

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Annual Report
» 2022 – 2023



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» Welcome

Welcome to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Annual Report. 2022-2023 has been an important year

for the Service. The summer brought a sustained period of hot, dry weather. The Met Office issued a first ever extreme heat warning, which meant there was a risk to life.

As anticipated, the high temperatures experienced in July and August, on top of previous months of low rainfall, created an increased demand on the Service. The number of outdoor fire incidents was double that of an average year and approximately five times the volume experienced across the same period last year.

While facing these challenges, we still hit several important milestones. In 2022-23, we saw the Fire Authority's investment in our facilities and equipment realised with the official opening of Theale Community Fire Station.

This new state-of-the-art facility will help us to deliver on our Strategic Commitment to ensure that our fire stations, people, and resources are placed firmly at the heart of local communities.

New equipment was deployed at fire stations across the County, further strengthening the Service's capabilities to respond to the people of Royal Berkshire in times of emergency.

This included new Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets. BA sets are a vital piece of equipment that firefighters wear when responding to incidents with an atmosphere that may cause difficulty breathing. The roll out of the new BA sets forms part of our

ongoing commitment to ensure our crews have the best equipment to enable them to provide the best response to our communities.

Additionally, we saw 18 new Apprentice Firefighters join the Service after they successfully completed a 13-week training course. This was the first year RBFRS recruited Apprentices into the crucial firefighter role. Much like previous wholetime recruitment, anyone, from any background or walk of life, could apply to be a Firefighter Apprentice, so long as they were new to the role.

In 2022, we were once again inspected by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), which confirmed RBFRS is performing to a high standard, receiving three 'good' judgments across the areas (effectiveness, efficiency and people) inspected. You can read more about this on page 14.

While we recognise that we will face challenges in the years ahead, this report recognises the fantastic public service that is being provided by our staff to the people of Royal Berkshire and we will continue to build upon the strong foundations highlighted in this report.

Over the next 12 months, we will continue to work hard to deliver our Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (2023-2027) to ensure that the Service has the right resources, people, and plans to build on the work completed in 2022-23.



**Councillor
Paul Gittings**

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.

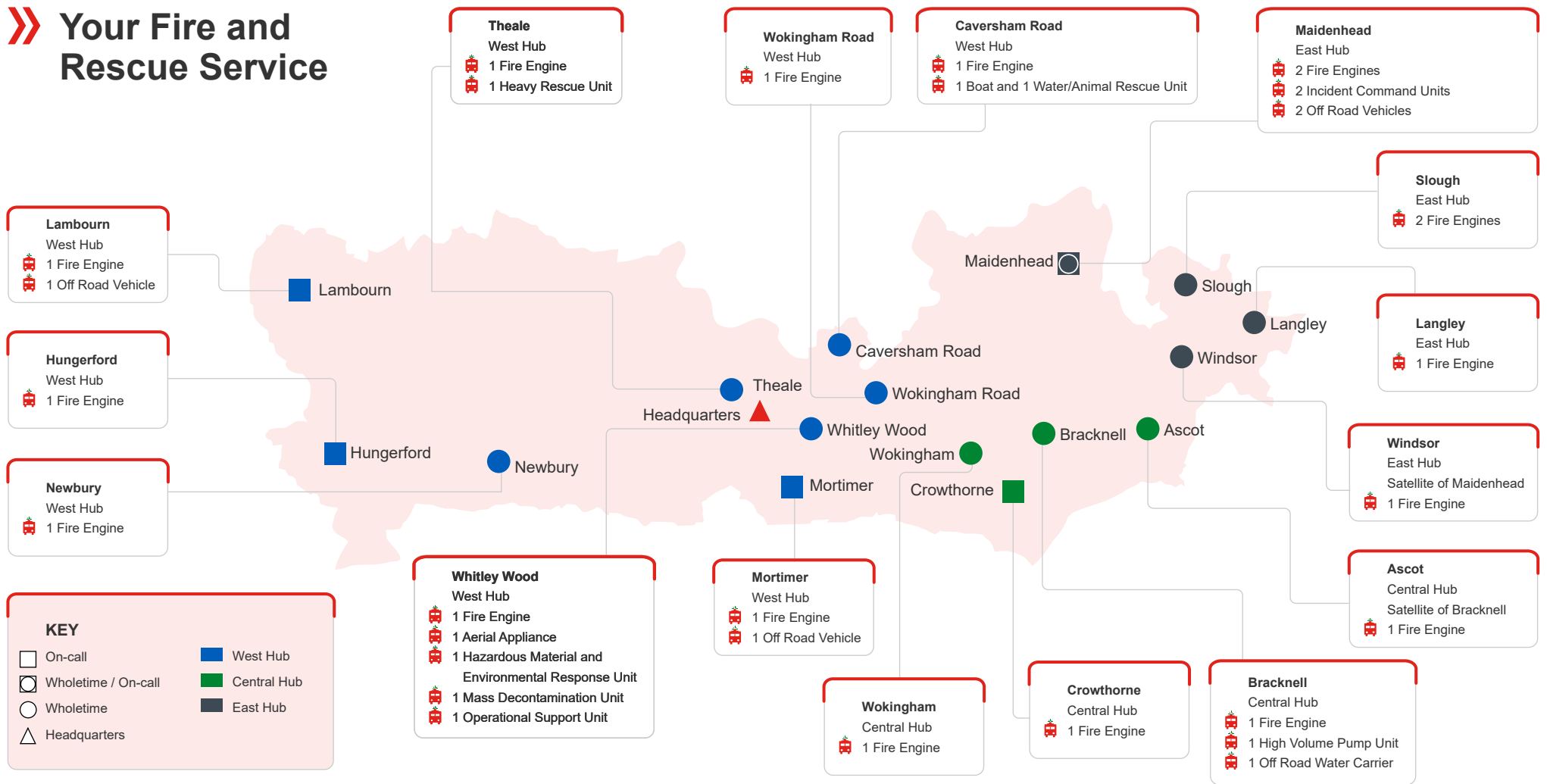
The Service's highly-trained fire crews deal with incidents ranging from road and rail accidents to fuel and chemical spills, aviation and waterway accidents, collapsed buildings, large animal rescues, and, of course, fires.

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.



» Your Fire and Rescue Service



Fire Stations		Staff		Incidents attended 2022-2023		Prevention & Protection 2022-2023	
Wholetime	11	Non-operational	168	All Emergency Incidents	8,244	Safe and Well Visits	6,129
On-call	4	Wholetime	373	Fires in the home	380	Fire Safety Audits	1,083
Wholetime and On-call	1	On-call	65	Fires in other buildings	206	Building consultations	1,121
		Control Staff	38	Road traffic collisions	420		
		Volunteers	11	Outdoor fires	954		
				Water rescues	53		

» About us

In our Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019-23, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority set six public facing commitments:

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

For 2022-23, RBFRS set an additional four objectives:

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



» Awards and Accreditations



The Service maintained its Gold Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme, the Armed Forces Covenant, in recognition of its commitment to supporting the Armed Forces.



As part of our partnership with Women in the Fire Service, we offered bespoke training opportunities to help women in the Service both professionally and personally.



The Service continued to solidify its commitment to supporting disabled people as a member of the Business Disability Forum. The Forum is a not-for-profit membership organisation that helps services become more accessible.



We are proud to have maintained the Level Three 'Leader' status in the Disability Confident Scheme. We have made efforts, such as our continued involvement with Leonard Cheshire's Change 100 Scheme, to demonstrate our commitment.



This year, the Service was awarded 'Project of the Year' by the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) for our work on the Summer Internship Scheme at AFSA's annual awards event in November 2022.



Membership of Inclusive Employers has been maintained this year to provide further support and ensure that our services are inclusive for all.

» Social Media Highlights



7.9k Followers
917 New followers
376k Total reach
25k Engagements



226k Users
281k Sessions
504k Page Views
1.79m Engagements



2.3k Followers
261 New followers
12k Reach
86 New posts



681 Hours watched
29k Views
456 Subscribers
62 New subscribers



11.5k Followers
559 New followers
1.1k Tweets
31k Engagements



2.4k Followers
542 New followers
184k Impressions
4k Engagements



» Timeline of the Last Year



First Firefighter Apprentices Graduate

Following an intensive 13-week training course, a group of 18 Wholetime Firefighter graduates celebrated their achievements at a Graduation Ceremony in front of their family and friends. For the first time, RBFRS recruited Apprentices into the crucial firefighter role.



Fire Aid for Ukraine

The Service provided four vehicles and various items of equipment to Ukraine. This work was coordinated by FIRE AID, The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the wider sector. The first convoy left in mid-March, the second one set off in late April and the third convoy left in early May. All convoys arrived safely in Poland, ahead of the final equipment transfer to Ukraine.



Summer Heatwaves

Between Saturday, 16 July and Wednesday, 20 July, Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) took over 1,000 calls and on the hottest day, Tuesday, 19 July, TVFCS staff took more than 550 emergency calls. Similarly, over a three-day period from Thursday, 11 August to Saturday, 13 August, we experienced a 99% increase in calls compared to the same period in 2021.

April 2022

May 2022

June 2022

July 2022

August 2022

September 2022

Positive Action in Action

The Service its first 'Have a Go' events following a two-year pause due to COVID measures. Two female focused events were held at Whitley Wood Fire Station in April and May, whilst Langley Fire Station hosted their own 'Have a Go' evening in March.

Artwork at Theale

Evan Rose, in Year 8, at Theale Green School designed a graphic that was applied to the wall of the lobby in Theale Community Fire Station.



Red Plaque Memorials

In May, two memorial plaques were unveiled to honour the lives of Firefighters David Barnes and Neil Goldsmith, who tragically lost their lives while on duty on 15 September 1977. The plaques were unveiled on 20 May at Caversham Road and Wokingham Road Fire Stations respectively.



Maidenhead Open Day

Maidenhead Fire Station held the first Open Day since the beginning of the COVID pandemic. The event was supported by our emergency service partners.



Fire Cadets Impress at Graduation Ceremony

On Thursday, 7 July 2022, Fire Cadets from across Berkshire showed off their new skills at a Graduation Ceremony at Whitley Wood Fire Station. The event was well attended with approximately 150 guests, including families, the High Sheriff and members of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

First Year of Internship Scheme

The Summer Internship Scheme, formally known as the Chairman's Internship Scheme, launched in the summer of 2022. The Scheme targeted young people from Berkshire who aged 16-18 and from ethnic groups that are under-represented in the Service.

Reading Pride 2022

On Saturday, 3 September, colleagues from across the Service joined together to host a stall at the Reading Pride festival in King's Meadow, Reading.



»» Timeline of the Last Year



Opening of Theale Community Fire Station

Theale Community Fire Station, located on Wigmore Lane, was officially opened following a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Mr. James Puxley, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for the Royal County of Berkshire. The facility is the third community tri-service station to be opened in the County.



Service Celebrates Success at Awards

On Tuesday, 1 November 2022, the Service's annual Awards Ceremony took place at the Coppid Beech Hotel in Bracknell. Awards were then presented in 13 categories, followed by a Long Service Award, and Long Service and Good Conduct Medals, for 20 years' service. This year, three recipients also received a 30-year Long Service and Good Conduct clasp.



Over £10,000 Raised for Charity

Firefighters from Slough, Langley and Maidenhead Fire Stations, along with staff and volunteers from across the Service, organised two car washes and collections to raise money for charity. In total, over £10,000 was raised, with all the proceeds going to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal and The Fire Fighters Charity.

October 2022

November 2022

December 2022

January 2023

February 2023

March 2023

New Intranet and Internet

With the launch of a new intranet in late October, staff across the Service can now benefit from the integration of Microsoft 365 products and functionality, to assist their work. Our new, refreshed website also went live, providing an improved tool for engagement with our communities. The new website has been built on WordPress, a popular tool for websites across the world. It has been customised to include our Service's branding and structured to align to our ways of working.

Commemorating Queen Elizabeth II

Upon the passing of Her Late Majesty The Queen on Thursday, 8 September 2022, our Service joined the nation in honouring her lifetime of dedicated service. Queen Elizabeth II reigned for 70 years from 1952 to 2022.

Built Environment Programme Concludes

Following a two-year programme focused on the issues identified in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report, the Built Environment Programme (BEP) concluded in December 2022. The Programme addressed the 46 recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Report (Phase 1), managed all High-Rise Residential Buildings (HRRBs) in Royal Berkshire and coordinated a response to the resulting legislative changes.



HMICFRS Publish Report

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) released their report, which confirmed that our Service is performing to a high standard, receiving three 'good' judgments across the three areas (effectiveness, efficiency and people) inspected.

New Community Risk Management Plan Proposed

An 11-week public consultation on Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's draft Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for the years 2023 - 2027 began on 9 January. The CRMP explains how all fire and rescue related risk in the community is evaluated and how resources are allocated to manage those risks.



» Our Year in Numbers



2,030

Primary and secondary fires attended.



8,244

Emergency incidents responded to.



73.6%

Incident response times within 10 minutes.



6,129

Safe and Well Visits completed.



2,324

Non-fire emergencies attended.



1,083

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 the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the Annual Plan 2022-2023

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 and 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 34-36.

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 a 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 34.6 percent, to 3,907.

Fire Safety Inspecting Officers completed over a thousand 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.

In April 2022, we launched our new Risk Based Inspection Programme which will ensure we target our resources at the highest risk premises. This year, 23.4 percent of our audits were carried out

on premises identified as High or Very High risk. In 2022-23, there were 8,244 emergency incidents within Berkshire, 12.6 percent higher than the previous year. The very hot, dry summer was the primary cause of the high number of incidents.

This particularly effected the number of Secondary Fires, which include field fires and other outdoor fires. There were over 50 percent more of these types of fire this year compared to last. In July and August alone, we attended over 500 Secondary Fires.

The number of False Alarm calls has started to stabilise this year after the effects of the pandemic, when Automatic Fire Alarm call numbers fell as businesses closed, rising again as they re-opened.

We have attended nearly 8 percent more Road Traffic Accidents this year than last, as the numbers of these incidents have continued to return to pre-pandemic levels. Although we did not meet our target of a maximum of 4 percent of working time

**Between 2021-2022 and
2022-2023 the number of
emergency incidents rose by**

12.6%



»» Our Performance

lost to sickness in 2022-23, we have improved from 5.8 percent last year to 5.3 percent this year, against a societal background of increasing sickness levels.

Our wholtime fire engines have been available 97.5 percent of the time this year, close to our 99 percent target. We constantly monitor and manage our crewing arrangements to maximise availability. Our on-call crews have achieved 40.6 percent availability this year. This is lower than our 60 percent target and we have continued to strive to increase availability of on-call.

In 2022-23, we attended 73.6 percent of all emergency incidents within 10 minutes of receiving a call. We did not achieve our Response Standard target of 75 percent. As mentioned above, we attended an exceptionally high number of incidents in July and August due to the hot, dry weather conditions, and in these months our performance was significantly reduced.

We also experienced a spate of incidents in December associated with storm conditions, again impacting our speed of response. In most other months we achieved the Standard, for example attending over 77 percent of incidents in 10 minutes in January.

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 2022-23, internal audits were carried out in the across a number of areas across the Service.

These areas were:

- Cyber Essentials (advisory)
- Risk Management and Governance
- Firefighter Pension Administration
- Payroll Provider - Dataplan
- Key Financial Controls
- Health and Safety including Mandatory Training
- Grenfell Action Plans
- Facilities Management

Our auditors found substantial assurance in four of these areas and reasonable assurance in the other three (the Cyber Essentials audit is advisory and doesn't result in a rating). 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.



» HMICFRS Inspection

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

The Service has built upon the success of its first inspection in 2019, achieving graded judgments of 'good' across all 11 questions judged under the three areas. Inspectors noted that the Service has worked effectively to address areas for improvement for example, in quality-assuring its prevention and protection activity, making sure that learning from incidents is shared across the service and ensuring the public is informed of ongoing incidents.

The report also noted that the Service has also made sure positive values and behaviours are accepted by everyone across the service. It has developed a positive feedback culture and effective grievance procedures.

Later in the year HMICFRS also released a report around culture in the fire and rescue services across the UK. The report highlighted contained extremely serious and concerning allegations of bullying, harassment and discrimination within the sector.

While the report highlights systemic issues that require Government and sector-led change, the Service would like to reiterate the ongoing commitment to ensure that everyone that works at RBFRS is treated with dignity and respect and work will continue to support continuous improvement in this area.

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.”

» At the Heart of Communities

Ensuring a Swift and Effective Response

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

Summer Heatwaves

The summer of 2022 saw a prolonged period of drought and some of the highest recorded temperatures across the United Kingdom. Consequently, fire and rescue services across the country responded to an extraordinary volume of incidents.

Between Saturday, 16 July and Wednesday, 20 July, Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) took over 1,000 calls and on the hottest day, Tuesday, 19 July, TVFCS staff took more than 550 emergency calls. Similarly, over a three-day period from Thursday, 11 August to Saturday, 13 August, we experienced a 99 percent increase in calls compared to the same period in 2021. In total, we responded to a total of 564 fires in the open in July and August.

Our operational staff, firefighters and officers responded to a number of challenging incidents in the Thames Valley throughout the summer. Notably, crews responded to an incident involving acetylene canisters in Thatcham, a large residential fire in Woodley, and a protracted woodland fire near Burchetts Green.

During this time, the Service provided additional support to London Fire Brigade and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service when they declared major incidents in July. Despite substantial demand on the Service, a major incident

was not declared in Berkshire at any point in the summer.

Ahead of and during the heatwaves, our teams engaged with communities across Berkshire to make them aware of the dangers posed by open water and the high risks of wildfire. Staff visited hotspots along the River Thames and Jubilee Flood Alleviation Channel, commonly called the Jubilee River, to warn people of the dangers posed by cold water shock and hidden debris under the water's surface.

These messages were accompanied by information shared on social media and a number of interviews with local media to warn our communities.

In July and August 2022,
the Service responded to

258

fires in the open



» At the Heart of Communities

Promoting Community Safety

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

#Winterwise Campaign

In 2022, the Service launched a #WinterWise campaign to combat new challenges as many members of the public understandably looked for ways to deal with colder weather and rising costs.

RBFRS Prevention Teams identified an increased risk of domestic fires across the County with documented instances of people using unconventional heat sources, such as disposable barbecues and gas hobs to keep warm inside their homes.

Candle, electrical and chimney fires, along with carbon monoxide poisoning, were also among some of the other increased potential risks identified caused by the economic difficulties people in our communities faced.

To support residents, our teams delivered fire safety messaging around a variety of topics including candle safety, carbon monoxide poisoning, electrical fires, amongst others.

Operation Holly – Multi-Agency Working

led by the Joint Operations Roads Policing Unit of Hampshire Constabulary and Thames Valley Police, Operation Holly combines educational and enforcement activity to warn people each year about the risks of driving while under

the influence of drink and drugs during the festive season.

The Service has supported this initiative for several years, and last year Wokingham Road and Wokingham Fire Stations constructed simulated road traffic collisions (RTC) outside the front of their Stations to remind our communities about the severe dangers of drink and drug driving. Stations throughout the Service also displayed large banners carrying the hashtag #ItsNotWorthTheRisk prominently outside their buildings.

The overall aim of Operation Holly was to make driving on Berkshire's roads safer for everyone. It helped reinforce messages around how RTCs not only cause deaths, but also leave people with life-changing and life-limiting injuries.

RBFRS teamed up with Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service to provide advice for people on how to stay safe and avoid putting their lives and the lives of others in danger. The Safety advice also encouraged people to challenge others who may have been tempted to drive having drunk alcohol or used drugs.

Following targeted activity throughout the month of December 2022, Police Officers from Thames Valley and Hampshire made more than 700 arrests across both force areas as part of Operation Holly.



The best way to deal with road traffic collisions is to stop them from happening in the first place. We need to get this important message out to as many people as possible. Simply don't drink or take drugs and drive. It's not worth the risk.

- Darren Barrett - Watch Manager



» At the Heart of Communities

Focus on Fire Safety

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

Fire Safety (England) Regulations

On 23 January, 2023 the new Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 (FSER) came into force and were an important step towards implementing the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report.

The Government's Fire Safety Consultation ran from July to October 2020, and included proposals to implement the Inquiry's recommendations in a practical way, and in some cases to go further. The new Regulations brought these changes into force and sit alongside the Fire Safety Act amendments to the Fire Safety Order.

The new FSER imposed new duties on the Responsible Persons (RP) for multi-occupied residential buildings and requires them to take specific actions depending on the height of their buildings.

Without the correct information about the design and construction of external walls, fire and rescue services are unable to plan an effective response to incidents occurring in multi-occupied residential buildings.

Floor levels and flat numbers must be clearly identifiable in low visibility conditions and information regarding known faults with lifts and key firefighting equipment must be reported electronically to the

fire service, with RPs required to carry out regular monthly checks.

In preparation for these new changes in legislation, letters were sent to all RPs for High-Rise Residential Buildings (HRRB) in Berkshire, outlining their legal responsibilities and explaining the new regulations.

Presentations with the local authorities and landlord forums were delivered to ensure they were aware of the new regulations and how they could help support us in enforcing them.

Additionally, a wide range of key stakeholders were engaged through a robust engagement plan to ensure that they were aware of the new regulations and their duty to comply with them. Some of which included working with local media to raise awareness around the legislative changes and training with our staff to ensure they were aware of the changes and their responsibilities.

Conclusion of the Built Environment Programme

Following a two-year programme focused on the issues identified in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report, the Built Environment Programme (BEP) closed in December 2022.

The safety of our residents and staff has remained a key priority of the Programme and has helped



» At the Heart of Communities

to inform the changes and improvements that have been embedded across the Service.

From the outset, a risk-based approach was used to ensure sufficient steps were taken to address all 46 recommendations, including the 17 not specifically directed at fire and rescue services.

Many of the recommendations were aimed at the training and upskilling of fire and rescue service staff. These have been addressed through the delivery of a number of e-learning packages and a series of practical assurance exercises. Additionally, the Programme has introduced new equipment and published a number of Operational Information Notes (OINs) - including Fires in Tall Buildings and Evacuation and Rescue of Persons - to support our response capabilities when attending incidents at HRRBs.

Thames Valley Fire Control Service's capabilities to manage large-scale incidents has been strengthened by the introduction of several national initiatives including National Talk Group 20 (NTG20) and Operation Willow Beck.

NTG20 allows each control room to immediately advise all Control rooms in England of an incident and keeps them updated in the event that related calls are diverted to their control rooms.

Operation Willow Beck redistributes calls around participating control rooms in the event of larger incidents.

Both systems have been successfully utilised throughout the year, including during the heatwave in July 2022. Throughout the Programme, we have worked closely with stakeholders at regional

and national levels to ensure the Service supports ongoing work elsewhere and adopts the best practices.

We have collaborated with both Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services to align changes where appropriate. We have also attended exercises with London Fire Brigade and invited partner agencies to take part in our exercises.

Throughout the year, crews have taken part in a series of high-rise training exercises. These exercises have all had different areas of focus, including:

Built Environment Programme Objectives

1. Address the **46 recommendations** of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Report (Phase 1).
2. Manage all **High-Rise Residential Buildings** (HRRBs) in Royal Berkshire.
3. Coordinate a response to **legislative changes**, further Grenfell Inquiry recommendations and additional areas of improvement identified within the Programme.

- Communication structures involved in a high-rise incident and a change of evacuation strategy
- Incident command systems and incident ground management, looking specifically at the application of JESIP principles. To test this, the Service worked with partner agencies to simulate multi-agency JESIP meetings.
- The use of new technology including: radio boosters, drone deployment; and Electronic Premises Information Plates (EPIPs). During one of the exercises, staff worked with Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue's (BLSAR) drone and saw how Incident Commanders could benefit from the support of drones at a high-rise incident.
- The management of a mass evacuation and multiple Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls.
- Engaging with multi-lingual role-players to test a new translation app available on all appliance mobile phones.

As we move forward, RBFPS will continue to work closely with Building Owners and Responsible Persons, alongside our partners in Local Authority Housing Teams and Building Control Bodies, to ensure appropriate actions are taken and interim measures are applied, where deemed appropriate.

» At the Heart of Communities

Donations, Charity and Community Work

As part of our ongoing commitments to the communities we serve, the Service and its staff undertook several charitable efforts throughout 2022/23. Alongside these proactive efforts, the Service continued to provide its facilities to community groups across Berkshire and hosted events year-round for the public.

Fire Aid for Ukraine

RBFRS joined fire and rescue services across the country in providing support to assist with the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

Fire services across the UK have donated thousands of items of kit and equipment to be sent to Ukraine, to support firefighters on the frontline.

The donated equipment includes a wide-range of kit, which is either due to be replaced or fire services have the capacity to donate it. It has all been provided in good, working order and all vehicles have been serviced and checked before the

convoy sets off. Each vehicle has been packed with essential – and lifesaving – equipment.

RBFRS has provided four vehicles and various items of equipment, including breathing apparatus sets, hose reels, defibrillators, PPE and generators.

This work was coordinated by FIRE AID, The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the wider sector, where all items will then be sent onto those that need them.

In total, 60 fire vehicles were donated by UK fire and rescue services and from wider fire sector as part of three convoys. The convoys travelled across Europe in groups, stopping in Eastern Poland where the equipment and appliances were handed to Ukrainian authorities.

The first convoy left in mid-March, the second one set off on 21 April and the third convoy left in early May.

These donations of firefighting equipment – which had been requested by Ukraine – helped its fire and rescue service as they continued their life-saving work in extremely challenging circumstances.

Donations to Ukraine from RBFRS

- Four Fire Appliances
- Hose Reels
- Breathing Apparatus Sets
- Defibrillators
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Generators



» At the Heart of Communities

Fundraising Efforts

In 2022-23, fundraising by staff from the Service was mainly in aid of the The Fire Fighters Charity who provide support for serving and retired fire service personnel across the UK. However, staff also supported other great local, national and international causes.

In April 2022, our 18 Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices undertook a challenge to row the equivalent of the entire length of the River Thames on rowing machines. The Apprentices completed their challenge and raised £3,188 for The Fire Fighters Charity.

Meanwhile, a team of three runners from Caversham Road's White Watch set off on the Dino Dash, a 97-mile run in inflatable dinosaur suits in June 2022.

Scott Butler, Ross Burton, Tom Houseman and support crew, Richie Young and Ed Robinson, set off from Exmouth after their last night shift. The route included over 13,000 feet of ascent, pushing the runners to their limits. The team raised over £1,400 for The Fire Fighters Charity.

Scott Butler took part in another challenge later in the year. Joined by Matt Hooper from Slough White Watch, the two travelled over 1,000 kilometres across East Africa raising over £2,500 for Made With Hope, a charity supporting African rural schools.

In February 2023, an incredible £10,000 was raised in one weekend at two charity car washes at Slough and Maidenhead for the DEC Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal and The Fire Fighters Charity.

Clothes Recycling Banks outside fire stations raised significant amounts for The Fire Fighters Charity.

Throughout the 2022/23 financial year, the 11 fire stations with clothes banks in Berkshire raised an incredible £14,104, with Lambourn Fire Station achieving the highest total at £2,543.

Fundraiser totals

£3,188

Raised by Firefighter Apprentices for The Fire Fighters Charity.

£1,400

Raised by the Dino Dash Team for The Fire Fighters Charity.

£10,000

Raised for the DEC Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal and The Fire Fighters Charity.

£14,104

Raised by clothes bank donations at fire stations across Berkshire.



» At the Heart of Communities

Fire Station at the Heart of Communities

Our fire stations are at the heart of our communities, and as such are used in a variety of ways in our communities.

Armed Forces Veterans' Hubs

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority is committed to supporting the Armed Forces community. RBFRS was awarded the Gold Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme in 2020.

As part of this ongoing commitment, the Service hosts regular Armed Forces Veterans' Hubs around the County which offer attendees a forum to speak to a range of organisations and each other. In 2022/23, three hubs were hosted at Maidenhead, Newbury and Crowthorne Fire Stations.

Wellness Hubs

Crowthorne Community Fire Station hosted a number of sessions in partnership with Bracknell Forest Council's 'Winter Wellness Hubs' series from November 2022 to March 2023.

Following this, Crowthorne's Happiness Hub launched in March 2023. Hosted in the community room, the Happiness Hub is a collaboration of support services including mental health and well-being advice to individuals 18 years and over who live in Bracknell Forest and surrounding areas.

The Winter Wellness and Happiness Hubs have been held monthly since November 2022 allowing people from the Crowthorne area to get advice and support from the Fire Service and other organisations who support the Hubs.

Open Days

2022 saw the return of fire station open days for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic and allowed firefighters, staff and volunteers to welcome the public back into fire stations. During the days, our teams shared key fire and water safety information, while also showcasing RBFRS as a career path, sharing information on the variety of roles available.

Across the year, five open days were hosted at fire stations, raising several hundred pounds for charity across the days.



.....
I witnessed first-hand the time and effort that went into organising and supporting this event, from those on duty crews to the volunteers that gave up their own time, it was great to see.

- Andy Stockwell, Group Manager on the Open Day at Maidenhead Fire Station.



» Capacity, Capability and Resilience

Modernising our Service

In our Strategic Asset Investment Framework, the Fire Authority has set out how we will maintain and renew our vital capital assets, necessary to support our service delivery. Our capital assets include:

- Our buildings, which includes 16 fire stations and our headquarters;
- Our fire appliances, equipment and support fleet; and
- Our ICT infrastructure and systems.

Together, these assets represent a major capital investment. The efficiency of these assets can also have a significant impact on our revenue budget as older stations, fire appliances and ICT require additional maintenance and are often more expensive to run.

During 2022-2023, the Service has invested in several key areas to modernise the delivery of our services to the people of Berkshire.

New Website and Intranet Project

During 2022-2023, new website and intranet systems were released, improving information sharing both within the Service and to our communities.

An opportunity to improve both systems was identified and the project team carried out engagement surveys with staff and the public to help inform the new solution.

Following the appointment of the successful supplier, teams worked to ensure that the key requirements of the project were met and the transition to the new systems was as smooth as possible. Accessibility was a key consideration throughout the project, to ensure that as many people as possible can easily access the website and intranet.

The new intranet system has been built on Microsoft Sharepoint, which has provided a high level of integration with other applications that are being used by staff in the Service. This has enabled staff to seamlessly share information and work more effectively together.

The website replacement project ran simultaneously and has been built on WordPress. While existing content was carried over to the new site, new features have been added such as the addition of a dedicated feed for displaying relevant incidents to the public and media, a digital dashboard displaying our performance measures and improved functionality when using mobile devices.

Since the launch of the new website, it has received over 167,000 visits.



» Capacity, Capability and Resilience

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.

Total savings across the three Thames Valley services

£532,178

Total savings by RBFRS alone

£130,000

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



» Capacity, Capability and Resilience

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.

Investing in our Stations

Our Service has 16 fire stations located across the County. As we continue to evolve and improve, it is essential that we continue appropriate investment in our estate, for the benefit of staff and the public.

Over the past few years, the Service has delivered several major build and refurbishment projects, such as Theale, Crowthorne and Hungerford. This

investment has provided improved community focused fire stations, which have shared facilities with our blue light partners which improves closer working, as well as providing greater value for the public purse.

In addition, we are accelerating a new Estates Development Programme, which has already seen a range of improvements undertaken at sites including Bracknell and Maidenhead Fire Stations.

The primary objectives of this Programme are to:

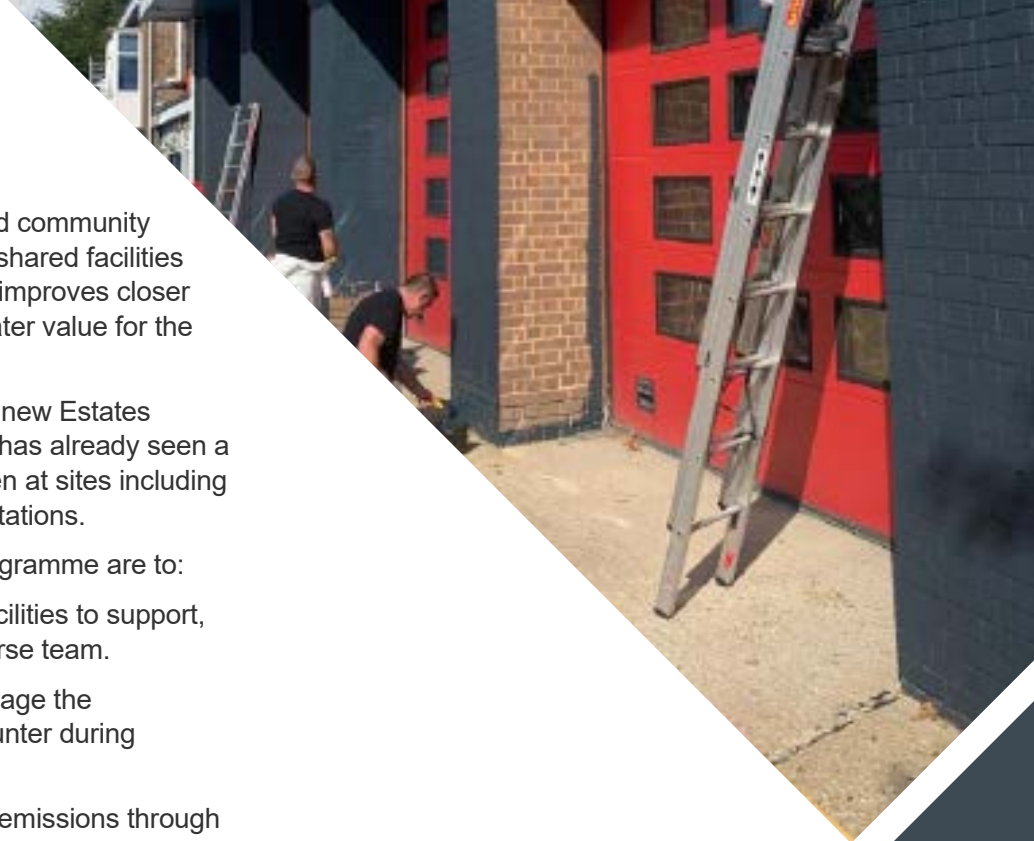
1. Improve the equality of our facilities to support, attract and retain a more diverse team.
2. Better enable our staff to manage the contaminants they may encounter during emergency incidents.
3. Reduce the Service's carbon emissions through investment in sustainability features and ways of working.

Bracknell Fire Station was refurbished in three stages over the course of 14 weeks through winter 2022.

Phase one saw significant improvements to the contamination management arrangements by creating a separate space for fire kits, upgrading extraction and ventilation in the locker area, installing a new laundry and drying room facilities.

Phase two included an upgrade to the Station's Mess Room to create a more modern and professional environment for the crew to occupy and Phase three focused on improving the equality of the facilities, such as enhancing female specific accommodation.

**Bracknell Fire Station's
refurbishment project took
14 weeks
through the winter
months of 2022.**



» Capacity, Capability and Resilience

Following the refurbishment, one member of staff shared the following: “Overall, the station is now much better equipped, providing the functions expected of a modern fire station.

“Despite there being extensive works throughout, there was minimal disruption to the station and a contractor was on site every day to make sure everything was running smoothly.”

After a period of staff engagement, work began in September 2022 to refurbish Maidenhead Fire Station to make it a fit for purpose, modern workplace.

The upgrades include, refurbishment of the



.....

Overall, the station is now much better equipped, providing the functions expected of a modern fire station. Despite there being extensive works throughout, there was minimal disruption to the station and a contractor was on site every day to make sure everything was running smoothly

- Staff Member, Bracknell Fire Station

.....



first floor to create a new open-plan office to enable closer working between response, prevention and protection staff, two new meeting rooms, and individual rest areas for operational crews.

Further improvements were achieved including female facilities, including individual shower, toilet and changing cubicles, an upgrade to the gym space, the creation of a third office, new laundry facilities and an upgrade to the breathing apparatus room. Finally, the project's last phase saw improvements to the male WC and showers.

This refurbishment project has significantly transformed the station and makes better use of our existing buildings.

Looking ahead, our Strategic Asset Investment Framework describes our capital investment programme over the next 10 years. The next major projects will be the redevelopment of the Training Centre facilities at the Whitley Wood and Slough Fire Station as well as estate wide improvements to reduce our carbon emissions and support our diverse workforce.



» Capacity, Capability and Resilience

Official Opening of Theale Community Fire Station

Following planning permission in August 2018, Theale Community Fire Station was officially opened on 20 October last year following a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Mr. James Puxley, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for the Royal County of Berkshire.

The Station has been operational since October 2021 with firefighting crews attending emergency incidents and providing a valuable service to communities across Berkshire. However, due to the disruption caused by COVID-19, the official opening ceremony was postponed for a year.

The state-of-the-art facility is the third community tri-service station to be opened in the Royal County, following the refurbishment of Hungerford Fire Station and the rebuild of Crowthorne in 2017 and 2020 respectively.

The tri-service station was designed to be easily identifiable and provided an important space for local communities to use. The Station's location was deliberately chosen with the main aim of improving the overall speed of response times to emergency incidents, while ensuring emergency vehicles were closer to the surrounding communities.

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer, said: "The Station represents a landmark to be proud of. It has been designed to be easily identifiable and provides an important space for local communities to use.

"Careful consideration was given to the location of Theale Community Fire Station. As such,

the Station now offers improved access to major road networks, such as the M4 and A4 corridors, while ensuring emergency vehicles are closer to the surrounding communities."

Theale Community Fire Station has brought an even closer working relationships between local ambulance, fire and rescue and police services.

All three emergency services have taken part in joint training exercises, allowing them to share expertise in a number of areas, including rescue and casualty care.



.....

The Station represents a landmark to be proud of. It has been designed to be easily identifiable and provides an important space for local communities to use.

- Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer

.....



» Capacity, Capability and Resilience

Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices

In January 2022, for the first time, we recruited Apprentices into the crucial firefighter role. Following an intensive 13-week training course, a group of 18 Wholetime Firefighter graduates celebrated their achievements at a Graduation Ceremony at Whitley Wood Fire Station in front of their family and friends in April 2022. Following this they took up their station placements across the County.

This was the first time that RBFRS has recruited Apprentices into the crucial firefighter role. 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 first part of the training course was delivered by 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 were thoroughly tested with a range of practical and theoretical training, core skills, breathing apparatus, fire behaviour, water rescue and road traffic collision training.

Upon completion of the course, the Apprentices returned to our Training Centre for a further five weeks with Instructors to help integrate them into RBFRS' ways of working.

This included 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.

All 18 Apprentices remain in post and it is anticipated the Apprenticeships will be completed within 24 months from the start date.

In January 2023, the next cohort of Apprentices were recruited. We received 233 eligible applications, and after a long and challenging recruitment process, 24 were selected to begin the training towards becoming Wholetime Firefighters.

**Royal Berkshire Fire and
Rescue Service welcomed
18
Wholetime Firefighter
Apprentices in its first cohort.**



» One Team Working Collaboratively

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Fire and Rescue Sector is characterised by a disproportionately low number of women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Our Service's EDI initiatives aim to help remedy this whilst also helping to connect the Service to the many diverse communities of Berkshire.

This work has also allowed the Service to tailor itself to the different needs of Berkshire's communities, whilst creating a workplace where everyone feels valued and able to be themselves. Consequently, the Service recognise that being an open and inclusive Service will ultimately make it more effective.

As part of our EDI Objectives, we are committed to building on our inclusive culture. We will continue taking action to ensure we have a culture where everyone feels valued and is treated with dignity and respect. We will support all staff to contribute to the creation of an inclusive working environment.

New EDI Objectives

Following a public consultation, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority adopted four revised EDI Objectives on behalf of the Service.

The first objective is focused on increasing the diversity of staff at all levels, recognising the value of a diverse workforce. The second is centred on leadership and our corporate commitment to support our organisational leaders to understand their role in tackling inequalities and demonstrate inclusive behaviours.

The third objective focuses on improving service delivery by creating strong links with different communities across Berkshire. The final objective emphasises the importance of growing an inclusive culture of equality and diversity in the Service.

All four objectives were created in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Change 100 Internships

The Change 100 Programme was developed by Leonard Cheshire and 2022 marked the fifth year of our Service's participation. As part of the Scheme, the Service welcomed three interns for 100 days over the summer.

The interns worked as part of the Communications and Engagement, Business Support and Built Environment Programme 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.



It's increased my confidence, helped kickstart my career, and enabled me to work for an outstanding organisation which does inspiring work helping communities in Berkshire.

- Ali Abdi, Change 100 Intern



» One Team Working Collaboratively

Summer Internship Scheme

The Summer Internship Scheme, previously known as the Chairman's 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.

In the 2022 intake, 10 internship positions were offered. This was an expansion from the originally planned number of eight. All of these positions were oversubscribed, with the Programme receiving 50 applications.

The interns worked in designated 'home departments' as part of the internship, contributing to the Service whilst learning about the fire and rescue sector.

They convened as a group twice a week; to visit a fire station on Wednesdays and share their learning on Fridays. Station visits typically included a range of activities for the interns with sessions being run by operational members of the Service.

The responses of interns who took part in the Programme suggest a highly positive experience. In their commentary, interns demonstrated enjoyment of a variety of aspects of the programme, in particular the opportunity to try new things and meet

new people. All of the interns said that they would recommend the Programme to others.

Mustafa Khan, who interned as part of the Finance Team, said: "From the moment I entered Finance, it felt like home. Everyone was a friend and the working environment within Finance was special.

"The three days a week sat at my desk, were surprisingly my favourite across the whole internship; and the amount of experience I gained whilst having fun was truly fantastic and was something I never would have thought I would have had upon joining the Scheme."

In May 2023, a second cohort of interns will be selected to take part in the Internship Programme. Several aspects of the Scheme have been altered based on the findings of the previous year's evaluation report.

The total number of interns has been reduced to five, with the interns rotating between five teams on a weekly basis. The age bracket has also been lowered to include just 16 and 17 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.



» One Team Working Collaboratively

Positive Action

Our Service ran a series of initiatives to help promote a career in the fire and rescue sector to groups in our community that may not have considered us or the role of a firefighter before.

In April 2022, we took the drill ground assessment out to a crossfit gym in Reading and ran the first of two female focused 'Have a Go' events. Across the events, 19 people took part, 11 women and eight men, with the majority of them completing the assessment in the required time.

In the same month, the Service held the first of two female focused 'Have a Go' events. During these, 12 attendees tried some of the fitness tests, spoke with firefighters and toured Whitley Wood Fire Station. They were then invited back in May to see how their training was going. At this event the 13 attendees were able to have a go at all of the physical tests for becoming a firefighter.

At all of the events, attendees were introduced to the Behavioural Competency Framework and at the May female focused event, the Resourcing and Development Team ran a session to help potential candidates write their supporting statement, which is along with the application form is the initial part of the recruitment process.

In February 2023, Bracknell's Red Watch welcomed members of Wokingham Netball Club into the Station to take part in a 'Have a Go' day. As part of the visit, the team took part in the selection tests they would be expected to perform if they applied for a firefighter role within the Service.



It's really important, as a public service, we reflect the communities that we serve. What we're trying to communicate is that there is no stereotypical firefighter anymore.

- Helen Morbin, Wellbeing Manager



Pride 2022

This year, we once again attended Reading Pride, reaffirming our commitment to supporting and making a positive difference to the communities we serve. Similarly, Red Watch from Newbury Fire Station attended Newbury Pride in June 2022.

These events gave the Service an opportunity to promote careers and important safety advice. One of our core aims is to ensure that everyone feels safe to access our services, enabling us to better serve our County.



» One Team Working Collaboratively

Prioritising Health, Safety and Wellbeing

In our [People Strategy](#), we set out our objective to support both the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff. During the 2022-2023 financial year, we progressed a number of areas dedicated to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.

Cycle2Work Scheme

Last year, the Service took part in the Cycle2Work Scheme in partnership with Halfords. The scheme is aimed at encouraging staff to cycle rather than drive or use alternate transportation. The Scheme has a limit of £2,000, the cost of which is covered by Halfords. Halfords partner with over 480 independent bike retailers which means, brands not normally stocked by Halfords can be accessed through the Scheme. In total, 15 applications were made from within the Service.

Flu Vaccinations

As part of the Service's commitment to the health and wellbeing of its staff, all staff who were not eligible for an NHS vaccination were offered the opportunity to be reimbursed for a flu vaccination up to a cost of £16.99.

To be eligible for an NHS vaccination you must be either aged 50-64, pregnant, a carer or under 50 and clinically at risk.

The Service encouraged everyone is to consider having the flu vaccination to both support the capacity of the NHS and support the Service to maintain crewing and staffing levels.

Mental Health Support

Every quarter Health Assured, our employee assistance provider, sends the Service anonymised information concerning the mental health of our staff.

This information includes the number of calls into the 24/7 telephone helpline and the primary reason for the call. RBFRS monitors this information, and initiatives are implemented to support staff where trends are identified. Between March 2022 and April 2023, 93 calls were made to the helpline by staff from the Service.

Of these 93, 27 calls (29%) made by staff within the Service concerned feelings of anxiety. In response, we provided specific advice and activities to assist staff in managing these feelings. Staff were regularly reminded of the other support avenues that our Service offers, including its dedicated Health and

**43 non-operational
and 24 TVFCS
staff completed a bi-annual
wellbeing check-in last year.**

Safety Team, Wellbeing Manager, Blue Light Champions, and Occupational Health.

Wellbeing Check-ins

In May, we began offering all staff the opportunity to complete bi-annual wellbeing check-ins. Until this year, only station based staff were eligible for the tests. However, recognising that the pandemic has had a significant impact on wellbeing, the Service opened up the opportunity for non-operational and Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) staff.

Following the change, 43 non-operational staff and 24 TVFCS staff completed a wellbeing check-in between May 2022 and the end of March 2023.

The consultation uses Fitech, a fitness assessment programme, to give an overview of a person's physical health and wellbeing. Fitech creates reports which include advice and guidance to support people in making positive changes to their lifestyle. Anonymised reports are retained by the Service and are used to spot trends, target health promotion campaigns and provide support for our staff.

» One Team Working Collaboratively

Valuing our Staff

In our People Strategy, we set out how we will support staff to become the best public servants they can be, creating a workforce that can deliver an efficient and effective service on behalf of the Fire Authority, to manage all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the people of Berkshire.

Awards Ceremony

On Tuesday, 1 November 2022, the Service held its annual Awards Ceremony at the Coppid Beech Hotel in Bracknell. The original event was due to take place on 10 September at Welford Park. However, this was postponed due to the passing of Her Late Majesty the Queen.

It is important to recognise some of the outstanding contributions of staff, volunteers, partners and members of the public over the past 12 months. The Awards Ceremony is also an opportunity to celebrate some of our longest serving colleagues, who have now completed 20, 30 or 40 years of public service.

Awards were presented in 13 categories, followed by Long Service Awards, and Long Service Good Conduct Medals, for 20 years' service. This year three recipients also received a 30-year Long Service and Good Conduct clasp, to be worn on the ribbon of recipient's existing 20-year medals.

The evening started with Awards being presented by Chair of the Fire Authority, Councillor Paul Gittings, including Excellence in Community Safety; Volunteer of the Year; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion and Excellence in Leadership.

Chief Fire Officer Wayne Bowcock presented Awards, including Support Department of the Year; Fire Station of the Year; Certificates of Commendation; Employee of the Year and Emergency Responder of the Year.

Deputy Lieutenant for the Royal County of Berkshire, Mr Willie Hartley Russell, joined the Ceremony and presented Awards for Fundraiser of the Year; Certificates of Merit; Outstanding Team Achievement and the Long Service Award and Long Service and Good Conduct Medals.

Councillor Paul Gittings, Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, said: "It was such an honour to recognise some of our amazing members of staff, partners and members of the public for their outstanding contribution and dedication to the service, and acts of courage over the past year.

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer, said: "For me personally, it's really important to be able to celebrate the achievements of all of our staff and recognise the hard work and dedication particularly of those who received Awards this year."

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



For me personally, it's really important to be able to celebrate the achievements of all of our staff and recognise the hard work and dedication particularly of those who received awards this year.

- Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer



» Community Risk Management Plan

People living, working or travelling in Berkshire were encouraged to have their say on the future of the Service. An 11-week public consultation on Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's (RBFA) draft Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for the years 2023 – 2027 began on 11 January, 2023 and closed on Monday, 27 March 2023.

RBFA set out how it intends to meet its goals to create safer and more resilient communities by preventing incidents, protecting homes and businesses and responding to emergencies. The CRMP explains how all fire and rescue-related risk in the community is evaluated and how resources are allocated to manage those risks.

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.

Within the CRMP, a number of priorities have been identified for the next four years:

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 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 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.

Speaking about the new CRMP, Councillor Paul Gittings, Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, said: "The years ahead are likely to be some of the most challenging we have faced, which is why we are focused on working ever closer with our local communities, businesses and partner agencies to deliver a first-rate service."



» 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	2022/2023 Target	2022/2023 Actual
Number of fire deaths	0	4
Number of non-fatal fire casualties	37	36
Number of deliberate primary fires	Reduce	129
Number of deliberate secondary fires	Reduce	270
Prevention		
Increase the number of Referrals for Safe and Well Visits received from our partners	10%	34.6%
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 and High Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time	90%	41%
Percentage of Medium Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time	75%	40.8%
Protection		
Proportion of Fire Safety Audits conducted against premises identified as High or Very High Risk in our Risk Based Inspection Programme	Monitor	23.4%
Percentage of Fire Safety Audits with a 'Broadly Compliant' result	60%	73.7%
Percentage success when cases go to court	80%	N/A (No cases)



» Corporate Measures

Measure	2022/2023 Target	2022/2023 Actual
Percentage of statutory fire consultations completed within the required timeframes	95%	96.4%
The number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received	Improve	3,153
Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm calls where RBFRS did not attend	30%	24.8%
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%	73.6%
Percentage of wholetime frontline pumping appliance availability	99%	97.5%
Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)	60%	40.6%
Resilience		
Percentage of visits to Very High, High and Medium Operational Risk sites completed in timescale	Monitor	38.1%
Number of Service Delivery Hub exercises completed	12	12
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%	98.9%
Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the service regards their Safe and Well Visit	100%	99.7%
Number of complaints received	Monitor	28
Number of compliments received	Monitor	22



» 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	2022/2023 Target	2022/2023 Actual
Human Resources and Learning & Development		
Percentage of working time lost to sickness across all staff groups	4%	5.3%
Percentage of eligible staff with Personal Development Reviews	100%	88.0%
Number of formal grievances	Monitor	18
Health and Safety		
Number of *RIDDOR accidents and diseases	4	9
Finance and Procurement		
Percentage of spend subject to competition	85%	85.9%
Compliant spend as a percentage of overall spend	100%	100%
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.



**ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**



RoyalBerksFRS



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