



**Agenda
for the Meeting
of the
Extraordinary Royal Berkshire Fire
Authority**

Tuesday, 9th July, 2024

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

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



MEETING: Extraordinary Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Meeting

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, 9th July, 2024 at 6.30 pm

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

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

To: Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority:

Councillor Greg Bello	Councillor Dave McElroy
Councillor Dennis Benneyworth	Councillor Owen Jeffery
Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle	Councillor Neel Rana
Councillor Jeff Brooks	Councillor Joshua Reynolds
Councillor Tricia Brown	Councillor Zafar Satti
Councillor Billy Drummond	Councillor Wayne Smith
Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	Councillor Helen Taylor
Councillor Peter Frewer	Councillor Lou Timlin
Councillor Paul Gittings	Councillor Simon Werner
Councillor Wendy Griffith	

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

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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

1. 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.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2024 (Pages 7 - 14)

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 24 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Petitions and Questions from the Public under Standing Orders 19 and 25

Purpose:

To receive any questions from members of the public, in accordance with Standing Orders 19 and 25.

4. Receipt of Announcements

Purpose:

To receive any announcements from the Chair or the Chief Fire Officer.

5. Issues arising from the Audit and Governance Committee

Recommendation:

That it be noted that no reports have been referred by the Audit and Governance Committee.

6. Questions from Members under Standing Order 30

Purpose:

To receive any questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

7. Notices of Motion under Standing Order 44

Purpose:

To receive any notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

8. Recommendations of Committees

Recommendation:

That it be noted no recommendations received from Committees.

9. Automatic Fire Alarms Consultation 2024 - Results and Summary Report
(Pages 15 - 164)

Purpose:

To note and consider the results of the AFA consultation as set out in the summary report at Appendix A, and agree with the member Task and Finish Group recommendation to adopt Option 3.

10. Annual Report 2022/23 *(Pages 165 - 204)*

Purpose:

To note the Annual Report prior to external publication.

11. Forward Plan *(Pages 205 - 208)*

Recommendation:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

12. Minutes of the Standing Committees

Recommendation:

To note Minutes of recent meetings were published on RBFRS website
<http://www.rbfrs.co.uk/about-us/fire-authority/fire-authority-meetings/>

13. Date of the next Meeting

Wednesday 13 November 2024, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Held on Monday, 24th June, 2024 at 7.00 pm

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

- Members:** (*present)
- * Councillor Greg Bello
 - * Councillor Dennis Benneyworth
 - Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
 - Councillor Jeff Brooks
 - * Councillor Tricia Brown
 - Councillor Billy Drummond
 - * Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
 - * Councillor Peter Frewer
 - * Councillor Paul Gittings
 - Councillor Wendy Griffith
 - * Councillor Dave McElroy
 - * Councillor Owen Jeffery
 - Councillor Neel Rana
 - * Councillor Joshua Reynolds
 - * Councillor Wayne Smith
 - * Councillor Helen Taylor
 - * Councillor Lou Timlin
 - * Councillor Simon Werner
 - * Councillor Zafar Satti

In Attendance: Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
Paul Bremble (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
Katie Mills (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)
Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, DChEx)
Christian Riley (Communications and Engagement Officer)
Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)

Action

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR 2024/25 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Councillor Paul Gittings opened the meeting as 2023/24 Vice-Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA). He requested for nominations for the position of Chair. One nomination was received for Chair. Councillor Simon Werner nominated Councillor Jeff Brooks. Seconded by Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey.

There being no other nominations, it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Jeff Brooks be elected Chair of RBFA for the 24/25 Municipal Year.

Councillor Jeff Brooks read the following statement, '*I, Councillor Jeff Brooks*

having been elected to the office of Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority declare that I take that office upon myself and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability’.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR FOR 2024/25 MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Chair sought nominations for Vice –Chair. One nomination was received. Councillor Brown nominated Councillor Paul Gittings and it was seconded by the Chair.

There being no other nominations, it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Paul Gittings be elected Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

The Vice-Chair read the following statement, ‘*I, Councillor Paul Gittings having been elected to the office of Vice-Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority declare that I take that office upon myself and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability’.*

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Tina McKenzie-Boyle, Billy Drummond, Wendy Griffith and Neel Rana.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest from Members in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority’s Local Code of Conduct.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 APRIL 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2024, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

6. PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDERS 19 AND 25

There were no petitions and questions from the Public under Standing Orders 19 and 25.

7. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed newly appointed Members on behalf of the Fire Authority,

he extended a warm welcome to Councillors Greg Bello, Neel Rana, Zafar Satti, Wayne Smith and Lou Timlin.

The Chair gave his best wishes to the following outgoing Members, Mike Smith, Haqeeq Dar, Robert Stedmond, Ishrat Shah, Pauline Helliard-Symons and Morag Malvern.

8. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

There were no issues arising from the Audit and Governance Committee.

9. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

11. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, LEAD MEMBER, MEMBER CHAMPIONS, WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Graham Britten, Monitoring Officer (MO), introduced the report and advised each Political Group had submitted their nominations. He tabled amended nominations received from the Liberal Democrat Group for the appointment of Committees, Lead Members, Member Champions, Working Parties and Outside Bodies.

The Chair moved recommendation 2.1 and it was seconded by the Vice-Chair. In response to a question from Councillor Tricia Brown, Graham Britten explained section n) of the Terms of Reference mandated it was the function of the Fire Authority to change the name of '*Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service*'.

On being put to the vote, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the amended Fire Authority Terms of Reference be approved.

The Chair moved recommendation 2.2 and it was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

On being put to the vote, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Development Lead Member role is effective from 1 July 2024, in line with the Member Scheme of Allowance approved by the Fire Authority on 8 November 2023.

The Chair moved recommendation 2.3 and 2.4 consecutively, and it was

seconded by the Vice-Chair.

On being put to the vote, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The nominations received from Group Leaders onto the Audit and Governance Committee and Management Committee be appointed. (Table 5)
- 2) The ungrouped Members (Green and Independent Member) onto the ninth seat of Audit and Governance Committee, and eleventh seat of Management Committee be appointed. (Table 5).

Table 5

<p><i>Audit and Governance Committee (9 seats)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (Lib Dem) Cllr Owen Jeffery 2. (Lib Dem) Cllr Lou Timlin 3. (Lib Dem) Cllr Billy Drummond 4. (Lab) Cllr Tricia Brown 5. (Lab) Cllr Greg Bello 6. (Lab) Slough Member 7. (Con) Cllr Dennis Benneyworth 8. (Con) Cllr Neel Rana 9. (Green) Cllr Dave McElroy
<p><i>Management Committee (11 seats)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (Lib Dem) Cllr Jeff Brooks 2. (Lib Dem) Cllr Joshua Reynolds 3. (Lib Dem) Cllr Rachelle Shepherd DuBey 4. Lib Dem) Cllr Simon Werner 5. (Lab) Cllr Paul Gittings 6. (Lab) Cllr Wendy Griffith 7. (Lab) Cllr Peter Frewer 8. (Con) Cllr Tina McKenzie-Boyle 9. (Con) Cllr Wayne Smith 10. (Con) Cllr Zafar Satti 11. (Independent) Cllr Helen Taylor

Following clarification of the typo in recommendation 2.5 which should be amended to **'NOTE'** instead of **'APPROVE'**. The Chair moved recommendation 2.5, and it was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

On being put to the vote, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** the roles to attract Special Responsibility Allowances be noted. (Table 6)

Position
Chair of Authority
Vice-Chair of Authority
Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee Chair (24/25)
Opposition Leader (s)
Finance Lead
Collaboration Lead
Community Risk Management Plan Lead
Strategic Assets and Sustainability Lead
Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Development Lead
Community Safety Champion

In referring to table 6, where there was more than one nomination for a position, it was put to the vote.

Two nominations (Councillors Wendy Griffith and Tina McKenzie-Boyle) were received for the position of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Development Lead, and two nominations were received for the position of Community Safety Champion (Councillors Owen Jeffery and Zafar Satti).

On being put to the vote respectively, it was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) Councillor Wendy Griffith be appointed as Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Development Lead;
- 2) Councillor Owen Jeffery be appointed as Community Safety Champion.
- 3) All the other nominations for the Special Responsibility Allowance roles be appointed (Table 6)

Table 6

Position	
Chair of Authority	Cllr Jeff Brooks
Vice-Chair of Authority	<i>Cllr Paul Gittings</i>
Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee Chair (24/25)	<i>Cllr Peter Frewer</i>
Opposition Leader (s)	<i>Cllrs Paul Gittings and Tina McKenzie-Boyle</i>
Finance Lead	Cllr Joshua Reynolds

Collaboration Lead	Cllr Simon Werner
Community Risk Management Plan Lead	<i>Cllr Paul Gittings</i>
Strategic Assets and Sustainability Lead	Cllr Rachelle Shepherd DuBey
Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Development Lead	<i>Cllr Wendy Griffith</i>
Community Safety Champion	Cllr Owen Jeffery

The Chair moved recommendation 2.6, and it was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

In referring to table 7, where there was more than one nomination for the position of Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee representatives and as TVFCS Joint Committee substitutes, it was put to the vote.

Three nominations were received for two TVFCS Joint Committee seats (Councillors Peter Frewer, Simon Werner and Dennis Benneyworth), and three nominations were received for two TVFCS Joint Committee substitute seats (Councillors Dennis Benneyworth, Owen Jeffery and Paul Gittings)

In referring to Table 9, where there was more than one nomination for the position of Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission representative, it was put to the vote.

Two nominations were received for Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission seat (1 seat), Councillors Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Tina McKenzie-Boyle).

On being put to the vote respectively, it was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) Councillors Peter Frewer and Simon Werner be appointed onto TVFCS Joint Committee;
- 2) Councillors Owen Jeffery and Paul Gittings be appointed as TVFCS Joint Committee Substitutes;
- 3) Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey be appointed as LGA Fire Commission representative; and
- 4) The nominations received for the appointments listed in Tables 7 – 10 be agreed.

Table 7

Position	
----------	--

TVFCS Joint Committee (2 seats)	<i>Cllr Peter Frewer, Cllr Simon Werner</i>
Two substitute Members for TVFCS Joint Committee	<i>Cllr Owen Jeffrey and Cllr Paul Gittings</i>

Table 8

Position	
Budget Working Party - minimum three Members	<i>Cllrs Paul Gittings, Tricia Brown, Dennis Benneyworth, Joshua Reynolds and Jeff Brooks</i>
Estates Development and Sustainability Working Group - minimum three Members	<i>Cllrs Greg Bello, Wayne Smith; Lou Timlin and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey</i>

Table 9

Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission representative (1 seat)*	Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Substitute Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission representative *	Cllr Paul Gittings

Table 10

Honorary Armed Forces Champion*	Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
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**These roles do not attract a special responsibility allowance.*

The Chair moved recommendation 2.7, and it was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

On being put to the vote, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** the amended Role Descriptions for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members (attached as Appendix B) be agreed.

12. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

13. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that it be noted the Minutes of recent meetings were published on RBFRS website.

14. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting on Tuesday 9 July 2024, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

(The meeting concluded at 7.30pm)

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	EXTRAORDINARY FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	9 JULY 2024
SUBJECT	AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARMS CONSULTATION 2024 – RESULTS AND SUMMARY REPORT
LEAD OFFICER	PAUL BREMBLE, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND JIM POWELL, AREA MANAGER COLLABORATION AND POLICY
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR PAUL GITTINGS
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Fire Authority members with the results of the Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) consultation which ran from 4 March 2024 – 13 May 2024.
- 1.2 The results are presented in the summary report at Appendix A and will enable members to conscientiously consider the views of respondents prior to making a decision on the proposed changes to the way Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) responds to AFAs.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE** and **CONSIDER** the results of the AFA consultation as set out in the summary report at appendix A.
- 2.2 **AGREE** with the member Task and Finish Group recommendation to adopt Option 3.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 At the Fire Authority meeting on 15 February 2024, the Authority agreed to consult the public on changes to the way RBFRS responds to Automatic Fire Alarms.

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- 3.2 False Alarms make up a significant proportion of the incidents RBFRS attend, and this was noted by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) who concluded that "the service should ensure it addresses effectively the burden of false alarms (termed 'unwanted fire signals')."
- 3.3 The Fire Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) set out a priority to address the burden of Automatic Fire Alarms on the service and the public "We will work with businesses to educate them on their responsibility under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Fire Safety Order 2005 to reduce the impact of unwanted fire signals (automatic fire alarms) on our operational crews"
- 3.4 False Alarms account for 45% of all incidents and 99.3% of Automatic Fire Alarm notifications require no action by the service. Of those that were actual incidents, particularly in the premises subject to the consultation, the impact was minor. Attending these types of incidents disrupts essential activities which are undertaken daily by our Firefighters.
- 3.5 The evidence suggests that by changing the way we respond to some of these incidents, as set out in the consultation document, the service could reduce this disruption and provide more time for those key activities which would have greater benefits for our communities and across the service.
- 3.6 The consultation proposed three options and are summarised (from page 12 of the summary report (page 30 of the agenda pack)) as:
- 3.7 **Option 1 – We will stop automatically sending a fire engine to an automatic fire alarm notification at buildings in Category A when there is no confirmed fire, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.**
- 3.8 **Option 2 - We will stop automatically sending a fire engine to an automatic fire alarm notification at buildings in Category A when there is no confirmed fire, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.**
- We will stop automatically sending a fire engine to an automatic fire alarm notification at buildings in Category B between 9am and 6pm, 365 days of the year, when the buildings are likely to be occupied and therefore the Responsible Person can confirm if there is an emergency response needed.**
- 3.9 **Option 3 - We will stop automatically sending a fire engine to an automatic fire alarm notification at buildings in Category A when there is no confirmed fire, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.**
- We will stop automatically sending a fire engine to an automatic fire alarm notification at buildings in Category B when there is no confirmed fire, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.**
- 3.10 For clarity and in respect of all the above options - **If a fire is confirmed or we receive a 999 call, we will immediately send a fire engine. We will continue to send fire engines to automatic fire alarm notifications from residential homes.**

- 3.11 The summary report sets out the responses to these options and overall, the most preferred option was option 2, with Option 3 second and Option 1 a close third preference overall.
- 3.12 The report also explores the distribution of peoples second and third choices and preferences related to the make up of respondents. The majority of Businesses, schools and the public preferred Option 2 whereas the majority of RBFRS Staff preferred option. 3
- 3.13 As with the initial consultation process, a member task and finish group was convened to carefully consider the consultation results and propose a recommendation.
- 3.14 The outcome of this deliberation was a proposal to recommend Option 3, based on the following rationale:
- 3.15 Service data tells us that for the types of property included in this option, over 99% of AFA activations are false alarms and for those that are not false alarms the impact is low. Furthermore, our data also tells us that we do not see any injuries related to AFA activations in these sort of buildings. That is primarily because they are required by law to have fire safety measures in place that include fire detection, means of escape and evacuation procedures and that these measures are the responsibility of the 'Responsible Person'¹.
- 3.16 The service recognises that the majority of respondents who chose Option 2 as their first preference were from businesses, schools and the general public. Broadly speaking this seems to be around the perceived increase in risk of not attending AFAs at night, and the potential for a delayed response should an actual fire occur where RBFRS has not attended the initial call to an AFA. The data indicates that this is a low risk. To further mitigate this issue, RBFRS will deliver a comprehensive communications and engagement plan to work with schools, businesses and so on to ensure they understand what is required of them and that they have time to put appropriate measures in place e.g. effective keyholder arrangements, in line with their duties as a Responsible Person.
- 3.17 As described in the consultation document, the primary aim of this initiative is to enable the service to manage risk in the most effective and appropriate way. The data indicates that Option 3 will provide the most benefit in terms of reducing the impact and disruption to frontline crews attending false alarms. This ensures we can deliver the best service to the public by having resources available when needed and supporting Firefighter safety through less disruption and more time for operational training and risk visits. As stated in the consultation document, this initiative is not

¹ **Meaning of “responsible person”**

3. In this Order “responsible person” means—

(a) in relation to a workplace, the employer, if the workplace is to any extent under his control;

(b) in relation to any premises not falling within paragraph (a)—

(i) the person who has control of the premises (as occupier or otherwise) in connection with the carrying on by him of a trade, business or other undertaking (for profit or not); or

(ii) the owner, where the person in control of the premises does not have control in connection with the carrying on by that person of a trade, business or other undertaking.

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about saving money. Therefore, the recommendation of Option 3 has no financial bearing.

- 3.18 Implementation and delivery of Option 3 is likely to be more effective than Option 2. This is because Option 2 splits Category A and B buildings by time of day. This will present Fire Control Operators with more challenges in making mobilising decisions. This could mean that it would be more challenging to realise the benefits indicated in the data. These challenges are significantly reduced in Option 3 which does not differentiate deployment conditions by time of day. Option 3 was the most preferred option of TVFCS staff who responded to the consultation.
- 3.19 The recommendation of Option 3 was also considered in light of developments in the sector, where FRS across the country are making similar decisions. Option 3, or very similar ways of working, have already been adopted by many services. Furthermore, a number of services have gone further, including neighbouring Surrey Fire and Rescue service, who will no longer attend AFAs in [residential or domestic properties](#). Members of the task and finish group felt that Option 3 provided the right balance of risk both locally and against the national picture.
- 3.20 This movement in the sector towards reducing the burden of false alarms also means that the national benchmark for AFA/false alarm attendance, used by HMICFRS to assess how well FRS are performing, will continue to drop as more and more services take decisions to reduce or stop attendance to Automatic Fire Alarms. RBFRS was significantly above that benchmark, as set out in the HMICFRS report from 2021/22, and the data indicates that Option 3 provides the most benefit in terms of working towards meeting that benchmark.
- 3.21 For these reasons the Task and Finish group determined that Option 3 should be recommended to the Fire Authority, acknowledging that members would still need to conscientiously consider both this recommendation and the full results of consultation (Appendix A) at Fire Authority Meeting, prior to making a final decision.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Prevention: We will reduce the risk to our communities through our partnership duties and prevention education activities, ensuring that our services are accessible to all.
- 4.2 Response: We will ensure that our people are trained and resources are located to provide the most effective response and to have a positive impact on incidents in our communities.
- 4.4 Resilience: We will ensure we are resilient and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no additional financial burdens in delivering any of the options presented in the consultation.

- 5.2 There may be some minor savings in fuel costs due to reduced appliance movements however the proposed changes do not offer monetary savings and this has not been a driving factor in developing the proposals. The focus is solely on reducing risk by minimising disruption to those key activities we know will provide the most benefit in keeping people safe.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is a legal requirement under Section 7(2)(c) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to “make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel”, in order to discharge its obligations under section 7(1) to extinguish fires in its area and protecting life and property in the event of fires in its area.
- 6.2 The obligations under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 are ‘target duties’ and not actionable, by someone suffering loss, for breach of duty; and the English courts have consistently ruled along the lines that no duty of care arises (save in circumstances where personnel attend and make matters worse).
- 6.3 The principles established are that a fire and rescue authority may be liable where its negligent acts cause physical harm, but owes no positive duties to act to protect others from harm in the absence of a specific voluntary assumption of responsibility [Capital and Counties Plc v Hampshire CC \[1997\] EWCA CIV 3091](#) ‘In our judgment the fire brigade are not under a common law duty to answer the call for help and are not under a duty to take care to do so. If therefore they fail to turn up or fail to turn up in time because they have carelessly misunderstood the message, got lost on the way or run into a tree, they are not liable.’
- 6.4 In responding to calls English courts have distinguished the fire and rescue duties from ambulance service obligations as the ambulance service is an arm of the health service which might owe a duty of care in similar circumstances. In [Kent v Griffiths & Ors \[2000\] EWCA Civ 3017 \(3 February 2000\)](#) it was held that it was arguable that, once a 999 call was accepted, a relationship of sufficient proximity was established between the caller and the ambulance service and, whilst the ambulance service operated in difficult circumstances, it was possible that a court would find that it was fair, just and reasonable to impose a duty of care on it
- 6.5 The legal obligations concerning the requirement to consult and how consultation should be conducted are set out in the ‘Legal obligations’ section of the consultation document. It defines the requirement to consult on CRMP matters as set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England and describes the common law framework set out in the four [Gunning Principles](#) (R v London Borough of Brent [1985] 84 LGR 168).

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An initial impact assessment has been carried out and will be reviewed as part of the implementation of the selected option.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The analysis of any implications are outlined in the consultation document at Appendix A. Essentially this change represents a low risk to the public and will enable more time for other risk mitigation activity to occur, such as Safe and Well visits.
- 8.2 This proposal will not change the fundamental position that RBFRS will always mobilise resources where there is a confirmed fire.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 AFA mobilisations are managed and delivered on behalf of RBFRS by Thames Valley Fire Control Service, a collaboration between Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority, Oxfordshire County Council and Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.
- 9.2 Officers have been working closely with partners in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service to work towards an aligned policy for mobilising to AFAs.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Chief Fire Officer
- 10.2 Chief Financial Officer
- 10.3 Monitoring Officer

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation - [Minutes of the meeting of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority 15 February 2024 \[minute 47\]](#)

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – Automatic Fire Alarms Consultation 2024 – Summary report
- 12.2 Appendix B – Buckinghamshire FRS Consultation Response
- 12.3 Appendix C – Oxfordshire FRS Consultation Response
- 12.4 Appendix D – Full Survey closing report

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Area Manager Paul Bremble bremblep@rbfrs.co.uk
- 13.2 Area Manager Jim Powell powellj@rbfrs.co.uk



Automatic Fire Alarms 2024 Consultation Report





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Consultation Headlines

 **Total Responses**
389

 **Total number of comments received**
632

 **Percentage of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals**
72.2%



Resident responses by Authority:

Bracknell Forest	15.1%
Reading	21.2%
Slough	4.9%
West Berkshire	22.1%
Windsor and Maidenhead	13.6%
Wokingham	23%

 **118,115** reached on Facebook, Twitter and Linked In.

2,913 Engagements

 **1,476** website page views

152 intranet page views

10 virtual briefing sessions

 **26%** of respondents said they are employees

 **85.8%** of respondents identified as Berkshire residents

 **3.2%** of responses were from Councillors of Members of Parliament

 **11.9%** of respondents said they represent a business

 **12.7%** of respondents were responding on behalf of a school

 **6.7%** responded on behalf of other groups and organisations



Executive Summary and conclusion

This report considers the findings of the 2024 Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) consultation. The consultation asked respondents to prioritise, assess and provide commentary on three options for changing the way Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFERS) responds to AFAs.

A previous RBFERS AFA consultation and subsequent policy change amended the call challenging of AFA's. This change had little to no impact. The need to address this issue has been an ongoing concern for RBFERS, as 45% of all incidents are attributed to AFA. Every year we attend around 2300 false alarms generated by AFA systems in Berkshire. This is a significant commitment of time to the service at AFA's. This time could be utilised to carry out risk critical activities such as training, safe and well visits and attending incidents where people are at risk, which in turn would help make the communities of Berkshire safer.

Attending AFAs does little to reduce risk, fewer than 1% of AFAs are caused by fires. Our data shows that those that were subsequently found to be fires were low consequence events. Within our data there is little evidence of property damage and no recorded fatalities at fires that were initially mobilised to as AFAs. The intent of the proposed policy change is to address community and firefighter risk by reducing attendance at AFAs. This is intended to facilitate more operational training, create more opportunity for safe and well visits with Berkshire's most vulnerable residents and create more opportunity for information gathering at high-risk premises.

It was identified as a priority to review our response to AFAs within our Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan 2023-27.

Our most recent His Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection highlighted:

The service should ensure it monitors and evaluates its revised approach to the burden of false alarms (termed 'unwanted fire signals').

The consultation team separated premises into four categories, based on risk (using factors such as occupancy type) and asked respondents to assess how potential changes to how RBFERS will respond using variables based on premises type and time of day.

The 10-week public consultation ran from March to May 2024. There were 389 responses which are analysed in detail in the body of the report. Part 1 of the report considers the proposals and part 2 assesses the consultation process and the demographics of the respondents.



Conclusion

The survey showed that respondents are overwhelmingly in favour of the overall aim of the proposals, with 72.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Option 2 was the most preferable choice with option 3 marginally preferred over option 1.

Interestingly, Berkshire residents, businesses, organisations, and schools prioritised option 2 where RBFRS employees (uniformed, non-uniformed, wholetime, on-call and Thames Valley Fire Control) showed a strong preference for option 3.

Although most respondents are in favour of the overall proposals there was a minority of respondents that are actively opposed. Those respondents that are opposed to change cite increased risk and express frustration and anger with the lack of a no change option. Concerns were also raised about public safety and a perceived lack of transparency in the consultation process.

The consultation asked several free text questions. These have generated insight into the sentiments of respondents and have been analysed in full. The qualitative data set has generated an engagement plan intended to support implementation should a change be approved by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority. The polarisation of the audience and the nature of questions asked by respondents indicates that there is a requirement for a comprehensive communication plan and extensive stakeholder engagement alongside continuing education, enforcement, and awareness activities.

The management of risk in this area is a joint endeavour, with building occupiers, owners and managers needing information and support on an ongoing basis. RBFRS will need to be very clear about accountability and the responsibility of people in charge of buildings should any of the proposals be agreed by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.



Introduction

This report considers the findings of a public consultation which sought to gather feedback from stakeholders on a set of proposals to change the way RBFRS responds to automatic fire alarms (AFAs). RBFRS currently mobilises an emergency response to more AFAs than the national average when compared to other fire and rescue services. Home Office data shows that false alarms make up 45% of incidents in Berkshire, and 39% of incidents in England as a whole. This has been highlighted as an area for improvement by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services during the service's previous two inspections.

The need to address the way RBFRS mobilises resources to this incident type was consulted upon as part of the 2023-27 Community Risk Management Plan public consultation, which was agreed by Royal Berkshire Fire authority in 2023.

This current consultation provided three options for consideration and asked respondents to rank their preferences, provide a rationale for their choice and suggest improvements to and concerns about the proposals.

Premises types have been divided into four groups, with higher risk categories, such as those with a sleeping risk and private dwellings, being outside of the scope of this consultation. This consultation only concerns lower risk property types.

The intention of the proposals is to reduce attendance to AFA's at lower risk premises. This will help the service to manage risk by releasing valuable time for operational crews to carry out activities including operational training, safe and well visits with residents at high risk of fire and operational risk information gathering, which in turn will increase productivity.

Any change in operational response is not a no risk decision. However, analysis of incident data shows that fewer than 1% of AFAs are fires. All the fires that were initially attended as AFAs were small and caused little property damage and no loss of life.

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority are requested to conscientiously consider the consultation report and decide whether to proceed with one of the options. The consultation did not offer a no change option as RBFRS considers that a degree of change is necessary. This echoes the sentiment of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services.



Part 1: Our consultation

We held a 10-week public consultation from March to May 2024 on Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service responds to Automatic Fire Alarms. RBFRS needs to change the way it responds to automatic fire alarm notifications to ensure communities and firefighters are kept safe. This is because 99% of the automatic fire alarm calls received are false alarms. Attending these types of incidents takes time and resource and therefore causes significant disruption to the delivery of essential services and training.

Why did we consult?

In Berkshire, false alarms make up 45% of the incidents we attend. Most of these calls come from commercial automatic fire detection systems. We refer to these as automatic fire alarms (AFAs). In 2022-23 alone, we attended 2,294 AFAs. On 99% of these calls (in the buildings we are consulting on), no action was required by RBFRS as there was no fire.

The 1% of automatic fire alarm notifications that were confirmed as fires resulted in no injuries or deaths. No significant property damage was caused by these incidents. Attending these types of incidents disrupts the essential daily activities of our firefighters.

According to the law, Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) must make provision for extinguishing fires and for protecting life and property in the event of fires. They must also make arrangements for dealing with calls for help when there is a fire. There is no legal duty on a fire and rescue service to respond to notifications from automatic fire alarm systems for the purpose of establishing whether there is a fire.

Non-domestic premises, that these proposed changes will affect, are covered by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In these premises the employer, the owner, or someone else who has control of the premises (the Responsible Person or RP) must ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the buildings are safe for their occupants in the event of a fire. When an alarm system is fitted, these arrangements include maintenance of the system and providing the actions to be taken if the automatic fire alarm system was activated.

This consultation proposed a change to how we respond to automatic fire alarm calls in the buildings categorised below, where the Responsible Person, (further details in [Appendix 1](#)) cannot confirm there is a fire.

If the proposals are adopted, we will continue to send fire engines to automatic fire alarm calls at buildings where anyone sleeps, such as hotels, hospitals, care homes, houses, and flats. We will also continue to attend fire alarm notifications at a range of existing known higher risk sites, including regulated sites and heritage properties.

We will also continue to maintain our emergency response to 999 calls, confirmed fires and to automatic fire alarm notifications from dwellings.



What other FRS do.

Fire and rescue services undertake a range of approaches to responding to AFAs. 95% of UK FRS have an AFA attendance policy and 98% have a call challenge policy.

These comprise a variety of measures:

- Call challenging
- Modified response depending on premises type
- Modified response depending on time of day
- Modified attendance – sending fewer pumps
- Some allow exemptions:
 - High risk premises
 - Sleeping risks
 - Heritage
 - Community value

The fire and rescue services neighboring Berkshire all have AFA call challenge and attendance policies. For example, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service will no longer automatically respond to alarms in residential and domestic properties, unless a fire has been confirmed at the property. In the Thames Valley, the three services, RBFRS, OFRS, BMKFRS, have been working to align AFA policies.

Drivers of change

The issue of false alarms was highlighted nationally in the first HMICFRS ‘State of Fire’ report in 2019 and, following RBFRS’ first inspection in 2018, the service received an Area for Improvement (AFI):

“The service should ensure it addresses effectively the burden of false alarms (termed ‘unwanted fire signals’).”

HMICFRS further highlighted an AFI in its 2021/22 report on RBFRS:

“The service should ensure it monitors and evaluates its revised approach to the burden of false alarms (termed ‘unwanted fire signals’)”

We need to change the way we respond to automatic fire alarm notifications. If we do not, we will be less able to address the following risks:

- We want to carry out more in person fire safety visits to our most vulnerable residents and businesses to help them live and work safely. Every time a fire engine is sent to an automatic fire alarm notification during a visit it disrupts the business, delays us giving vital advice to residents, and increases risk to the public.
- Being called to automatic fire alarm notifications can divert firefighters from real emergencies, potentially putting life and property at risk. Additionally, driving to false alarms



under emergency conditions puts our residents at unnecessary risk as well as having an environmental impact.

- If we do not change the way we respond to these false alarms, it will have a longer-term impact on the delivery of critical training. It is essential that our teams can train, exercise, and develop their skills and knowledge to deal with known and emerging risks in our communities. It is vital that we can respond effectively when there is a real incident. Dealing with false alarms regularly disrupts training and exercises.
- Firefighters carry out familiarisation visits at high-risk buildings so that we are well prepared to respond to real incidents. It is a legal duty for firefighters to gather this information. Maintaining up to date risk information helps us minimise the risk to our staff and the public. Attending false alarms disrupts us gathering the information we need and creates unnecessary risk.

According to Home Office data in England in 2022-23 39.3% of all FRS incidents were to AFAs. RBFRS currently sits above this average at 45%.

We need to change the way we respond to automatic fire alarm notifications to help us to manage community and firefighter safety.

Strategic Commitments

PREVENTION	PROTECTION	RESPONSE	RESILIENCE	SUSTAINABILITY	PEOPLE
We will reduce the risk to our communities through our partnership duties and prevention education activities, ensuring that our services are accessible to all.	We will support those with responsibility for premises to understand their duties in ensuring the safety of all people using buildings covered by the Building Safety Act 2022 and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 , whilst ensuring that our services are accessible to all.	We will ensure that our people are trained and resources are located to provide the most effective response and to have a positive impact on incidents in our communities.	We will ensure our resilience and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.	We will ensure that we provide a financially sustainable and environmentally friendly service to our communities.	We will support our staff by providing a safe and inclusive environment for them to thrive in, building a diverse organisation that is engaged with, and accessible to, our communities.

The proposed changes to the way we respond to AFAs are intended to have a positive impact on strategic priorities in prevention, response, and people. Improved availability for genuine emergencies, more capacity for safe and well visits and community engagement are all anticipated benefits.



Community Risk Management Plan 2023-27

The Fire Authority's Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2023-27 Priority 3 sets out the intent to, "develop our response model to ensure that we are providing the most effective response to incidents within Berkshire, ensuring that it is aligned to the risks identified, is sustainable and provides value for money."

Further, under Priority 5 - "We will develop our fire protection service to support the resilience of businesses, to ensure the safety of all people using buildings covered by the Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Safety Act 2022, and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to ensure that our enforcement role is effective and clear." – the Authority has specifically committed to 'review our operational response to Unwanted Fire Signals (Automatic Fire Alarms) to reduce the impact on the service and public'.

Premises categories

We have separated all buildings into categories. This helps us explain how we want to change our response to automatic fire alarm notifications. Detail of the building types in each category are included in [Appendix 4](#).

It is important to note that the consultation does not affect the way we will respond to buildings in category C. We will continue to send fire engines to automatic fire alarm notifications at these addresses at any time.

The consultation presents options to consider changing the way we respond to automatic fire alarm notifications in buildings in category A and B only.

AFA Proposals

We consulted on three proposed options. These options explain how we plan to reduce our response to automatic fire alarms in the buildings categorised below. The proposed changes do not offer monetary savings. The focus is solely on reducing risk by minimising disruption to key activities.

We will continue to send fire engines to automatic fire alarm notifications at higher risk buildings, where anyone sleeps, such as hotels, hospitals, care homes, houses, and flats.

Most importantly, we will continue to maintain our emergency response to manual 999 calls and confirmed fires.

For all the options we consulted on, we are proposing the same change to how we respond to category A buildings. For buildings in category B, we proposed different options for consideration. This is intended to enable us to reduce the number of unnecessary false alarms attended and disruption caused by these, further improving the service we provide to our residents.



For all the options below If a fire is confirmed or we receive a 999 call, we will immediately send a fire engine. We will continue to send fire engines to automatic fire alarm notifications from residential homes.

Option 1

We will stop automatically sending a fire engine to an automatic fire alarm notification at buildings in Category A when there is no confirmed fire, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Estimated number of automatic fire alarm notifications affected by option 1	Estimated productive hours gained for critical activities
725	986 hours

Option 2

We will stop automatically sending a fire engine to an automatic fire alarm notification at buildings in Category A when there is no confirmed fire, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

We will stop automatically sending a fire engine to an automatic fire alarm notification at buildings in Category B between 9am and 6pm, 365 days of the year, when the buildings are likely to be occupied and therefore the Responsible Person can confirm if there is an emergency response needed.

Estimated number of automatic fire alarm notifications affected by option 2	Estimated productive hours gained for critical activities
810	1,074 hours

Option 3

We will stop automatically sending a fire engine to an automatic fire alarm notification at buildings in Category A when there is no confirmed fire, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

We will stop automatically sending a fire engine to an automatic fire alarm notification at buildings in Category B when there is no confirmed fire, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Estimated number of automatic fire alarm notifications affected by option 3	Estimated productive hours gained for critical activities
894	1,228 hours

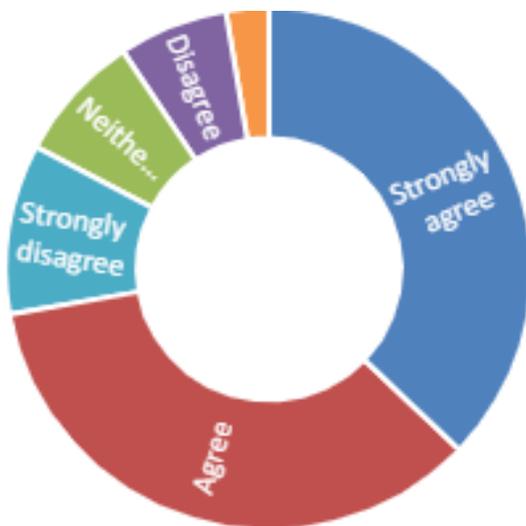
*The number of incidents in options above are taken from 2022-2023 data for Berkshire



Part 2: What the consultation tells us

Level of agreement

Question 1 of the survey asked whether respondents agreed or disagreed with the overall proposal to change the way RBFRS responds to automatic fire alarms. Respondents to the survey have a strong preference for the overall proposal to change the way RBFRS attends AFAs, 72.2% of respondents either strongly agree or agree with the proposal.



Strongly agree	127	37.1%
Agree	120	35.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	27	7.9%
Disagree	23	6.7%
Strongly disagree	36	10.5%
Don't know	9	2.6%

Strongly agree or agree	247	72.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	27	7.9%
Disagree or strongly disagree	59	17.2%

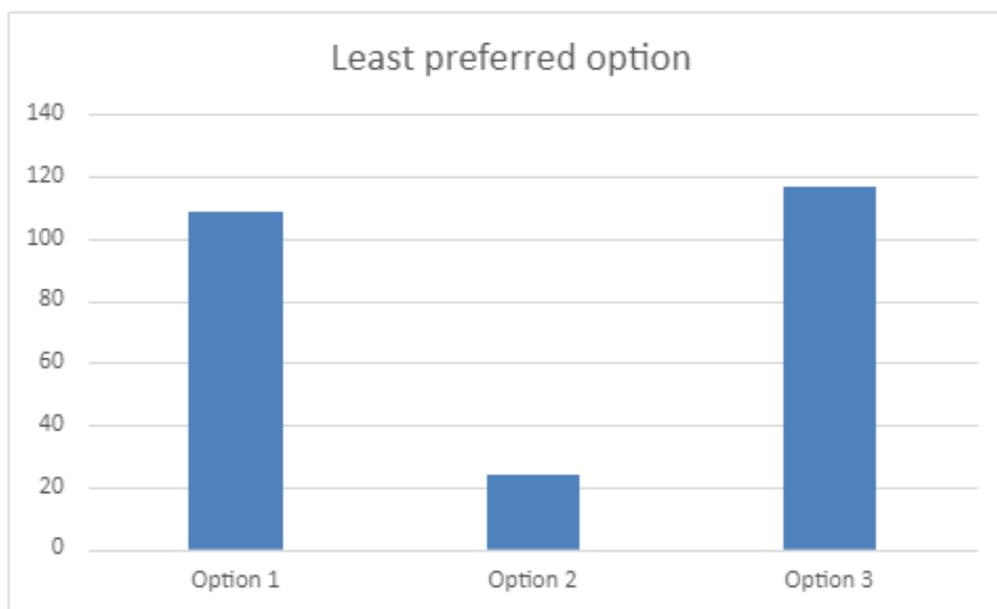
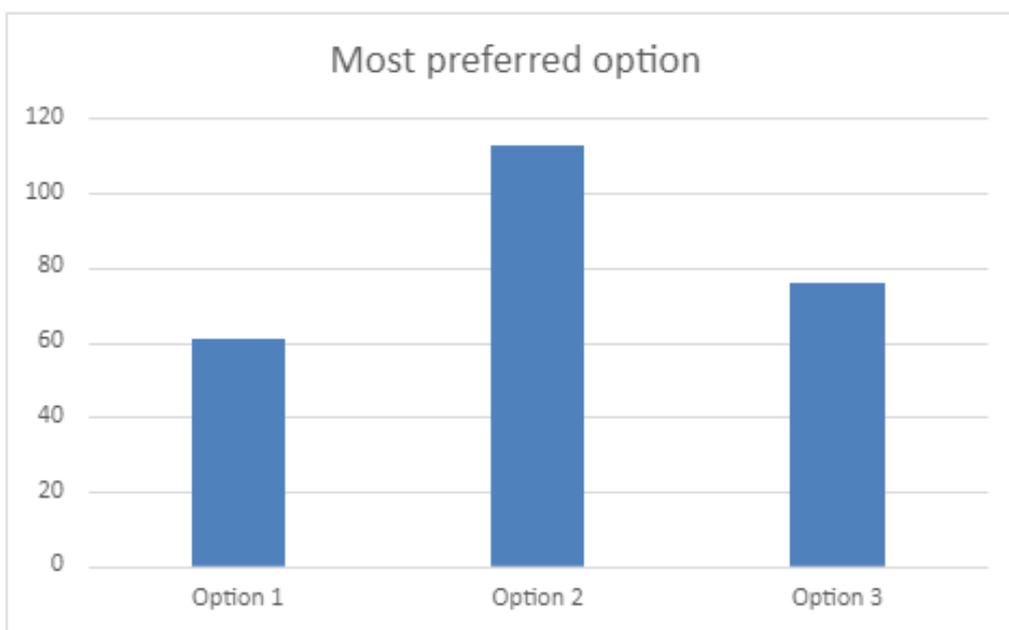


Overview of preferences

Respondents were given the opportunity to select the three options in order of preference, ranking them as first, second and third choice.

Of the first-choice preferences, the most preferred option was option 2. Option 3 was the second most popular choice with option 1 receiving the fewest first choices.

The least preferred option was option 3, with option 1 in second place and option 2 receiving the fewest least choice responses.

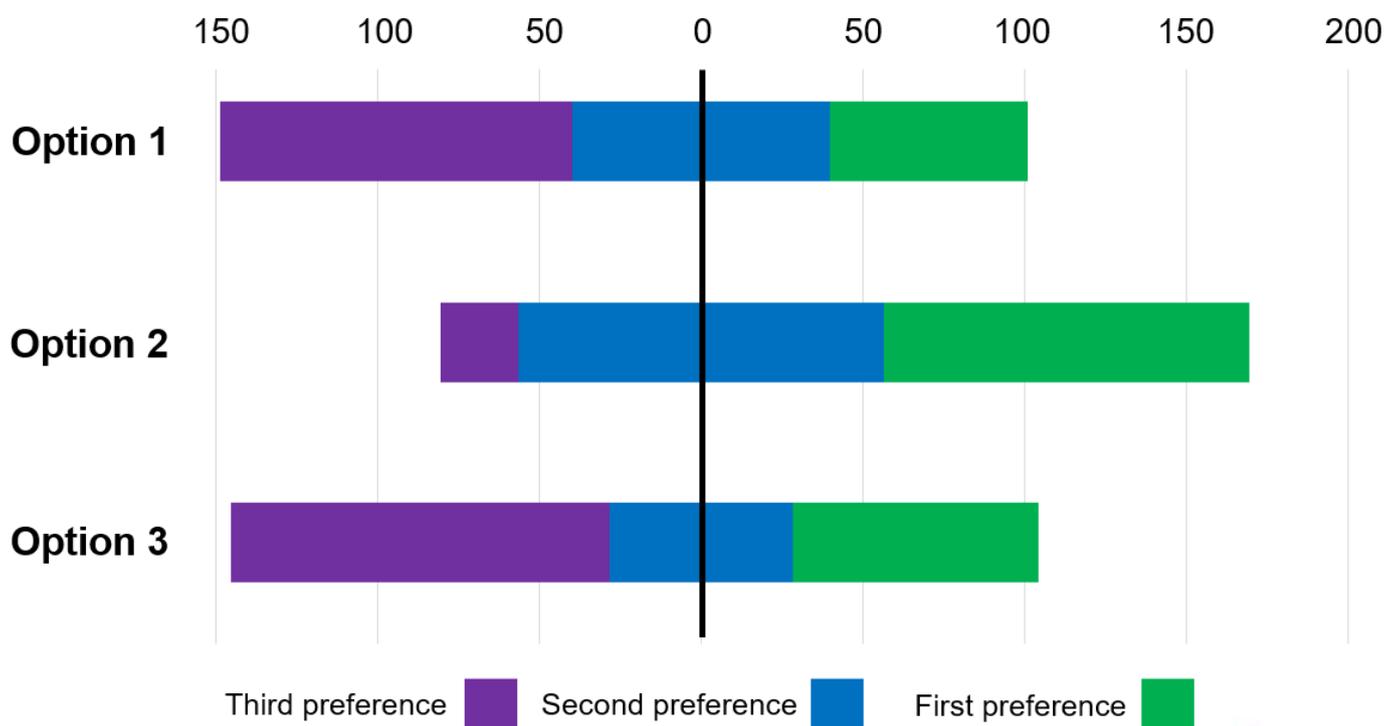




Respondents were given the opportunity to select the three options in order of most and least preferred, second and third preference.

It is helpful to visualise the preference choices in a manner that accounts for second choice preferences as well as the most and least preferred options of respondents. The chart below shows the range of preferences with the second-choice preferences centred around the median.

This shows that option 2 is the foremost preference with option 3 as the second most preferred. Option 1 is the least preferential with the greatest number of responses below the median line.





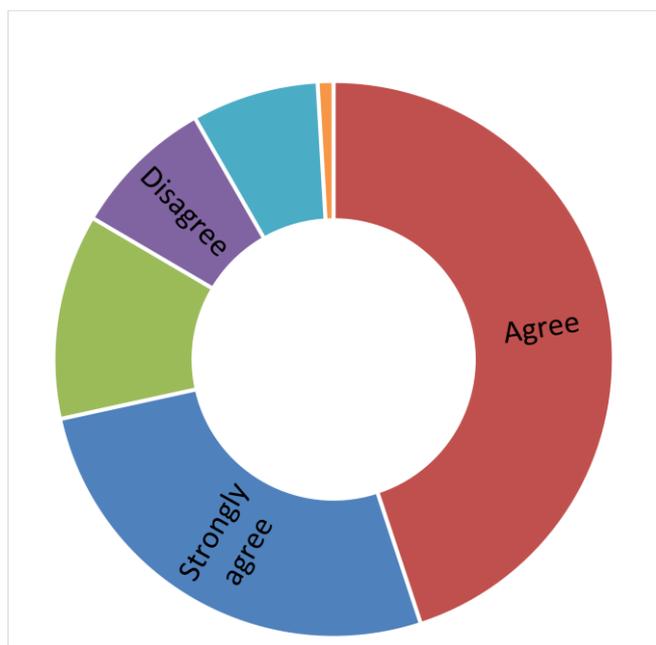
Responses by group

The following section considers the responses from businesses and organisations, Berkshire residents, schools, RBFRS employees and TVFCS employees. The intent is to facilitate comparison of responses from key stakeholder groups.

Businesses and Organisations

The survey asked, “To what extent to agree or disagree with the consultation proposals to change the way we respond to automatic fire alarms?”

Responses from representatives of businesses and organisations have a strong preference for the overall proposal to change the way RBFRS attends AFAs. Slightly fewer choose to agree or strongly agree than the overall result of the survey. A slightly higher proportion of responses than the overall survey response chooses to disagree or strongly disagree. A higher proportion of respondents from this group neither agree nor disagree.



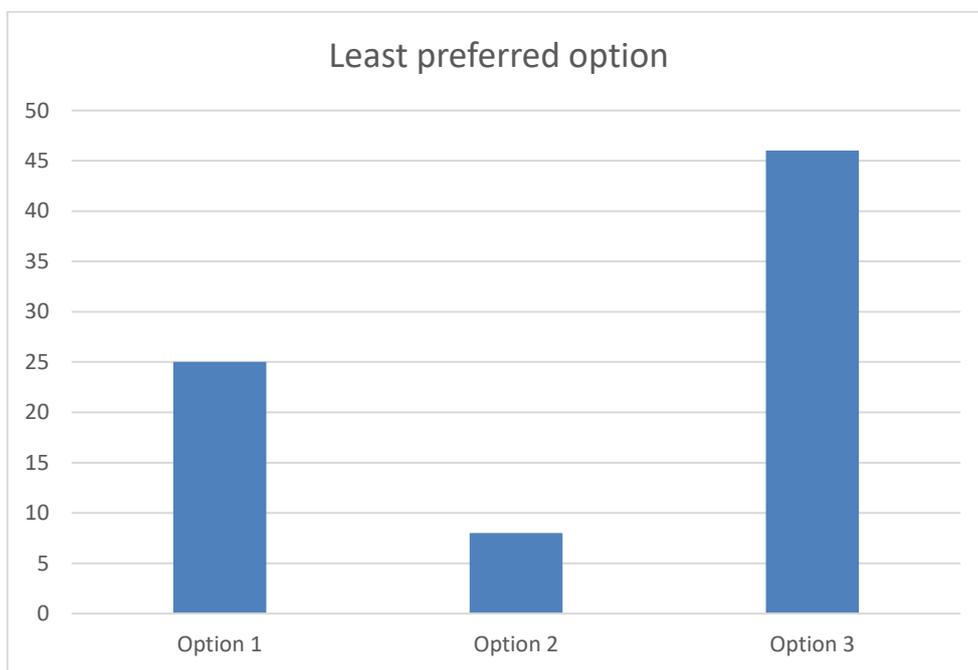
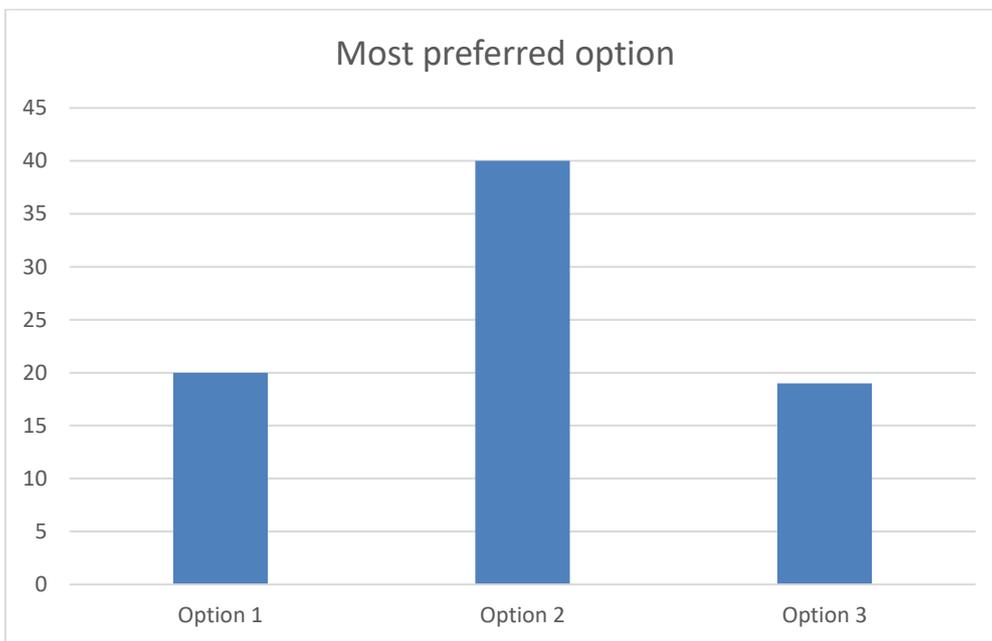
Strongly agree	29	26.6%
Agree	49	45.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	13	11.9%
Disagree	9	8.3%
Strongly disagree	8	7.3%
Don't know	1	0.9%

Strongly agree or agree	78	71.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	13	11.9%
Disagree or strongly disagree	17	15.6%



Preferred option of Businesses and organisations

Respondents from businesses and organisations show the strongest preference for option 2 with option 3 being the least preferred option.

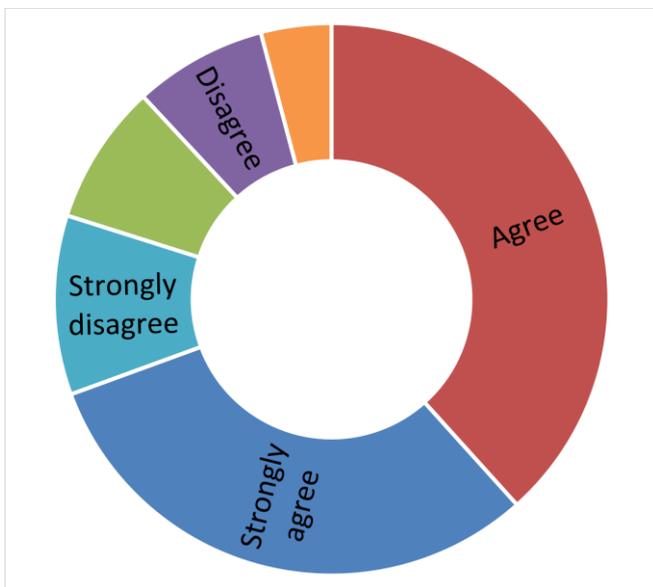




Berkshire Residents

The survey asked, “To what extent to agree or disagree with the consultation proposals to change the way we respond to automatic fire alarms?”

Responses from Berkshire residents have a strong preference for the overall proposal to change the way RBFRS attends AFAs. Slightly fewer choose to agree or strongly agree than the overall result of the survey. Fewer also choose to disagree or strongly disagree. In comparison to the overall survey result a slightly higher proportion of respondents from this group neither agree nor disagree.



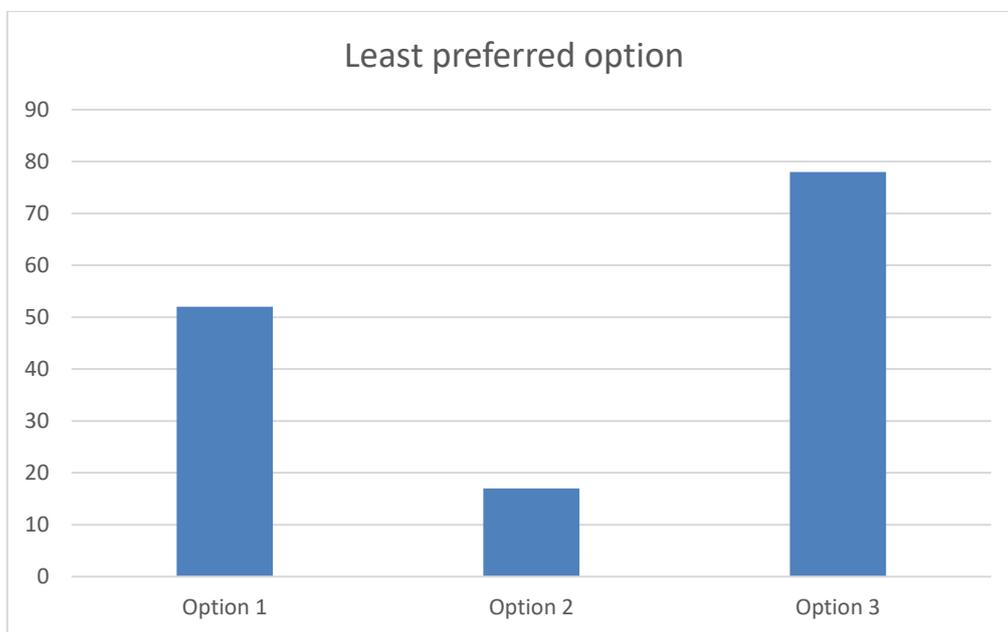
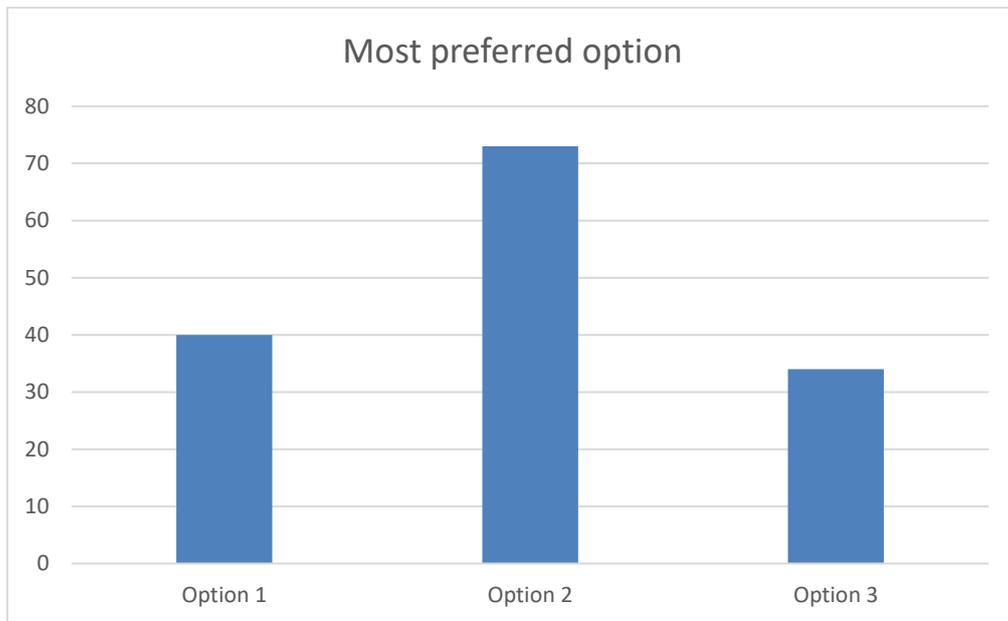
Strongly agree	68	31.1%
Agree	84	38.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	18	8.2%
Disagree	17	7.8%
Strongly disagree	23	10.5%
Don't know	9	4.1%

Strongly agree or agree	152	69.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	18	8.2%
Disagree or strongly disagree	40	18.3%



Preferred option of Berkshire Residents

Respondents from Berkshire residents show the strongest preference for option 2 with option 3 being the least preferred option.

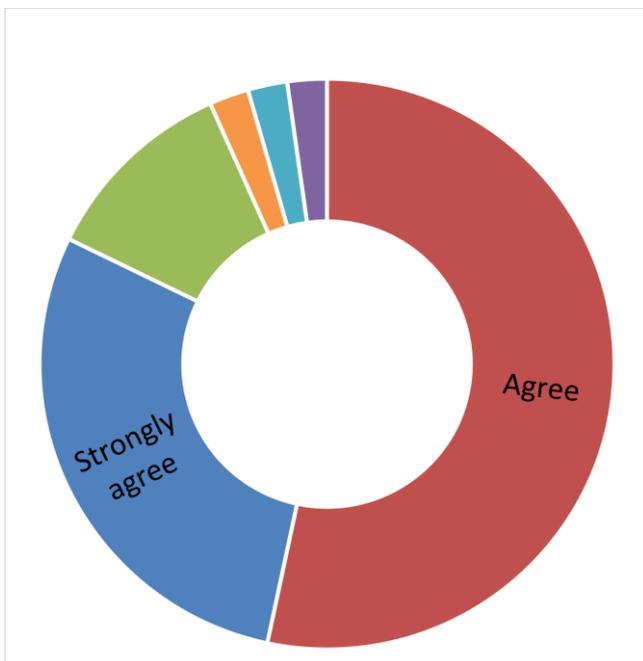




Schools

The survey asked, “To what extent to agree or disagree with the consultation proposals to change the way we respond to automatic fire alarms?”

Responses from schools have a strong preference for the overall proposal to change the way RBFRS attends AFAs. The percentage of respondents from schools who choose to agree or strongly agree than the overall result of the survey was higher than the overall survey response. A smaller percentage also choose to disagree or strongly disagree. In comparison to the overall survey result a slightly lower proportion of respondents from this group neither agree nor disagree.



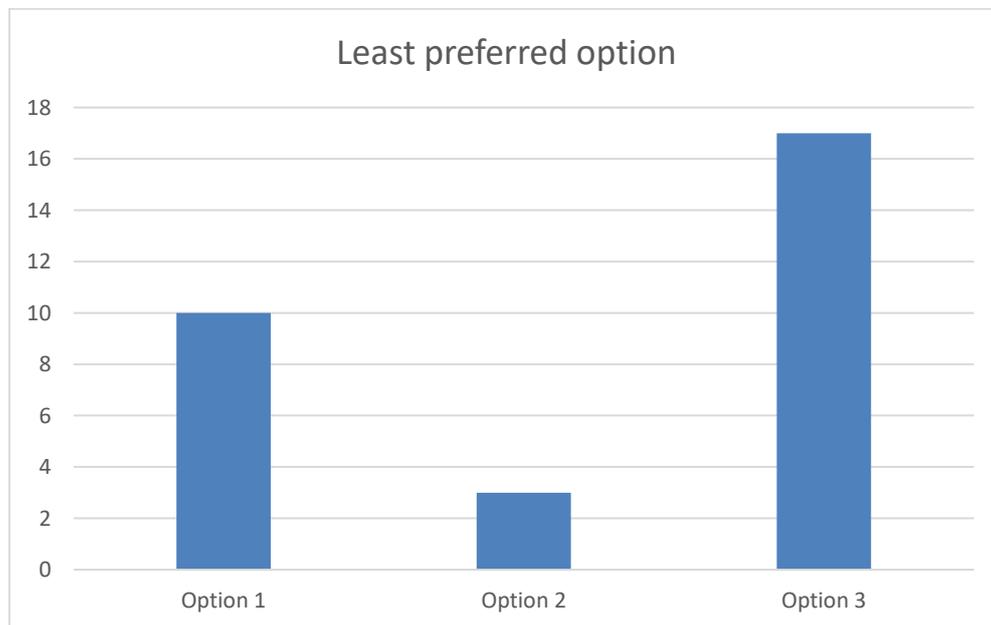
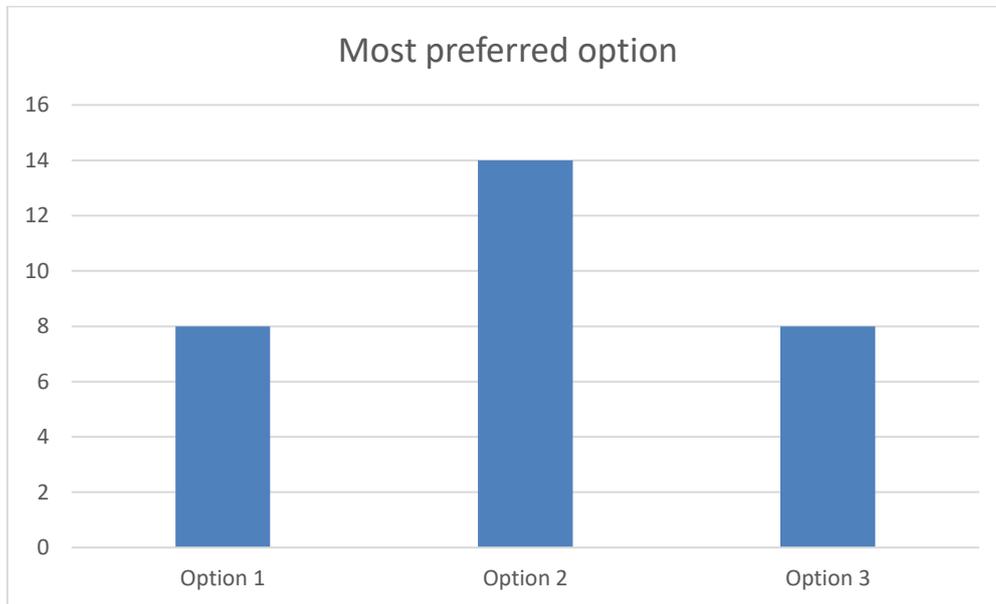
Strongly agree	13	28.9%
Agree	24	53.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	5	11.1%
Disagree	1	2.2%
Strongly disagree	1	2.2%
Don't know	1	2.2%

Strongly agree or agree	37	82.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	5	11.1%
Disagree or strongly disagree	3	6.6%



Preferred option of Schools

Respondents from schools show the strongest preference for option 2 with option 3 being the least preferred option.

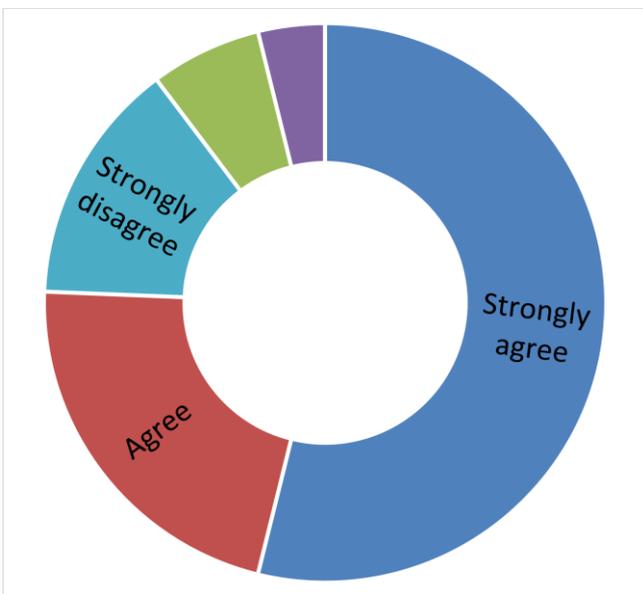




RBFRS employees

The survey asked, “To what extent to agree or disagree with the consultation proposals to change the way we respond to automatic fire alarms?”

Responses from RBFRS employees have a strong preference for the overall proposal to change the way RBFRS attends AFAs. The percentage of respondents from RBFRS employees who choose to agree or strongly agree was a higher percentage of responses than the overall survey response. A slightly higher percentage also choose to disagree or strongly disagree. In comparison to the overall survey result a smaller percentage of respondents from this group neither agree nor disagree.



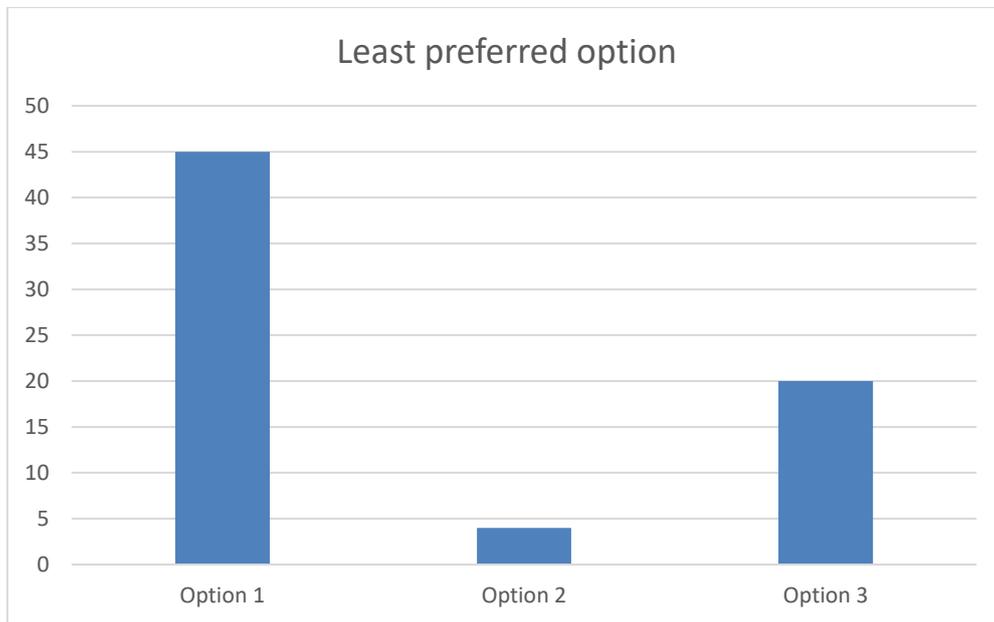
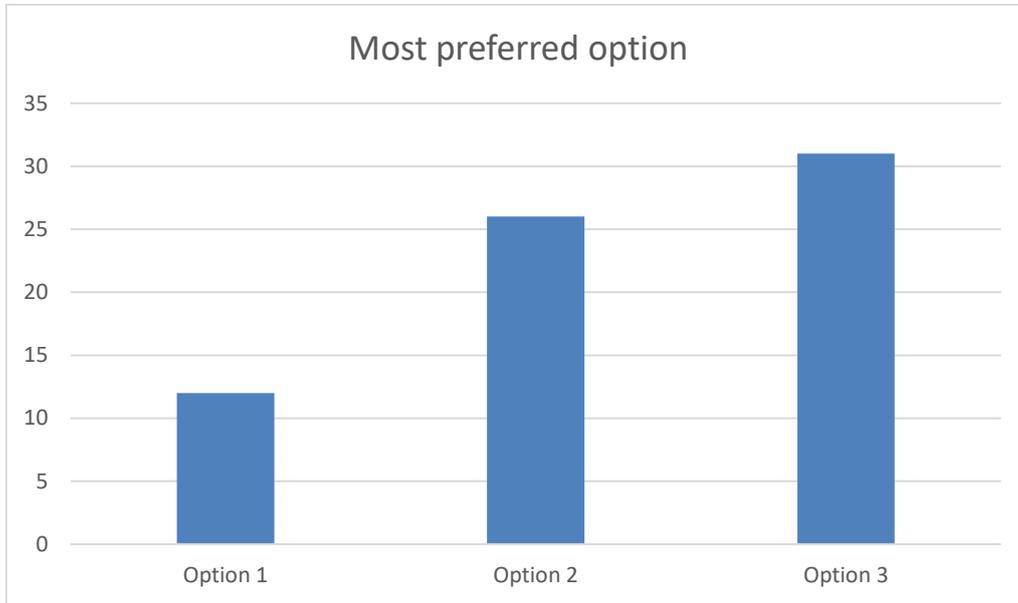
Strongly agree	42	53.8%
Agree	17	21.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	5	6.4%
Disagree	3	3.8%
Strongly disagree	11	14.1%
Don't know	0	0%

Strongly agree or agree	59	75.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	5	6.4%
Disagree or strongly disagree	14	17.9%



Preferred option of Employees

In contrast to responses from businesses and organisations, Berkshire residents and schools, RBFRS employees choose option 3 as their first choice. Unlike the preceding groups, RBFRS employees choose option 1 as their least favoured option.

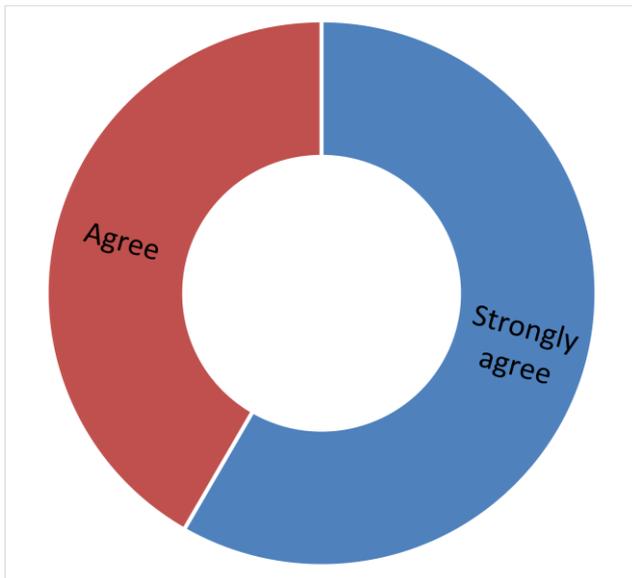




Thames Valley Fire Control Staff (TVFCS)

To what extent to agree or disagree with the consultation proposals to change the way we respond to automatic fire alarms?

Responses from TVFCS employees are a unanimous approval of the proposals. All respondents strongly agree or agree with the overall consultation proposals.



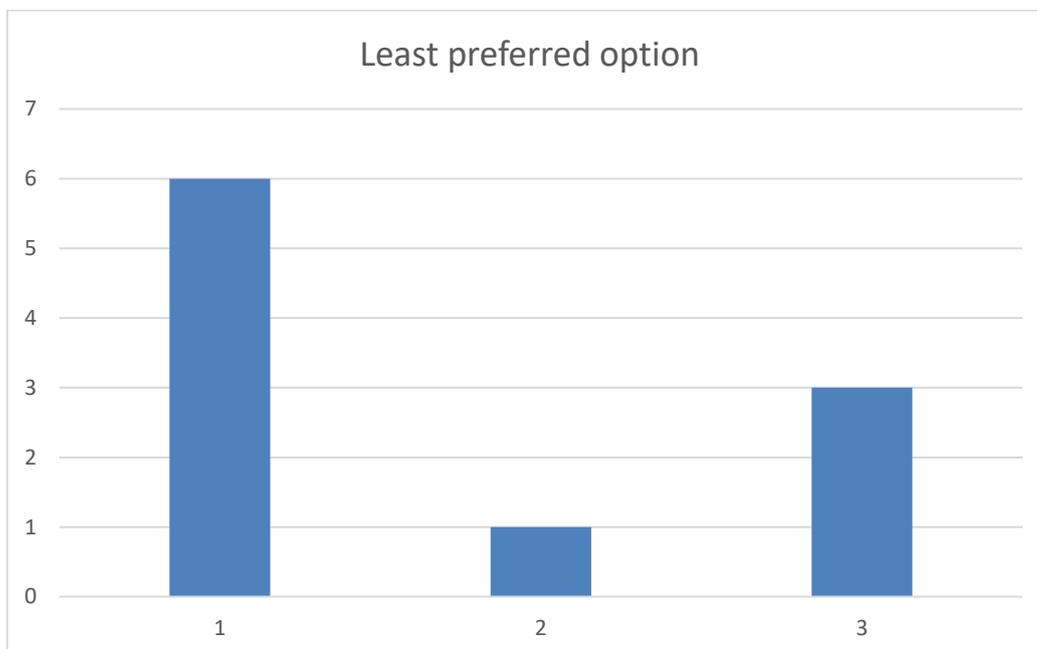
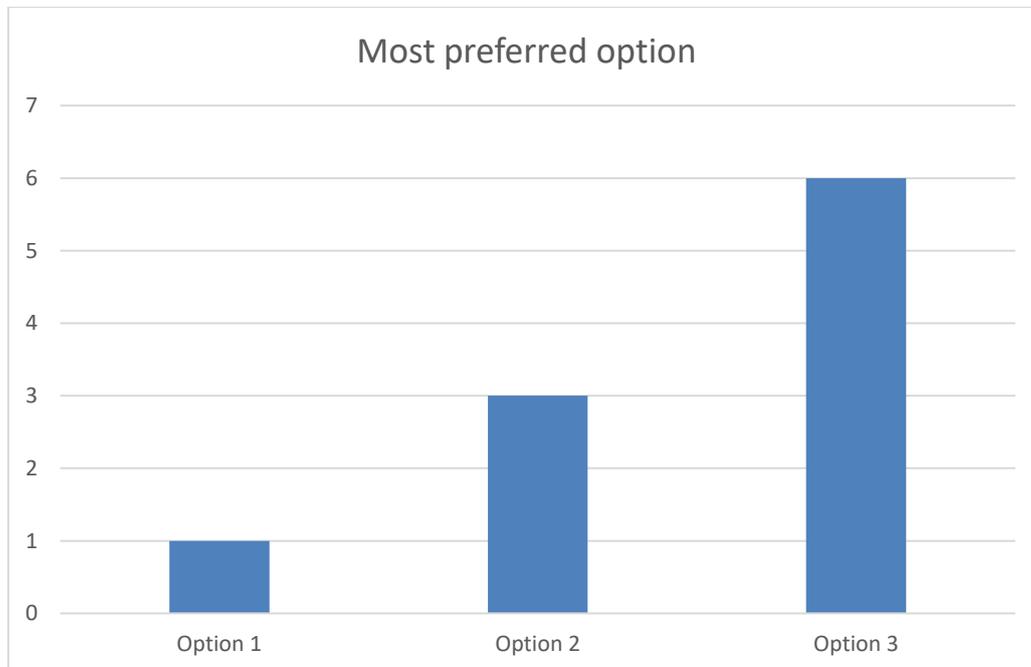
Strongly agree	7	58.3%
Agree	5	41.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Don't know	0	0%

Strongly agree or agree	12	100%
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
Disagree or strongly disagree	0	0%



Preferred option of TVFCS staff

Although this is one of the smallest respondent groups TVFCS employees will have a primary responsibility in implementing any adopted change. TVFCS employees choose option 3 as their first choice. TVFCS employees choose option 1 as their least favoured option. These results are close to RBFRS employees and contrast with non-employee results.





Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services' response to consultation

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) both responded to the consultation.

BFRS DCFO Mick Osbourne states that BFRS supports the proposals and that they believe that they will, 'lead to safer communities, better-trained firefighters, and a more efficient service overall.'

OFRS CFO Rob MacDougall is clear that OFRS, 'fully support the alignment of policies and procedures between Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service, as well as Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, to support more efficient and effective ways of working in our joint Thames Valley Fire Control Service.'

Both responses are captured in full, in [Appendix 8](#) (See Appendices B and C – attached under a separate cover).

Conclusion of preferences

The survey showed that overall respondents were overwhelmingly in favour of the overall aim of the proposals, with 72.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that RBFRS need to change the way it responds to AFA's. As set out above the overall preference is for option 2, with option 3 second, and closely followed by option 1 as the least preferable option.

When comparing the preferences of the different groups Berkshire residents, businesses, organisations, and schools prioritised option 2 where RBFRS employees (uniformed, non-uniformed, wholetime, on-call and Thames Valley Fire Control) showed a preference for option 3.



Qualitative data

Questions 11, 13, 14 and 15 were free text questions. These were posed to allow opportunity for respondents to provide additional context and to gather information which may have otherwise been absent within the survey data.

For reference, a copy of all the free text responses can be found in **Appendix 6** (attached as a separate document).

Question 11: Please tell us why you gave that answer?

This question was intended to provide an opportunity for respondents to expand their rationale for their decision in answering the previous question. That question asked, *'To what extent to agree or disagree with the consultation proposals to change the way we respond to automatic fire alarms?'*

Q11 qualitative data

Keywords

- Waste of time
- Resources
- Real fire
- Emergency
- Responsible person
- Training
- Prevention
- Risk
- Safety
- Vulnerable

Themes

Efficiency: The dominant theme is the perceived waste of resources (time, money, and personnel) due to a high volume of false alarms RBFRS currently attends. Many respondents highlight the inefficiency of responding to alarms that are not actual fires. This aligns with the high level of agreement seen in responses to Question 10.

'As a resident of Berkshire, I think it's important for the fire service to deliver value for money service to our communities. Fake fire alarms are a waste of time, money, and resources. I would be more than happy for the fire fighters to use that time to educate our communities or have them do so their training and drills and be ready to respond to serious incidents as well.'



'It's ridiculous that you waste so much time, and taxpayer's money on attending so many false alarms.'

Prioritisation of real emergencies: Respondents emphasise the importance of prioritising actual fires and emergencies over false alarms, ensuring that RBFRS is available for critical incidents. This theme is attuned to the intent of the proposals to ensure that resources are available to mitigate community risk through response and prevention activities.

'Attendance at AFA False alarms is a waste of FRS time and increases risk to the public. Fire crews investigating an AFA activation are not available to respond to higher priority incidents for around 20 to 30 minutes.'

'We should not be wasting fire service time when it could delay them going to an actual emergency.'

Risk of delay in real emergencies: In contrast to the responses in the preceding section many respondents express concern about potential delays in responding to actual fires if resources are not mobilised to automatic fire alarms. They see this as potentially leading to more significant damage and risk to life.

'I don't think it is worth the risk that a premises could burn down costing the owner huge amounts of money and potentially injuring people, just because it might be a false alarm. It is much better to attend and be turned back rather than attend a lot later when it is too late to have any impact.'

'Some organisations such as Reading Borough Council carefully manage its buildings and we do not have many false alarms. If any of the options are introduced crucial council assets could be jeopardised with even potential risk of life if activation alarms are not attended. As fire spreads quickly relying on attendance from call out operative is unrealistic and risks losing assets at key buildings supporting vital services.'

Accountability: The role of the responsible person on site who can verify the presence of a fire is mentioned by RBFRS employees. Other respondents less frequently explicitly recognise the duties of the responsible person as a factor. There is a call for increased responsibility from property owners and alarm system providers to reduce false alarms. Some respondents suggest charging for false alarms to deter careless activations.

'We have a moral obligation to both ensuring that we protect the people of RB and provide best value. This cannot be done whilst responding to premises and businesses that see the fire service as a safety net that means that allows them to neglect or poorly maintain their own systems. In my humble opinion premises and business owners have figured out that they can save a few pennies here and there through poor systems, procedures, and maintenance because the FRS will deal with a situation if it arises. This is unfair on the taxpayer, the community, and Fire & Rescue staff. A poorly timed AFA can be extremely detrimental the whole day on a fire station and ruin weeks or even months of planning with regards to training or Fire safety initiatives etc. We still need to respond to incidents but not properly risk assessed AFA's especially repeat offenders.'



'False alarms are far too frequent and my staff member who is retained can be tied up for hours, impacting my business. I have no problem with employing a retained firefighter, but sending a fire engine to confirm if there is a fire or not makes no sense, the property owner should confirm if there is a fire or not.'

Safety concerns: Some respondents voice concerns about the safety implications of not responding to all alarms, particularly in situations involving vulnerable individuals or properties with unique risks.

'All fires start as alarms, just because this alarm was false who is to say the next one will be, someone rough sleeping inside a building and unable to escape, children playing inside a building. The risks to life and property should not be ruled out.'

'Of course, loss of life is the priority, but other factors should also be given weight. For example, what impact to the community, the character of the town, would the loss of the building entail?'

'Our 130-year-old listed building is in constant use by over 1000 residents every week. It is one of the most beautiful buildings in Maidenhead and the town would suffer irreparable loss if it were to burn down. There are people in the building from 8am until 10:30pm every day and since we took over in July 2021 there has not been a single false alarm call to the fire service.'

Lack of options: Several comments criticise the lack of a "no change" option in the survey, suggesting a perceived bias towards reducing service.

'Feel the current system must remain.'

'No option to remain as the current cover plan... all options are to decrease attendance.'

Training and prevention: Respondents that support the proposals advocate for utilising the time saved by reduced AFA responses for training, public education, and fire prevention initiatives. This is in line with the beneficial outcomes identified in the consultation document.

'A lot of time is clearly wasted attending false alarms that would be better spent educating the public.'

'A lot of time is wasted and could be better used if not attending false alarm calls the hours saved could be put towards training or extra home and business visits which would go towards educating people that could prove vital.'

Emotional Tone

Frustration: Many responses express frustration about the high number of false alarms and the perceived waste of resources. Respondents also expressed frustration, and a degree of misunderstanding around who is responsible for driving down false alarms. Some respondents felt this was a responsibility of RBFRS others, property owners and managers.

Concern: Safety concerns related to potential delays in responding to real fires are frequently expressed.



Anger: Some respondents express anger towards property owners who are seen as responsible for false alarms. Some respondents express anger towards the proposed changes which they perceive as cuts.

Support: Respondents who agree with the proposed changes often express a sense of understanding and support for efficient use of resources.

Categorisation of responses

Pro-change (In support reducing the number of attendances made to AFAs): These respondents generally agree with the proposed changes, emphasising the wasted use of resources on false alarms and the need for prioritisation. They often advocate for utilising saved resources for training and prevention.

Concerned about safety: This group expresses concern about potential safety risks associated with not responding to all alarms, particularly for vulnerable individuals or unique properties. They worry about delayed response times to real fires.

No change supporters: Some respondents advocate for maintaining the current response policy, arguing that the fire service should respond to all alarms to ensure safety and prevent damage. This report notes that no change was not an option for this consultation and that this approach was agreed by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

Ambivalent: A smaller group expresses mixed feelings, supporting the need for change but highlighting concerns about implementation or specific categories of buildings.

Summary

Respondents' opinions on the proposed changes to the AFA response policy are divided. The free text responses closely matched the result of question 1 with 75% of respondents supporting change (although some respondents gave qualifications to their agreement) and 25% opposing the proposals. While many recognise the need to reduce what is perceived as a wasteful use of resources in responding to false alarms and highlighted a need to prioritise resources for real emergencies, others express deep concerns about the potential safety implications of these changes. The divergence of the responses highlights a polarising position between efficient resource allocation and the need to ensure public safety and protect property. Employees are more likely to agree with the proposals and understandably have a different view on risk based on experience and resourcing to residents and representatives of businesses and organisations. This report notes that a minority of employee responses strongly oppose the proposals based on their experience. This report reminds the reader that analysis of incident data indicates that just over 99% of AFA responses are false alarms.



Question 13: Having considered the options, do you have any concerns about our proposals?

Question 13 provided an opportunity for respondents to express any concerns about the proposal. Given that there was no option provided to maintain the status quo, this question allowed the consultation to capture a wider range of responses.

Q13 qualitative data

Keywords

- Unoccupied
- Responsible Person
- Risk Assessment
- Transparency
- Communication
- School Holidays
- Arson
- Insurance

Themes

Unoccupied Buildings: There is significant anxiety about the potential impact on unoccupied buildings, particularly during off-peak hours and school holidays. There were several concerns raised by schools about how the proposed change would affect them.

'I am the representative of the school and would have serious concerns if the school was not attended to if the alarms sounded during the evenings and overnight.'

'Occasions when the building may be in a remote area e.g. rural church where there is no one around to confirm the presence of fire should there be any.'

Responsible Person: Many responses focus on the role of the responsible person and whether they can be reliably contacted and trusted to make decisions during emergencies.

'The only concern I have is around option 3 - how do you assure that the responsible person on duty after 6pm is suitably qualified to respond to a fire and evacuate say a cinema or a theatre where there will still be a lot of people - hence my reason for selecting Option 2.'

'Reliability of the responsible person being available.'

Risk Assessment: Concern was raised about the methodology for categorising buildings and the potential for misclassification. A concern was also raised about the capability of the mobilising system to be adapted to the change.



'I would like to know which category we fit into; we are a church which also has widely used community buildings open 9am to 11 pm 7 days a week. No one sleeps on the premises. it could be A or B.'

'How will buildings be adequately graded? It seems like a finger in the air approach and clearly a risk to the public by not sending resources to these premises, notwithstanding an element of call handling but this seems to be going too far.'

'What about listed buildings? It isn't clear if you will respond to alarms at these.'

Transparency and Communication: Respondents desire clarity on the rationale behind the proposed changes and better communication about how decisions are made.

'Yes. As mentioned earlier. This survey is flawed as there is no way to rank 'no change' to judge public sentiment.'

'None of the above. Had to decide options above when there should be an option of "none of the above" Another survey that gets the answers that are wanted.'

'This does not feel fair, that a decision has already been made against many of the Firefighters views. A 4th option that crews should attend should be offered in this survey.'

TVFCS concerns: Responses include concerns about how ARCs will meet proposed changes to policy. Concerns were also expressed about the capacity of the mobilising system to adapt to a modified policy. A desire for an aligned AFA policy across the three County's served by TVFCS was also expressed.

'Are the proposals technically possible to implement in the Vision System? For option 2 is it possible to implement day and night PDAs on Vision? Will RBFRS ensure that prior to "go live" that addresses of category A and category B buildings have the correct PDA (or lack of PDA) attached to them? Given that Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue are changing their AFA policies will these changes be implemented across the three counties? It is unreasonable that 9 years into the TVFCS project we still have 3 differing AFA policies.'

'TVFCS should have single call challenging process, if RBFRS, OFRS and RBFRS have different approached to call challenging, this will result in reduced effectiveness in reducing false alarms and confuse TVFCS staff.'

Categorisation of Responses

Concerns raised about the proposals: This question asked for concerns, so the free text responses tended to be more negative than the overall tone of the consultation. 44.2% of answers raised concerns. The negative responses can be broadly categorised as concerns centred on the following headings:

- Unoccupied buildings
- Advocacy for continued coverage



- Criticism of the consultation process
- Concerns about specific building types

Support for the proposals: Many respondents used this question to affirm that a reduction in fire engine mobilisations for certain types of alarms is justifiable. 41.5% of responses to this question were positive or made no comment. When checked with previous questions no comment responses were generally from those that agree or strongly agree with the overall proposals.

'Fire service time and resources for which I pay in my council tax are being wasted mainly by incompetent and ignorant business owners taking the response for granted. This takes away the firefighters from being able to spend time with us in communities.'

Emotional Tone Analysis

Concerned: A significant portion of respondents express worry and anxiety about the potential consequences of the proposed changes.

Emotive: Some responses are emotive and express anger and frustration towards the fire service, questioning the decisions and stating that the service is prioritising cost savings over public safety.

Frustrated: Many respondents express frustration with the limited options provided in the survey and a lack of flexibility in the proposed changes.

Suspicious: Some respondents express suspicion about the motives behind the proposed changes and fear the impact on their safety.

Neutral or supportive: Many responses express concerns or suggestions in a neutral, factual manner or responded with positive support.

Overall Sentiment

The overall sentiment is mixed but leaning towards negative. While some respondents support a reduction in unnecessary mobilisations, a majority express concerns about the potential impact of the changes on public safety, especially for unoccupied buildings and specific building types. A perceived lack of transparency and the feeling that the consultation process is flawed have also fuelled negative sentiment.

Summary

Enhance communication: If a policy change is recommended by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority there is a need to clearly communicate the rationale behind the proposed changes and the methods used for categorising buildings. This should be carried out well in advance of implementation.

Address concerns: A communication plan should be developed that actively addresses the concerns raised about the impact dependant on which options is chosen.



Improve consultation process: Although RBFRS strives to ensure the consultation process is transparent, inclusive, and provides options that address the full range of concerns expressed by the respondents, some feel this is not the case. The service should consider implementing a, 'you said, we did' feedback mechanism to raise the level of accountability by highlighting the consultation strategy and to reflect the democratic decision-making process. This mechanism could be utilised on an ongoing basis for future consultation outcomes.

Increase public awareness: RBFRS should continue to educate the public on the causes of false alarms and the importance of responsible fire alarm maintenance to reduce unnecessary appliance mobilisations.

Question 14: If you have concerns, how can we help you to address them?

Q14 qualitative data

Keywords

- Service Reduction
- Safety
- Risk Assessment
- Transparency
- Communication
- Prioritisation
- Building Classification

Themes

Service reduction concerns: Some respondents used the question as a further opportunity to reiterate concern about the proposed reduction in fire service response to AFAs, particularly during specific times (e.g., evenings, weekends).

'Don't change the response.'

'Perhaps adapt the requirements for automated fire alarms to be no response between 0900-1800 on Monday to Friday during term time. Weekends and school holidays then you would attend at these locations.'

'Don't cut the service by stealth. Respond to all emergencies. Spend time making contact with building owners where you have problems, help them sort out their legal requirements with regards to system maintenance and risk assessments. Don't put your employees at greater risk or neglect the community you are supposed to be protecting.'

This is a consultation on a reduction in service cover and IT STINKS.'



Risk Assessment and Prioritisation: Respondents stressed the need for a balanced approach that considers the risks associated with different building types and occupancy levels.

'It would be helpful to differentiate between replaceable and irreplaceable property.'

'Give preferential treatment to responsible building owners such as Reading Borough Council buildings.'

'Look at the type of a use of building. Just because it is occupied, there is more risk asking the responsible person of a day care centre or community hall going to check as more likely elderly than maybe the lead at an office, rather than building type, demographic of use needs to be looked at and ease of escape.'

'Prioritise calls where more than one sensor has activated.'

Communication and Transparency: There are demands for clear communication about the proposed changes, justifications for the decision, and the implementation process.

'By having a period of review. Say every three months over a period of one or two years or an ongoing periodic review process for ever. Serious issue like death and personal injury to result in the immediate removal of the policy and revert to previous.'

'Better communication. Use of access to CCTV etc.'

'By putting all information in the local news.'

Building Classification: The need for a more nuanced approach to building categorisation, potentially based on demographic factors and ease of escape, is emphasised.

'You should have a way to exclude certain buildings from your list. For example, the risk or use of the building might change. How will you manage that?'

'Is there a possibility of reviewing the category system, especially considering our status as a college with a significant number of SEN students? Additionally, could measures be implemented to ensure that if we were to call for Fire and Rescue, we would still receive the same excellent response service?'

'Ensuring we are classified as a class C Building so our AFA is responded to.'

Accountability and Enforcement: Concerns about accountability and enforcement of fire safety regulations, including potential penalties for persistent offenders, are expressed.

'When an AFA goes off in error have the occupant register a reason with you within 48hrs.'

'Charge for responding to false alarms you're choosing not to do it. I'll be asking for your justification.'

'Continue to respond but charge organisations for false alarms.'



Sentiment analysis

Overall Sentiment: Negative. A significant portion of the responses to this question express disapproval and concern about the proposed changes, highlighting potential safety risks and concerns about the new policy's effectiveness. It is important to note that this questions directly asked about concerns, and the responses reflected that. This contrasts with the overall sentiment expressed in terms of whether respondents agree with the overall proposals, which is positive.

Categorisation

Suggestions to address concerns can be grouped into three areas, safety, policy change and implementation.

20% of respondents used this question to reiterate their disapproval. A further 34.4% of respondents suggested changes to our proposals indicating that they feel that the proposals need to be adapted. Two recurrent themes within this category are the time of day that any change to response would occur (relating to Option 2) and charging for attendances at repeat false alarms. 43.3% of respondents made positive comments or stated this question was not applicable. Reviewing the answers of these respondents showed that they generally agree or strongly agree with the proposals in previous survey answers.

Safety Concerns

Loss of life and injury: Fear that reducing response times could lead to increased risk of fatalities and injuries in real fires.

Missed fires: Worry that prioritising calls might lead to a delay in response to genuine fires, particularly during high-risk periods.

Duty of responsible person: Concern was raised by schools that a responsible person would not be able to respond to an AFA outside of school hours. This is likely to apply to other types of premises, but this was not evidenced clearly in responses.

Policy Concerns

Lack of Transparency: Uncertainty about the rationale behind the proposed changes and a lack of clear information about the implementation process.

Insufficient Data: Requests for more robust evidence and statistics to justify the proposed changes and demonstrate that they maintain adequate fire safety.

Fairness and Consistency: Calls for fairness in applying the policy across different building types, ensuring a consistent approach, and addressing concerns about potential discrimination.



Implementation Concerns

Communication gaps: A need for clearer communication between the fire service and stakeholders, including building owners and occupants.

Training and guidance: Demand for clear guidance and training for building owners and responsible persons regarding their responsibilities under the new policy.

‘Provide training and education.’

‘Provide guidance to organisations, ensure they secure appropriate training for responsible persons.’

Thames Valley Fire Control: Concerns about the reliability and accuracy of automated systems and the potential for increased workload for TVFCS staff.

‘Give assurances TVFCS’s mobilising system can inform our operators accurately and that no guess work or additional workload will be required by the operators.’

‘ARC¹ will need to be told what the new process is, what we will not be attending. However, I do believe they will then claim the building is a sleeping risk in order to get us to attend.’

Summary

Responses to this question include a passionate minority that express strong opposition to the proposed fire alarm response policy changes. Addressing their concerns related to safety, transparency, and fairness will be crucial for achieving a successful outcome that balances resource management with community safety.

The data that was shared in the consultation is clear that the risk that the proposals present is very low. However, it is not a ‘no risk’ change. While levels of support for the change are high, taking time to address the concerns in line with respondents’ suggestions may help to mitigate negative perceptions of the proposals.

Enhance communication: Provide a clear reiteration of, and detailed information about the proposed policy changes, including the rationale, data supporting the decision, and implementation details. Produce a communications plan to deliver this in advance of any policy change implementation. Note that much of this information was contained in the full consultation document. It is clear from some survey answers that the respondent had not read this document or had not understood it. Future consultation surveys should clearly stress the importance of reading the consultation prior to responding to the survey. Alternatively, hyperlinks to supporting data should be provided alongside the survey questions.

Engage stakeholders: Continue to actively involve stakeholders in the decision-making process, including building owners, responsible persons, and community representatives.

¹ ARC: Alarm receiving centre



Address safety concerns: Reiterate the risk position relating to the potential policy change. Risk is difficult to quantify and decision around risk management that may seem reasonable to fire and rescue service leaders may not seem reasonable to concern observers.

Clearly define building classification: Re-communicate the system for classifying buildings, explain risk factors like occupancy, demographics, and ease of escape. Include clear explanation of the duties of the responsible person and signpost to advice, help and guidance. Make it clear to building owners, occupiers, and managers which category their building is in. This should include guidance regarding complex multi-use premises.

Strengthen Enforcement: Ensure ongoing enforcement of fire safety regulations at high-risk premises to improve compliance. Enhance management of unwanted fire signals in line with the UwFS Policy Evaluation Report and associated Action Plan. Clearly communicate this to stakeholders. Ensure progress is visible.

Question 15: How can we support organisations to be ready for this change?

Keywords

- Communication
- Training
- Education
- Support
- Engagement
- Notice
- Responsibility
- Visit
- Information
- Media

Themes

Communication and transparency: Most responses emphasise the importance of clear, proactive communication about the changes. This includes providing ample notice, detailed explanations, and frequent updates. Responses focused on disseminating information about the changes, including timing, rationale, and procedures.

‘Publicise the change, communicate clearly about what is happening and ensure we do as much as possible to prepare businesses.’

‘We already have fantastic communication and support with RBFS, more of the same would be ideal.’

‘Supply easily accessible comprehensive info.’



'Your social media is a great source of information. I think you are doing great job already.'

'Please continue to keep communication open so that we are kept abreast with changes as they occur and what protocols we can expect.'

Education and training: Several responses highlight the need for education and training for businesses and individuals on fire safety, responsible alarm procedures, and any new response policy. Responses suggesting training programs, educational materials, or resources to help stakeholders understand the new policy were a common theme.

'Make them aware offer guidance sessions, provide advice on what they need to do - maybe set up a commercial arm of the service to provide training and guidance to fire marshals.'

'Encourage/support businesses in training staff to recognise the signs of fire to be able to confirm if fire is present or not.'

'Clear instructions on times and how the new system would potentially work.'

'Education towards businesses to ensure they have a responsible person trained to check the site.'

Engagement and support: There is a strong emphasis on engaging with stakeholders, including businesses, alarm companies, and community groups, to ensure understanding and support for the policy change. Responses advocate for collaboration with businesses, alarm companies, and other stakeholders to ensure successful implementation.

'Do reach out to the installers of the system to ensure end users have the correct expectations.'

'Support them with information to update and place their fire safety procedures in line with the adopted policy and information on how to re check a building safely.'

'Online video offering reassurance.'

Accountability & Responsibility: Responses frequently mention the need to remind businesses of their legal obligations regarding fire safety and the importance of having trained staff to assess alarms and take appropriate action. This group of responses emphasise the importance of businesses taking ownership of fire safety and responsible fire alarm procedures.

'Remind them of their legal obligations and responsibilities. Their preparedness is their responsibility. The fire service can advise them and provide them with relevant information to help this process.'

'Information about the importance of the responsible person's role.'

'Liaison with the ARCs to emphasise their responsibilities when it comes to AFAs.'

'Properly trained employees at these sites. Correct contact details for responsible person/s.'



Sentiment Analysis

Overall, the sentiment in responses to question 15 is primarily constructive and supportive of the proposed policy change, with a focus on improving communication and ensuring a smooth transition. Some responses express concern about the potential consequences of reduced automatic response, emphasising the need for clear communication and robust education initiatives. A few responses show disappointment or frustration with the perceived lack of transparency and perceived potential financial implications. However, the majority of responses advocate for effective communication, education, and collaboration to successfully implement the policy change.

Summary

Develop a comprehensive communication plan: This plan should outline the target audience, communication channels, message frequency, and key messaging points.

Invest in targeted educational initiatives: This could include training sessions, workshops, online materials, and outreach programs to address various stakeholder groups.

Establish clear lines of communication: Ensure regular communication with businesses, alarm companies, and other stakeholders, providing updates and addressing concerns.

Facilitate ongoing feedback mechanisms: Establish channels for receiving feedback on the policy implementation and making necessary adjustments.

Promote a culture of shared responsibility: Emphasize the importance of businesses and individuals taking ownership of fire safety and contributing to a safer environment.

Implementing these actions may help to mitigate potential negative sentiments, build trust with stakeholders, and ensure a successful transition to the new fire alarm response policy.

Question 16: Is there anything else you want to add?

Keywords

- Cost-cutting
- Risk
- Safety
- Training
- Responsibility
- Education

Themes

No comment or not applicable: Most respondents made no comment.



Cost-cutting: The second largest group of respondents express concern about potential cost-cutting measures that may lead to reduced fire service response times and a decrease in the number of firefighters.

'This is cuts by stealth. It is shameful. London cut appliances going to high rise fires. Then Grenfell happened. What will be Berkshire's Grenfell?'

'Don't pretend it's not about money and the value of a life.'

Supportive: A smaller number of respondents reiterated that they support the proposals.

'I agree with this decision. I've no doubt some of the businesses you are attending are earning profits that are greater the entire budget of RBFRS. I would encourage you to move forward with your plans.'

'In my mind, that stats/data paints a compelling picture for change and while option 3 may appear the riskiest option, in my mind, if there was a fire someone would call 999.'

Risk to life and property: Concerns are raised about the potential consequences of reduced fire service response, including increased risk to life and damage to property.

'From my experience working in Emergency Services, I understand that false alarms can be frustrating. However, it's always better to err on the side of caution when it comes to safety.'

'Our concern is the loss of the building if there is no early intervention at a time the building is unoccupied. We have a caretaker who lives in a residential dwelling on the premises for most of the year.'

Responsibility, duty of care and charging: The importance of responsible fire safety practices in buildings, including proper maintenance of alarm systems, is emphasized.

'A charging and fee-based approach for poorly setup alarms and repeat offenders of false calls. Alternatively, we should return to providing direct access for alarm receiving to our control room. Currently ARCs earn a great deal of money for a service that we provide.'

'Start charging - are you that incompetent? I'll be contacting my MP and sending requests for this information. Have you even considered it? If not, why not? I want to see the reasons.'

Education, awareness, and enforcement: Several respondents highlight the need for enhanced fire safety education and awareness for building occupants, particularly in relation to automatic alarms.

'There should be much more stringent checks to ensure all aspects of fire safety legislation are being complied with by businesses.'

'Fire alarm systems are intended to assist with the evacuation of a building; therefore, RPs have a legal duty to ensure their general fire safety arrangements are suitable and sufficient, and do not rely on the FRS to investigate false alarms.'



Sentiment Analysis

Neutral Sentiment or suggested improvements: 40.8% of responses were neutral, and 9.9% offered suggestions for improvement for the proposals without expressing strong opinions.

Negative Sentiment: A significant portion (28.2% of respondents to this question) of the responses express negative sentiment, including anger, frustration, and concern. This is primarily driven by the perceived threat of reduced fire service response and the potential consequences for community safety.

Positive Sentiment: 18.3% of responses express positive sentiment, such as support for improved fire safety practices, education, and improved efficiency.

Summary

This question elicited some strong responses from respondents that oppose the proposals. There were fewer responses than previous free text questions, and respondents that did reply often used this question to reinforce previous answers.

Conclusions drawn from free text questions

The consultation survey indicates that the sentiment of respondents is that they are broadly supportive of change to the way RBFRS responds to AFAs. There is a passionate minority that is staunchly opposed to the proposals.

Where supporters recognise the need to reduce wasteful use of resources, those in opposition to change express concerns about a perceived risk to safety. A minority of respondents feel that the proposed changes are a mechanism for delivering cuts to service delivery. For reference, this is not an intention of the proposals and was not expressed in the consultation document. The intent is to align resource to risk, increasing efficiency and effectiveness, and consequently, public safety. The proposals are intended to facilitate risk critical safety activities and increase productivity. It is anticipated that, if adopted, this will improve outcomes for those at most risk from fire.

There is a challenge around perception of the risk of fire. RBFRS messaging regularly highlights the dangers of fire and the need for the community to act i.e. the regular testing of smoke alarms. Hazard perception is also governed by factors including involuntary exposure to the hazard, a lack of personal control and uncertainty about the probability of exposure². The service should ensure that it continues to communicate its understanding of risk and clearly identify both what it is doing to reduce it and what members of the public can do to reduce their own risk.

The service should be very clear, and publicly acknowledge that the proposed changes are not a no risk change. The risk versus benefit calculation should be clearly reiterated. It can do so by ensuring there are visible communications around the benefits of the proposed change and how

² Understanding public perception of risk. Glynis Breakwell, University of Surrey 2002



explain how this modifies the community risk profile to the benefit of staff and residents. A well-defined link to who is at risk of fire and a clear explanation of the duties of the responsible person, would help to improve understanding of the motivating factors for change. Ongoing conversations around the change are important and need to be conducted with the audience in mind.

Respondents who express concern about the transparency of decision making lack trust in the consultation process. RBFRS strives to ensure its consultation processes are transparent and inclusive. The service has a comprehensive consultation strategy and adheres to the Gunning Principles.

- Employees are more likely to agree with the proposals, although not all do.
- Residents and businesses are more cautious and will need ongoing support if the proposals are upheld.
- TVFCS employees are invested in change and clearly desire alignment across the Thames Valley area. Their concerns relate to the practicalities of the proposed change, they will also need to feel supported, and be fully engaged in any future change management process.



Part 3: Consultation Methodology

The second part of this report explains how RBFRS undertook the AFA consultation on behalf of the Fire Authority. This information is intended to support the Fire Authority in reaching a decision on the proposed way forward. It is equally important that the Fire Authority are satisfied that the consultation meets or exceeds the standards for consultation as set out in the RBFRS Consultation Strategy.

Consultation principles

Fire and rescue authorities are required to pay due regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The Framework states that fire and rescue authorities need to:

- be transparent and accountable to their communities for their decisions and actions;
- provide the opportunity for communities to help to plan their local service through effective consultation and involvement

This consultation is conducted in line with these requirements and in accordance with the following principles.

[Government consultation guidance principles](#) suggest that the length of consultation should be proportionate to the nature and impact of the proposals. This consultation period ran between 4 March 2024 and 13 May 2024.

RBFRS also followed the legal principles which specify how public bodies should consult. Known as the Gunning Principles; they specify that:

- Consultation should be carried out when proposals are at the formative stage;
- Sufficient information is provided to allow intelligent consideration of the proposals;
- Adequate time is given for response; and
- Responses are conscientiously considered before decisions are taken.

This consultation has also sought to adhere to the [2018 consultation principles](#) published by the Government. These principles are that;

- Consultations will be clear and concise
- Consultations will have a purpose
- Consultation will be informative
- Consultations are only part of a process of engagement
- Consultations should last for a proportionate amount of time
- Consultations should be targeted
- Consultations should take account of the groups being consulted
- Consultations should be agreed before publication
- Consultations should facilitate scrutiny
- Responses should be published in a timely fashion; and



We will also consider appropriate times to launch consultations.

You can access [RBFRRS' Consultation Strategy](#) online for full details of the consultation framework that we follow.

It is the opinion of this report that the consultation met the principles set out above and contained within the Consultation Strategy. The following sections provide detail about the conduct of the consultation.

Overview of Consultation Responses

The data was gathered via an online survey conducted using Survey Monkey. Hard copies of the survey were available, but none were requested. All data collected was anonymised in line with good practice.

We asked about:

- Whether respondents agreed with the proposals and if they had any comments that they would like to make. This qualitative data was analysed to look at responses from different stakeholder groups to seek further insight.
- Equality and diversity information to analyse the demographic profile of respondents.
- An indication of the capacity in which the respondents were replying, such as an individual resident of Royal Berkshire or on behalf of an organisation.

Free text questions were used to enable respondents to provide individual and specific feedback on the consultation proposals.

The free text questions were analysed using coding methodology; common themes in the feedback were highlighted and patterns in responses form the basis of the analysis in Part 1 of this report.

To remain transparent and impartial, we have ensured that due consideration was given to all feedback collected, analysing comments, and considering the range of comments including those which do not support our proposals. All of the free text responses are included in **Appendix 6** (attached as Appendix D under a separate cover).

We received 389 responses to the consultation in total.

Within our data reporting, we have noted the number of questions that were answered and percentage of agreement with the proposals. We have presented our data including publishing all consultation comments to be as transparent as possible. We felt that it was important that respondents did have the option to skip questions to encourage participation and a higher response rate. If we were not to allow respondents to skip questions, we may have achieved a lower response rate or missed an opportunity to collect data and feedback about our proposals across the survey.



The intention was to encourage completion, however this freedom places constraints on our ability to analyse demographic data.

An activity tracker was maintained to monitor engagement. However, attendee numbers and engagement levels were not captured for all activities which makes it challenging to understand the full reach of the consultation. For clarity a copy of the activity tracker can be found in [Appendix 7](#).

The tables and figures in this section of the report illustrate the demographic profile of respondents who gave feedback through our Survey Monkey platform.

Benchmarking

	RBFRS 2024 AFA Consultation	London Fire Brigade 2023 AFA Consultation
Responses	389	261
Reach	118,115	180,000
Clicks to landing page	1476	3242

Consultation Resources

The Automatic Fire Alarm 2024 Consultation was widely publicised across the Service's digital channels, including social media platforms, website, intranet (available to RBFRS staff) and online and local media. This promotion was delivered, alongside in-person community engagement activity led by our teams across the County. Consultation materials were made available via several accessible methods.

These included:

- Online via rbfrs.co.uk/haveyoursay
- Social media
- Local and online media
- Hard copies of leaflets and posters were distributed to every fire station and made available to download from the website
- Information about the consultation was sent via email
- Engagement events and activities
- Signposting via email.

To improve engagement with the consultation, specific community and business stakeholders were identified and contacted directly. This included directly contacting all schools across Berkshire.



Communications

The overarching priority of our communications plan was to engage with as many stakeholders as possible, to gain the most representative response from residents, partners, and our staff.

An extensive stakeholder mapping exercise was completed to ensure that we would reach all those groups identified as being potentially interested in, or impacted by, the proposals outlined.

Following this, various channels of communications were considered to reach these stakeholders effectively, as outlined in this report. This included emails, letters, leaflets and posters, social media and articles for local magazines and newsletters.

Regular updates were posted across our communications channels throughout the duration of the consultation to try and encourage a higher response rate.

We also held four online engagement sessions with our staff, while the consultation was live. Due to the shift patterns worked by operational firefighters, we held sessions for each watch, and one specifically for on-call firefighters, who usually meet on Mondays. A total of six online sessions were offered to the public to come and find out more about the consultation. Four engagement sessions were completed with TVFCS employees.

Website

A section was created on the RBFRS website on the Consultation webpage. This included:

- An overview of what the consultation was focusing on.
- An animated video, which explained what the Automatic Fire Alarm consultation is and what buildings were included in the proposals.
- A link to the consultation documents, comprising:
 - The consultation document
 - An accessible version of the document, built in HTML so that people using accessible technology such as screen reading software and translation services (such as Google which is inbuilt to the website and offers over 100 languages) can access the whole document.
 - An 'Easy Read' version of the consultation document and survey.
 - The survey translated into four different languages – Romanian, Urdu, Punjabi and Polish.
 - A large text format version of the consultation document; and
 - A promotional poster and leaflet for local groups to use to promote the consultation.
- A link to the online survey to provide feedback.
- Information on other ways that people could take part in the consultation. This included by email, postal address, and telephone number to provide alternative methods of response.
- Details on accessibility for people requiring alternative formats or languages.



We had a total of **1,476 visits** to pages relating to the consultation during the time the consultation was running, and the main page was the **33rd most popular** page on the RBFRS website.

Throughout the course of the consultation, updates were added to the RBFRS website to remind people take part, with the consultation remaining on the homepage banner for the entire duration.

Media and Partners

A press release was issued to media contacts at the beginning of the consultation on 4 March 2024, which provided details of the consultation and how to get involved, outlining the reasons for the consultation and the importance of residents and businesses having their say. Following this, the Communications and Engagement Team actively engaged with local media by phone and at local events to encourage coverage and promote the consultation to residents.

Tim Readings, Group Manager for CRMP took part in an interview with BBC Radio Berkshire on 24 April. Coverage was also received in [BBC News](#), [Maidenhead Advertiser](#), [Reading Today](#) and the [Reading Chronicle](#).

Partner authorities in Berkshire also shared details of the consultation, such as the [Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead](#) in their newsletter to residents on 12 April 2024. [Winnersh Parish Council](#) shared details of the consultation on their website, [Reading Voluntary Action](#) shared the consultation. The consultation was also shared in the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum newsletter.

Social Media

To complement the channels above, social media was used throughout the consultation programme to enable respondents to share the information and to encourage engagement.

Information was posted on RBFRS' Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn pages at regular intervals, to encourage people to participate in the consultation. Information about the consultation was 'shared' in over 60 Facebook community groups.

During the consultation, the following videos were shared:

- Animated video with an outline of the Automatic Fire Alarm consultation and why we were consulting.
- A second animated video explaining the choices available in the consultation.
- An explanation of why it is important to take part in the consultation by Councillor Jeff Brooks, Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and Paul Gittings, Vice Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.
- A short interview with Tim Readings, Group Manager for Community Risk Management Planning encouraging people to take part.

These videos were published on our social media channels and in Facebook community groups, alongside a selection of social media cards that highlighted the key messages of the consultation.



We used paid-for promotion on Facebook and Instagram to target areas of the County that had the lowest response rate. This activity focused on Slough, which consistently had the lowest rate by unitary authority. This resulted in 62,913 people being reached and 903 people clicking the link to find out more.

Analytics

We saw positive engagement through the analytics for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram.

Impressions refers to the number of times your content is displayed, no matter if it was clicked or not. Reach refers to the number of unique users who saw your content. Engagements refers to numbers of clicks, shares or comments on our posts.

- Our Facebook posts resulted in 93,365 people being reached and 2,347 engagements.
- From the over 60 community groups we posted in, they have approximately 400,000 members, which we may have reached. Due to the page set up, there no way of formally tracking the engagement or reach of this so the above figure is indicative.
- On Instagram, we used Insta stories to continually promote the consultation throughout, reaching 1,807 people with 30 engagements.
- In total, our Twitter posts received 16,675 impressions and had 273 engagements.
- Our LinkedIn posts achieved 6,268 impressions and 263 engagements.
- Our three videos posted throughout the duration of the consultation, including the animated video, received a combined total of 49,641 views on Facebook and YouTube.

Consultation Activity

Throughout the consultation period, community engagement activity was carried out by teams across the Service to support responses:

- Letters and emails were sent to 1,373 community contacts across a broad range of organisations, from schools to faith groups and disability organisations. This wide range of contacts was used to encourage as many areas of our community as possible to take part in our consultation – particularly those who have been under-represented in our consultations in previous years.
- Details of the consultation were shared with local authorities to include in their residents' newsletters.
- Letters were sent to partner agencies and contacts, including neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, the Leaders of the unitary authorities, the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner, MPs and Town and Parish Councils. Representative bodies including the Fire Brigades Union, Fire Officers Association, National Fire Chiefs Council and Unison were all sent letters and invited to respond.
- A variety of engagement activities were undertaken at a Hub level throughout the period of the consultation. There were 102 separate actions completed by Service Delivery staff from Prevention, Protection and Response, as well as RBFRS volunteers. The activities



comprised visits to local businesses and trading estates, contact with schools and promotion through fire station social media accounts.

- Fire crews took the opportunity to promote the consultation while carrying out their usual duties and often combined this work with activities such as risk information gathering.
- An activity tracking document was maintained during the consultation. It is attached to this report, see [Appendix 7](#).

The consultation team has attempted to reach out to a wide set of stakeholders. An analysis of organisations, businesses, community groups, agencies and charities were carried out at an early stage of the process. This analysis focused on seeking diversity of experience and opinion within the community and was intended to build on RBFRS’s previous experience of conducting public consultation.

This table represents a sample of organisations, businesses and groups that were included in the RBFRS community contact list. All were contacted during the consultation.

Alzheimer’s and dementia support groups	11	Health Service	6
Building Control and Planning	12	Hospitals	5
High profile businesses	16	Housing/Homelessness Support	24
Care Homes	28	Internal Representative Bodies	3
Carer support groups	11	Military and Veteran Charities	26
The Centre	NA	Leisure Centres	24
Charities	119	Libraries	34
Children’s Centres	47	Licensing Bodies	6
Community Groups/Centre	192	Museums	5
Creative/Arts Groups	40	Online Forums	5
Dentists	30	Policy Groups/Think tanks	6
Employment Support organisations	3	Schools/Colleges	409
Faith Groups	50	Scouts/Guides	8
Financial Support Providers	1	Sports Clubs & Sports Centres	45
Foodbank	1	Victim/Witness Support	3
General Practitioners	68	Wildlife & Environmental organisations	4
Health Groups	3		

Organisations, groups, and business responses

The consultation team contacted a wide range of stakeholder organisations, groups, and businesses to solicit as wide a range of responses as possible.

This table provides a breakdown of organisations, groups and businesses that responded to the consultation.



Thames Valley Fire Control Service

All watches in Thames Valley Fire Control Service were involved in pre-consultation engagement sessions. The purpose of these sessions was to understand the processes involved in AFA call handling the challenges, current issues, and viable proposals for change. All TVFCS staff were encouraged to respond to the consultation.

Neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services

Neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services in Dorset and Wiltshire, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, London Fire Brigade, and Surrey were contacted. No responses were provided.

Representative Bodies

We are pleased to have received a detailed response from the Fire Brigades Union as a key organisational stakeholder.

The response from the Fire Brigades Union is included in full in [Appendix 5](#).

Unitary Authorities

All unitary authorities in Berkshire were contacted during the consultation. No organisational responses were received. However, councillors from Englefield, Greenham, Reading, Winkfield, Winnersh, and Wokingham all responded to the survey.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

RBFRS recognises the importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and operates in accordance with our [EDI Objectives](#). The Objectives for 2022-2026 were published following a public consultation.

In line with consultation best practice, at the beginning of our consultation process, we created an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the AFA policy change proposals, which we have reviewed and updated where needed.

Our EIAs ensure that we are aware of the risks and impact of our work on individuals or groups who are protected under the nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 and the methods we can undertake to mitigate these risks. The intent of the EIA is to ensure that we are aware of the risks and impacts of our work on individuals or groups who share protected characteristics, and other non-statutory social characteristics identified within our documentation (such as rurality, homelessness, and those with caring responsibilities).

We are seeking continuous improvement and for this consultation we intended to build on our previous experience. We felt it was extremely important to ensure our documentation and survey could both be accessible in multiple formats to support engagement from as many individuals as possible.



For this, we worked with an external organisation who created an Easy Read version of our consultation document. This document made our information more accessible to people with learning disabilities by using short, simple sentences with pictures.

Google Translate is a built-in function on our website. This makes the consultation material, including the consultation document, available in up to 108 languages. Further translations of the consultation document could also be made available upon request.

The AFA consultation webpage and documentation was assessed for readability and was suitable for use with screen reading technology.

During the consultation process, we were also able to analyse our ongoing response rate from various groups through the EDI data we collected through Survey Monkey. This enabled us to assess where we needed to target more specific communications and to adapt our strategy as the consultation progressed. As a result, we completed targeted activities to increase the response rate from Slough as this was consistently low.

We seek to continually improve our consultations and will utilise learning from this experience, to improve our processes and our approach to consultation. So that we can improve our engagement with those from all areas of the community.

Equality and Diversity Monitoring

In [Appendix 3](#), we have presented the raw data comparison of EDI data from this consultation and the previous AFA consultation. This data is provided to show how we have changed and modified the way in which we collect EDI data through more inclusive answer options. Our intention is to represent the diversity within the communities we serve. As such, making direct comparisons is challenging as the questions asked and options offered have changed over time.

Within this consultation, we expanded the opportunity for respondents to self-describe. This has been offered to increase the inclusivity of the consultation, ensuring that all respondents are able to describe themselves in the language they wish to use, whilst simultaneously indicating where we may have missed opportunities to add sufficient options to represent the fullest range of possible answers. For this consultation, the [NFCC Equality of Access documents](#) were reviewed to ensure that due consideration was given to how we could engage with different groups of people across the County to make a positive difference. For future consultations, we will be considering how we can continue to develop the accessibility and inclusivity in line with good practice and the NFCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Project Team national guidance.

We are continually working to improve the way in which we reach and engage with different groups across Royal Berkshire. We will be considering further the pre-engagement work we may be able to do with different groups within our County to inform our consultation activity and promote inclusivity within our work with the public. We continue to be committed to promoting diversity and inclusion across the work that we do at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.



Respondents Profile

[Appendix 2](#) illustrates the demographic profile for all responses via the Survey Monkey questionnaire. RBFRS is committed to promoting equality and diversity; by collecting this information we can monitor the response rate to our consultation across a range of communities and backgrounds. This enables us to continually evaluate our work and to improve efforts to engage a representative sample of people within Royal Berkshire.

Next Steps

RBFRS will continue to review its consultation methods to ensure we communicate with our stakeholders in an effective and meaningful way. We welcome any feedback you may have, so please email consultations@rbfrs.co.uk with any suggestions.

This consultation will be evaluated in line with the [RBFRS Consultation Strategy](#). The evaluation will consider:

- What worked well?
- What didn't work well?
- Areas for improvement
- Resources needed for the future
- Next steps



Appendix 1. Responsible Persons

A responsible person (RP) is defined in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, article 3 (here forth referred to as the Order) as:

- a) In relation to a workplace, the employer, if the workplace is to any extent under his control;
- b) in relation to any premises not falling within paragraph (a)
 - i. the person who has control of the premises (as occupier or otherwise) in connection with the carrying on by him of a trade, business or other undertaking (for profit or not); or
 - ii. the owner, where the person in control of the premises does not have control in connection with the carrying on by that person of a trade, business or other undertaking

In short, the RP can be the employer, the person in control of the premises or in the absence of either of those roles, the owner of the premises.

The need for, and type of AFA system, installed in non-domestic premises is also regulated through the Order. The RP is required by law under Article 17 of the Order to ensure that the fire alarm system is, 'subject to a suitable system of maintenance and is maintained in an efficient state, in efficient order and in good repair'.

Responsible persons and Fire Alarm Monitoring Organisations (FAMOs) have a responsibility to evaluate if the activation of an AFA is an actual fire or a false alarm before notifying the Fire Service.



Appendix 2. Respondent Groups

Which option best describes you?

Answer Choices	%	Responses
A Berkshire resident	85.8%	333
A member of the public living outside of Berkshire	14.2%	55

Which local authority do you live in?

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Slough	4.9%	16
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	13.6%	45
Wokingham	23.0%	76
Bracknell	15.2%	50
West Berkshire	22.1%	73
Reading	21.2%	70

Please select the option which best applies to you

Answer Choices	%	Responses
A business representative	12%	45
A representative of a group or organisation	6.7%	25
A councillor or a member of parliament	3.2%	12
An employee of RBFRS	26.1%	98
An employer of a part time firefighter(S) on the on-call duty system	0.8%	3
None	30.1%	113
A school	12.8%	48
Other	8.5%	32



If you are an employee of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, are you:

Answer Choices	%	Responses
On a wholetime duty system	52.6%	51
TVFCS	13.4%	13
In a professional services role	23.7%	23
On-call	10.3%	10

Which unitary authority does your school fall into?

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Slough	4.2%	2
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	8.3%	4
Wokingham	27.1%	13
Bracknell	10.4%	5
West Berkshire	16.7%	8
Reading	33.3%	16
Outside Berkshire	0%	0



Age

Answer Choices	%	Responses
16-24	7.1%	17
25-34	17.2%	41
35-44	25.5%	61
45-54	24.3%	58
55-64	18.0%	43
65+	8.0%	19

Disability

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Yes	13.6%	33
No	76.7%	184
Prefer not to say	8.8%	21
Prefer to specify	0.8%	2

Neurodivergence

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Yes	12.2%	29
No	73.5%	175
Prefer not to say	11.8%	28
Prefer to specify	2.5%	6



Ethnic origin

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Arab	0.4%	1
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi		
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0%	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1.7%	4
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0.8%	2
Other Asian Background	0.4%	1
Mixed - Asian and White	1.7%	4
Black or Black British - African	0.4%	1
Black or Black British - Caribbean	2.1%	5
Mixed - Black African and White	0.8%	2
Mixed - Black Caribbean and White	0%	0
Chinese	0.4%	1
White	74.1%	177
Other White Background	2.5%	6
Other Mixed Background	0.4%	1
Other Ethnic Background	0%	0
Prefer not to say	13.4%	32
How I would self-describe is not listed here	0.8%	2



Religion

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Buddhist	0%	0
Christian	30.8%	74
Hindu	2.1%	5
Jewish	1.7%	4
Muslim	1.3%	3
No religion	40.8%	98
Sikh	0%	0
Prefer not to say	21.7%	52
How I would self-describe is not listed here	1.7%	4

Gender

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Female	35.7%	85
Male	46.9%	112
Non-binary	2.1%	5
Prefer not to say	14.2%	34
I prefer to self-describe	1.3%	3



Trans

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Yes	1.7%	4
No	82.7%	196
Prefer not to say	15.6%	37

Sexual Orientation

Answer Choices	%	Responses
Asexual		
Bi/bisexual		
Gay/lesbian		
Heterosexual/straight		
Pansexual		
Prefer not to say		
How I would self-describe is not listed		



Appendix 3. EDI data comparison

This is the raw data comparison of EDI data from this consultation against the responses from the 2022 Automatic Fire Alarm consultation. Categories that were changed for this consultation can be seen in the tables with a grey box

Response capacity

	AFA 2021	AFA 2024
A business representative	6.0%	12.0%
A representative of a group or organisation	12.0%	6.7%
A Councillor or Member of Parliament		3.2%
An employee of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service	28.1%	26.1%
An employer of a part time firefighter(s) on the on-call duty system		0.8%
None		30.0%
A school		12.8%
Other*	3.5%	8.5%

*Other comprised:

Senior FRS Officer	RBC Manager	Oxfordshire resident
House owner	Retired RBFRS employee x 3	Retired x 2
Resident x 13	FRS Officer	Schools Health and Safety
Member of public x 3	Further Education	Other FRS
Emergency services worker	Volunteer	

Age

	AFA 2021	AFA 2024
Under 16	0%	
16-24	4.4%	7.1%
25-34	18.1%	17.2%
35-44	26.0%	25.5%
45-54	28.7%	24.3%
55-64	15.6%	18.0%
65+	7.1%	8.0%



Disability or long term health conditions

	AFA 2021	AFA 2024
Yes	7.9%	13.8%
No	85.5%	76.7%
Prefer not to say	6.6%	8.8%
Prefer to specify		0.8%

Neurodivergence

	AFA 2021	AFA 2024
Yes		12.2%
No		73.5%
Prefer not to say		11.8%
Prefer to specify		2.5%

Ethnic origin

	AFA 2021	AFA 2024
Arab		0.4%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi		0.0%
Asian or Asian British - Indian		1.7%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani		0.8%
Other Asian Background		0.4%
Mixed - Asian and White	1.0%	1.7%
Black or Black British - African		0.4%
Black or Black British - Caribbean		2.1%
Mixed - Black African and White	0.3%	0.8%
Mixed - Black Caribbean and White	0.3%	0.0%
Chinese	0.3%	0.4%
White	76.6%	74.1%
Other White Background	4.7%	2.5%
Other Mixed Background	0.5%	0.4%
Other Ethnic Background		0.0%
Prefer not to say	8.5%	13.4%
How I would self-describe is not listed here		0.8%



Religion

	AFA 2021	AFA 2024
Buddhist	0.3%	0%
Christian (Including Church of England, Catholic ,Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	35.8%	30.8%
Hindu	0.8%	2.1%
Jewish	0%	1.7%
Muslim	2.2%	1.3%
No religion	42.6%	40.8%
Sikh	1.1%	0%
Prefer not to say	15.3%	21.7%
How I would self-describe is not listed here*		1.7%

* How I would self-describe is not listed here comprised:

See last comment
Fire doesn't discriminate!
Atheist
Strongly atheist

Gender

	AFA 2021	AFA 2024
Female	34.8%	35.6%
Male	54.5%	46.9%
Non-binary	0.8%	2.1%
Prefer not to say	8.8%	14.2%
I prefer to self-describe*	1.1%	1.3%

* I prefer to self-describe comprised:

Ditto
Fire doesn't care about pronouns
X



Trans

	AFA 2021	AFA 2024
Yes		1.7%
No		82.7%
Prefer not to say		15.6%

Sexual orientation

	AFA 2021	AFA 2024
Asexual		1.7%
Bi/bisexual	0.8%	1.7%
Gay/lesbian	3.5%	2.1%
Heterosexual/straight	79.0%	63.7%
Pansexual		1.7%
Prefer not to say	15.6%	27.4%
How I would self-describe is not listed*		1.7%

How I would self-describe is not listed comprised:

What does this have to do with AFAs?
Ditto
Fire will screw anybody
More questions about EDI than survey



Appendix 4. Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation – Data and Analysis Sources

The consultation document uses data to illustrate the challenges of Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) and the potential impacts of the proposed options.

Volume of False Alarms

We have used published Home Office data from 2022-23 to illustrate the national and local picture of the scale of False Alarm incidents: [Fire statistics data tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-data-tables) – Table FIRE0102. This data shows that False Alarms made up 45% of incidents in Berkshire, and 39% of incidents in England as a whole.

Every year we attend around 2300 false alarms generated by AFA systems in Berkshire. This figure does vary from year to year and was lower during the COVID-19 pandemic. We report these figures to HMICFRS.

Incidents where we were called to an Automatic Fire Alarm

To understand and illustrate the potential scope and impact of our proposed options, we used detailed data from the 2022-2023 year.

This analysis was carried out on the basis of the original incident type – that is, the information we had when we first received the call. This means that we can look at the proportion of those AFA calls which were, in fact, fires, and which were false alarms. The original incident type codes included were:

- A1.0.0.P ALARM - INDUSTRIAL / COMMERCIAL
- A2.0.0.P ALARM - RETAIL / PUBLIC ASSEMBLY
- A3.0.0.P ALARM - RESIDENTIAL
- A8.1.0.P ALARM - FRS PROPERTY ALARM

For this year, we were able to refine how we count an AFA by using relatively recently introduced data flag indicating where an addressable alarm panel was present. This enabled us to remove incidents from the analysis where it had been confirmed that there was no addressable alarm panel.



This gave us a dataset of 2294 incidents in premises with an AFA system which we attended in the 2022-23 year. For data quality reasons we did not have full premises information about 50 of these, leaving 2244 incidents for further analysis.

We assessed the property types of these incidents and developed three risk groups, A, B and C. The complete list of property types can be found at the end of this document.

We then calculated the number of incidents in each of these three groups, and when these incidents occurred (9am to 6pm or 6pm to 9am), on the basis of the time of initial call. We used information from our incident recording system to examine the number of these incidents which were fires, and whether there were any injuries or fatalities in these fires.

All incidents 2022-23

	Total Incidents	AFA incidents*	% of incidents that are AFAs
Group A	1013	663	65.4%
Commercial	961	631	65.7%
Further education	34	22	64.7%
Entertainment	15	9	60.0%
Stadia	3	1	33.3%
Group B	435	270	62.1%
Commercial higher risk	45	23	51.1%
Education under 16	158	130	82.3%
Other	11	2	18.2%
Community	183	95	51.9%
Hospital	38	20	52.6%
Group C	4117	1313	31.9%
Dwelling	3456	926	26.8%
Other Residential	661	387	58.5%
Non-buildings	2679	48	1.8%
TOTAL	8244	2294	27.8%

*Incidents where: Alarm Codes correspond to AFA alarms, and alarm panel present is yes or not completed on incident recording system.



AFA Incidents by time of day

	6pm to 9am	9am to 6pm	Total
Group A	347	316	663
Commercial	333	298	631
Further education	10	12	22
Entertainment	4	5	9
Stadia	0	1	1
Group B	141	129	270
Commercial higher risk	16	7	23
Education under 16	62	68	130
Other	1	1	2
Community	50	45	95
Hospital	12	8	20
Group C	724	589	1313
Dwelling	489	437	926
Other Residential	235	152	387
TOTAL	1212	1034	2246

Incidents resulting in fires (primary or secondary) by 9am to 6pm

	6pm to 9am	9am to 6pm	Total
Group A	3	2	5
Commercial	3	2	5
Further education	0	0	0
Entertainment	0	0	0
Stadia	0	0	0
Group B	2	1	3
Commercial higher risk	0	1	1
Education under 16	1	0	1
Other	1	0	1
Community	0	0	0



Hospital	0	0	0
Group C	14	5	19
Dwelling	10	2	12
Other Residential	4	3	7
TOTAL	19	8	27

Plus -3 internal flooding and one hazmat incident, no fire, alarm actuated.

Victims in these incidents - by time of day

	6pm to 9am	9am to 6pm
Group A	0	0
Commercial	0	0
Further education	0	0
Entertainment	0	0
Stadia	0	0
Group B	0	0
Commercial higher risk	0	0
Education under 16	0	0
Other	0	0
Community	0	0
Hospital	0	0
Group C	2	0
Dwelling	0	0
Other Residential	2	0
TOTAL	2	0



Total time spent (first appliances only), and by 9am to 6pm

	6pm to 9am	9am to 6pm	Total
Group A	137:22:00	89:08:10	226:30:10
Commercial	132:08:53	84:29:27	216:38:20
Further education	3:43:36	3:07:17	6:50:53
Entertainment	1:29:31	1:14:42	2:44:13
Stadia	0	0:16:44	0:16:44
Group B	57:41:32	34:52:23	92:33:55
Commercial higher risk	4:21:15	1:45:35	6:06:50
Education under 16	27:37:08	18:13:28	45:50:36
Other	0:38:44	0:11:49	0:50:33
Community	22:34:43	12:02:53	34:37:36
Hospital	2:29:42	2:38:38	5:08:20
Group C	231:57:37	175:25:56	407:23:33
Dwelling	157:34:17	131:18:57	288:53:14
Other Residential	74:23:20	44:06:59	118:30:19
TOTAL	427:01:09	299:26:29	726:27:38

Consultation options

	Incidents in scope	% of AFAs in scope	Time spent in scope	% of time spent in scope
A only, 24 hours	663	29.5%	226:30:10	31.2%
A 24 hours, B 9am to 6pm only	792	35.3%	261:22:33	36.0%
A and B, 24 hours	933	41.5%	319:04:05	43.9%



Appendix 5. Fire Brigades Union consultation response

Southern Region Fire Brigades Union submission

Thames Valley Brigades: Consultation on Options for Responding to Automatic Fire Alarms



03 April 2024

Introduction

This is the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) submission to the Thames Valley (Buckinghamshire, Berkshire & Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services) consultation on Options for Responding to Automatic Fire Alarms. The FBU is the democratic, professional voice of firefighters and other workers within fire and rescue services across the UK. The union represents the vast majority of wholetime (full-time), retained (part-time, on-call) and volunteer operational firefighters and operational fire control staff across the UK.

As a collective response to the three fire and rescue services within the region, this document reflects a thorough review conducted through the structures of each brigade committee and collectively the Southern Region of the Fire Brigades Union. We have coordinated our response, aligning with the consultation processes and associated documents from each service. The committees acknowledge that this initiative stems from directives by HMICFRS and NFCC and has been adopted by various fire services across the UK. In evaluating the proposed changes, we have analysed the number of Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) attended in each service and engaged with station representatives to gauge their views and insights.

Consultation with FBU representatives

The FBU, the representative staff body of firefighters and those within the three Thames Valley fire and rescue services in our view have not been adequately consulted and normal channels for consultation have been bypassed. Not allowing for meaningful dialogue prior to public consultation is an indication that the views of staff have not been fully considered at this point in time. As this is a proposal that covers the three fire and rescue services a discussion involving the FBU in each brigade we believe would have assisted in providing productive feedback and the ability to explain our position to our members and the service.

Significant proposals such as those detailed should in our view be based on a review conducted over a period of time. Yet the consultation signposts to a public “survey” that will be carried out in two of the three services and allowing staff engagement at the same time - those that understand in detail what these proposals mean and how they will impact / change the response being provided to the public.



Moreover, we expect the review process detailed in each service to fully involve the Fire Brigades Union, to review openly the feedback from different organisations such as schools, universities, NHS establishments and others listed in the three categories of risk detailed in the proposals. It would be informative to learn how many organisations feed back into this process and what lengths each service has taken to consult and reach out to key stake holders in their respective counties.

Risks to wholetime and retained firefighters

The FBU locally do not feel we have been consulted on this proposal nor had the opportunity to feed in our concerns through the recognised processes and we feel these proposals represent a significant risk to firefighter safety and to the communities we serve. We will outline some of those concerns in this response.

The consultation notes that only a small per cent of automatic fire alarms (AFA) actuations that are received are actual confirmed fires, and many of these requiring no action – what this does mean is a number of incidents did require action and intervention by fire crews, clearly the risk remains but now it is being proposed that the three services should not address and manage this risk fully but should ignore it – firefighters and the public would be concerned if this were to be the case.

The FBU also has issues with the back to front argument being made in the consultation. On the one hand, the consultation complains that despite attending AFAs the service has no legal duty to attend. On the other hand, it sees the solution, as not providing statutory footing and resources to aid these efforts but to place more responsibility on duty holders, whose judgements on AFAs is clearly an area of concern. Additionally, the argument we have seen before that the majority of other UK fire and rescue services now require a confirmed fire before they send fire appliances is a part of a race to the bottom and we propose that each of the three fire and rescue services demand more resources and extra capacity to deal with AFAs safely and properly.

Attendance at AFAs are never unwanted nor would we imagine unwelcome to the vast majority of occupiers. The reassurance of knowing a professional response is on its way to assist, advise and if necessary commence an early attack on a fire, cannot be overstated. Seconds save lives and a reduction in responses only increases the chances of fires going undetected until it is too late, or a delayed call for assistance when an incorrect assessment is made by a member of the public as opposed to the judgement of a professionally trained, qualified and experienced Firefighter.

AFAs are a sizable portion of a firefighter's work and aid familiarisation of premises in the station's grounds; they can conduct fire safety checks and disseminate fire safety advice to the duty holder. This is valuable work that serves our communities and protects the public.

Firefighters have raised over many years, concerns around reductions in crewing levels, appliance availability, non positive crewing of specialist vehicles such as ALPs in some brigades and changes to responses and PDAs. What is needed is an urgent injection of funding into the fire and rescue service that will bring numbers back to at least 2010 levels. We've lost a fifth of our workforce nationally – in no sector could you do that without it having some impact.

The fire and rescue service needs more resources and pursuing these proposals, kicks the can for more resources down the road and puts our members and the public at risk.



The prevalence of false alarms from automatic fire alarm is acknowledged; however, it's imperative to recognise the potential risks associated with low-risk premises listed in the consultation. Factors such as complex layouts, those that are scientific in nature, and high-value contents can significantly elevate the risk in such settings. The time delay in attending to alarms could result in more developed fires, posing hazards to both firefighters and the public. The financial implications of a more developed fire are substantial and can lead to severe consequences for businesses, potentially resulting in total loss. It's crucial to emphasise that expecting untrained individuals to confirm a fire before involving the fire service contradicts established safety protocols and sound advice provided by the fire service themselves, "to get out, call the fire service out and stay out". This delay increases the risk of greater damage and endangers both property and lives.

Risks to control staff

The FBU has issues with the impact of the proposals on firefighters in control. These include moral pressures, increased workload from increased call challenging, and the potential for increased stress and lower morale. Given that the FBU has not had prior consultation - our control staff members have not been consulted widely on these proposals and lack the thorough and considered consultation they deserve.

The issue we consider regarding the 'call challenge' system in relation to AFAs. The main purpose of call challenging is to ascertain if there is a fire within the premises. This is currently the legal responsibility of the duty holder but custom has resulted in this investigation being undertaken by fire crews – without fire crews on the ground. Call times will likely increase due to call challenging, diminishing the ability of control firefighters to respond to other emergencies. The call challenge approach arguably puts undue pressure and responsibility on control members, relying on the public to spot signs of fire and building damage and therefore the three fire and rescue services are potentially abdicating responsibility.

We are planning to meet and discuss these proposals with our Control members to ascertain any concerns regarding the robustness of the system and current practice and potential impact these proposals will have. As staff utilise a flow chart to the letter, there are no assurances that alarm companies and switchboards can answer all questions being asked of them which at present they are often unable to do. Also, there are no assurances that every alarm company/stakeholder will be made aware of these proposals, made their staff aware and confirmed this to the service as potentially we could see control staff having to explain the process to alarm company staff. It is clear that these proposals lack the robustness and rigour to ensure our control members are best able to perform their role.

Conclusion

The FBU has not been properly consulted on this proposal nor had the opportunity to feed in our concerns through the recognised processes. They don't improve the management of risk or protect firefighters and public safety. It is worth noting that firefighters don't get turned out to UFAS; they only know that it's an unwanted/false alarm once they leave the incident, having established and confirmed that conditions in and around the premises are safe. These proposals will ultimately put public safety at risk for alleged efficiencies when what is required, is more



resources and investment in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire fire and rescue services.

The broader context of declining resources within the fire and rescue service nationally is a significant concern. With over 12,000 firefighters lost since 2010 and longer response times for attending incidents, there is a pressing need for investment in frontline firefighters and fire protection/prevention roles. The current practice of crews riding appliances with four members compromises firefighter safety, particularly in the absence of a dedicated Breathing Apparatus Entry Control Officer (BAECO). Given these proposals, the critical necessity of crewing fire appliances with five riders becomes apparent. Plus ensuring there is no downgrading of fire cover and the number of fire appliances available during the night as is being proposed in the region is also of grave concern based on the concerns we have raised in this response. Investment in the fire and rescue service is essential to ensure the safety of both firefighters and the public they serve. We ask for the three services to look again at these proposals and consult properly with the FBU to ensure firefighter and public safety are not negatively compromised.



Appendix 6. Full consultation response

Attached as Appendix D under a separate cover.



Appendix 7. Activity tracker

Owner	Activity Type	Outcome	Time
Staff member	Forwarded EASY READ links to Wokingham CLASP	Members will now be primed by CLASP leaders; I'll back this up with a visit to assist members complete returns	10mins
Stn 4 Greens	Leaflet dropped to local industrial units during 7.2d visit	Number of leaflets given out	30mins
Staff member	AFA consultation leaflet left with RP following inspection at Calcot Services for Children, Yew Tree Cottage, 40 Bath Rd, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7QJ	Matt gave the RP a leaflet and gave a brief overview of the consultation process	10mins
Station 18 red watch	Attended Alzheimer's Dementia Support event at St Francis of Assisi church, Langley.	Poster given to be displayed in the church and poster given to support group for other meetings along with number of leaflets. Discussion had with organiser to explain consultation	30 mins
Station 18 red watch	Attended Langley College for meeting with facilities and reception staff	Posters to be displayed around site and leaflets available to those interested. Reception staff made aware of the purpose of the consultation should any questions be asked.	30 mins
Stn 16 Red watch	Car wash at stn 16	Posters displayed and leaflets given out and offered to all that attended.	10.30 - 15.30
Stn 16 Red watch	Leaflets left with RP at Holly Springs School After visit from watch.	Leaflets and a poster given to receptionist. Situation fully explained so she can pass on message/ information to others.	15 mins

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Appendix A
Agenda Item 10



Stn 17 W	Post Incident Activity - AFA Postcard to attended businesses.		Post Incident
Stn 1 Blue	Place of Worship All Nations Christian Centre	Leaflets and x2 posters delivered and meeting had with the Reverend who will pass to his congress over the Easter Weekend	1 hour
Stn 16 Green	Leaflets delivered to over 50 shops in The Lexicon Bracknell Leaflets delivered to approx 20 shops on Ascot High Street Places of worship to be identified and approached after the Easter break Leaflets being left after S&Ws (where suitable) and following any AFA	Over 70 businesses have received leaflets so far	3 hours
Stn 10 Green	Engagement with approximately 15-20 Retail / Commercial units and leaflets dropped in Peach Place, Wokingham	Encouragement given to managers to complete online survey	1 Hours
Stn 17/18 Green	Places of worship identified and will be approached after the Easter break. Leaflets being left after S&Ws if applicable. Leaflets being left After Each AFA attended. Local consultation planned in for 9th April		2 hrs
STN 04 Green	Leaflet and poster drops at multiple places of worship around Newbury including 4 Churches, 2 Muslim Centres, 1 Christian Centre and 2 Community Centres	Leaflets and advice given to multiple places of worship	2 HRS
CSA West Hub	Norcot Mission Church Jamaican Club group of 30	Leaflets given and advice on the AFA Consultation	2Hrs
CSA West Hub	Theale Dr's	Leaflets Given to pass out	15 mins
CSA West Hub	Theale Libary	Leaflets Given to pass out	15 mins
CSA West Hub	Chapel Row Dr's	Leaflets Given to pass out	15 mins



CSA West Hub	Thatcham Frank Hutchins Community Hall Food Bank	Leaflets Given to pass out	15 mins
CSA West Hub	Thatcham Frank Hutchins Community Hall Re-Hab Center	Leaflets Given to pass out	15 mins
CSA West Hub	Thatcham Frank Hutchins Community Hall Reception	Leaflets Given to pass out	15 mins
CSA West Hub	Thatcham Dr's	Leaflets Given to pass out	15 mins
Staff member	Email to community contacts list	Email sent to Schools/Colleges, Scouts/Guides, Sports club/centres, Thames Valley, Victim/witness support, Wildlife, Women's Group, Youth Group, Faith Groups	30 mins
Staff member	Email and letters sent to neighbouring services CFOs, MPs, Local councils and Unions	Emails and letters sent	30 mins
STN1 W	Leaflets left with Broad Street Mall management team following risk Visit by watch	Leaflet will be emailed to all retailers by management team	1 hr
STN1 W	Leaflets left with The Oracle shopping mall management team	Leaflet will be emailed to all retailers in the Oracle by management team	15mins
STN1 W	Post put onto station social media page	Consultation message posted	15 mins
Wokingham Road, Red Watch	Following an AFA to Loddon House, Regis Park Road. Poster erected in window in full of entrance.	Consultation Poster	10 Mins
Maidenhead Blue Watch	Post cards and leaflets handed out to every business from Nicolson's Lane down the length of the High street, speaking to business owners and staff about the AFA consultation.	Leaflets and advise given on the AFA consultation	1 Hour
Windsor Blue Watch	Post cards and leaflets handed out to every business down the length of Peascod Street Windsor, speaking to business owners and staff about the AFA consultation.	Leaflets and advise given on the AFA consultation	1 hour
Newbury Blue watch	Post cards plus engagement with retail businesses in Town Centre	Leaflets and advice given to multiple sops retail outlets	2 hour

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Appendix A
Agenda Item 10



Stn 1 Blue	Poster and card delivered during an AFA at Bottle and Glass Binfield and poster put up in bar and restaurant	Advice given	15mins
Maidnehead Blue Watch	Visited the Maidenhead Synagogue to speak to a council member and provide information on AFA's and the consultation.	Posters provided and provided information about the AFA consultation.	1 Hour
Windsor Blue Watch	Visted the Medina Islamic Educational and cultural Center in Windsor to speak to them about the AFA's and the consultation	Posters provided and provided information about the AFA consultation.	1 hour
Bracknell whites	Visited Tesco superstore at Warfield next to Warfield community centre and smaller shops - AFA consultation leaflets and one to one advice to business owners and public	AFA consult leaflets and advice	2 hours
	Visited WCDA cafe in Whitley	Posters provided and provided information about the AFA consultation.	1 hour
	Theale parish council	Posters provided and provided information about the AFA consultation.	1 hour
stn 1 G	Greyfriars church	AFA leaflets and explanation on consultation	
Stn 1 G	Cross St, Union St, Minster St local shops	AFA leaflets and explanation on consultation	
Stn 1 G	Vaston Road retail park	AFA leaflets and explanation on consultation	
STN 17/18 Green watch	Visited 50 plus businesses and passers-by within Slough High Street and 2 places of worship in the community. RBFRS social media and Viva updated.	AFA consultation leaflets and advice	2.5 hrs
PM Central Hub	Sent for inclusion in Community Safety Newsletter /Social media posts etc if possible	AFA consultation leaflets and advice	10 mins
Stn 16 Red Watch	Visited Eid festival at Bracknell Sports ground	AFA consultation leaflets Including community engagement	30 mins
Stn 20 Green	The Chapters, Beke Avenue, Shinfield	AFA leaflets and explanation on consultation	15 mins



STN 16 White Watch	Ascot Business Park, Lyndhurst Road, Ascot	AFA consultation leaflet delivery to estate and community engagement.	30 mins
Stn 16 White Watch	Western Industrial Estate, Bracknell, (Longshot Lane & Downmill Road)	AFA consultation leaflets delivered to local businesses and community engagement with local managers.	50 Mins
STN 1 White watch	Poster put up on public notice board and cards left on main desk at Reading Library Kings road	Large number of public will read poster regarding AFA consultation or will be able to take a card	15 mins
stn 1 White watch	Abu Bakr Islamic Centre, Masjid Abu Bakr Oxford Road Reading visited by Crews Poster placed on notice board and cards left with Mosque	popular local Mosque with large number of local community business owners visiting will be informed regarding AFA consultation	15 mins
Stn 22 Blue Watch	Arlington Business Park, Waterside Drive & Lakeview	Managers and responsible persons given information on consultation, cards and posters delivered.	30 mins
Stn 22 Blue Watch	Elizabeth Court, James Butcher Drive	responsible person given information on consultation, card and poster delivered.	5 mins
Stn 19 White watch	Travel lodge, Sainsburys, Queen street, Maidenhead	AFA consultation leaflets delivered to local businesses and community engagement with local managers.	15 mins
PM East Hub	Information shared with Slough Safer Partnership members	Link provided to partner agencies	5 mins
PM East Hub	Information shared with RBWM CSP members	Link provided to partner agencies	5 mins
PM East Hub	information shared with RBWM HDCPL partners	Link provided to partner agencies	5 mins
East Hub Protection	Audit - Hobbycraft, Unit 3, Maidenhead Retail Park, Stafferton Way	Link provided on outcome letter	5 mins
Staff member	AFA consultation leaflet handed to store manager following fire safety inspection	Manager made aware of the consultation process and the possible changes that would affect the store.	5mins



Staff member	AFA consultation leaflet handed to management agency (Remus Management) following fire safety inspection	Company made aware of the consultation process and the possible changes that would affect the store	5mins
Staff member	AFA consultation paragraphs added to several letters issued to businesses to either arrange inspections and/or provide fire safety advice	Link provided on standard letters	5mins
Staff member	AFA consultation leaflet handed to company manager following a post fire inspection	Manager made aware of the consultation process and the possible changes that would affect the store.	5mins
Staff member	AFA consultation leaflet handed to company manager following a post fire inspection	Manager made aware of the consultation process and the possible changes that would affect the store.	5mins
Staff member	AFA consultation paragraph added to a letter issued to Bacon Arms, Newbury	Link to consultation sent in letter	5mins
Staff member	Both AFA and Career awareness posters + information shared with local station chaplain who has agreed to try to put them up in his local church and community venues	Posters + information shared	15 mins
Stn 4 Green Watch	Leaflets and information given to Coop and surrounding shops in Thatcham following incident.	Leaflets and advice given	20 mins
Stn 4 Green Watch	Leaflets and information given to Woodspeen pub and restaurant following incident.	Leaflets and advice given	15 mins
Stn10 Blue Watch	Leaflets and information handed to Cadets/Parents and carers at Stn15 Crowthorne.	Leaflets and advice	
Stn 19 Blue	Leaflet and information handed to hand made cake company after 7.2d visit.	Leaflets and Advice	1 hour
Staff member	Email sent to MP Matt Roda responding to questions raised	Email sent	5 mins
Staff member	Phone call to Wazing Weddings to answer questions about building category	Phone call conversation had	10mins



Staff member	AFA consultation letter handed to premises manager and a brief conversation regarding what the consultation is about. (Fox and Hounds PH, Theale)	Leaflet and advice given	5mins
Station 1 reds	Greyfriars church leaflets dropped and explained to church community	Leaflet and advice	30mins
Station 1 reds	Attended Reading college as part of CFS and spoke to faculty staff regarding consultation and displaying posters	Leaflet and advice	30mins
Station 1 reds	Kings reach and Kings reach court HRRB	Leaflet and advice	30mins
	Tilehurst Synagogue	Leaflet and advice	30mins
station 1 reds	New century place. AFA repeat offender	Leaflet and advice	15 mins
Stn 16 Whites	AFA consultation leaflets and discussion with parishioners. All Souls Church, Ascot	Leaflets and Advice	30 mins
station 01 Whites	AFA at Tesco Whitley street, Reading	Leaflets and advice. Leaflet given to manager and conversations had with shoppers outside following evacuation	15 mins
Stn 16 Whites	AFA Consultation leaflet drop and discussion at Kerith Church.	Leaflets to be posted on noticeboard and link emailed to church goers	35 mins
Safety Education	AFA details Shared at ARP talk to 60 candidates across Berkshire	inserted in to ARP talk	60min talk
Station 19/21	AFA consultation leaflets dropped at Maidenhead Rugby Club, during County Cup Final, A number of business present, with leaflets on notice boards	Advice given to owner of rugby club	30mins
Stn 1 Whites	AFA consultation input for parents of Scouts attending stn 1	leaflet passed to scout leader	20 mins
Stn 10 Green	AFA Consultation at Wokingham Methodist church	Leaflet drop at Wokingham Methodist church with advice given to church manager to ensure engagement with worshippers	30 mins



Stn 16 Blue	Targeted engagement with retail units (approx 20) along Sunninghill High Street, Sunninghill Library and Ascot Library. All Saints Church & Community Centre, London Road, Ascot, King Edward Hall (Chapel), King Edward Road, Ascot	Leaflet drop, engagement with retail managers. Engagement with Libraries and Churches displaying Posters and Postcards to visitors for the duration of the consultation.	2 Hours
Communications	Included in RBWM's residents newsletter	Went out as part of newsletter on 26 April	
Staff member	Carried out public Q&A session	spoke with school, encouraged to complete consultation and offered support from fire safety team	30 mins
Stn 20 Greens	South Reading networking meeting attended, Whitley wood community centre	AFA consultation promoted to all attendees	2 hours
Stn2 Reds	Religious group- Our Lady of Peace and Blessed Dominic Barberi. AFA consultation	AFA consultation poster left with responsible person with explanation. I have also requested to feature in their newsletter. Photo taken and forwarded to Corp comms team.	20 mins
Stn2 Reds	AFA poster following unwanted fire call @ Norfolk house redlane court RG1 5QT	AFA consultation poster left with designated responsible resident. To be placed in communal area	15 mins
Stn 16 & 1 White watch	Water safety awareness event, Multi agency. Gave out AFA consultation leaflets with Home fire safety information	AFA consultation promoted along with Home fire safety and water awareness.	4.5 hours
Staff member	Follow up emails sent out to all contacts on the community contacts lists and all schools	Emails sent out	15 mins
Staff member	attended slough trading estate and shared materials with 40 businesses	afa consultation promoted and materials provided to encourage them to respond	6 hours
Staff member	High risk SSRIs emailed	Email sent out	10 mins
Station 15	Happiness Hub at Crowthorne Community Fire Station 19/4/24 & 15/3/24, Wildfire event at Wildmoor Heath 3/4/24, Safe & Well Visits during the entire period of the consultation, Crowthorne Fire Cadet Unit.	Advice regarding AFA consultation, leaflets.	2 hours



Stn2 Reds	The celebration of Vaisakhi & Nagar Kirtan. Local business around the procession when engaging with the fire appliance. Estimated x10 businesses.	Advice on AFA consultation	2 Hours
Stn19 Greens	Religious group - Visit to Seventh Day Adventist Church, Maidenhead	Missed due to incident, information sent by email	0
Stn19 Greens	AFA consultation information sent to fire alarm monitoring companies	E mails sent	30 mins
Stn19 Greens	Maidenhead Sailing Club event	Consultation leaflets and advice	30mins
stn16 Whites	AFA attendance,	Leaflet provided and discussion on proposals	30 mins
Stn 16 Whites	Visit and AFA consultation with Fire service chaplain.	He will meet with Deacon and respond due to concerns churches are not considered heritage buildings.	30 mins
Stn10 Blues	Visit with local nursery and childcare group management	Discussion held; leaflet provided to be distributed in the company	
Staff member	AFA added to SEGRO newsletter that goes to all of slough trading estate	included in news letter on 8 may	20 mins
Staff member	Phoning of all secondary schools in Berkshire to ask for contact for the building manager	Phone calls to all secondary schools receptions and contacts found for specific person for that school then email about consultation sent to them	2 days



Appendix 8. Thames Valley FRS responses

See Appendices B and C – attached under a separate cover.

ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

-  RoyalBerksFRS
-  @RBFRSOfficial
-  RoyalBerkshireFire
-  Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service
-  rbfrs.co.uk

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Our ref: MOAM 0009.24
Enquiries to: Mick Osborne
Ext no:
Direct line: 01296 744434
Date: 14th May 2024
Email: AMccallum@bucksfire.gov.uk

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for sharing your proposal to revise your approach to automatic fire alarm (AFA) responses within Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service. We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and contribute to enhancing emergency services across the Thames Valley.

After careful consideration, BFRS support the proposed changes for the following reasons:

Resource Optimisation:

The current approach to AFA mobilisation often diverts valuable resources to false alarms triggered by cooking fumes, dust, or inadequate maintenance. By refining the response criteria, you can ensure that valuable resources are mobilised more effectively.

This initiative will allow the Service to focus on genuine emergencies, improving resilience and ensuring that the community receives the timely assistance it deserves.

Reducing Unnecessary Disruptions:

Responding to false alarms disrupts important community safety work and operational training for crews. It also introduces environmental and road risks that are avoidable.

Limiting an emergency response to specific circumstances (such as residential premises, nursing and care homes, and premises subject to fire safety prohibition or enforcement notices), can minimise these disruptions.



Enhancing Efficiency and Productivity:

By reducing the number of unnecessary callouts, more hours can be dedicated to safety-critical training, skill development, and community engagement. This will also improve overall productivity, allowing teams to serve the public more effectively.

Legislative Duty and Business Responsibility:

Commercial premises must take ownership of false fire alarms within their facilities, as mandated by legislation. The new approach reinforces this responsibility.

The proposals remain committed to responding promptly to 999 calls when there is a confirmed fire, or there is deemed to be a high risk, ensuring public safety remains a top priority.

Control Room Efficiency and Safety:

The Thames Valley Fire Control Service plays a crucial role in coordinating responses across the Thames Valley. With a common set of principles across the three fire services, the control room can streamline operations, ensuring efficient deployment of resources.

A unified approach to AFAs allows the control room operators to work with consistency. They can follow standardised protocols, reducing the risk of errors and improving overall effectiveness.

Additionally, a shared model for responding to AFAs and other incidents will enable operators to become proficient in handling various scenarios, leading to quicker decision-making during emergencies.

In summary, these changes represent a proactive step toward optimising emergency response. We believe they will lead to safer communities, better-trained firefighters, and a more efficient service overall. As we look forward to our own pilot and consultation period, we look forward to collaborating with you to implement these improvements effectively.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mick Osborne', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

DCFO Mick Osborne
Chief Operating Officer

Reference: RM/CB

**Oxfordshire County Council
Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters
Sterling Road
Kidlington
Oxfordshire OX5 2DU**

CFO Wayne Bowcock
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue
Service

**Rob MacDougall
Chief Fire Officer and Director
of Community Safety**

Via Email
bowcockw@RBFRS.co.uk

Date: 3rd June 2024

Dear Wayne

Re: Consultation on proposals to reduce the number of false alarms from automatic fire alarms systems

Thank you for your letter dated 28 May 2024 regarding the consultation on proposals to reduce the number of false alarms from automatic fire alarm systems.

We appreciate your support for our efforts to reduce the number of false alarms generated by automatic fire alarm notifications. We acknowledge that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is also committed to changing the way you respond to automatic fire alarm notifications.

We fully support the alignment of policies and procedures between Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service, as well as Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, to support more efficient and effective ways of working in our joint Thames Valley Fire Control Service.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the three fire and rescue services of the Thames Valley and in doing so, continually improving the service we offer to our residents.

Yours sincerely



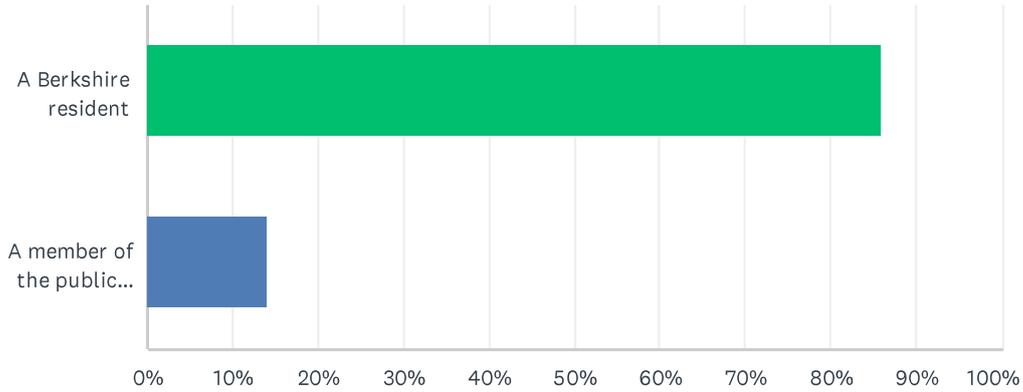
Rob MacDougall
Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety

Direct line: 07881 583208
Email: rob.macdougall@oxfordshire.gov.uk
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/fire

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Q1 Please select the option which best describes you

Answered: 388 Skipped: 0

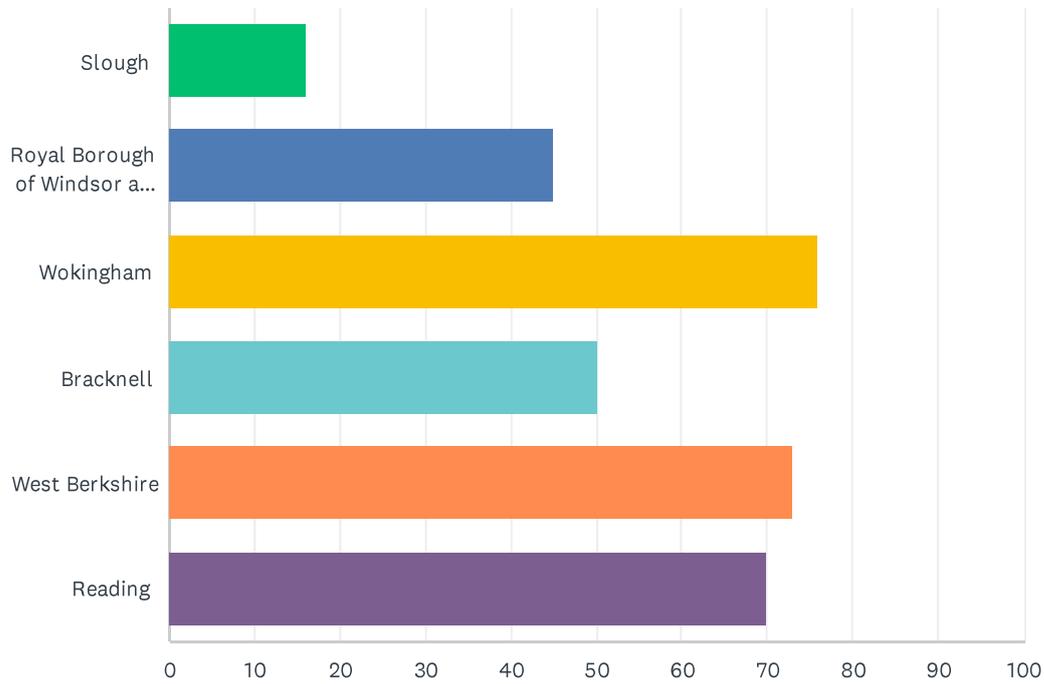


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A Berkshire resident	85.82%	333
A member of the public living outside of Berkshire	14.18%	55
TOTAL		388

Appendix D

Q2 Which local authority do you live in

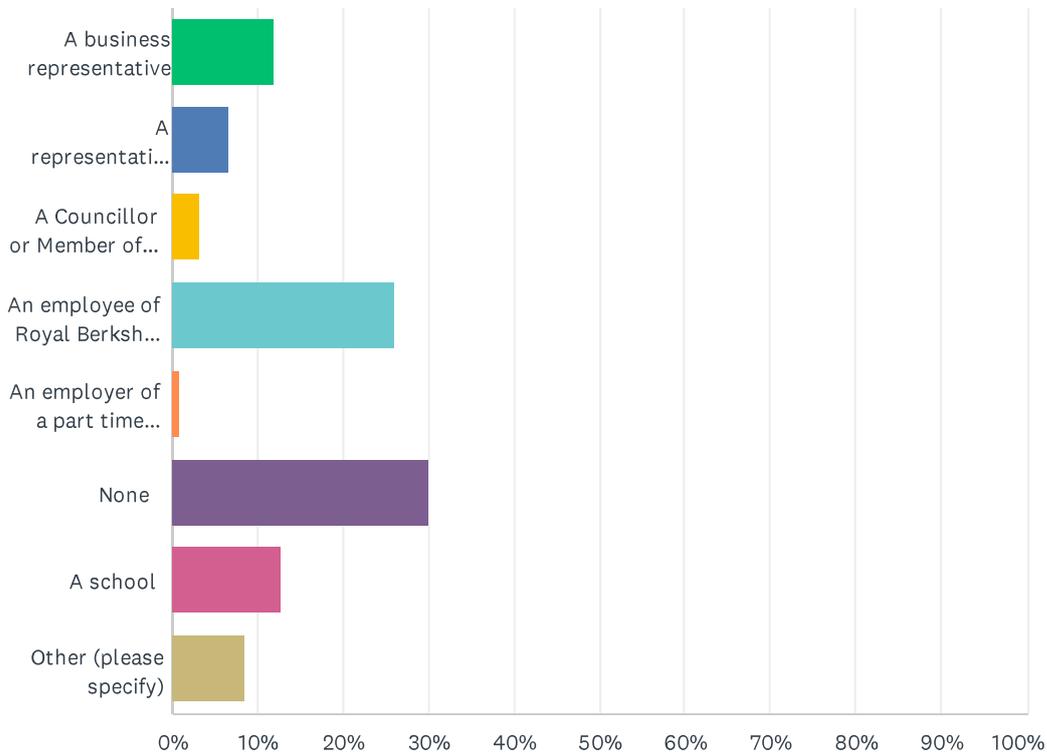
Answered: 330 Skipped: 58



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Slough	4.85%	16
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	13.64%	45
Wokingham	23.03%	76
Bracknell	15.15%	50
West Berkshire	22.12%	73
Reading	21.21%	70
TOTAL		330

Q3 Please select the options which best applies to you

Answered: 376 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A business representative	11.97%	45
A representative of a group or organisation	6.65%	25
A Councillor or Member of Parliament	3.19%	12
An employee of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service	26.06%	98
An employer of a part time firefighter(s) on the on-call duty system	0.80%	3
None	30.05%	113
A school	12.77%	48
Other (please specify)	8.51%	32
TOTAL		376

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Senior officer in another FRS	5/13/2024 7:39 AM
2	House owner	5/11/2024 1:34 PM
3	Resident	5/10/2024 8:52 AM
4	Member of public	5/8/2024 7:13 PM
5	Resident	5/7/2024 6:17 PM
6	Reading Borough Council Facilities Manager	5/7/2024 2:35 PM
7	Resident. Retired Firefighter	5/4/2024 7:49 AM

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8	Resident Appendix D	4/27/2024 11:30 AM
9	Resident - Windsor	4/26/2024 1:24 PM
10	Fire Officer	4/26/2024 9:30 AM
11	Further Education/ Higher Education	4/23/2024 1:50 PM
12	Oxfordshire resident	4/21/2024 9:44 AM
13	Retired	4/20/2024 8:54 AM
14	Ex rbfers	4/19/2024 6:29 PM
15	Member of the public	4/19/2024 2:47 PM
16	Schools Health and Safety Adviser	4/15/2024 11:31 AM
17	Resident	4/13/2024 8:32 AM
18	Ex-employee	4/6/2024 4:15 PM
19	Resident	4/5/2024 2:16 PM
20	Other FRS	4/3/2024 9:39 AM
21	Resident who works for another emergency service	3/31/2024 5:33 PM
22	Member of the public	3/25/2024 3:44 PM
23	Resident	3/24/2024 7:06 PM
24	Resident	3/24/2024 7:04 PM
25	Concerned Resident	3/13/2024 12:22 PM
26	Resident	3/11/2024 11:12 PM
27	Volunteer	3/11/2024 4:11 PM
28	retired	3/8/2024 9:13 AM
29	resident	3/5/2024 11:42 PM
30	A resident	3/5/2024 7:34 PM
31	yt name poop	3/5/2024 5:21 PM
32	resident of Berkshire	3/5/2024 11:44 AM

Q4 Please give the sector you work in

Answered: 45 Skipped: 343

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Mechanical	5/13/2024 9:26 AM
2	Sales	5/13/2024 7:18 AM
3	Hospitality	5/10/2024 6:09 PM
4	Aerospace	5/9/2024 11:41 AM
5	Medical equipment supply	5/9/2024 9:31 AM
6	Warehouse distribution	5/8/2024 3:42 PM
7	Manufacturing	5/7/2024 9:52 AM
8	Royal Household	5/7/2024 9:21 AM
9	Professional services	5/7/2024 8:12 AM
10	Education	5/4/2024 10:20 AM
11	NHS	5/3/2024 1:23 PM
12	IT Technology	5/3/2024 9:35 AM
13	Construction	5/2/2024 12:02 PM
14	Sign Supplies and Printing Equipment	5/2/2024 11:59 AM
15	Hazardous Chemical Manufacture and Waste Recovery	5/1/2024 1:33 PM
16	Manufacturing	5/1/2024 12:23 PM
17	Retail	4/27/2024 2:34 PM
18	Technology	4/27/2024 12:26 PM
19	Theatre	4/24/2024 10:15 AM
20	Charity	4/24/2024 9:22 AM
21	Motor Trade	4/23/2024 7:54 AM
22	Communications	4/22/2024 7:19 PM
23	Wedding and Event Venue and Accommodation - Leisure	4/18/2024 3:35 PM
24	Defence	4/18/2024 2:19 PM
25	Security -ARC	4/18/2024 2:08 PM
26	Food Production	4/18/2024 1:39 PM
27	Retail/residential	4/17/2024 12:51 PM
28	Wines & spirits	4/16/2024 7:24 AM
29	Consultancy	4/15/2024 6:09 PM
30	Education	4/15/2024 11:16 AM
31	Insurance IT	4/11/2024 4:35 PM
32	Retail	4/1/2024 1:37 PM
33	legal	3/31/2024 3:33 PM
34	Education	3/24/2024 8:30 PM
35	Prestige vehicles	3/22/2024 1:44 PM

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36	Community Appendix D	3/20/2024 8:11 AM
37	Leisure	3/19/2024 3:04 PM
38	engineering	3/16/2024 9:51 AM
39	Education	3/15/2024 7:51 PM
40	Retail	3/13/2024 8:03 PM
41	security	3/6/2024 3:25 PM
42	tOURISM	3/6/2024 8:58 AM
43	Local Government	3/6/2024 7:39 AM
44	Distribution	3/5/2024 8:52 PM
45	Retail	3/4/2024 5:43 PM

Q5 Please give the name of the group/organisation you represent

Answered: 22 Skipped: 366

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Reading Borough Council Libraries and Museums	5/10/2024 12:58 PM
2	Royal Berkshire Archives (West Berkshire Council)	5/9/2024 9:46 AM
3	Kerith Community Church	5/7/2024 1:56 PM
4	Park United Reformed Church	5/3/2024 3:39 PM
5	Maidenhead Community Watch Association	4/27/2024 1:04 PM
6	Goodgym Windsor & Maidenhead	4/27/2024 11:52 AM
7	Maidenhead Community Centre	4/27/2024 11:07 AM
8	Newbury College	4/23/2024 1:50 PM
9	Jamaica Society Health and Well-being	4/22/2024 6:55 PM
10	Graft Thames Valley Limited	4/22/2024 12:53 PM
11	Newbury Town Council	4/19/2024 4:38 PM
12	Campion House Residents Association	4/19/2024 12:43 PM
13	Alzheimer's Society	4/19/2024 9:25 AM
14	Jennett's Park Community Association	4/18/2024 4:34 PM
15	St Lawrence's	4/18/2024 12:55 PM
16	Maidenhead Synagogue	4/17/2024 4:56 PM
17	Schuh	4/17/2024 4:14 PM
18	TVLRF	3/21/2024 2:45 PM
19	lkjhkj	3/7/2024 12:23 PM
20	Arc Monitoring Ltd	3/7/2024 9:05 AM
21	Shaw cum Donnington Village Hall Committee	3/6/2024 4:54 PM
22	Nursing Home	3/6/2024 9:35 AM

Appendix D

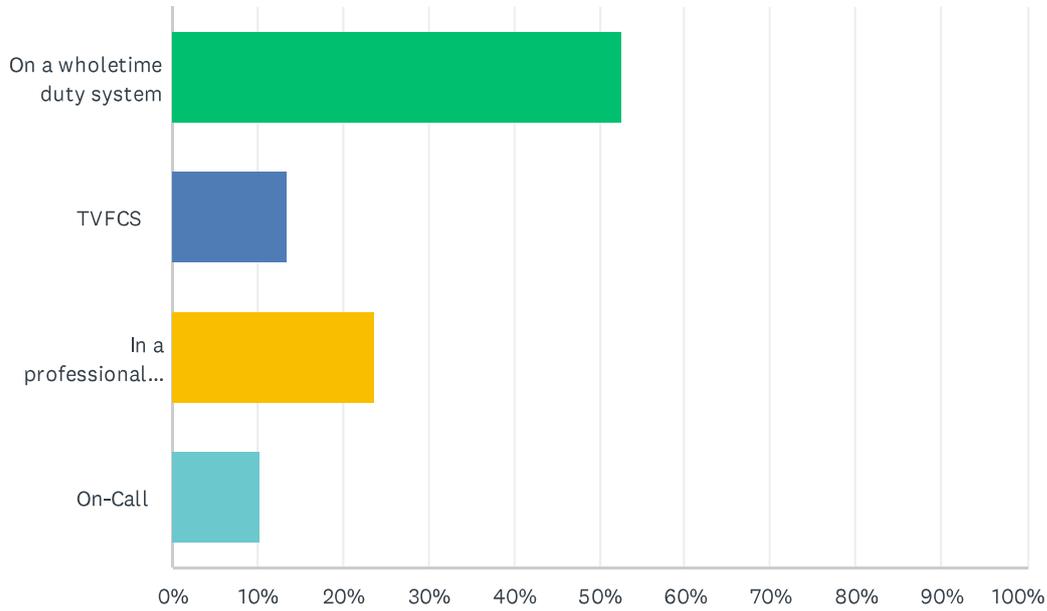
**Q6 Please give your name and the Parish, Town, Ward or Constituency
 you represent**

Answered: 10 Skipped: 378

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Wokingham Town Council	5/3/2024 8:55 AM
2	Wendy Griffith, Battle Ward, Reading	4/23/2024 5:38 PM
3	Greenham	4/2/2024 6:56 PM
4	Geoff Paxton. Winkfield Parish Council	3/20/2024 10:38 PM
5	winnersh	3/19/2024 4:30 PM
6	Englefield Parish Council	3/18/2024 8:00 PM
7	Winnersh Parish	3/18/2024 11:10 AM
8	All regions	3/15/2024 5:56 PM
9	Evendons West	3/12/2024 1:36 PM
10	Winkfield Parish Council	3/6/2024 1:09 PM

Q7 If you are an employee of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, are you:

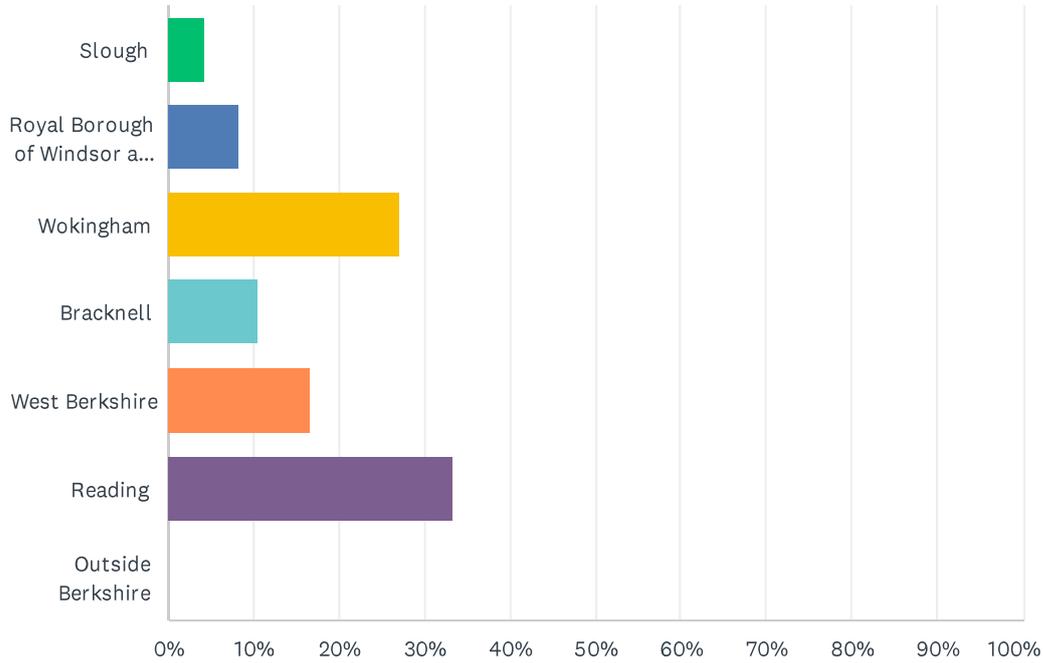
Answered: 97 Skipped: 291



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
On a wholetime duty system	52.58%	51
TVFCS	13.40%	13
In a professional services role	23.71%	23
On-Call	10.31%	10
TOTAL		97

Appendix D
Q8 Which unitary authority does your school fall into

Answered: 48 Skipped: 340



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Slough	4.17%	2
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	8.33%	4
Wokingham	27.08%	13
Bracknell	10.42%	5
West Berkshire	16.67%	8
Reading	33.33%	16
Outside Berkshire	0.00%	0
TOTAL		48

Q9 If you received a postcard or poster, please input your reference number below:

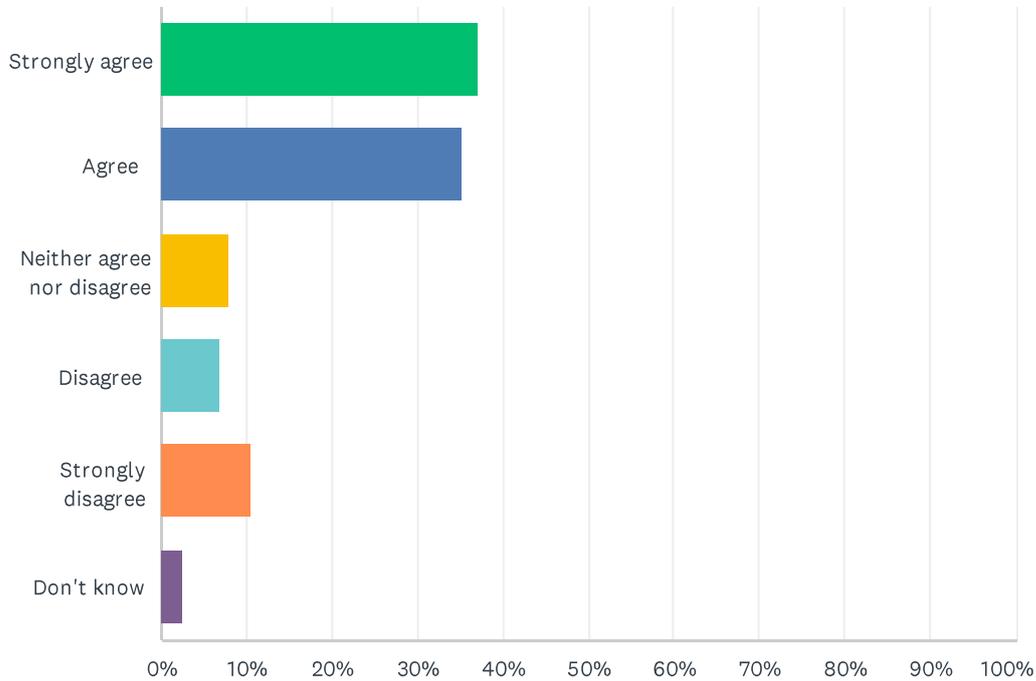
Answered: 33 Skipped: 355

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	No	5/7/2024 2:35 PM
2	We were visited in person	5/7/2024 1:57 PM
3	NA	5/4/2024 10:20 AM
4	AFAL001	5/3/2024 3:40 PM
5	AFAL001	5/3/2024 9:35 AM
6	N/A	5/3/2024 8:55 AM
7	Spoke to a fire crew	5/2/2024 12:03 PM
8	AFAL001	5/2/2024 11:59 AM
9	N/A	5/1/2024 1:33 PM
10	AFAL001	5/1/2024 12:23 PM
11	Afal001	5/1/2024 9:57 AM
12	N/A	4/27/2024 2:34 PM
13	SI1 7ph	4/24/2024 8:17 PM
14	AFAL002	4/23/2024 3:08 PM
15	Newbury College	4/23/2024 1:50 PM
16	n/a	4/22/2024 6:56 PM
17	n/a	4/22/2024 12:53 PM
18	AFAL001	4/18/2024 1:40 PM
19	AFAL002	4/17/2024 4:57 PM
20	AFAL002	4/17/2024 4:14 PM
21	AFAL002	4/17/2024 12:51 PM
22	AFAL001	4/16/2024 7:24 AM
23	AFAL002	4/15/2024 6:09 PM
24	AFAL002	4/15/2024 11:16 AM
25	AFAL001	4/7/2024 2:24 PM
26	AFAL001	4/1/2024 1:38 PM
27	AFAL001	4/1/2024 11:26 AM
28	N/A	3/25/2024 3:44 PM
29	Rg303ha	3/16/2024 10:25 AM
30	N/A	3/15/2024 5:56 PM
31	N/A	3/6/2024 12:50 PM
32	qr code	3/5/2024 11:42 PM
33	shut up	3/5/2024 5:21 PM

Appendix D

Q10 To what extent to agree or disagree with the consultation proposals to change the way we respond to automatic fire alarms?

Answered: 342 Skipped: 46



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	37.13%	127
Agree	35.09%	120
Neither agree nor disagree	7.89%	27
Disagree	6.73%	23
Strongly disagree	10.53%	36
Don't know	2.63%	9
TOTAL		342

Q11 Please tell us why you gave that answer?

Answered: 205 Skipped: 183

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	How do you know it's a false alarm till you get there ? They should all be checked it's not a waste of time it's a firefighters job	5/13/2024 9:27 AM
2	It's ridiculous that you waste so much time, and taxpayer's money on attending so many false alarms.	5/13/2024 8:21 AM
3	Efficiency to ensure best use of resources	5/13/2024 7:39 AM
4	Send sensible, with some reservations.	5/13/2024 7:18 AM
5	It was one of the multi choice answers available for selection	5/11/2024 1:36 PM
6	I live in a block of flats where the fire alarm goes off every week because of people vaping/smoking in staircase. The council have not addressed the issue. I believe if the fire service stopped coming out to silence the alarm the council might take more responsibility and effort in reducing the false alarms. Surely the fire service should be taking more action through your legal powers to make the council stop these false alarms? Why have we got fire alarms in our staircase anyway? There are no ignition sources or things to catch fire, each flat has a smoke alarm and I've been to, stay put, if a fire occurs in another flat and is not affecting my flat. It just doesn't make SENSE? Your proposals focus on low risk properties, but what are you doing to stop false alarms in blocks or flats?	5/11/2024 11:02 AM
7	Seems like a reasonable ask	5/11/2024 7:07 AM
8	The buildings I am responsible for are not overnight residential but do contain a large amount of important/unique/priceless items, and where we have this facility in place it is worrying to think any activation might need calling in	5/10/2024 12:59 PM
9	Because it is the responsibility of those occupants in the building to confirm a fire and save time for other duties.	5/10/2024 8:59 AM
10	False alarms are a waste of our firefighters time and a waste of tax payer money - if the fire service attends a false alarm the property management should be charged	5/9/2024 11:52 AM
11	its a good thing to do	5/9/2024 11:42 AM
12	Save time for the fire service in unnecessary call outs	5/9/2024 10:57 AM
13	Response could be filtered based on time of day e.g. during normal business hours - no response. Outside normal business hours - attendance required.	5/9/2024 9:36 AM
14	I work in a school where the SEN children regularly set off the fire alarm because they cant resist pressing the big red button. This has happened 10 times in the last 2 weeks. If the fire service attended everyone of this it is not only a huge waste of time but also money. If there was a real fire, we could just call 999	5/9/2024 9:32 AM
15	Responding to false alarms could put someone in danger elsewhere	5/8/2024 10:59 PM
16	It's a waist of resources	5/8/2024 10:46 PM
17	Even the possibility that there may be a fire should be investigated, even if the likelihood is a false alarm. No one needs to tell you how dangerous fires are.	5/8/2024 8:30 PM
18	Waste of resources answering false alarms	5/8/2024 3:42 PM
19	Automatic Fire Alarms should be checked by people on site as to whether there is a real fire. There are many organisations that do this already	5/8/2024 12:05 PM
20	Not responding to all alarms will allow crews to be available for other calls. Increasing the amount the service can help people	5/8/2024 10:20 AM
21	It is important to make sure our resources are used in a way that manages the most risk to our communities.	5/7/2024 4:17 PM
22	Better use of resources - if it not a fire, why send an appliance	5/7/2024 4:05 PM

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Appendix B

23	I feel that attendance levels at AFAs are too high and that changing tube way we work will help reduce risk to the community.	5/7/2024 4:04 PM
24	Some organisations such as Reading Borough Council carefully manage its buildings and we do not have many false alarms. If any of the options are introduced crucial council assets could be jeopardised with even potential risk of life if activation alarms are not attended. As fire spreads quickly relying on attendance from call out operative is unrealistic and risk losing assets to key buildings supporting vital services.	5/7/2024 2:46 PM
25	We are a school and if our automatic fire alarm is not responded to then we could lose so much if the fire service did not attend outside of school hours	5/7/2024 2:20 PM
26	We certainly see the need to offer greater care for those who are vulnerable in our community and highly encourage this. Our property, however, is nestled next to a residential zone and we are concerned that as there is no one in the building over night, if a fire were to occur there wouldn't be anyone who could call it in. We would like to be assured that we would still receive immediate help even if it is only the fire alarm that goes off.	5/7/2024 2:06 PM
27	I can understand that you need to prioritise and reduce the number of false alarms that you go to.	5/7/2024 1:28 PM
28	I agree it is a total waste of time turning up to false alarms	5/7/2024 11:40 AM
29	They seem sensible, you should make effective use of taxpayer's money.	5/7/2024 8:13 AM
30	Fire Service should respond to all alarms indicating a fire - this is your primary role! If there is a problem with accuracy of these devices then Fire Service should work with manufacturers / government to improve them. Other emergency services do not get to choose which notifications they respond to. Treating these as a lower priority in times of high calls would be fair enough, however.	5/7/2024 7:49 AM
31	The statistics you quote suggest this is a massive waste of resources	5/5/2024 5:13 AM
32	A lot of time us clearly wasted attending false alarms that would be better spent educating the public	5/4/2024 11:56 AM
33	False alarms are not intentional from my premises	5/4/2024 10:21 AM
34	You never go to false alarms, you only come back from them. If you do not routinely respond to false alarms people will think that responding to and evacuating a building or doing any fire safety is pointless. These proposals are just cuts on the quiet. They point your staff and members of the public at serious risk. Don't forget that Windsor castle was an AFA. Good luck in court when someone dies as a result if these proposals go through.	5/3/2024 10:13 PM
35	False alarms are far too frequent and my staff member who is retained can be tied up for hours, impacting my business. I have no problem with employing a retained firefighter, but sending a fire engine to confirm if there is a fire or not makes no sense, the property owner should confirm if there is a fire or not.	5/3/2024 6:42 PM
36	In our building we use Wood pellets to heat the building rather than gas/oil/electric. We have experienced bad fuel quality which can generate smoke/CO causing a false alarm. In 90% of these incidents no assistance from Fire Brigade was needed. on one occasion (in 10 years) due to excessive amounts of smoke, breathing apparatus was required to enter boiler room to turn off boilers and fans were used to remove smoke from building. In this instance I arrived just before the fire brigade so if necessary I could have rung 999 for assistance if they hadn't been automatically called. there was no risk to life at anytime.	5/3/2024 3:48 PM
37	Reducing unwanted AFAs is a good initiative but needs to be done in a considered and organised way. The current proposal of TVFCS having to manually 'guess' whether a building is considered high or low risk is not acceptable in my view, unless the mobilising system can tell them definitively which category a building falls under then we should either go to all high/low risk commercial premises or none. Even in this case the system would still need a way of flagging whether the commercial premise is located under or within the same building of residential premises. E.g. Nando's in Reading town centre vs. Nando's in Whitley wood. We should rely on TVFCS local knowledge to know which of these has residential properties attached and which doesn't.	5/3/2024 10:45 AM
38	The amount of saved hours will lead to reduced costs for an already overstretched fire service	5/3/2024 10:20 AM
39	We should not be wasting fire service time when it could delay them going to an actual emergency	5/3/2024 9:36 AM
40	I believe it is important to provide the best fire service possible for public safety and to safeguard property particularly for listed buildings that cannot be replaced	5/3/2024 8:58 AM

41	I feel the fire service is essential but a lot of call outs can waste their time from attending potentially situations that require their assistance far greater	Appendix D	5/3/2024 8:03 AM
42	gambling on the call not being that 1% is a terrible idea. Also the additional pressure this would put on control staff is an unrealistic and unfair expectation		5/2/2024 10:01 PM
43	Although a high percentage of AFA's are false alarms, it is not wasted time in terms of familiarisation of sites and identifying new risks. Along with the obvious that is it is not a false alarm we are in attendance sooner for early intervention.		5/2/2024 9:53 PM
44	Would like the fire and rescue to direct their services to actual need.		5/2/2024 5:00 PM
45	As firefighters we should priorities our response activity, of which AFA belong.		5/2/2024 12:03 PM
46	Your figures clearly demonstrate the percentage of false alarms is unreasonable and I see it as completely fair to consider a process to reduce false calls.		5/1/2024 1:34 PM
47	Resources More constructive use of resource		5/1/2024 12:24 PM
48	Shops I think gives up shops a chance to call quickly		5/1/2024 9:58 AM
49	Resources Save resources		4/30/2024 10:33 PM
50	It's unsafe		4/30/2024 8:51 AM
51	Waste of time Need to target facilities to where they are needed most, and not waste time on false alarms		4/30/2024 8:29 AM
52	AFAs helpful for Firefighters Experience AFA shouts gives a great opportunity to a new, unexperienced driver to gain experience on blue light drive without taking any risks so they will have better understanding of the limits of the vehicle and themselves. Also drivers will gain local knowledge of the traffic hot spots and how to avoid them. " Practice saves seconds, seconds save minutes, minutes save lives "		4/29/2024 10:12 PM
53	Community feel safer Continue to attend AFAs From discussions with Firefighters it is clear that the strong feeling is that the community is safer by crews attending AFA's and minimal time is deemed wasted as an inconvenience regardless of the hour.		4/29/2024 6:52 PM
54	Site owners taking ownership there are a large amount of false alarms when there should be a responsible person on site		4/29/2024 6:49 PM
55	Time back Waste of time 99% of alarm calls being false alarms shows the Fire Service are wasting their valuable time attending these incidents		4/29/2024 6:11 PM
56	Time To ensure that staff's time is used appropriately enabling us to provide the best service to the public.		4/29/2024 2:02 PM
57	Time back As stated within the document - almost all AFA's aren't anything but false alarms, so it makes sense to review our response accordingly, to allow RBFRS to make a difference to the public in other areas.		4/27/2024 3:35 PM
58	Data The proposal seems data driven - if 99% of automatic alarms are false, then the change is based on facts, not just anecdotal.		4/27/2024 2:51 PM
59	Option 2 Schools & Colleges Option 2 seems to be the best option. However, there is no consideration for schools during holiday times when the likelihood of there being a responsible person there is lower.		4/27/2024 12:35 PM
60	Community engagement Historic Buildings Of course loss of life is the priority but other factors should also be given weight: eg, what impact to * the community * the character of the town would the loss of the building entail. Out 130 yr old listed building is in constant use by over 1000 residents every week. It is one of the most beautiful buildings in Maidehead and the town would suffer irreparable loss if it were to burn down. There are people in the building from 8am until 10:30pm every day and since we took over in July 2021 there has not been a single false alarm call to the fire service.		4/27/2024 11:12 AM
61	Time They take up a lot of time that can be spent doing more important things.		4/26/2024 8:35 PM
62	Resources Save resources		4/26/2024 5:52 PM
63	Remain the same Feel the current system must remain		4/26/2024 1:25 PM
64	Community engagement Risk to members of public Early engagement with vulnerable members of the community is essential to reducing harm in the community		4/26/2024 9:43 AM
65	Building owners Schools & Colleges I agree most business / School fire alarms are false.		4/25/2024 12:24 PM

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Appendix D

66	Schools & Colleges We are a boarding school and a Grade 2 listed site	4/25/2024 11:23 AM
67	Option 2 Waste of time Having read the correspondence it makes sense to reduce time wasted, I like Option B	4/25/2024 9:09 AM
68	I think very good	4/24/2024 8:18 PM
69	Building owners Properties monitored Business/ automatic fire systems should be doing there part to minimise risk of fires, and ensuring that there premises is monitored within their own company. It is not the job of fire fighters. If someone needs any other emergency service they reach out or have a system such as panic alarms- even then a company normal rings to check if there is assistance needed.	4/24/2024 7:56 PM
70	Efficiency We need an efficient and responsive Fire service	4/24/2024 10:15 AM
71	Times to actual incidents Because I want the fire service to concentrate on real fires not false alarm	4/24/2024 7:43 AM
72	99% says it all.	4/23/2024 5:47 PM
73	Unnecessary call outs It seems a lot of effort to deploy appliances and fire teams to attend a fire alarm when such a high proportion end up not being an actual fire.	4/23/2024 5:39 PM
74	Data Unnecessary call outs The high level of calls from the automatic system is alarming, and measures are needed to help reduce these statistics.	4/23/2024 1:53 PM
75	Risk Schools & Colleges As a day school we often have false alarms which call the fire brigade before we have had a chance to inform the call centre we don't need help - and we appreciate it is a waste of an important resource. For a genuine serious matter we would call 999 and as a day school with regularly updated fire risk assessments feel we are a lower risk environment.	4/23/2024 1:44 PM
76	Officers Better use of fire officers time	4/23/2024 11:23 AM
77	Resources Makes perfect sense to reduce such an unnecessary waste of resources on false alarms	4/23/2024 7:53 AM
78	Times to actual incidents Too many false alarms Better off concentrating on other priorities	4/22/2024 7:20 PM
79	it seems a sensible plan	4/22/2024 12:54 PM
80	Care Homes Hospitals Resources I agree as it will ensure resources are better used and more readily available. However im also pleased that automatic alarms for care homes, hospitals and those where people reside will still be responded too	4/21/2024 10:23 PM
81	Waste of time Lots of time is wasted	4/21/2024 9:44 AM
82	Data Prevention Resources Time I believe that if data is showing that time and resources are being taken away attending false alarms, rather than dealing with real fires and prevention work then it is worthwhile to address this issue, so as long as it does not put people at risk in event of there being a real fire.	4/20/2024 9:00 PM
83	Call confirmation Because not having this, could push the price of service up in these locations, as they may require staff present 24h a day, and also if there is a fire, if the fire service is en route asap rather than only when fire confirmed, this will ensure a faster service and less damage. There is no mention here of how many times automated calls related to circumstances when there was an actual fire.	4/20/2024 9:50 AM
84	Flats I live in a block of flats where the fire alarm glitches quite often, without there being any fire or smoke.	4/20/2024 8:51 AM
85	Cost Time time spent by the service on false alarms can cost lives in other real fires	4/19/2024 3:49 PM
86	Schools & Colleges In the 18 years that I have been in the school the alarm has been set off several times. However, the actual number of times that there was a need for the fire service was zero.	4/19/2024 3:28 PM
87	Time back It is wasteful to send fire crew to automated fire alarms only to find it's a false alarm.	4/19/2024 2:48 PM
88	Schools & Colleges The schools fire alarm is a monitored system, only calling the fire brigade in out of hours times and the school is non residential.	4/19/2024 1:03 PM
89	Commercial Properties Too many false alarms from commercial properties that do not provide a sufficient danger to life, consuming disproportionate public funds.	4/19/2024 12:54 PM

90	Schools & Colleges Waste of time I worked in a school which was automatically alarmed. I went to the fire service and felt awful that they had so many wasted journeys when the alarm went off. Schools are generally able to evacuate a building quickly and have appropriate assembly points so the slight delay between an automatic response and checking the site and calling if there is an actual fire is a risk we can tolerate	Appendix D 4/19/2024 12:07 PM
91	Risk False alarms put the fire service as additional pressure and live could be put at risk	4/19/2024 11:51 AM
92	Unnecessary call outs False alarms equate for a large number of call outs which could impact the ability to respond to real call outs.	4/19/2024 11:13 AM
93	Time Time back I agree with the reasoning behind the proposed change and can see how much time would be saved and utilised elsewhere	4/19/2024 10:15 AM
94	oioooo	4/19/2024 9:26 AM
95	Cause of False alarm You say 99% are false alarms, but do you record how many are caused by overheating appliances or caused by cooking these are alarms that could have been the beginning of a fire but the alarms done their job.	4/18/2024 9:37 PM
96	Resources I work at Heathrow airport and we often send our fire service out to automatic fire alarm activations that frequently turn out to be false/non-fires. I agree that it takes up valuable resources and also might delay a response to a real fire.	4/18/2024 9:05 PM
97	Point of contact Prevention Training AFAs continue to disrupt essential training and prevention work by crews. When we attend AFAs we often have no keyholders or onsite person to assist with dealing with the alarm system.	4/18/2024 6:48 PM
98	Sleeping above shops That 1% is important. Also, what about a shop with a flat someone is sleeping in above?	4/18/2024 5:28 PM
99	Continue to attend AFAs Risk Sleeping above shops All fires start as alarms, just because this alarm was false who is to say the next one will be, someone rough sleeping inside a building and unable to escape, children playing inside a building. The risks to life and property should not be ruled out	4/18/2024 2:21 PM
100	Waste of time I don't want our precious services time to be wasted	4/18/2024 2:09 PM
101	Responsibility Having been responsible for buildings with autodiallers I appreciate how frequently false alarms can be triggered.	4/18/2024 1:44 PM
102	Resources Risk Site owners taking ownership Need to prioritize situation with risk of the life such as actual fire or emergency, not going and checking that alarms is triggered. As fire alarm can be triggered from various things, we dont have resources to attend every situation. That people responsible for the building should check their permits not fire brigade	4/18/2024 1:43 PM
103	AFA in my Housing scheme cannot be cancelled if only paint or toaster etc	4/18/2024 1:22 PM
104	Resources Redirecting resource to where it is most needed is sensible.	4/18/2024 12:56 PM
105	Prevention Time Time back Time can be better spent on proactive fire prevention	4/18/2024 11:16 AM
106	Cost Specialist appliances and equipment Training The fire service wastes money on very expensive specialist appliances and equipment, control units etc which quickly date and are useless if they happen to be off the run when an incident occurs. Of course fire fighters should have the best protective kit but some of the communications stuff is ridiculous when there isn't enough money to attend fire alarms, the very basic equipment designed and installed to save lives. Of course it's about money. If there was enough money you wouldn't be trying to evade your duties. It's like the Tory government saying there's no money for the homeless and vulnerable and the NHS but there's always enough for weapons of mass destruction. Stop trying to cut the basics. Training and risk inspections should also have time and funding. Fine the properties that have too many false alarm call outs but don't stop attending.	4/18/2024 1:37 AM
107	Call confirmation We know that many times an alarm goes off it is a false alarm which is why our procedure involves our monitoring company contacting us before requesting a fire engine.	4/17/2024 4:58 PM
108	Training Waste of time I agree with the amount of time wasted can be significantly reduced and put into training, visits ect	4/17/2024 12:53 PM
109	What if that fire is real?	4/15/2024 6:11 PM
110	Pressure on the service I am well aware of the pressure on the service and the additional	4/15/2024 11:33 AM

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impact false alarms have on already stretched services. I fully support the need for change.

Appendix D

111	Risk It may mean an increase in risk of serious incident	4/15/2024 11:17 AM
112	Resources Will enable more resource availability for genuine incidents	4/13/2024 6:27 PM
113	Impact to On-call even if 1 out 100 calls save a life or make a difference then what does it matter and why are we trying to change that. crew moral will massively go down hill with less shouts getting out and about! i also think you will lose a lot of on call firefighters throughout the brigade due to less call outs and low moral with not going out and just being sat around waiting for less of a chance of a call.	4/13/2024 11:41 AM
114	Waste of time Need to avoid waste of attending false alarms	4/13/2024 12:29 AM
115	Alignment across Thames Valley Resources RBFRS attend AFA's that take away valuable resources from genuine emergencies. I also think that all three FRS's across the Thames Valley should align their policies and procedures regarding the attendance to AFA's.	4/12/2024 2:22 PM
116	Because I accept that something does need to change	4/11/2024 4:37 PM
117	Road risk Time I am very aware of the time spent attending these incidents and the risk involved when doing so, there is the road risk for members of the public and also the risk of not having a fire appliance available for a serious incident due to attending an unwanted afa	4/10/2024 6:35 AM
118	Efficiency To make the service more efficient	4/8/2024 11:02 AM
119	Time Time better spent elsewhere	4/8/2024 8:18 AM
120	Waste of time False alarms waste time which is a restricted commodity	4/7/2024 2:25 PM
121	Time back Training Because it will allow fire crews to do more meaningful work and training.	4/7/2024 12:57 PM
122	Installers Legislation Legislation requires certain types of building to have a fire alarm to provide early warning of a fire developing. In the event of a fire activating the alarm that early warning and a prompt response from the Fire Service can save lives, livelihoods and businesses. The responsibility should be on the manufacturers and installers to produce alarm systems that are not susceptible to false alarms. During daylight hours in an occupied building a delay could be built into the call to the Fire Service to allow for investigation by the occupier first. Other strategies are available.	4/6/2024 4:22 PM
123	Continue to attend AFAs Schools & Colleges I think that Fire engines should still continue to Automatically be sent to schools, colleges etc as the high cast of people who are in these buildings	4/4/2024 3:34 PM
124	Continue to attend AFAs Current cover plan Develop into large fires A fire alarm system (AFA) is designed to do one thing & one thing only; detect fire. By ceasing to respond to a portion of these because the 'statistics say so', we open ourselves up to the reality of more serious & well established fires taking hold because the FRS wouldn't attend when the installed system raises the alarm. RBFRS is a comparatively quiet FRS, what are we gaining by not attending these incidents? Each and every AFA is an opportunity for the crew & in particular development Firefighters to gain insight to risks & properties on their respective station ground & to see first hand how different fixed installations operate.	4/3/2024 1:59 PM
125	Attend too many A neighbour with Dementia had an fire crew almost daily due to false alarms, minimum time of an hour per visit as they couldn't confirm.	4/3/2024 9:54 AM
126	Attend too many Availability Disruption to station regular day to day false alarms can be disruptive and affect availability of fire engines to respond to proper emergencies	4/2/2024 2:22 PM
127	Not enough Firefighters Resources Every second counts when responding a report of a fire. Is this not just a case of there are not enough firefighters to respond so in effect cutting back on the incidents firefighters attend because there are not enough resources.	4/1/2024 3:48 PM
128	Training Better training is important	4/1/2024 7:21 AM
129	Continue to attend AFAs Statutory duty The fire service should attend alarm calls, this is your statutory duty	3/31/2024 10:14 PM
130	Attend too many Building owners Provide reasoning It seems sensible due to the high number of false alarm to not deploy fire crews to alarms where there is no confirmation of risk to life/property. Businesses should be asked to provide their own response to fire alarms (security key holders etc) rather than taking up the valuable time of a life saving public service. I also agree with the concept that anywhere people sleep they still deploy	3/31/2024 8:52 PM
131	Attend too many Education Time back Training Waste of time A lot of time is	3/31/2024 5:36 PM

wasted and could be better used if not attending false alarm calls the hours saved could be put towards training or extra home and business visits which would go towards educating people that could prove vital

132	Waste of time To reduce time wasted that could be spent on other workloads	3/28/2024 2:28 PM
133	Disruption to station regular day to day As a wholetime firefighter, AFAs are a bit of a nuisance call as they rarely turn into anything and get in the way of other activities. Plus the added road risk of responding on blue lights and the environmental impact from the fuel and emissions of driving to the address.	3/27/2024 6:41 PM
134	Safety Time back Training It saves a lot of time which can be used for training and safety visits. Less residents being put at risk from the ambulance's unnecessary emergency speed. Less disruptions of important staff training.	3/25/2024 4:04 PM
135	ARC Contact site first Majority of the alarms we receive are from ARC and do turn out to be false alarms. A lot of them would decrease if the ARC contacted site first, or are commercial and have a responsible person on site who can check site. However we are told they either do not have a site number or have the wrong number, in the new AFA consultation we would just tell them this isn't a site we attend, which would reduce the number of false alarm calls	3/25/2024 3:01 PM
136	ARC Resources Waste of time Waste of time and resources answering calls to badly setup and provisioned Alarm systems. These systems the Alarm receiving centres charge a great deal of money for but have limited responsibilities for ensuring they are accurate and reliable in their reporting.	3/25/2024 8:58 AM
137	Continue to attend AFAs Response time By not turning up to automatic fire alarms it means that incidents where a fire has actually started won't get a fast response until someone notices. By that point there will be far more damage to the building and firefighters will have to tackle a much bigger fire. Surly it's better to send fire crews and not need them that it is to not send them when they are actually needed.	3/24/2024 8:34 PM
138	ARC Site owners taking ownership It should be down to the site owners, fire warden/marshal, keyholders and ARC to investigate why the alarm is sounding before calling the fire and rescue serving. They should take more ownership and only call 999 if there is a confirmed fire. This should take pressure of the fire service, helping the crews by utilising their time more effectively.	3/24/2024 7:58 PM
139	Continue to attend AFAs Statutory duty 1% of automatic fire alarms resulting in fires is still 1% that needs to be attended on receipt of the AFA signal. If that was my business that had an AFA system the detected a fire and you didn't respond to it I would be starting legal action against you to reclaim costs due to your negligence. You are a fire service so maintain your statutory duty and respond to fires. It's Only a false alarm once you have investigated and found no fire.	3/24/2024 7:11 PM
140	Vulnerable Not all fire alarms will be false alarms. There are vulnerable people in our community that need you to check on them as they may not be able to protect themselves.	3/24/2024 7:06 PM
141	Attend too many Cost saving Education Resources Time back As a resident of Berkshire i think it's important for the fire service to deliver value for money service to our communities. Fake fire alarms is waste of time, money and resources. I would be more than happy for the fire fighters to use that time to educate our communities or have them do so their training and drills and be ready to respond to serious incidents as well.	3/24/2024 3:16 PM
142	Cost saving Resources Waste of time It is a waste of time, money and resource	3/23/2024 10:03 PM
143	Disruption False alarms can disrupt primary employment for oncall staff. My employer would like to support more staff to be oncall but false alarms have negative impact on their business.	3/23/2024 8:22 AM
144	Attend too many We attend far too many alarms when it is likely that there is a responsible person at the premises to confirm a fire or not	3/22/2024 11:35 PM
145	Cuts I fear a 40% reduction in calls will justify cuts in crews, fire engines and fire stations. RBFR haven't given any assurance that cuts will not follow	3/21/2024 6:05 PM
146	Resources Training There is a requirement to release resources to ensure the ability to respond to real incidents when they occur and ensure firefighters have the training required to do so.	3/21/2024 2:50 PM
147	Contacting It makes sense BUT I have concerns that you will not attend when unable to contact the "" relevant person""	3/20/2024 10:40 PM

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Appendix D

148	Waste of time Wasted time is awful and can be limited.	3/20/2024 8:11 AM
149	Waste of time The high percentage of alarms which are false, prove that time is being wasted where it could be used better elsewhere.	3/19/2024 3:05 PM
150	Time back The amount of time wasted on AFAs could be spent much better elsewhere	3/19/2024 2:07 PM
151	Cost saving Surely a response to a false alarm is a waste of valuable costly resources however the 'trick' will be knowing whether the alarm is false or for real.	3/18/2024 8:04 PM
152	What if it's a fire	3/15/2024 10:00 PM
153	Continue to attend AFAs You get paid by us/council/tax payers. Your firefighters sleep. The least you can do is respond to all. Regardless of false alarms or not. There's high potential.	3/15/2024 5:57 PM
154	Smoke Cloak I have been a wholetime firefighter since 2019, since then only 2 AFA's that I have attended required action by the brigade. One was an actual fire that was called in immediately after anyway, and the other was a smoke cloak that had malfunctioned.	3/15/2024 2:51 PM
155	Continue to attend AFAs one death would be to many if we didnt respond to an AFA and there would be a public out cry. we should not rely on the public to say there is no fire	3/15/2024 8:56 AM
156	Prevention Safe and Well Time back Training To allow crews time to commit to other valuable exercises - eg training, Safe and Well visits, prevention events.	3/13/2024 2:43 PM
157	Current cover plan No option to remain as the current cover plan... all options are to decrease attendance.	3/13/2024 2:31 PM
158	Makes sense	3/13/2024 12:23 PM
159	Waste of time It seems like a waste of your time	3/13/2024 10:44 AM
160	Resources Time back Time and resources would be better spent.	3/12/2024 10:43 PM
161	Resources Waste of time Waste of time and resources to attend	3/12/2024 1:37 PM
162	Continue to attend AFAs Would much rather an over reaction to a false activation, than a late attendance at the 1% of genuine incidents.	3/12/2024 10:37 AM
163	Attend too many I can see that we attend far too many AFA False Alarms.	3/12/2024 9:57 AM
164	Develop into large fires The 1% that are real fires will develop into large fires if the Fire Brigade do not go to them.	3/11/2024 11:14 PM
165	Continue to attend AFAs Risk I dont think it is worth the risk that a premise could burn down costing the owner huge amounts of money and potentially injuring people, just because it might be a false alarm. It is much better to attend and be turned back rather than attend a lot later when it is too late to have any impact.	3/11/2024 8:41 PM
166	Continue to attend AFAs Part of job its what firefighters are paid to do? Surely?????	3/11/2024 8:31 PM
167	AFAs helpful for Firefighters Building Types Risk Risk to members of public With already reduced numbers of calls we receive, drivers are at risk of skill fade with reducing the number of times they are called out by 45%. Reducing the AFA turnout numbers puts members of the public at a greater risk if only by the 1% the stats show are actual fires. We are asking untrained personnel to put themselves in a hazardous environment by investigating a potential fire. AFA's are a great way for firefighters to familiarise themselves with buildings which are complex in design and also to engage with the public.	3/11/2024 8:04 PM
168	AFAs helpful for Firefighters Building Types Risk to members of public I believe the not attending afas puts the public in high situation of risk. Attending afas is one of the best ways for crews to visit and familiarise themselves with areas and properties not covered by our 72ds visits. Attending them is valuable knowledge of topography and practice for drivers and crews, the point of lowering risk to other drivers on the roads is swayed already by a slower more controlled fire drive to such incidents in comparison to a persons job.	3/11/2024 7:50 PM
169	AFAs helpful for Firefighters Building Types Time From experience AFA are beneficial for crews to gain experience of building layout and understand risks on station grounds. EFAD's gain experience and confidence if fire driving and topography. These are skills and experiences that will be lost if we do not attend AFA's Minimal time is lost across the service for this to be seen as beneficial with all the positives outlined for category B AFA's.	3/11/2024 7:37 PM
170	Time back I agree our time can be better spent than attending a large number of false alarms	3/11/2024 7:07 PM

171	Getting opinions Its important to obtain views from where possible and it helps to draw attention to the service provided.	Appendix D	3/11/2024 3:00 PM
172	Building owners Building owners should be responsible for checking AFAs to confirm the presence of fire		3/11/2024 1:01 AM
173	Community engagement Prevention Work for crews False alarms have a huge impact on the work activity of crews, detracting from vital trading and prevention work. Freeing up crews to focus on keeping communities safe rather responding to false alarms is a welcome change.		3/10/2024 11:28 AM
174	Resources It is important to make best use of resources. I feel it is important that we take action so that the number of false alarms is reduced.		3/10/2024 6:44 AM
175	Resources Better use of resources		3/9/2024 8:02 PM
176	makes sense		3/9/2024 7:41 PM
177	Staff development Time Training Our time is already getting squeezed, with more and more staff in development, we require more time for training.		3/9/2024 4:19 PM
178	Risk to members of public Waste of time Attendance at AFA False alarms is a waste of FRS time and increases risk to the public. Fire crews investigating an AFA activation are not available to respond to higher priority incidents for around 20 to 30 minutes.		3/9/2024 2:42 PM
179	Community engagement Time Training Value for the people we serve is time better spent on training, visiting the elderly and venerable and other call outs		3/9/2024 11:13 AM
180	Pragmatic It is a pragmatic approach whilst retaining the automatic response to properties such as care homes etc		3/8/2024 10:17 AM
181	Multiple AFAs TVP Many years ago the Thames Valley Police had the same problem. It was always the same premises, usually at the same time each day. After a set number of false activations, we refused to attend. The alarm companies control rooms should also confirm the fire before informing the fire brigade.		3/8/2024 9:17 AM
182	jhj		3/7/2024 12:24 PM
183	It's obvious		3/7/2024 12:07 PM
184	Waste of time We don't want to waste emergency services time by reporting false alarms		3/7/2024 9:06 AM
185	Building owners Disruption to station regular day to day Morale Obligation Waste of time We have a morale obligation to both ensuring that we protect the people of RB and provide best value. This cannot be done whilst responding to premises and businesses that see the fire service as a safety net that means that allows them to neglect or poorly maintain their own systems. In my humble opinion premise and business owners have figured out that they can save a few pennies here and there through poor systems, procedures and maintenance because the FRS will deal with a situation if it arises. This is unfair on the Taxpayer, the community and Fire & Rescue staff. A poorly timed AFA can be extremely detrimental the whole day on a fire station and ruin weeks or even months of planning with regards to training or Fire safety initiatives etc. We still need to respond to incidents but not properly risk assessed AFA's especially repeat offenders.		3/6/2024 8:37 PM
186	Waste of time A lot of time is being wasted attending automatic fire alarm which are unnecessary		3/6/2024 4:56 PM
187	Waste of time we understand the amount of wasted time due to false alarms need to be addressed.		3/6/2024 3:26 PM
188	Data the data tells us that we need to change the way we are responding and with a low risk posed by doing so, it seems a sensible step to take		3/6/2024 12:50 PM
189	Makes sense		3/6/2024 11:54 AM
190	Prioritisation Prioritising urgent calls is of high importance. False alarms are not a good use of the Fire Services time.		3/6/2024 10:45 AM
191	Time back to free up the service for real emergencies		3/6/2024 9:35 AM
192	Second call for confirmation I think that not all AFA's should be answered, as they should need a second back up call to confirm that a fire is actually happening		3/6/2024 7:52 AM
193	Risk Why do you show up to false alarms. You're on emergency blue lights. You put your health and everyone's else at risk coz now you're rushing on a blue light to a burnt toast... strongly agree, this should be addressed.		3/5/2024 11:44 PM

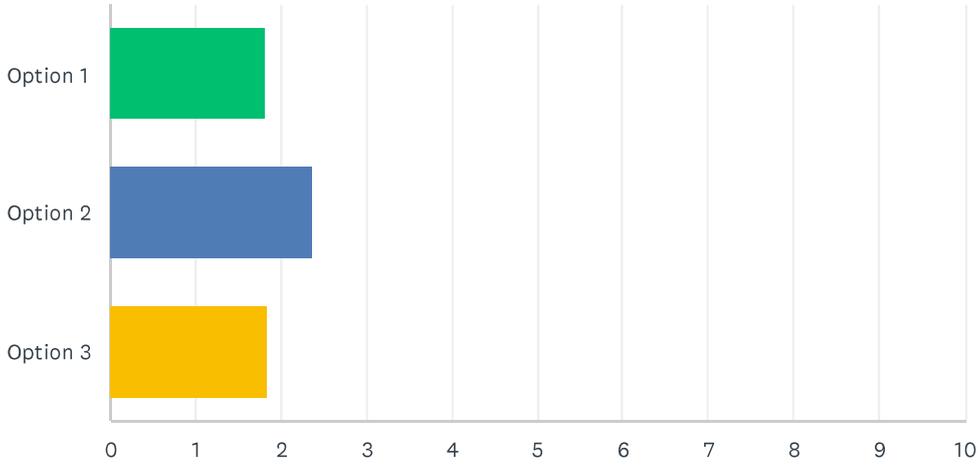
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194	Should engage Appendix D As a taxpayer I believe it's the role of the fire brigade to respond to alarms	3/5/2024 8:53 PM
195	Building owners Community engagement Resources Time Fire service time and resources for which I pay in my council tax are being wasted mainly by incompetent and ignorant business owners taking the response for granted. This take away the firefighters from being able to spend time with us in communities.	3/5/2024 7:38 PM
196	Waste of time Too many false alarms wastes time and endangers lives	3/5/2024 5:39 PM
197	just shut up x2	3/5/2024 5:22 PM
198	Education Time is better spent on educating the population then attending false alarms	3/5/2024 2:30 PM
199	Resources It feels as if fire engines are being sent to false alarms where others have not carried out the required checks to make sure there is a fire. Sounds like a waste of resources that could be better used in other places.	3/5/2024 11:46 AM
200	Time back If there is a nominated responsible person on site, they should be able to assess whether there is a fire at the site and make appropriate decisions. FF's skills could be better used to be more proactive in other areas to reduce the risk of fires.	3/5/2024 11:33 AM
201	Efficiency Prevention Time back Training Improve the efficiency of the Service and give more time to operational staff to train, do prevention activities and respond to other incidents	3/5/2024 9:52 AM
202	Capacity The fire service should attend, they have the capacity to	3/4/2024 8:20 PM
203	Time back Times to actual incidents You go to so many false alarms, taking away attention from other duties or even making delayed or late response times to actual incidents	3/4/2024 7:36 PM
204	I agree what is being proposed	3/4/2024 7:15 PM
205	Cost saving Effectiveness Efficiency Resources Safety Times to actual incidents The consultation proposals to change the way RBFRS respond to automatic fire alarms could lead to more efficient and effective use of resources, enhanced safety, cost savings, and a more data-driven approach to service delivery. Therefore, I strongly agree with these proposals.	3/4/2024 4:48 PM

Q12 Please select the options in order of your preference (1 - most preferred option - 3- least preferred option)

Answered: 250 Skipped: 138



	1	2	3	TOTAL	SCORE
Option 1	24.40% 61	32.00% 80	43.60% 109	250	1.81
Option 2	45.20% 113	45.20% 113	9.60% 24	250	2.36
Option 3	30.40% 76	22.80% 57	46.80% 117	250	1.84

Appendix D

Q13 Having considered the options, do you have any concerns about our proposals?

Answered: 147 Skipped: 241

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	No concerns. It's your responsibility to address this matter.	5/13/2024 8:22 AM
2	Having already implemented this, I would suggest a phased approach to ensure businesses understand and are prepared. Also be aware one of the potential consequences is that more move to call handling systems	5/13/2024 7:42 AM
3	Yes, this needs to be well communicated. Not sure people are prepared.	5/13/2024 7:20 AM
4	Yes but minimal	5/11/2024 1:45 PM
5	You show no consideration to reducing false alarms in flats, you propose to keep attending, but you should do more to stop the false alarms.	5/11/2024 11:05 AM
6	Although a high number are false alarms some have been fires and also fatal	5/9/2024 4:52 PM
7	There were concerns about the lack of responses to unoccupied buildings when no responsible person can confirm if an emergency response is needed. We would still want to save buildings and stop fire from spreading even if there is noone inside. This goes for Category A buildings as well as Category B as they could be unoccupied during the day and the fire would need to have taken hold for a passerby or neighbour to perhaps to realise and confirm.	5/9/2024 1:52 PM
8	Options 2 & 3 would not respond to calls 9-6 from a school, 365 days a year. What about weekends and school holidays when the site would not be occupied?	5/9/2024 11:09 AM
9	As custodian for the county archives, it would be helpful if category C could include unique and irreplaceable collections of community value. This would impact a limited range of buildings and perhaps we could ask you to add them to an agreed list?	5/9/2024 9:48 AM
10	It will take approximately 30 minutes to respond to an alarm out of hours. If the fire is genuine then it will lead to catastrophic loss of the building and possible spread to adjoining properties	5/9/2024 9:44 AM
11	No	5/8/2024 11:00 PM
12	No	5/8/2024 10:48 PM
13	N/A	5/8/2024 12:06 PM
14	If the building is not in use and fire is not visible, it may go unreported, causing more damage to property	5/8/2024 10:27 AM
15	No	5/7/2024 4:18 PM
16	No	5/7/2024 4:08 PM
17	No concerns.	5/7/2024 4:06 PM
18	Yes, extremely concered about each proposal	5/7/2024 2:49 PM
19	Our concern if Option 2 was chosen then although you wouldn't respond between 9am-6pm we are not open all year round as a school. Option 3 would be the same concerns as Option 2.	5/7/2024 1:30 PM
20	Yes - business owners may need to upgrade their fire protection and alarm systems to accommodate the proposed changes. There may be an increase in insurance costs, which will affect many public funded institutions.	5/7/2024 1:07 PM
21	No	5/7/2024 11:50 AM
22	What about listed buildings? It isn't clear if you will respond to alarms at these.	5/7/2024 8:17 AM
23	Yes, the purpose of these alarms is for you to react early to prevent fire spread, particularly to those buildings connected to others. What is the point in having these alarms if they are	5/7/2024 7:57 AM

so inaccurate?

Appendix D

24	Would like clarity on how fires are to be confirmed to warrant an engine being dispatched	5/5/2024 5:16 AM
25	There is NO option to retain the status quo. This question is designed to give you the answer you want. This is not a consultation question	5/3/2024 10:19 PM
26	I would like to know which category we fit into , we are a church which also has widely used community buildings open 9am to 11 pm 7 days a week. No one sleeps on the premises. it could be A or B .	5/3/2024 3:54 PM
27	See previous answer	5/3/2024 10:46 AM
28	None	5/3/2024 10:22 AM
29	Obviously that a fire may occur without anyone to report it (out of hours) and a total loss of the building and contents.	5/3/2024 9:40 AM
30	Yes I believe that the fire brigade should continue to attend as they have been	5/3/2024 9:25 AM
31	No	5/3/2024 8:05 AM
32	Yes	5/2/2024 10:07 PM
33	I think schools are vulnerable out of school hours. Secondary, and pupil referral schools more than primary or nurseries. All HMO's and residential properties (children's homes / care homes - elderly or vulnerable) AFA must be covered 24/7 365.	5/2/2024 5:06 PM
34	We should respond to all category alarms when out of hours	5/2/2024 12:06 PM
35	Yes, we are under the COMAH tier although we do manage hazardous chemicals on site that include 400 tonnes of flammables, a swift response would be essential to control not only fire but the env risk. Ignoring our AFA system could lead to delay.	5/1/2024 1:39 PM
36	No	5/1/2024 12:26 PM
37	N/a	5/1/2024 10:00 AM
38	no	4/30/2024 11:18 AM
39	Officers Risk Yes concerned& as a serving whole time officer it's dangerous	4/30/2024 8:55 AM
40	Risk Of coirse there is always the cnace that where thereappears no danger, there may be	4/30/2024 8:32 AM
41	No longer attend I do not like any of them. We are fire and rescue service. We are there to attend to every fire call even if it's false alarm.	4/29/2024 10:32 PM
42	Continue to attend This does not feel fair, that a decision has already been made against many of the Firefighters views. A 4th option that crews should attend should be offered in this survey.	4/29/2024 6:54 PM
43	no	4/29/2024 6:51 PM
44	None	4/29/2024 6:12 PM
45	None	4/29/2024 4:36 PM
46	N/A	4/29/2024 2:03 PM
47	Data Would a like to see the stat's regards to what premises your more likely to get 'actual incidents' from these categories	4/27/2024 4:08 PM
48	No	4/27/2024 2:35 PM
49	Option 2 Option 2 makes the most sense but there should be an additional consideration for school holidays as the likelihood of there being a responsible person there is much lower.	4/27/2024 12:37 PM
50	Volunteers Yes. Some of these buildings are occupied/used by volunteers.	4/27/2024 11:55 AM
51	yes	4/27/2024 11:16 AM
52	Flats I live in a flat where our fire alarm in the corridors is linked to the commercial property below. Will the fire service respond to a fire alarm in the flats if the alarm is shown as coming from the commercial property? Will this cause a delay in the fire service responding to a fire in the flats? This isn't clear in your consultation document and has me concerned.	4/26/2024 7:29 PM
53	No Concerns	4/26/2024 9:52 AM

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54	No	Appendix D	4/25/2024 9:11 AM
55	Prevention	Risk No concerns, as the potential risk of damage/impact is so minimal, and the preventative work is more impactful for the community	4/24/2024 7:59 PM
56		Understanding the proposal	4/24/2024 10:33 AM
57	Schools	In some school, there is no one at the reception after 4pm	4/24/2024 7:49 AM
58	No		4/23/2024 5:51 PM
59		I am reassured that the service will always respond when there is evidence of fire or smoke.	4/23/2024 5:44 PM
60	Community Impact	Cost Data While examining these statistics and considering the rising cost of council taxes, some may question if reducing service is the best option. Additionally, it's important to understand why certain groups are selected and who determines the criteria. For instance, as a college, we have approximately 90 students with disabilities, prompting further inquiry into the decision-making process. Furthermore, we have a service that monitors our system to prevent false fire brigade calls. In my 5 years here, despite numerous fire alarms set off by students, we have only called the brigade out once. So, it's puzzling why we are categorised in a certain way when we have maintained a robust system.	4/23/2024 2:55 PM
61	Resources	No - think this a really sensible use of a scarce resource - people know how to call emergency services.	4/23/2024 1:47 PM
62	No		4/23/2024 7:57 AM
63	No		4/22/2024 7:21 PM
64	no		4/22/2024 7:01 PM
65	Option 2	Option 2 asking the RP to potential go back into a building on fire to confirm could result in them being trapped or over come with smoke	4/22/2024 3:48 PM
66	Schools	Staying as same I am the representative of the school and would have serious concerns if the school was not attended to if the alarms sounded during the evenings and overnight.	4/20/2024 9:03 PM
67	Staying as same	Yes. As mentioned earlier. This survey is flawed as there is no way to rank 'no change' to judge public sentiment.	4/20/2024 9:54 AM
68	No		4/19/2024 3:31 PM
69	No		4/19/2024 2:50 PM
70	No		4/19/2024 12:09 PM
71	Call to check	I think that as a school we would confirm with you if there was a real fire during 8am-4pm.	4/19/2024 11:44 AM
72	Option 1	Schools Option 1 is the only viable option for schools, as during holidays there will be no-one on site to verify an emergency	4/19/2024 10:53 AM
73	No concerns		4/19/2024 10:21 AM
74	Call to check	Yes if its not occpied and there is a developing fire. I.e Dulux Slough. Does it need a passer by to raise the alarm or when its fully alight.	4/18/2024 9:47 PM
75	Money Saving	Yes. There is no money saving and you are proposing a worse service.	4/18/2024 5:30 PM
76	Option 2	Option 2 - many volunteer led community buildings will not have someone 'on site 365. Broadly agree with proposal 2 but think for Buildings B should be changed to include no response 1800 - 0800, Mon-Fri excluding bank holidays and weekends	4/18/2024 4:39 PM
77	Time of the day	Want to know was is level of Fire alarm in building cat B - in proposed times 9am to 6pm. How much will affect?	4/18/2024 1:53 PM
78	No		4/18/2024 1:46 PM
79	No		4/18/2024 1:26 PM
80	Impact on future of service	Concerned this could lead to an underutilized service which may in future be reduced	4/18/2024 11:20 AM
81	Time of the day	Yes. People sleep in the day between 9am and 6pm. You're shift workers you know this.	4/18/2024 1:44 AM

82	Unsure of category We're not sure if our premises which is a mixture of community centre, place of worship and educational establishment is category A or B and whether any assumptions on when our premises are occupied are correct. We're pretty confident that you'd only be called out to a real fire whenever the building is occupied.	4/17/2024 5:12 PM
83	Unoccupied premises What if an unoccupied building is on fire and in close proximity to a higher risk unoccupied property? What if a building is on fire and occupied by a lone worker who is injured and unable to call / confirm the fire to the emergency services? What impact might the changes have on insurance claims? What other form of contact might be considered to check if a fire engine is required eg calling the building contact to check if all is ok?	4/16/2024 7:46 AM
84	Time of the day I am concerned about the 365 day proposal on option 2 for cat B buildings. What arrangements will be in place if any during school holiday periods as not all schools will be occupied from 9am - 6pm during these times.	4/15/2024 11:43 AM
85	Call challenging Companies taking responsibility No - about time private alarm responder companies took more responsibility	4/13/2024 6:31 PM
86	Option 1 Of course. There are bound to be one or more fires where you will be told you could have got there earlier. Nevertheless if you do Option 1 you/we get maximum "bang for buck" - options 2 or 3 are higher risk	4/11/2024 4:46 PM
87	No	4/10/2024 6:41 AM
88	No	4/7/2024 12:59 PM
89	Yes please see previous response.	4/6/2024 4:27 PM
90	Resources Risk How will building be adequately graded. It seems like a finger in the air approach and clearly a risk to the public by not sending resources to these premises, not withstanding an element of call handling but this seems to be going too far.	4/1/2024 3:53 PM
91	Your options make it so I have to agree to stopping attendance at dire alarms.	3/31/2024 10:17 PM
92	Time back to stations Training No, the risk to the public is minimal. The vast majority are false alarms I would rather the crews are training and deployable to incidents that have confirmed elements of risk	3/31/2024 9:01 PM
93	No	3/28/2024 2:32 PM
94	No	3/27/2024 6:44 PM
95	I have no concerns.	3/25/2024 4:07 PM
96	ARC No concerns about your options, only concerns about ARC and how they will respond to these.	3/25/2024 3:06 PM
97	Relying on responsible Reliability of the responsible person being available.	3/25/2024 9:05 AM
98	Response time The idea of these alarms is to get a fast response from the fire service when there is a small fire. This quick response will minimise the damage done to local buildings. With your proposal there will be cases where the automated fire alarm would have given early warning but instead the fire services has only turned up once the fire has become bigger damaging more of the property. As a local business owner we had a small fire which triggered the automatic alarm. This meant the fire service turned up quickly before it spread and the damage was kept to a minimum. If they didn't respond no-one would have known until it became much bigger. This would have probably caused so much damage that we wouldn't be able to stay open and would have ended our business.	3/24/2024 8:42 PM
99	n/a	3/24/2024 8:03 PM
100	No	3/24/2024 3:20 PM
101	How would you know there was no confirmed fire? Who would confirm that?	3/23/2024 10:06 PM
102	No concerns	3/22/2024 1:39 PM
103	See answer 6	3/21/2024 6:06 PM
104	Arson Option 3 with no response to automated fire alarms out of hours including schools could be an issue with arson during the school holidays.	3/21/2024 2:56 PM
105	Call to check I believe you should always have confirmation from the " Responsible Person". If no contact then you must attend - Just in case !!!	3/20/2024 10:45 PM
106	Remote area Occasions when the building may be in a remote area eg rural church where	3/19/2024 5:06 PM

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there is no one around to confirm the presence of fire should there be any.

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107	None	3/19/2024 3:07 PM
108	No	3/19/2024 2:10 PM
109	All off them	3/15/2024 10:04 PM
110	none of the above Had to decide options above when there should be an option of "none of the above" Another survey that gets the answers that are wanted	3/15/2024 9:02 AM
111	Timings Although option 2 is my preferred choice, there may be situations where there are grey areas in terms of timings when the timings for category B buildings are between 9am and 6pm.	3/13/2024 2:53 PM
112	Staying as same Yes - no 4th option of leaving as the current fire cover asking questions of this survey....	3/13/2024 2:34 PM
113	No	3/13/2024 12:24 PM
114	No	3/12/2024 10:46 PM
115	Categorisation A bit concerned that Cinema/Theatre is in the wrong category.	3/12/2024 1:40 PM
116	Understanding from public Are we confident the public will understand.	3/12/2024 9:58 AM
117	If it is an automatic fire alarm that has been triggered in error has the alarm had its regular maintenance checked	3/12/2024 2:03 AM
118	Categorisation I do not agree with Option 1 as you should go to Category A building when there is no-one there but you have already disregarded this!!	3/11/2024 11:27 PM
119	Policy None - seen this type of policy successfully introduced in other fire services.	3/11/2024 10:43 PM
120	I would like to say non of these are a good idea.	3/11/2024 8:43 PM
121	None suitable None of the above are suitable - No options support the Fire Service continually attending	3/11/2024 8:39 PM
122	Staying as same Yes. I feel for a balanced and fair consultation, there needs to be a fourth option to keep the afa procedures as they are.	3/11/2024 7:53 PM
123	Staying as same Option 4 should be available as a fair consultation with no change to current practice.	3/11/2024 7:40 PM
124	Catching early Missing potential to catch a fire early	3/11/2024 7:10 PM
125	Not able to answer Making sure even if there's people in. They may not be able to respond if they are stuck or no access to call/ answer.	3/11/2024 4:14 PM
126	None	3/11/2024 3:02 PM
127	Categorisation Day and Night PDAs Impact on other FRS TVFCS Are the proposals technically possible to implement in the Vision System? For option 2 is it possible to implement day and night PDAs on Vision? Will RBFrs ensure that prior to "go live" that addresses of category A and category B buildings have the correct PDA (or lack of PDA) attached to them? Given that Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue are changing their AFA policies will these changes be implemented across the three counties? It is unreasonable that 9 years into the TVFCS project we still have 3 differing AFA policies.	3/11/2024 1:23 AM
128	Categorisation Public activity What is a Category a or B building? Why should investigating a possible fire be more important than swanning around on a publicity activity?	3/10/2024 8:51 PM
129	Call challenging Effectiveness Impact on other FRS TVFCS TVFCS should have single call challenging process, if RBFrs, Ofrs and RBFrs have different approached to call challenging, this will result in reduced effectiveness in reducing false alarms and confuse TVFCS staff.	3/10/2024 11:32 AM
130	Categorisation Outside of regular working hours Outside of normal working hours without anyone else on site for category B buildings, the alarm system system could play a vital role in protecting these buildings.	3/10/2024 6:49 AM
131	No	3/9/2024 3:14 PM
132	N/A	3/8/2024 9:24 AM
133	v	3/7/2024 12:27 PM

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134	None		3/7/2024 9:16 AM
135	<p>Outside of regular working hours Risk Time back to stations Unoccupied premises</p> <p>Option 3 is (in my opinion) too risky. By not sending a fire engine between 6pm & 9am (night time) you are potentially allowing unoccupied premises to be at risk of having fully developed fires and 100% losses because of the lack of the responsible person. Out of hours (18:00-09:00) then we still need to respond due to the lack of a responsible. Also if crews have time freed up during the day time then more can be achieved re training, fire safety, 72Ds, familiarisation etc.</p>		3/6/2024 8:53 PM
136	None		3/6/2024 4:59 PM
137	no		3/6/2024 3:28 PM
138	no		3/6/2024 1:15 PM
139	No		3/6/2024 12:51 PM
140	<p>High risk buildings No as long as high risk buildings remain covered, and there are follow up telephone calls to establish a false alarm first</p>		3/6/2024 9:59 AM
141	<p>Charging for AFAs For the life of me, I do not understand why you do not charge for false alarms. My friend who's a lawyer showed me you can, so I do not understand that - how much are you going to charge? IT'S MY MONEY. We - the residents of Berkshire, pay for the call outs. Why did you disregard that in your options and on WHAT basis? You can't be bothered? Have you spoken to your legal people? My local MP will be contacted. If you charge the business, at least some of OUR MONEY can be recovered. You just raised your rates. Do you think we're that dumb? We pay the council tax, and your approach is just lazy. Shocking incompetence. Why are you protecting business and passing the cost to us - the residents? YOUR DIRECTORS SHOULD BE SACKED! We're done with all of you protecting business!</p>		3/6/2024 12:17 AM
142	<p>Business Owners No, it makes sense. I have seen so many false alarms in my workplace due to decorating work affecting the alarm but employer wanting or needing automatic response for their business insurance - highly inconsiderate and wasteful.</p>		3/5/2024 7:44 PM
143	<p>Policy People remembering a change to policy</p>		3/5/2024 5:43 PM
144	No		3/5/2024 11:53 AM
145	<p>Cinemas and Theaters Outside of regular working hours The only concern I have is around option 3 - how do you assure that the responsible person on duty after 6pm is suitably qualified to respond to a fire and evacuate say a cinema or a theatre where there will still be a lot of people - hence my reason for selecting Option 2</p>		3/5/2024 11:40 AM
146	Unnecessary cuts		3/4/2024 8:21 PM
147	N/A		3/4/2024 7:17 PM

Appendix D

Q14 If you have concerns, how can we help you to address them?

Answered: 90 Skipped: 298

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Provide training and education.	5/13/2024 7:20 AM
2	By having a period of review. Say every three months over a period of one or two years or an ongoing periodic review process for ever. Serious issue like death and personal injury to result in the immediate removal of the policy and revert to previous.	5/11/2024 1:45 PM
3	Agree that the incidences of lost time and unecessary callouts to alarms though also has a negative impact on the ability to reach real fires so option 2 seems a good balance.	5/9/2024 1:52 PM
4	Could the proposal be amended to continue automatic call outs at weekends and school holidays?	5/9/2024 11:09 AM
5	see above - it would be helpful to differentiate between replaceable and irreplaceable property	5/9/2024 9:48 AM
6	Continue to respond but charge organisations for false alarms.	5/9/2024 9:44 AM
7	N/A	5/8/2024 12:06 PM
8	No concerns	5/7/2024 4:08 PM
9	N/a	5/7/2024 4:06 PM
10	Give preferential treatment to responsible building owners such as Reading Borough Council buildings	5/7/2024 2:49 PM
11	You should have a way to exclude certain buildings from your list. For example, the risk or use of the building might change. Hire will you manage that?	5/7/2024 8:17 AM
12	Continue to respond to these alarms, but treat them as lower priority at times of higher risk calls.	5/7/2024 7:57 AM
13	Don't cut the service by stealth. Rwspond to all emergencies. Spend time making contact with building owners where you have problems, help themmsort out their legal requirements with regards to system maintenance and risk assessments. Don't put your employees at greater risk or neglect the community you arw supposwd to be protecting. This is a consultation on a reduction in service cover and IT STINKS.	5/3/2024 10:19 PM
14	Give assurances TVFCS's mobilising system can inform our operators accurately and that no guess work or additional workload will be required by the operators	5/3/2024 10:46 AM
15	None that don't involve automatic call outs or the use of drones or non-engine response to get a visual inspection of an actual fire or false alarm.	5/3/2024 9:40 AM
16	Do not cut back on the service at all	5/3/2024 9:25 AM
17	NA	5/3/2024 8:05 AM
18	by not reducing the response levels we provide	5/2/2024 10:07 PM
19	Maintain appropriate fire cover to enable an appropriate responsible at all times.	5/2/2024 12:06 PM
20	Ensuring we are classified as a class C Building so our AFA is responded to.	5/1/2024 1:39 PM
21	N/a	5/1/2024 10:00 AM
22	no	4/30/2024 11:18 AM
23	Don't change the response	4/30/2024 8:55 AM
24	Comms Better communication. Use of access to CCTV etc	4/30/2024 8:32 AM
25	Going out to check Send a crew or an officer to check on the situation.	4/29/2024 10:32 PM
26	Continue to attend Complete the survey with the option to remain attending AFA's.	4/29/2024 6:54 PM
27	No further concerns	4/27/2024 4:08 PM

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28	No		4/27/2024 2:35 PM
29	Option 1 choose option 1 only		4/27/2024 11:16 AM
30	See above.		4/26/2024 7:29 PM
31	None		4/26/2024 9:52 AM
32	Option works well		4/25/2024 9:11 AM
33	.		4/24/2024 7:59 PM
34	Just making sure that a real fire doesn't get missed.		4/24/2024 10:33 AM
35	Specific Times I think the time should be 9am to 4pm		4/24/2024 7:49 AM
36	None		4/23/2024 5:51 PM
37	Categorisation Is there a possibility of reviewing the category system, especially considering our status as a college with a significant number of SEN students? Additionally, could measures be implemented to ensure that if we were to call for Fire and Rescue, we would still receive the same excellent response service?		4/23/2024 2:55 PM
38	Risk Look at the type of a use of building. Just because it is occupied, there is more risk asking the responsible person of a day care centre or community hall going to check as more likely elderly than maybe the lead at an office, rather than building type , demographic of use needs to be looked at and ease of escape		4/22/2024 3:48 PM
39	Option 2 Proceed with Option 2, so that overnight the fire service still attend to fire alarms in schools.		4/20/2024 9:03 PM
40	Safety Yes. Don't make changes. You haven't provided evidence that this will maintain safety, like levels of fire in those automated calls.		4/20/2024 9:54 AM
41	Unoccupied businesses Unoccupied businesses i.e those without security or wardens should get an attendance of 1 appliance. Buildings with security or wardens do not get an attendance unless a call by phone is made.		4/18/2024 9:47 PM
42	withdraw this proposal		4/18/2024 5:30 PM
43	Data More clear information about statistics.		4/18/2024 1:53 PM
44	No		4/18/2024 1:26 PM
45	Continue to attend Long term commitment on maintaining the current level of service		4/18/2024 11:20 AM
46	Cuts You can choose not make the proposed cuts.		4/18/2024 1:44 AM
47	Categorisation Maybe we could discuss if our premises are category A or B with you.		4/17/2024 5:12 PM
48	Contacting Perhaps setting up a contact process to verify the false alarm or not? Perhaps implementing a mandatory / automatic servicing of fire alarms / fines if not done?		4/16/2024 7:46 AM
49	Resources Schools Please also consider the pressures on schools, not all schools have the resources to have someone on call at all times.		4/15/2024 11:43 AM
50	Continue to attend Continue to respond to the majority of AFA calls.		4/6/2024 4:27 PM
51	Resources Send adequate resources to risk of fires which include AFAs		4/1/2024 3:53 PM
52	You've already made your decision from the looks of it		3/31/2024 10:17 PM
53	No		3/28/2024 2:32 PM
54	N/A		3/25/2024 4:07 PM
55	ARC ARC will need to be told what the new process is, what we will not be attending. However i do believe they will then claim the building is a sleeping risk in order to get us to attend.		3/25/2024 3:06 PM
56	Multiple responsible persons.		3/25/2024 9:05 AM
57	Continue to attend Keep responding to these alarm calls. Although they don't always need to do anything. When they do at least firefighters will be there to deal with it.		3/24/2024 8:42 PM
58	n/a		3/24/2024 8:03 PM
59	N/A		3/24/2024 3:20 PM

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60	News By putting all information in the local news	3/23/2024 10:06 PM
61	Attend during certain hours Perhaps adapt the requirements for automated fire alarms to be no response between 0900-1800 on Monday to Friday during term time. Weekends and school holidays then you would attend at these locations.	3/21/2024 2:56 PM
62	See 9	3/20/2024 10:45 PM
63	Risk Decisions, such as being made, need to balance risk, potential loss of life / injury against budget.	3/19/2024 5:06 PM
64	NA	3/19/2024 3:07 PM
65	N/A	3/19/2024 2:10 PM
66	Cuts Have more fire trucks and not cut the service	3/15/2024 10:04 PM
67	Continue to attend dont stop sending out to AFA	3/15/2024 9:02 AM
68	Flexibility Outside of normal working hours Timings need to be flexible around the 9am and 6pm cut-offs.	3/13/2024 2:53 PM
69	Include an additional option to make this a fair and honest survey	3/13/2024 2:34 PM
70	Interaction from members of public Will be interesting to see how many members of the public respond to this consultation.	3/12/2024 9:58 AM
71	Reasoning behind AFA When an AFA goes off in error have the occupant register a reason with you within 48hrs	3/12/2024 2:03 AM
72	Categorisation Charging persistent offenders Go to fire alarms whatever the Category when no-one is present. What about school holidays when risk of Arson high. Charge persistent offenders of fire alarms for the call outs.	3/11/2024 11:27 PM
73	4th option For a fair process a forth option should be offered	3/11/2024 8:39 PM
74	N/A	3/11/2024 7:10 PM
75	Impact of with other FRS TVFCS By liaising with OFRS and BFRS to ensure a consistent approach to dealing with AFAs. By liaising with TVFCS to ensure correct implementation into the mobilising system.	3/11/2024 1:23 AM
76	Prioritisation Prioritise calls where more than one sensor has activated.	3/10/2024 8:51 PM
77	Call challenging TVFCS Single call challenging guidance for TVFCS staff to follow.	3/10/2024 11:32 AM
78	N/A	3/9/2024 3:14 PM
79	N/A	3/8/2024 9:24 AM
80	v	3/7/2024 12:27 PM
81	N/a	3/7/2024 9:16 AM
82	Option 1 doesn't go far enough and 3 goes too far.	3/6/2024 8:53 PM
83	no	3/6/2024 1:15 PM
84	Follow up calls Folloow up phone calls to establish if a false alarm	3/6/2024 9:59 AM
85	Charge for AFAs CHARGE FOR RESPONDING TO FALSE ALARMS YOU'RE CHOOSING NOT TO DO IT. I'LL BE ASKING FOR YOUR JUSTIFICATION.	3/6/2024 12:17 AM
86	Difference in AFAs and real fires It took me a while to get my head around the difference between automated alarms and real fires. Perception can be tricky.	3/5/2024 7:44 PM
87	Outside of normal working hours As a school out of hours or holidays no call out could be problematic- ours is linked to a provider who would contact myself on my number but others my not have this service.	3/5/2024 5:43 PM
88	Guidance Training Provide guidance to organisations, ensure they secure appropriate training for responsible persons.	3/5/2024 11:40 AM
89	N/A	3/4/2024 7:17 PM
90	Categorisation Policy Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service should provide further clarification on how they intend to ensure sufficient regulation for A and B premises. i.e. targeted fire safety advice, monitoring of FS compliance to ensure that the new policy does not compromise safety.	3/4/2024 5:03 PM

Appendix D

Q15 How can we support organisations to be ready for this change?

Answered: 119 Skipped: 269

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	See point 7 above	5/13/2024 7:42 AM
2	See above	5/13/2024 7:20 AM
3	Lots of notice. Lots of explanations. Lots of advice. A promise of an increase in fire service staff in a fire fighting capacity.	5/11/2024 1:45 PM
4	Notifying the service of alarm testing day, to reduce our attendance	5/9/2024 4:52 PM
5	Making sure everyone is aware of the changes and the need to be extra vigilant in reporting real fires.	5/9/2024 1:52 PM
6	Remind them of their legal obligations and responsibilities. Their preparedness is their responsibility. The fire service can advise them and provide them with relevant information to help this process.	5/9/2024 11:55 AM
7	Advice on how best to respond to an out of hour alarm	5/9/2024 9:44 AM
8	Check the amount of staff on duty 24 hours a day to check with being able to notify us	5/8/2024 12:06 PM
9	Encourage/support businesses in training staff to recognise the signs of fire to be able to confirm if fire is present or not.	5/8/2024 10:27 AM
10	Lot's of communications and engagement	5/7/2024 4:08 PM
11	Publicise the change, communicate clearly about what is happening and ensure we do as much as possible to prepare businesses.	5/7/2024 4:06 PM
12	Reconsider the proposal and reponse to local authoristy buildings	5/7/2024 2:49 PM
13	Please continue to keep communication open so that we are kept abreast with changes as they occur and what protocols we can expect.	5/7/2024 2:09 PM
14	Making sure we have plenty of notice so we can adapt any policies and procedures we have in place.	5/7/2024 1:30 PM
15	Additional guidance, and site visits.	5/7/2024 1:07 PM
16	A visit to explain to the children the consequences of triggering alarms	5/7/2024 11:50 AM
17	Provide advice or support	5/7/2024 8:17 AM
18	You cannot.	5/7/2024 7:57 AM
19	Give them clarity on route to confirm fires	5/5/2024 5:16 AM
20	Don't change! Liaise with them, get thier FRA's sorted and systems maintenance sorted.	5/3/2024 10:19 PM
21	As above	5/3/2024 10:46 AM
22	Make sure they fully understand the implications	5/3/2024 10:22 AM
23	The Fire Brigade could push back to reverse any change change	5/3/2024 9:25 AM
24	Clear instructions on times and how the new system would potentially work	5/3/2024 8:05 AM
25	By focusing on education organisations on reducing false alarms rather than trying to reduce our response	5/2/2024 10:07 PM
26	Visit to help us improve our fire safety especially relating to location of bins, holiday safety, fire risk in schools - generally.	5/2/2024 5:06 PM
27	Comms We already have fantastic communication and support with RBFS, more of the same would be ideal.	5/1/2024 1:39 PM
28	Community to them well in advance with follow up	5/1/2024 12:26 PM
29	nothing	4/30/2024 11:18 AM

		Appendix D	4/30/2024 8:55 AM
30	As above		
31	Comms Good communication. Testing of fire alarms more regularly		4/30/2024 8:32 AM
32	Comms Need to let them know, even if it's a false alarm we will be on our way to help to protect them and they properties from fire .		4/29/2024 10:32 PM
33	Education education towards businesses to ensure they have a responsible person trained to check the site		4/29/2024 6:51 PM
34	ARCs Liaison with the ARCs to emphasise their responsibilities when it comes to AFAs		4/29/2024 6:12 PM
35	Comms Training Make them aware offer guidance sessions, provide advice on what they need to do - maybe set up a commercial arm of the service to provide training and guidance to fire marshal's.		4/27/2024 4:08 PM
36	Alignment with other FRS The policy aligns with other F&R		4/27/2024 2:35 PM
37	you cannot		4/27/2024 11:16 AM
38	Engagement Greater business engagement		4/26/2024 9:52 AM
39	Option 2 We already have things in place to work with option 2		4/25/2024 9:11 AM
40	Comms Make them fully aware of the changes, ensure they have put in adequate provisions after the change.		4/24/2024 7:59 PM
41	Testing Making sure organisations, have their alarms tested regularly and call order is correct before going to Fire Rescue.		4/24/2024 10:33 AM
42	Comms Send more information		4/24/2024 7:49 AM
43	Compliance Promote better fire compliance by recommending approved tradespeople who won't rip us off.		4/23/2024 5:51 PM
44	Comms Advertising in press, on TV and Radio and on billboards. Everyone should know.		4/23/2024 5:44 PM
45	Collaboration By ensuring that organisations like ours continue to receive support from our local fire brigade, we can facilitate an increase in site visits. Through this collaboration, we can ensure that we have taken all necessary measures to guarantee the safety of our staff, students, and the wider community.		4/23/2024 2:55 PM
46	Social media Marketing Flyers/Social Media compaigns		4/23/2024 1:47 PM
47	Public impact make sure the public are aware that if the fire alarm goes off they should call the fire service		4/22/2024 7:01 PM
48	Fire Safety Policy Support them with information to update and place their fire safety procedures inline with the adopted policy and information on how to re check a building safely.		4/22/2024 3:48 PM
49	No no no		4/20/2024 9:54 AM
50	Business owners E mail to property or building owner.		4/19/2024 2:50 PM
51	Comms Good clear materials distributed to communicate the change.		4/19/2024 12:59 PM
52	Marketing Marketing/publicity about the changes. Perhaps visiting sites that no longer have automatic response so that you know you have spoken to someone who understands the changes		4/19/2024 12:09 PM
53	Comms Provide cards, emails and posters with the changes.		4/19/2024 11:44 AM
54	Comms Training Better communication, step by step guidance on what this new procedure means for them including asking for any training requirements.		4/19/2024 10:21 AM
55	ARCs Alarm companies should notify if premisis has security or wardens or key holder within 10 mins.		4/18/2024 9:47 PM
56	no change is needed		4/18/2024 5:30 PM
57	Installation Do reach out the the installers of the system to ensure end users have the correct expectations		4/18/2024 2:14 PM
58	Training Training for fire wardens, implementation of monitoring service for premises		4/18/2024 1:53 PM
59	Frequency More frequent inspection visits.		4/18/2024 1:46 PM

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Appendix D

60	Causes for false alarms	Better level of alarm triggering criteria for various locations	4/18/2024 1:26 PM
61	Comms Training	Communication well in advance. Training for fire marshals in buildings affected. Ensure buildings have notices displayed so members of the public know what will happen.	4/18/2024 1:00 PM
62	Fire Safety	Fire safety support for organisation who will require responsible people to investigate alarms	4/18/2024 11:20 AM
63		Clearly if you do make these bad decisions people need to know they need to dial 999. Let's hope there aren't telephone delays.	4/18/2024 1:44 AM
64	ARCs	Working with the alarm monitoring companies would be useful. We are with Universal Fire Ltd.	4/17/2024 5:12 PM
65	Comms Survey details	Is it a nationwide consultation? If implemented, the media will doubtless publicise - if it isn't simply 'no more automatic fire engines' it would help reduce concerns?	4/16/2024 7:46 AM
66	Comms	Supply easily accessible comprehensive info	4/13/2024 6:31 PM
67	Comms	Tell them. Tell them on paper (even), tell them by email	4/11/2024 4:46 PM
68	Comms	Good timely implementation and support / notification lines of communication	4/10/2024 6:41 AM
69	Training	Training package and or an advice helpline	4/7/2024 12:59 PM
70	Comms	Open days/ information banners/ Social media/ Visits to these organisations	4/4/2024 3:35 PM
71	Prevention	Provide input to organisations on preventing unwanted fire alarms.	4/1/2024 3:53 PM
72	Details checked	regular checks on contact details for responsible persons in the event of a triggered alarm. as due to staff changes etc this could change regularly	4/1/2024 1:41 PM
73		Also send fire engines	3/31/2024 10:17 PM
74	Business owners taking more responsibility	Conduct visits to addresses where fire cover will be reduced. Advise them about ways they can take more responsibility for example having their own call out rota for staff to attend to alarms	3/31/2024 9:01 PM
75	Education	Education and informative media	3/28/2024 2:32 PM
76	Funding Start charging	Charge them for any unwanted fire alarm signals. Then use the money raised from that to fund station improvements.	3/27/2024 6:44 PM
77		I do not have an answer for this question.	3/25/2024 4:07 PM
78	Training	clear training outside of the control room from Berkshire on what exactly they do or do not attend when	3/25/2024 3:06 PM
79	Education	Educational visits targeted at management and team leaders	3/25/2024 9:05 AM
80	Continue to attend	You can't. You're an emergency service and we want to be there when we have an emergency.	3/24/2024 8:42 PM
81	Upcoming changes	Letting them know of the changes that are potentially coming into play, so they can get things in place their end if needing to.	3/24/2024 8:03 PM
82	Comms	Your social media is a great source of information. I think you are doing great job already.	3/24/2024 3:20 PM
83	High risk sites Training	Training / popping into high risk sites to advise	3/23/2024 10:06 PM
84	Different alarms	Are there alternative alarm types that are more accurate that organisations could consider having installed that would mean the Fire & Rescue Service would attend as the accuracy of the method increases?	3/21/2024 2:56 PM
85		Publicity- lots of it,	3/20/2024 10:45 PM
86	Confirmation	Could there be a call to a designated number to confirm fire/not during work days or to care homes etc.	3/20/2024 8:12 AM
87	Awareness Comms	Raising awareness of new modes of fire service operation. Communication with insurance companies so messages can be passed on via them. Maybe even comms to the general public via media / press / social media.	3/19/2024 5:06 PM
88	Awareness	Raise awareness, and give timely notification of this change.	3/19/2024 3:07 PM

89	Training Training for RPs	Appendix D	3/19/2024 2:10 PM
90	this question tells me the decision has been made		3/15/2024 9:02 AM
91	Comms Information about the importance of the responsible person's role.		3/13/2024 2:53 PM
92	Comms Media Media campaign and communication to make everyone aware.		3/13/2024 10:47 AM
93	Fire Marshals Making sure fire marshals know their Duties		3/12/2024 10:46 PM
94	Comms Communication.		3/12/2024 9:58 AM
95	Comms Social media Communicate via social media and whenever AFA's have been triggered in the property		3/12/2024 2:03 AM
96	Insurance Warn them to review their insurance cover.		3/11/2024 11:27 PM
97	Email Letters Social media As much publicity as possible - postal letters, social media posts, email, etc		3/11/2024 10:43 PM
98	Not sure		3/11/2024 7:10 PM
99	Draw further awareness		3/11/2024 3:02 PM
100	ARCs Ensuring that ARCs are aware of the changes (this will be easier to implement if there is a consistent approach across the Thames Valley).		3/11/2024 1:23 AM
101	Unsure when will attend Don't know, sounds like you're only going to show up when the flames are at roof level.		3/10/2024 8:51 PM
102	Correct training Properly trained employees at these sites. Correct contact details for responsible person/s.		3/9/2024 4:24 PM
103	Catergories Comms Letters Social media Publish information & advice through media/social media/online reminding them of their responsibilities. Write to properties on category B to offer additional advice/guidance. Assist with reviewing fire safety measures and risk assessments at category B properties to minimise their risk as far as possible.		3/9/2024 3:14 PM
104	ARCs By speaking to the alarm companies and putting the onus on them to train the company staff.		3/8/2024 9:24 AM
105	v		3/7/2024 12:27 PM
106	Comms Good communication		3/7/2024 9:16 AM
107	Installers of AFAs You need to reach out to the installers of the systems, so that they can make their customer expectations clear		3/7/2024 9:08 AM
108	Comms Point of contact within the service Communication, establish point of contact within organisation and link to local fire station. Provide info to let them know what they are responsible for and how our service will be changing. More visits by crews to more risky or repeat offenders.		3/6/2024 8:53 PM
109	Videos Online video offering reassurance		3/6/2024 4:59 PM
110	provide clear information on a timely basis.		3/6/2024 3:28 PM
111	no		3/6/2024 1:15 PM
112	Calls Reassure them that a call will be made immediately to see if this is a genuine emergency call		3/6/2024 9:59 AM
113	Unhappy with current situation ORGANISATIONS? HOW MUCH OF OUR MONEY HAVE YOU RECOVERED? DISGRACEFUL- LAZY DIRECTORS YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELVES PASSING THE COST TO RESIDENCE.		3/6/2024 12:17 AM
114	Business owners Tell them how it is. Businesses owners should ensure they have means of being sure a fire is real rather than relying on an expensive safety net funded by my council tax.		3/5/2024 7:44 PM
115	Policy Time and deadlines so that policy can be changed. Support and advice.		3/5/2024 5:43 PM
116	ARCs Comms Forums Local Authorities Radio Through this consultation and more directly engaging with business forums, education forums, local authorities and alarm companies. Media campaigns, radio and local/regional tv?		3/5/2024 11:53 AM
117	Comms Repeated communication prior to the change Respond to/support, where possible, requests for assistance in communicating the change		3/5/2024 11:40 AM

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118	N/A	Appendix D	3/4/2024 7:17 PM
119	Business owners	Provide support through greater engagement with business owners for A and B premises.	3/4/2024 5:03 PM

Q16 Is there anything else you want to add?

Answered: 71 Skipped: 317

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Perhaps consider a fast first response to alarms using a variety of trained volunteers or in situ training of some members of staff in organisations	5/11/2024 1:45 PM
2	Although AFA, whilst in attendance familiarisation of the buildings sometimes are carried out by crews	5/9/2024 4:52 PM
3	This proposal makes sense to stop wasting money. However I would be concerned that you will then make huge redundancies due to needing fire fighters less. Whilst i support not wasting public funding, I do not agree with reducing the number of fire fighters	5/9/2024 9:35 AM
4	N/A	5/8/2024 12:06 PM
5	No	5/7/2024 4:08 PM
6	Please reconsider	5/7/2024 2:49 PM
7	Thank you for all that you do for our community.	5/7/2024 2:09 PM
8	This is disappointing that Fire Service is again seeking to reduce their tasks at a time when pressure on police and ambulance is increasing. A service that historically at least has been able to have extended leisure time and even sleep whilst on shift during quiet times. In contrast, police would still undertake patrols or complete case files during quiet times - not play and sleep!	5/7/2024 7:57 AM
9	This is cuts by stealth. Ot is shameful. London cut appliances going to high rise fires. Then Grenfell happened. What will be Berkshire's Grenfell?	5/3/2024 10:19 PM
10	This doesn't seem like an appropriate consultation	5/3/2024 9:25 AM
11	NO	5/3/2024 8:05 AM
12	no	5/2/2024 10:07 PM
13	As a council tax payer in Berkshire, as with most people I want my service to respond to all emergency calls, including AFA's and feel we should priorities response for front line crews.	5/2/2024 12:06 PM
14	I am responding on behalf of Rutpen LTD in Membury West Berks (Membury Airfield RG17 7TJ) following a site visit by Fire Officers	5/1/2024 1:39 PM
15	No	5/1/2024 12:26 PM
16	nope	4/30/2024 11:18 AM
17	Responsibility It's dangerous to rely on a responsible person' to make the judgment call on a fire situation.	4/30/2024 8:55 AM
18	Learning As a newbie , I have learned a lot just by following an experienced JO or SM on AFA calls	4/29/2024 10:32 PM
19	Survey issue This feels like an unfair survey rigged for an outcome to deplete the community.	4/29/2024 6:54 PM
20	Different methods we use a key holder service and have a double knock system as well as sprinkler cover for all buildings with multiple floors	4/29/2024 4:36 PM
21	No	4/27/2024 4:08 PM
22	Education Prevention More emphasis must now be placed on education for fire prevention, especially in old/heritage buildings.	4/27/2024 2:53 PM
23	No	4/27/2024 2:35 PM
24	Different methods There are technical solutions that can assist with reducing the burden on the fire service. I'd be happy to discuss in more detail on 01183702804 as we have solutions that can be deployed to either reach out to a responsible person autonomously or to utilise IoT technology to provide additional data in commercial buildings.	4/27/2024 12:37 PM

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25	Difference in category B Please provide a breakdown of the burden of false alarms between category A, B and C buildings.	4/27/2024 11:16 AM
26	No	4/24/2024 7:59 PM
27	Contractors Very hard to comply without getting shafted by unscrupulous contractors.	4/23/2024 5:51 PM
28	Still attend From my experience working in Emergency Services, I understand that false alarms can be frustrating. However, it's always better to err on the side of caution when it comes to safety.	4/23/2024 2:55 PM
29	no	4/22/2024 7:01 PM
30	No changes please	4/20/2024 9:54 AM
31	No	4/19/2024 10:21 AM
32	No	4/18/2024 1:26 PM
33	Cost Don't pretend it's not about money and the value of a life.	4/18/2024 1:44 AM
34	Impact to building Our concern is the loss of the building if there is no early intervention at a time the building is unoccupied. We have a caretaker who lives in a residential dwelling on the premises for most of the year.	4/17/2024 5:12 PM
35	Community Engagement Training Had the fire brigade not dropped off the leaflet our business park would not have been aware of the consultation that started last month. There will be no perfect solution but hopefully with more training / awareness / better maintenance of alarm systems / better safety measures in buildings the volume of calls / false alarms can be much reduced - how many call outs are there per year?	4/16/2024 7:46 AM
36	No favourable option I think you are wrong to simply say "stop sending a fire engine " as if that is the only option. There must be other options you could colander. Eg have a high speed motorcycle responder who can attend the alarm to judge if false or real. If it's real they can then call the fire engine to attend. It could be fully funded by charging for attending false alarms.	4/13/2024 12:34 AM
37	Cost cutting The Fire Service has already been paired pared back to the bone and despite what you say this is just another cost cutting measure.	4/6/2024 4:27 PM
38	Different methods of deployment Send a biker out on blues from the closest station, with basic kit to make the initial observations, a bike on blues will get to any location far quicker than any 4 wheeled, they can then assess & call in if backup is required or if its a false alarm.. The time factor delay for an engine being deployed will be tops 10 minutes, but will be confident & confirmed with the scene controlled.. Use the right tools & capabilities available ;-)	4/3/2024 9:57 AM
39	Impact to businesses Consideration given to reevaluate the proposals that will offer a lesser response to communities and businesses	4/1/2024 3:53 PM
40	Community Engagement Listen to the community you serve	3/31/2024 10:17 PM
41	Cost Impact to businesses I agree with this decision. I've no doubt some of the businesses you are attending are earning profits that are greater the the entire budget of RBFRS. I would encourage you to move forward with your plans	3/31/2024 9:01 PM
42	Cost It will save the tax payer money which can be spent on improving the Service	3/28/2024 2:32 PM
43	No	3/27/2024 6:44 PM
44	N.A	3/25/2024 4:07 PM
45	ARC Charging for AFA A charging and fee based approach for poorly setup Alarms and repeat offenders of false calls. Alternatively we should return to providing direct access for Alarm receiving to our control room. Currently ARC's earn a great deal of money for a service that we provide.	3/25/2024 9:05 AM
46	n/a	3/24/2024 8:03 PM
47	No	3/24/2024 3:20 PM
48	Data Option 3 In my mind, that stats/data paints a compelling picture for change and while option 3 may appear the riskiest option, in my mind, if there was a fire someone would call 999.	3/22/2024 1:39 PM
49	Impact to community The key focus has to be on risk to life and therefore there will need to be a continual review to identify whether there is any increase in injury or even death	3/21/2024 2:56 PM

reported as a result of this change being introduced with scope to review requirements, if unintended consequences are identified.

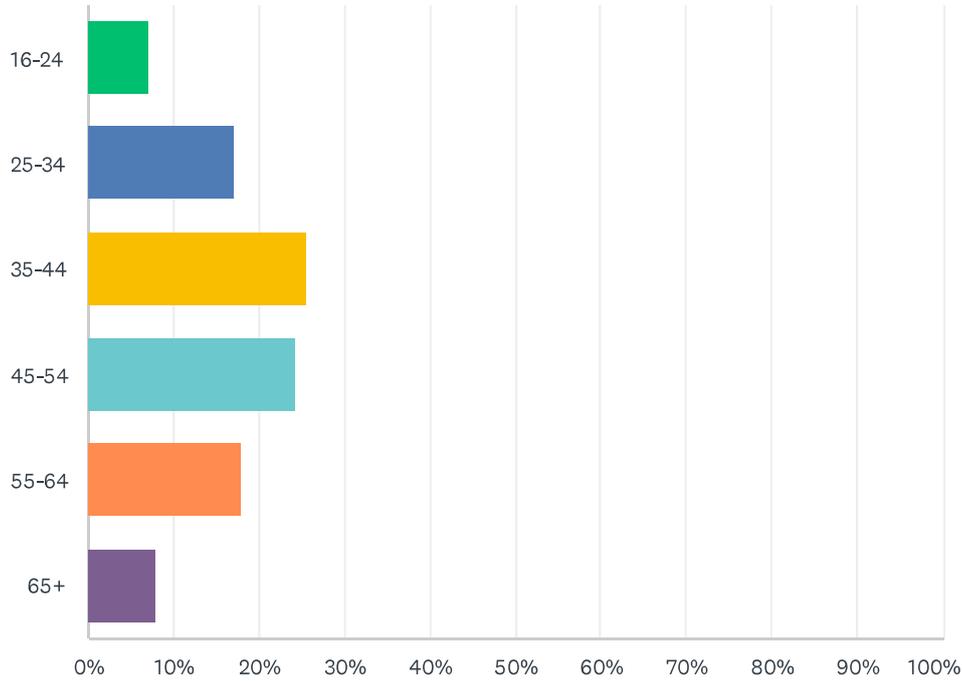
Appendix D

50	na	3/19/2024 3:07 PM
51	No	3/19/2024 2:10 PM
52	Cost cutting Impact to community Cost cutting front line appliances attending AFA will cost lives, injuries or loss of properties. Save money by looking elsewhere	3/15/2024 9:02 AM
53	No	3/12/2024 10:46 PM
54	Legislation There should be much more stringent checks to ensure all aspects of fire safety legislation are being complied with by businesses	3/12/2024 2:03 AM
55	Impact to council Apart from Shops, Offices & Warehouse most other premises mentioned are OWNED BY THE COUNCIL, who pay for the Fire Service. It only needs a couple of the 1% (23 cases) to develop into proper fires and all of these savings will be wiped out and we will suffer.	3/11/2024 11:27 PM
56	Nope	3/11/2024 10:43 PM
57	Trials I believe trialing this in various time frames would be beneficial	3/11/2024 7:10 PM
58	Impact to people with disabilities Those with a disability, such as autism may lack awareness of fire safety/ have communication difficulties, not understand what is happening or what to do.	3/11/2024 4:14 PM
59	No	3/9/2024 3:14 PM
60	Schools With the improved levels of security on school sites, I feel the arson risk out of normal school hours is far less these days.	3/9/2024 2:50 PM
61	N/A	3/8/2024 9:24 AM
62	v	3/7/2024 12:27 PM
63	No	3/7/2024 9:16 AM
64	no	3/6/2024 8:53 PM
65	no	3/6/2024 3:28 PM
66	no	3/6/2024 1:15 PM
67	Cuts I hope this is not a way of reducing services, as these have already been cut to the bone, we need our firemen!	3/6/2024 9:59 AM
68	Charging for AFA START CHARGING - ARE YOU THAT INCOMPETENT? I'LL BE CONTACTING MY MP, AND SENDING REQUESTS FOR THIS INFORMATION. HAVE YOU EVEN CONSIDERED IT? IF NOT, WHY NOT? I WANT TO SEE THE REASONS	3/6/2024 12:17 AM
69	Categorisation Education I think there needs to be wider education of the people who use the buildings in category B and C to make them aware of the impact when there is an automatic alarm but no fire.	3/5/2024 11:53 AM
70	N/A	3/4/2024 7:17 PM
71	Fire Safety Fire alarm systems are intended to assist with the evacuation of a building, therefore RPs have a legal duty to ensure their general fire safety arrangements are suitable and sufficient, and do not rely on the FRS to investigate false alarms.	3/4/2024 5:03 PM

Appendix D

Q17 What age group do you belong to?

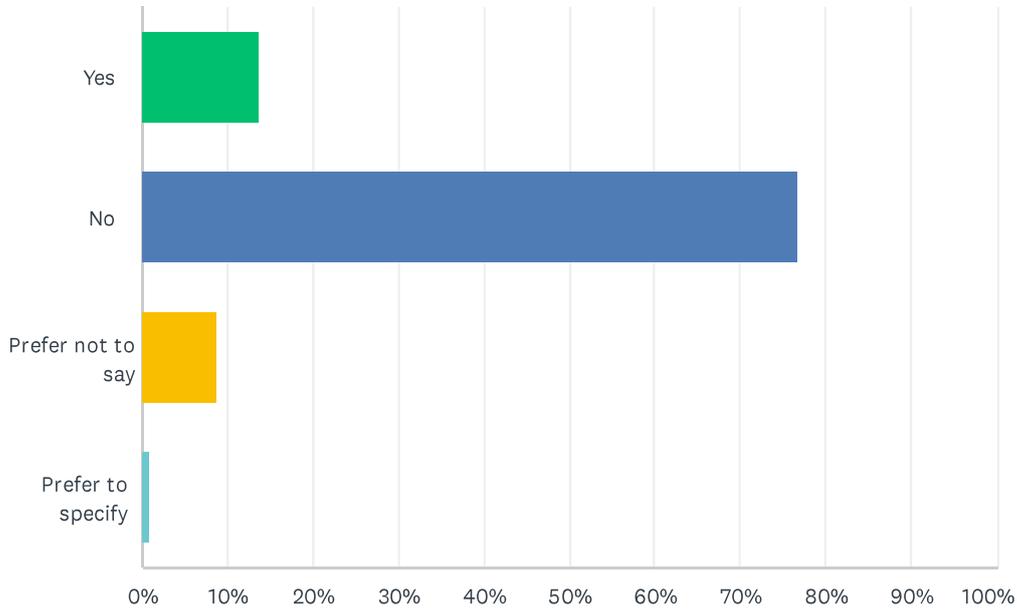
Answered: 239 Skipped: 149



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
16-24	7.11%	17
25-34	17.15%	41
35-44	25.52%	61
45-54	24.27%	58
55-64	17.99%	43
65+	7.95%	19
TOTAL		239

Q18 Would you consider yourself to have a disability or long-term health condition?

Answered: 240 Skipped: 148



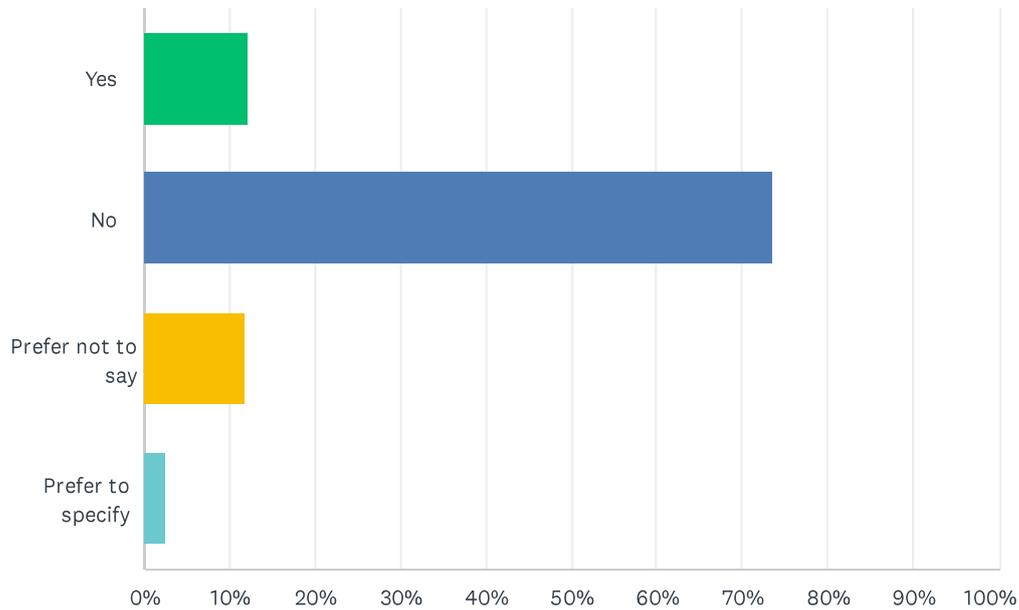
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	13.75%	33
No	76.67%	184
Prefer not to say	8.75%	21
Prefer to specify	0.83%	2
TOTAL		240

#	PREFER TO SPECIFY	DATE
1	Group who discussed topis have dementia diagnoses	5/9/2024 1:53 PM
2	Priapism	4/23/2024 5:51 PM

Appendix D

Q19 Would you consider yourself to be neurodivergent?

Answered: 238 Skipped: 150

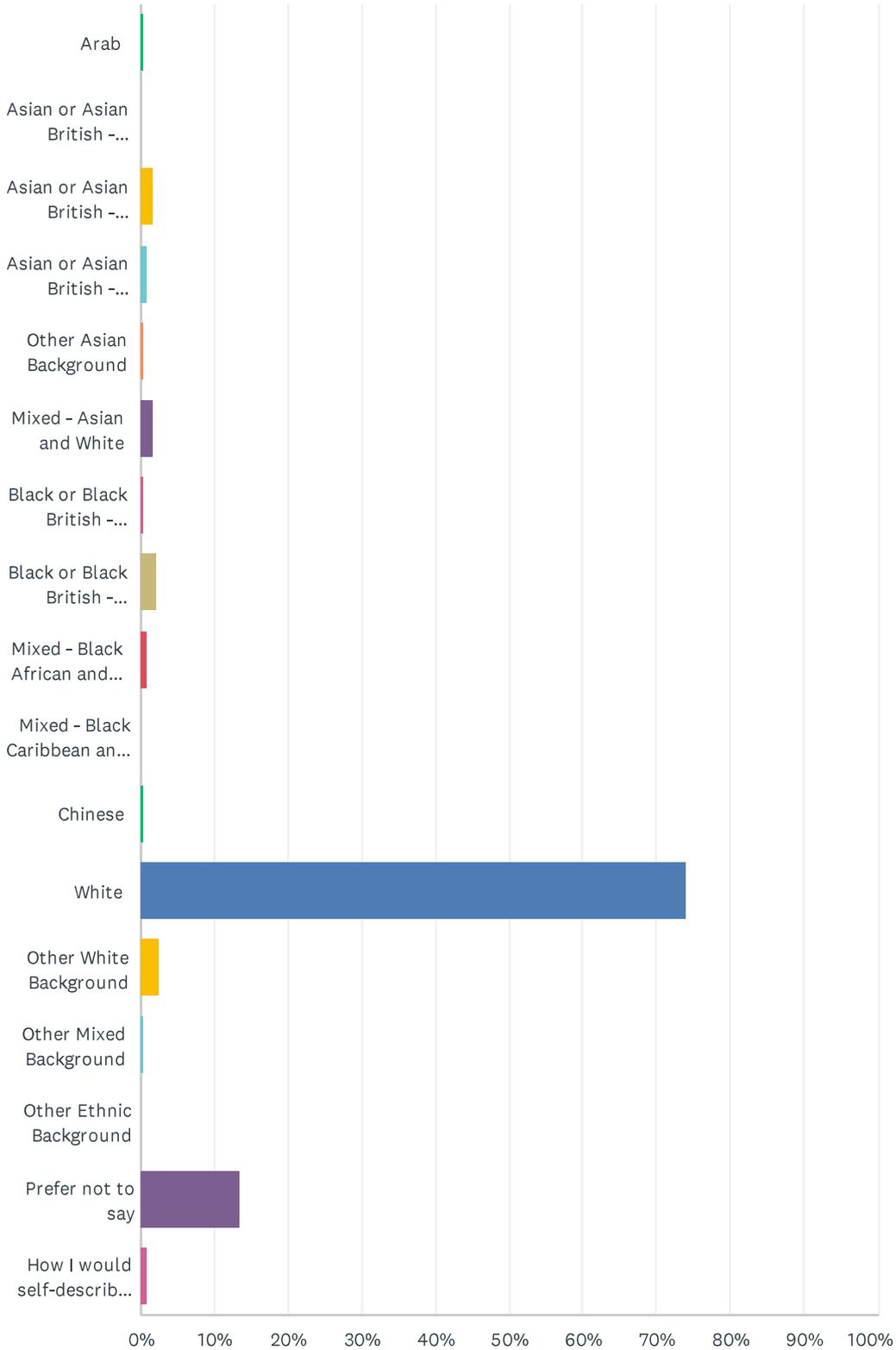


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	12.18%	29
No	73.53%	175
Prefer not to say	11.76%	28
Prefer to specify	2.52%	6
TOTAL		238

#	PREFER TO SPECIFY	DATE
1	Don't know	5/11/2024 1:45 PM
2	Don't know what neurodivergent means	4/27/2024 1:11 PM
3	I'm Aquarius.	4/23/2024 5:52 PM
4	I don't know what neurodivergent means	4/13/2024 12:35 AM
5	Autistic and ADHD	3/11/2024 4:15 PM
6	what is a neurodiverent	3/8/2024 9:25 AM

Q20 How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 149



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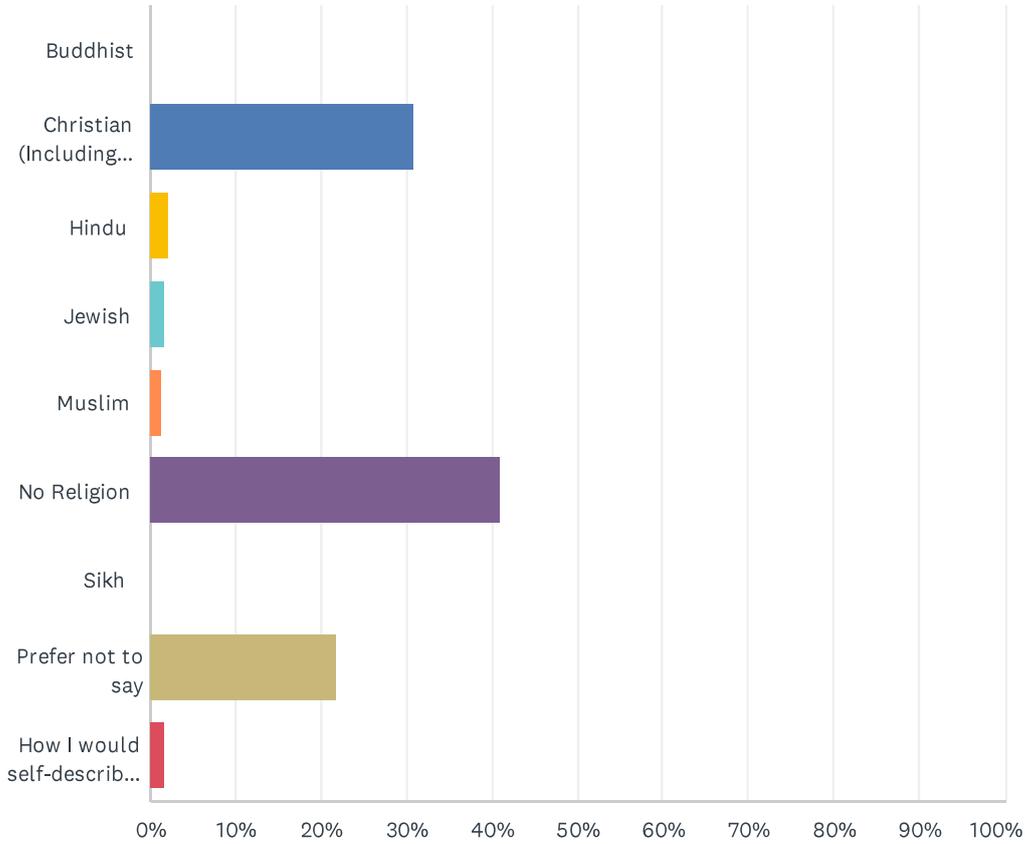
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ANSWER CHOICES	Appendix D	RESPONSES
Arab		0.42% 1
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi		0.00% 0
Asian or Asian British - Indian		1.67% 4
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani		0.84% 2
Other Asian Background		0.42% 1
Mixed - Asian and White		1.67% 4
Black or Black British - African		0.42% 1
Black or Black British - Caribbean		2.09% 5
Mixed - Black African and White		0.84% 2
Mixed - Black Caribbean and White		0.00% 0
Chinese		0.42% 1
White		74.06% 177
Other White Background		2.51% 6
Other Mixed Background		0.42% 1
Other Ethnic Background		0.00% 0
Prefer not to say		13.39% 32
How I would self-describe is not listed here		0.84% 2
TOTAL		239

#	HOW I WOULD SELF-DESCRIBE IS NOT LISTED HERE	DATE
1	The survey is now invalid in view of "neurodivergent" being used earlier	4/27/2024 1:13 PM
2	White British	4/6/2024 4:28 PM

Q21 What is your religion?

Answered: 240 Skipped: 148



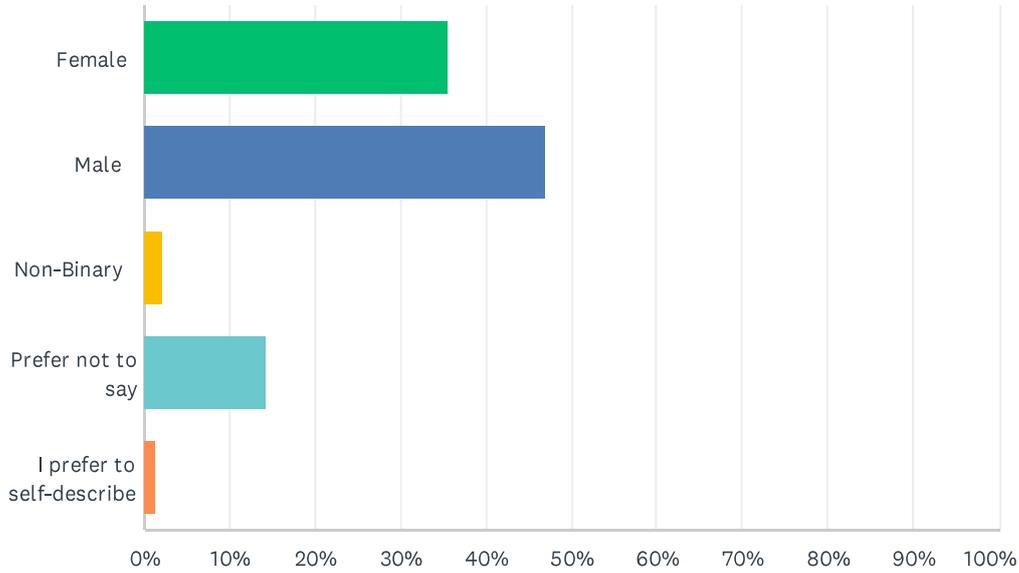
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Buddhist	0.00%	0
Christian (Including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	30.83%	74
Hindu	2.08%	5
Jewish	1.67%	4
Muslim	1.25%	3
No Religion	40.83%	98
Sikh	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	21.67%	52
How I would self-describe is not listed here	1.67%	4
TOTAL		240

#	HOW I WOULD SELF-DESCRIBE IS NOT LISTED HERE	DATE
1	See last comment	4/27/2024 1:14 PM
2	Fire doesn't discriminate !	4/23/2024 5:52 PM
3	Atheist	3/27/2024 6:44 PM
4	Strongly Atheist.	3/10/2024 8:51 PM

Appendix D

Q22 What best describes your gender?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 149



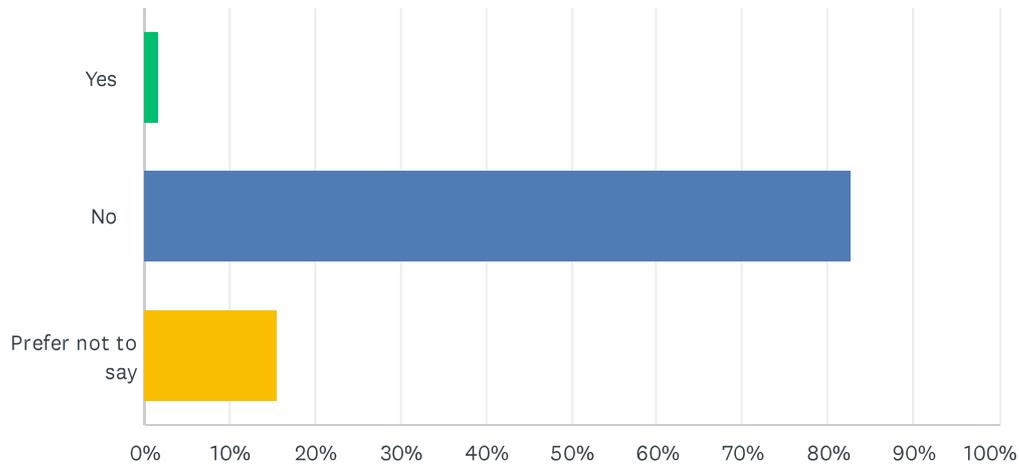
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Female	35.56%	85
Male	46.86%	112
Non-Binary	2.09%	5
Prefer not to say	14.23%	34
I prefer to self-describe	1.26%	3
TOTAL		239

#	I PREFER TO SELF-DESCRIBE	DATE
1	Ditto	4/27/2024 1:14 PM
2	Fire doesn't care about pronouns.	4/23/2024 5:53 PM
3	X	4/18/2024 5:30 PM

Appendix D

Q23 Do you consider yourself to be trans?

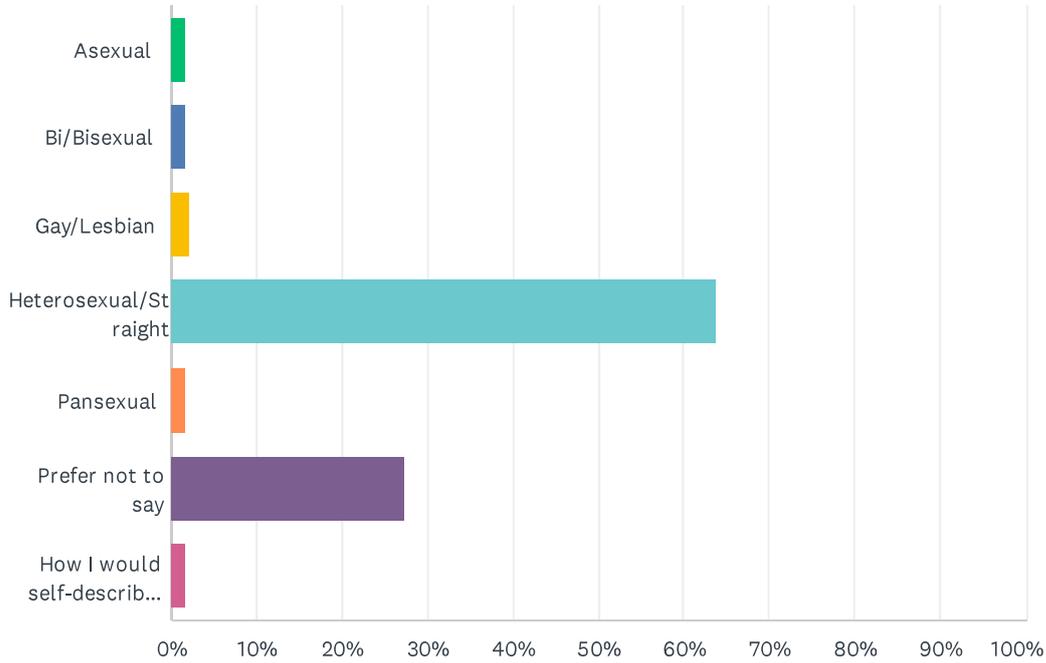
Answered: 237 Skipped: 151



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	1.69%	4
No	82.70%	196
Prefer not to say	15.61%	37
TOTAL		237

Q24 What best describes your sexual orientation?

Answered: 234 Skipped: 154



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Asexual	1.71%	4
Bi/Bisexual	1.71%	4
Gay/Lesbian	2.14%	5
Heterosexual/Straight	63.68%	149
Pansexual	1.71%	4
Prefer not to say	27.35%	64
How I would self-describe is not listed here	1.71%	4
TOTAL		234

#	HOW I WOULD SELF-DESCRIBE IS NOT LISTED HERE	DATE
1	What does this have to do with AFAs?	4/29/2024 10:35 PM
2	Ditto	4/27/2024 1:15 PM
3	Fire will screw anybody.	4/23/2024 5:53 PM
4	More questions about EDI than survey	3/4/2024 8:22 PM

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



COMMITTEE	EXTRAORDINARY FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	9 JULY 2024
SUBJECT	ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23
LEAD OFFICERS	PAUL BREMBLE, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Annual Report to the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority summarising performance in 2023/24.

2. RECOMMENDATION

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

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The Fire Authority agreed its Annual Plan 2023/24 for delivery of the Strategic Commitments as set out in the Corporate Plan 2023-2027. 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 2023/24, highlighting a number of achievements and challenges in delivering services for the people of Berkshire.
- 3.3 As part of our commitment to transparency, following consideration by the Fire Authority, 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 2023/24.

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 2023/24

11.2 Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan 2023-2027

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A - Annual Report 2023/24

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Paul Bremble, Head of Corporate Services, 07786145153

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Annual Report
» 2023 – 2024



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» Welcome

Welcome to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Annual Report. Over the past year, our staff have responded to numerous major events and incidents, and showcased exceptional operational readiness, while engaging with the community.

During the last year, as a Service we have tackled several major fires, protecting lives and property across Berkshire. Notable incidents include the rapid response to a large fire in central Reading, which was successfully contained without casualties.

With global media organisations reporting on the incident, our response teams did an excellent job under pressure in quickly extinguishing the fire and making the scene safe. We are grateful to the crane operator, Glen Edwards, and his team for their amazing efforts in rescuing a man from the 8th floor of the building prior to our arrival.

At the start of April, a fire broke out at a house in Erleigh Road, Reading, which tragically claimed the lives of two people, Naseem Khalid and Mohammed Hussain. However, due to the lifesaving actions of crews, three others were rescued. We thank all those that responded bravely in such difficult circumstances. But of course not all our work makes headlines and there are many people that deserve to be commended for their professionalism and dedication to their roles, so we recognised more staff and volunteers at our Awards Ceremony at Welford Park, near Newbury in September.

The Service played a crucial role during periods of severe flooding following Storm Henk in January. Our teams worked tirelessly to evacuate residents, protect properties, and manage flood defences. The region experienced several intense storms, during which RBFRS provided essential support by clearing fallen trees, securing damaged structures, and ensuring public safety.

This year the Fire Authority approved plans to invest in new training facilities and fleet to further strengthen RBFRS' capability to respond to communities across Berkshire. This includes refurbishment of the training centre at Whitley Wood, Reading, as well as the replacement of a number of our front line vehicles including new Fire Appliances, with allocated investment of approximately £6 million.

Our inspection report by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, was published in January 2023. The report confirmed that RBFRS is providing a good service to the public – and this verdict has only been possible thanks to each and every one of our staff that has worked tirelessly for the safety of our communities.

As we move forward, we extend our gratitude to the dedicated firefighters, staff, and volunteers who embody our values of service, integrity, and professionalism every day.



**Councillor
Jeff Brooks**

Chair,
Royal Berkshire
Fire Authority



Wayne Bowcock

Chief Fire Officer
and Chief Executive,
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 wholtime fire stations and four 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.

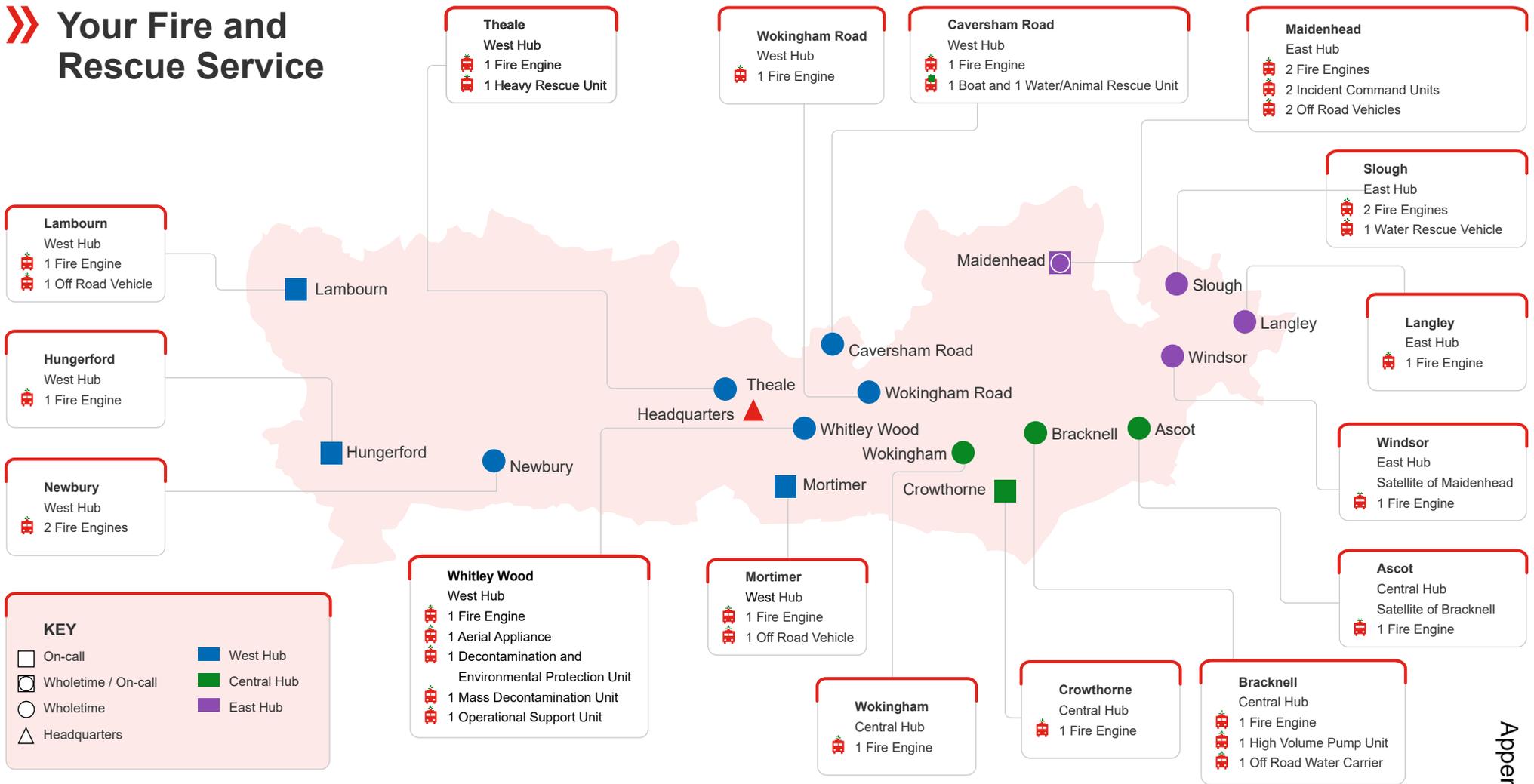
Along with providing a swift and effective response to incidents, one of the Service's aims is to educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies. Our Service works with schools, businesses, residents, and community groups throughout Royal Berkshire to raise awareness and educate people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



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Appendix A

» Your Fire and Rescue Service



Fire Stations	16	Staff	651	Incidents attended	2023-2024	Prevention & Protection	2023-2024
Wholetime	11	Non-operational	175	All Emergency Incidents	8026	Safe and Well Visits	5260
On-call	4	Wholetime	371	Fires in the home	368	Fire Safety Audits	716
Wholetime and On-call	1	On-call	53	Fires in other buildings	152	Building consultations	774
		Control Staff	41	Road traffic collisions	452		
		Volunteers	11	Flooding	252		
				Water rescues	86		

» About Us - Community Risk Management Plan

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service produces a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) to ensure we deliver the right resources at the right time, in the right place.

The CRMP balances resources against risk. Our CRMP contains information on what RBFRS is going to do over a five-year period and is supported by annual action plans.

RBFRS has a Programme Board to ensure that it meets the statutory requirements of the CRMP process whilst supporting the achievement of the strategic commitments and objectives.

The board provides leadership and support for the delivery of the CRMP programme, which is outlined in the Corporate Plan and CRMP 2023-27, which outlines six key priorities for the four year period:

1. We will develop our Integrated Service Delivery Strategy to meet the changing profile of risk in Berkshire due to climate change, societal and technological shifts.
2. We will develop a Risk Based Prevention Programme to target those most vulnerable and at risk from emergency incidents.
3. We will develop our response model to ensure that we are providing the most effective response to incidents within Berkshire, ensuring that it is aligned to the risks identified, sustainable and provides value for money

4. We will review the incidents that do not form part of our core statutory responsibilities, to better understand the implications for the Service in attending these incidents. Notwithstanding the review of our response and the gathering of this data, public safety will remain the primary priority of the Service.
5. We will develop our Service to reduce the impact of fire safety issues in commercial buildings.
6. We will maintain 19 frontline fire appliances, and a baseline service provision of 14 frontline fire appliances, utilising wholetime and on-call staff as effectively as possible, through local management.

The Programme Board makes recommendations for consideration by the Fire Authority through its CRMP Working Party.

We manage the risks we identify through an integrated approach. This means we consider the full range of treatments we have at our disposal and identify the most effective and efficient way to reduce community risk.



Agenda Item 11
Appendix A

» Social Media Highlights



Followers: **9,567**
New followers: **1,431**
Impressions: **2,139,777**
Engagements: **30,132**



Users: **333,000**
Page Views: **551,000**
Form Submissions: **8,465**
File Downloads: **18,508**



Followers: **2,715**
New followers: **336**
Reach: **7,800**
Engagements: **1,800**



Hours watched: **759.6**
Views: **35,000**
Subscribers: **544**
New subscribers: **90**



Followers: **11,683**
New followers: **141**
Impressions: **976,306**
Engagements: **8,780**



Followers: **2,942**
New followers: **523**
Impressions: **155,728**
Posts: **328**

» Timeline of the Last Year



Largest Apprentice Cohort Graduates at Newbury

On Friday, 12 May, the Service welcomed 23 new Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices in a graduation ceremony at Newbury Fire Station. As part of the apprenticeship, the recruits raised £15,000 for The Fire Fighters Charity by cycling 500 miles, the distance of Windsor to Balmoral on static bikes.



Supporting Pride Month 2023 Across Berkshire

On Saturday, 10 June, Firefighters from Bracknell Fire Station attended the first ever official Bracknell Pride event.

A few weeks later on Saturday, 24 June, Blue Watch from Newbury Fire Station represented the Service at Newbury Pride for the second year running.



Recognising Outstanding Public Service

Our Awards Ceremony took place on 9 September, coinciding with Emergency Services Day, at Welford Park near Newbury. Staff who have dedicated 20 and 30 years of Service were recognised during the Ceremony, while a number of staff awards were also presented on the day.

April 2023

May 2023

June 2023

July 2023

August 2023

September 2023

Service Responds to Major Fire on Erleigh Road

On Wednesday, 5 April, crews responded to a serious fire on Erleigh Road in Reading. Over 40 members of staff attended the incident to tackle the blaze and, in the aftermath of the fire, over 100 residents were visited and 80 Safe and Well Visits were completed.

Refurbishment at Maidenhead

First started in September 2022, the final stage of Maidenhead Fire Station's refurbishment programme was completed in May 2023. The refurbishment project considered recommendations from the EDI work stream and the Service's Contaminants Policy so that our station environments are more inclusive and better protect staff from contaminants.

BA Donations to Ukraine

89 BA sets and 304 air cylinders were donated by the Service as part of the latest convoy that was sent to Ukraine. The donation of this equipment was a national effort, coordinated by the charity FIRE AID UK and the National Fire Chiefs Council. Our Service also donated water rescue equipment to support those engulfed by floods in southern Ukraine after a major dam was destroyed.



Fire Cadets Impress at Graduation

On Wednesday, 5 July, 37 Fire Cadets demonstrated their new skills at a Graduation Ceremony at Newbury Fire Station. During the event, cadets from Crowthorne, Maidenhead, Newbury, and Whitley Wood demonstrated a range of skills required to deal with different emergency fire and rescue scenarios.

Year Two of the Summer Internship

In July and August, we welcomed five new interns as part of The Summer Internship Scheme aimed at 16 and 17 year olds from underrepresented groups. The five-week placement saw five Interns rotating across several departments and visiting six fire stations.



Reading Pride 2023

On Saturday, 2 September, staff from across the Service took part in Reading Pride, talking about our Service, fire safety advice and career opportunities.

» Timeline of the Last Year



Second Wholetime Apprentice Cohort

An unprecedented second cohort of Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices graduated within a calendar year on Friday, 10 November.

The graduates celebrated months of training and hard work with family and friends at the Ceremony and were presented with certificates.



Fire in Central Reading Makes Headlines

At 11:38am on Thursday, 23 November, we received reports of a fire on Station Hill in Reading. At its peak, over 50 firefighters were on the scene from fire stations across the County. Additionally, the Aerial Ladder Platform and Incident Command Unit was sent to the scene, alongside six Officers.



Service Responds to Thames Valley Flooding

At the start of January, the Service was called to action in response to significant flooding events in Berkshire and across the Thames Valley. At the height of the flooding, Firefighters from across the County assisted with the evacuation of vulnerable people from the village of Wraysbury.

October 2023

November 2023

December 2023

January 2024

February 2024

March 2024

Blue Nimbus: Multi-Agency Exercise

On 4 October, partners across the Thames Valley took part in an exercise to test our joint response to severe flooding. The exercise, named Blue Nimbus, was organised by Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum to test responding agencies awareness of the Multi-Agency Flood Plan and their responsibilities within it.

Water Rescue Response in the East

In the Autumn, crews at Slough began providing a 24/7 water rescue response. Staff completed an intensive training course to qualify as Swift Water Rescue Technicians (SWTs).

The addition of a new water rescue unit was a risk-based, evidence-led decision, made as part of our Community Risk Management Plan.

Fire Safety Inspectors Complete Training

Four Fire Safety Inspectors (FSIs) were formally recognised for completing their training at a Ceremony at Newsham Court on 17 November 2023.

The course generally takes between two and three years, in which the trainees undertook real inspections whilst completing a Level 3 and Level 4 Diploma in Fire Safety.



Firefighter Discovery Sessions

Ahead of future recruitment campaigns for Wholetime Firefighters, a programme of activities began across the County, in an effort to give prospective applicants a feel for what being a firefighter involves. Starting in the Winter of 2023, these sessions have proven popular amongst prospective recruits.

Service Secures Circa £1m in Grant Support

Following a rigorous application process, the Service received a substantial grant to invest into energy efficiency and reducing the carbon footprint of our estate. The Service successfully won an additional £927,000 from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) to significantly reduce our carbon footprint and improve energy efficiency.



Implementation of Tethered Wade Training

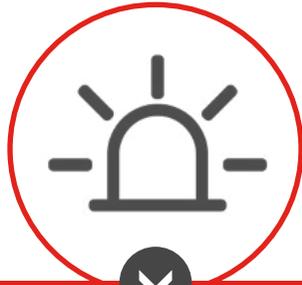
In early 2024, our Wholetime Apprentices were the first to receive Tethered Wade Training. Tethered wade offers an additional method for reaching individuals in shallow water. This training will be rolled out to Water Rescue Module 2 responders, ensuring a dynamic and adaptable response to water related emergencies in the region.

» Our Year in Numbers



1,461

Primary and secondary
fires attended.



8,026

Emergency incidents
responded to.



72.30%

Incident response times
within 10 minutes.



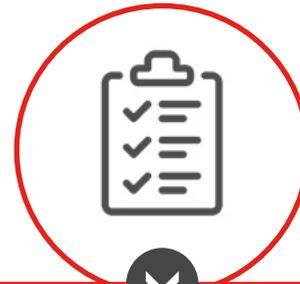
5,260

Safe and Well Visits
completed.



2,318

Other services provided
by RBFRS.



716

Fire Safety Audits
carried out.

» Our Performance

In order to monitor performance and ensure we are working towards our Annual Objectives and CRMP commitments, a number of performance measures were agreed by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the 2024/25 Annual Plan.

These measures monitor the delivery of our statutory obligations and services we provide, along with how key resources are managed, including staff, finance, and health & safety.

Performance is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Strategic Performance Board and by the Audit and Governance Committee. Our year end performance against the Corporate Measures can be seen on pages 33-35.

Our strategy to prevent fires and other emergencies includes the provision of Safe and Well Visits to those who are at heightened risk of dying or being injured as result of an accidental dwelling fire.

We work closely with partner agencies to ensure individuals with risk factors are referred to us, which allows us to target the most vulnerable in our communities. This year we increased the number of referrals from our partners by 9.2 percent, to 4,266.

Fire Safety Inspecting Officers completed over 700 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.

We have continued to embed our new Risk Based Inspection Programme, to ensure we target our resources at the highest risk premises. This year, 26.2 percent of our audits were carried out on premises identified as High or Very High risk.

In 2023/24, there were 8,026 emergency incidents within Berkshire. This is the second highest number of incidents in recent years, only having been exceeded in 2022/23 when incident numbers were very high due to a hot, dry summer. We saw a particularly high number of incidents over the winter months, due to storms and flooding.

We have continued to see a return to pre-pandemic incident levels for Road Traffic Collision incidents with an increase of 8 percent.

False alarm call volumes have continued to rise with a further 9.4 percent increase from last year and levels of these incidents are now substantially higher than pre-pandemic. The majority of these calls are from Automatic Fire Alarm systems. We continue to seek ways to reduce the numbers of these calls we receive, and manage our response to them to ensure a risk-based approach.

We lost 5.5 percent of working time to sickness in 2023/24, which means we did not meet our target of a maximum of 4 percent. There continue to be wider societal trends of increased sickness and absence, including impacts on mental health, and pressures on the NHS which may delay treatment and lengthen absence. We continue to provide support and assistance to managers and promote early intervention including workshops to ensure consistency of policy application across the Service.

Our Wholtime fire engines have been available 97.4 percent of the time this year, under our 99 percent target. There has been an increased requirement for risk critical operational training due to high numbers of staff in development. Our on-call crews have achieved 40.0 percent availability



» Our Performance

this year. This is lower than our 50 percent target and we have continued to strive to increase availability of on-call. This year we have established an Operational Support Team who have close oversight of resourcing gaps to maximise appliance availability.

In 2023/24, we attended 72.3 percent of all emergency incidents within 10 mins of receiving the call. We did not achieve our Response Standard target of 75 percent. There are several factors associated with the fall in performance in this area. The total numbers of incidents this year was high which impacts travel times. We are also seeing a higher proportion of false alarm and special service calls, which require longer call handling times.

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

Audits

In 2023-24, there were 8,026 emergency incidents within Berkshire. This is the second highest number of incidents in recent years.

In 2023-24, internal audits were carried out across the Service.

These were:

- Community Risk Management Plan
- Firefighter Pension Administration
- General Data Protection Regulation
- Payroll Provider - Data Plan
- Sickness Absence Management
- Cyber Essentials*
- Key Financial Controls*

Our external auditors found substantial assurance in two of these audits, and reasonable assurance in the rest (* we are still awaiting the finalised reports for the Cyber Essentials and Key Financial Controls audits). All audit actions are monitored through the Strategic Performance Board and Audit and Governance Committee.

Statement of Assurance

We are required by the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England to provide an Annual Statement of Assurance on financial, governance and operational matters to enable our communities, Government, Local Authorities and partners to make a valid assessment of our governance arrangements.

This is produced and published on our website and confirms the extent to which the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England have been met.

Welcome to Newsham Court



» HMICFRS Inspection

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspected all fire and rescue services for the third time in 2021/22. The inspection confirmed that RBFRS is performing to a high standard, receiving three 'good' judgments across the three areas (effectiveness, efficiency and people) inspected.

The principal findings from the HMICFRS assessment of the Service over the past year are as follows:

- The Service understands the risk and demand in its area. It has evaluated the way it mitigates risk using its prevention, protection and response teams. It has revised its risk-based inspection programme and is now more focused on the highest risk. This makes sure it can keep the communities of Royal Berkshire safe from fire and other risks.
- The Service is facing challenges in recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce. The cost-of-living crisis and pressures raised through pension changes make workforce planning difficult for the service. It should continue to assess innovative ways to mitigate this risk.
- The Service has improved its work in equality, diversity and inclusion and its workforce demonstrates positive values and behaviours. The Service seeks feedback and challenge from its workforce and the community. This supports it to make decisions based on the needs of both.

More information about the inspection can be found on the RBFRS website. RBFRS' next inspection is due in 2024.

Effectiveness

“Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service’s overall effectiveness is **good**.”

Efficiency

“Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service’s overall efficiency is **good**.”

People

“Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is **good** at looking after its people.”



» Culture

Values and Culture

The Service's Vision is for our staff to work together as one team for the communities we serve. It is therefore vital that our staff work in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment.

During a time where the whole sector has come under increased scrutiny for its culture and values, we decided to pause the rollout and implementation of our People Strategy, so that we could spend the whole of 2023 engaging with and listening to staff across the Service. The original Strategy has been revised to reflect what we have heard and learnt and we intend to now deliver the eight objectives across a three-year period (2024-2027). This will align implementation of our current Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

Since the culture of any organisation is not static and continuously evolves due to changes internally and externally, an RBFERS Development Programme has now been created. This Programme has been created to enable us to positively develop our culture, creating mutually beneficial improvements across the five areas identified (People, Places, Processes and Systems, Structure and Communications and Engagement) and our culture.

The Service was already ahead of some of the wider sector in some areas, for example, through the provision of a confidential way for staff to raise concerns. A confidential reporting line was introduced in 2018 and is available to all staff at any time. The Service's Employee Assistance Programme also offers a confidential telephone helpline to staff whenever they need it.

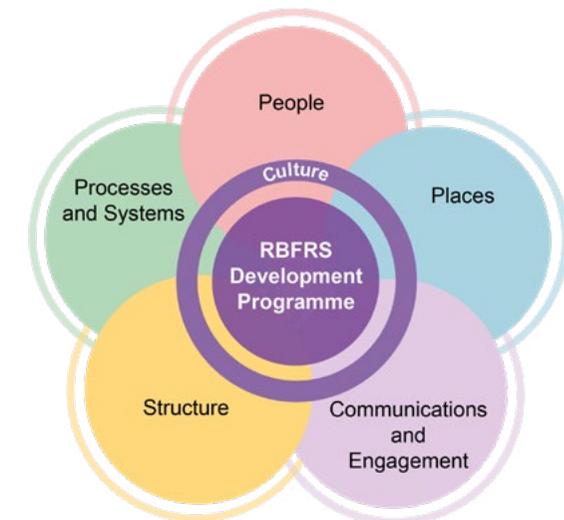
One of the key areas that we've continued to focus on is tackling bullying and harassment in the workplace. To support staff with knowledge and tools for dealing with challenging situations in the workplace, all staff were invited to conferences held in June, July and September 2023. The conferences included a session on Active Bystander training, to provide staff with techniques and a toolkit for dealing with challenging situations.

In addition, following a number of unsettling stories in the media about culture in other fire and rescue services, direct communication has been sent to staff from underrepresented groups within the Service to provide reassurance and remind them of sources of support. Wider communications making it clear that the Service takes a zero-tolerance position on discrimination, harassment or bullying has also been issued.

Our activities have involved a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the Fire Authority, who were engaged through Members' Workshops to help maintain political support for the steps taken.

In March 2023, a report was published by His Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) into the values and culture of all 44 fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England. Our progress against HMICFRS's recommendations is now available publically on our website, and will be reviewed annually, with the next review due to take place in April 2025.

In the meantime, ongoing engagement and tracking of our cultural progress takes place through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group



The five pillars of the RBFERS Development Programme

and Forum and regular staff engagement sessions.

During 2023-24, a number of activities have taken place to improve culture and inclusion. You can read about some of the initiatives on the following pages.



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Agenda Item 11

» Culture

Discover a Career as a Firefighter Sessions

In November and December 2023, our Service ran a series of events aimed at helping to encourage more people to consider a career as a firefighter.

The sessions were timed to take place ahead of the recruitment window and were geared towards those that had a limited or no understanding of the role. Over the course of four sessions, attendees gained a greater understanding of the role of a firefighter and what the recruitment process involves.

The programme aimed to target individuals from groups that are currently underrepresented within the Service. This includes females, individuals from ethnic minorities, individuals with a disability or long-term condition, LBTQ+ individuals and individuals from different faith groups. To ensure we were targeting these groups we reached out to community contacts across Berkshire inviting them to share information of the sessions with their communities and to encourage sign up.

The first two sessions were held online with support from staff in the Resourcing and Development and Learning and Development Team, as well as operational firefighters to give an insight into the training programme and the recruitment process.

In session three, attendees got the chance to receive a guided tour of the station, followed by a demonstration of a drill. In the final session, people got the opportunity to try the physical tests they would have to pass during recruitment,

including the Drill Ground Assessment and Equipment Assembly.

A total of 67 people attended the sessions, with 42% of those identifying as being from an underrepresented group. Many of those that attended the sessions went on to apply for the Service's Wholetime Apprenticeship Programme, which opened for applications in December 2023.

Following the success of the 'Discover a Career as a Firefighter' programme, it was commissioned to be run again in 2024/2025 to help expand the career talent pipeline of the Service.

Change 100 Internships

The Change 100 Programme was developed by Leonard Cheshire and 2023 marked the sixth year of our Service's participation. As part of the Scheme, the Service welcomed two interns for 100 days over the summer and autumn.

The interns worked as part of the Communications and Engagement and Data and Performance Teams. 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.



Appendix A
Agenda Item 11

Summer Internship Scheme

The Summer Internship Scheme is designed for young people in Berkshire, specifically targeting individuals from ethnic groups that are under-represented in the Service. The Scheme is a three-year pilot and will run annually until summer 2024.

For the first year of the pilot scheme, the Programme was designed for a five-week period over the summer. Individuals were eligible to apply if they were aged between 16 and 18, lived in Berkshire and were from an ethnic group that is currently under-represented within the Service.

As the scheme is a pilot, the project team revised the recruitment criteria for the second year of the programme. Whilst the focus remained on under-represented young people from Berkshire, the Service changed the age criteria and welcomed five interns aged 16 and 17 in the 2023 cohort.

The five final interns were chosen following a three stage application process that involved nearly 50 applicants.

The five-week placement saw five Interns rotating across several department including: Facilities, Business Support, Enforcement, Programme Office, and Collaboration and Policy with some also working with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator.

The interns spent one day every week at one of our fire stations. Across the five weeks, they visited Whitley Wood, Theale, Slough, Caversham Road and Maidenhead. Crews at each of these stations

"It gave me so many memories that I will forever cherish. I met so many amazing people that I wouldn't have come across if I didn't come here."

- 2023 Summer Intern

introduced them to a range of operational skills including working at height, BA shuffle, cutting open vehicles, water rescue, animal rescue and many more!

The interns visited Wokingham Fire Station to spend time with Central Hub's Protection Team, learnt more about our Prevention work and spent time completing core skills courses and working on their career development.

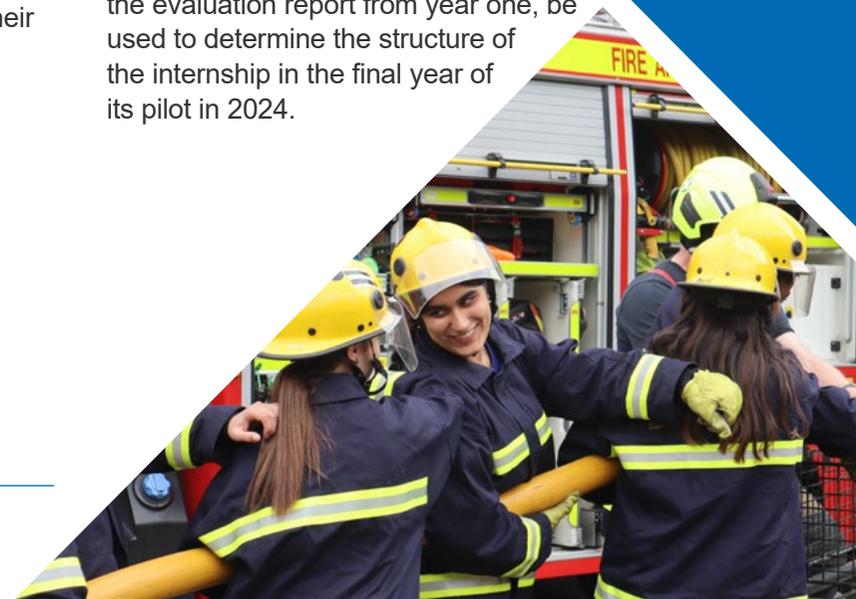
One intern, when asked what they would tell others about the internship, said: "I would first of all tell them to go for it because it is an amazing opportunity that, for me, was once in a lifetime. It gave me so many memories that I will forever cherish. I met so many amazing people that I wouldn't have come across if I didn't come here.

"I have learnt so much about the Service, what it does and how many jobs you can have in the Service beyond becoming a firefighter. I think it

really opened my eyes and showed me a whole different career direction that I never thought about."

Another responded: "The internship opened my eyes to the fire service. The fire service has lots of different teams and its more than just firefighters going out to stop fires. Each department is equally important, and all need each other to ensure the fire service acts as efficiently as possible. "What I learnt from the internship means that I can now tell my friends more about the fire service and all of its different teams. I have a much better knowledge of the fire service."

In May 2024, a third cohort of interns will be selected to take part in the Internship Programme. Several aspects of the Scheme have again been altered based on the findings of the previous year's evaluation report. In 2024, the interns will rotate on a bi-weekly basis between five departments. The age bracket has also been raised to include just 17 and 18 year olds. The outcomes of this year's Scheme will, combined with the evaluation report from year one, be used to determine the structure of the internship in the final year of its pilot in 2024.



» Culture

Awards Ceremony

On Saturday, 9 September 2023, we held our annual Awards ceremony at Welford Park, near Newbury.

The event provided the opportunity to recognise the efforts and achievements of staff, volunteers and partners over the past 12 months.

During the event, staff that have dedicated 20, or 30, years to public service were presented with Long Service and Good Conduct Medals or Long Service Awards by The Lord Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire, Mr James Puxley.

This event was made possible thanks to the generous donations of the sponsors: AVE Services, Corrigenda, Fireblitz, Hub Telecoms, Kensington Mortgages and Say So.

Councillor Jeff Brooks, Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority said: "It was such an honour to be here today to recognise some of our amazing members of staff, and partners for the incredible contribution, dedication and acts of courage that we have seen in the past year.

"How fitting that the event shared the date with Emergency Services Day – I can't think of a better opportunity to honour the contributions of so many dedicated public servants and to say thank you."

A number of awards were presented during the event. Some of the highlights include:

Certificates of Commendation were presented to those that responded to the tragic fire on Erleigh Road, Reading, as well as staff from Thames Valley

"I am extremely proud of our Service and the way we serve the communities of Royal Berkshire."

- Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer said

Fire Control Service who worked under extreme pressure during last year's heatwave.

RBFRS' Duty Officers received the Team of the Year Award for their high performance despite the pressures they faced in 2022/23 and in recognition of the work that they do, every day, to keep the community safe.

Central Hub Teams and South Hill Park Arts Centre in Bracknell received the Innovation of the Year Award for an exciting art project to promote water safety on Berkshire's waterways.

The Fundraiser of the Year Award was won by the Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices, who raised more than £14,800 for the Fire Fighters Charity during a charity bike ride.

They cycled the equivalent of 500 miles in remembrance of Scotland Fire and Rescue Service firefighter Barry Martin, who sadly lost his life in the line of duty in January 2023 and to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.



Appendix A
Agenda Item 1

» Culture

Pride Events in 2023

In 2023, the Service participated in several Pride events across the Royal County to show support for the LGBTQ+ community and to engage with them directly. In June, which is Pride Month, crews from Newbury and Bracknell took part in their respective town's Pride events. In the case of Bracknell, this was the first Pride event held in the town and it was important to show our support for this landmark event.

In September, a crew from Caversham Road Fire Station attended Reading Pride alongside Prevention, Protection and non-operational staff from across the Service. These events gave the Service an opportunity to promote careers and important safety advice. One of our core aims remains to ensure that everyone feels safe to access our services, enabling us to better serve our County.

Getting to Know RBFRS

An event was held at Newbury Fire Station to showcase what our Service delivers for the communities of Royal Berkshire. It was attended by Members of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, Mayors and the High Sheriff of the Royal County of Berkshire, Simon Muir.

Following the publication of the Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), the event provided an opportunity to explore the key themes of the Vision that has been set out for the next four years.

Staff members from across the organisation were

on hand to explain how they deliver services to the community. Guests got the opportunity to speak to staff from various teams, including representatives from the Fleet and Equipment, CRMP, Human Resources, Safety Education and ICT teams, as well as an opportunity to speak to the Health and Wellbeing Manager and the Volunteer Coordinator.

After the groups had spoken to all the teams, there were demonstrations from Newbury's firefighters and fire cadets.

Firefighters on Blue Watch carried out a road traffic collision demonstration, before the fire cadets showed some of the skills they have learnt on their course.

Charity Events

Crews from across Service continued to run Car Washes and Open Days at their stations to raise money for The Fire Fighters Charity and other local causes, as well as share important safety information with the public. At Whitley Wood Fire Station, staff from all across the Service, including non-operational, Prevention and Protection staff, joined crews to perform demonstrations, share important safety information, and showcase some of the career paths available within the Service.

Various car washes took place across the County, including at Crowthorne, Maidenhead, Slough, Newbury, Ascot and Langley fire stations, raising thousands for worthy causes.



Appendix A
Agenda Item 11

» Culture

Armed Forces Veterans' Hubs

To support members of the armed forces community, our Service hosts a number of Armed Forces Hub events. At these events, attendees are able to speak to a range of organisations and charities that support the armed forces community and each other.

During the last year we have hosted events at Maidenhead and Newbury with an event at Crowthorne planned for May.

Cycle2Work Scheme

As with previous years, the Service again offered all staff the opportunity to obtain a bike and cycling safety equipment through the Halfords' Cycle2Work Scheme. The Scheme is aimed at encouraging staff to cycle to work rather than drive, and enables staff to save tax and NI contributions as the bike is paid for via salary sacrifice.

There were two opportunities to join the scheme in the last financial year. The first was in April/May 2023 and the second was in September/October 2023. In total, 16 applications were made from within the Service.

Flu Vaccinations

The Service again encouraged staff of all ages to have an annual flu vaccination ahead of winter 2023/24 to support the capacity of the NHS and support the Service in maintaining crewing and staffing levels by preventing absence.

The offer available to all staff, who did not meet the

criteria for a free NHS vaccination, was to claim up to £19.99 towards the cost of their vaccination.

Working with the OddBalls Foundation

In early 2024, the Service announced a series of talks in partnership with the OddBalls Foundation to address the risks of testicular cancer; the most common type of cancer found in men aged between 15-49.

The OddBalls Foundation was founded in December 2015 and engages with schools, universities and workplaces through their University Ambassador Programme. The University of Reading OddBalls Ambassador, Esther Morgan, alongside Ambassadors from several other universities, held several remote talks with the Service in March of 2024.

Each talk was 30 minutes long and gave every watch, as well as non-operational staff, the opportunity to learn more about testicular cancer including the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment and the support available to people with testicular cancer.

Mental Health Awareness Training

In continued efforts to raise awareness and challenge stigma around mental health, the roll out of a second mental health awareness training course began in October 2023, the first being in 2018/19. This is mandatory training for all staff and by the end of the financial year approximately half of staff had received the training. Delivery continues into 2024/25.



» Capability

Service Responds to Thames Valley Flooding

At the start of January, the Service was called to action in response to significant flooding events in Berkshire.

As a result of the heavy rainfall associated with Storm Henk in January, crews from across the County responded to a range of challenging incidents, including water rescues, flooded properties and evacuations.

Our teams worked alongside partners across the Thames Valley, including council partners, Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service and Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue.

Our initial response to the floods was focused in the west, where crews undertook several flood-related incidents near Shefford Woodlands, Ufton Nervet, Theale, Inkpen, Hungerford and Newbury. As the situation developed, crews were also called out to flood-related incidents in Pangbourne, Sindlesham, Brimpton, Wargrave, Hurst, Henley and Sonning.

At the height of the flooding, firefighters from across the County assisted with the evacuation of vulnerable people from the village of Wraysbury.

Crews worked alongside partners from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service and Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue to evacuate residents to rest centres in the area.

Thames Valley Fire Control Service worked incredibly hard to triage calls as they came in. Through this effective triage system, incidents were

“Thanks to everyone involved in the response to the floods. This truly showed how our teams all collectively work together extremely effectively.”

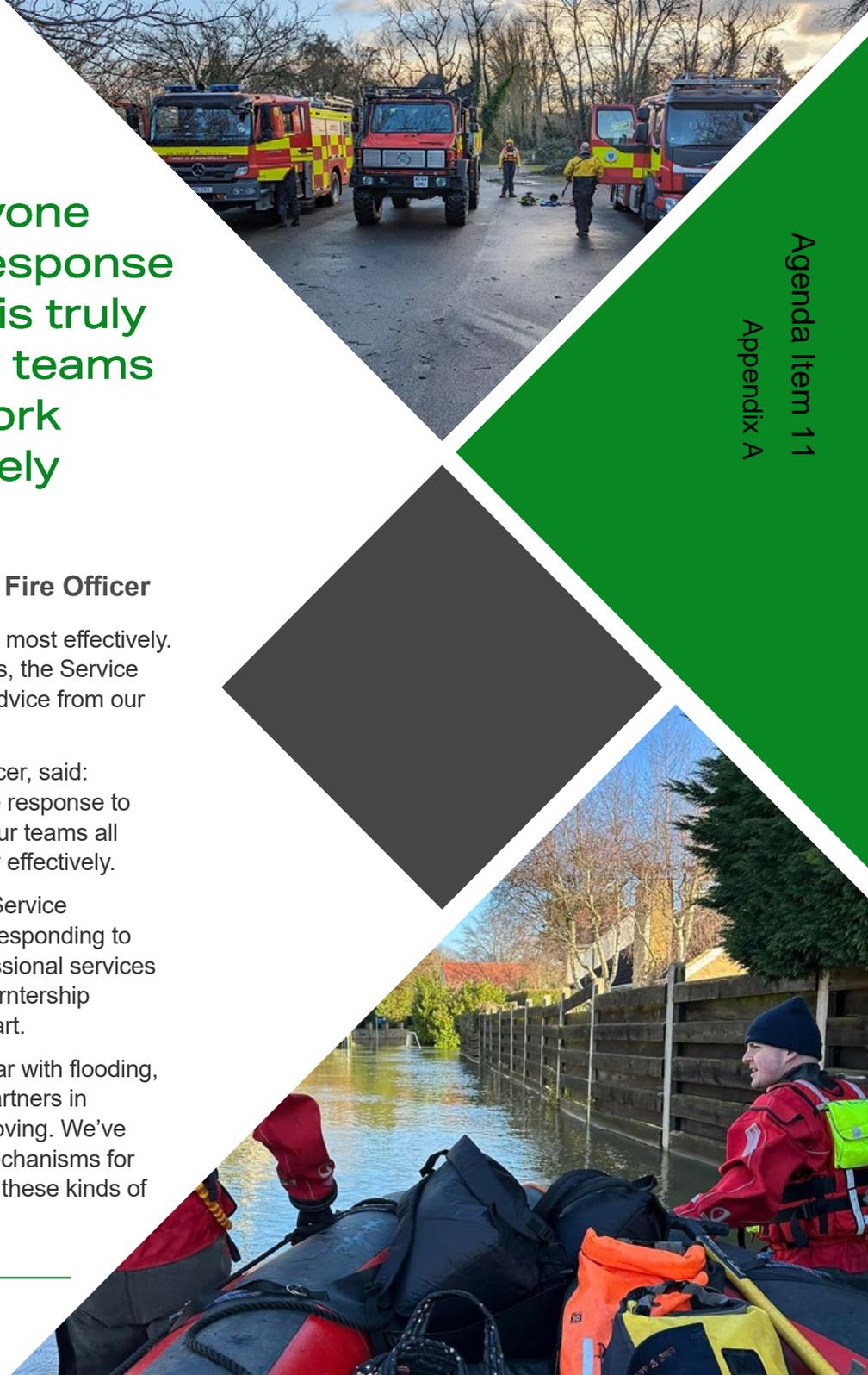
- Katie Mills, Assistant Chief Fire Officer

able to be filtered and responded to most effectively. Whether this be by partner agencies, the Service or residents themselves following advice from our teams.

Katie Mills, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, said: “Thanks to everyone involved in the response to the floods. This truly showed how our teams all collectively work together extremely effectively.

“From Thames Valley Fire Control Service taking and triaging the calls, crews responding to emergencies, to Officers and professional services that supported incidents and our partnership response - everyone played their part.

“Sadly, we’re becoming more familiar with flooding, so the way that we work with our partners in response to these incidents is improving. We’ve got some really well established mechanisms for drawing everyone that’s involved in these kinds of emergencies together.”



» Capability

High-rise Fire in Central Reading Makes Headlines

Over 50 firefighters responded to a high-rise fire on Station Hill, Reading which made headlines across the world.

Crews from fire stations across the County, including Caversham Road, Wokingham Road, Newbury, Ascot, Bracknell, Maidenhead, Windsor, Whitley Wood and Theale were sent to the scene.

Additionally, the Aerial Ladder Platform and Incident Command Unit was on the scene, alongside six Officers. Crews found the fire in a high-rise building under construction, so firefighters equipped with breathing apparatus used two main jets to extinguish the fire.

Two people were taken into the care of South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) and were later discharged from Hospital.

“Following the fire in Reading town centre, I would like to add my thanks to the crane operators for an incredibly skilful rescue.”

- Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer

One person was rescued from the rooftop of the construction site by a crane, propelling the incident into an international news story.

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, said: “Following the fire in Reading town centre, I would like to add my thanks to the crane operators for an incredibly skilful rescue under extremely difficult circumstances. Without their actions, we may be looking at an entirely different scenario.”

Erleigh Road

On Wednesday, 5 April, crews responded to a serious fire on Erleigh Road in Reading.

The first crew arrived within four minutes of the 999 call and were immediately faced with a well-developed house fire.

Our teams immediately got to work in tackling the fire and rescued five of the occupants and provided life-saving CPR.

Over 40 members of staff attended the incident to tackle the blaze. The crews worked tirelessly into the early hours of the morning, spending over six hours at the scene.

Sadly, two people lost their lives as a result of the fire.

In the aftermath of the fire, over 100 residents were visited and 80 Safe and Well Visits were completed. This work was undertaken alongside our partners, including Thames Valley Police, Reading Borough Council and local community groups, to deliver prevention advice to as many people as possible.



» Capability

Breathing Apparatus Project

New breathing apparatus sets are being worn by our firefighters, following a successful project run alongside Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service and Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service.

140 of the BA sets were issued to staff, each with their own personal issue facemask made from the latest, technologically advanced Chemical, Biological, Radiation, Nuclear (CBRN) certified material. The roll out of the new BA sets forms part of our ongoing commitment to ensure our crews have fit for purpose equipment to enable them to provide the best response to our communities.

The BA sets, manufactured by Interspiro have been produced as part of the Thames Valley Operational Alignment Programme, which aims to deliver seamless, cross-border mobilisation of fire and rescue service assets by Thames Valley Fire Control Service and firefighters who can work together using the same operational guidance, training, and equipment.

As part of the tendering process, operational firefighters from the Service took part in a rigorous and thorough practical evaluation, in which BA sets were tested for ease of use and operability. Participants from on-call and wholtime stations braved sweltering temperatures during the height of summer 2022 to support the evaluation process, which saw the Interspiro sets coming top with users, largely as a result of its robust, light-weight harness which proved fully adjustable to meet the

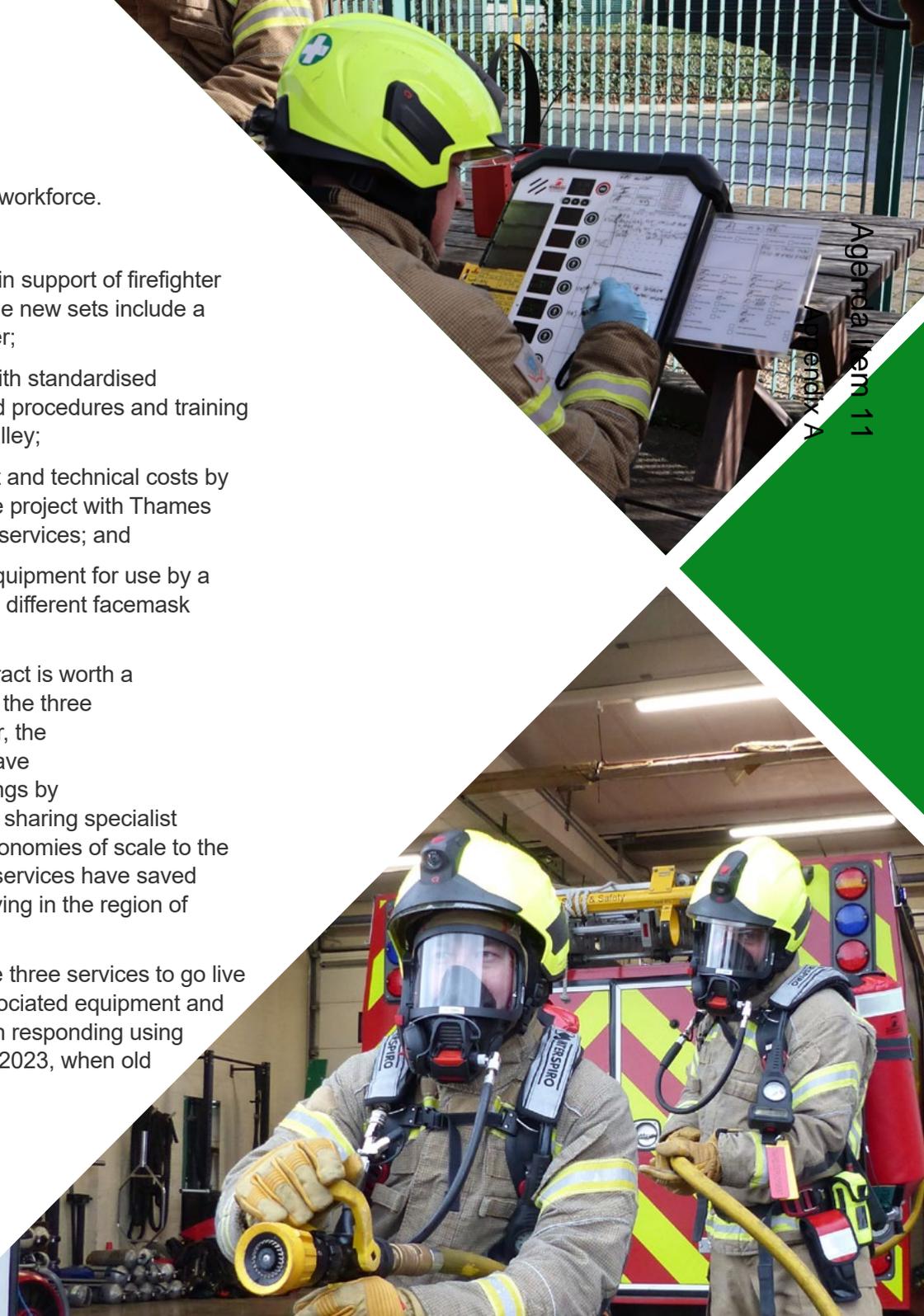
requirements of a diverse workforce.

The new sets provide:

- The latest technology in support of firefighter safety and comfort. The new sets include a lighter, 300 bar cylinder;
- Improved alignment with standardised equipment and aligned procedures and training across the Thames Valley;
- Reduced procurement and technical costs by running a collaborative project with Thames Valley fire and rescue services; and
- Lighter, better fitting equipment for use by a diverse workforce with different facemask fitting requirements.

The BA collaborative contract is worth a total of £1,768,468 across the three services. Working together, the Thames Valley services have been able to achieve savings by not duplicating processes, sharing specialist resources and bringing economies of scale to the project. In total, the three services have saved £532,178 with RBFRS saving in the region of £130,000 for the first year.

RBFRS was the first of the three services to go live with the new sets and associated equipment and firefighters from have been responding using the new sets since March 2023, when old kits were replaced.



» Capability

Enhanced Water Rescue Response in the East of Berkshire

Following four tragic accidental drownings in Berkshire's waterways in 2022, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service advanced plans to provide a specialist water rescue capability in the East of the County, to complement the existing water rescue capability provided from Caversham Road Fire Station in Reading.

In 2022, RBFRS attended 46 water-related incidents across Berkshire (including those involving person, vehicle and animal rescue) with the Slough Weir within the Jubilee River an identified risk. The Jubilee River was designed as a flood relief channel and not as a place for recreational swimming.

An extensive review as part of our Community Risk Management Planning identified that Slough Fire Station would be the preferred location to operate the new capability from. Crews at Slough were then provided with over 50 hours of intensive training to qualify as Module 3 Swift Water Rescue Technicians (SWTs).

A dedicated water rescue vehicle and associated equipment has been allocated to the station to enable firefighters to respond to water rescue incidents. The addition of the necessary training and equipment has been made possible by investment from Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

While this work was undertaken, during July, members of Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue provided Water Rescue support to our Service at weekends, in addition to the Water Rescue Team

“Providing an enhanced water rescue capability from Slough provides additional reassurance to our communities that we can provide a swift and effective response to water-related incidents.”

- Councillor Jeff Brooks, Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

based at Caversham Road and provided additional support to strengthen our water rescue resilience across Berkshire.

In the summer months, there is historically a heightened risk of water-related incidents owing to the hot weather, particularly during weekends, and members of BLSAR's water team were co-located at Slough Fire Station ready to respond immediately to any calls.

Councillor Jeff Brooks, Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, said: “We identified an opportunity to upskill our teams to increase our water rescue capabilities in the East of Berkshire.

“Providing an enhanced water rescue capability from Slough provides additional reassurance to

our communities that we can provide a swift and effective response to water-related incidents. It also builds upon all our prevention activity this year, working with partner organisations and schools in particular to promote water safety.

“Thank you to our partners from Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue for their support. This positive working partnership has provided us with layers of resilience at what tends to be a busy time of year for water rescue.”

Chris Curry, Emergency Planning Officer for Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue, said: “As an established partner agency, we are proud to have provided water search and rescue support to RBFRS for several years. We were pleased to have been able to compliment the water rescue team based at Caversham Road whilst training and resources were being put in place in Slough, thus providing additional support to strengthen the overall water rescue resilience across Berkshire.”

» Capability

Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices

Two cohorts of Firefighter Apprentices have joined the Service during the last financial year. In May 2023 we saw a group of 23 new Firefighter apprentices graduate at a ceremony at Newbury Fire Station; this was followed by a further eight apprentices graduating in a ceremony at the same location in November 2023.

RBFRS has recruited apprentices into this very important role for the last two years, and has seen three groups of apprentice firefighters that have graduated. We are very proud that the apprentices have chosen Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue to begin their fire and rescue service careers.

Much like previous Wholetime recruitment, anyone, from any background or walk of life, could apply to be a Firefighter Apprentice, as long as they were new to the role.

The Service commissioned an external provider, the Fire Service College (Capita). Capita are approved to deliver the Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship through the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP).

The Apprentices are 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, and other locations in Berkshire, for a further five weeks with Instructors to help integrate them into RBFRS' ways of working.

This includes specific operational training on

equipment, safeguarding training, organisational awareness training and a host of realistic scenarios to put what they had learnt into practice in a safe environment.

Their development will continue with support of their line manager, and an Apprenticeship talent coach, supported by the Service.

It is anticipated the Apprenticeships will be completed within 24 months of the start dates.

During the Graduation Ceremony there are two special awards presented. The Endeavour Award is presented to the Firefighter that has demonstrated the most effort to improve during the course. This was awarded to George Holden in May and Ashley Ward in November.

Ashley said: "I'm really surprised to win the Award, but very proud. I don't think you always know how well you're doing, so for someone else to notice, it's great. Everyone in the group has done so well."

The Silver Axe is an Award given to the Firefighter that has performed to the highest standards throughout the course. This was awarded to Mike Selmes in May and Bethany Ashcroft in November.

Upon receiving the Silver Axe Award, Bethany said: "It was an absolute honour, I didn't expect it. Everyone has worked so hard, so to be picked out of a good bunch, I'm really pleased."

In January 2024, another group of Apprentices were recruited. This group are undergoing training and are due to graduate at a ceremony at Maidenhead Fire Station in front of their family and friends in May 2024.



Agenda Item 11
Appendix A



» Capability

On-call Crews Support the Community

On-call crews were mobilised a total of 674 times over the last year, providing an important role in protecting the communities of Berkshire.

The On-call station mobilised to most incidents was Mortimer and Lambourn was mobilised to the fewest. Availability and location play a factor in this with Mortimer averaging approximately 68% availability and Lambourn 13%.

Availability for 2023-24 averaged 40%, which represents a small drop on the previous year figure of 40.6%.

The current number of on-call firefighters in the Service is 61. During the last year 14 new recruits have joined, which is encouraging. The impact of the new recruits on fire engine availability will be seen once they have completed relevant courses, which will enable them to support their crew.

A total of 19 school visits have been recorded as completed by on-call firefighters, in addition to those carried out at Maidenhead by on-call staff (because the station is both wholetime and on-call the figures can't be verified so have been omitted from these figures). 173 Safe and Well visits have been recorded as completed by on-call firefighters.

On-call crews have also taken part in numerous Service, Hub, and Station exercises over the course of the year, to help maintain their competency. Other station activities carried out over the last year include risk visits, station open days and attendance at community events.

There have also been four National Fire Standards Testing days to test potential recruits, all held at Training Centre. These events are predominately supported by on-call crews, and organised by the on-call Station Manager and the recruitment team.

A number of 'Have a Go' days have also been held during the year. These are to enable people who may be interested in joining as an on-call firefighter to visit a station, talk to crews and try some of the fitness tests that they would need to pass.

Incidents of note that on-call crews have attended include the Multi-Agency response to flooding at Wraysbury, a large fire at a commercial premise in Tessa Road, Reading, a vehicle fire involving cylinders in Crowthorne.

On-call staff have been trained in the use of the new Ranger 4x4 response vehicles, which are now located at on-call stations. This will enable the Service to increase its level of response to wildfire incidents and other incidents that require this capability.

A new report has also been developed in 2023/24, which shows the availability provided by on-call staff. The initial report is positive, highlighting the dedication of our on-call staff and that most on-call staff offer higher levels of availability than their contracted hours.

Positive joint working between wholetime and on-call has resulted in an increase in our fire engine availability.



» Capability

TVFCS Control Room

In September 2023, Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) undertook a full refresh of the hardware that runs the Control room. The mobilising system used by TVFCS was originally installed and commissioned in spring 2015, when TVFCS became operational and had been in 24/7 operation since then.

The work to replace the servers and associated hardware in a live Control room environment is a complex and challenging piece of work. It requires the disconnection of systems from the old hardware and connection to the new hardware, whilst maintaining our ability to handle incoming emergency calls and mobilise our response to incidents.

The work to actually connect the new hardware required a high degree of cooperation between all parties involved, and was supported by Operational Support Rooms set up by each fire and rescue service.

Simon Harris, Group Manager, Thames Valley Fire Control Service, said: "The hardware that TVFCS uses was starting to show its age and I'm really pleased that we have been able to get the replacement equipment in and installed to continue to benefit the people across the Thames Valley. The upgrade process went well, which is in no small part down to the hard work of the project team."

Sharepoint Migration

Following the migration of the Service's Intranet system onto Microsoft Sharepoint, all teams and departments' working areas were migrated onto the same system over a period of 8 months.

This project aimed to streamline our data management process and enhance collaboration and security across all stations and departments within the organisation. As result of this project a total of 5TB of data has been migrated into Sharepoint sites.

The SharePoint migration project brings several benefits to our organisation, with a primary focus on enhancing team collaboration and bolstering security measures. By centralizing our data storage on SharePoint, we have provided a unified platform for teams to collaborate, share information effortlessly.

"The upgrade process went well, which is in no small part down to the hard work of the project team."

- Simon Harris, Group Manager, Thames Valley Fire Control Service

Viva Engage

In August we launched a new communications channel for staff to connect with each other. Viva Engage, a Microsoft 365 application, is now available for staff on their desktop and mobile devices.

This new application provides a social noticeboard allowing everyone to share updates across the Service and follows the introduction of other Microsoft 365 products such as Teams and Sharepoint, the platform that our intranet, Siren, was built on. Viva Engage therefore seamlessly integrates with our intranet system and provide new opportunities for colleagues to connect with each other.

With our workforce based at a number of locations across the County and some of the workforce working remotely, Viva Engage gives us a new tool to engage and strengthen relationships with colleagues, share their work and perspective, and find answers to their questions.



» Risk Management

Community Risk Management Plan Approved for Next Four Years

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) agreed the Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2023 – 2027 in May 2023, following a public consultation.

The consultation ran for 11 weeks between 11 January and 27 March, receiving a total of 662 responses from the public and staff. Thank you to everybody who provided feedback on the plans.

At the Fire Authority meeting on Thursday, 27 April, Members of RBFA conscientiously considered all feedback received and a summary report, which recommended changes to the plans based on the feedback that was received.

Our Vision



The CRMP explains how all fire and rescue-related risk in the community is evaluated and how resources are allocated to manage those risks. These risks include house fires, road traffic collisions and chemical spills, but they also include other less common hazards such as wide area flooding, terrorist attacks and building collapse.

The priorities of the new plan have been agreed as follows:

Priority 1. We will develop our Integrated Service Delivery Strategy to meet the changing profile of risk in Berkshire due to climate change, societal and technological shifts.

Priority 2. We will develop a Risk Based Prevention Programme, in collaboration with partner agencies, to target those most vulnerable and at risk from emergency incidents.

Priority 3. We will develop our response model to ensure that we are providing the most effective response to incidents within Berkshire, ensuring that it is aligned to the risks identified, sustainable and provides value for money.

Priority 4. We will review the incidents that do not form part of our core statutory responsibilities, to better understand the implications for the service in attending these incidents. Notwithstanding the review of our response and the gathering of this data, public safety will remain the primary priority of the Service.

Priority 5. We will develop our Fire Protection service to support the resilience of businesses, to ensure the safety of all people using buildings

covered by the Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Safety Act 2022, and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to ensure that our enforcement role is effective and clear.

Priority 6. We will maintain 19 frontline fire appliances, and a baseline service provision of 14 frontline fire appliances, utilising wholetime and on-call staff as effectively as possible, through local management.

The overarching vision set out in the plan is for RBFRS staff to work together as one team for the communities we serve. In order to fulfil that vision it is vital that staff work in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment.

Although progress has been made in creating a service that reflects the communities it serves, there is more work required to achieve this goal.

» Risk Management

Contaminants Measures

Researchers at the University of Central Lancashire conducted a study that found that a firefighter's risk of developing cancer is increased by high levels of harmful chemicals that remain on PPE following exposure to smoke.

It found that skin absorption, rather than inhalation, is the leading cause of exposure to the gases created during a fire.

Over the last two years, work has been completed to identify the reasonable and practical steps the Service and individuals can take to minimise firefighters' exposure to contaminants.

So in December 2023, a number of new measures were introduced to reduce the potential occupational risk of exposure to contaminants.

The new measures included:

- Zoning our stations, using a traffic light system;
- A web form to track exposure to potential contaminants; and
- The new Contamination Prevention and Management Policy.

In addition, as part of the Estates Development Programme, work is continuing is around our station facilities to ensure the layout is optimal for managing the risk of contaminants amongst other factors. As we progress in our journey to managing the risk of contaminants.

These changes are the first steps we are taking around managing contaminants. As more research

and information is shared with us, we will continue to adapt and evolve the way we manage the potential risk.

“Without these vehicles with their specialist crews, we would see much more serious harm to the environment at incidents.”

- Andrew Barnes, Senior Advisor, Environment Agency

Service Enhances Decontamination and Environmental Protection Capabilities

A Decontamination and Environmental Protection Unit (DEPU) has been added to the Service's fleet.

This new vehicle is equipped to use at incidents where there is a risk to the local environment or where there is a hazard which requires our crews to operate in gas tight suits.

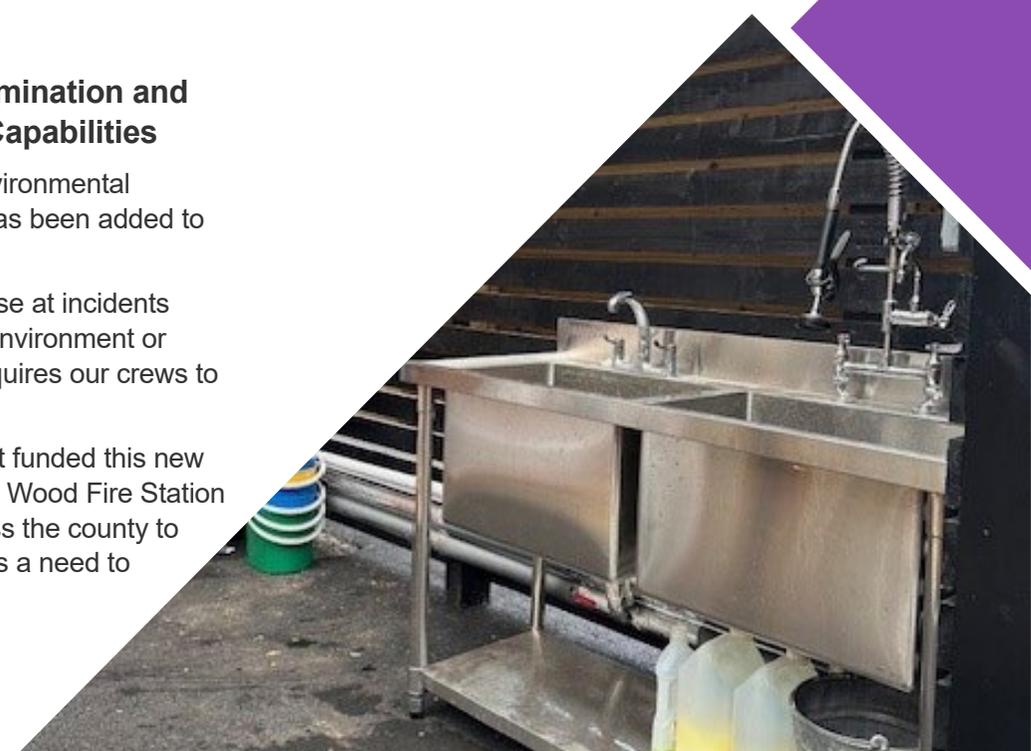
The Environment Agency has part funded this new vehicle, which is based at Whitley Wood Fire Station in Reading, but will be used across the county to support at incidents where there is a need to

limit the exposure of hazardous materials to our firefighters, the public or the environment.

At an incident, this will be crewed by a driver and an OIC (Officer-In-Charge).

Andrew Barnes, Senior Advisor in the Environment Agency's Environment Incident Preparedness Team said "Environmental Protection Units allow a swift emergency response to serious pollution incidents which is critical in preventing serious harm to the environment.

“Without these vehicles with their specialist crews, we would see much more serious harm to the environment at incidents like large fires, chemical spills, and road traffic collisions. It is a pleasure to partner with Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service to expand this important capability.”



» Risk Management

Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation

In March 2024, we opened a public consultation to ask for feedback on how the Service responds to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs).

The consultation asked for people's views on how their fire and rescue service responds to Automatic Fire Alarms in buildings such as shops, offices, leisure centres, colleges, sports grounds, libraries, schools and health centres.

Our Service needs to change the way it responds to automatic fire alarm notifications to ensure communities and firefighters are kept safe.

This is because 99% of the automatic fire alarm calls received are false alarms. Attending these types of incidents takes time and resource and therefore causes significant disruption to the delivery of essential services and training. RBFRS will continue to send fire engines to automatic fire alarm notifications at higher risk buildings, where anyone sleeps, such as hotels, hospitals, care homes, houses, and flats.

Most importantly, the Service will continue to maintain an emergency response to 999 calls, confirmed fires and to automatic fire alarm notifications from residential homes.

Following the consultation, work will begin on analysing and compiling the responses into a summary report for decision makers. Royal Berkshire Fire Authority will meet in June 2024 to conscientiously consider the results of consultation and make decisions on the options.

Don't Take the Risk campaign

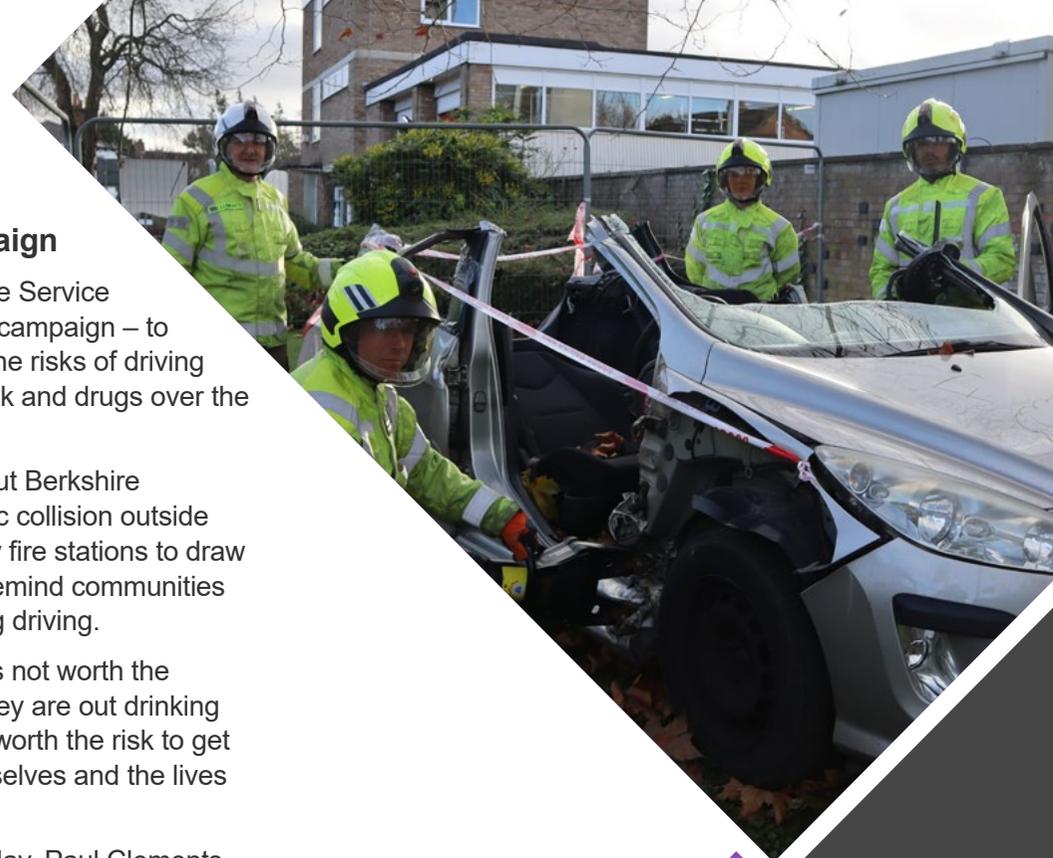
During December 2023 the Service supported a road safety campaign – to raise awareness about the risks of driving while under the influence of drink and drugs over the festive season.

Each year, firefighters throughout Berkshire construct a simulated road traffic collision outside Wokingham Road and Newbury fire stations to draw the attention of the public and remind communities about the risks of drink and drug driving.

The theme of the displays is “it's not worth the risk”, reminding people that if they are out drinking over the festive period, it is not worth the risk to get behind the wheel and put themselves and the lives of others in danger.

Commenting on this year's display, Paul Clements, Watch Manager, said: “The aim of the campaign is to remind drivers of the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Road traffic collisions can be life-threatening, so we need to take every step we can to stop them from happening.

“The message is simple. Do not drink or take drugs and drive. It's not worth the risk to yourself and others. If you are out drinking, particularly over the festive period, book a taxi, catch the bus or arrange a lift from a designated driver.”



» Risk Management

#Waterwise Campaign

The #WaterWise campaign a campaign was created with the overall mission to warn and inform the public about the risks of accidentally drowning and what actions to carry out in an emergency.

Conscious of the wider interest in water safety amongst our partners in the. Thames Valley, we spoke to colleagues in Communications teams at Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service, the Environment Agency and neighbouring fire and rescue services to agree a joint approach. The resulting campaign was called #WaterWise and looked at how we can use all our communications channels alongside our existing activities and networks.

Filming by our Communications and Engagement Team took place in April 2023 with spokespeople from a range of organisations appearing in front of camera to provide guidance in their respective areas of expertise. We were delighted that Tom Dean, double Olympic Swimming Gold Medalist, was happy to speak on the importance of swimming in safe areas and in groups. Once the filming was complete, the videos were used on social media, as well as circulated to schools across the area for them to use in any suitable display areas, including screens on buses for example.

To help encourage more young people to swim in safe areas, we have been supporting a leisure centre that has been offering free lessons to children. Leisure Focus has swimming pools in Maidenhead and Windsor providing a secure environment for residents to swim in. This summer,

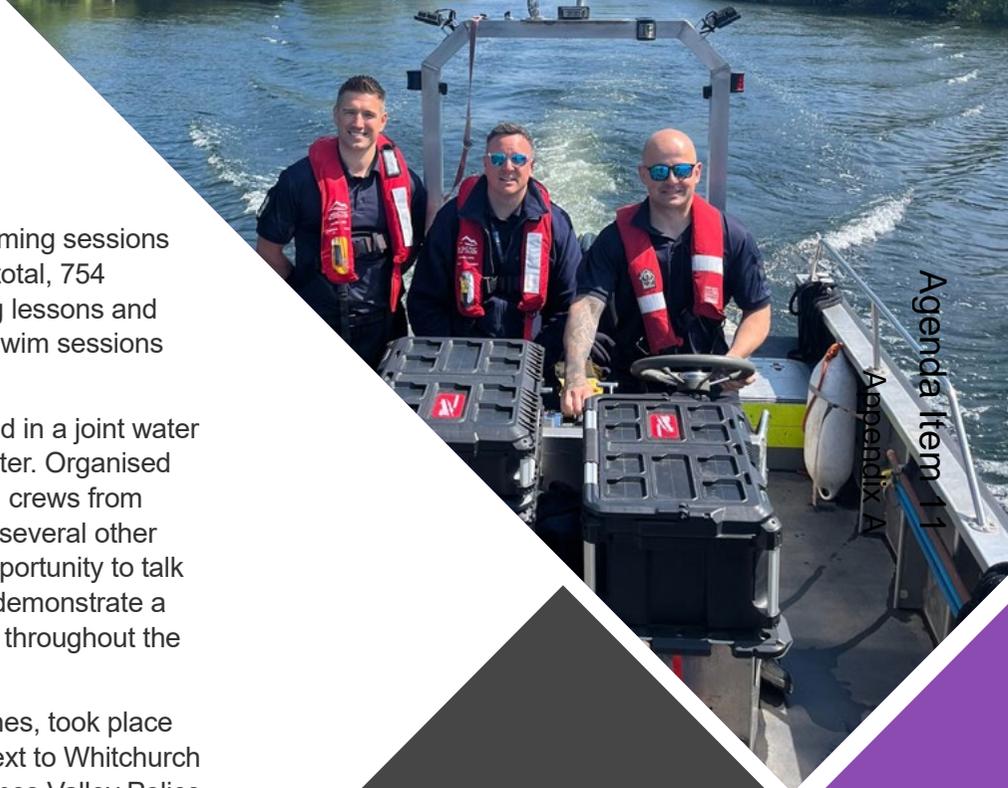
Leisure Focus offered 60 free swimming sessions for young people aged 13 to 17. In total, 754 individuals participated in swimming lessons and 945 individuals took part in casual swim sessions over the summer.

Furthermore, in April, we participated in a joint water safety demonstration at Virginia Water. Organised by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, crews from Caversham Road and Ascot joined several other agencies. This provided an ideal opportunity to talk to members of the community and demonstrate a number of water rescue techniques throughout the day.

Another event, focussed on throwlines, took place in July at Pangbourne Meadows, next to Whitchurch Bridge in Berkshire. Staff from Thames Valley Police and members of the local community received training on how to use a throw line. Firefighters from Caversham Road Fire Station (Green Watch) were also on hand to explain the dangers of swimming in open bodies of water, including cold water shock.

#Winterwise Campaign

Following cold weather warnings issued by the Met Office in December 2022, Berkshire residents were warned to be extra vigilant when it comes to ensuring their homes remain warm during these colder months. Local fire prevention teams were concerned that some residents may try to find alternative ways to stay warm and light their homes amid a cost-of-living crisis. In response, the 'Winter Wise' campaign was launched, which aims to educate people about a range of fire risks within the home.



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» Sustainability

Whitley Wood Training Centre

Due to extensive flooding of the Service's Training Centre in June 2022, the Whitley Wood Training Centre redevelopment project was brought forward as a high priority for refurbishment under the Estates Development Programme (EDP) to ensure continuity and delivery of training for our operational crews.

Throughout 2023, the Estates Team have worked to create plans for a new Training Centre at Whitley Wood and, in December 2023, submitted the final plans to Reading Borough Council.

The proposed plans will see the demolition of the existing Training Centre and the construction of a two-storey, modular building in its place.

These works are essential as the Service looks to enhance the training it provides to firefighters, improving the effectiveness of Berkshire's fire and rescue service.

Premier Module Limited have been chosen to manufacture and install the new building and, by electing to use a prefabricated building, the Service has been able to reduce the cost, both financial and ecological, of the build.

The proposed plans incorporate the latest contaminants management protocols to ensure that firefighters can train for hazardous incidents in an environment that does not compromise their health.

A decision from the Council is expected in April 2024 and, if approved, work on the new Training Centre is due to begin in May 2024 with completion and opening expected in Summer 2025.

Minor Capital Works Programmes

In February 2019, funding was approved by the Fire Authority for £1.25m as part of the Minor Capital Works Programme covering six stations. This was to look at providing an improved working environment for all crews and staff on stations while being fit for purpose.

The refurbishment projects consider recommendations from the EDI work stream and the Service's Contaminants Policy so that our station environments are more inclusive and better protect staff from potential contaminant exposure.

First started in September 2022, the final stage of Maidenhead Fire Station's refurbishment programme was completed in May 2023. Maidenhead was the second major station refurbishment to be completed following Bracknell Fire Station in September 2022.

As part of the works, the first floor was completely transformed into a bright open-plan office with two station meeting rooms and additional meeting space for the rest of the Service.

The communal dorm space, previously located on the ground floor, was removed and reconstituted as individual dorms on the first floor. Both the female and male bathroom areas were modernised to include individual shower, changing, and toilet facilities.

To comply with the new decontamination protocols, improved clean and dirty side laundry facilities were also added to the station as part of the project.



» Sustainability

Following the works at Maidenhead Fire Station, the Fire Authority approved plans to refurbish Slough Fire Station as part of a wider programme of improvements being made to the Service's Estate

Councillor Jeff Brooks, Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, said: "The works will provide a much improved working environment for our current and future staff, bringing our workplaces up to date to meet the needs of a modern fire and rescue service and our next generation of firefighters."

So far, phase one of the refurbishment programme has been completed. This saw the introduction of new bathroom and showering facilities, a refurbished kit room built in line with the Service's new Contaminants Policy.

Government Grants Accelerate Sustainability Upgrades

In March of 2024, the Service successfully won £927,845 from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) to go towards reducing our carbon footprint and improving energy efficiency.

Building on the Service's successful Low Carbon Skills Fund Grant bid secured in 2023 and benefitting from further Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) support, the Service intends to invest £1.77 million in sustainability improvements over the next two years starting with five of our least energy efficient buildings.

The two-year programme will see the introduction of sustainability features at properties that qualified for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant support. The scheme is run by the Department for

Energy Security and Net Zero and is delivered by Salix Finance.

Mark Arkwell, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, said: "As a fire service, we are committed to ensuring we are doing all we can to reduce our impact on the environment. This funding is a fantastic boost to help deliver our ambition of rapidly improving our estate for the benefit of staff, public and the planet.

"I believe it's right for us to play a leading role in responding to the climate emergency and with 65 percent of our carbon coming from the estate we are sensible to focus on this area first. This grant reflects months of hard work to ensure that we receive central support to deliver our local commitment to reduce our carbon output.

"I'd like to thank Salix who administer the PSDS on behalf of HM Government, for their support and guidance throughout the process and we look forward to continuing our relationship with them during our programme."

Features will include new LED lighting, solar panels,

"As a fire service, we are committed to ensuring we are doing all we can to reduce our impact on the environment."

- Mark Arkwell, Deputy Chief Fire Officer



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air-source heat pump systems and improved building fabric insulation. These improvements will save 132 tonnes of carbon generation, result in greater efficiencies and will see a significant reduction in our energy bills.

In July 2023 RBFRS were successful in bidding for the Salix Low Carbon Skills Fund and received £40,450 in funding. The funding was used to pay for the professional services of Atkins Realis who pulled together a Heat Decarbonisation Plan (HDP) for 11 fire stations in Berkshire. The HDP has identified the gaps and inefficiencies in the Service's buildings and provided a programme road map for reducing our carbon output and making our estate more energy efficient.

The HDP was successfully completed, and RBFRS received the funding in full from Salix in December 2023. In February 2024 Salix requested that the Service's HDP be published on their website as an example for other Public Sector bodies, due to the high standard of work.

» Sustainability

Breathing Apparatus Sets Donated to Ukrainian Firefighters

Our Service donated a number of breathing apparatus (BA) sets to help support Ukrainian firefighters in their vital work during the ongoing war. In total, 89 BA sets and 304 air cylinders have been donated by RBFRS as part of the latest convoy that was sent to Ukraine.

The donation of this equipment is part of a national effort, which has been coordinated by the charity FIRE AID UK and the National Fire Chiefs Council. Four convoys including a total of 69 fire appliances and tens of thousands of items of life-saving kit and equipment have already been donated.

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer, said: “We have recently replaced our BA sets and rather than disposing of the old kits, there is no better use for them than donating them to Ukrainian firefighters, who clearly have great need for them and who we will continue to show our full support at every opportunity.

“Alongside the donations from fire and rescue services across the UK, we hope that this equipment will assist in the immense relief effort that is needed in Ukraine.”

Members of the Fleet and Equipment Team had prepared the sets for the donation and use by Ukrainian firefighters. Other fire and rescue services are donating a range of other equipment and appliances.

“Alongside the donations from fire and rescue services across the UK, we hope that this equipment will assist in the immense relief effort that is needed in Ukraine.”

- Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer

Fire Hoses Donated for Benefit of Animals

In line with our commitment to provide an environmentally friendly service to our communities, we have donated some more old fire hoses to the Berkshire College of Agriculture Zoo to help enrich the lives of the animals living there.

In the past, as you can see from the photos, fire hoses have been used to make toys, browser racks for food, feeders, hammocks, cargo nets, mats or just simply climbing opportunities. Due to its toughness and durability, fire hoses are a tried and tested material for use.

A number of hoses have been donated that are surplus to requirements, and we are pleased to re-purpose old materials in a sustainable way that benefits animals living in the zoo.



» Corporate Measures

Service Provision

Service Provision monitors the service we provide to the public. Performance is monitored in relation to attendance at incidents, types of incidents, Prevention activities and fire safety in commercial buildings.

Measure	2023/2024 Target	2023/2024 Actual
Number of fire deaths	0	4
Number of non-fatal fire casualties	34 max	38
Number of deliberate primary fires	135 max	100
Number of deliberate secondary fires	244 max	187

Prevention

Increase the number of Referrals for Safe and Well Visits received from our partners	10%	9.2%
Percentage of Safe and Well referrals, where there has been a threat or incidence of arson, completed within 48 hours	100%	100%
Percentage of Very High Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time	35%	37.3%
Percentage of High Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time	50%	50.2%

Protection

Proportion of Fire Safety Audits conducted against premises identified as High or Very High Risk in our Risk Based Inspection Programme	monitor	26.2%
Percentage of Fire Safety Audits with a 'Broadly Compliant' result	60% max	69.0%
Percentage success when cases go to court	80%	0 cases
Percentage of statutory fire consultations completed within the required timeframes	95%	96.9%



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» Corporate Measures

Measure	2023/2024 Target	2023/2024 Actual
Response		
Percentage of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes from time the emergency call was answered	75%	72.3%
Percentage of wholetime frontline pumping appliance availability	99%	97.4%
Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)	50%	40.0%
Resilience		
Percentage of visits to Very High, High and Medium Operational Risk sites completed in timescale	100%	69.8%
Number of Service Delivery Hub exercises completed	12	12
Efficiency		
Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm calls where RBFRS did not attend	30% (min)	25.3%
Customer Experience		
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	90%	96.3%
Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the service regards their Safe and Well Visit	100%	99.6%
Number of complaints received	Monitor	21
Number of compliments received	Monitor	21



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» Corporate Measures

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.

Measure	2023/2024 Target	2023/2024 Actual
Human Resources and Learning & Development		
Percentage of working time lost to sickness across all staff groups	5%	5.5%
Percentage of eligible staff with Personal Development Reviews	100%	94.0%
Number of formal grievances	Monitor	17
Health and Safety		
Number of *RIDDOR accidents and diseases	Max 4	3
Finance and Procurement		
Percentage of spend subject to competition	85%	89.5%
Compliant spend as a percentage of overall spend	100%	99.7%
Freedom of Information		
Number of Information Commissioner assessments finding that the Service has breached Information Rights Legislation (Free-dom of Information Act, Environmental Regulations or Data Pro-tection Legislation)	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 AND RESCUE SERVICE**



RoyalBerksFRS



royalberkshirefire



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Royal Berkshire Fire and
Rescue Service



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ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman	TVFCS Joint Committee	08.07.24	Annual	Agree	MO	N/A	Part I
Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring	TVFCS Joint Committee	08.07.24	Bi annual	Note	AM C&P and HF&P	N/A	Part I
Chairman's Annual Report	TVFCS Joint Committee	08.07.24	Annual	Note	AM C&P	N/A	Part I
Cost Apportionment Model	TVFCS Joint Committee	08.07.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	AM C&P	N/A	Part I
Annual Report	Extraordinary Fire Authority	09.07.24	Annual	Note	HCS	N/A	Part I
AFA Consultation results	Extraordinary Fire Authority	09.07.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	AM C&P	N/A	Part I
Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair	A&GC	16.07.24	Annual	Agree	MO	N/A	Part I
Pensions Board Annual update	A&GC	16.07.24	Annual	Note	HHR&L&D and Pension Board Chair	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	16.07.24	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Discipline and Complaints Effectiveness Assessment	A&GC	16.07.24	Ad-hoc	Note	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	16.07.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q4 Performance Report	A&GC	16.07.24	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair	Management Committee	22.07.24	Annual	Agree	MO	N/A	Part I
Annual Outturn	Management Committee	22.07.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
LED Lighting Project - Priority 2 sites	Management Committee	22.07.24	Ad-Hoc	Agree	HoA	Strategic Assests and Sustainability Lead	Part I
Q4 Appliance Availability	Management Committee	22.07.24	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
BT Contract Update	Management Committee	22.07.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HBIS	N/A	Part II
Culture Development Update	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Note	CFO	Chair	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Budget Monitoring Q1	Management Committee	08.10.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q1	Management Committee	08.10.24	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Workwear Project	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Property Asset Management Strategy	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	Strategic Assessts and Sustainability Lead	Part I
Fleet and Equipment Strategy	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Property Asset Management Strategy	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Langley Refurbishment	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Sustainability Strategy	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Fleet and Equipment SAIF Budget	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Minor Capital Works SAIF Budget	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
External Audit report	A&GC	21.10.24	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	21.10.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal assessment of effectiveness within discipline	A&GC	21.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Statement of Accounts	A&GC	21.10.24	Annual	Agree	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Contract Regulations	A&GC	21.10.24	Ad-hoc	Note and recommend	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Lease changes	A&GC	21.10.24	Ad-hoc	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Statement of Assurance 22/23	A&GC	21.10.24	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Q1 Performance Report	A&GC	21.10.24	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Constitutional update	A&GC	21.10.24	Ad-hoc	Note and recommend	MO	N/A	Part I
Annual Treasury Report and Mid-year report	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Contract Regulations	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HF&P	N/A	Part I
TVFCS Joint Committee Annual Report 2023/24	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Annual	Note	AM (C&P)	Collaboration Lead	Part I
Annual Report on Governance - to include Member attendance, allowances and expenses	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Annual	Note	HCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Constitutional update	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Ad-hoc	Approve	MO	N/A	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q2	Management Committee	04.12.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q2	Management Committee	04.12.24	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring	TVFCS Joint Committee	12.12.24	Bi annual	Note	AM C&P and HF&P	N/A	Part I
Statement of Assurance 23/24	A&GC	30.01.25	Quarterly	Note and Recommend	HCS	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	Part I
Annual Governance Statement 22/23	A&GC	30.01.25	Annual	Note	HCS	N/A	Part I
Gender, Ethnicity and Equality Pay Gap	A&GC	30.01.25	Annual	Note	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	A&GC	30.01.25	Annual	Note and Recommend	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	30.01.25	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q2 Performance Report	A&GC	30.01.25	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Management Committee	10.02.25	Annual	Note and recommend	MO	N/A	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q3	Management Committee	10.02.25	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q3	Management Committee	10.02.25	Quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Approve	MO	N/A	Part I
Annual Budget 24/25, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation/ Collaboration and Strategic Assets Lead	Part I
Annual Plan	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring	TVFCS Joint Committee	17.03.25	Bi annual	Note	AM C&P and HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit Report	A&GC	24.03.25	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	24.03.25	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Annual Report on Members Development	A&GC	24.03.25	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	Member Development Champion	Part I
Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances / Code of Conduct annual consultation results	A&GC	24.03.25	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Quarter 3 Performance Report	A&GC	24.03.25	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
	Management Committee	07.04.25	Ad-hoc	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
Corporate Calendar 2025/26	Fire Authority	17.04.25	Annual	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
Lead Member and Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	17.04.25	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I