverage of key areas, such as risk assessments, risk scoring, risk documentation, risk ownership and risk treatments.
	We reviewed the distribution list for the training material and noted that it had been rolled out to 230 users. We obtained a list of 75 middle managers and through data analytics confirmed that all 75 were included on the distribution list, we were advised by the Data, Performance and Risk Manager that all middle managers are required to complete the training by June 2022. We noted that as of March 2022 there were 48 completions out of the full pool of 230 staff.
	We therefore confirmed that management action three from our 2020/21 review had been implemented.
	Through discussions with the Data, Performance and Risk Manager we found that a refresher date had not yet been assigned for the training. There is a risk that key staff may lose a level of understanding over time if training is not refreshed.

<b>Management Action 5</b>	RBFRS will assign a refresher timeframe to key staff for the Learning Management System Risk Management training, compliance and compliance will be monitored.	<b>Responsible Owner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Priority:</b>
		Sam Faulknall-Mills (Performance & Planning Officer)	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2022	Low

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – CYBER ESSENTIAL

## Background

An audit of Cyber Essentials was undertaken as part of The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's (RBFRS) approved internal audit plan for 2021/22.

The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's technology services and IT infrastructure is overseen by the Head of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and managed by the Service Delivery Manager. The day-to-day IT operation is overseen by the Technical Services Manager, supported by the team who work with him. The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Board provides strategic direction, ensures accountability, resolves tensions between stakeholders, and supports and advises management. Organisations have achieved or are seeking to achieve Cyber Essentials certification (See Appendix C) as a means to provide communities, and their staff with additional assurance that they are doing what they can to combat potential threats and ensure the security of the information they hold.

The Cyber Essentials scheme defines a set of controls which, when properly implemented, will provide organisations with basic protection from the most prevalent forms of threats coming from the internet. In particular, it focuses on threats which require low levels of attacker skill, and tools which are widely available online. Risk management is the fundamental starting point for organisations to act to protect their information. However, given the nature of the threat, Government believes that action should begin with a core set of security controls which all organisations – large and small – should implement. However, it does not offer a silver bullet to remove all cyber security risk; for example, it is not designed to address more advanced, targeted attacks and hence organisations facing these threats will need to implement additional measures as part of their security strategy.

The level one Cyber Essentials certification is awarded on the basis of a verified self-assessment. An organisation undertakes their own assessment of their implementation of the Cyber Essentials control themes via a questionnaire, which is approved by a senior executive such as the CEO. This questionnaire is verified by an independent accredited Certification Body to assess whether an appropriate standard has been achieved, and certification can be awarded. The level two (Cyber Essentials Plus) certification requires an independent vulnerability assessment to validate the effectiveness of controls declared in the self-assessment questionnaire.

### Mapping of the Cyber Essentials framework to the NCSC 10 Steps:

Cyber Essentials control themes	NCSC 10 steps to cyber security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office Firewalls and Internet Gateways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vulnerability Management</li> <li>Architecture and configuration</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure Configuration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Architecture and configuration</li> <li>Logging and monitoring</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Security Update Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vulnerability Management</li> <li>Data Security</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User Accounts and Administrative Accounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identity and access management</li> </ul>

- 
- Malware Protection
  - Vulnerability Management
  - Data Security
- 

What Cyber Essentials does is to define a focused set of controls which will provide cost-effective, basic cyber security for organisations of all sizes. It is acknowledged that five out of the NCSC '10 Steps to Cyber Security' are not covered by the Cyber Essentials scheme.

## Conclusion

RBFRS completed a self-assessment questionnaire in March 2022. Based upon the evidence available at the time of our fieldwork, we found that 25 of the 50 requirements from the five Cyber Essentials control themes had evidence to support the self-assessment that controls were established.

Of the remaining 25 requirements within the scope of the assessment:

- 13 were self-assessed by RBFRS as implemented but not tested in our review due to lack of evidence provided;
- 6 were not started;
- 5 were not applicable; and
- issues were identified from our testing in the one remaining case. This issue was identified across the Security Update Management control theme and one medium priority management action has been agreed to address this issue.

## Key findings

We have agreed one 'medium' priority management actions with regards to the cyber essentials control framework.

The 'medium' action relates to the following area:



### Security Update Management: Automated Firmware Patch Management

Whilst high risk and critical operating software updates are automatically installed, firmware updates are not applied on schedule, and are administered on an ad-hoc basis. By not applying firmware patches in a timely manner increases the risk of a security breach, data leaks and data loss, resulting in financial and reputational harm. **(Medium) (MA1)**

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND ACTIONS

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

### Control theme: Security Update Management: Automated Firmware Patch Management

<b>Self-Assessment Question</b>	Q6.4. Are all high-risk or critical security updates for operating systems and firmware installed within 14 days of release?	<b>Answer Provided:</b> Notes
---------------------------------	--	----------------------------------

<b>Findings / Implications</b>	<p>Whilst high risk and critical operating software updates are automatically installed; firmware updates are administered on an ad-hoc basis and only when required.</p> <p>Firmware updates are essential to ensure the latest identified vulnerabilities are secured and improve performance for products. Firmware updates can contain new features, adding new functionality or extending support for additional platforms. By not applying firmware patches in a timely manner increases the risk of a security breach, data leaks and data loss, resulting in financial and reputational harm.</p>	
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<b>Management Action 1</b>	Management will ensure that firmware patches are administered to systems in a timely manner; scheduled and documented.	<b>Priority</b> Medium	<b>Implementation Date</b> Complete	<b>Owner Responsible</b> Tony Vincent - Head of Business Information and System
----------------------------	--	---------------------------	--	--

<b>Managements Comments</b>	<p>Firmware patching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have included the following section into our System patching policy documentation and the infrastructure team have been informed of any changes, which I believe satisfies the requirement of the action. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Firmware is to be immediately deployed if it is found to be vulnerable by checking CVE database, Nessus will also inform you of firmware vulnerabilities.</li> <li>Firmware is to be deployed on to client laptops on a ad-hoc basis of when they visit IT or if vulnerabilities are found the device must have access stopped until they visit IT.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
-----------------------------	--

- 
- All of our laptops have manufacturer software for updating the firmware on those devices.
  - All of our phones are managed by Android firmware updates and are immediately installed.
  - Everything else is updated if vulnerabilities are present or bugs are present.
-

# Emergency Services News Briefing

June 2022



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# Introduction

In this edition of our news briefing, we draw attention to some of the key developments and publications in the sector, with particular focus on the latest reports from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act.

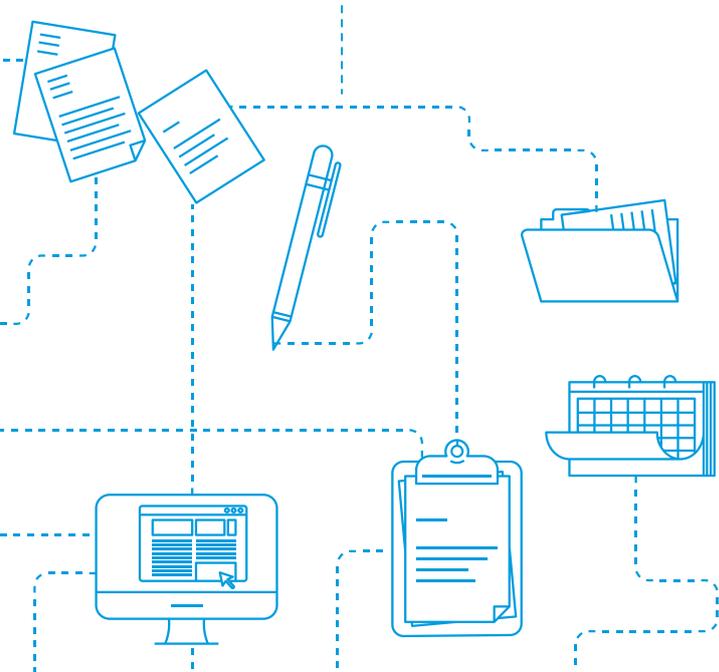
In relation to fire, we look at proposals set out by the Home Office to introduce a 'system-wide reform that will strengthen fire and rescue services in England.'

We also highlight our latest report on an analysis of secure remote working and operational resilience audits.



A few questions for audit committees to consider on the articles covered within this publication.

- Have you been briefed on these issues and whether management have considered the impacts on your organisation(s), and how it affects the risk profile(s)?
- Are you receiving (where relevant) timely, second or third line assurance on the items contained within this briefing
- Does this duplicate any other assurance you are receiving?
- Are there any assurance gaps highlighted by this briefing?





# Police

## State of Policing

The HMICFRS has published its annual assessment of policing in England and Wales 2021.

The annual assessment provides an overview of the findings of inspections, which were carried out between 1 April and 30 November 2021, including a summary of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections. HMICFRS also sets out the full list of its inspections and other work. The results of individual inspections enable an assessment of the performance of individual forces, or a more general assessment of performance in specific aspects of policing. In his final annual report after nearly a decade in post, Sir Thomas Winsor, the Chief Inspector of Constabulary, described how demand on the police has changed very significantly, for example:

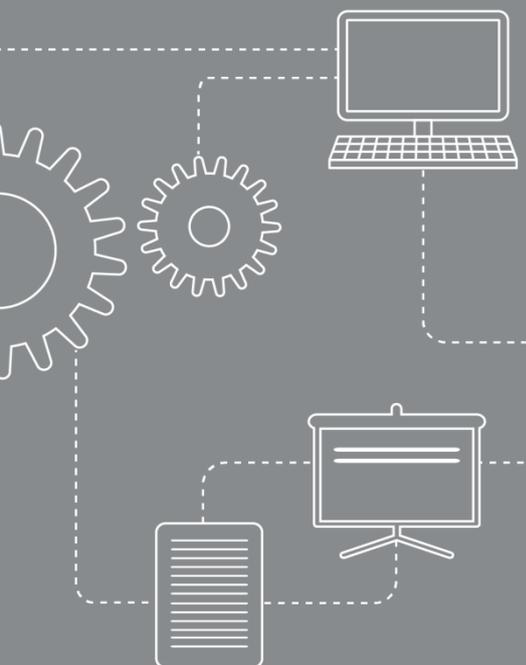
- online crime is now the most prevalent type of crime and online fraud has increased, 'eclipsing all other crimes in volume';
- total demand and public expectations cannot be met without sufficient funding and the public must decide how much threat, harm and risk they are prepared to tolerate; and
- the rapid advancement of technology has provided opportunities for both criminals and the police, but the police have sometimes struggled to keep pace.

In his report, the Chief Inspector also draws attention to:

- the causes of crime and low detection rates;
- the need for proactive as well as reactive policing to protect vulnerable people;
- the state of the system of local police accountability and the sometimes 'brittle and fragile relationships between chief constables and police and crime commissioners', and the need for trust and confidence in a special constitutional relationship which the public needs to work;
- the successes and potential of the National Crime Agency, and its ability, with sufficient investment, to do a great deal more to disrupt or break sophisticated criminal networks; and
- the need for significant investment in police technology.

The Chief Inspector stated the 'fragile architecture of the 43-force model, born in 1962, is not fit for purpose.' Sir Thomas also reiterated his proposal for a network code, which would dissolve the barriers preventing policing and law enforcement from 'operating as a single system and secure fair, reliable and sustainable decisions on regional and nation-wide problems.

[Read more](#)





## Boost for public safety as bill receives Royal Assent

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill received Royal Assent and became an Act of Parliament on 28 April 2022. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022 equips the police with the powers and tools they need to combat crime and create safer communities. The Act builds on the government's Beating Crime Plan to reduce crime, better protect victims and make the country safer. It has already seen the recruitment of more than 13,500 of the 20,000 extra police officers promised by March 2023.

[Read more](#)

## Impact of the pandemic on the Criminal Justice System

In January 2021, HMICFRS, HM Inspectorate of Probation, HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and HM Inspectorate of Prisons conducted inspections of its respective agencies' responses to coronavirus and published '[Impact of the pandemic on the Criminal Justice System](#)'.

The progress report provides an update to the original report and is based on combined inspection findings during 2021. The structure follows the flow of work through the Criminal Justice System (CJS) from policing to prisons. It sets out findings from inspections, 'as well as cross-cutting themes, and highlights the successes of the CJS, but also the challenges that it has faced and still faces.'

[Read more](#)

## National Stop and Search learning report

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has published its latest report on National Stop and Search. This report brings together evidence from the IOPC work, stakeholder engagement and published research to highlight concerns about transparency, legitimacy, scrutiny, and disproportionality that must be considered and addressed by the police service and others. This report aims to support change and improvement in policing practice to help increase public confidence.

[Read more](#)

## An inspection of the service provided to victims of crime

HMICFRS has published a report assessing the quality of the service provided to victims of crime by the British Transport Police (BTP). The investigation reviewed the service provided by the BTP for each of the six components of the victim service assessment:

- call handling;
- deployment of resources;
- crime recording;
- screening and allocation;
- investigation; and
- outcomes.

HMICFRS has worked collaboratively with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland to produce a single report that covers BTP's whole jurisdiction across England, Wales and Scotland.

[Read more](#)

## The Police Uplift Programme

The National Audit Office (NAO) has published a report examining whether the Home Office is well placed to deliver value for money from the programme. It covers the:

- aims of the programme;
- management of the programme and progress against its objectives; and
- challenges in maximising the impact from the programme.

The NAO notes that it is too early to assess whether the additional officers are delivering the government's aims to improving public safety and reducing crime, as they will 'need time to become fully effective in their roles.' Furthermore, improvements in wider criminal justice outcomes depend on many more factors than the number of police officers. This paper looks at how far the recruiting process has progressed so far, as well as how the Home Office intends to show the impact of the extra officers in the future.



## Police Covenant update

The Home Office has published a policy document which provides a summary of latest activity on the Police Covenant and the progress made so far. The Police Covenant Oversight Board outlined that a number of workstreams have been progressed and finished. Key activity over the past year includes:

- pre-deployment mental health care incorporated into all providers of the Police Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF)
- over 30 police forces attended a three-day workshop led by the National Police Wellbeing Service, where the clinical team provided extensive advice and support for occupational health teams; and
- 'the addition of new workstream priorities: to develop a support model for those who leave policing and to progress NHS engagement.'

[Read more](#)

## Extra £150m to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour

The Home Office has launched round four of the Safer Streets Fund as part of the government's commitment to reduce crime and promote public safety. As a result, £150m is available over the next three financial years for police and crime commissioners and local authorities across England and Wales, as well as certain civil society organisations. The Safer Streets Programme provides funding to areas most affected by crime and anti-social behaviour and will allow local authorities, civil society organisations and police and crime commissioners to bid for up to £500,000 per year for each project.

[Read more](#)

## Observations on the third generation of force management statements

A force management statement (FMS) is a self-assessment that chief constables (and London equivalents) prepare and submit to HMICFRS each year.

HMICFRS has published the observations of the FMS steering group on the third round of FMSs following statements that were submitted by police forces. The steering group is made up of HMICFRS, the National Police Chiefs Council, the College of Policing, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the Home Office, and other parties interested in the development of FMSs.

The summary observations note:

- FMSs continue to improve and focus on national policing issues; and
- police forces understand demand better but need to improve understanding of workforce capabilities.

[Read more](#)

## 'Whole-system' approach to tackling violent crime is working

The Home Office has announced a further £130m to strengthen efforts in tackling serious violence. Violence Reduction Units and 'hotspot policing initiatives' have avoided 49,000 violent offences across England and Wales. The government's funding package includes:

- a further £64m for Violence Reduction Units, supporting the existing 18 and enabling two new units to be established in Cleveland and Humberside;
- an additional £30m into the 'Grip' police enforcement programme; and
- supporting the implementation of the new Serious Violence Duty and Serious Violence Reduction Orders, being brought into law as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

[Read more](#)



# Police and Fire

## Evaluation of remote inspection methods

HMICFRS has published its report on the evaluation of remote inspection methods required during the coronavirus pandemic. Key findings include:

- interviews, remote case file reviews, staff surveys, self-assessment, team debriefs and meeting observations were all effective remote inspection methods. Large focus groups, on the other hand, were more difficult to conduct remotely than small focus groups. HMICFRS noted that all methods of remote inspections relied on effective IT capabilities;
- working remotely had a mixed response on staff wellbeing, with some employees adjusting well and others finding it more challenging. Challenges included integrating home and work life and the intensity of working online all day without pauses; and
- the findings of the review have also prompted more permanent changes to HMICFRS' inspection process, including the use of remote inspection technologies when suitable. HMICFRS now employs a combination of on-site and remote inspection techniques.

[Read more](#)

## Local Government and Emergency Services VAT Webinar

We are pleased to announce our next VAT and tax webinar for local authorities and emergency services is taking place on 16 June 2022.

Our webinars aim to help officers gain up-to-date and bite-size insights on VAT and tax issues affecting their organisations.

This webinar will be an excellent opportunity for you to hear and raise questions on sector related VAT issues within a trusted forum. As well as hearing about technical updates, our sector specialists will be on hand to provide feedback on recent developments.

In our session, topical sector updates will include mutual trading status of subsidiaries and our top tax queries from FY21/22:

- recent case law and legislative changes affecting the sector;
- HMRC VAT policy changes including sector activity;
- sector activity;
- VAT saving opportunities; and
- questions and answers.

To register for the webinar, please [click here](#).

If you have any questions relating to the webinar, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please also feel free to forward this invitation to your colleagues or to officers in other authorities.

## Secure remote working and operational resilience in a hybrid world

As the coronavirus pandemic took hold, organisations quickly moved their workforces to their homes. The speed at which organisations had to adapt was remarkable, and we know that some were better placed than others to move successfully. With the shift to homeworking, the risk landscape changed and organisations were exposed to greater and more complex threats.

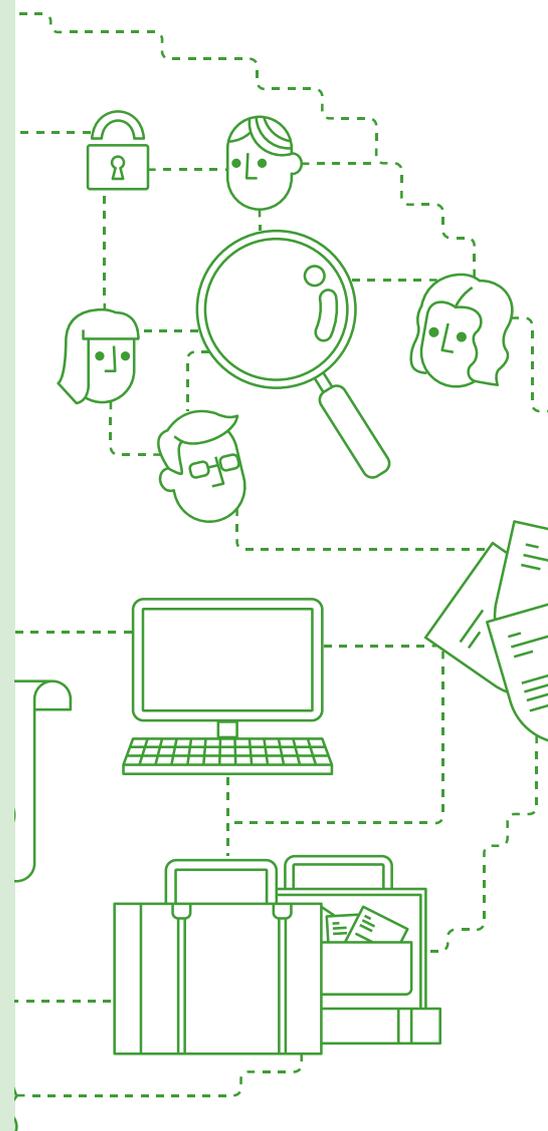
Across the diverse sectors we work in, we have undertaken secure remote working and operational resilience audits, assessing how management have implemented and managed controls to enable remote working. Through reviewing and assessing IT infrastructure and remote working processes, we have provided assurance over the design of key controls and adherence to them in respect of governance over business-critical data while working remotely, whilst also ensuring adequate capacity is available to meet the needs of the business.

From our reviews, we have seen several key outcomes emerge, highlighted from where we have agreed management actions.

### Overview of key internal audit review outcomes

- Only 12 per cent of businesses could take substantial assurance that the controls in place to ensure secure remote working are operating effectively to manage risks. This illustrates there is significant room for many businesses to improve and strengthen the IT control environment to ensure data security, manage cyber-crime threats and enhance IT operational effectiveness.
- In those areas where we agreed management actions, 80 per cent of the controls in place were deemed to be ineffective in terms of design.
- Given the spike in phishing and ransomware attacks, there is perhaps now more than ever, a need to ensure a comprehensive incident response plan is in place, to guide the organisation's response, should an attack occur.

Access our report on the [RSM website](#).



# The ESG Risk Landscape

The Global Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) has published a [collection of Global Knowledge briefs](#) providing information and analysis on changes to the dynamic environmental, social and governance (ESG) risk landscape. Collectively, they provide practical information to help internal auditors anticipate and prepare for new reporting regulations, position internal audit functions to provide high-quality services related to ESG and offer direction on identifying ESG risks within organisations.

## ESG Appetite

ESG is becoming increasingly important, both for us as individuals and for organisations. We are seeing investors, employees, customers and business partners demanding that organisations act responsibly and ethically.

As internal auditors we are in a unique position to help an organisation start to understand what its approach or 'appetite' is to ESG, and how the organisation is starting on its ESG journey around developing and embedding an ESG culture.

RSM has an audit approach which is designed to look at your external commitment and communication in relation to ESG matters and compares it to the views held by senior management and an organisations largest stakeholder group — its employees.

## How an ESG Appetite review can benefit you.

- Understand what actions have been undertaken to date as part of your ESG journey.
- Understand what matters to your employees and how they view the organisation's ESG related activities and programmes.
- Demonstrate commitment to corporate responsibility and continuous improvement.

## Next steps

Speak to your usual internal audit contact about having an 'ESG appetite review' built into your internal audit plan, or request the review as an additional piece of work. The appetite review is delivered by your Internal Audit team, with support from an ESG subject matter expert.

Discuss with your internal audit contact as to whether an ESG maturity assessment may benefit you more. This falls outside of the internal audit plan, but may be more appropriate for where you are on your ESG journey

## ESG maturity assessment

Building on ESG Appetite, a more in-depth ESG maturity assessment can be undertaken. RSM's full maturity assessment places an organisation in one of four stages in its ESG journey: Awareness; Defining and Reporting; Managing; and Maturity.

For a copy of our briefing papers, please get in touch with your usual RSM contact.



# Fire

## Data management fire standard consultation

The Data Management Fire Standard has been developed with expert input from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Digital and Data Programme, NFCC Leads for Data, Apollo Gerolymbos and Andy Hopkinson, Government Digital Services and colleagues, with data expertise from a wide range of fire and rescue services. This consultation focuses on fire and rescue services delivering excellence to our communities by maximising the value of good quality and reliable data.

The consultation closed on 27 April 2022; the responses will be considered and the 'Fire Standard will undergo a quality assurance process before the final Fire Standard is proposed to the Fire Standards Board for approval.'

[Read more](#)

## Fire Standard is launched

The Fire Standards Board (FSB) has announced the launch of the tenth professional Fire Standard; Fire Investigation. The Standard focuses on ensuring fire and rescue services (FRS) deliver effective, efficient and valid fire investigations into the origin, cause and development of fire. An anticipated outcome of the Standard is that services will have a competent and resilient capability to undertake fire investigations, adhering to relevant legislation, guidance and codes of practice. By identifying risk and reporting product safety issues, the Fire Standard is expected 'to improve the safety and wellbeing of members of the public (FRS communities) and FRS employees.' The Standard also contains other anticipated benefits.

[Read more](#)



## Reforming fire and rescue services

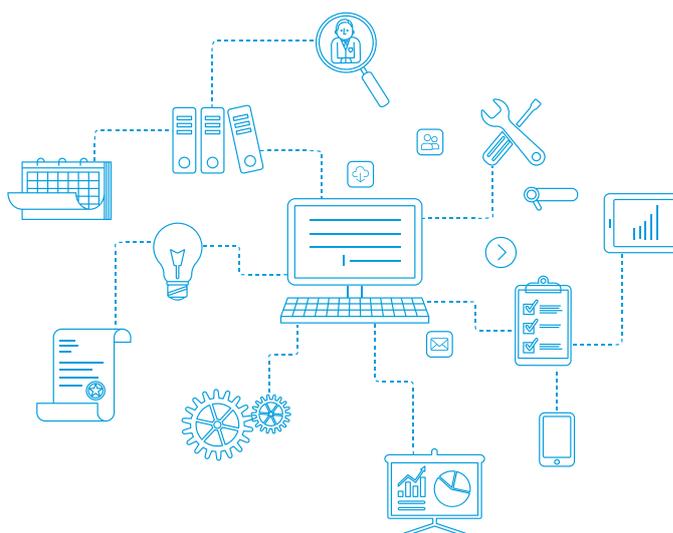
The Home Office has launched a consultation seeking views on proposals to introduce a 'system-wide reform that will strengthen fire and rescue services in England.' The changes announced include the commencement of the Fire Safety Act 2021 which will make sure all blocks of flats are properly assessed for fire safety risks. The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 was also announced which implements eight recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report and will help ensure people feel safe in their homes.

At the centre of the White Paper are plans to deliver:

- increased public safety: by improving the professionalism of the fire and rescue service through modern workforce practices and potentially establishing a College of Fire and Rescue;
- improved accountability: through the proposals to transfer fire governance to a single elected individual, overseeing delivery by operationally independent Chief Fire Officers; and
- better engagement with the public: through the 10-week consultation the government will listen to the views of the public and stakeholders, after which it will finalise its reform programme.

The consultation closes on 26 July 2022

[Read more](#)



## The Fire Risk Assessment Prioritisation Tool

The government has launched its risk prioritisation tool, which has been set up to encourage building owners to review fire risk assessments (FRAs) on their most dangerous buildings. The new tool comes in after the Fire Safety Act said it will now force building owners to consider the external walls and balconies in periodic fire risk assessments. Prior to this, the focus was on the internal walls of a block and the external fell out of scope.

The Fire Risk Assessment Prioritisation Tool takes responsible persons through a series of specific questions, which are each carefully scored to assist them to determine the priority of their buildings for the purpose of reviewing their fire risk assessments. The tool does this by allocating each building to one of five priority tiers.

[Read more](#)



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# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Annual internal audit report 2021/22

18 July 2022

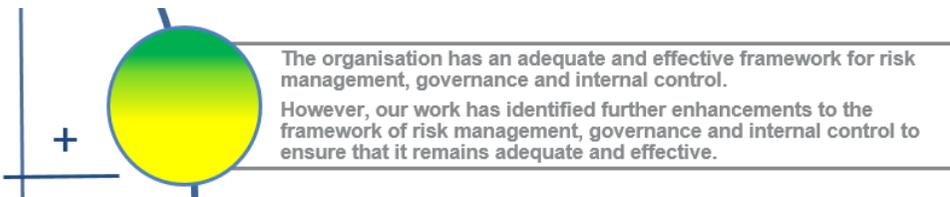
This report is solely for the use of the persons to whom it is addressed.  
To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party.

# THE ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION

This report provides an annual internal audit opinion, based upon and limited to the work performed, on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation’s risk management, control and governance processes. The opinion should contribute to the organisation's annual governance reporting.

## The opinion

For the 12 months ended 31 March 2022, the head of internal audit opinion for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is as follows:



Please see appendix A for the full range of annual opinions available to us in preparing this report and opinion.

---

*It remains management’s responsibility to develop and maintain a sound system of risk management, internal control and governance, and for the prevention and detection of material errors, loss or fraud. The work of internal audit should not be a substitute for management responsibility around the design and effective operation of these systems.*

---

## Scope and limitations of our work

The formation of our opinion is achieved through a risk-based plan of work, agreed with management and approved by the audit committee, our opinion is subject to inherent limitations, as detailed below:

- internal audit has not reviewed all risks and assurances relating to the organisation;
- the opinion is substantially derived from the conduct of risk-based plans generated from a robust and organisation-led assurance framework. The assurance framework is one component that the board takes into account in making its annual governance statement (AGS);
- the opinion is based on the findings and conclusions from the work undertaken, the scope of which has been agreed with management / lead individual;
- where strong levels of control have been identified, there are still instances where these may not always be effective. This may be due to human error, incorrect management judgement, management override, controls being by-passed or a reduction in compliance;
- due to the limited scope of our audits, there may be weaknesses in the control system which we are not aware of, or which were not brought to our attention; and

- our internal audit work for 2021/22 has continued to be undertaken through the operational disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In undertaking our audit work, we recognise that there has been some impact on both the operations of the organisation and its risk profile; and our annual opinion should be read in this context.
- Our planned internal audit work for 2021/22 has been subject to some postponement. Following requests, we pushed back the start date of the Cyber Essentials review which was in progress at the time of writing this report. We reserve the right to amend our opinion as this report is issued and finalised.

## FACTORS AND FINDINGS WHICH HAVE INFORMED OUR OPINION

### Performance Management (Hub Model) 1.21/22 (Reasonable Assurance)

Overall, our review has identified that Service had a well-designed control framework in place for managing performance at Hub-level. This is supported by the identification and approval of objectives within Station Plans and LSP's and we confirmed that these objectives were clearly linked to performance measures reviewed at the quarterly SPB. We found that performance management information reported was accurate as it could be traced back to source data.

However, we found that approved station level objectives were not specific or measurable and that the 2021/22 Service Plan objectives were not fully updated.

Additionally, we identified a number of instances of non-compliance with controls including action tracking and terms of reference review for the RSG, timely review of station plan objectives, timely updating of accountabilities for performance management and the timely sharing of meeting papers.

### Vetting and Pre-Employment Checks 2.21/22 (Reasonable Assurance)

Overall, our review found that there were effective controls and arrangements in place to ensure the completion of vetting and pre-employment checks when hiring staff. We identified that policy documents and other guidance materials had been prepared to define the key responsibilities and outline the expected processes relating to employment checks.

Sample testing confirmed job advertisements/profiles and conditional offers outlined the information required from candidates and checks to be completed, whilst we further confirmed checks had been undertaken prior to start dates. We found suitable training was provided to recruitment managers and HR staff, whilst also confirming access to personnel files was appropriately restricted.

We have, however, noted areas for improvement, namely in relation to the retaining of evidence to confirm qualifications have been checked and recording of DBS checks not requiring renewal. There was also no evidence within personnel files of qualifications being reviewed as part of the recruitment process for a sample of new starters. We also found there was no communication of whether volunteers requiring DBS checks were active or on a break from such activities.

### Review of Payroll Provider - Dataplan 3.21/22 (Substantial Assurance)

Our review has confirmed that Dataplan has robust controls in place to manage the payroll processes which our testing has demonstrated compliance with.

Our sample testing identified one exception which has resulted in one 'low' priority action being agreed with management. The action relates to the absence of version control on the Operational Guide to Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Payroll.

#### Firefighter Pension Administration (WYPF) 4.21/22 (Substantial Assurance)

Our testing has confirmed that West Yorkshire Pension Fund had effective controls in place to manage pension administration processes and associated risks including the monitoring and recovery of overpayments on behalf of RBFRS.

#### VFM – Effectiveness of the Administration of Pension Arrangements by RBFRS 5.21/22 (Substantial Assurance)

Overall, we have found that the processes and controls in place relating to the effectiveness of the management of pensions by RBFRS were generally well designed and complied with. Guidance was in place with sufficient guidance on the administration of pensions, adequate pension records were retained, and regular performance reporting was also in place.

We could see evidence that significant risks relating to pensions were being escalated to the corporate risk register and arrangements were in place to action any legislative changes or updated guidance that may be received relating to pensions.

However, we have identified issues in relation to the contract terms not being updated since inception, to account for any additional responsibilities or duties that have emerged and are being undertaken by HR, and the KPIs documented within the contract not being updated to account for these.

Additionally, we found that updates on pension risks are not being regularly documented within the Pension Board risk register, the Pension Board Terms of Reference has not been subject to regular review and approval, and updates on overdue actions within the Pensions Action Log were not being provided.

#### Key Financial Controls – Creditors 6.21/22 (Substantial Assurance)

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service has a well-designed control framework in place with regards to payment of suppliers and changes to supplier details.

Staff are supported by local procedures which are consistent with working practice and clearly signal to staff where segregation of duties is necessary.

### Governance and Risk Management 7.21/22 (Substantial Assurance)

Overall, our review found that there were well-designed and consistently applied governance and risk management arrangements at the Service. Strategic plans and objectives are clearly set in the approved Corporate Plan and Annual Plan, there was a well-documented and applied governance structure in place to monitor performance against these objectives. The Organisational Risk Management Policy outlines the Service’s risk management approach and has been communicated to staff. The CRR is consistently reviewed and actioned by the SLT, with highlights of the CRR shared with the Audit and Governance Committee and SPB.

We have, however, identified scope for improving efficiency and/or quality in relation to the clear documentation of responsibilities for review of the CRR, the recording of risk descriptions in line with Policy including linking strategic risks and objectives, ensuring that risk treatments are updated on the full risk register in a timely manner and assigning a refresher date for the risk management training.

A summary of internal audit work undertaken, and the resulting conclusions, is provided at appendix B.

### Topics judged relevant for consideration as part of the annual governance statement

Based on the work we have undertaken on the Authority’s system on internal control, there are no audits currently that the Authority should consider as significant governance issues when completing their Annual Governance Statements (AGS).

### Cyber Security 8.21/22 (Advisory)

RBFRS completed a self-assessment questionnaire in March 2022. Based upon the evidence available at the time of our fieldwork, we found that 25 of the 50 requirements from the five Cyber Essentials control themes had evidence to support the self-assessment that controls were established.

Of the remaining 25 requirements within the scope of the assessment:

- 13 were self-assessed by RBFRS as implemented but not tested in our review due to lack of evidence provided;
- six were not started;
- five were not applicable; and
- issues were identified from our testing in the remaining case and a medium priority action agreed to address this issue.

# THE BASIS OF OUR INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION

As well as those headlines previously discussed, the following areas have helped to inform our opinion. A summary of internal audit work undertaken, and the resulting conclusions, is provided at appendix B.

## Acceptance of internal audit management actions

Management have agreed actions to address all of the findings reported by the internal audit service during 2021/22.

## Implementation of internal audit management actions

Where actions have been agreed by management, these have been monitored by management through the action tracking process in place. During the year progress has been reported to the audit and governance committee, with the validation of the action status confirmed by internal audit on where actions are followed up in similar audits.

Our follow up of the actions agreed to address previous years' internal audit findings shows that the organisation had made **good progress** in implementing the agreed actions.

Our internal audit work has identified that only one action from the prior year remains outstanding and relates to written succession plans for WYPF.

It was noted that whilst informal successional plans are in place, no succession plans have been documented due to upcoming substantial changes in the workforce structure pending a restructure, which are on-going with Bradford Council's HR Department (who is the administering authority of the WYPF).

## Working with other assurance providers

In forming our opinion we have not placed any direct reliance on other assurance providers.

# OUR PERFORMANCE

## Wider value adding delivery

In the year, we have provided to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service the following information:

Area of work	How has this added value?
Emergency Services – Sector Update: June 2021	<p>The briefing paper provides a useful source of insight into recent developments and publications affecting the sector and provided further insight into the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cyber Crime;</li> <li>• Code of Ethics for fire and rescue services;</li> <li>• Home Secretary to strengthen Police and Crime Commissioner role; and</li> <li>• The annual assessment of fire and rescue services.</li> </ul>
Emergency Services – Sector Update: August 2021	<p>The briefing paper provides a useful source of insight into recent developments and publications affecting the sector and provided further insight into the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change risk: A guide for Audit and Risk Assurance Committees;</li> <li>• Risk Appetite – it’s slippery;</li> <li>• Community Risk Management Planning; and</li> <li>• Fire Protection Learning Portal.</li> </ul>
Emergency Services – Sector Update: November 2021	<p>The briefing paper provides a useful source of insight into recent developments and publications affecting the sector and provided further insight into the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cyber and information security;</li> <li>• ESG (Environmental, Social &amp; Governance); and</li> <li>• Protection Fire Standard.</li> </ul>
Emergency Services – Sector Update: March 2022	<p>The briefing paper provides a useful source of insight into recent developments and publications affecting the sector and provided further insight into the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RSM and CIPFA Public Procurement Webinar;</li> <li>• Strengthening resilience: lessons learnt from the impacts of the pandemic; and</li> </ul> <p>Analysis of non-fire incidents.</p>
Best Practice	Shared best practice across the sector through our work.
Sector Experience	We have also made suggestions throughout our audit reports based on our knowledge and experience in the emergency services sector to provide areas for consideration.

Briefings	Issued non-sector specific briefings to all of our clients.
Procurement	The organisation has been invited to our RSM and CIPFA Public Procurement Webinars. These are a series of procurement and contract management network webinars offering expert advice on EU and UK public sector procurement legislation and practice. These monthly webinars include an update on current developments in public procurement as well as a more detailed discussion on a selected topical area.

## Conflicts of interest

RSM has not undertaken any work or activity during 2021/22 that would lead us to declare any conflict of interest.

## Conformance with internal auditing standards

RSM affirms that our internal audit services are designed to conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

Under PSIAS, internal audit services are required to have an external quality assessment every five years. Our risk assurance service line commissioned an external independent review of our internal audit services in 2021 to provide assurance whether our approach meets the requirements of the International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF), and the Internal Audit Code of Practice, as published by the Global Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) and the Chartered IIA, on which PSIAS is based.

The external review concluded that RSM 'generally conforms\*' to the requirements of the IIA Standards' and that 'RSM IA also generally conforms with the other Professional Standards and the IIA Code of Ethics. There were no instances of non-conformance with any of the Professional Standards'.

\* The rating of 'generally conforms' is the highest rating that can be achieved, in line with the IIA's EQA assessment model.

## Quality assurance and continual improvement

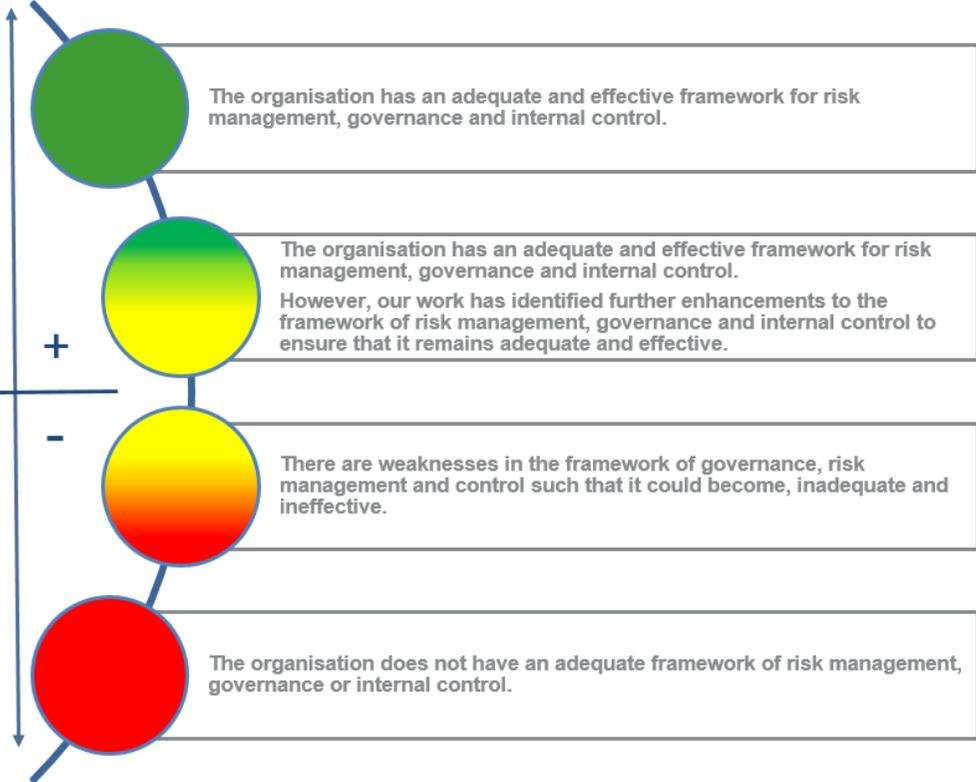
To ensure that RSM remains compliant with the PSIAS framework we have a dedicated internal Quality Assurance Team who undertake a programme of reviews to ensure the quality of our audit assignments. This is applicable to all Heads of Internal Audit, where a sample of their clients will be reviewed. Any findings from these reviews are used to inform the training needs of our audit teams.

Resulting from the programme in 2021/22, there are no areas which we believe warrant flagging to your attention as impacting on the quality of the service we provide to you.

In addition to this, any feedback we receive from our post assignment surveys, client feedback, appraisal processes and training needs assessments is also taken into consideration to continually improve the service we provide and inform any training requirements.

# APPENDIX A: ANNUAL OPINIONS

The following shows the full range of opinions available to us within our internal audit methodology to provide you with context regarding your annual internal audit opinion.

Annual opinions	Factors influencing our opinion
 <p>The organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control.</p> <p>The organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. However, our work has identified further enhancements to the framework of risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remains adequate and effective.</p> <p>There are weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could become, inadequate and ineffective.</p> <p>The organisation does not have an adequate framework of risk management, governance or internal control.</p>	<p>The factors which are considered when influencing our opinion are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inherent risk in the area being audited;</li> <li>• limitations in the individual audit assignments;</li> <li>• the adequacy and effectiveness of the risk management and / or governance control framework;</li> <li>• the impact of weakness identified;</li> <li>• the level of risk exposure; and</li> <li>• the response to management actions raised and timeliness of actions taken.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF INTERNAL AUDIT WORK COMPLETED 2021/22

All of the assurance levels and outcomes provided above should be considered in the context of the scope, and the limitation of scope, set out in the individual assignment report.

Assignment	Executive lead	Assurance level	Actions agreed		
			L	M	H
Performance Management (1.21/22)	Doug Buchanan – Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Reasonable Assurance [●]	9	1	0
Vetting and Pre-Employment Checks (2.21/22)	Becci Jefferies - Head of HR and Learning & Development	Reasonable Assurance [●]	2	1	0
Review of Payroll Provider – Dataplan (3.21/22)	Becci Jefferies - Head of HR and Learning & Development	Substantial Assurance [●]	1	0	0
Firefighter Pension Administration (WYPF) (4.21/22)	Becci Jefferies - Head of HR and Learning & Development	Substantial Assurance [●]	3	0	0
VFM – Effectiveness of the Administration of Pension Arrangements by RBFRS (5.21/22)	Conor Byrne - Head of Finance and Procurement	Substantial Assurance [●]	6	0	0
Key Financial Controls – Creditors (6.21/22)	Conor Byrne - Head of Finance and Procurement	Substantial Assurance [●]	1	0	0
Governance and Risk Management (7.21/22)	Katie Mills - Head of Corporate Services	Substantial Assurance [●]	5	0	0
Cyber Essentials – (8.21/22)	Tony Vincent - Head of Business Information and Systems	Advisory	0	1	0

# APPENDIX C: OPINION CLASSIFICATION

We use the following levels of opinion classification within our internal audit reports, reflecting the level of assurance the board can take:

	<p>Taking account of the issues identified, the board cannot take assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied or effective.</p> <p>Urgent action is needed to strengthen the control framework to manage the identified risk(s).</p>
	<p>Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take partial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied or effective.</p> <p>Action is needed to strengthen the control framework to manage the identified risk(s).</p>
	<p>Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take reasonable assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.</p> <p>However, we have identified issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the control framework is effective in managing the identified risk(s).</p>
	<p>Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.</p>

# YOUR INTERNAL AUDIT TEAM

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The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Actions for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

Our report is prepared solely for the confidential use of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, and solely for the purposes set out herein. This report should not therefore be regarded as suitable to be used or relied on by any other party wishing to acquire any rights from RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP for any purpose or in any context. Any third party which obtains access to this report or a copy and chooses to rely on it (or any part of it) will do so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party and shall not be liable for any loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature which is caused by any person's reliance on representations in this report.

This report is released to you on the basis that it shall not be copied, referred to or disclosed, in whole or in part (save as otherwise permitted by agreed written terms), without our prior written consent.

We have no responsibility to update this report for events and circumstances occurring after the date of this report.

RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales no. OC389499 at 6th floor, 25 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4AB.

# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Internal Audit Strategy 2022 - 2023

Presented at the Audit Committee meeting of: 28 July 2022

This report is solely for the use of the persons to whom it is addressed.  
To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In preparing our Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23 we have worked closely with management to produce an audit programme which remains mindful of the continuing developments and challenges around Covid-19. Whilst this plan is presented for consideration by the Audit and Governance Committee, we will continue to hold regular meetings with management, during the year, to deliver an internal audit programme which remains flexible and 'agile' to ensure it meets your needs in these ever changing circumstances.

The key points to note from our plan are:



**2022/23 Internal Audit priorities:** Internal audit activity for 2022/23 is based on analysing your corporate objectives, risk profile and assurance framework as well as other factors affecting you in the year ahead, including changes within the sector. Our detailed plan for 2022/23 is included at Section 1.



**Level of Resource:** The level of resource required to deliver the plan is consistent with last year and in line with the daily rates with our contract with you. We will continue using technology when undertaking our operational audits. During 2021/22 we embraced more ways of using technology to undertake our audit work including; the use of 4questionnaires, MS Teams meetings, secure web portals for audit data sharing (Huddle) and data analytics technology. This will strengthen our sampling and focus our audit testing. Refer to Appendix A.



**Core Assurance:** At the request of management and detailed in section 1, the areas for consideration are broadly in line with prior years in a number of areas where core assurance reviews have been requested over a number of key areas. A further cyber security review has been requested. We have not allowed for any call off audits in this years programme of work, but the plan will remain flexible and will be reviewed throughout 2022/23 should any changes be required.



**'Agile' approach:** Our approach to working with you has always been one where we will respond to your changing assurance needs. By employing 'agile' or a 'flexible' approach to our service delivery, we are able to change the focus of audits / audit delivery; keeping you informed of these changes in our progress papers to the Audit and Governance Committee during the year.

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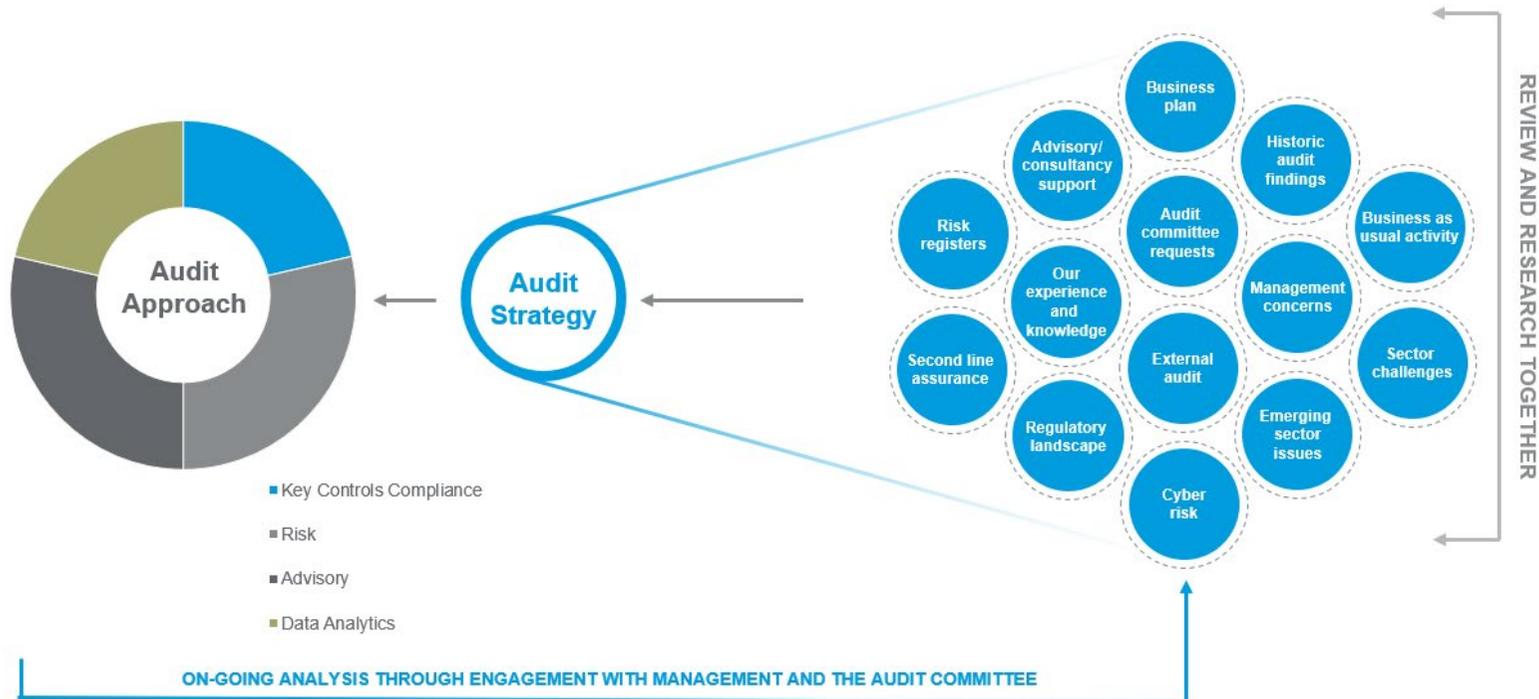
# 1. YOUR INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2022/23

Our approach to developing your internal audit plan is based on analysing your corporate objectives, risk profile and assurance framework as well as other, factors affecting Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service in the year ahead, including changes within the sector.

## Risk management processes

We have evaluated your risk management processes and consider that we can place reliance on your risk registers to inform the internal audit strategy. We have used various sources of information (see Figure A below) and discussed priorities for internal audit coverage with senior management who have indicated a preference to continue to review areas of key concern which are detailed in section 2 which follow a similar theme with prior years.

Figure A: Audit considerations – sources considered when developing the Internal Audit Strategy.



Based on our understanding of the organisation, the information provided to us by stakeholders, and the regulatory requirements, we have developed an annual internal plan for the coming year and a high level strategic plan (see Section 2 and Appendix B for full details).

## 2. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2022/23

The table below shows each of the reviews that we propose to undertake as part of the internal audit plan for 2022/23. The table details the strategic risk titles documented within the Corporate Risk Register which may warrant internal audit coverage. This review of your risks allows us to ensure that the proposed plan will meet the organisation's assurance needs for the forthcoming and future years. As well as assignments designed to provide assurance or advisory input around specific risks, the strategy also includes time for tracking the implementation of actions and an audit management allocation.

Objective of the review (Corporate Risk Register = 'Risk Title')	Audit approach	Fee	Proposed timing	Proposed Audit Committee
<b>Risk Title: Management of Cyber Security</b>				
<b>Cyber Essentials</b> Our review would allow the Service to take assurance that good practice in cyber security is being implemented. We would utilise our specialist Technology Risk Assurance team to undertake this review.	Risk Based	£8250	March 2023	June 2023
<b>Risk Title: Grenfell – Phase 1</b>				
<b>Grenfell Action Plans</b> To allow the Service to take assurance that action plans are in place to address the recommendations arising from the Grenfell review and that appropriate governance is in place over the management of these actions.	Risk Based	£4850	July 2022	September 2022
<b>Risk Title: Capital Projects - Effective Estate Management</b>				
<b>Facilities Management</b> To allow the Service to take assurance over the arrangements for managing its facilities across the estate. The exact scope will be further agreed with Officers.	Risk Based	£4700	April 2022	June 2022
<b>Risk Title: Firefighter Safety</b>				
<b>Health and Safety (Inc Mandatory Training)</b> To allow the Service to take assurance over the arrangements in place for health and safety arrangements in place, including mandatory training, riddor reporting, risks assessments, operational policy and guidance and safe systems of work.	Risk Based	£4700	June 2022	September 2022
<b>Firefighter Pension Administration (WYPF)</b> A review of the Fire Authorities pension provider 'West Yorkshire Pension Fund', to allow the service to take assurance that WYPF have adequate processes and controls in place to process Firefighter pensions.	Risk Based	£4700	November 2022	March 2023

Objective of the review (Corporate Risk Register = 'Risk Title')	Audit approach	Fee	Proposed timing	Proposed Audit Committee
<p><b>Payroll Provider – Dataplan:</b></p> <p>A review of the Fire Authorities payroll provider 'Dataplan', to allow the service to take assurance that Dataplan have adequate processes and controls in place to process the payroll.</p>	Risk Based	£4700	November 2022	March 2023
<b>Risk Title: Management of Operational Risk</b>				
<p><b>Risk Management &amp; Governance:</b></p> <p>In order to comply with public sector internal audit standards, and to facilitate RSM's annual Head of Internal Audit opinion on risk management and governance, RSM will undertake the following:</p> <p>Risk Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep dive on a sample of risks to challenge controls, assessments, assurances and actions recorded within the risk register to ensure that reflect operating practice.</li> <li>• Follow up of prior year actions</li> </ul> <p>Governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business / Strategic Planning</li> <li>• Key Performance Indicators</li> <li>• Performance Management</li> </ul>	Risk Based	£4700	March 2023	June 2023
<b>Core Assurance</b>				
<p><b>Key Financial Controls</b></p> <p>In prior years, RSM has conducted a high-level review across a number of areas, it is proposed that going forward a deep dive of these areas will be undertaken on a cyclical basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General ledger;</li> <li>• Cash, bank and treasury management;</li> <li>• Payroll;</li> <li>• Payments and creditors – 2019/20</li> <li>• Income and debtors; and</li> </ul>	Systems Based	£5250	January 2023	March 2023

Objective of the review (Corporate Risk Register = 'Risk Title')	Audit approach	Fee	Proposed timing	Proposed Audit Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asset Management</li> <li>Annual Pension Return – 2020/21</li> <li>Creditors – 2021/22</li> </ul>				
<b>Other Internal Audit Activity</b>				
Follow up	To meet internal auditing standards, and to provide assurance on action taken to address recommendations previously agreed by management.	N/A	The fees and timings will be included within the internal audit reviews noted above	
Management	This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual planning</li> <li>Preparation for, and attendance at, audit committee</li> <li>Regular liaison and progress updates</li> <li>Liaison with external audit and other assurance providers</li> <li>Preparation of the annual opinion</li> </ul>	N/A	£7200	N/A

A detailed planning process will be completed for each review, and the final scope will be documented in an Assignment Planning Sheet. This will be issued to the key stakeholders for each review.

## 2.1 Working with other assurance providers

The Audit and Governance Committee is reminded that internal audit is only one source of assurance and through the delivery of our plan we will not, and do not, seek to cover all risks and processes within the organisation.

We will however continue to work closely with other assurance providers, such as external audit to ensure that duplication is minimised, and a suitable breadth of assurance obtained.

# APPENDIX A: YOUR INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

Your internal audit service is provided by RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP. The team will be led by Dan Harris as your Head of Internal Audit, supported by Amir Kapasi as your client manager.

## Fees

Our fee to deliver the plan is £49,050 (excluding VAT).

## Core team

The delivery of the 2022/23 audit plan will be based around a core team. However, we will complement the team with additional specialist skills where required.

## Conformance with internal auditing standards

RSM affirms that our internal audit services are designed to conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

Under PSIAS, internal audit services are required to have an external quality assessment every five years. Our risk assurance service line commissioned an external independent review of our internal audit services in 2021 to provide assurance whether our approach meets the requirements of the International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF), and the Internal Audit Code of Practice, as published by the Global Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) and the Chartered IIA, on which PSIAS is based.

The external review concluded that RSM 'generally conforms\*' to the requirements of the IIA Standards' and that 'RSM IA also generally conforms with the other Professional Standards and the IIA Code of Ethics. There were no instances of non-conformance with any of the Professional Standards'.

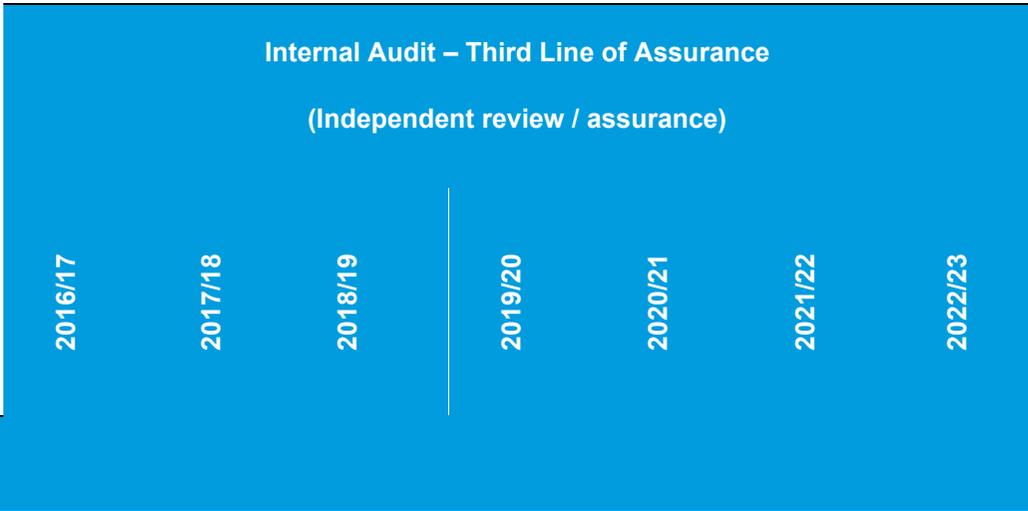
\* The rating of 'generally conforms' is the highest rating that can be achieved, in line with the IIA's EQA assessment model.

## Conflicts of interest

We are not aware of any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of the team, and which are required to be disclosed under internal auditing standards.



Assurance Provided	
	Red - Minimal Assurance / Poor Progress
	Amber/red - Partial Assurance / Little Progress
	Amber/green - Reasonable Assurance / Reasonable Progress
	Green - Substantial Assurance / Good Progress
	Advisory / AUP
	IDEA



Audit Area	BAF / Risk Ref
------------	----------------

**Strategic Commitments: We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings**

Facilities / Estates Management		✓
Grenfell Action Plans		✓
Capital Investment Strategy		
Capital Projects		

**Strategic Commitments: We will seek opportunities to contribute to broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions**

Health and Safety		✓
HR – Recruitment		
Sickness Absence Management		
Performance Management (Hub Model)		
Performance Development Reviews		

Assurance Provided	
	Red - Minimal Assurance / Poor Progress
	Amber/red - Partial Assurance / Little Progress
	Amber/green - Reasonable Assurance / Reasonable Progress
	Green - Substantial Assurance / Good Progress
	Advisory / AUP
	IDEA

Internal Audit – Third Line of Assurance (Independent review / assurance)						
2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23

Audit Area	BAF / Risk Ref	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Vetting								
<b>Strategic Commitments: We will ensure that RBFRS provides good value for money</b>								
Key Financial Controls								✓
Fire Fighter Pension Administration								✓
Payroll Provider – Dataplan								✓
Procurement								
Timesheet and Timekeeping								
Financial Planning / Long Term Budgeting								
Value for Money								✓
<b>Core Assurance</b>								
Risk Management & Governance								✓

Follow up – Good progress

Assurance Provided	
	Red - Minimal Assurance / Poor Progress
	Amber/red - Partial Assurance / Little Progress
	Amber/green - Reasonable Assurance / Reasonable Progress
	Green - Substantial Assurance / Good Progress
	Advisory / AUP
	IDEA

Audit Area	BAF / Risk Ref	Internal Audit – Third Line of Assurance (Independent review / assurance)						
		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Follow Up (Included within individual audits)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

# APPENDIX C: INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER

## Need for the charter

This charter establishes the purpose, authority and responsibilities for the internal audit service for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. The establishment of a charter is a requirement of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and approval of the charter is the responsibility of the audit committee.

The internal audit service is provided by RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP (“RSM”).

We plan and perform our internal audit work with a view to reviewing and evaluating the risk management, control and governance arrangements that the organisation has in place, focusing in particular on how these arrangements help you to achieve its objectives. The PSIAS encompass the mandatory elements of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF) as follows:

- Core principles for the professional practice of internal auditing;
- Definition of internal auditing;
- Code of ethics; and
- The Standards.

## Mission of internal audit

As set out in the PSIAS, the mission articulates what internal audit aspires to accomplish within an organisation. Its place in the IPPF is deliberate, demonstrating how practitioners should leverage the entire framework to facilitate their ability to achieve the mission.

---

*“To enhance and protect organisational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight”.*

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## Independence and ethics

To provide for the independence of internal audit, its personnel report directly to the Dan Harris (acting as your head of internal audit). The independence of RSM is assured by the internal audit service reporting to the Audit and Governance Committee, with further reporting lines to the Head of Finance and Procurement.

Your head of internal audit Dan Harris has been in place for seven years. The Internal Audit Code of Practice as published by the Chartered IIA suggests that this is brought to the attention of the Audit and Governance Committee to review and confirm your assessment on the independence of your internal audit services. To assist the assessment; RSM is able to remain independent for the following reasons:

- As an outsourced provider of internal audit services to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, independence is inherent in our delivery and audit methodology.
- Our internal auditors do not have any operational responsibilities across Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- No member of the audit team is employed by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- The head of internal audit reports to the Head of Finance and Procurement and Audit Committee chair.
- RSM methodology includes a second partner review (by another head of internal audit who does not work on Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service) of the annual plan, the year-end annual report and opinion.
- The Internal Audit Charter details our role and responsibilities and the authority we have which enables us to undertake our internal audit service.

The head of internal audit has unrestricted access to the chair of audit committee to whom all significant concerns relating to the adequacy and effectiveness of risk management activities, internal control and governance are reported.

Conflicts of interest may arise where RSM provides services other than internal audit to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Steps will be taken to avoid or manage transparently and openly such conflicts of interest so that there is no real or perceived threat or impairment to independence in providing the internal audit service. If a potential conflict arises through the provision of other services, disclosure will be reported to the audit committee. The nature of the disclosure will depend upon the potential impairment and it is important that our role does not appear to be compromised in reporting the matter to the audit committee. Equally we do not want the organisation to be deprived of wider RSM expertise and will therefore raise awareness without compromising our independence.

## Responsibilities

In providing your outsourced internal audit service, RSM has a responsibility to:

- Develop a flexible and risk based internal audit strategy with more detailed annual audit plans. The plan will be submitted to the audit committee for review and approval each year before work commences on delivery of that plan.
- Implement the internal audit plan as approved, including any additional tasks requested by management and the audit committee.
- Ensure the internal audit team consists of professional audit staff with sufficient knowledge, skills, and experience.
- Establish a quality assurance and improvement program to ensure the quality and effective operation of internal audit activities.
- Perform advisory activities where appropriate, beyond internal audit's assurance services, to assist management in meeting its objectives.
- Bring a systematic disciplined approach to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of risk management, internal control and governance processes.

- Highlight control weaknesses and required associated improvements together with corrective action recommended to management based on an acceptable and practicable timeframe.
- Undertake follow up reviews to ensure management has implemented agreed internal control improvements within specified and agreed timeframes.
- Report regularly to the audit committee to demonstrate the performance of the internal audit service.

For clarity, we have included the definition of 'internal audit', 'senior management' and 'board'.

- Internal audit – a department, division, team of consultant, or other practitioner (s) that provides independent, objective assurance and consulting services designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. The internal audit activity helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes.
- Senior management who are the team of individuals at the highest level of organisational management who have the day-to-day responsibilities for managing the organisation.
- Board of governors - The highest level governing body charged with the responsibility to direct and/or oversee the organisation's activities and hold organisational management accountable. Furthermore, "board" may refer to a committee or another body to which the governing body has delegated certain functions (eg an audit committee).

## Client care standards

In delivering our services we require full cooperation from key stakeholders and relevant business areas to ensure a smooth delivery of the plan. We proposed the following KPIs for monitoring the delivery of the internal audit service:

- Discussions with senior staff at the client take place to confirm the scope six weeks before the agreed audit start date.
- Key information such as: the draft assignment planning sheet are issued by RSM to the key auditee six weeks before the agreed start date.
- The lead auditor to contact the client to confirm logistical arrangements at least 15 working days before the commencement of the audit fieldwork to confirm practical arrangements, appointments, debrief date etc.
- Fieldwork takes place on agreed dates with key issues flagged up immediately.
- A debrief meeting will be held with audit sponsor at the end of fieldwork or within a reasonable time frame.
- Draft reports will be issued within 10 working days of the debrief meeting and will be issued by RSM to the agreed distribution list / Huddle.
- Management responses to the draft report should be submitted to RSM.

- Within three working days of receipt of client responses the final report will be issued by RSM to the assignment sponsor and any other agreed recipients of the report.



We continue to monitor and implement official Government guidelines relevant to the nations of the UK in respect of Covid-19. RSM UK has in place policies to protect both its staff and clients, which are updated to reflect official guidelines.

## Authority

The internal audit team is authorised to:

- Have unrestricted access to all functions, records, property and personnel which it considers necessary to fulfil its function.
- Have full and free access to the audit committee.
- Allocate resources, set timeframes, define review areas, develop scopes of work and apply techniques to accomplish the overall internal audit objectives.
- Obtain the required assistance from personnel within the organisation where audits will be performed, including other specialised services from within or outside the organisation.

The head of internal audit and internal audit staff are not authorised to:

- Perform any operational duties associated with the organisation.
- Initiate or approve accounting transactions on behalf of the organisation.
- Direct the activities of any employee not employed by RSM unless specifically seconded to internal audit.

## Reporting

An assignment report will be issued following each internal audit assignment. The report will be issued in draft for comment by management, and then issued as a final report to management, with the executive summary being provided to the audit committee. The final report will contain an action plan agreed with management to address any weaknesses identified by internal audit.

The internal audit service will issue progress reports to the audit committee and management summarising outcomes of audit activities, including follow up reviews.

As your internal audit provider, the assignment opinions that RSM provides the organisation during the year are part of the framework of assurances that assist the board in taking decisions and managing its risks.

As the provider of the internal audit service we are required to provide an annual opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management and control arrangements. In giving our opinion it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. The most that the internal audit service can provide to the board is a reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in risk management, governance and control processes. The annual opinion will be provided to the organisation by RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP at the financial year end. The results of internal audit reviews, and the annual opinion, should be used by management and the Board to inform the organisation's annual governance statement.

## Data protection

Internal audit files need to include sufficient, reliable, relevant and useful evidence in order to support our findings and conclusions. Personal data is not shared with unauthorised persons unless there is a valid and lawful requirement to do so. We are authorised as providers of internal audit services to our clients (through the firm's terms of business and our engagement letter) to have access to all necessary documentation from our clients needed to carry out our duties.

## Quality Assurance and Improvement

As your external service provider of internal audit services, we have the responsibility for maintaining an effective internal audit activity. Under the standards, internal audit services are required to have an external quality assessment every five years. In addition to this, we also have in place an internal quality assurance and improvement programme, led by a dedicated team who undertake these reviews. This ensures continuous improvement of our internal audit services.

Any areas which we believe warrant bringing to your attention, which may have the potential to have an impact on the quality of the service we provide to you, will be raised in our progress reports to the audit committee.

## Fraud

The audit committee recognises that management is responsible for controls to reasonably prevent and detect fraud. Furthermore, the audit committee recognises that internal audit is not responsible for identifying fraud; however internal audit will be aware of the risk of fraud when planning and undertaking any assignments.

## Approval of the internal audit charter

By approving this document, the internal audit strategy, the audit committee is also approving the internal audit charter.

# FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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## rsmuk.com

The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Actions for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

Our report is prepared solely for the confidential use of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and solely for the purposes set out herein. This report should not therefore be regarded as suitable to be used or relied on by any other party wishing to acquire any rights from RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP for any purpose or in any context. Any third party which obtains access to this report or a copy and chooses to rely on it (or any part of it) will do so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party and shall not be liable for any loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature which is caused by any person's reliance on representations in this report.

This report is released to you on the basis that it shall not be copied, referred to or disclosed, in whole or in part (save as otherwise permitted by agreed written terms), without our prior written consent.

We have no responsibility to update this report for events and circumstances occurring after the date of this report.

RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales no. OC389499 at 6th floor, 25 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4AB.

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AUDIT &amp; GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>28 JULY 2022</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR NOTE</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 EY will present a verbal update in relation to the current status of the audit of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Committee **NOTE** the report.

**3. REPORT**

- 3.1 Although it had been hoped to bring the audited accounts to this committee meeting for approval, this has not been possible due to the ongoing delays in Deloitte's audit of the Berkshire Pension Fund accounts. It is anticipated that the Statement of Accounts will be ready for sign off at the next Committee meeting in October.
- 3.2 A representative from EY will update Members on the current status of the audit.

**4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The work of the external auditors assures members that the Authority's finances are in good order.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Complies with the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Financial risks are identified and mitigations and controls are tested by the external auditors.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

- 9.1 The Authority opted into the national procurement exercise run by PSAA to appoint its external auditors.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 The Chief Fire Officer has noted the contents of the report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None.

**12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 None.

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

- 13.1 Conor Byrne - Head of Finance and Procurement  
Email: [byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk)  
Tel: 0118 938 4720



## ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>28 JULY 2022</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>LOCAL PENSIONS BOARD – ANNUAL REPORT</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>LINCOLN BALL – CHAIR OF LOCAL PENSIONS BOARD</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>NOTE</b>

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. This annual report updates the Audit and Governance Committee with:

- The 2021-22 pension schemes' administrator's performance figures;
- The recent activities of the Local Pensions Board (for all firefighter pension schemes);
- Relevant aspects of firefighters' pensions administration; and
- An overview of current national issues.

1.2. The Local Pensions Board considers the performance of the local firefighter Pensions administrator as broadly to a good standard. There are a few areas where targets are not met with ongoing interaction to address this, although overall performance against targets is at 94.7%.

1.3. Complexity in relation to the administration of firefighters' pension schemes has increased further over the past twelve months and this has a commensurate impact on the Scheme Manager's current risks.

1.4. National issues continue to dominate firefighters pensions and in particular:

- The mechanism to provide remedy for the age discrimination created by the introduction of the 2015 pension scheme. Amongst the issues are:
  - New legislation has been introduced that finally closed the 1992 and 2006 Firefighters Pension Schemes (legacy schemes) for future accrual from 31 March 2022.
  - An absence of national guidance (Home Office and HM Treasury) on how to deal with what are termed 'immediate detriment' cases.

## Agenda Item 8

### 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That Audit and Governance Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the contents of the report.

### 3. **REPORT**

#### **Background**

- 3.1 The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 makes it a legal requirement to have a Local Pensions Board for the various public sector pensions.
- 3.2 Firefighter pensions in RBFRS are administered by a contractor, West Yorkshire Pension Fund, who work with team members in the RBFRS Human Resources department.
- 3.3 The Fire Authority itself is the current Scheme Manager for the Firefighters Pension Scheme with the Local Pensions Board existing to assist the Fire Authority in its role as Scheme Manager.
- 3.4 The Board consists of four members: two management representatives (Lucy Greenway and Mark Arkwell) and two scheme member representatives (Lincoln Ball and Steve Collins). The Chairmanship of the Board rotates between the management and the member representatives. Currently Lincoln is the Chair and Lucy the vice-Chair. Lincoln has remained on the Local Pensions Board following his retirement from service in February 2022.
- 3.5 Given the significant knowledge requirements, all members strive to provide a minimum four-year term.
- 3.6 Additionally, to retain knowledge and aid succession, the board members plan for the replacement of its members to be staggered rather than losing all or most of its members at the same time.
- 3.7 The Board reports to this Committee twice per year, one of which incorporates an April to March annual report. The last report to the Committee was on 24 January 2022.

#### **Local Pensions Board Activity**

- 3.8 The Board has met on four occasions since the last Annual Report (July 2021), although the most recent meeting in June 2022 was inquorate. At the board meetings reports are received from the responsible managers in the Human Resources department.
- 3.9 Between formal meetings the board members keep in contact as issues arise and where necessary will meet informally.
- 3.10 The board's documents such as the risk register, terms of reference, role description and performance monitoring document are regularly reviewed.
- 3.11 Since the last report to the Committee, the Pensions Board has not been made aware of any potential breaches that needed to be reported to the Pensions Regulator.
- 3.12 The Board has continued to scrutinise the performance of the Pensions Administrator. As West Yorkshire Pension Fund also provides services to other Fire and Rescue Services, the Board has been able to compare the level of service provided to RBFRS against that provided to other authorities.

- 3.13 Members of the Board undertake a variety of activities including attending regional meetings, assisting with surveys and audits and undertaking development activities.
- 3.14 Members of the Board work closely with the managers in the Human Resources department and have assisted in the completion of surveys.

**Annual Report Information**

- 3.15 The Annual Report covers the period 1 April 2021 – 31 Mar 2022.
- 3.16 The Board has maintained scrutiny in relation to the administrator’s key performance indicators (KPIs).
- 3.17 Overall the administrators managed 286 discrete activities over the twelve-month period (compared with 418 over the previous twelve-months). The performance target was achieved on 271 of those activities, equating to 94.6% of activities (compared with 95.7% in the previous annual report period).
- 3.18 These activities are summarised in the table below:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>No of Cases</b>	<b>Target met as %</b>	<b>Target % Compared with 2020-21</b>
<b>Age 55 Increase to Pension</b>	10	98%	-2%
<b>Change of Address</b>	32	100%	Same
<b>Change of Bank Details</b>	6	96%	+29%
<b>Death in Retirement</b>	8	83%	-17%
<b>Deferred Benefits Into Payment of Lump Sum</b>	2	100%	Same
<b>Deferred Benefits Set Up on Leaving</b>	30	66%	-8%
<b>Divorce Settlement Pension sharing order implemented</b>	1	100%	Same
<b>General Payroll Changes</b>	55	100%	Same
<b>Initial letter Death in Retirement</b>	8	100%	+11%
<b>Pension Estimate</b>	29	97%	+2%
<b>Retirement Actual</b>	15	100%	Same
<b>Set Up New Spouse Pension</b>	3	100%	+30%
<b>Spouse Potential</b>	3	33%	-42%
<b>Transfer In Quote</b>	1	100%	+7%
<b>Update Member Details</b>	83	100%	Same

## Agenda Item 8

*Table 1: Pensions Administrator Performance 2021-22*

- 3.19 Overall, whilst there were fewer discrete tasks undertaken by the Pensions Administrator, the performance in relation to the targets was relatively steady dropping by 0.9% points.
- 3.20 As previously reported to the Audit and Governance Committee, the reasons for KPIs periodically being below their target is addressed through contract meetings or sometimes the administrators will provide a reason in their monthly report to the service or quarterly bulletin to their clients. Broadly, things are tending to take longer as the issues are becoming more complicated given the current landscape. The Pensions Board is satisfied that adequate arrangements are in place to address administrative queries.
- 3.21 In April 2022 all existing employees who were in the 1992 or 2006 pension schemes were compulsorily transferred into the 2015 scheme with their legacy rights protected (i.e. pension accrual, links to final salary and retirement age).
- 3.22 **Membership of Pension Schemes:**

Pension Scheme	Mar-22	Apr-21	Change
1992 – Active Members	12	22	-10
2006 – Active Members	2	2	0
2006 – RDS Active Members	1	2	-1
2015 – Active Members	405	382	+23
2015 – RDS Active Members	5	6	-1

*Table 2: Active members of the various firefighter pension schemes, March 2022 and April 2021*

- 3.23 It should also be noted that over half of the active pension members in the 2015 scheme in the table above also will have protected rights (including age discrimination remedy rights) in the legacy schemes.

### Other Significant Issues

- 3.24 Significant national issues remain in relation to Firefighters Pensions.
- 3.24.1 Changes are being made into law through the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act, which came into force on 1 April 2022, removing the discrimination found in the McCloud/ Sargeant case by closing legacy schemes and ensuring all members are treated as members of the reformed career average scheme from 1 April 2022.
- 3.24.2 The secondary legislation will address the retrospective remedy, move all members' service back into the legacy final salary scheme for the remedy period (1 April 2015 – 31 March 2022) and allow a choice of benefits for this period. This aspect is both technical and complex and will be subject to consultation in 2022. This legislation is expected to be in place by 1 October 2023 and will be both resource consuming and complex to administer.
- 3.24.3 A number of Scheme Managers, of which Royal Berkshire Fire Authority is one, have determined that given the relative risks and despite the absence of national guidance, the decisions and judgements of the Employment Appeal

Tribunal and Court of Appeal should be implemented for pension scheme members who are about to retire.

- 3.24.4 On 8 October 2021, the Local Government Association (LGA) and Fire Bridges Union (FBU) reached agreement on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Framework for dealing with Immediate Detriment cases. Management Committee resolved to partially adopt the Framework for Category 1 individuals only, on the basis that not doing so, would create significant issues for the health and wellbeing of individuals, for employee relations and risk costly legal action. For those who are already in receipt of benefits (Category 2 members) the Fire Authority determined that until the impact of the tax issues for the individuals, employers and scheme managers has been clarified, these would not be processed at this time.
- 3.24.6 Resolving the O'Brien/Matthews legal case about how retained duty system staff should be given access to buy back previous pension service. Effectively, this case will enable retained and former retained firefighters to backdate their pension contributions to before 01 July 2000 (the previous cap on pensionable service that could be brought back in the modified pension scheme options exercise). RBFRS continue to prepare for action associated with implementing these matters and is working with the LGA on this prior to changes in legislation. The Local Pensions Board is monitoring activity.
- 3.24.7 Following what has been referred to as a 'perverse outcome', legislation relating to the 'cost cap' mechanism was introduced earlier in 2022 that waived any requirement to amend contribution or benefit rates arising from the recent 2016 valuation. The Government was of the opinion that the mechanism it had introduced was not working as intended and felt it needed to protect taxpayers from volatility. HM Government then stated it would seek to incorporate the costs of remedying the age discrimination from within the cost control mechanism which is still awaiting a 2020 valuation exercise expected to be completed by 2024. In turn this desire to 'fund' the age discrimination through future increased contributions (or decreased benefits) has led to legal challenge to HM Government from a number of public sector trade unions, including from the Fire and Rescue Service.

#### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Fire Authority currently makes an allowance of £104 per meeting available to each Local Pensions Board member. However, not all board members currently choose to receive this allowance.
- 5.2 The Terms of Reference provide for:
- All reasonable expenses incurred by board members to be reimbursed upon production of a valid expenses claim.
  - Adequate resources for the board to fulfil its role including the provision of legal advice and training. The board will seek approval from the HHR&LD for such expenditure.

## Agenda Item 8

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The provision of the Local Pensions Board is a requirement of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.
- 6.2 The Court of Appeal judged in December 2018 that the way in which the transitional provisions of the 2015 pension scheme were implemented amounted to unlawful age discrimination and this has led to the relevant sections of the legislation being overridden by that legal judgement which was clarified by a further judgement made by the Employment Appeal Tribunal on 12 February 2021.
- 6.3 The Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act, which came into force on 1 April 2022, removing the discrimination found in the McCloud/ Sargeant case by closing legacy schemes and ensuring all members are treated as members of the reformed career average scheme from 1 April 2022.
- 6.4 The secondary legislation will address the retrospective remedy, move all members' service back into the legacy final salary scheme for the remedy period (1 April 2015 – 31 March 2022) and allow a choice of benefits for this period. This legislation is expected to be in place by 1 October 2023 and will be both resource consuming and complex.

### **7. EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The public sector equality duty requires public bodies to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- 7.2 The current national issues in relation to firefighter pensions relate directly to age discrimination and the Equality Act 2010 and as such Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's actions and procedures to address these matters also directly relate to being assured that the law is applied.
- 7.3 To reduce the risk of discrimination, the resolutions made by the Fire Authority at its meetings of 17 February 2021, 7 December 2021 (Management Committee) and 28 April 2022 gave effect to the Employment Appeal Tribunal judgement for individuals about to retire who meet the eligibility criteria regardless of whether they are a claimant or non-claimant. Currently in RBFPS this applies only to pension scheme members who have retired since February 2021 with members retiring on the 2015 scheme before that (back to 1 April 2015) yet to have their cases resolved.
- 7.4 There are no additional equality and diversity implications considered in relation to this report

### **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 If there is a failure to comply with the requirements of The Public Service Pensions Act 2013, The Police and Firefighters' Pension Schemes (Amendment) Regulations 2022 and related regulations which may become increasingly likely given the legal determinations, current guidance and complexity with relation to the pension schemes then we can expect that there will be an increase in reports of potential breaches of the legislation, administrative errors, complaints and further legal proceedings leading to

reputational and financial loss which are significant given the Fire Authority's strategic commitments.

- 8.2 If local pension board members, who are lay members, possess insufficient knowledge of the various firefighter pensions issues, which is possible given the complexity of the firefighters pensions legislation and guidance, then we can expect that the oversight and assurance provided to the Fire Authority will be negatively affected which is significant given this is a legal requirement of the Public Sector Pensions Act 2013.
- 8.3 The Board maintains a risk register which is reviewed regularly. The five main identified risks are related to: oversight, performance monitoring, knowledge, loss of knowledge and conflicts of interest. All risks are managed and are being monitored with only one risk (knowledge) needing more treatment.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

- 9.1 The legislation enables the establishment of joint boards with others. This is not a matter being pursued currently within Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 The Chief Fire Officer has been consulted on the contents of this report.  
10.2 The Chief Finance Officer has been consulted on the contents of this report.  
10.3 The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and on the contents of this report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None.

**12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 None.

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

- 13.1 Lincoln Ball, RBFRS Pensions Board Chair, 07541 263386,  
[lincoln\\_ball@live.co.uk](mailto:lincoln_ball@live.co.uk)

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## ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>28 JULY 2022</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>NIKKI RICHARDS, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR NOTE</b>

### 1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Annual Report to the Audit and Governance Committee summarising performance in 2021/22.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To **NOTE** the Annual Report prior to external publication.

### 3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 The Fire Authority agreed its Annual Plan 2021/22 for delivery of the Strategic Commitments as set out in the Corporate Plan 2019-2023. Within the Annual Plan were a number of Corporate Measures against which our performance was monitored by Officers and Members via the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 3.2 The Annual Report provides a summary of performance in 2021/22, highlighting a number of challenges and achievements in delivering services for the people of Berkshire.
- 3.3 As part of our commitment to transparency, following consideration by the Audit and Governance Committee, the Annual Report will be published on our website.

### 4. **CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 The Annual Report sets out delivery against the Strategic Commitments in 2021/22.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 No direct financial implications.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 No direct legal implications.

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 No direct equality and diversity implications.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 No direct risk implication.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

9.1 The Annual Report highlights a number of areas in which we have demonstrated our commitment to the duty to collaborate.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 The Annual Report has been developed in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Annual Plan 2021/22

11.2 Corporate Plan 2019-2023

**12. APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix A - Annual Report 2021/22

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Mark Antell, Communications and Engagement Lead, 07990771595

13.2 Becca Chapman, Data, Performance and Risk Manager, 07585991629



# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

Agenda Item 9

Appendix A



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### » WELCOME

Welcome to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Annual Report. 2021-2022 has been an important year for the Service.

2021-22 saw changes to our Senior Leadership Team, who have been establishing plans to take our Service forward on its journey of continuous improvement. These changes include Wayne's appointment as Chief Fire Officer and the appointments of Nikki Richards as Deputy Chief Executive, Mark Arkwell as Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Katie Mills as Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

Despite a number of significant incidents and COVID-19 continuing to present challenges for our Service and communities, we still hit several important milestones during this time. For example, we are delighted that firefighters began to serve their local communities from the new community fire station in Theale in September 2021. This new state-of-the-art facility will help us to deliver on our strategic commitment to ensure that our fire stations, people, and resources are placed firmly at the heart of local communities.

New equipment has also been deployed at fire stations across the County, further strengthening the Service's capabilities to respond to the people of Royal Berkshire in times of emergency. This included the deployment of six new specialist off-road vehicles to five on-call fire stations and Caversham Road Fire Station. We also introduced a new Aerial Ladder Platform, improving the Service's response to complex operations within high-rise buildings.

To celebrate the achievements of staff and volunteers in responding to a challenging 18 months, we held a Celebration Event in October 2021. The event recognised those that took on additional responsibilities during the pandemic, congratulated the staff recognised in our Virtual Awards Ceremony and formally welcomed firefighters who completed their training at the start of 2020 and went straight to work, serving their communities on fire stations.

The following report highlights the incredible amount of work completed in 2021-22, and we are proud of all Members, staff, and volunteers who have contributed to making it possible. Over the next 12 months, we will continue to work hard to ensure that the Service has the right resources, people, and plans to build on the work completed in 2021-22.



**Councillor Colin Dudley**  
Chairman  
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority



**Wayne Bowcock**  
Chief Fire Officer  
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service



## » YOUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides prevention, protection, and response services across the County of Berkshire. Twelve wholetime fire stations and five on-call fire stations cover 488 square miles from Langley in the East to Lambourn in the West. It serves a diverse cultural population of approximately 949,000 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

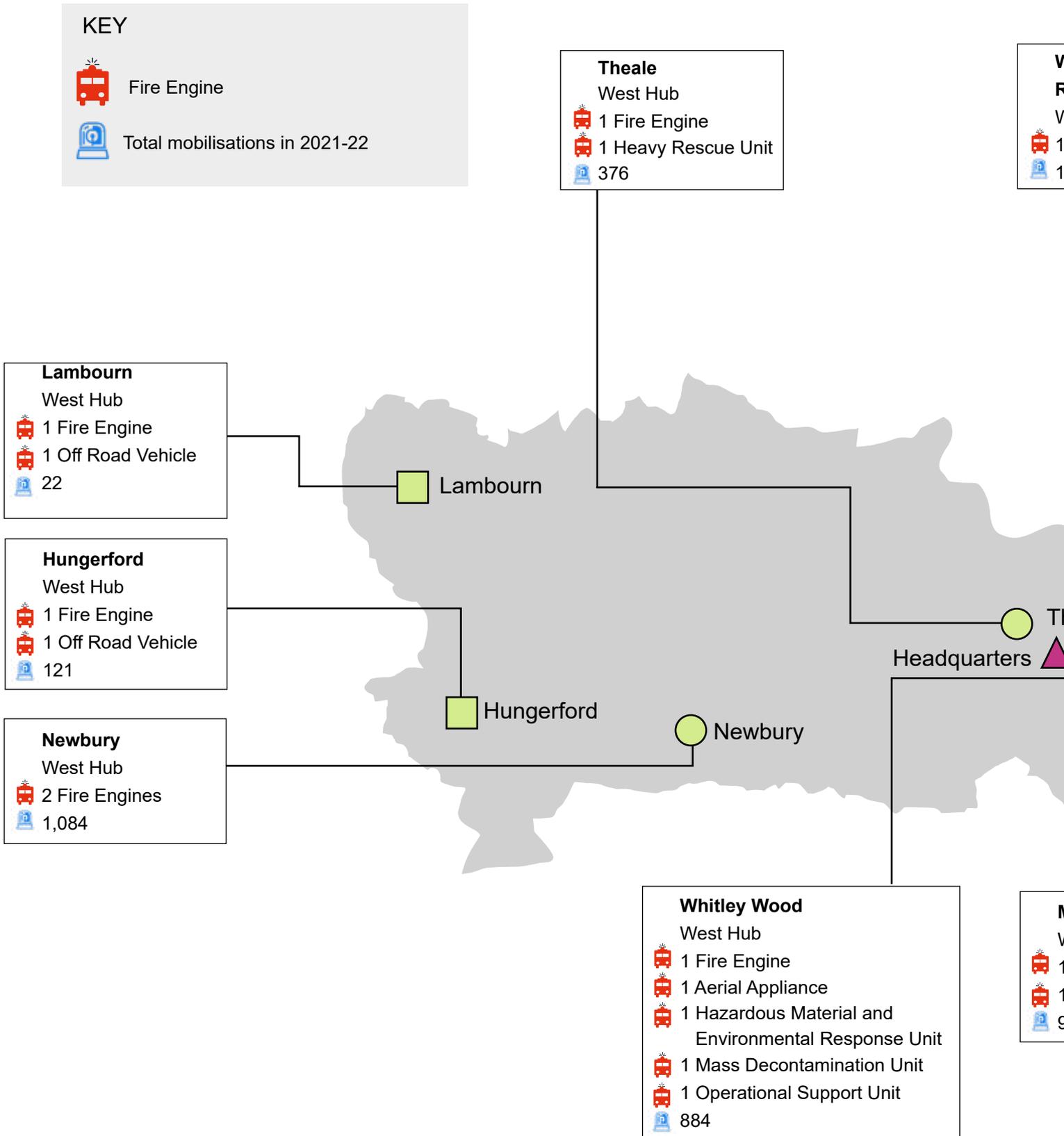
The Service's highly-trained fire crews deal with incidents ranging from road and rail accidents to fuel and chemical spills, aviation and waterway accidents, collapsed buildings, large animal rescues, and, of course, fires.

Along with providing a swift and effective response to incidents, one of the Service's aims is to educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies. Our Service works with schools, businesses, residents, and community groups throughout Royal Berkshire to raise awareness and educate people about a wide variety of safety issues.

The Service has joined forces with Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service to establish a shared emergency call handling centre, Thames Valley Fire Control Service.



» **YOUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**







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## » ABOUT US

In our [Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019-23](#), Royal Berkshire Fire Authority set RBFRS six public facing commitments:

1. We will provide education and advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.
2. We will ensure a swift and appropriate response when called to emergencies.
3. We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.
4. We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.
5. We will ensure that RBFRS provides good value for money.
6. We will work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.

**For 2021-22, RBFRS set an additional four objectives:**

7. We will recruit, train and develop our people to ensure we create a safe, professional and capable workforce that are supported to become the best public servants they can be for the residents of Berkshire.
8. We will manage RBFRS in accordance with best practice, understanding and continuous improvement, learning from events and being transparent in our compliance.
9. We will be strong and visible in our leadership in developing a diverse and inclusive 'one team' culture where everyone's contribution is valued and positive behaviours are recognised.
10. We will explore collaboration opportunities to ensure we deliver effective and efficient services to the people we serve.



## » AWARDS AND ACCREDITATIONS



We are proud to have achieved the Level Three 'Leader' status in the Disability Confident Scheme this year. We have undertaken a number of activities to demonstrate our commitment to the scheme, including our involvement with Leonard Cheshire's Change 100 scheme.



This year, two members of staff were nominated for Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) awards and another won the award for 'Addressing Health Inequalities in the Community' for her work during the pandemic.



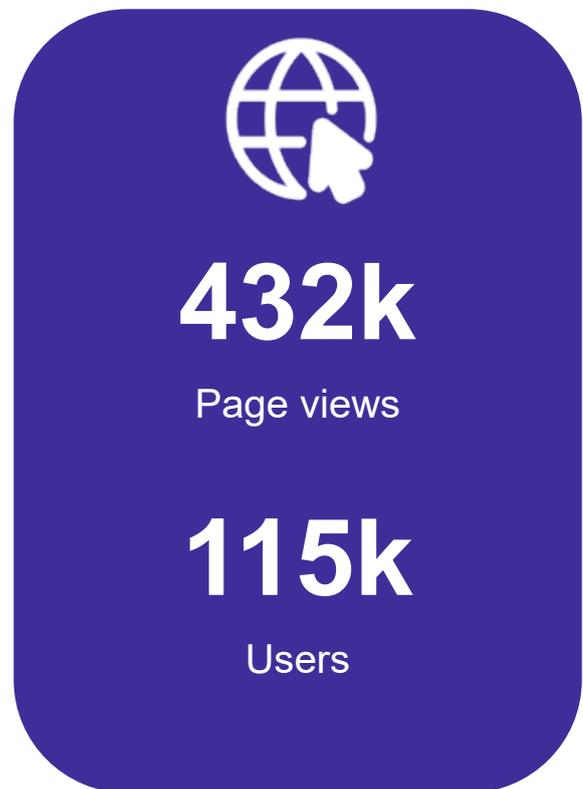
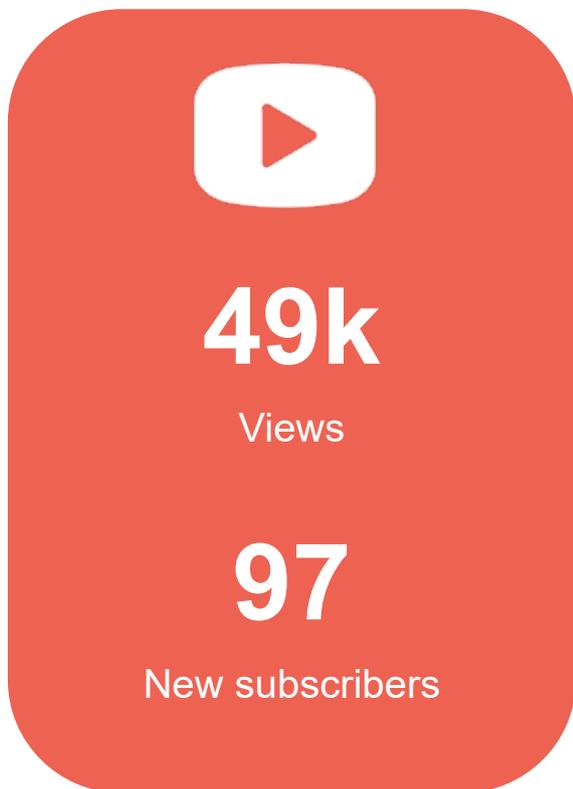
Memberships with Stonewall and the Business Disability Forum have been maintained this year and a new membership with Inclusive Employers has been gained to provide further support and resources to ensure our activities and services are inclusive for all.



We are delighted that Becci Jefferies, Head of HR and Learning and Development, was awarded a British Empire Medal for her work to transform health and wellbeing services for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.



» **SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2021-22**





» **SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2021-22**



**3,778**  
Page views

**342**  
New followers



**492**  
New followers

**52**  
New posts



 **437k**  
Impressions

 **245**  
New followers

 **71k**  
Engagements

 **5k**  
Total followers



## » TIMELINE OF THE LAST YEAR (APRIL 2021 - MARCH 2022)

Here is a summary of some of the main events that have taken place in the past year at RBFRS.



### ROWE COURT

Our teams worked with Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service and Reading Borough Council in responding to a fatal fire at a block of flats in Rowe Court, Reading, in December 2021. At the height of the fire, there were around 50 firefighters at the scene from stations across Berkshire and Oxfordshire, supported by Officers and specialist equipment, including our Aerial Ladder Platform and the Urban Search and Rescue Team from Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.



### THEALE COMMUNITY FIRE STATION OPERATIONAL

In October 2021, firefighters began serving the community from Theale Community Fire Station, a major milestone for the Service. This new station supports our ongoing commitment to work collaboratively with our emergency service partners, offering a shared location for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service.



### DON'T DRINK AND DROWN

In April 2021, we teamed up with our partners, Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service, to promote the Don't Drink and Drown Campaign.



### CROWTHORNE TRAIL WINNERS

We were delighted that Crowthorne Community Fire Station won the Crowthorne Trails Business prize for their Easter display. A rainbow and clouds was created for the community room window, which included some fire safety questions and answers.



### NEW VEHICLES AT STATIONS

Six new Ford Ranger vehicles were deployed at five on-call fire stations and Caversham Road Fire Station. They have since been providing logistical support at incidents.



### GAMBIA EQUIPMENT DONATION

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority donated the Dennis Elite Water Carrier, and range of other firefighting equipment, to a charity partnership that works to assist the emergency response of the Gambia Fire and Ambulance Service.

### ARMED FORCES WEEK

The Service celebrated Armed Forces Week with several activities, but most prominent was the third virtual meeting of our Armed Forces Veteran's Hub on Friday, 25 June.

### CELEBRATING PRIDE

We were once again able to celebrate Reading Pride in person with our communities. Teams from across the Service attended to engage with local residents and host a stall.



### EMERGENCY SERVICES DAY

We once again proudly supported Emergency Services Day, honouring everyone working and volunteering in the emergency services. Staff joined in the two minutes' silence to mark the day.

### HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS

All 187 high rise buildings in Berkshire were visited by June 2021, enabling us to ensure appropriate regulatory activities were in place.



**CELEBRATION EVENT**

On Saturday, 2 October, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service held an event to celebrate the outstanding achievements of staff and volunteers in responding during a challenging 18 months, recognise those that took on additional responsibilities during the pandemic, congratulate the staff recognised in our Virtual Awards Ceremony and formally welcome firefighters who completed their training at the start of 2020 and went straight to work, serving their local communities on fire stations.



**SUPPORTING UKRAINE**

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service proudly joined fire and rescue services across the country in providing support to assist with the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Slough Fire Station's charity car wash raised over £5,000 for the British Red Cross - Ukraine Appeal. The Service also donated 5,000 items of kit, equipment and vehicles to Ukrainian firefighters. Firefighters at Maidenhead and Windsor Fire Stations also showed their solidarity by creating the Ukraine flag from their hose reels (pictured).



**OPENING OF CROWTHORNE COMMUNITY FIRE STATION**

Crowthorne Community Fire Station officially opened. The Station is the Service's second tri-service community fire station, offering a shared location for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service.

**FIRST IN PERSON ARMED FORCES VETERAN'S HUB**

Our Service hosted its first in-person Armed Forces Veterans' Hub event on 7 November, at Crowthorne Community Fire Station.

**THAMES VALLEY FIRE SERVICES CELEBRATE COLLABORATION**

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services gathered at Blenheim Palace to showcase the successes of their ongoing collaboration to deliver increased effectiveness for the communities we serve.

**NEW AERIAL LADDER PLATFORM OPERATIONAL**

A new Aerial Ladder Platform (high reach vehicle) became operational, further strengthening the Service's capabilities to respond to the people of Royal Berkshire in times of emergency.



**BECCI JEFFERIES RECOGNISED IN QUEEN'S NEW YEAR'S HONOURS**

In the New Year's Honours, Becci Jefferies, Head of HR and Learning and Development, was awarded a British Empire Medal for her work to transform health and wellbeing services.

**CONSULTATIONS**

In January, the Service ran two important consultations. The Council Tax Consultation asked residents for their opinion on an increase in Council Tax by £5 for the financial year 2022/23. The Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation also began in January, which you can read more about on page 21.

**THEALE COMMUNITY FIRE STATION ARTWORK COMPETITION**

Art students from Theale Green School took part in an art competition for the new Theale Community Fire Station. Over 40 pieces of artwork were submitted. Congratulations to Evan Rose, in Year 8, who was selected as the winner.

**STORM EUNICE**

On 18 February, Berkshire was hit by Storm Eunice. The Service responded to a number of incidents as a result and between midnight and 5pm, Thames Valley Fire Control Service answered more than 400 calls.



**INTRODUCING REFUGEES TO OUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

In March, our Service visited a hotel in West Berkshire to provide fire safety advice in various languages to local refugees, who had been arriving in the UK from Afghanistan through the Afghan Refugee Resettlement Programme.



>> OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS 2021-2022



7,300

Emergency incidents responded to



77.2%

Of occasions we responded within 10 minutes



814

Number of primary fires



730

Number of secondary fires



388

Road traffic collisions



1,468

Other services



6,734

Number of Safe and Well Visits completed



947

Number of full Fire Safety Audits carried out



98.6%

Of eligible staff successfully completing fitness test



5.8%

Working time lost to staff sickness across all groups



100%

Compliant spend as a % of overall spend



## >> OUR PERFORMANCE

To monitor performance and ensure we are working towards our Annual Objectives and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) commitments, several performance measures were agreed upon by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the Annual Plan 2021-2022.

These measures monitor the delivery of our statutory obligations and services we provide alongside how key resources are managed, including staff, finance, and health and safety. However, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted some of our performance measures and plans.

Performance is monitored quarterly by the Strategic Performance Board and the Audit and Governance Committee. Our year-end performance against our Corporate Measures can be seen on pages 44-46.

Our strategy to prevent fires and other emergencies includes providing Safe and Well Visits to those at heightened risk of dying or being injured as a result of an accidental dwelling fire. Although we had to take a risk-based approach during the pandemic, we increased the number of Safe and Well Visits as restrictions eased. This year we have delivered 5,887 Safe and Well Visits, and we have now completed over 37,000 Safe and Well visits since April 2017.

In 2021-22, we continued to work closely with our local authority partners to ensure vulnerable members of our communities



were protected and supported. Providing this support was more important than ever due to the impacts of the pandemic on domestic violence, and mental health and substance and alcohol misuse. We made 566 safeguarding referrals this year, an increase of 18% from the previous year, 100% of which we made within our 24-hour target.

Fire Safety Inspectors completed 957 full Fire Safety Audits in premises falling under the Regulatory Reform Order 2005, which outlines our duty to enforce fire safety in non-domestic premises. As a result, this is an increase compared to the previous year as our activity returned to normal after the pandemic.



## >> OUR PERFORMANCE



Over 37,000

Safe and Well Visits delivered since April 2017



566

Safeguarding referrals made during 2021/22

In 2021-22, there were 7,300 emergency incidents within Berkshire, which is a return to the level of incidents seen before the pandemic.

While the number of Primary Fires has remained relatively steady since 2019/20, we have seen a 77% increase in Primary Fires in Industrial and Commercial buildings in 2021-22, which is consistent with businesses reopening as COVID-19 restrictions eased.

Secondary Fires also fell by 22% in 2021-22 compared to the previous year. Although this fall is partly a result of a wet summer, 2020-21 figures were higher than usual due to increased rubbish and refuse fires when local amenity sites were closed during the first COVID-19 lockdown.

False Alarms rose by 9% in 2021-22 compared to the previous year, including an 18% increase in Automatic Fire Alarms compared to 2020-21, which is again consistent with businesses reopening as COVID-19 pandemic restrictions eased. This year the Service carried out

a consultation addressing the burden of Automatic Fire Alarms, further details of which are on page 21.

While the number of road traffic collisions increased by 18% on the previous year due to busier roads as pandemic restrictions eased, the number still remained lower than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Though we were fortunate to have only seen a relatively small number of COVID-19 cases amongst our staff, these and requirements to self-isolate, impacted the availability of our wholtime crews, which this year was 87.0%, compared with 96.8% in 2020-21. In response, we utilised some of our on-call staff to support our wholtime crew availability during this challenging time. However, this also impacted on-call staff availability which was 43.6% compared with 65.6% the year before.

Despite these challenges, we exceeded our Response Standard target in 2021-22 of attending 75% of all emergency



incidents in under 10 minutes from the time of the call. Our overall performance for the year was 77.2%. Our performance was consistent across the year, with the target achieved every month.

Our performance measures and targets enable us to manage our performance and demonstrate our effectiveness at preventing and protecting against risk and responding to incidents to ensure that we provide value for money to the communities we serve.

### Audits

A number of internal audits were conducted in 2021-22:

- Cyber Essentials;
- Performance Management;
- Value for Money;
- Vetting and pre-employment checks;
- Risk Management and Governance;
- Firefighter Pension Administration;
- Payroll Provider; and
- Key Financial Controls.

We await the results of our Cyber Essentials internal audit.

Our auditors found substantial assurance on four of seven audit reports received and reasonable assurance on the final three of the seven audit reports received.

We monitor all audit actions through the Strategic Performance Board and Audit and Governance Committee.

### Statement of Assurance

The annual Statement of Assurance formally confirms to the Government, stakeholders, and the communities we serve the adequacy of arrangements for the effective management of financial, governance, and operational matters in our Service.

The Statement confirms the extent to which we have met the requirement of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

### Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

The Service continued to work on projects to deliver against the Areas for Improvement identified in our previous inspections, which have rated the Service as 'Good' overall.

HMICFRS will carry out a new inspection in June 2022.





## >> ENSURING A SWIFT AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

In the [Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019 – 2023](#), one of the Fire Authority’s Strategic Commitments is to ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies.

### Maintaining Crewing During the COVID-19 Pandemic

To ensure our Service provides a swift and effective response to residents, we have set three Response Measures which are reported on a quarterly basis. In an emergency incident, a swift response is vital to ensuring that we can help those in need. Therefore, we measure the percentage of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes, from time the emergency call was answered.

As a Service we aim to have a fire engine on scene within 10 minutes on 75% of occasions. During 2021-2022, we have exceeded this target, responding within 10 minutes on 77.2% of occasions.

This target has been achieved despite of significant pressures on the workforce caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the legal requirement to self-isolate was removed on 24 February

2021, staff continue to be advised to isolate if they are unwell with COVID-19 symptoms, for their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of colleagues.

Crewing levels are also measured and reported on - both for wholetime and on-call frontline pumping appliances. With workforce sickness and absence high, this has impacted the number of shifts where there is adequate crewing on all of our appliances.

To manage this, frequent meetings of the Critical Event Management Team (CEMT) and Response Support Group take place, monitoring sickness levels across the organisation in an effort to maintain adequate operational crewing levels.

To provide additional resilience to our wholetime appliances’ availability, a number of our on-call staff have transferred into wholetime roles at our stations. A total of nine on-call firefighters completed the transfer. This increased wholetime appliance availability and provided them with an opportunity to gain more experience, but reduced on-call availability during the past year.

During a challenging twelve months, the arrangements put in place helped ensure that residents continued to receive a swift and effective response at their time of need.





### Maintaining Our Emergency Call Handling Services During Storm Eunice

Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) is a shared function for emergency call handling, mobilising, and resource management, which takes emergency calls for the Thames Valley area, including the counties of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Royal Berkshire. TVFCS has been in operation for over seven years, taking more than 238,437 calls (until 31 March 2022).

During 2021-2022, TVFCS again faced staffing challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Safety measures remained in place to protect the wellbeing of staff and maintain this critical function.

The resilience of TVFCS was tested on several occasions, including the arrival of Storm Eunice in Royal Berkshire on 18 February. Between midnight and 5pm on Friday, 18 February, TVFCS staff answered more than 400 calls in the Thames Valley. Many calls concerned fallen trees causing threats to life and structural damage to properties. Our teams worked diligently to prioritise those in greatest need, where there was a risk to life. In this period of high demand, the emergency phone lines needed to remain open for residents to dial 999 for assistance.

In the lead-up to and during Storm Eunice, our Duty Officers and Communications Team worked collectively to share regular updates on the RBFRS website and social media channels and proactively issued them to local media.



*Today they're out responding to our community calls in storm Eunice.*

*What amazing "Heroes" we have in our County assisting us when we're in need, keeping us safe.*

Twitter User



Crucial safety advice shared helped residents to prepare ahead of Storm Eunice. Advice included securing all loose belongings down and only making essential journeys. Residents were also provided with contact information for reporting road debris and advised to follow local weather forecasts.

Despite Storm Eunice causing extensive disruption and damage, residents continued to receive a swift and effective response when dialling 999.



400

Calls answered by Thames Valley Fire Control Service during Storm Eunice



### Working in Partnership at a Difficult Incident

Our Service worked closely with Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service, and Reading Borough Council in responding to a devastating fire at a block of flats in Rowe Court, Reading.

In the early hours of Wednesday, 15 December, our teams responded to this fire in the four-storey building, arriving within 8 minutes of receiving the 999 call. Upon arrival, they faced a challenging situation.

Their priority was to locate casualties inside the building to evacuate them safely and ensure they received prompt treatment from our partners at South Central Ambulance Service while also working to extinguish the fire.

During this incident, our firefighters were able to rescue one of the residents from the building using a ladder, and emergency call handlers also led a resident safely out of the property by providing fire survival guidance. However, despite their efforts on the scene, we know that two people, Richard Burgess and Neil Morris, tragically lost their lives.

At the height of the fire, there were around 50 firefighters at the scene from stations across Berkshire and Oxfordshire, supported by Officers and specialist equipment, including our Aerial Ladder Platform and the Urban Search and Rescue Team from Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

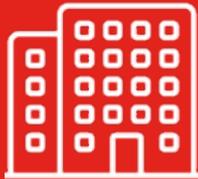
The fire caused extensive damage to the structure of the building, meaning recovery efforts had to be delayed until scaffolding installed could ensure the safety of staff on-site. In the meantime, our staff went to offer Safe and Well Visits in the nearby area to provide safety advice to local residents and regularly provide information.

It was vital that throughout the incident, we shared updates promptly, and the media reporting was accurate. A dedicated website page was set up, updates were posted on partner agencies' social media channels and interviews were held, including a joint press briefing on the first day of the incident. These steps helped warn and inform our communities of the incident and reassured them about what was being done to keep them safe.

Our thoughts continue to be with those affected by this tragic fire. We recognise that this incident is very distressing, especially for the family and friends of those that lost their lives. Following the incident, the Service offered all staff support through its dedicated Employee Assistance Programme, through which they continue to be supported.



## >> REDUCING THE BURDEN OF FALSE ALARMS



### Low-Risk

Properties affected by the  
policy change

Between 17 January and 28 March, Our Service ran an extensive consultation on behalf of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority regarding how our Service should respond to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs).

An AFA is an alarm that, when it sounds, will alert the occupants of the building. Building occupiers should consider ways to reduce the number of AFAs and have a legal responsibility in line with their fire safety measures on-site to respond promptly when an AFA sounds.

The Automatic Fire Alarm consultation asked residents, business owners, and people who work in Berkshire to consider how their Fire and Rescue Service should respond to AFAs in lower-risk, occupied buildings. Lower-risk, occupied buildings include shops, factories, and office blocks.

The consultation document was available online in English, Polish, Urdu, and Punjabi. Accessible and Easyread versions of the consultation document aimed to make the consultation as inclusive as possible. The public was able to respond online or via mail.

The public indicated, through the consultation, that they favoured the proposed changes to how the Service responds to AFAs in lower-risk buildings. On Thursday, 28 April, the Fire Authority approved the proposed changes.

The Service consulted on how it should respond to AFAs because 99% of these calls are false alarms, placing a significant burden on the Service.

The difference between the new process and the old process is the removal of the second call back after 20 minutes. Removing the second call back is low risk, because the responsible person at the property will be required to do the necessary checks and confirm if there is a fire.

Under the changes made by the Service, up to 1,300 hours of firefighter time could be saved annually, allowing firefighters to dedicate more time to training, visiting high-risk properties, and delivering vital fire safety advice to communities across Berkshire.

Not included in the consultation were higher-risk buildings, such as care homes, hotels, high-rise buildings, and houses, and the Service's policy towards AFAs on these premises has not changed.

For further information on the Automatic Fire Alarm consultation, [please visit our website](#).



## >> FOCUS ON FIRE SAFETY

One of the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments in the [Fire Authority's Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019 – 2023](#) is to ensure we provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.

### Fire Safety in the Built Environment

With the Grenfell Tower Inquiry continuing to examine the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the fire on the night of 14 June 2017, our Service has been following proceedings closely to ensure we continue to put the safety of Berkshire residents at the heart of everything we do.

In Phase 2, the Public Inquiry is examining the causes of the events, including how Grenfell Tower came to be in a condition that allowed the fire to spread in the way it did.

In previous Annual Reports, we have outlined our own four-phase plan firstly for responding to the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, and then learning from and responding to the emergent picture of risk associated with high-rise buildings and Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding.

In Phase 1, our Service inspected high-rise buildings and gave 4,700 residents valuable fire safety guidance. In Phase 2, we worked with building owners, Local Authorities, and residents to ensure compliance with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) guidance and interim measures.

The Built Environment Programme (BEP) was established as part of phase 3 of our response. To manage the scale and



complexity of change, we have arranged the Programme into five work streams: tactics and equipment, call management, risk and information, command support, and our high-rise residential building (HRRB) project.

Each of the 46 recommendations have been translated into risks using the organisational risk management approach. This has allowed us to address both the specific recommendations and underlying issues where appropriate. Where areas of improvement have been identified, the Programme has established new ways of working whilst providing assurance that changes are embedded into the Service and making a real difference to the safety of staff and residents through improved



effectiveness of the services we deliver across the built environment.

The Programme has made significant progress towards addressing the 46 recommendations, including:

- The introduction of escape hoods;
- Assuring our accessibility of Thames Valley Police's helicopter footage;
- Conducting radio tests in high-risk buildings to identify any potential issues and making boosters available where needed; and
- Implementing a new process for sharing critical risk information between Response and Resilience and TVFCS to ensure everyone has the most up-to-date information during an incident.

Electronic Premise information plates (EPIPs) have been developed for all high-rise residential buildings across the County. An EPIP is a simple 'one page' overview of key operational risk information, which is available to crews on the Mobile Data Terminals. EPIPs support tactical planning by enabling crews to access crucial information about a building during the early stages of an incident, which ultimately helps to keep our crews safe.

A number of training packages have been released on our Learning Management System, to equip our staff with a greater level of knowledge and understanding that will better prepare them for future incidents in high-rise buildings. Our Services' External Cladding Systems

e-learning course has been published on the shared learning platform for fire & rescue service staff, FRS learn.

During phase 1 of the HRRB project, the team visited 187 buildings. This provided the service 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 whereby we continue to work closely with Building Owners and Responsible Persons, alongside our partners in local authority housing teams ensuring where necessary, enforcement action is taken and interim measures are applied as appropriate. We have identified 97 buildings as needing further management due to cladding, internal compartmentation, or other fire safety concerns and continue to have our dedicated teamwork to ensure these risks are managed appropriately.

We are committed to learning the lessons from the findings of the Inquiry and our thoughts remain firmly focused on the victims, families, and communities devastated by the Grenfell fire.



97

Buildings identified as needed further management



### Fire Safety Activities

A total of 947 Fire Safety Audits have been completed and enforcement activity has continued to ensure that business owners comply with fire safety legislation.

We work with business owners to support, promote and ensure fire safety standards on premises. If the fire safety is not adequate then this will be addressed, usually through a notice of deficiencies, but if this is not complied with or is so serious it needs immediate attention then we will use our enforcement powers and consider prosecution.

In addition to audits carried out in response to complaints or after an incident, we conduct Audits in premises that we identify to be high-risk through our Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP).

This year, in line with our Protection Strategy, we have conducted a full review of how we define high risk and what data sources we use to decide which premises we need to visit. The new Risk Based Inspection Programme will launch in April 2022.

A total of 36 Enforcement Notices have been issued during the past year, under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. These are notices served against business premises to require them to meet adequate fire safety standards. This is an increase of 63.4% from 2020-21.

This last year we have received 35 building consultations, which required a fire engineering input. A number of these are extended consultations with the Building Control Body as a result of our initial comments to improve the safety of the premises for occupants and access for firefighters. Due to the demand of engineered consultations coming into the Service, we are exploring introducing fire engineering apprenticeships to develop others and provide more resilience to our services.

Our Service's Fire Engineering Lead has also been involved in the NFCC FETS (Fire Engineering Technical Standards) Group and has input into the Mega Warehouse working group to influence the FRS National approach to consultations of this type. Furthermore, our Fire Engineering Lead took the lead on a development of a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) day at a local girls' school to raise awareness of different careers in the fire service, and to introduce fire safety and human behaviours to the students.

The majority of businesses comply with fire safety legislation and our Service will always seek to work with business owners to maintain fire safety standards on premises with prosecution considered as



36

Enforcement Notices issued in the past year, an increase of 63.4% from 2020-21



a last resort. However, if our residents are put at risk, we won't hesitate to prosecute. We have successfully prosecuted one leaseholder in the past year.

On 23 November 2021, the leaseholder of a flat in Reading was sentenced to community service for a number of fire safety breaches. Reading Crown Court sentenced the defendant to 200 hours of unpaid community service and the Authority was awarded full prosecution costs.

In line with the new Protection Fire Standard published last year, our Service has been working hard to further align our Protection function with the NFCC Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators. Part of this work has resulted in the design and implementation of a new Development Assessment Pathway (DAPs) for fire safety staff. Our Service has also adopted the nationally recognised title of Fire Safety Inspectors (FSIs) to describe our Inspecting Officers. It is vital that we continue to ensure that our Fire Safety Regulators can demonstrate the highest levels of professional competence. The implementation of a new Development Assessment Pathway for Fire Safety Inspectors aligned with the NFCC Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators is an important factor in achieving this aim.

DAPs is in three parts as below, with different booklets depending on the level of fire safety experienced required. Booklet Two is fully implemented with eight FSIs working through them with a

completion estimated for the end of the year. Booklet Three is the next one being implemented that will see five protection managers through developing competency for the role and the aim is to get this in place by autumn. Booklet One will be the last of the three to implement, although the structure for this has commenced.

- Booklet One – Fire Safety Advisors (Grade 3)
- Booklet Two – Fire Safety Inspectors (Grade 4/5)
- Booklet Three – Fire Safety Competent Manager (Grade 6)

### **Quality Assurance**

The Quality Assurance Programme has been designed and implemented, to provide an understanding our levels of consistency and standards within our Protection work, which will allow further analysis for decisions and actions to consider around learning and improving our processes.

This programme has commenced and will sample areas of work across all to provide findings for the Internal Peer Review Group (IPRG). The IPRG will review findings to provide an agreed summary of actions and decisions required for further governance at the Prevention and Protection Support Group. Over the year, this programme has collated observations from all hubs and across all protection activities, the IPRG has also built in an evaluation process to review the Quality Assurance process to ensure it works well and if any changes are required moving forward.



## >> PROMOTING COMMUNITY SAFETY

In the [Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019 – 2023](#), one of the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments is that we will provide education and advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.

### Water Safety

Our Service embarked on several Water Safety initiatives throughout 2021/22.

In April 2021, we supported the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) annual Water Safety Week. Taking place between 26 April and 2 May, the campaign aims to raise awareness of the risk of accidental drowning and share advice so that people can enjoy the water safely.

Drowning is among the leading causes of accidental death in the UK. In 2021, 277 people tragically died in accidental drownings and 44% of those people had no intention of ever being in the water.

As in previous years, we marked Water Safety Week on all of our social media accounts. The Service received positive engagement with a total reach of 40,602 on Twitter.

We also supported the NFCC's Drowning Prevention Week in June 2021. Digitally, the Service had a total reach of 11,680 on Facebook and a total reach of 1,698 on Instagram.



Stations also placed posters around the local area in key locations, such as the Jubilee River in Slough, the Sounding Arch in Maidenhead, and other hot spots, where people may be tempted to enter the water.

As part of the week-long campaign, we also teamed up with unitary authorities and local radio stations to share messaging with residents as well as partners. Our teams joined Thames Valley Police (TVP) and South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) to promote the 'Don't Drink and Drown' campaign, run by the Royal Life Saving Society, which encouraged smart decision-making if drinking alcohol around open water.

### Adults at Risk Programme

The Adults at Risk Programme (ARP) is a free training scheme run by the Prevention Team to provide a fire safety guide for all those involved in the care of adults in the community. The ARP lays down the minimum recommendations for the protection of adults most at risk from fire.



53,980

Reach across social media channels during water safety initiatives



It is recognised that there are many considerations to be taken into account when planning a care package to allow someone to continue to live in the community with extra support to ensure their safety and wellbeing. If fire safety is not considered and the correct protection measures are not put in place then the person may not be safe in their home. They will be at the greatest possible risk should a fire occur.

As part of the partnership approach being adopted, we have partnered with Adult Social Care to supply training and resources to support agency partners, families, and carers. This training package is designed to enable participants to work with our teams to protect vulnerable adults living in the community from the risks of fire.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the ARP training sessions have been delivered remotely with participants booking onto the courses via our Eventbrite page.

### **West Berkshire Hotel Refugee Event**

Since August 2021, refugees have been arriving in the UK from Afghanistan through the Afghan Refugee Resettlement Programme. Around 20,000 refugees are expected to arrive in the UK through this scheme over the next four years, and when they arrive in the UK they are placed in hotels until permanent housing becomes available. As the fire service in Afghanistan is very different from that in the UK, we need to ensure that they are aware of how our service works and how they can prevent the risk of fire, and what to do if a fire breaks out.

We were contacted by a local hotel in Reading, as they were concerned that when conducting a fire drill, many of the refugees did not know what they needed to do to evacuate the building.

To support the refugees, our Prevention Team gathered information from the hotel, the local authority, and the Reading Refugee Support Group to create an information package for the refugees.

Our Prevention Teams held two events at a hotel in West Berkshire, with the first taking place on 17 March. This event focused on fire safety and included information about the fire service and calling 999, escape and evacuation as well as fire safety prevention. The second event is planned to cover road and water safety.

The team also worked with other fire and rescue services to develop materials that could be used elsewhere across Berkshire.

This work will help us to share important safety information which will help to prevent fires in hotels that are participating in the refugee resettlement programme.

In developing this project, the team considered the specific needs of the refugees and consulted with experts and people from the Afghan community to develop activities and information that is tailored to their specific needs.

The first event was very well attended. Over 30 adults attended a fire safety presentation that covered fire safety in the context of living in a hotel.



The Prevention Team delivered the presentation to two groups. One group of 16 men and the second group of 15 women, with two women translating into Dari and Pashto.

Outside, approximately 50 – 60 children watched a water demonstration from our crews, who were impressed by the appliance and the equipment.

When we finished the women's fire safety presentation, a male hub manager delivered the presentation to approximately 16 men.

This approach worked as the women preferred to attend the presentation separately and ask questions and discuss topics afterwards.



31

Adults attended a fire safety presentation which covered fire safety in the context of living in a hotel



50-60

Children took part in the hotel Refugee Event

### Biker Down

Motorcyclists are a highly vulnerable group of road users and although they make up a significantly low amount of motor vehicle traffic on UK roads, they have a high fatality and casualty rate.

Biker Down is a free training course aimed at motorcyclists of all ages and experiences. The course is run by most fire and rescue services in the UK and is aimed at preparing motorcyclists should the worst happen on the roads.

On 15 January, we hosted our first Thames Valley Biker Down course at Newsham Court with the Thames Valley Harley Owners Group (TVHOG). The session received some great feedback from those taking part. Mike Connolly, TVHOG Safety Officer, said: "We were extremely pleased and grateful to you for hosting our group as one of the first Biker Down sessions of 2022.

"Your team delivered an excellent training morning that was entertaining, as well as highly educational and memorable. All of our riders who attended have told me that they feel much more confident in their ability to plan and lead rides and deal with any incidents more competently. The knowledge and experience of your training team were highly evident."

The second Thames Valley Biker Down session was run on 12 February, again at Newsham Court, with the Rapid Training group. Neil Whiteman, a Biker Down Instructor and Safety Education Coordinator at RBFRRS, said: "The two sessions have been great. The feedback



and engagement during the sessions have been very positive. People who have done this course before picked up on new things and others found it useful to refresh their knowledge for the coming year when out on the roads again. We do feel proud to represent RBFRS when giving training to such a high-risk group of road users.”

In the future, the Service will continue to show our commitment to motorcycle safety by delivering more Thames Valley Biker Down courses and also providing a location for the ‘Be A Better Biker’ course, now running in Berkshire for the first time.



### Fire Cadets

Fire Cadets is a youth initiative run by firefighters, with educational support from our Prevention department. Working as a team, Fire Cadets take part in practical and theoretical fire service activities, including hose drills, breathing apparatus procedures, and fire safety awareness sessions.

The scheme also teaches young people essential life skills such as self-discipline, confidence, and leadership. The courses are held at Crowthorne, Whitley Wood,

Newbury, and Maidenhead Fire Stations. However, more stations are looking at launching Fire Cadets in the near future.

In July 2021, 28 Fire Cadets from all four stations showed off their new skills at a Graduation Ceremony held at Whitley Wood Training Centre. During the Graduation Ceremony, each unit showcased the skills they had learnt, by performing graduation drills, which involved scenarios such as vehicle and domestic ‘fires’.

Feedback from the graduating cohort was very positive, with the Cadets commenting that they really enjoyed the challenging nature of the programme despite the challenging circumstances, with every week encouraging different skills such as teamwork and fire safety skills.

The course typically runs for 36 weeks during term time, although Cadets have also learnt and participated virtually in line with COVID-19 measures.





## >> PRIORITISING HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

In our [People Strategy](#), we set out our objective to support both the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff. During 2021-2022, we progressed a number of areas dedicated to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.

### **Return to Work Fitness Tests**

For much of 2021, COVID-19 was still at the forefront of our health and wellbeing activities. Protecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of our staff continued to be of the highest priority.

We provided increased support to staff, including mental health and financial wellbeing support, as well as flexible working arrangements. However, one of the most significant developments implemented was extending return to work fitness testing.

As evidence emerged about the potential long-term effects of COVID-19, we identified the need to assess the fitness of Operational staff before they returned to duty following a COVID-19 positive test.

A return to work test with pre and post-test pulse oximetry was introduced and adapted throughout 2021. Pulse oximetry is a simple, relatively cheap and

non-invasive technique to monitor blood oxygenation. The purpose of a return to work test is to identify individuals with ongoing issues needing further support.

Allowing staff to return to work with no fitness assessment could leave them at risk of becoming unwell on duty. A return to work test ensures the safety of the individual, the colleagues who rely on their fitness and limits the delay in returning individuals to operational duties, allowing our Service to continue to provide a swift and effective response to emergencies across Berkshire.

The safety of staff was maintained despite the unprecedented pressures on crewing, and the success of return to work testing has integrated testing into business as usual, with return to work testing mainstreamed for all respiratory absences.

### **Disability Awareness Network**

Alongside implementing Return to Work fitness testing, we continued to provide mental health and wellbeing support to our staff.

Introduced in early 2021, our Disability Awareness Network is still running. The Network aims to provide support, and raise awareness for anyone who has, knows someone, or cares for someone who has a long-term health condition or disability.



Return to Work Fitness Testing is now part of business as usual for all respiratory absences



The Disability Awareness Network provided support on autism, dementia, alzheimers, dyslexia, diabetes, and low mood

The group meets monthly to discuss a wide range of disability-focused topics and provides the opportunity for staff to gain advice and support from colleagues across the Service.

Between April 2021 and March 2022, the Network covered autism, movement, dementia and Alzheimer's, dyslexia, diabetes, and sources of support. The Network has also hosted guest speakers, including a speaker from the Disability Forum and a speaker from Benenden.

### Mental Health Support

Each quarter, our Employee Assistance provider sends the Service anonymised information, including the number of calls into the 24/7 telephone helpline and the primary reason for the call. RBFRS monitors this information, and initiatives are implemented to support staff where trends are identified.

Over the last 12 months, 24 calls were made relating directly to low mood. This is the second most common reason that staff used the helpline.

In response, we provided specific advice and activities to assist staff in coping with these feelings. This included teaching



Six new Trauma Support Volunteers joined the Trauma Support Group and 10 Trauma Support sessions were hosted

staff massage techniques proven to help with low mood, a dedicated Disability Awareness Network session, and providing guidance documents at particular times of the year, such as Christmas and New Year and in line with changes in the pandemic. Staff were regularly reminded of the other support avenues that our Service offers, including its dedicated Health and Safety Team, Wellbeing Manager, Blue Light Champions, and Occupational Health.

### Trauma Support Volunteers

We also have a Trauma Support Group available to staff intended to minimise the distress that can occur after traumatic incidents.

The Trauma Support Group consists of trained staff volunteers who can provide Psychological First Aid to help individuals develop coping methods within a few days of an incident.

Six staff members recently trained to join the Trauma Support Group, giving the group 15 volunteers in total. In the last 12 months, the Trauma Support Group has delivered ten support sessions to staff in need.



## >> MODERNISING OUR SERVICE

In our [Strategic Asset Investment Framework](#), the Fire Authority has set out how we will maintain and renew our vital capital assets. This is supported by the more detailed Property Asset Management Strategy and Fleet Strategy, which provide a high level statement on the overall approach to providing property, fleet and equipment to meet the needs of the Service. Our collaboration work through the sharing of facilities is important in enabling us to provide the best possible service to the people of Royal Berkshire.

### **New Aerial Ladder Platform**

We improved our fleet with the addition of a new Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP). Standing at a maximum height of 45 meters, this impressive new addition has enhanced the Service's operational capabilities when tackling incidents in high-rise environments.

The new aerial appliance offers increased outreach at incidents, allowing the vehicle to reach incidents in taller buildings. Importantly, it enables extra horizontal reach, which will allow firefighters to access more difficult to reach areas.

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer, said: "To maintain a modern fire and rescue service, it is important that we provide fit-for-purpose, 21st-century operational equipment to support our firefighters in the delivery of excellent services to the communities we serve.

"This gives our residents the reassurance and confidence that we have the equipment and professional skill to respond quickly and highly effectively."

The new Aerial Ladder Platform is a Bronto Skylift 45XR that was built by Angloco on a Volvo chassis. It forms part of a programme to update the Service's fleet with state-of-the-art vehicles, incorporating the latest technology.



The new appliance was also accompanied by a new rangefinder and lightning detector. These tools will help keep crews safe and provide additional support during operations in adverse or hazardous conditions.

The deployment of this new vehicle was made possible thanks to investments made by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority under its Strategic Asset Investment Framework.

### **New Appliances**

A further four new fire engines were deployed at Bracknell, Ascot and, Wokingham Road Fire Stations and the vehicle at Langley Fire Station was replaced.



The new appliances formed a part of a joint procurement process project between RBFRS, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes and, Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Services.

The addition of these four new fire engines means that all wholetime fire stations in Berkshire now have a Volvo fire engine to serve their local communities.

As previously, the fire engines were purchased as part of the Fire Authority's Strategic Asset Investment Framework, which sets out how the Authority will maintain and renew the vital capital assets necessary to support the services delivered by RBFRS.

Councillor Colin Dudley, Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, said: "One of the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments is to ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies. As part of our Strategic Asset Investment Framework, we continue to invest in vital assets that benefit the community. The Fire Authority

has prioritised investing in frontline fire appliances, recognising the importance of providing fit for purpose equipment to support the services provided by a modern fire and rescue service to the communities of Royal Berkshire."

The Volvo fire engine previously based at Langley Fire Station has also been replaced and the previous vehicle is now in use at Newsham Court for driver training and firefighter development.

The deployment of the appliance at Newsham Court provides improved training opportunities for firefighters whilst also offering immediate resilience in the event of a large-scale incident.



*To maintain a modern fire and rescue service, it is important that we provide fit-for-purpose, 21st century operational equipment to support our firefighters in the delivery excellent services to the communities we serve.*



**Wayne Bowcock Chief Fire Officer**

**45  
Meters**

Maximum height of the new  
Aerial Ladder Platform



### Breathing Apparatus Project

Our Service, Oxfordshire, and Buckinghamshire have been collaborating on a joint procurement process to purchase the same breathing apparatus (BA) set along with all associated equipment and train staff in their use. Through this project it is hoped that our Services will maximise the efficient mobilisation of resources and improve the way we work together at the incident ground.

Following a robust procurement process, including practical trials in July, Interspiro Ltd was selected to provide Breathing Apparatus (BA) equipment for fire and rescue services in the Thames Valley.

Interspiro was one of three suppliers who provided equipment for the trial last summer – which was carried out by three candidates from all of the Thames Valley fire and rescue services.

The selected candidates undertook a training day at Marlow Fire Station. The trials were supported by Training Instructors from each Service who devised and facilitated the scenarios used to test the equipment. This was also overseen by other members of the project team, including Fire Brigade Union (FBU) representation.

During the trials, feedback from the candidates was fed back to Interspiro to see if further improvements could be made. Following the procurement process, our crews are being trained and will begin using the new equipment operationally from November 2022.

The rollout process has seen the introduction of the Incurve-E SCBA BA set, utilising a 300-bar cylinder with telemetry-enabled entry control boards (ECBs) to monitor wearer progress and welfare.

A full training and rollout programme is currently in process and is being delivered by a tri-service training team.

The completion of this project will mean that all BA wearers across the Thames Valley will be using the same equipment to be committed through the same ECBs at cross-border incidents.

This will further enable all benefits that come with improved Operational Alignment including firefighter safety.

# 3

## Suppliers

Were chosen to take part in the procurement process for the Breathing Apparatus Project at Marlow Fire Station

# 9

## Candidates

Partook in the procurement process with three representing each of the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services



### **Celebrating the Official Opening of Crowthorne Community Fire Station**

Our Service celebrated the official opening of Crowthorne Community Fire Station on Friday, 15 October 2021.

Crowthorne Community Fire Station is our second tri-service community fire station. As such, it offers a shared location for our Service, Thames Valley Police, and South Central Ambulance Service.

Construction began in May 2019 and took 11 months to complete. During the build, Crowthorne's on-call firefighters were able to respond from a base at Wellington College, before beginning to respond operationally from the new Community Fire Station in May 2020.

Councillor Angus Ross, the Lead Member for Strategic Assets, said: "Our thanks go to all involved for working tirelessly, under very difficult circumstances to complete this essential operational base for the three blue light services - Fire, Police, and Ambulance. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and under very difficult circumstances, I am very

pleased to say that the Station has been completed on time and on budget.

"The rebuild of Crowthorne Community Fire Station is part of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's plans to modernise the fire and rescue service's buildings over the next 15 years, providing suitable, fit for purpose, community-based fire stations across the County of Berkshire."

The official opening provided the opportunity for a number of partners and dignitaries to speak to Crowthorne's on-call firefighters and take a tour of the Community Fire Station.

Councillor Colin Dudley, Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, officially opened the station as part of the ceremony. Speaking of the event, he said: "I was delighted to officially open Crowthorne Community Fire Station.

"While the firefighters began responding from the new station in May 2020, the official opening had been delayed due to the pandemic, so we are delighted that we have now been able to officially open the station".

**11**  
**Months**  
Construction time of Crowthorne Community Fire Station, which was ahead of schedule



## Theale Community Fire Station Now Responding to Emergencies

Since October 2021, firefighters have been serving the community from Theale Community Fire Station, after successfully relocating from Dee Road Fire Station in Tilehurst.

The relocation has been made possible thanks to a team effort involving staff from across the Service, led by the Capital Projects Team, who have worked effectively with the contractors on site. Contractors Knights Brown began the build in January 2020.

This new station supports our ongoing commitment to working collaboratively with our emergency service partners, offering a shared location for our Service Thames Valley Police, and South Central Ambulance Service.

As well as improvements for all Services in the efficient use of public funds, the relationships and opportunities of working more closely together are expected to support greater collective effectiveness for the services we provide to the public.

Councillor Colin Dudley, Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, said: "Theale Community Fire Station is a fantastic investment that the local community will be proud of.

"The construction of this community fire station will help to deliver on our strategic commitment to ensure that our fire stations, people, and resources are placed firmly at the heart of the local communities they are serving.



"I am sure that the new station will be a facility that the community will be proud of for many years to come."

We intend to welcome local residents to see the new facility, with the official opening ceremony planned to take place in summer 2022.



*Theale Community Fire Station is a fantastic investment that the local community will be proud of.*

*The construction of this community fire station will help to deliver on our strategic commitment to ensure that our fire stations, people and resources are placed firmly at the heart of local communities they are serving.*



**Councillor Colin Dudley, Chairman,  
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**



## >> FIREFIGHTER APPRENTICES



For the first time, we recruited Apprentices into the crucial firefighter role. As per previous firefighter recruitment, anyone, from any background or walk of life could apply to be a Firefighter Apprentice, but this time they had to be new to the role.

We received 418 completed applications. After a long and challenging recruitment process, the class of 18 new Apprentices was selected to begin training towards becoming wholetime firefighters. The Service commissioned an external provider, the Fire Service College (Capita), to train and develop this new group of staff. Capita is approved to deliver the Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship through the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP).

The course enabled the Apprentices to get to know each other, form friendships, and further build on the foundations of teamwork, commitment, loyalty, integrity, and professionalism, aligned to our Behavioural Competency Framework.

The Apprentices were thoroughly tested with a range of practical and theoretical training, core skills, breathing apparatus,

fire behaviour, water rescue, and road traffic collision training.

Upon completion of the course, the Apprentices returned to our Training Centre for a further five weeks with Instructors to help integrate them into our Service's ways of working. This included specific operational training on our equipment, safeguarding training, organisational awareness training, and a host of realistic scenarios to put what they had learnt into practice in a safe environment.

The Apprentices have now taken up their station placements across the county. Their development will continue with the support of their line manager, with an apprenticeship talent coach, supported by the Service. It is anticipated the Apprenticeships will be completed within 24 months from the start date.

418

Applications to be an  
Apprentice Firefighter



## >> EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

The Fire and Rescue Sector is characterised by a disproportionately low number of women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Our Service's EDI initiatives aim to help remedy this whilst also helping to connect the Service to the many diverse communities of Berkshire. This work also has also allowed the Service to tailor itself to the different needs of Berkshire's communities, whilst creating a workplace where everyone feels valued and able to be themselves. Consequently, the Service recognise that being an open and inclusive Service will ultimately make it more effective.

### **New EDI Objectives**

In line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in the Equality Act 2010, we encouraged as many people as possible to have their say on our four revised EDI Objectives.

The first objective was to increase the diversity of staff at all levels, recognising the value of a diverse workforce. The second was leadership and corporate commitment to support our organisational leaders to understand their role in tackling inequalities and demonstrate inclusive behaviours.

The third objective was focused on improving service delivery by creating strong links with different communities across Berkshire. The final objective emphasised growing an inclusive culture of equality and diversity in the Service.

Based on the results of the consultation, the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority unanimously agreed to approve all four EDI objectives that will be in place for the next four years.

### **Equality Impact Statements**

In light of various developments in this area nationally, including the work of the

National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC), a review of RBFRS' overall approach to Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) was conducted. Following this, the Service identified a need to update and revise its EIA process.

A review of completed EIAs found that the existing approach to EIAs was inconsistent and lacked clear understanding across RBFRS. As a result, EIAs were completed inconsistently or often retrospectively and therefore failed to inform the Service's work as effectively as possible.

Following this review of EIAs and external developments such as the work of the NFCC, several steps to improve this process were identified. These included a review and update of the EIA form template and the production of a comprehensive guidance document to assist staff in completing the template.

Additionally, to ensure that EIAs are completed more proactively and consistently across the Service, changes to other document templates were made to reiterate the requirement for an EIA where relevant and to ensure they became embedded in these processes.



These changes will impact the design and delivery of the Service’s work for the benefit of all staff and members of our community. Therefore, staff will be better able to identify and reduce any negative or disproportionate impacts resulting from work conducted by the Service. Our Service’s activities will now also be tailored to the impacted groups.

**Armed Force’s Veterans’ Hubs**

We were happy to hold the first in-person Armed Forces Veterans’ Hub at Crowthorne Community Fire Station on Wednesday, 17 November. The Armed Forces Veterans’ Hub initiative was launched in 2020 to connect veterans and support organisations.

Che Scott, Station Manager, said: “The Veterans’ Hub Initiative is a way we can further support the armed forces community in Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. How we do that is by inviting them into our fire stations, making sure that our fire stations remain at the heart of our community, and ensure that we provide a safe space for them to get some help and advice.”

We held a second in-person Armed Forces Veterans’ Hub at Whitley Wood Fire Station at the end of March 2022.

**Pride**

This year we once again attended Reading Pride, reaffirming our commitment to being open and welcoming to all members of the Berkshire community. The event was also an opportunity to promote careers and important safety advice. The Service aims is to ensure that everyone feels safe to access its services, enabling us to better protect our County.

**Positive Action Events**

Since January 2022, several events targeting under-represented groups within the Service have been planned to encourage a wider range of people within the Berkshire community to consider a career as a firefighter.

The ‘Have a Go’ events are opportunities for people to try some of the entry tests for new firefighters at one of our stations. Having been disrupted by the pandemic, the ‘Have a Go’ events resumed with the first taking place at the end of March. All three of these events specifically targeted under-represented ethnic minority groups and women and were well attended by groups ranging between 10 and 20 in size.





### Disability Confident Leader

We achieved Level Three 'Leader' status in the Disability Confident Scheme. In becoming a Disability Confident Leader, the Service joined approximately 360 other organisations that have achieved the highest level available in the government scheme.

This achievement is a testament to the work of colleagues across all areas of the Service to ensure that the organisation is accessible for all colleagues and members of the community we serve. Our Service became a member of the Disability Confident scheme in 2018 before becoming a Disability Confident Employer, the second level of the scheme, in 2019.

### Change 100

The Change100 programme was developed by Leonard Cheshire and 2022 marks the fifth year of our Service's participation.

This year, our Service is planning on hosting five more interns across a wide range of roles. The Programme provides an opportunity for them to develop new skills and build confidence. All the while, the Service gains increased organisational diversity awareness and increases its capacity to deliver services.

### Stonewall Diversity Champion

As a Stonewall diversity champion, we have access to a range of services and resources. This includes webinars and conference events, as well as a suite of resources and guidance aimed at helping the Service to make its workspaces as inclusive as possible.



*As a Service, we are committed to engaging with young people in our communities and expanding career pathways into the fire and rescue service.*



### Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer

Together with Stonewall, the Service is building on its commitments to LGBTQ+ inclusion, including work with Reading Pride and a Trans Equality Policy.

**Inclusive Employers:** Inclusive Employers is a leading membership organisation for employers who are committed to prioritising inclusion and creating truly inclusive workplaces. As a member, we have access to a range of resources and services to support the work of the Service and all members of staff can benefit from these opportunities.

### Chairman's Internship Scheme

The Chairman's Internship Scheme is aimed at 16-18-year-old residents of Berkshire who are from ethnic backgrounds that are currently under-represented within the Service

Several of our teams and departments have volunteered to host the first intake of interns, offering a total of ten placements. Further work is ongoing to finalise the activities the interns will take part throughout summer.

Speaking of the scheme, Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer, said: "This scheme is an exciting opportunity. It offers a paid



internship and will give these students a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, develop new skills and enhance their future education and career prospects in a supportive work environment.

“As a Service, we are committed to engaging with young people in our communities and expanding career pathways into the fire and rescue service.”

As part of the work to develop the scheme, the Project Team held engagement sessions with schools and community groups across Berkshire. Their feedback has so far been used to help finalise the design and shape of the internship programme.

### **Work with the Five Shires**

The Five Shires Collaboration is a group that was set up in 2020 by the Chief Fire Officers (CFOs) of Five Services.

Our Service, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Services all joined together to create the Five Shires Group.

The Group exists to look at the wider role the Fire and Rescue Sector can have in addressing inequalities across our communities. Furthermore, the Group works to pool resources to further maximise the effectiveness of the combined EDI efforts of all five Services.

Crucially, the group is also currently beginning to look at how we compare our equality data and the measures we could develop to understand progress.

### **In Review**

The expansion of our EDI programmes has greatly enhanced the Service’s capacity to engage with people within and beyond the Organisation. Internally, membership within the Service of its EDI forum has increased, crews actively participate in EDI events, and interns now contribute to the delivery of our Services countywide. Looking ahead, the Service will continue to better measure the results.

10  
Roles

Across the Service are available to interns as part of the inaugural Chairman’s Internship Scheme in summer 2022

3

‘Have a Go’

Events took place in spring 2022 to encourage people from under-represented groups to become firefighters

5

Interns

Will join Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service this year as part of the Change 100 Programme



## >> VALUING AND DEVELOPING OUR PEOPLE

In our [People Strategy](#), we set out how we will support staff to become the best public servants they can be, creating a workforce that can deliver an efficient and effective service on behalf of the Fire Authority, to manage all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the people of Berkshire.

Our Service is committed to valuing every employee as a unique individual. We want to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people, regardless of their background, and make best use of their talents to deliver effective services to our communities.

This year our Service aligned to the Core Code of Ethics, developed in partnership with the National Fire Chiefs Council, Local Government Association, and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, to support a consistent approach to ethics, including behaviours, by Fire and Rescue Services in England.

Every staff member is expected to behave in a professional manner and offer the highest standards of public service. Within our Service we have two key documents that outline the behaviours expected of our employees – the Employee Code of Conduct and the Behavioural Competency Framework. Both of these documents have been recently reviewed in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council Core Code of Ethics.

The Employee Code of Conduct forms part of every employee's contract of employment and provides a framework for behaviour, decisions and actions as an employee. It aims to help every member of our Service understand how to conduct



themselves in interactions with the public and towards each other.

The Behavioural Competency Framework (BCF) describes how the Employee Code of Conduct translates into expected behaviour. It defines how as a team we can work together, towards One Team, to ensure we deliver an outstanding service to the communities we serve. It makes clear everyone's responsibility to understand the organisations goals and to identify positive change and continual improvement.

We have distributed copies of the Employee Code of Conduct and the BCF to all staff via their line managers. This will give all staff easy access to both documents and the ability to use them as a quick reference guide.



### **Celebration Event**

On Saturday 2 October 2021 we held a Summer Celebration event at Welford Park, near Newbury, which celebrated the outstanding achievements of staff and volunteers, particularly in responding during the preceding challenging 18-month period. It was also an opportunity to recognise those who had taken on additional responsibilities during the pandemic and to formally welcome a group of wholtime firefighters, who officially graduated in March 2020 and went straight to work on fire stations serving their communities.

During the pandemic, our Service supported with the following – driving ambulances for South Central Ambulance Service, visiting vulnerable residents in Slough, delivering of over six-million pieces of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), setting up the mass vaccination centre at the Madjeski Stadium in Reading, establishment of Slough Lateral Flow Testing Sites and surge testing in Sandhurst for variants of concern.

In addition, due to COVID-19 restrictions at the time, we held a Virtual Awards Ceremony on the evening of 18 May 2021 which was available to view on YouTube and provided an opportunity to pause and reflect on the outstanding and exceptional acts of courage and excellence shown by staff. Winners of 13 award categories were announced, alongside recognising those that have dedicated 20 years to serving the public.

### **Development Opportunities**

Our Service seeks to continually develop every member of staff through the provision of Core Skills courses, a variety of training packages available via our Learning Management System and we develop leadership at all levels.

### **Staff Engagement Programme**

During 2021, we embarked on an ambitious Staff Engagement Programme. In September, we started engagement visits across the Service, with the aim of finding about more on some areas highlighted in the 2019 staff survey. We managed to speak directly to over 200 staff in a six-month period.

We wanted to find out what's working well and what could be working better. With multiple sessions being run with staff across stations, on-call, Thames Valley Fire Control Service, middle managers and professional services staff, both in person and virtually, we were able to collect some really valuable and honest feedback from members of staff. Following the conclusion of these sessions, we collated the feedback into themes.

To capture feedback from across the Service, a staff engagement survey was also distributed. 52% of the service responded to a staff survey which we ran from 17 January – 22 February 2022.

The results from both of these activities will be reviewed and used to inform the refresh of our three people-centred plans - the People Strategy, the Consultation Strategy and the Communications and Engagement Strategy.



## » CORPORATE MEASURES

Here is a summary of our Corporate Measures and how we have performed this year.

In addition, we publish our [Response Standard and key performance measures](#) on our website every month.

Measure	2021/2022 Target	2021/2022 Actual
Number of fire deaths in accidental dwelling fires	0	3
Number of fire casualties in accidental dwelling fires	20	28
Percentage of safeguarding referrals made to local authorities within 24 hours	100%	100%
The number of deliberate primary fires	129	129
The number of deliberate secondary fires	261	199
<b>Prevention</b>		
Number of Safe and Well visits (S&W's) delivered to those with individual characteristics making them at higher risk of death in the event of an accidental dwelling fire	5,700	5,887
Number of Safe and Well visits delivered to those who live in households with demographic characteristics associated with higher risk of injury in accidental dwelling fires	1,800	847
Percentage of home safety referrals, where there has been a threat or incidence of arson, completed within 48 hours	100%	100%
<b>Protection</b>		
Total Number of Full Fire Safety Audits carried out	1,100	947
Percentage of Full Fire Safety Audits with a 'Broadly Compliant' result	60%	57.2%
Percentage success rate when cases go to court	80%	100%
Percentage of statutory fire safety consultations completed within the required timeframes	95%	96.7%



Measure	2020/2021 Target	2020/2021 Actual
<b>Response</b>		
Number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received	N/A	3,041
Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm calls where RBFRS did not attend	N/A	23.5%
Percentage of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes from time the emergency call was answered	75%	77.2%
Percentage of full shifts where there is adequate crewing on all 'wholetime' frontline fire engines	100%	87%
Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances	60%	43.6%
<b>Customer Feedback</b>		
Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the overall service	100%	100%
Percentage of commercial respondents satisfied with the overall service	95%	100%
Percentage of respondents satisfied with the services with regards to Fire Safety Audits	100%	98.7%
Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the service regards their safe and well visit	100%	99.2%
Number of complaints received	Monitor	27
Number of compliments received	Monitor	14
<b>Human Resources and Learning and Development</b>		
Percentage of working time lost to sickness, across all staff groups	4%	5.8%
Percentage of eligible operational staff successfully completing fitness test	100%	98.6%
Percentage of eligible staff with Personal Development Appraisals	100%	98.7%
Percentage of eligible operational staff in qualification	100%	97%
Number of formal grievances	N/A	7



Measure	2020/2021 Target	2020/2021 Actual
<b>Health and Safety</b>		
Number of RIDDOR accidents	4	4
<b>Finance and Procurement</b>		
Percentage of spend subject to competition	85%	91.0%
Compliant spend as a % of overall spend	100%	100%
<b>Information Rights</b>		
Number of Information Commissioner assessments finding that the Service has breached Information Rights Legislation (Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations).	0	0

\*\*RIDDOR is the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. Under RIDDOR we have a duty to report certain events, those events being accidents that led to a person being unfit for their normal work for more than 7 days, or 'specified injuries' which are more serious types of injuries. These include injuries such as broken bones, crush injuries and amputations.



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## ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>28 JULY 2022</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021-22 QUARTER FOUR (JANUARY – MARCH 2022)</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>BECCA CHAPMAN, DATA, PERFORMANCE AND RISK MANAGER</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TO NOTE</b>

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To provide Audit & Governance Committee with an overview of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) fourth quarter (January – March 2022) performance for the 2021/22 financial year.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Audit & Governance Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the performance against Service Provision and Corporate Health measures for the targets agreed by the Fire Authority for 2021/22;
- 2.2 **NOTE** the progress made on the four priority programmes;
- 2.3 **NOTE** the position of corporate risk and
- 2.4 **DISCUSS** and **AGREE** any further actions, if appropriate.

### 3. REPORT

- 3.1 The quarterly performance report supports the Performance Management Framework which provides structure and governance that will enable RBFRS to measure, monitor and manage outputs and outcomes in a timely manner, allowing the organisation to respond and make informed decisions to ensure that statutory obligations and the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments are successfully delivered.

## Agenda Item 10

- 3.2 Following data capture, review and analysis, evidence is reviewed by the Strategic Performance Board (SPB) whose purpose is to lead, support and monitor the effective delivery of the Strategic Objectives by monitoring and reviewing performance across the four Quadrants.
- 3.3 Informed by these processes, key data and highlights have been extracted and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and are presented in this report for scrutiny at the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 3.4 The attached report provides an overview of performance for the fourth quarter (January – March 2022) performance for the 2021/22 financial year. It reports performance in four key areas:
- 3.5 Quadrant one - Service Provision - This section presents data and information which will allow members to monitor how RBFRS are doing at delivering its statutory obligations and any internal services provided between teams, departments and functions.
- 3.6 Quadrant two - Corporate Health - This section brings together all data, information and measures from across the organisation, which will allow members to monitor how RBFRS are managing key resources, e.g. People and Finance.
- 3.7 Quadrant three - Priority Programmes (IRMP, People Strategy, Strategic Asset Investment Framework and the HRRB Project) - This section will allow members to monitor progress of work designed to deliver a defined outcome which is different to or improves on current working practices, policies and procedures in support of delivering against the strategic commitments and corporate plan 2019-23.
- 3.8 Quadrant four - Corporate Risk - This section groups provides an assessment of corporate risks that may impact on service delivery. This section will also include data and information from audit monitoring and an update on the HMICFRS Action Plan.

### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 Commitment 1 – We will provide education and advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.
- 4.2 Commitment 2 – We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies
- 4.3 Commitment 3 - We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.
- 4.4 Commitment 4 – We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.
- 4.5 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.
- 4.6 Commitment 6 – We will work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report provides RBFA financial information under the corporate health quadrant.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 This report provides RBFRS equality and diversity information under the corporate health quadrant.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 This report provides RBFRS corporate risk information under the risk quadrant.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

- 9.1 This report provides information on RBFRS performance measures and targets, as such there are no identified areas for collaboration.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 The Chief Fire Officer was consulted during preparation of this report.  
10.2 The Head of Finance and Procurement was consulted on the content of this report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Annual Plan 2021/22.

**12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 Appendix A.

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

- 13.1 Sam Faulknall-Mills  
Performance & Planning Officer  
07786 135 706  
13.2 Becca Chapman  
Data, Performance and Risk Manager  
07585 991629

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# Quarterly Performance Report

Q4 2021-2022 January - March





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## Contact Us

### Accessibility

If you require any of the information contained within this document in a more accessible format, [please contact us](#). Please advise us which information you would like to access and provide your name and email address.

### In an emergency

In an emergency, dial 999 and ask for the fire service.

If you are inside a building when a fire starts, remember to get out, stay out and call 999. Never try and put out a fire unless you have received sufficient training.

### Contacting us when it's not an emergency

 Visit our website: [rbfrs.co.uk](http://rbfrs.co.uk)

 Email us at: [performance@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:performance@rbfrs.co.uk)

 Call us on: 0118 945 2888

 Write to us at: Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 7SD



## Introduction

This is the Quarter Four Performance Report, summarising our progress across the Service.

In our Annual Plan for 2021/22, we set 10 Annual Objectives for the year, which can be found at Appendix B. The Objectives are delivered through our Service Plans and Local Safety Plans and our projects and programmes. Ongoing analysis of performance data and information supports decision-making across the organisation. We monitor performance across four quadrants:

**Service Provision:** Monitoring the delivery of our statutory obligations and the services provided by RBFRS.

**Corporate Health:** Monitoring how key resources are managed, which includes measures relating to staff, finance and health and safety.

**Priority Programmes:** Progress against our key programme activity (our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), People Strategy, Strategic Asset Investment Framework and Built Environment Programme).

**Risk:** Monitoring corporate risk management and other assurance activity including internal audit and our HMICFRS Action Plan.

The Strategic Performance Board monitors performance quarterly, before key data and analysis is provided in this report for the Audit and Governance Committee to scrutinise.



## Key

### Performance Measures

	Target exceeded by more than 10%
	Target met or exceeded by up to 10%
	Target missed by up to 10%
	Target missed by more than 10%
	NA or data accuracy issues affect confidence in reporting
↑	Improvement in performance
↔	Maintenance of performance
↓	Decline in performance

### Priority Programme Project Status

C	Project complete
G	Project on Track
A	There are issues with the project but these are being managed
R	Issues are having an impact on delivery
NS	Project not yet due to start

### Classification of Risk Scores and Risk Movement

20 - 25	Outside assumed Risk Appetite and requires mitigation to proceed
19	Inside Risk Appetite only because of extremely low probability. Mitigate if necessary and possible, accept only if no further action can be justified
17 & 18	Inside Risk Appetite. Mitigate further if cost effective to do so - discuss with a Director
7-16	Inside Risk Appetite. Mitigate further if cost effective to do so
1-6	Inside Risk Appetite and unlikely to need further mitigation
↑	Risk increasing
↔	No risk movement
↓	Risk decreasing



## Q4 Summary

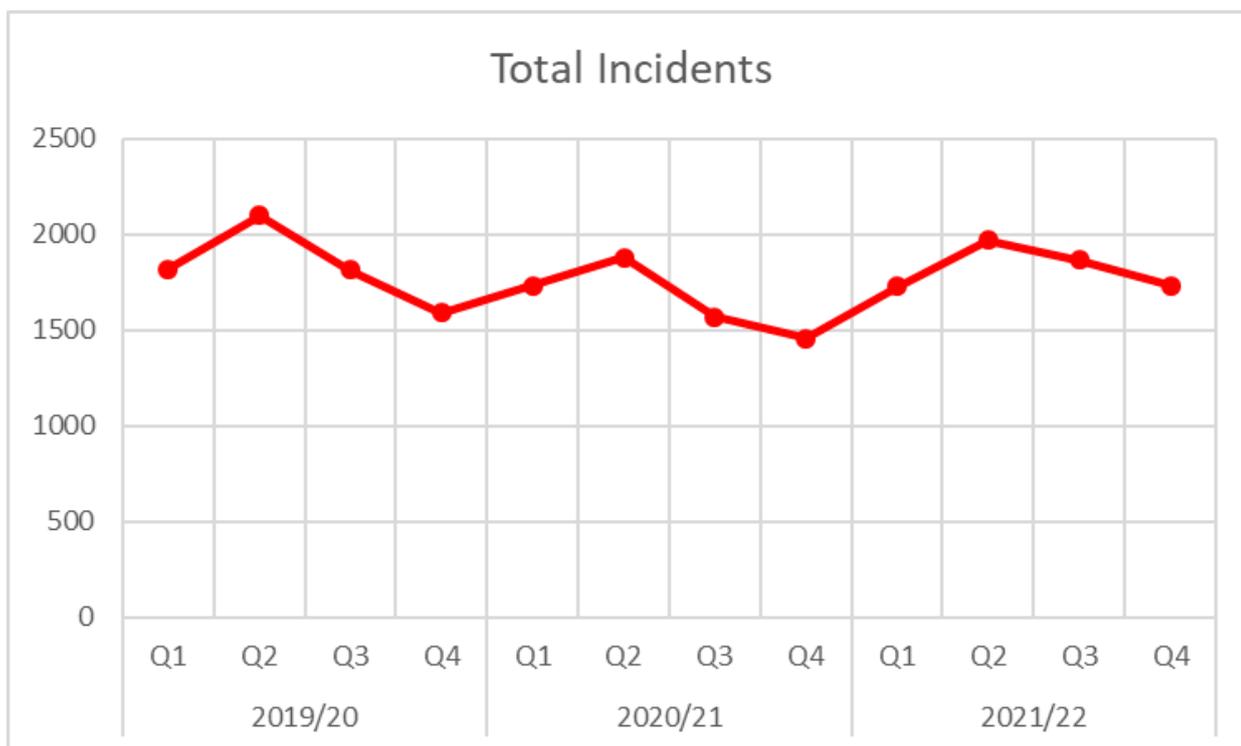




## Incident Trends

The table below illustrates the number of emergency incidents we responded to in Quarter 4 2021/22 in comparison with previous years. This data is also presented in a graph.

Total Incidents				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2019/20	1821	2101	1816	1592
2020/21	1732	1880	1571	1459
2021/22	1728	1972	1867	1733



The number of incidents in 2020/21 fell due to the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst 2019/20 was mostly unaffected by the pandemic and is included in the tables in this report to aid comparisons. The number of incidents in 2021/22 returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The return to pre-COVID-19 activity in our communities continues to be reflected in incident trends, with a rise in primary fires in industrial and commercial premises associated with increased on-site working.

The number of secondary fires this quarter continues at normal expected levels after very low numbers in summer 2021, which was related to a wetter summer across the South East of England.

The number of Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) calls received dropped in this quarter, as did the number of False Alarms attended. There are two main drivers of this trend, the first is explained by the increase in people returning to the workplace and available to deal with alarms. The second is changes to our AFA policy, which although went live in Q1 2022/23, engagement sessions were



held with control in Q4 2021/22 that changed the perception of False Alarms. Evidence of this is in the increase in % of AFAs not attended in Q4, which is a record for the past 3 years.

Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) have increased compared to 2020/21, as the effects of Covid-19 on economic activity began ease, but have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. Similarly, malicious calls have increased compared to 2020/21 but these have now returned to pre-pandemic levels.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic we have focussed on protecting core service delivery, the wellbeing of our staff, and support for our partners. Our Annual Plan 2021/22 recognises the continued challenges we face and in some of our key areas of service, we adapted our delivery targets to reflect the expected impact COVID-19 restrictions would have on our level of delivery.



## Quadrant One – Service Provision

This Quadrant scrutinises the service we provide to the public. Performance is monitored across Prevention, Protection and Response, using a set of performance measures, which can be found at Appendix C.

There has unfortunately been an increase in the number of non-fatal fire casualties in accidental dwelling fires in Q4, with the total annual figures higher than the two previous years. However, 2021/22 has been slightly below the five year average. A decision was taken to focus Safe & Well Visits based on “risk to individuals” and increase the numbers of vulnerable people referred by partner agencies so that we can target those most at risk. It is our expectation that this will enable us to further reduce both fire fatalities and non-fatal fire casualties moving forward.

The majority of AFAs attended continue to be Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS). There was a decrease in AFA calls received in Q4, which is due to the increase in people returning to the workplace and available to deal with alarms as well as changes to our AFA policy, as discussed further on Page 7. In line with our new UwFS Policy and guidance issued at the start of Q3, response crews are working with the Responsible Person (RP) at each incident to identify the cause of the alarm and prevent future false alarms. In addition, the Protection Teams will be working through records of UwFS and writing to RPs where trigger points have been reached. Where persistent UwFS are received, Hub Managers will consider further reasonable measures to avoid repetition.

Despite ongoing challenges in relation to wholetime appliance availability, we continued to see a high percentage of emergency incidents attended within our response standard of ten minutes. This is a response standard performance improvement from the last Quarter and when compared to this time last year. This Quarter we have attended 76.3% of incidents within ten minutes, which continues to exceed our target of 75%. We have succeeded in exceeding our response standard target each quarter in 2021/22.

Both On-Call and Whole-time appliance availability also remained a pressure during the quarter, although both saw partial recovery in Q4. A new Response Resourcing Group has been established to scrutinise the causes of the availability challenge closely to find solutions. Causes identified include courses needing to be delivered to maintain core skills following the cessation of courses during the pandemic and a higher than anticipated level of staff sickness. An additional transferee course has been agreed to bolster staff numbers with a further apprentice / recruit course also in planning. On-Call recruitment is ongoing and has been successful over the period, with six additional on-call recruits having undertaken their initial training during Q4. An additional six On-Call recruits begin their initial training in Q1 of 2022. Whilst this is positive, it is unlikely to yield significant improvements in availability for several months due to recruits having to complete the retained development pathway before impacting appliance availability

### Ukraine Donation

On Tuesday 1 March 2022, RBFRS was contacted through the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) following a request from the Home Office to support the humanitarian effort in Ukraine. The request focused on scoping out the potential to provide firefighting vehicles and equipment that would assist the Ukrainian fire and rescue service. The request was made to all UK fire and rescue services.



The NFCC, with the support of the charity Fire Aid, have managed to send three convoys of fire fighting vehicles and equipment to date. Support from multiple UK fire and rescue services has meant donations from across the fire sector have been successfully received in Ukraine, with many FRS personnel volunteering to drive across Europe as part of the convoys.

As a result of RBFRS' main front line appliance replacement programme, 4 vehicles that were going to be sold were available to be donated.

The ancillary equipment donated included lengths of hose, used petrol generators and some personal protective equipment not required by RBFRS, all of which had a nominal residual or resale value.



### **Rowe Court Fire - working in partnership following a devastating fire**

Our teams worked closely with Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service, and Reading Borough Council in responding to a devastating fire at a block of flats in Rowe Court, Reading.

In the early hours of Wednesday, 15 December 2021, our teams responded to this fire in the four-storey building, arriving within 8 minutes of receiving the 999 call. Upon arrival, they faced a challenging situation. Their priority was to locate casualties inside the building to evacuate them safely and ensure they received prompt treatment from our partners at South Central Ambulance Service while also working to extinguish the fire. During this incident, our firefighters were able to rescue one of the residents from the building using a ladder, and emergency call handlers also led a resident safely out of the property by providing fire survival guidance. However, despite their efforts on the scene, we know that two people, Richard Burgess and Neil Morris, tragically lost their lives.

At the height of the fire, there were around 50 firefighters at the scene from stations across Berkshire and Oxfordshire, supported by Officers and specialist equipment, including our Aerial Ladder Platform and the Urban Search and Rescue Team from Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue



Service. The fire caused extensive damage to the structure of the building, meaning recovery efforts had to be delayed until scaffolding installed could ensure the safety of staff onsite. In the meantime, our staff went to offer Safe and Well Visits in the nearby area to provide safety advice to local residents and regularly provide information.

It was vital that throughout the incident, we shared updates promptly, and the media reporting was accurate. We set up a dedicated website page with a rolling feed of information, updates were posted on partner agencies' social media channels, interviews were provided to local media, and a joint press briefing was set up on the first day of the incident. These steps helped warn and inform our communities of the incident and reassured them about what was being done to keep them safe.

With court proceedings ongoing concerning this incident, our thoughts continue to be with those affected by this tragic fire. We recognise that this incident is very distressing, especially for the family and friends of those that lost their lives. Following the incident, the Service offered all staff support through its dedicated Employee Assistance Programme, through which they continue to be supported.



<b>QUADRANT ONE – SERVICE PROVISION</b>		<b>DATA SUMMARY</b>			
<b>Overall Measures</b>					
<b>1. Number of Fire Deaths in Accidental Dwelling Fires</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 0</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	1	0	1	1	3
Previous Year (20/21)	0	0	0	0	0
Target	0	0	0	0	0
2021/22 Actual	1	0	0	2	3↓
<b>2. Number of non-fatal fire casualties in accidental dwelling fires</b>					
					<b>2021/22 Target: 20 max</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	2	3	8	2	15
Previous Year (20/21)	2	10	5	7	24
Target	5	5	5	5	20
2021/22 Actual	10	11	0	7	28↓
<b>3. Number of deliberate Primary Fires</b>					
					<b>2021/22 Target: Reduce</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	50	44	36	35	165
Previous Year (20/21)	36	28	40	26	130
Target (Max)	35	27	39	25	129
2021/22 Actual	30	27	37	35	129↑
<b>4. Number of deliberate Secondary Fires</b>					
					<b>2021/22 Target: Reduce</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	84	110	40	35	269
Previous Year (20/21)	85	101	41	38	265
Target (max)	84	100	40	37	261
2021/22 Actual	76	35	38	50	199↑
<b>Prevention Measures</b>					
<b>5. Number of Safe &amp; Well visits delivered to those with individual characteristics making them at higher risk of death in the event of an accidental dwelling fire</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 5,700 (COVID-19 impacted measure)</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	2288	1800	2070	1352	7510
Previous Year (20/21)	302	542	581	490	1915
Target	450	1750	1750	1750	5700
2021/22 Actual	1143	1453	1802	1489	5887↑
<b>6. Number of Safe &amp; Well visits delivered to those who live in households with demographic characteristics associated with higher risk of injury in accidental dwelling fires</b>					
					<b>2021/22 Target: 1880 (COVID-19 impacted measure)</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	416	702	685	704	2507
Previous Year (20/21)	14	18	0	2	34
Target	5	625	625	625	1880
2021/22 Actual	32	151	410	254	847↑



7. Percentage of Safe and Well referrals, where there has been a threat or incidence of arson, completed within 48 hours <span style="float: right;">2021/22 Target: 100%</span>					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	75.0%	100.0%	94.7%	75.0%	87.5%
Previous Year (20/21)	100%	100%	97.20%	100%	99.1%
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2021/22 Actual	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%↑
<b>Protection Measures</b>					
8. Total number of Full Fire Safety Audits carried out in premises in Berkshire <span style="float: right;">2021/22 Target: 1100</span>					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	470	319	321	283	1393
Previous Year (20/21)	32	158	141	66	397
Target	50	350	350	350	1100
2021/22 Actual	235	230	256	226	947↑
9. Percentage of Full Fire Safety Audits with a 'Broadly Compliant' result <span style="float: right;">2021/22 Target: 60% max</span>					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	67.9%	61.8%	55.8%	64.3%	63.0%
Previous Year (20/21)	40.6%	55.7%	39.7%	62.1%	49.9%
Target (max)	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
2021/22 Actual	56.2%	57.4%	63.3%	51.3%	57.2%↓
10. Percentage success when cases go to court <span style="float: right;">2021/22 Target: 80%</span>					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	0 cases	0 cases	100% (2 cases)	0 cases	100% (2 cases)
Previous Year (20/21)	0 cases	0 cases	100% (1 case)	0 cases	100% (1 case)
Target	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
2021/22 Actual	0 cases	100% (1 case)	0 cases	0 cases	100% (1 case)
11. Percentage of Statutory fire consultations completed within the required timeframes <span style="float: right;">2021/22 Target: 95%</span>					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	92%	95%	90%	85.5%	90.4%
Previous Year (20/21)	95.6%	97.1%	95.5%	98.7%	96.8%
Target	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
2021/22 Actual	94.1%	97.7%	98.4%	97.2%	96.7%
12. The number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received <span style="float: right;">2021/22 Target: Monitor</span>					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	707	801	821	623	2952
Previous Year (20/21)	497	698	733	567	2495
Target	-	-	-	-	-
2021/22 Actual	622	853	868	698	3041↓



<b>13. Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm calls where RBFRS did not attend</b> <b>2021/22 Target: Improve</b>					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	25.5%	25.3%	25.7%	26.3%	25.7%
Previous Year (20/21)	15.3%	21.3%	25.9%	18.5%	20.8%
Target	-	-	-	-	-
2021/22 Actual	23.8%	22.0%	21.2%	28.1%	23.5%↓
<b>Response Measures</b>					
<b>14. Percentage of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes from time the emergency call was answered</b> <b>2021/22 Target: 75%</b>					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	76.7%	74.0%	76.6%	78.6%	76.3%
Previous Year (20/21)	78.4%	76.6%	78.0%	80.1%	78.2%
Target	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%
2021/22 Actual	76.1%	77.0%	79.4%	76.3%	77.2%↓
<b>15. Percentage of full shifts where there is adequate crewing on all wholetime frontline pumping appliances</b> <b>2021/22 Target: 100%</b>					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	100%	100%	98.4%	100%	99.6%
Previous Year (20/21)	100%	98.9%	89.7%	98.9%	96.8%
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2021/22 Actual	98.9%	84.8%	71.7%	92.8%	87.0%↓
<b>16. Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances</b> <b>2021/22 Target: 60%</b>					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	35.9%	28.2%	32.7%	34.7%	32.9%
Previous Year (20/21)**	72.4%	60.9%	61.1%	68.2%	65.6%
Target	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
2021/22 Actual**	59.8%	34.7 %	36.5%	43.8%	43.6%↓
**excluding Pangbourne					
<b>Customer Experience Measures</b>					
<b>17. Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the overall service (fire incident)</b> <b>2021/22 Target: 100%</b>					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Previous Year (20/21)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2021/22 Actual	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



<b>18. Percentage of commercial respondents satisfied with the overall service (fire incident)</b>		<b>2021/22 Target: 95%</b>			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Previous Year (20/21)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Target	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
2021/22 Actual	100%	No Returns	100%	100%	100%

<b>19. Percentage of respondents satisfied with the service with regards to Fire Safety Audits</b>		<b>2021/22 Target: 90%</b>			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Previous Year (20/21)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
2021/22 Actual	95.8%	100%	100%	100%	98.7%

<b>20. Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the service – Safe and Well Visits</b>		<b>2021/22 Target: 100%</b>			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Previous Year (20/21)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2021/22 Actual	98.2%	100%	No Returns	100%	99.2%

<b>21. Number of complaints received</b>		<b>2021/22 Target: Monitor</b>			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	7	11	14	5	37
Previous Year (20/21)	5	3	9	5	22
Target	-	-	-	-	-
2021/22 Actual	7	8	9	4	27↓

<b>22. Number of compliments received</b>		<b>2021/22 Target: Monitor</b>			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Previous Year (20/21)	2	4	2	2	10
Target	-	-	-	-	-
2021/22 Actual	5	3	1	5	14↑



## Quadrant Two – Corporate Health

The Corporate Health Quadrant monitors the wellbeing of the organisation. Performance is monitored in relation to staffing levels, health and safety and finances within RBFRS, to ensure the organisation is being run safely, efficiently and is cost effective.

### Finance

The 2021/22 Revenue Budget agreed by Members in February 2021 was set on the basis that expenditure would exceed income by £29,000 (on a budget of £35.779m). This deficit was to be funded from reserves.

The actual revenue outturn for 2021/22 is shown in Appendix A. The outturn position shows a deficit of £40,000, to be funded from reserves – which is an addition of £11,000 from the budget setting position. Variances against individual revenue lines are explained below.

Whilst staffing salary budgets were set based on the Government position of a public sector pay freeze, the NJC subsequently agreed a grey book pay award of 1.5%, effective from 1 July 2021, which cost an additional £232,000. The final green book pay award of 1.75% backdated to 1 April 2021 cost an additional £129,000.

In relation to Station based employees, Covid has resulted in increased overtime both to cover sickness absences and to cover staff undertaking training to maintain operational competence. There was also additional overtime required to cover vacancies during the year. Set against these pay pressures, there were savings from the re-phasing of the Nucleus Crewing project and reduced costs as a result of lower overall availability on on-call stations.

As well as the unbudgeted pay awards, the other pressure in the Non-Station employee cost line related to the salary costs of new recruits while undergoing their training. This was £53,000 higher than expected as the budget was set for 14 recruits, and 18 were taken on.

Pressure on the Repairs and Maintenance expenditure line has led to costs exceeding the budget by £77,000. Major costs include roof repairs at four stations, a water leak at the training centre, chiller repairs at HQ and work on the extractor unit at the Firehouse.

On a more positive note, the Authority has been working with a property specialist to appeal business rate charges applied to our properties. This has proven to be successful and has resulted in rebates totalling £321,000 for 16 stations. £245,000 of this amount relates to previous years. Against these saving the business rates for the new station in Theale have been confirmed and the cost in 2021/22 was £53,000.

Over the year, we have been fortunate to benefit from hedging by our energy supplier meaning that utility cost rises have been relatively subdued. However, price rises have fed in during the final quarter of this financial year, and will increase further next year.

The IS Equipment & Licences line includes additional costs for the deployment of Microsoft Office 365, to enable flexible working, which was planned but was accelerated due to Covid.



There have been supply chain delays in meeting our clothing orders under the National Uniform Framework. Kent FRS are working with the supplier to resolve all issues which affect FRSs signed up to the framework agreement.

The Community Fire Safety Supplies line is underspent due to restrictions in the early part of the year on in-person Safe & Well visits due to Covid restrictions and latterly there have been supply delays for smoke detectors (particularly affected by the shortage of semiconductors).

Thames Valley Fire Control Service (see Appendix B) shows an adverse variance of £36,000, which is mainly due to the un-budgeted pay award. The Authority's share of this is £14,000.

There have been some additional one-off cost pressures in relation to legal fees, with costs exceeding the allocated budget by £70,000.

Cross border charges are £20,000 lower (under Contracts Other) and income is £102,000 higher than the budgeted amounts (under Income Other).

The Grants line is showing an adverse variance as the Home Office miscalculated the Firelink grant due to fire and rescue services. In our case, the Home Office paid us £47,000 too much in 2020/21, which is being recovered in the current year. This has been partly offset by additional small government grants received in the year.

Pension costs pressures continue to be seen as a result of the McCloud judgement. Based on the latest guidance, further provisions have been made to dealing with future liabilities meaning that costs outstripped the budget by £148,000.

At the point of budget setting, there was uncertainty about the final level of funding the Authority would receive via the Berkshire unitary authorities, section 31 grants and the other council tax and business rates COVID related support measures that the Government implemented. Confirmed final figures and funding were not received until quarter 4, and the Authority received an additional £296,000.

Spend subject to competition decreased in Q4 as we saw an increase in low level spend which is not subject to competition and reduced levels of spend on projects requiring competitive processes.

## HR

Although the levels of working time lost due to sickness has reduced slightly this quarter, the level remains high. Whilst last year's annual average working time lost due to sickness figure (3.1%) was particularly low, this year's figure (5.8%) is also higher than 2019/20's (4.5%). The reasons for sickness absence are actively monitored. The three major categories of sickness absence are discussed in detail below.

Absence due to confirmed COVID-19 cases made up just under one third of all sickness absences, with a much smaller additional number of sickness absences due to coronavirus symptoms. Long Covid was newly introduced as a category this quarter and should embed in Q1 2022/23.

Musculoskeletal (MSK) sickness continues to remain one of the top causes of sickness absence, equating to nearly a fifth of total days lost. The number of episodes remain consistent.



Mental health sickness has reduced a large amount this quarter, but still equates to nearly a fifth of total days lost and remains much higher than the same period last year.

The percentage of eligible staff receiving a Personal Development Review (PDR) meeting this quarter remains high and is only a very small reduction from the same quarter last year. Likewise, the percentage of eligible operational staff in qualification also remains high. This measure has shown an increase on the previous quarter and an increase in performance compared to the same quarter last year.

The number of employees from an ethnic minority background in the service does not reflect the diversity of Berkshire's population and remains a challenge, however, there has been a small increase in the percentage of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds this quarter. Likewise, the number of female firefighters employed in the Service remains a challenge and is the same as last quarter. The number of staff employed by RBFPS declaring a disability has reduced by one this quarter.



**Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**

**Budget Update - Revenue Position Quarter 4 2021/22**

	Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Variance £'000
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>			
STATIONS	16,858	17,019	161
NON-STATIONS	11,153	11,341	188
TRAINING	529	528	(1)
OTHER	264	278	14
	<b>28,804</b>	<b>29,166</b>	<b>362</b>
<b>PREMISES</b>			
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	738	815	77
RATES	920	649	(271)
CLEANING	249	266	17
UTILITIES	460	509	49
	<b>2,367</b>	<b>2,239</b>	<b>(128)</b>
<b>SUPPLIES</b>			
INSURANCE	385	385	0
EQUIPMENT	575	586	11
IS EQUIPMENT & LICENCES	681	750	69
CLOTHING/PPE	336	314	(22)
COMMUNICATIONS	764	762	(2)
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH	198	214	16
PRINT/STATIONERY/PUBLICATIONS/SUBSCRIPTIONS	139	138	(1)
COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY SUPPLIES	151	99	(52)
SUPPLIES OTHER	199	180	(19)
	<b>3,428</b>	<b>3,428</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>CONTRACTS</b>			
CONTRIBUTION TO TVFCS & COLLABORATION	911	925	14
LEGAL	50	122	72
CONTRACTS OTHER (incl Professional Services)	721	690	(31)
	<b>1,682</b>	<b>1,737</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>TRANSPORT</b>			
VEHICLE RUNNING COSTS	698	688	(10)
TRAVEL	200	181	(19)
	<b>898</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>(29)</b>
<b>PENSIONS</b>			
PENSIONS	331	479	148
	<b>331</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
GRANTS	(2,620)	(2,594)	26
RENTAL INCOME	(199)	(211)	(12)
TVFCS RECHARGE INCOME	(324)	(324)	0



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INCOME OTHER	(355)	(476)	(121)
	<b>(3,498)</b>	<b>(3,605)</b>	<b>(107)</b>
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>34,012</b>	<b>34,313</b>	<b>301</b>
DEBT CHARGES INTEREST	374	380	6
INVESTMENT INTEREST	(11)	(11)	0
REVENUE FUNDING OF CAPITAL	600	600	0
APPROPRIATION TO/(FROM) RESERVES	213	213	0
FINANCING COSTS	620	620	0
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>35,808</b>	<b>36,115</b>	<b>307</b>
GOV GRANTS/PRECEPTS	(35,779)	(36,075)	(296)
<b>DEFICIT / (SURPLUS) BEFORE USE OF RESERVES</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>11</b>



Royal Berkshire Fire Authority  
Quarter 4 Budget Monitoring Report 2021/22  
Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Variance</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>	1,798	1,850	52
<b>CORPORATE RECHARGES TO TVFCS FROM RBFRS</b>	324	324	0
<b>SUPPLIES/ OTHER</b>	38	36	(2)
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	250	236	(14)
<b>NET COST OF TVFCS</b>	<b>2,410</b>	<b>2,446</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>RBFRS Share of Costs (37.8%)</b>	911	925	14



**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives Progress Update**

The end of year Equality, Diversity and Inclusion summary update has been reported through Fire Authority. The table below illustrates progress against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives.

	End 20/21		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<p><b>Objective: Increasing the diversity of staff at all levels</b> We will take actions to increase the diversity of job applicants to help us reflect the community by focusing particularly on under-represented groups.</p>				A	A	G
<p><b>Objective: Leadership and corporate commitment</b> This objective aligns with the NFCC Framework which centres on leadership, partnership and commitment. Leadership and corporate commitment means we will be strong and visible in our leadership and that all employees have confidence in our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.</p>				G	G	G
<p><b>Objective: Improving our service delivery by knowing the communities we serve through a partnership and risk-based approach</b> This objective will focus on promoting equality by knowing our diverse communities and understanding their needs, ensuring that our prevention, protection and response activities target the most vulnerable people with the greatest risk.</p>				NS	A	A
<p><b>Objective: Promoting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion</b> We will continue to take action to ensure we have a culture where everyone feels valued and is treated with dignity and respect by creating an inclusive working environment that will enable us to maximise the potential of a diverse workforce.</p>				G	G	G



<b>QUADRANT TWO – CORPORATE HEALTH</b>					<b>DATA SUMMARY</b>
<b>23. Percentage of working time lost to sickness across all staff groups</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 4% max</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	4.3%	3.9%	5.3%	4.7%	4.5%
Previous Year (20/21)	2.8%	3.0%	3.4%	3.3%	3.1%
Target (21/22)	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
2021/22 Actual	3.4%	5.5%	7.3%	7.1%	5.8%↓
<b>24. Percentage of eligible operational staff successfully completing fitness test</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 100%</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	96.6%	99.8%	96.0%	98.5%	98.5%
Previous Year (20/21)*	--	--	99.2%	99.2%	99.2%
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2021/22 Actual	99%	99%	93.7%	98.6%	98.6%↓
* timeframes for testing impacted by COVID-19					
<b>25. Percentage of eligible staff with Personal Development Appraisals</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 100%</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	47.5%	81.9%	92.0%	92.0%	92.0%
Previous Year (20/21)	78.9%	95.3%	99.7%	99.7%	99.7%
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2021/22 Actual	76.0%	93.8%	98.2%	98.7%	98.7%↓
<b>26. Percentage of eligible operational staff in qualification</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 100%</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	98.8%	99.3%	99.1%	99.2%	99.1%
Previous Year (20/21)	97.3%	96.9%	96.9%	96.4%	96.4%
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2021/22 Actual	96.7%	95.9%	96.0%	97.0%	97.0%↑
<b>27. Number of formal grievances</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: Monitor</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	3	0	8	1	12
Previous Year (20/21)	0	0	1	1	2
Target	--	--	--	--	--
2021/22 Actual	2	1	4	0	7↓
<b>28. Number of RIDDOR accidents</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 6 max</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	1	0	0	1	2
Previous Year (20/21)	0	1	1	0	2
Target (max)	1	1	1	1	6
2021/22 Actual	2	1	1	1	5↓



<b>29. Percentage of spend subject to competition</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 85%</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	95.4%	91.4%	95.1%	93.6%	94.7%
Previous Year (20/21)	91.7%	92.1%	95.2%	89.6%	93.3%
Target	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%
2021/22 Actual	94.7%	92.3%	89.9%	83.8%	91.0%↓

<b>30. Compliant spend as a percentage of overall spend</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 100%</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Previous Year (20/21)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2021/22 Actual	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%↔

<b>31. Number of Information Commissioner assessments finding that the Service has breached Information Rights Legislation*</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 0</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	0	0	1	0	1
Previous Year (20/21)	0	0	0	0	0
Target	0	0	0	0	0
2021/22 Actual	0	0	0	0	0↔

\*Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Regulations or Data Protection Legislation



## Quadrant Three – Priority Programmes

Our Priority Programmes Quadrant brings together progress updates on our areas of work where we are delivering defined outcomes that are different to, or improve on, current working practices, policies and procedures.

Updates are provided on our CRMP, People Strategy, Strategic Asset Investment Framework, and the HRRB Project, assessing progress against the projects and objectives set in our 2021/22 Annual Plan.

This quarter we have seen a number of project statuses move in a positive direction, from Red to Green, or from Amber to Green. This includes our work to develop Protection quality assurance processes as part of our CRMP action plan. Also as part of our CRMP action plan, our work to focus activities on Children and Young People through our road and water safety education programmes, Fire Cadets and FireSafe is back on track. As part of the People Strategy, we have made positive progress moving forward on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives. We have also completed the project to deliver a new tri-service station at Theale, which is reflected in the Strategic Asset Investment Framework Update.



**CRMP**

RBFA is required to publish a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP – formerly known as an Integrated Risk Management Plan). In 2018, we consulted on and published an [IRMP for 2019-23](#), which reflects the priorities and requirements of the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#).

The below shows progress against our CRMP (IRMP) commitments published in our 2021-22 Annual Plan.

<b>Project 1: Risk Analyses</b>						
	End 20/21	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Continued development of our existing Risk Methodology and Risk Modelling capability to ensure we have an even better understanding of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks.	Revised	BAU	BAU	BAU	BAU	
Continue to maintain a theoretical response model for the Thames Valley, in collaboration with our Thames Valley Fire and Rescue partners to ensure our Risk Methodology and Risk Modelling aligns to theirs.	A	A	A	A	A	
Continue to engage with and drive the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) work to develop national best practice in this area.	G	G	G	G	G	
<b>Project 2: Prevention</b>						
	End 20/21	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Continue to work towards the delivery of our 'Risk to Individuals' and 'Risk to Household' Safe and Well Visits, working in collaboration with our Berkshire partners to identify the most vulnerable people in our society.	BAU	G	A	A	A	
Develop a programme of follow up Safe and Well Visits to the most vulnerable.	R	R	A	G	G	
Focus our activities in support of Children and Young People through our road and water safety education programmes, Fire Cadets and FireSafe.	A	A	G	A	G	
Carry out targeted road safety activity, including for motorcyclists.	A	A	G	G	G	
Further develop local safety initiatives, campaigns and events to target risk at a local level and evaluate their effectiveness.	A	G	G	G	G	
Ensure a high standard of service through the quality assurance of our Prevention activities	New	A	A	A	A	



<b>Project 3: Protection</b>						
	End 20/21	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Develop our risk-based inspection programme to ensure that we are identifying and targeting our resources at the areas of highest risk, in line with our Protection Strategy.	A	G	G	G	G	
Through our built environment programme, implement the learning from the phase one Grenfell Tower inquiry.	G (revised)	G	G	G	G	
Visit all high rise residential buildings 18m and above within Berkshire, supporting the safety of residents through the appropriate use of our regulatory powers and professional influence	revised	G	G	G	G	
Ensure a high standard of service through the quality assurance of our Protection activities	New	R	R	R	G	
<b>Project 4: Response Resource Deployment</b>						
	End 20/21	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Continue to evaluate future developments in housing and infrastructure to ensure that our resource deployments match predicted future demands.	A	A	A	A	A	
Undertake a review of our specialist water rescue capability to ensure it continues to be aligned to local risk and reflects national best practice.	R	A	R	R	A	
Commence a project to consider the feasibility of introducing dynamic risk-based daytime nucleus crewing in the West of the County to improve emergency incident response times.	R	A	R	R	A	
Conduct a review of our Incident Command provision to ensure alignment to National Operational Guidance and best practice.	New	A	A	G	G	
<b>Project 5: Response Safe Systems of Work Development</b>						
	End 20/21	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Align our systems of work and training to National Operational Guidance and National Operational Learning.	G	G	G	G	G	
Work with the NFCC and other key stakeholders to adopt new technologies, which support effective and efficient safe systems of work.	G	G	G	G	G	
Continue our investment of resource and expertise in the Thames Valley Breathing Apparatus Replacement project, conducting an effective and efficient joint procurement prior to implementation in 2022/23.	New	G	G	G	G	



## People Strategy

The purpose of our [People Strategy 2018-2021](#) is to support RBFRS staff to become the best public servants they can be, creating a workforce that can deliver efficient and effective service on behalf of the Fire Authority, to manage all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the people of Berkshire.

<b>Objective 1: Recruit, train and develop people to ensure we create a safe, professional and capable workforce, who can provide a fit for purpose service, 24/7, 365 days a year</b>						
	End 20/21		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Undertake Fire Fighter recruitment using Apprenticeships	NEW		G	G	G	G
Expand on alternative ways of delivering learning and development through improved use of technology	A		A	G	G	G
<b>Objective 2: Increase the diversity of our workforce to better represent and therefore serve our local communities</b>						
	End 20/21		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Continue to support the Leonard Cheshire Change 100 programme to work with disabled graduates on a 100-day intern programme.	G		G	G	G	G
Review and consult on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives and deliver associated actions, including taking positive action to ensure job and career opportunities in our service are accessible to all individuals and groups in our communities	NEW		G	A	A	G
Develop and implement the Chairman's Internship which will target young people from under-represented groups in Berkshire	NEW		G	G	G	G
<b>Objective 3: Develop people and recruit talent to take personal responsibility for leadership in the organisation to ensure a public service ethos, support collaboration and effectively deliver service improvement</b>						
	End 20/21		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Integrate and embed our behavioural competency framework and values at all levels of the service	G		G	G	G	G
Deliver a framework for coaching and mentoring	A		A	A	G	G
<b>Objective 4: Develop a diverse and inclusive 'one team' culture where everyone's contribution is valued and positive behaviours are used to describe how we work together</b>						
	End 20/21		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Develop a Communications and Engagement strategy	NS		G	G	G	G
Continue to develop the Fire Authority Member Development Programme	G		G	G	G	G
Develop and deliver a programme of staff engagement to inform our People Strategy, policies, processes and improvements	G		G	G	G	G



<b>Objective 5: Change policies, processes and systems to ensure they enable and support the delivery of a fit for purpose, efficient and effective service to the community</b>						
	End 20/21		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Develop our approach on equality of access to services and employment for potential staff and communities	NEW		NS	A	A	R
We will explore the options for use of digital resources for our Protection services	NS		G	A	A	A
<b>Objective 6: Continue to support both the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our people.</b>						
	End 19/20		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Learn and adapt to different ways of working during and after the COVID-19 pandemic	G		G	G	A	A
Deliver the requirements of the 2021/22 mental health action plan	G		G	G	G	G



### Strategic Asset Investment Framework

The Strategic Asset Investment Framework sets out how we will maintain and renew the vital capital assets, necessary to support our services. Our capital assets include our fire stations and HQ, fleet and equipment and our ICT systems. All together, they represent a major capital investment.

Buildings						
		Status				
		Q4 20/21	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
New Fire Stations: Theale	On Track	G	G	G	G	C
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	C
Minor Capital Works Programme	On Track	G	G	G	G	G
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	G
Fleet and Equipment						
		Status				
		Q4 20/21	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Fleet: Fire Appliances	On Track	G	G	G	C	C
	On Budget	G	G	G	C	C
Fleet: Special Appliances	On Track	A	A	A	A	A
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	G
Fleet: Aerial Ladder Platform	On Track	G	G	C	C	C
	On Budget	G	G	C	C	C
Fleet: Other Ancillary Vehicles	On Track	G	G	G	G	G
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	G
Equipment	On Track	G	G	G	G	G
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	G
ICT						
		Status				
		Q4 20/21	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Hardware	On Track	G	G	G	A	A
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	G
Software	On Track	G	G	G	G	G
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	G
Services	On Track	G	G	G	G	A



ICT						
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	G
Networks	On Track	G	G	G	G	G
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	G
Security Resilience	On Track	G	G	G	G	A
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	A
ESMCP	On Track	G	G	G	G	A
	On Budget	G	A	A	A	G



### Built Environment Programme – High Rise Residential Project

The HRRB (High Rise Residential Building) project was initiated to undertake fire safety audits of 198 identified high rise premises within Royal Berkshire over a 6 month period. Phase one of the project was completed in Quarter 1. Progress against the Phase two objectives will be reported below.

Phase 2 HRRB Project Objectives:						
1. Perform a Fire Safety revisit for each of the 97 identified HRRBs within Royal Berkshire that received an unsatisfactory audit during Phase 1. 2. Perform regular site visits of Interim Measures Buildings where frequency is based upon risk.						
	End 20/21	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>HRRB Revisits:</b> Good progress towards the goal of completing return visits on the 97 premises identified with fire safety issues during phase 1 continues.	n/a	G	G	G	G	
<b>Interim Measures Premises:</b> Operational crews continue to perform monthly visits on HRRBs in Interim Measures. The HRRB team have performed a site visit on each of the 33 HRRB's in interim Measures in order to provide assurance to RBFRS that Interim Measures remain sufficient to mitigate the risk. Visits to premises in interim measures continue with a 14 having been removed from IM following remediation.	n/a	G	G	G	G	



## Quadrant Four – Risk

### Risk Register

RBFRS has developed a comprehensive Organisational Risk Management Policy, along with a framework for monitoring and managing risks and uncertainties to ensure that organisational objectives can be achieved. Strategic Risks and those with a current score of 17 or above, are escalated to the Corporate Risk Register and monitored monthly by the Senior Leadership Team.

### Risk Movement Highlights

This section highlights organisational risks which have been added, closed or substantially changed risk score over the course of Quarter Four. To ensure the most up to date picture for risk, the updates include information about progress since the end of the quarter.



Key Risk: Management of Cyber Security (Risk: 629)				
Risk Owner: Deputy Chief Executive				
	End of Q3 Risk Score	End of Q4 Risk Score	Direction of travel	Risk score as at May 22
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> If we fail to ensure compliance with Cyber Security best practices and guidelines, which is increasingly likely due to ongoing evolution in the sophistication of attack methodologies, we may be exposed to operational degradation, financial loss and/or reputational damage due to reduced availability, integrity or currency of our data and systems.</p>	18	18	↑	21
<p>This risk, increased in risk score shortly after the end of Q4 2021/22. This risk captures the challenge of protecting the security of our IT systems.</p> <p>The risk score has been increased to reflect the general increase in threat level due to external global factors, primarily associated with the conflict in Ukraine, which started in Q4 2021/22, and the potential for state sponsored attacks on states visibly supporting the Ukraine, such as the UK.</p> <p>Current mitigations are focused on continuing education campaigns around Cyber Security for staff and regular checking of our IT systems. Annual IT Health Checks and Cyber Security Audits are undertaken by independent and accredited external actions and we ensure that any actions generated by these are expedited to minimise any risk to the organisation.</p>				
Current Mitigations	Progress on Mitigations			
Certify and renew against government and industry accreditation schemes where available.	Current Status: IT Health Check report received and recommendations being analysed for remediation before undertaking Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation. Most critical and high actions completed. Approach to mitigate remaining findings to be determined based on cost/benefit analysis. The importance of increased vigilance due to global factors is being reinforced via standard communications channels. Said global events and the resultant heightened threat level are the reason the risk has been revised up to 21 for the time being.			
Establish and execute an ongoing communications and education campaign focussing on Cyber Security in the workplace to be delivered across RBFRS.	Current Status: Established information channel on Workplace has yielded some successes, with staff members successfully identifying attempted scams/attacks and reporting to ICT for action. Protecting Information elearning successfully migrated to LMS portal. The importance of increased vigilance due to global factors is being reinforced via standard communications channels. Said global events and the resultant heightened threat level are the reason the risk has been revised up to 21 for the time being.			



<b>Key Risk: Management of Cyber Security (Risk: 629)</b>	
<b>Risk Owner: Deputy Chief Executive</b>	
<p>Ensure adequate expert resource is available to RBFRS to carry out IT Security activities</p>	<p>Current Status: Information Governance Manager now recruited and brings extensive ICT Security management experience to RBFRS. Senior Infrastructure position still under recruitment process. The importance of increased vigilance due to global factors is being reinforced via standard communications channels. Said global events and the resultant heightened threat level are the reason the risk has been revised up to 21 for the time being.</p>
<p>Carry out annual IT Health check exercises, to be delivered by independent and accredited external organisations</p>	<p>Current Status: it Health check completed in August 2021, findings report has been delivered with a comprehensive set of recommendations for implementation. ICT are working to analyse and prioritise the action plan to remediate. The report raises some areas for attention and this treatment along with global heightened threat levels and awareness is the reason for the risk current score increasing to 21 from 18. Expect the score to reduce as the action plan is worked through and global tensions ease. ICT continue to address areas for focus on ITHC action plan, the approach to mitigate remaining findings to be determined based on cost/benefit analysis.</p>
<p>Ensure actions plans arising from annual health check are expedited to minimise exposure</p>	<p>Current Status: Report received, analysis underway and action plan in progress. 61% of critical findings resolved, 31% high priority findings resolved. Progress being tracked at weekly ICT meetings. Approach to mitigate remaining findings to be determined based on cost/benefit analysis. The importance of increased vigilance due to global factors is being reinforced via standard communications channels. Said global events and the resultant heightened threat level are the reason the risk has been revised up to 21 for the time being.</p>
<p>Carrot Cyber Security Audits, to be delivered by an independent and accredited audit organisation to ensure exposure to RBFA and appropriate sub-committees</p>	<p>Current Status: 2022 Cyber Security audit to be carried out in Q4 2021/22 municipal year, tentatively scheduled with Auditors. Audit underway, findings expected imminently. Audit completed, awaiting report. The importance of increased vigilance due to global factors is being reinforced via standard communications channels. Said global events and the resultant heightened threat level are the reason the risk has been revised up to 21 for the time being.</p>



Key Risk: NOG Implementation Resourcing (Risk: 746)				
Risk Owner: Area Manager Collaboration and Policy				
	End of Q3 Risk Score	End of Q4 Risk Score	Direction of travel	Risk score as at May 2022
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> If we fail to appropriately align both operational assurance activities and station based training to National Operational Guidance (N.O.G) then we can expect to experience delays to full N.O.G implementation which could have a negative impact to achieve full compliance with the fire standards for operational competence and learning</p>	17	12	↓	12
<p>This risk, alongside the National Operational Guidance Risk 669, have both reduced in risk score in early 2022. This Risk reduced in risk score in Q4 2021/22, whilst Risk 669 reduced in risk score shortly after the end of Q4 2021/22. These risks capture the challenges the service faces in aligning to National Operation Guidance.</p> <p>The National Operational Guidance Project started in 2020 to fully adopt, implement and embed National Operational Guidance into RBFRS. After Phase 1 completion in January 2021, we moved into Phase 2 and 3 which would run concurrently. The risk score on these risks has reduce due to the progress of work in both the implementation and embedding phases. The project is due to finish on time and on budget.</p> <p>Current mitigations are focused on implementing training to all operational staff on how to deliver the new Operational Learning Plan to ensure that National Operational Guidance is embedded, whilst also implementing a new template for learning outcomes. We will also be working with our Learning and Development team to ensure that Operational Training Programme is aligned to National Operational Guidance.</p>				
Current Mitigations	Progress on Mitigations			
R&Rs to review all Operational Assurance work and align to N.O.G & NOL best practice.	The Operational Assurance Project has started and has highlighted issues, actions and treatments. Actions have owners and work has started. Policies and guidance are being produced. New forms have been completed and published on Siren. 50% of new guidance is ready for stakeholder review.			
All Operational staff to receive training on how to deliver the new Operational learning plan to ensure N.O.G is embedded into the service.	This has not started yet as policy is still being produced.			
L&D to align all current learning outcomes to N.O.G using new Learning Outcomes template	L&D have designed the new template for learning outcomes. 2 new Learning Outcome documents have been published and incident command learning outcomes are due to be rolled out in Q2.			
L&D to highlight gaps in current OTP and align to N.O.G	The assessment has been started on the known gaps in the OTP, a project plan has been put into place, with resources advertised to ensure full compliance to NOG.			



**Corporate Risk Register risks as at 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

**Strategic Risks**

Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
417	Firefighter Safety	If we do not maintain the safety, health and wellbeing of our operational staff through effective training; operational policy and guidance; safe systems of work and; means to capture and respond to operational learning, we risk a significant firefighter injury or fatality, a failure to comply with our legal duty and an undermining of the operational effectiveness and competence of our staff. This could significantly impact the effectiveness of our operational response, have a long term impact on staff welfare and damage our public reputation and trust levels.	25	19	19
418	ESMCP	If we do not make sufficient provision of resources to support the development, transformation to and implementation of ESMCP products and capabilities at a Service level, then we will not be a part of the proposed Emergency Services Network and we will be out of step with national and regional partners across the three emergency services. This could significantly impact on the effectiveness of our operational mobilization and response and limit access and use of operational technology to support incident command and joint emergency services interoperability. Consequently this could impact negatively on our collaborative and partnership working and our public and political reputation.	18	17	10
506	Volatility of funding	If RBFRS fails to receive sufficient funding, which is becoming more likely given the level of national debt, the Government's fiscal policy, increasing volatility in local funding and increasing budget pressures, we can expect to face further reductions in service delivery and a loss of public trust, which will severely impact on our ability to deliver our statutory duties and strategic objectives.	24	21	16



Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
629	Management of Cyber Security	If we fail to ensure compliance with Cyber Security best practices and guidelines, which is increasingly likely due to ongoing evolution in the sophistication of attack methodologies, we may be exposed to operational degradation, financial loss and/or reputational damage due to reduced availability, integrity or currency of our data and systems.	21	21	12
641	Collaboration	If collaboration activity is not appropriately commissioned, prioritised, resourced and coordinated, which is likely due to the complexity of working across different organisations and the capacity to manage additional demand, then we can expect impacts on delivery of the expected benefits, efficiencies and improvements which is significant in respect of our legal duties and the Authority's commitments in the IRMP and annual plan.	21	15	12
651	Grenfell - Phase 1	If we do not respond to the recommendations made within the Grenfell Inquiry phase 1 report which is becoming increasingly likely given the additional changes/information being received through a number of channels then we can expect potential impact to the safety of our staff and members of the public which is significant in respect to our public reputation and managing our community risk.	24	18	15
663	Capital Projects - Effective Estate Management	If we fail to effectively manage our property assets to ensure they are fit for purpose and in the right locations, which may become increasingly likely given the funding challenges and the increasing age of our fire stations, then we can expect our revenue expenditure to increase, our services to be less effective and our stations to further decline which would be significant in respect to our strategic objectives; to ensure value for money and ensure fire stations are suitable and accessible for our own staff and the communities they serve.	23	17	10



Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
669	National Operational Guidance	If we do not ensure operational documentation is up to date, accessible and aligned to national best practice then there is the potential for personnel to train in or deploy operational procedures that do not maximise safety and operational effectiveness which is significant in respect of delivery statutory duties and legislative responsibilities	18	14	12
681	WDS Operational Availability, Crewing and Capabilities	If we do not maintain the necessary numbers, skills and knowledge requirements of WDS personnel, which requires constant attention with our lean operating model, we may see adverse impacts on the provision of appliance availability, delivery of our response standard and our wider service plans and this could significantly impact community safety and our organizational reputation.	23	16	12
682	On-Call Operational Availability, Crewing and Capabilities	If we do not sustain activity to ensure our on-call provision has the appropriate numbers of personnel with the necessary skills, knowledge and availability then we risk undermining organisational resilience in our response capability and this could impact community safety and organizational reputation.	21	18	12
737	Fire Transformation	If the fire transformation programme brings significant change within the sector, which is becoming increasingly likely with the Government's fire reform agenda, then we face a period of increasing uncertainty which may affect the organisation's strategic direction.	21	21	11
742	Management of premises risk information	If we do not manage the capture, processing, storage and access of premises risk information which is increasingly likely due to the quantity and complexity of the data involved, staff may be unaware of hazards within the built environment or be presented with inaccurate or out of date information which may result reduced staff safety and or a breach of GDPR.	18	15	12



Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
774	Comms Resource	If we fail to resource the Communications and Engagement Team adequately, in line with our current and anticipated work demands, then this could significantly impact the effectiveness of the support provided across the Service and risk delivery against our strategic objectives as set out in the Annual Plan and Corporate Plan	21	18	15
798	Environmental/Sustainability	If RBFRS fails to develop, fund and implement an environmental and sustainability plan, then we can expect an increase in financial pressure with rising energy costs, and RBFRS' reputation as a public sector organisation to be negatively impacted through being out of alignment to wider societal progress towards creating a more sustainable future which will significantly impact our ability to deliver our statutory duties and strategic objectives.	23	21	6
831	Service Delivery Policy	If we do not develop, deliver and maintain coherent service delivery policy and guidance, which is likely given existing legacy arrangements, we can expect to have contradictory, duplicated, erroneous or out of date policy which is significant in respect of supporting staff to provide a safe and effective Response service, aligned to our statutory duties.	16	16	6
833	Fire Investigation - Collaboration	If we are unable to provide the support and resource required to deliver a multi-service approach to ISO 17020 accreditation, which is becoming increasingly likely due escalating costs and increasing complexity and demand, then we can expect to encounter issues in supporting criminal prosecutions which is significant in respect of public safety and the reputation of RBFRS	21	18	12



**Service Plan Risks**

Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
664	Management of Budget Pressures	If we fail to accurately capture budget pressures over the medium term, which is becoming more likely given the volatility in the macro-economic environment, then resource allocation will become sub-optimal, impacting negatively on our ability to deliver an efficient and effective service to the public.	24	21	16
685	Pensions Case Law	If we do not keep informed of pension case law and prepare records and establish adequate arrangements to meet the expected changes to pension regulations and ensure the Pensions Administrator undertakes the necessary action; which is becoming increasingly difficult due lack of understanding and clear direction, the technical complexity associated with changes and competing demands, then we can expect to be in breach of the regulations, subject to potential legal challenge and adversely impact employees and pensioners, which are significant in respect to our financial security, employer duties and our reputation.	24	22	18
686	Pensions Governance	If we do not employ an effective pension governance, management and administration strategy; which is becoming increasingly important given the complexity and changes made to pension regulations, limited pensions expertise and capacity within the HR department, then we can expect to fail in our employer duties, breach regulations, be subject to legal challenge and scrutiny from The Pensions Regulator resulting in potential for enforcement and penalty notices, which are significant in respect to our financial security, statutory duty and our reputation.	21	21	15



Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
767	TVFCS staffing resilience	If we do fail to develop and implement resilient TVFCS staffing arrangements, which is becoming likely due to the impacts of crewing deficiencies on managerial capacity, then we can expect to experience impacts on service delivery in the control room and the health and wellbeing of our staff, which is significant in respect of FRS delivering their statutory duties.	18	18	12
827	Driver Training	If we fail to recruit Driving Instructors or new instructors are insufficiently qualified and require significant development, which is increasingly likely given the requirements of the professional standard and the national shortage of HGV drivers, our ability to train and develop staff to drive blue light emergency vehicles will be compromised and we we can expect to see reduced operational capability and an increased demand on existing drivers presenting welfare issues leading to a reduction in our service provision and reputational risk.	21	18	12



**Project Risks**

Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
675	Handling FSG calls simultaneously	If we are unable to process large volumes of Fire Survival Guidance calls simultaneously then we can expect callers not to be able to speak with us and /or be diverted to other control rooms whereby they may not receive the Fire Survival Guidance advice required. This will impact on the safety of residents within these buildings and our operational response	18	18	15
694	Fire Survival Guidance	If we fail to differentiate between a caller seeking advice and a caller who is trapped and requiring rescue, it is likely that we will give inconsistent or inaccurate guidance which could harm operational effectiveness and impact public safety	21	18	15
697	Radio Assurance	If we fail to assure the effectiveness of BA and fireground radio comms in high rise buildings, we could significantly increase the risks to crews and building occupants during an incident	21	18	15
699	Command Unit effectiveness	If we fail to assure the effectiveness and resourcing of our command support units, we are likely to attend an incident in which the command unit would be unavailable or operating sub-optimally which could impact our operational response, and affect the safety of our staff and members of the public	18	18	10
700	Evacuation Training	If we fail to establish effective procedures and training for operational crews on the evacuation of complex and high-rise buildings, the delivery of the tactical plan could be compromised which would adversely impact staff and public safety	21	18	15



### Audit Plan

Audits provide assurance that the Service is run properly and in ways that have been agreed by our Officers and Members. They demonstrate that the business is conducted in accordance with relevant legislation, government expectations, good practice and organisational policy.

Our Audit Programme is agreed by the Audit and Governance Committee at the start of the year. Progress against all actions open at the start of Quarter 4, or opened during the quarter, is detailed below.

Audit title and date	Audit Action	Date due (revised where applicable)	Priority	Status	Open / Closed
<b>Firefighter Pension Administration</b> 11/01/2021	2020:FFPA:01  We will develop written succession plans for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service once the changes to the workforce structure have been implemented.	30/04/2022	Low	<b>C</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<p><b>Progress:</b> The evolving pressure on pensions resulting from the McCloud/Sergeant ruling has meant that further staff are being recruited to WYPF to deal with forthcoming impacts, therefore altering staffing needs. This will impact succession plans and the view/ status of this will be picked up in the next audit with revised completion dates. The succession planning work was put on hold due to their restructure and bringing in new senior posts. Due to factors outside of the pension fund’s control this exercise has taken far longer than anticipated. Assurances provided that although there is no documented succession plan in place, WYPF regularly review staffing levels, knowledge and experience of staff, training requirements at management team meetings. Revised date provided of 30/4/22</p>					
<b>Governance and Risk Management</b> 17/03/2021	2020: Gov&RM:03  As part of the implementation of the risk management course, we will identify all staff responsible for risk management within the organisation. An exercise will then be completed to ensure appropriate risk training has been provided and a formal record will be retained to evidence this.	28/02/2022	Low	<b>C</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<p><b>Progress:</b> LMS course for Risk Management has gone live and has been targeted advertised to middle managers and SLT. A list of the staff included in this target advertising has been compiled and they have been given a deadline of the end of June 2022 to have completed this training. Data &amp; Performance are able to run reports off the LMS system and will chase anyone who doesn't meet this deadline for completion.</p>					



Audit title and date	Audit Action	Date due (revised where applicable)	Priority	Status	Open / Closed
<b>Performance Development Reviews</b>  01/07/2021	2020: PDR:02  We will update the training materials, including the PDR slides, to provide detailed information and guidance regarding SMART objectives, including examples of these.  Emphasising that objectives are SMART will also be covered within the appraisal communications to staff and line managers.	28/02/2022	Low	<b>C</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Progress:</b> Internal PDR completed, with findings fed back into the training materials being developed for staff and managers. PDR form has been revised and will be published in line with the training materials prior to the commencement of the next round of PDRs (commencing 1 April 2022)					
<b>Performance Management Hubs</b>  05/10/2021	2021: PMH: 04  The Hub Managers will review a sample of PDRs and confirm that they are aligned to Station Plan objectives	31/12/2021	Med	<b>C</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Progress:</b> Objectives were reviewed with an extension given for re-submitting. PDRs audited by HR and subsequently no longer being part of Station audit process as emailed by R,R&S. Endorsing managers to ensure objectives smart going forward into 2022/23.					
<b>Performance Management Hubs</b>  05/10/2021	2021: PMH: 05  The Service plan for 21/22 should be reviewed in a timely manner, with a progress update noted, within two weeks of the end of the relevant quarter.	31/12/2021	Low	<b>C</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Progress:</b> Service Delivery Area Managers to do so at end of each Quarter.					
<b>Performance Management Hubs</b>  05/10/2021	2021: PMH: 06  Actions noted in the RSG Action and Decisions Log will be clearly followed up when they are overdue to ensure that they are completed in a timely manner. Any overdue actions will be followed up and comments noted on the log to evidence this.	31/12/2021	Low	<b>C</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Progress:</b> New terms of reference / ways of working formed for RSG. RSG now reformed as OLAB, chaired by Area Manager Collaboration and Policy					



Audit title and date	Audit Action	Date due (revised where applicable)	Priority	Status	Open / Closed
<b>Performance Management Hubs</b> 05/10/2021	2021: PMH: 07  The RSG terms of reference should be formally reviewed.	31/12/2021	Low	<b>C</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Progress:</b> New terms of reference / ways of working formed for RSG. RSG now reformed as OLAB, chaired by Area Manager Collaboration and Policy					
<b>Performance Management Hubs</b> 05/10/2021	2021: PMH: 10  The Service should review its local performance measures to ensure that they are relevant and can be actioned where appropriate.  Any local actions assigned should be clearly separated from analysis in the performance reports.	31/12/2021	Low	<b>C</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Progress:</b> Refocus on station plans being more community focused, with non-quantitative measures. Discussions on re-branding Station Plans to Community Plans in 2022/23 will influence/create local community measures					
<b>Firefighter Pension Administration</b> 08/03/2022	2021: FPA:1  WYPF will ensure the review of the Retirement Quote and Retirement Actual checklist by an independent checker is documented on UPM. WYPF will document the pre-paper and reviewer	17/12/2021	Low	<b>C</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Progress:</b> this action is owned by WYPF and now complete					
<b>Firefighter Pension Administration</b> 08/03/2022	2021: FPA:2  WYPF will remind staff to close the process in UPM once overpayments have been recovered.	17/12/2021	Low	<b>C</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Progress:</b> this action is owned by WYPF and is now complete					
<b>Firefighter Pension Administration</b> 08/03/2022	2021: FPA:3  We will develop written succession plans for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service once the changes to the workforce structure have been implemented (provisionally in Q4 2020/21).	31/03/2022	Low	<b>C</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Progress:</b> Revised completion date as above, succession plan has been provided by WYPF.					



Audit title and date	Audit Action	Date due (revised where applicable)	Priority	Status	Open / Closed
<b>Payroll Provider - DataPlan</b>  08/03/2022	2021: PP: 1  Dataplan will include version control on the Operational Guide to Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Payroll	24/01/2022	Low	<b>C</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Progress:</b> this action is owned by WYPF and is now complete					



### HMICFRS ACTION PLAN

The HMICFRS report for RBFRS was published in 2019 rating us good in each of the three areas of effectiveness, efficiency and people. Improvements were identified within the report and the actions to address these are being tracked through this plan.

Section One: Effectiveness							
Improvement	Delivered via	Status					
		End 20/21		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Prevention evaluation to better understand benefits	Service Plans (Service Delivery & Collaboration and Policy)	A		A	A	A	A
Prevention quality assurance	Collaboration and Policy Service Plan	A		A	A	A	A
Protection quality assurance	Collaboration and Policy Service Plan	A		R	R	R	A
Addressing the burden of false alarms	Collaboration and Policy Service Plan	A		A	A	G	G
Keeping the public informed during ongoing incidents	Corporate Services Service Plan	G		G	G	G	G
Effective system to use for learning and debriefs	Collaboration and Policy Service Plan	G		A	A	A	A
Section two: Efficiency							
Improvement	Delivered via	Status					
		End 20/21		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Best use of available technology	ICT Strategy	G		G	G	G	G
Section three: People							
Improvement	Delivered via	Status					
		End 20/21		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Values and behaviours understood and demonstrated	HR & L&D Service Plan	G		G	G	G	G
Effective use of competence recording system	HR & L&D Service plan	G		G	G	G	G
Effective grievance procedures in place	HR & L&D Service plan	G		G	G	G	C
Staff are confident in using feedback mechanisms	Corporate Services Service plan	G		G	G	G	G
Process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders	HR & L&D Service plan	A		A	A	A	A



### Fire Standard Implementation Tracking

Updated 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022

		Fire Standard	Owner	FS consultation	FS publication date	Gap analysis	SLT Review	Action Plan in progress	Commentary
Standards in progress	1	Emergency Response Driving	Becci Jefferies	C	Feb-21	C	C	A↓	Action plan in place and being worked to, however due to lack of staff risk of progress in all areas and unknown impact on qualification status of any new staff successfully recruited. Risk on corporate register.
	2	Operational Response - Preparedness	Doug Buchanan	C	Feb-21	C	C	A↓	Action plan in place and being worked to. Review across Ops Competence, learning and preparedness needed to establish priorities. Majority of actions covered in competence and learning fire standards. Work still required to confirm where actions not covered and progress.
	3	Operational Response - Competence	Becci Jefferies	C	Feb-21	C	C	G =	Action plan in place and being worked to. Review across Ops Competence, learning and preparedness underway, further meetings scheduled to prioritise and co-ordinate actions.
	4	Operational Response - Learning	Jim Powell	C	Feb-21	C	C	G =	Action plan in place and being worked to. Review across Ops Competence, learning and preparedness underway, further meetings scheduled to prioritise and co-ordinate actions.
	5	Code of Ethics	Nikki Richards	C	May-21	C	C	G =	Action plan in place and being worked to
	6	Community Risk Management Planning	Katie Mills	C	May-21	C	C	NS	Gap analysis completed and awaiting review.

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	7	Fire Protection	Trig Thomas	C	Sep-21	A =	NS	NS	Gap analysis being completed and aiming for submission to May SLT.
	8	Prevention	Trig Thomas	C	Jul-21	A =	NS	NS	Gap analysis being completed and aiming for submission to April SLT.
	9	Safeguarding	Jim Powell	C	Jan-22	C	C	G =	Gap analysis prepared and being checked against the published standard, went to March 30th SLT review.
	10	Fire Investigation	Trig Thomas	C	Apr-22	G =	NS	NS	Fire standard published and gap analysis template reviewed with Jess. Review underway.
	11	Emergency Planning and Resilience	Jim Powell	C	Mar-22	NS	NS	NS	FSB consultation opened 12 Jan 2022. Response submitted
	12	Data requirements and management	Katie Mills	G =	May-22	NS	NS	NS	Consultation now opened
Not published	13	Leadership: Well led organisation							
	14	Leadership: Developing Leaders							
	15	Workforce Management	Becci Jefferies		Aug-22				

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## Appendix A – Additional Data

REPORTABLE SERVICE MEASURES					
<b>Percentage of occasions where time to answer emergency calls is within 10 seconds</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 97%</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	98.2%	97.7%	99.2%	97.6%	98.4%
Previous Year (20/21)	98.4%	98.3%	99.1%	98.9%	98.7%
Target	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
2021/22 Actual	98.8%	98.4%	99.1%	97.8%	98.6%↓
<b>Percentage of occasions where time to mobilise is within 90 seconds</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 80%</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	72%	73.5%	74.5%	72.1%	73.1%
Previous Year (20/21)	71.6%	70.8%	68.1%	70.9%	70.4%
Target	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
2021/22 Actual	70.6%	72.7%	74.4%	67.6%	71.4%↑
<b>Percentage of occasions where wholetime duty system crew turnout time is under 90 seconds</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 90%</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	91.9%	93.4%	94.2%	94.5%	93.4%
Previous Year (20/21)	95.9%	95.4%	95.3%	94.4%	95.3%
Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
2021/22 Actual	94.5%	94.6%	93.6%	94.3%	94.2%↓
<b>Percentage of occasions where On Call crews turnout is within the agreed timeframes</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 90%</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	69.4%	74.1%	74.2%	81.1%	75.1%
Previous Year (20/21)	94.2%	86.3%	91.4%	86.4%	89.5%
Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
2021/22 Actual	91.5%	91.9%	81.1%	85.9%	88.2%↓
<b>Percentage of occasions a second fire appliance attending a dwelling fire arrives within 2 minutes of the first appliance to arrive</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: Monitor</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	63.0%	61.6%	62.8%	73.3%	65.5%
Previous Year (20/21)	62.7%	56.2%	65.9%	57.5%	60.5%
Target	--	--	--	--	--
2021/22 Actual	64.9%	60.5 %	62.5%	46.5%	59.0%↓
<b>Percentage of occasions a second fire appliance attending a road traffic collision arrives within 2 minutes of the first appliance to arrive</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: Monitor</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	55.3%	54.0%	52.3%	58.3%	54.5%
Previous Year (20/21)	55.6%	52.7%	63.6%	55.3%	56.6%
Target	--	--	--	--	--
2021/22 Actual	69.8%	42.3%	37.8%	40.4%	48.2%↓



<b>Percentage of Safeguarding Referrals made to local authorities within 24 hours</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: 100%</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Previous Year (20/21)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2021/22 Actual	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%↔

<b>Number of Formal and Informal Fire Safety activities</b>					<b>2021/22 Target: Monitor</b>
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q4
Previous Year (19/20)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Previous Year (20/21)	4	58	88	19	169
Target	--	--	--	--	--
2021/22 Actual	99	94	98	77	368↑



### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Data Summary

The overall percentage of female staff in post has remained the same compared with last quarter, while the percentage of staff from an ethnic minority background has increased by 0.2 percentage points. The number of staff with a disability decreased by one, resulting from two leavers and one employee joining on a dual contract. There are also some changes to note across the organisational age profile – whilst most categories remain broadly comparable with changes in totals of five or less, if at all, it can be noted that there an increase of 16 in the 25 and under category.

Measure		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2020/21	Q4 20/21	Authorised establishment at the end of Q4 2021/22 (Number of authorised posts)
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	YTD		
STAFF IN POST	Wholetime	360	364	366	375	375	354	362
	Retained	71	68	59	62	62	73	78
	Control	43	42	40	42	42	43	39
	Green Book	184	175	172	171	171	174	168
	<b>Total Number of</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>647</b>
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2021/22 YTD	Q4 20/21	
STAFF TURNOVER	Wholetime	7	8	10	12	37	26	
	Retained	1	4	5	3	13	18	
	Control	0	1	2	4	7	3	
	Green Book	4	16	9	10	39	17	
	Total Number of	12	29	26	29	96	64	
	Staff in Post (SIP)	658	649	637	650	649	649	
	<b>Percentage of</b>	<b>1.82%</b>	<b>4.47%</b>	<b>4.08%</b>	<b>4.46%</b>	<b>14.79%</b>	9.86%	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2021/22 YTD	Target	YTD Q4 20/21
FEMALE STAFF	Wholetime	4.2%	5.8%	5.5%	5.3%	5.3%	4%	4.5%
	Retained	15.5%	16.2%	16.9%	16.1%	16.1%		16.4%
	Control	67.4%	69%	70.0%	73.8%	73.8%		67.4%
	Green Book	57.6%	57.1%	56.4%	56.7%	56.7%		57.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>24.5%</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>		<b>24%</b>
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2021/22 YTD	Target	YTD Q4 20/21
ETHNICITY FIGURES	Wholetime	5.0%	4.7%	4.1%	4.3%	4.3%	5%	5.4%
	Retained	2.8%	1.5%	1.7%	3.2%	3.2%		4.1%
	Control	4.7%	4.8%	5.0%	4.8%	4.8%		4.7%
	Green Book	13.6%	13.7%	12.8%	12.9%	12.9%		13.2%



	<b>Total</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>		<b>7.3%</b>
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	Measure	Q1 Actual	Q2 Actual	Q3 Actual	Q4 Actual	2021/22 YTD	Target	2020/21 YTD
<b>STAFF AGE PROFILE</b>	25 and Under	39	34	33	49	49	38	36
	26-35	174	178	168	168	168	162	168
	36-45	213	209	206	201	201	209	215
	46-55	188	181	177	182	182	191	184
	56-65	39	42	48	44	44	33	37
	66 and Over	5	5	5	6	6	1	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>644</b>

**Staff Ethnicity Profile**

Ethnicity	Wholetime	Retained	Control	Green Book	All Staff
White British	359	60	39	146	604
Other Ethnicity	16	2	2	22	42
Unknown	0	0	1	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>650</b>

Ethnicity	Number of Staff
Asian or British Asian: Indian	3
Asian or British Asian: Other	3
Black or Black British African	3
Black or Black British Caribbean	4
Chinese	1
Mixed White and Asian	1
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	2
Other	1
Other Mixed	3
Unknown	4
White British	604
White Irish	3
White Other	17
Asian or British Asian: Pakistani	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>650</b>





**Staff Age Profile**

Age Group	Wholetime	Retained	Control	Green Book	Grand Total
25 and Under	21	7	8	13	49
26 - 35	93	24	14	37	168
36 - 45	136	18	8	39	201
46 - 55	113	9	11	49	182
56 - 65	12	4	1	27	44
66 and Over	0	0	0	6	6
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>650</b>

**Staff Gender Profile**

Gender	Wholetime	Retained	Control	Green Book	All Staff
Female	20	10	31	97	158
Male	355	52	11	74	492
Other	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>650</b>



## Appendix B – 2021-22 Annual Objectives

- 1) We will provide education and advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.
- 2) We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies.
- 3) We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.
- 4) We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.
- 5) We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.
- 6) We will work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.
- 7) We will recruit, train and develop our people to ensure we create a safe, professional and capable workforce that are supported to become the best public servants they can be for the residents of Berkshire.
- 8) We will manage RBFRS in accordance with best practice, understanding and continuous improvement, learning from events and being transparent in our compliance.
- 9) We will be strong and visible in our leadership in developing a diverse and inclusive 'one team' culture where everyone's contribution is valued and positive behaviours are recognised.
- 10) We will explore collaboration opportunities to ensure we deliver effective and efficient services to the people we serve.



## Appendix C - Performance Measures and Definitions

### Service Provision

ID	Measure	Definition
1	Number of fire deaths in accidental dwelling fires	The number of deaths that occur as a result of an accidental dwelling fire, even when the death occurs weeks or months later.
2	Number of non-fatal fire casualties in accidental dwelling fires	The number of non-fatal casualties that occur as a result of an accidental dwelling fire. This includes a person or persons whose injuries may be slight or serious and require hospital treatment and which are attributed to the accidental dwelling fire.
3	The number of deliberate primary fires	The total number of primary fires, where it has been identified that the fire was started deliberately.
4	The number of deliberate secondary fires	The total number of secondary fires, where it has been identified that the fire was started deliberately.
Prevention		
5	Number of Safe and Well Visits (S&Ws) delivered to those with individual characteristics making them at higher risk of death in the event of an accidental dwelling fire	A Safe and Well Visit is a free service that we provide to eligible residents. Safe and Well Visits are tailored to individual needs, relating to health and wellbeing, as well as fire risk reduction. A Safe and Well Visit will take place in the home and can be arranged at a convenient time.
6	Number of Safe and Well Visits (S&Ws) delivered to those who live in households with characteristics associated with higher risk of injury in accidental dwelling fires.	A Safe and Well Visit is a free service that we provide to eligible residents. Safe and Well Visits are tailored to individual needs, relating to health and wellbeing, as well as fire risk reduction. A Safe and Well Visit will take place in the home and can be arranged at a convenient time.



7	Percentage of Safe and Well referrals, where there has been a threat or incidence of arson, completed within 48 hours	When RBFRS are made aware of the threat or incidence of arson against an individual(s) a Safe and Well Visit should be conducted, wherever possible, within 48 hours.
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ID	Measure	Definition
Protection		
8	Total Number of Full Fire Safety Audits carried out	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. This is the total number of Full Fire Safety Audits carried out in premises in Berkshire. This is calculated once the service has been closed by RBFRS and only includes the initial Full Fire Safety Audit.
9	Percentage of Fire Safety Audits with a 'Broadly Compliant' result.	The percentage of closed Fire Safety Audits carried out in commercial premises, where the result was 'Broadly Compliant' (satisfactory) and no further action or follow-up was required.
10	Percentage success when cases go to court.	The percentage of cases prosecuted following Fire Safety Audits that result in a successful outcome.
11	Percentage of statutory fire safety consultations completed within the required timeframes	Statutory fire consultations have a legally defined timeframe in which they must be completed and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensing</li> <li>• Building regulations</li> <li>• Building regulations approved supplier</li> </ul>
12	The number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received	Automatic Fire Alarm calls are calls from Alarm systems and have a higher likelihood of being a false alarm.
13	The percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm calls where RBFRS did not attend.	This is the number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received where we did not attend. In some circumstances we are able to seek confirmation that this is not a false alarm, before attending.



ID	Measure	Definition
Response		
14	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 time the first fire engine (appliance) arrives at the scene of the emergency incident, and on how many occasions RBFRS does this in under 10 minutes.
15	Percentage of full shifts where there is adequate crewing on all wholetime frontline pumping appliances	This is the percentage of shifts (day or night) where there is sufficient minimum qualified firefighters (four personnel) on all wholetime pumping appliances (fire engines). A wholetime frontline pumping appliance is available 24/7, 365 days a year.
16	Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)	This is the percentage of hours where there is sufficient minimum qualified firefighters (four personnel) on on-call pumping appliances (fire engines). On-call frontline pumping appliances are crewed mainly by on-call fire fighters who are based at stations in more rural locations, and are ready to leave their place of work or home and attend emergencies from the local retained station, when they receive the call.
Customer Feedback		
17	Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the overall service	Results are from a customer feedback questionnaire which is sent to those who have experienced a dwelling fire asking about their satisfaction and experience with the service they received from RBFRS.
18	Percentage of commercial respondents satisfied with the overall service	Results are from a customer feedback questionnaire which is sent to business owners/ managers who have experienced a fire in their commercial premises asking about their satisfaction and experience with the service they received from RBFRS.
19	Percentage of respondents satisfied with the services with regards to Fire Safety Audits	Results are from a customer feedback questionnaire which is sent to business owners/ managers who have had a full fire safety audit, asking about their satisfaction and experience with the service they received from RBFRS.



20	Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the service regards their Safe and Well Visit	Results are from a customer feedback questionnaire which is sent to a sample of individuals who have received a Safe and Well Visit and asks about their satisfaction and experience with the service they received from RBFRS.
21	Number of complaints received	The number of complaints made to RBFRS about any aspect of our service or staff.
22	Number of compliments received	The number of compliments received by RBFRS about any aspect of our service or staff.

## Corporate Health

ID	Measure	Definition
Human Resources and Learning & Development		
23	Percentage of working time lost to sickness across all staff groups	This measure looks at sickness across the whole organisation and the percentage of time lost, based on the number of working hours available to the organisation. This will not include COVID-19 related absences where an individual is isolating but not symptomatic.
24	Percentage of eligible operational staff successfully completing fitness test	The measure reflects the percentage of eligible operational personnel who have successfully completed their fitness test. Individuals who are not eligible, include those on long-term sick or light duties.
25	Percentage of eligible staff with Personal Development Reviews	This measure reflects the percentage of eligible employees who have had a Personal Development Review meeting. Eligible staff are those who have completed their initial probation period, before the end of the PDR period and who have not been absent for over 50% of the reporting period. Employees moving within the Organisation to new roles on trial or probation periods will still be eligible for a PDR.
26	Percentage of eligible operational staff in qualification	This measure examines performance in the key qualifications, outlined in the eight core areas of the <a href="#">Fire Professional Framework</a> ,



		required by staff to maintain effective service delivery.
<b>ID</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Definition</b>
27	Number of formal grievances	The number of formal grievances raised by staff under the Grievance, Bullying and Harrassment Policy.
Health and Safety		
28	Number of RIDDOR accidents	RIDDOR( <i>Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations</i> ) are more serious injury accidents.
Finance and Procurement		
29	Percentage of spend subject to competition	This measure looks at all items of expenditure over £10k as RBFA must obtain quotes or tenders for all these purchases. This excludes statutory payments such as local authority charges or HMRC.
30	Compliant spend as a percentage of overall spend	This measure calculates the supplier spend that is in a compliant contract as a percentage of the total spend to external bodies and suppliers (as per RBFA contract regulations).
Freedom of Information		
31	Number of Information Commissioner assessments finding that the Service has breached Information Rights Legislation (Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Information Regulations or Data Protection Legislation)	RBFRS are required to conform to Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. The Information Commissioner is responsible for determining compliance and issuing advice or penalties. This measure includes only incidents where there is a finding of a breach (not complaints which are subsequently dismissed).

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

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