

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY**  
**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Director of Legal & Governance, Graham Britten  
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**Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive**  
Jason Thelwell

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To: Members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

4 December 2017

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS**  
**AND PUBLIC**

Please note the content of Page  
2 of this Agenda Pack

Dear Councillor

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY** to be held in Meeting Room 1, Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Stocklake, Aylesbury on **WEDNESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2017 at 11.00 am** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

Graham Britten  
Director of Legal and Governance

Chairman: Councillor Reed  
Councillors: Carroll, Cranmer, Exon, Glover, Irwin, Lambert, Marland, McCall, McDonald, Roberts, Sullivan, Teesdale, Watson and Wilson



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## **Recording of the Meeting**

The Authority supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. Requests to take photographs or undertake audio or visual recordings either by members of the public or by the media should wherever possible be made to [enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk) at least two working days before the meeting.

The Authority also allows the use of social networking websites and blogging to communicate with people about what is happening, as it happens.

## **Adjournment and Rights to Speak – Public**

The Authority may, when members of the public are present, adjourn a Meeting to hear the views of the public on a particular agenda item. The proposal to adjourn must be moved by a Member, seconded and agreed by a majority of the Members present and voting.

Prior to inviting the public to speak, the Chairman should advise that they:

- (a) raise their hands to indicate their wish to speak at the invitation of the Chairman,
- (b) speak for no more than four minutes,
- (c) should only speak once unless the Chairman agrees otherwise.

The Chairman should resume the Meeting as soon as possible, with the agreement of the other Members present.

Adjournments do not form part of the Meeting and should be confined to times when the views of the public need to be heard.

## **Rights to Speak - Members**

A Member of the constituent Councils who is not a Member of the Authority may attend Meetings of the Authority or its Committees to make a statement on behalf of the Member's constituents in the case of any item under discussion which directly affects the Member's division, with the prior consent of the Chairman of the Meeting which will not be unreasonably withheld. The Member's statement will not last longer than four minutes.

## **Petitions**

Any Member of the constituent Councils, a District Council, or Parish Council, falling within the Fire Authority area may Petition the Fire Authority.

The substance of a petition presented at a Meeting of the Authority shall be summarised, in not more than four minutes, by the Member of the Council who presents it. If the petition does not refer to a matter before the Authority it shall be referred without debate to the appropriate Committee.

## **Questions**

Members of the Authority, or its constituent councils, District, or Parish Councils may submit written questions prior to the Meeting to allow their full and proper consideration. Such questions shall be received by the Monitoring Officer to the Authority, *in writing or by fax*, at least two clear working days before the day of the Meeting of the Authority or the Committee.

## **COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. To appoint the Authority's Standing Committees and Lead Members.
2. To determine the following issues after considering recommendations from the Executive Committee, or in the case of 2(a) below, only, after considering recommendations from the Overview and Audit Committee:
  - (a) variations to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
  - (b) the medium-term financial plans including:
    - (i) the Revenue Budget;
    - (ii) the Capital Programme;
    - (iii) the level of borrowing under the Local Government Act 2003 in accordance with the Prudential Code produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy; and
  - (c) a Precept and all decisions legally required to set a balanced budget each financial year;
  - (d) the Prudential Indicators in accordance with the Prudential Code;
  - (e) the Treasury Strategy;
  - (f) the Scheme of Members' Allowances;
  - (g) the Integrated Risk Management Plan and Action Plan;
  - (h) the Annual Report.
3. To determine the Code of Conduct for Members on recommendation from the Overview and Audit Committee.
4. To determine all other matters reserved by law or otherwise, whether delegated to a committee or not.
5. To determine the terms of appointment or dismissal of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, and deputy to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, or equivalent.
6. To approve the Authority's statutory pay policy statement.

## **AGENDA**

### **Item No:**

#### **1. Apologies**

##### **1a. Welcome any New Member onto the Authority**

To welcome any new Member and to appoint to a Committee in accordance with the Group Leader's wishes.

#### **2. Minutes**

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 18 October 2017 (Item 2) **(Pages 7 - 18)**

#### **3. Disclosure of Interests**

Members to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in any matter being considered which are not entered onto the Authority's Register, and officers to disclose any interests they may have in any contract to be considered.

#### **4. Chairman's Announcements**

To receive the Chairman's announcements (if any).

#### **5. Petitions**

To receive petitions under Standing Order SOA6.

#### **6. Questions**

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order SOA7.

#### **7. Committee Matters:**

Amendments to the Authority's Standing Orders

##### **(a) SOA4 Election of and Powers of the Chairman**

At the Fire Authority meeting on 17 December 1999 (Minute FA31/00) Officers were asked to seek advice from the Home Office and other appropriate sources and report back to the next meeting of the Authority with a process relating to the procedure for the Election of Chairman. At the next meeting of the Fire Authority on 24 March 2000 (Minute FA41/00) it was resolved that in the absence of the Vice-Chairman, the oldest Member will preside.

Rather than having to ask a Member of the Fire Authority their age, if Members are in agreement, the Monitoring Officer or his or her nominee will preside.

It is recommended that the Authority's Standing Orders be amended so that the following text at SOA4 2(b) be deleted:

"In the absence of the Vice-Chairman, the oldest Member present will preside."

and replaced with:

"In the absence of the Vice-Chairman, the Monitoring Officer or an officer nominated by him or her will preside."

**(b) SOA20 Suspension, Variation, and Revocation of Standing Orders**

All the information in the Members' Handbook is readily available on the Authority's website under Fire Authority, a printed copy of the Standing Orders will be given to a Member as part of the induction pack when they join the Authority.

It is recommended that the Authority's Standing Orders be amended so that the following text at SOA20 5 (Variation and Revocation) be deleted:

"A printed copy of these Standing Orders shall be given to each Member of the Authority, for inclusion in the Member's Handbook, by the Monitoring Officer to the Authority upon nomination to the Authority by the Constituent Authority."

and replaced with:

"A printed copy of these Standing Orders shall be given to each Member of the Authority, as part of the induction pack upon nomination to the Authority by the Constituent Authority."

Contact Officer: Katie Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) - 01296 744633

Amendments to the Authority's Financial Regulations

**(c) Investments and Treasury Management**

The Financial Regulations were approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 18 October 2017. However, the update failed to reflect the following decisions taken by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 14 October 2015:

- 1) That future Treasury Management monitoring reports be received by the Overview and Audit Committee.
- 2) That the Overview and Audit Committee's terms of reference be amended so that it shall 'consider and make recommendations to the Authority on the Annual Treasury Management Strategy'.

It is recommended that the Authority's Financial Regulations be amended so that the following text at C.9 (Investments and Treasury Management) be deleted:

"At or before the start of each financial year the Chief Finance Officer will prepare a report on the Treasury Management Strategy for the coming year for consideration by the Executive Committee before submission to the Authority for approval. The Chief Finance Officer will also report to the Executive Committee and the Authority on the annual performance of the Treasury Management function following the end of the financial year."

and replaced with:

“At or before the start of each financial year the Chief Finance Officer will prepare a report on the Treasury Management Strategy for the coming year for consideration by the **Overview and Audit Committee** before submission to the Authority for approval. The Chief Finance Officer will also report to the **Overview and Audit Committee** and the Authority on the annual performance of the Treasury Management function following the end of the financial year.”

Contact Officer: Mark Hemming (Deputy Director of Finance and Assets) – 01296 744687

**8. Health, Safety and Well-being Annual Report 2016-17**

To consider Item 8 (**Pages 19 - 52**)

**9. Supporting those people who hoard possessions in their homes**

To receive a presentation

**10. Caton House Nursing Home Fire**

To receive a presentation

**11. Exclusion of Press and Public**

To consider excluding the public and press representatives from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including BMKFA) and Paragraph 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as the report contains information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings; and on these grounds it is considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information:

**12. Exempt Minutes**

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 18 October 2017.

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 14 February 2018 at 11am.

If you have any enquiries about this agenda please contact: Katie Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) – Tel: (01296) 744633 email: [knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk)

Minutes of the meeting of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY held on WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2017 at 11.00 am

**Present** Councillors Carroll, Exon, Glover, N Hussain (part), Irwin, Lambert, Marland (part), McCall, McDonald, Reed, Roberts (part), Sullivan, Teesdale, Watson and Wilson

**Officers:** J Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), L Swift (Director of People and Organisational Development) D Sutherland (Director of Finance and Assets), N Boustred (Head of Service Delivery), J Parsons (Head of Service Development), M Hemming (Deputy Director of Finance and Assets), F Mansfield (HR Services and Development Manager), C Turner (HR Projects Manager), M Ridder (Employee Relations and Engagement Manager), K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer), F Pearson (Communication and Consultation Manager), A McCallum (Executive Assistant to the Chief Fire Officer) R Priest (Group Commander Community and Business Safety) and V Peck (HR Apprentice)

2 FBU Representatives, 1 Member of the Public

**Apologies:** Councillors Brunning and A Hussain

**FA17 NEW MEMBER OF AUTHORITY AND APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES**

The Chairman welcomed the new Member to the Fire Authority Councillor Brian Roberts from Buckinghamshire County Council and advised that it was the Group Leader's wish that he be appointed to the Executive Committee.

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Roberts be appointed to the Executive Committee.

**FA18 MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 7 June 2017, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**FA19 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Marland declared he was a Board Member of the Milton Keynes Development Partnership.

Councillor Lambert declared he was a Member of the Local Government Pension Scheme Fund for Buckinghamshire.

Councillor Reed declared he was a Member of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services.

**FA19 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman's Announcements had been circulated in advance.

## FA20

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

#### Executive Committee – 12 July 2017

The Authority considered the recommendations of the Executive Committee held on 12 July 2017 relating to:

#### **(a) 2015-20 Corporate Plan: Mid-Term Review and Refresh**

RESOLVED –

That the updated 2015-20 Corporate Plan be approved.

#### Overview and Audit Committee – 26 July 2017

The Authority considered the recommendations of the Overview and Audit Committee held on 26 July 2017 relating to:

#### **(b) Review of Financial Regulations**

RESOLVED –

That the Financial Regulations as amended be approved.

The Authority considered the recommendations of the Overview and Audit Committee held on 26 July 2017 relating to:

#### **(c) Review of Standing Orders Relating to Contracts**

RESOLVED –

That the Standing Orders relating to Contracts as amended be approved.

## FA21

### THE POLICING AND CRIME ACT 2017 AND THE AUTHORITY

The Chairman advised Members that he had attended the inaugural meeting of the Thames Valley Collaboration Joint Steering Committee that had been set up with Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services and the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised Members that the origin of this report was the June meeting of the Authority when Members considered the proposals put forward by the Thames Valley Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner. This report provided more detail about the parts of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 which cover (a) Police and Crime Commissioner's powers to become a Fire and Rescue Authority or to become a voting member on an Authority; and (b) the duties on an Authority to collaborate with the police and ambulance services. Alongside this, the report was intended to update Members on events since its June meeting.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised that at the June meeting, Members made various observations about the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner's proposals and these were reflected in the letter from the Chief Fire Officer which was sent on the 12 June 2017. In the discussion that led to the Chief Fire Officer being directed to write to the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (TVPCC), a Member asked if the TVPCC



could impose a change of governance onto the Authority. It was explained that this was not the case. The Home Office had now published details about the Independent Assessment Process (IAP) which would inform the Secretary of State's decision.

The Director of Legal and Governance did not take Members in detail through the IAP as the issue had been rendered somewhat academic in light of the statement issued by the TVPCC on 16 August 2017 in which the Police and Crime Commissioner stated that "following a meeting last week between myself, the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and representatives from the fire and rescue authorities we have agreed that we will not be actively pursuing any governance changes in the foreseeable future". Reference was made to the regulations yet to be made which would enable the TVPCC to become a voting member on the Authority. The TVPCC's expressed view was that "This was not considered to be of significant benefit in itself."

The Director of Legal and Governance brought to Members attention the exchange of correspondence between the Chief Fire Officer and the Home Office. In light of the Home Office's stated intention to bring forward the regulations to change the Authority's constitution this autumn, the Chief Fire Officer was highlighting in his correspondence that their consultation timeline was wholly unrealistic. If the Home Office were proposing to bring forward legislation, the only meaningful consultation it could have was with the Authority itself. The Home Office had responded saying it had taken the points into account. It was already autumn and there was no consultation as yet.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised Members that the duty under the Policing and Crime Act for the Authority to collaborate with the police and ambulance services comprised of four stages. The first stage for the Authority was the duty to keep collaboration opportunities under review with at least one of the two other blue light services. The second stage was that where an emergency service identified an opportunity, it had a duty to notify the other emergency services of the proposed collaboration. It then triggers the third stage, a duty to consider whether the proposed collaboration would be in the interests of the proposed parties and finally stage four was if two or more of the emergency services considered it would be in their interest, there was a duty to enter into a collaboration agreement.

A Member asked if as well as collaborating with other blue light services, the Authority collaborates wider i.e. with other local authorities and was advised that yes the Authority does and these would be covered in the Partnership Register report that was being presented to a future meeting of the Executive Committee.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

**FA22**

**FIRE REFORM – COLLABORATIVE WORKING UPDATE**

The Director of People and Organisational Development advised Members that this report was a companion report to the previous item and provided an update on the Authority's primary collaborative activities which were built into the refreshed Corporate Plan.

The Director of People and Organisational Development advised Members that collaboration with blue light services and other partners was well embedded within this Authority long before the duty to collaborate as highlighted in the Policing and Crime Act. Before the Authority decides to collaborate, it would have a Memorandum of Understanding in place, and as referred to in the report, there were strict criteria to ensure that the Authority and the communities benefit in everything it collaborates on. The report sets out the main strategic collaboration, primarily across Thames Valley, but also included were some of the national collaboration projects. The report highlighted where the Authority played a lead role or where the Authority had a significant influential role. The Thames Valley Fire Control Service the joint mobilising service was the main driving force that continued to drive operational policy alignment within the Thames Valley.

RESOLVED –

1. That the collaborative work in progress across the Thames Valley Fire and Emergency Services as set out in Annex A be noted.
2. That the range of BMKFA supported national and regional collaborative working programmes set out in Annex B be noted.

**FA23**

**THE 2018-19 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT: TECHNICAL CONSULTATION PAPER (THE CONSULTATION)**

The Lead Member for Finance, IT and Procurement advised Members that this was a response to the 2018-19 Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation. Within the Consultation there were a series of questions that the Authority had put draft answers to. Subsequently, the Authority had received some advice from the Home Office about how to phrase this and what sort of information to include.

The Lead Member for Finance, IT and Procurement would like to modify the recommendation to take into account this advice and any views of Members and leave it to the Chief Fire Officer and Lead Member for Finance, IT and Procurement to write the final submission to the consultation.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets also advised Members that Question 10 "do you have any views on whether additional flexibilities were required for particular categories of authority? What evidence was available to support this specific flexibility" was a new question brought in this year after pressure from the Home Office as fire and rescue authorities do have some additional pressures and need some flexibility. This was the

Authority's opportunity to say what it would do with the extra funding.

Members asked what the Authority would be recommending to do if it got the flexibility to increase council tax.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that it would depend on the degree of flexibility. If Members looked at the Grenfell fire, the outcome from it would be increased regulation or some form of burden placed on fire and rescue services. There was also a recruitment and retention crisis for on call firefighters. The organisation was currently staffed under establishment but made it up with the bank shift system. It could not do that without the flexibility of its staff, but there was a definite need to add more resilience. If the Authority had the flexibility it would be looking to put more people back in the system. Also, with increased population, the calls could start to rise and there was undeniably a need for more community safety activity within the community.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that if the Authority were to pick up a pay agreement agreed nationally above 1% it would place an additional burden on the Authority. The service was stretched and any additional burdens, without increased funding, would mean some very difficult decisions relating to fire engines and fire stations, moving forward.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that in terms of the current national picture regarding this submission, every fire authority and the Association of Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities, would be putting in a submission asking for precept flexibility. The Combined Fire Authorities had agreed to do individual responses as well as a group response in terms of supporting precept flexibility. The Fire Brigades Union and the National Fire Chiefs Council would also support the flexibility. The only two who were not in agreement were Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and London Fire Brigade.

A Member asked where the £10 came from and was the Authority asking this for one year or ever year and would it be better not to just ask to end capping.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that the Authority had asked for precept flexibility for one year. This was partially in response to the NJC pay offer during the summer. It was clear that if the public sector pay cap was to be breached or removed, whilst £5 would be sustainable in the short term, a £10 increase would allow sustainability for the medium-long term and allow further investment into the service in other areas.

It being proposed by Councillor McDonald and seconded by Councillor Carroll:

RESOLVED –

That the proposed response to the consultation be approved subject to amendments being finalised by the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Lead Member.

**FA24**

**UPDATE ON BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES  
FIRE AUTHORITY APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME**

The Lead Member for People and Equality and Diversity advised Members that he was extremely proud of this organisation as it was the leading Fire Authority across the country regarding apprenticeships.

The HR Projects Manager advised Members that the aim of this paper was to update Members on the position of apprentices both nationally and locally. Apprenticeships were a key Government reform initiative with the aim of delivering 3 million apprenticeships by 2020. This had brought a new focus across fire and rescue services, but this Authority was ahead in terms of planning and Member approval of investing in apprentices.

The HR Projects Manager advised Members that the annual levy, which had been set at 0.5% of an employer's pay bill in excess of £3 million, was approximately £60k and the apprenticeship plans for support staff and management apprenticeships would satisfy the government's target of 2.3% new apprentice starts each year. The Authority currently had 19 firefighter apprentices who were popular with crews and fully embedded in the resourcing of the service. 12 new start firefighters who commenced in September 2017 and were now in training and these would be an operational resource from December 2017. 8 support staff apprentices (4 started in 2016 and 4 in September 2017), again adding value to the service, many being local residents.

The Chairman asked that all Members lobby and influence local development plans for firefighters to be considered as key workers and for the provision of key worker housing in any local plans.

A Member asked if the number of apprentices being taken on would cover the number of firefighters leaving and was advised that the service had projected its workforce plan forward to 2022/23 and knew the potential numbers for retirement. It was looking to top up firefighter numbers by advertising for transferees in from other services and was also planning for the next intake of firefighter apprentices in April/May 2018 (this was being undertaken in collaboration with Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire fire and rescue services). The service also tracked unplanned leavers which would include transfers to London.

RESOLVED –

That the content of the update be noted.

**FA25**

**EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OBJECTIVES  
2016-20, REVIEW OF YEAR 1 PROGRESS**

The Lead Member for People and Equality and Diversity introduced the report and advised Members that a lot of work had been undertaken on this over the past year. The Authority

was subject to the specific duties as laid out in the Equality Act (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which was in addition to the general equality duty as laid out in the Equality Act 2010. These duties together were commonly known as the Public Sector Duty, and the Authority's aim was to embed equality and diversity into everything it did both internally and externally.

The Employee Relations and Engagement Manager advised Members that the purpose of this report was to update on the progress made in the first year of its four year plan and setting out what needs to be done for the next four years in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The report contained updates on key internal performance in areas including workforce strategy, workforce monitoring, equality impact assessment, employee engagement, promoting an inclusive working environment, equal pay, anti-harassment and bullying, appraisal and training and learning and development. The report also contained an update on the key external performance areas; working with our communities; knowing communities; involving communities and responsive services and customer care.

The Authority had set up an EDI Advisory Group chaired by the Director of People and Organisational Development and attended by Councillor Steven Lambert, Lead Member for People and Equality and Diversity. The group's terms of reference included supporting the Authority to strive for future improvements in EDI and developing networks to enable the sharing of best practice.

(Councillor Roberts left the meeting)

The Group Commander Community and Business Safety advised Members that this year a new infrastructure had been established so that the service could work more effectively with its communities. This was being undertaken in three different ways, a) increasing our knowledge, b) increasing our involvement and c) being a responsive and accessible service. Increasing our knowledge included looking at a risk based inspection process and to enable the service to do this, there was a new prevention and protection data base.

Increased involvement with our communities involved the service holding user groups for safe guarding at its fire stations and while the user groups were in the properties, they were being asked to become a focus group.

Being a responsive and accessible service involves working with schools and young people who would not usually visit a fire station. The sustainable tenancy programme in Milton Keynes saw a gap in young people moving from care to living on their own, teaching them life skills but also addressing fire safety risk. These initiatives allows the service to be more open and transparent and in the long term would help recruitment.

RESOLVED –

That the content of the report Annex A and Annex B be noted.

(Councillor N Hussain left the meeting)

**FA26**

**SCHEME MANAGER DISCRETION FOR THE FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME 2015**

The Lead Member for People and Equality and Diversity introduced the report and advised Members that this report was being brought back to the Fire Authority following the agreement to defer it to October at the June 2017 meeting.

The HR Services and Development Manager advised Members that the purpose of this report was to recommend a position on the scheme manager pension discretions as contained in the Firefighters Pension (England) Regulations 2014. The Firefighters' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014 set out fifty-two pension discretions available to the Authority following the introduction of the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme in April 2015. An immediate position was required on three pension discretions within Regulations; Regulations 5 on delegation, Regulation 17 on pensionable pay and Regulation 111 on pension contributions during absences from work due to illness, trade disputes and authorised absences.

The HR Services and Development Manager advised Members that a report was presented at the Fire Authority meeting on 10 June 2015 and a policy statement was adopted on these discretions. The Member approved position on these discretions had not been amended, and the remaining forty-nine pension discretions had been added to form the Scheme Manager Pension Discretions policy presented today, bringing together all the discretionary elements as contained within the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Regulations 2014.

Appendix 1 provided a position on each pension discretion with a recommendation made for each one. Further clarity had been provided to documents to enable greater understanding of the pension discretions and the implication of the pension discretions on the scheme manager. Recommendations made within this report had been made in collaboration with Royal Berkshire and were in the main, the same as those pension discretions agreed by Royal Berkshire's Fire Authority on 18 April 2017.

Appendix 2 was a draft scheme manager pension discretions policy based on the approval of Appendix 1. This was being recommended as the adopted policy for the Authority. This document incorporated the three approved discretions made in June 2015, and brings together all the discretions for the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme into one document. As detailed within this appendix, it was recommended this policy was approved for a three year period unless there was a need to review earlier due to legislation or pension Regulation changes as was normal. In line with best practice, the pension discretions set out in the 1992 and 2006 Firefighters' Pension Schemes and the Local Government Pension Scheme would be reviewed, with reports planned on these for 2018. This was with exception to one of the pension discretions applicable to firefighters in the 1992 and 2006 Schemes following an amendment to the

Regulations in July 2013, which could impact on the Authority's ability to promote temporarily.

A Member asked if consultations had been held locally with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and was advised that yes the report had been circulated at the joint consultation forum which a representative from the FBU sat on.

A Member asked if the service excluded people with beards as operational firefighters and was advised that firefighters were required to be clean shaven for health and safety reasons, so breathing apparatus could be worn correctly, but there were other roles within the fire service.

RESOLVED –

That the forty-nine Scheme Manager Pension Discretions applicable to the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme be approved and adopted with immediate effect.

## **FA27**

### **UPDATE ON PAY NEGOTIATIONS**

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that the reason for the verbal update was that the situation was changing so quickly. Firefighter pay was determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) who were representatives of the Employers, who were Councillors from fire authorities and representatives from the representative bodies, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) being one of them.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that earlier in the year the NJC made a pay offer to the Fire Brigades Union for firefighters which was 2% backdated to July 2017. The 2% would be paid locally out of local budgets and then a further 3% would be funded by government and the NJC would lobby government for that further 3%. Also included in the offer were talks on a further pay formula going forward over the next number of years. Some of the detail attached to the offer were that emergency medical response (co-responder) should continue and firefighters would take on other emergency response roles within the community. The FBU Executive Council recommended that Members of the FBU should accept the offer but the Executive Council had their recommendation overturned as the Membership decided to reject the offer.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that the NJC then wrote to the FBU and offered to pay the 1% already identified within the budget, with a no strings attached agreement, while they continued discussions. The FBU did not agree this position and since then one fire authority had subsequently paid their staff 1%.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that he had subsequently received a letter from the FBU (Members had a copy in front of them), which said they would be taking any authority who decided to pay the 1% to court. The reason being was that the

FBU want to maintain a national collective agreement. The FBU do not want fire authorities to go off and pay different rates of pay etc.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that he had asked the Director of Legal and Governance to look at the risks of paying the 1%, if Members were minded to do so, there was no recommendation to do so, but he wanted to get a steer from the Authority.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised Members that the letter to the Authority was quite unequivocal of the FBU's intentions should the Fire Authority be minded to make a 1% offer. The legislation to which the FBU were referring to, was Section 145B of TULR(C)A and had typically been used where local authorities had moved away from nationalised pay to local pay.

If an employer had made an offer to move to local terms and conditions the member can take the 'sweetener' but they can also take a claim to the Employment Tribunal. If the Employment Tribunal finds that the sole or main purpose of the inducement was to seek to move from a collective agreement, there would be a mandatory award made of £3,907 per claimant.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised that without commenting on the merits of the case, and the strength of their argument, the Authority would run a risk if it were to lose, of quite a considerable sum. Even if the Authority was to defend the claim against it and win, it would incur irrecoverable time, effort and costs. This was something Members would need to take into account.

The Chairman advised Members that the issue before the Authority was that it had the opportunity to pay a 1%, no strings attached, pay increase to its firefighters back dated to 1 July 2017. The Authority could take that decision. However, if the Authority were to do that, it would be exposing itself to an extremely large financial risk because of the threat from the FBU to take fire and rescue authorities who paid it to court.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that the letter from the FBU stemmed from the fact that one authority, Kent Fire and Rescue Authority, had gone ahead and decided to pay the 1%.

A Member asked if firefighters were aware of the situation and it was requested that the Chief Fire Officer write to all operational members of staff to acquaint them with the current position.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilson and seconded by Councillor Marland:

This Authority calls on the Employers side of the National Joint Council to make a fair and reasonable offer to enable an early



and just settlement that will amongst other objectives a) reward our firefighters and other staff for their hard work, b) enhance our ability to recruit and retain staff and c) enable us to match our vision of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, being the safest place to live, work and travel.

On being put to the vote there being 11 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 2 abstentions, the motion was lost.

The Chairman advised that the Authority noted the position of Kent Fire and Rescue Authority but the Authority would not be considering paying the 1% backdated to July 2017 budgeted for, because of the exposure to risk.

(Councillor Marland left the meeting)

**FA28**

**EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

M Hemming (Deputy Director of Finance and Assets), F Mansfield (HR Services and Development Manager), C Turner (HR Projects Manager), M Ridder (Employee Relations and Engagement Manager), F Pearson (Communication and Consultation Manager), A McCallum (Executive Assistant to the Chief Fire Officer), R Priest (Group Commander Community and Business Safety), V Peck (HR Apprentice), 2 FBU Representatives and 1 Member of the Public left the meeting.

RESOLVED -

By virtue of paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including BMKFA) and paragraph 5 of part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 as the report contains information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings; and on these grounds it was considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**FA29**

**FIREFIGHTERS' PENSIONS TOP-UP GRANT**

The Authority considered the report and appendices, details of which were noted in the confidential/exempt minutes.

**FA30**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Authority noted that the next meeting of the Fire Authority was to be held on Wednesday 13 December 2017 at 11.00am.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 1.30PM

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>MEETING</b>                | Fire Authority   |
| <b>DATE OF MEETING</b>        | 13 December 2017   |
| <b>OFFICER</b>                | Julian Parsons, Head of Service Development.   |
| <b>LEAD MEMBER</b>            | Councillor Netta Glover  |
| <b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>  | <b>Health, Safety and Well-being Annual Report 2016-17</b>   |
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>      | <p>Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Health, Safety and Well-being performance report – 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BFRS Health and Safety achievements</li> <li>• Statistical overview</li> <li>• Championing health and safety</li> <li>• Multi-functional health and safety information system</li> <li>• Working with others</li> <li>• RoSPA Achievement Award</li> </ul>  |
| <b>ACTION</b>                 | Noting.  |
| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>        | Members are requested to note the performance of the Service in terms of Health, Safety and Well-being.  |
| <b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>        | <p>This report details the progression of the Service in relation to its health, safety and well-being performance over the period stated.</p> <p>There are no implications for the Risk Registers.</p>  |
| <b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b> | <p>If the management of risk is not controlled effectively it can potentially lead to serious injury and breaches of legislation which can have significant financial implications by way of claims or fines for the Authority. There is also the potential for reputational damage.</p> <p>The number and severity of Health and Safety incidents also has a direct impact on insurance premium expenditure. At present the Authority has a good record in this regard and this has contributed toward a reduced premium budget from 2017/18.</p> |
| <b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>     | The safety management system is well embedded throughout the Service and its performance is subject to regular monitoring and review in order to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the Authority's   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | employees, contractors, visitors and the communities it serves, as well as ensuring compliance with legislation. If this scrutiny does not take place there is the potential for a breach of health and safety legislation.  |
| <b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b> | <p>In line with the requirements of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 the Health and Safety Manager is working closely with the Head of Health and Safety for Thames Valley Police exploring collaboration opportunities where possible. Shared training and sharing of learning from incidents are such examples.</p> <p>Collaboration work continues with the other Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services and this report highlights the on-going collaboration work. An example of this is the joint use of BFRS's eSafety system via additional licences reducing ongoing costs for both BFRS and the other two Services.</p> <p>Occupational health services have been procured collaboratively with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service.</p> |
| <b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>  | Continual compliance with health and safety legislation is demonstrated through the safety management system implementation and the practical application of that system through policies and procedures. This is subject to internal and external scrutiny through audit and review. An example of this compliance is the achievement of the RoSPA Gold Award for health and safety performance 2016-17.  |
| <b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>                                     | There are no Equality and Diversity or Privacy implications and therefore there is no requirement for an Integrated Impact Assessment to be carried out  |
| <b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>   | There are no use of resources implications.  |
| <b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>                 | <p>This is the annual health, safety and well-being report detailing performance and progress against objectives set for the year 2016-17. A link to the previous year's report is provided below.</p> <p>Some of the statistical information contained in the report is held in the six monthly reports presented to the Performance Management Board.</p> <p><a href="#">Annual Health, Safety and Well-being Report 2015-16</a></p>   |
| <b>APPENDICES</b>   | Appendix A: Health, Safety and Well-being Report 2016-17   |
| <b>TIME REQUIRED</b>  | 15 minutes.  |
| <b>REPORT ORIGINATOR</b>  | Alison Chart   |

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>AND CONTACT</b> | <a href="mailto:achart@bucksfire.gov.uk">achart@bucksfire.gov.uk</a><br>01296 744490 |
|--------------------|--|

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Health, Safety and Well-being



# Annual Report

2016-17



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# Forewords

*"We are pleased to announce that Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service have achieved the Gold Award for health and safety performance for the year 2016/17. The Royal Society for the prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Awards are the most prestigious in the world of occupational health and safety, and held in high regard around the world, as winning one demonstrates an organisation's commitment to maintaining an excellent health and safety record. Achieving the standard required is no mean feat".*

Julia Small  
Head of Awards and Events  
RoSPA

*"We are delighted and very proud to have been recognised in this way by RoSPA. What makes it all the more special is that the very nature of the work we undertake means that more often than not, we have to place ourselves in positions of risk and mitigate the dangers.*

*We could not have achieved this without the commitment and dedication of all our staff to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of themselves, their colleagues, visitors and the communities they serve".*

Jason Thelwell  
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive of  
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire  
Authority

# Executive Summary

**Our performance:** The statistical analysis for 2016/17 detailed in the appendix at the end of this year's report provides valuable comparisons with last year's Home Office Fire and Rescue Authorities Operational Statistics and against those Services of a similar size and structure (our peer group). It should be noted that BFRS provides total transparency in terms of statistical data and investigate every safety event reported whereas some Services do not investigate events that are deemed to be commensurate with the role of Firefighter or any event other than personal injury.

**Championing health and safety:** A programme of engagement sessions with operational personnel has been introduced in a bid to visibly demonstrate senior management commitment to health and safety. This is in addition to the work that has gone into encouraging all personnel to report safety events, 'near misses' and hazards through proactive reporting training. Evidence that this is happening is reflected in the safety event statistics contained within this report.

**Multi-functional health and safety information system:** eSafety procured for its health and safety functionality such as safety event/near miss reporting and investigation, is being utilised by other departments such as the Operational Assurance Team, Business Continuity, Fire Safety and Information Governance.

**Working with others:** The Head of Health and Safety for Thames Valley Police attends the quarterly Thames Valley health and safety meetings to explore and develop collaboration opportunities.

South East regional work continues to flourish with the benchmarking of safety event statistics between all nine Services and the completion and roll out of the Fire Service specific audit tool which will also be used nationally.

**Fire safety arrangements audit:** An independent company conducts an audit of the Authority's fire safety arrangements following the findings of an internal audit. The report identified **fifteen** recommendations based around the fire risk assessment template and the training of personnel.

**Diesel exhaust emissions:** Air sampling carried out by Bureau Veritas at four fire stations concludes that Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) comply with HSE guidance on diesel exhaust emissions and there is no requirement to retrofit local exhaust ventilation systems.

**Behavioural safety culture survey:** A survey has been purchased to determine the level of behavioural safety within the Service and provide a benchmark of performance from which to improve further.

**RoSPA achievement award:** BFRS won a Gold Award for its health and safety performance for the year 2016-17.

# Our Performance at a Glance

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

A YEAR IN NUMBERS

Ctrl & click on the icons below for more information

### INJURY RATE

97% 

Increase from 50.9 to 100.6 per 1000




### ACCIDENT / INJURY

 46%

Increase from 27 to 46 reports



### RIDDOR

167% 

Increase from 3 to 8 reports




### NEAR MISS

 193%

Increase from 14 to 41 reports



### ACTS OF VIOLENCE

100% 

Decrease from 1 to 0



### VEHICLE DAMAGE

 19%

Increase from 37 to 44 reports

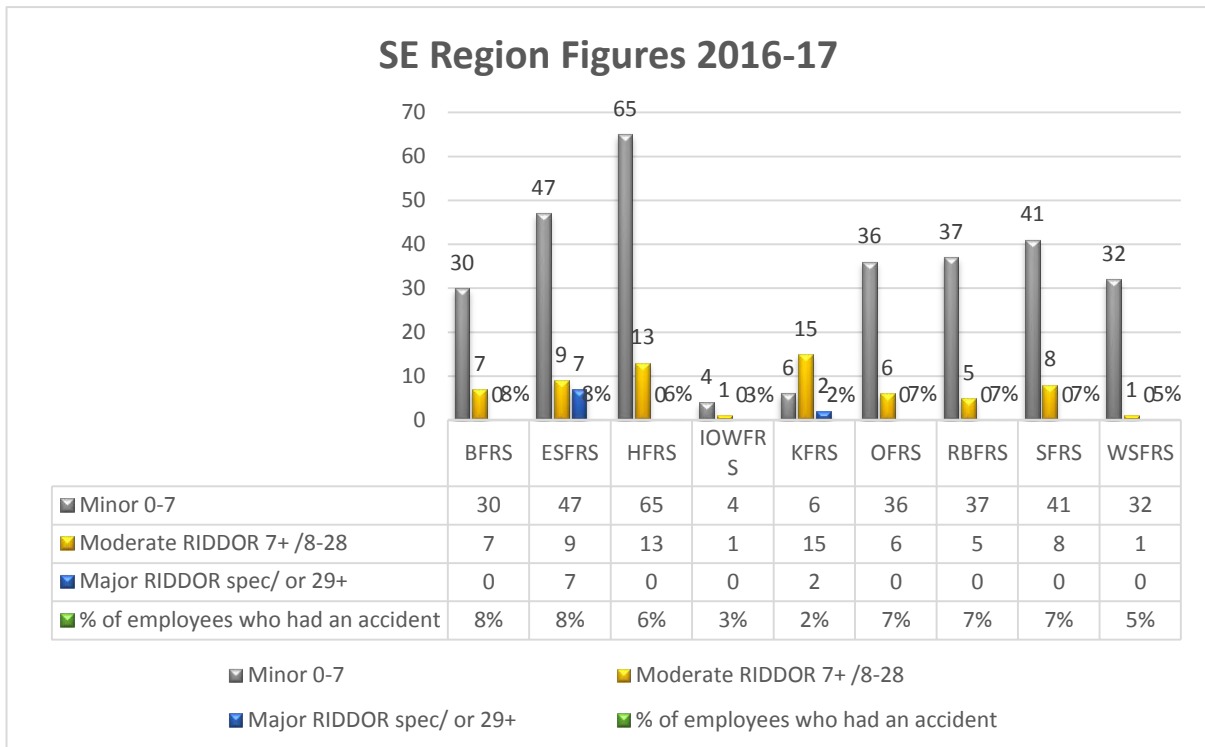


### EQUIPMENT DAMAGE

 56%

Increase from 23 to 36 reports





The figures place BFRS fourth of the nine Services for the number of safety events that occurred during 2016-17.

## Performance overview

From the graph in 'Our performance at a glance' on page 5, it is apparent that this year has seen an increase in five of the seven performance areas. However, it should be noted that BFRS report and investigate every type of safety event reported whereas some Services do not report or investigate events that are deemed to be commensurate with the role of Firefighter or any event other than personal injury. This makes national benchmarking difficult as the statistics are not comparing 'apples with apples'.

BFRS is totally transparent in terms of the statistical data provided to the Home Office giving assurance that, on inspection, the figures are accurate. This transparency aligns with the Service's aim to be in a continual 'inspection ready' state.

The injury rate has increased to 97% this year from 51% in 2015-16 which in numerical terms means an increase from 27 reported events in 2015-16 to 46 this year. To arrive at this figure the number of events reported is divided by the number of employees multiplied by 1000.

Overall the Accident/Injury rate has increased to 46%. Following the programme of health and safety proactive training to all Service personnel throughout late 2015 and early 2016, it appears that personnel are better educated and more aware of the need to report events and are doing so.

Injuries which are of a major nature or result in absence of over seven days are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

This year there has been an increase of such events of 167%. In numerical terms this equates to an increase from three reports in 2015-16 to eight this year. All are of a minor nature and have been reported under the 'absence over seven days' criteria. Whilst the injuries sustained were all of a minor nature, collectively the eight reported events amounted to a total of one hundred and eighty three working days lost.

There have also been increases in the number of safety events reported for both vehicle and equipment damage. Vehicle damage events increased from thirty seven in 2015-16 to forty four this year of which thirty one were of a minor nature and thirteen were moderate. Of these, a number were third party at fault and some were of an unavoidable nature e.g. windscreen cracks, stones chipping and breaking fog lamps.

Equipment damage events increased from twenty three in 2015-16 to thirty six this year, of which thirty were of a minor nature and six were moderate.

The increase in numbers is as a direct result of the department monitoring both vehicle and equipment damage/defects and initiating safety event investigations, where necessary, which is excellent proactive monitoring.

It is pleasing to note the 100% reduction in the number of 'acts of violence' against employees from one in 2015-16 to zero this year.

It is especially pleasing to note the increase in the number of 'near miss' reports, rising from fourteen in 2015-16 to forty one this year – an increase of 193%. This is as a direct result of the programme of health and safety proactive training given to all Service personnel by the Health and Safety team.

In a further bid to increase the number of 'near-miss' reports in future, a simplified process and reporting form has been introduced which has been well received and is working well.

Bench-marking between fire services provides statistical data for comparison and is an important part of performance management. The South East region fire services share safety event statistics on an annual basis. Please see graph in 'Our performance at a glance'.

The information is broken down as follows:

- Minor safety events;
- Moderate RIDDOR safety events;
- Major RIDDOR 7 day or more than 29 days sickness safety events;
- Percentage of employees who had an accident.

The performance statistical data received from the Home Office for 2016/17 has been grouped, by the health and safety department, in services of similar 'employee numbers' to provide a more accurate comparison of performance between BFRS and its peers.

There has been an increase in the **total number of persons injured** from twenty one to thirty seven with a small decrease in staff numbers from two hundred and fifty nine in 2015/16 to two hundred and fifty two in 2016/17. Of these injuries twenty five were of a minor nature and twelve were moderate. Analysis indicates that, as a result of the training carried out in 2015, personnel are reporting more accidents than in previous years.

Unfortunately there has been an increase in the number of **over 7 day injuries** from two in 2015/16 to seven resulting in one hundred and eighty three lost working days. A big percentage of days lost was as a result of two musculoskeletal injuries which accounted for seventy six days.

The total number of **injuries during routine activities** has increased from seven in 2015/16 to eleven which has resulted in a slip to sixth place in the league table. This is disappointing and work is underway to determine the reasons for the increase.

The total number of **injuries during training events** has seen an increase from seven in 2015/16 to sixteen in 2016/17. Analysis of these events highlight that this year saw the implementation of a new swift water training initiative resulting in several musculoskeletal strains and sprains. A review of this training has taken place confirming that this type of training in swift running water is necessary to improve fitness of personnel.

The Home Office has omitted to include the statistics for **vehicle safety events** so this is not captured in this report.

On a more positive note the **number of injuries at fires** has remained the same, at five, resulting in BFRS being top of the league table which is excellent news. The **total number of injuries at special service calls** remains in fourth place for a second year but has seen an increase from two to five.

BFRS has maintained the top position in the league table for the least **number of major injuries** for the third year with a total of zero. A further reflection of the importance of and commitment to the safety of personnel.

The Health and Safety Manager reports to the Performance and Strategic Management Boards on health and safety performance every six months which includes statistical data on the number and type of safety events occurring at operational incidents, training and routine activities.

# Championing Health & Safety

Following the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) audit in October 2015, as part of the action plan, a recommendation was made for the Service to introduce a means of visibly demonstrating to all personnel the commitment of senior management to health and safety throughout the Service.

In order to achieve this, a programme of health and safety engagement sessions, led by the Head of Service Development and the Health and Safety Manager, were initiated with the plan being to visit Wholetime and On-call watches throughout the year.

In a bid to ensure engagement and to provide a light hearted approach, the Health and Safety Manager obtained a set of prompt cards to generate debate on various health and safety related topics. At each visit two teams were created who went head to head against each other scoring points on the fullness of their answers. On each occasion the cards and questions soon became redundant as, within a confidential environment, personnel opened up and discussed issues/ideas relevant to themselves, their watches and station. Anonymised notes were taken and at the end of the round of visits feedback was provided to those watches on the progress of any issues or suggestions they had raised.

Some of these suggestions and issues have resulted in the following:

- Approval for a lighter weight rescue jacket to be procured for crews when dealing with RTCs in the summer months
- Near miss reporting procedure simplified
- Provision of stowage on the Turntable Ladder for helmets and PPE
- Safety event investigation process now less onerous

These engagement sessions were very well received, so much so that further engagement sessions have been planned and are currently being carried out.

## Employee Well-being

Employee well-being remains a priority with work streams in progress on the sourcing and provision of mental health first aid for staff and trauma awareness for new operational personnel along with a review of the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing process.

It is well recognised that in general terms physical endurance and muscular performances of most firefighters is likely, at some point in their career, to decline.

The implementation of the national six monthly firefighter fitness tests comprising of the Chester Treadmill Test and the Fire Ground Assessment, should individuals not reach the required standards in the treadmill test, will

assist in improving and ensuring the continued fitness of operational personnel. In addition, the Service has invested in two fitness 'champions' who provide guidance and training for personnel who experience difficulty in acquiring and maintaining the required levels of fitness. These individuals have won awards for their fitness work and have gone over and above assisting personnel in achieving their goals often when not on duty which is testament to their dedication.

Whilst mandatory for all operational staff, support staff are actively encouraged to achieve the same fitness standard with fitness testing being accessible to them in the same way as operational staff although on a voluntary basis. The Authority has provided fitness equipment on all Wholetime and On-call stations.

Staff are able to access physiotherapy services, should this be recommended by the Occupational Health provider and always after a musculoskeletal injury, as a means to improve fitness and prevent further injury particularly relevant with an ageing workforce. Musculoskeletal injuries remain the top reason for absence amongst operational staff.

Phased return to work is actively encouraged for operational staff following an extended period of sickness. With the right support this process increases a person's speed of recovery and prevents potential relapses or complications that may affect their ability to return to full firefighting duties.

The Service and the Fire Service College (FSC) are in partnership for the provision and delivery of operational training. The Service's Associate Trainers are required to deliver, amongst other things, 'hot fire' training for operational personnel and for the FSC which has an impact on the number of 'BA hot wears' they undertake. In order to ensure the on-going welfare of these personnel the Service has adopted the FSC's suite of procedures, including the Breathing Apparatus (BA) Instructor Welfare procedure which restricts the amount of 'BA hot wears' a Trainer can have in a set period along with more stringent and regular medical checks.

Overall sickness absence was 2% lower in 2016/17 than in 2015/16 highlighting a small decrease in attendance for Operational employees and small improvement for Support employees.

Across the operational staff group musculoskeletal remained the top reason for absence with Anxiety / Depression/Stress remaining the second. The top sickness reason for Support Staff in 2016/17 was Anxiety/Depression/Stress.

*This is in line with the rest of the public sector with "Nearly a third of organisations report an increase in stress-related absence over the past year and two-fifths a rise in reported mental health problems. Both are considerably more common in the public sector. Just over three-fifths of organisations are*



*taking steps to identify and reduce stress in the workplace and the majority are taking some action on mental health". CIPD 2016.*

The Service has a number of interventions on well-being including six weekly Service Delivery Absence Management meetings chaired by the Head of Service Delivery where trends and cases are closely scrutinised. These meetings were set up in response to an upward trend in absence.

Stress audits and risk assessments are undertaken where necessary to facilitate a faster return to work for absence caused by stress and anxiety.

The continuing priorities are to reduce absence as a result of muscular-skeletal injuries; improve employee mental well-being through counselling services and promoting overall fitness and well-being through a review of the Physical Fitness Testing procedure and the provision of training for Fitness Advisors.

Underpinning these changes is the requirement to increase employee fitness which includes providing physiotherapy where needed; promote positive coping strategies for stress, which include wellness action plans and Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) protocols.

Pro-active stress management has been a focus since 2014. The Authority has signed up to MIND's "Blue Light Pledge", which sets standards of support for emergency service employees. This has been followed up during 2016/17 with a new CISD procedure and refresher training for the debriefing team. In addition a working group has been set up to promote mental health first aid across the Service with two of its members having recently received accredited training to become Mental Health First Aiders.

Compulsory completion of an e-learning package on how to manage stress has been rolled out across the Service in addition to an e-learning package on CISD both of which have been well received by staff. Procedures for stress audits, risk assessments and the use of wellness action plans are fully embedded across the Service.

A dedicated "Fighting fit" web page on the intranet continues to be updated regularly by employees with information on health, fitness and well-being initiatives. The Employee Proposition is also bolstered by new voluntary employee benefit options including: Dental services, GP Consultation services, routine health screenings, therapies and wellbeing options and reimbursement of costs for Flu jabs and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

## Multifunctional H&S Information System

The roll out of eSafety, the bespoke safety event reporting and investigation system, at the beginning of April has proved successful with greater numbers of personnel becoming proficient in its use.

Since going live (September 2016) in the Health and Safety department, the team have identified that the system can be utilised by other departments as a means of recording information, allocating and carrying out actions and providing an audit trail from initiation to completion.

The team have been active in demonstrating how the system can benefit departments and as such have seen take up of the system by the Operational Assurance Team who will use the system to input details of internal and national learning from incidents, findings from gap analysis, generate actions for stakeholders and, once complete, be able to close off the matter. This will ensure that a complete audit trail, held in one place, is available for auditors and inspectors whenever required. An important step towards achieving the Service's objective of being in an 'inspection ready' state.

Other departments that are actively seeking to utilise the system are Business Continuity, Fire Safety (for complaints) and Information Governance (for Authority premises security matters).

Demonstration of the system has also been extended to other Fire and Rescue Services such as Shropshire, Thames Valley Police and Prezzo the Italian restaurant chain.

This systems offers flexibility and longevity for users within the Service and as such is an excellent example of value for money.



# Health and Safety (H&S) Training

Health and Safety training remained high on the list of priorities for the Training Strategy Group with approval given to procure the following courses:

## External Providers

**Accident Investigation** training for the final Level 2 Accident Investigators took place in early April ensuring that all staff are now trained to the same standard.

Two **IOSH Managing Safely** courses took place in January and March 2017 for 21 delegates consisting of both operational and support staff new to managing people or who require the qualification as part of their role.

The course has been reduced from four days to three so the Health and Safety department took the opportunity to use half of the fourth day to apply their learning to the Service's procedures for hazard reporting, risk assessment, safety event/near miss reporting and investigation. In addition, a Hazardous Materials Environment Protection Advisor (HMEPA) gave training to all operational Supervisory Managers on the procedures to follow should they be required to take charge of an incident involving chemical substances.

Two personnel attended an external **Fire Warden** course as part of the legal requirement to provide the appropriate number of wardens for the occupancy and type of premises.

A **NEBOSH General Certificate** course was run in-house for a number of Station Commanders new to the role. In order to reduce costs the remaining places on the course were sold to Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire FRSs.

## In- house

**eSafety electronic safety event reporting and investigation system.** A programme of training for all personnel was delivered by the Health and Safety team, from February to the end of March, on how to report and investigate safety events and 'near misses' through the eSafety portal. Flexi-Duty Officers were given additional training on how to promote an event and assign an investigating officer.

Training for personnel by the Health and Safety team will be ongoing as, due to the relatively small number of safety events, use of the system will be infrequent.



## Management of Risk

**Audit of Fire Safety arrangements** - Following the results of the audit of fire safety arrangements carried out by the Authority's Fire Safety teams at various Authority premises, it was decided that a specialist fire risk management company should be contracted to come in and carry out an independent audit of fire safety arrangements across all Authority sites to ensure the fire risk assessments currently in place are suitable and sufficient. The directors of the company selected are ex fire service senior officers who have an understanding of the layout, use and potential issues of fire stations.

The audit, which involved the auditors carrying out their own fire risk assessments of all Authority premises, took place over four days. The outcome of the audit was a detailed report containing 15 recommendations – 10 of a minor nature and 5 moderate which include training for personnel carrying out fire risk assessments and changes to procedures. Further improvements will be delivered through an action plan.

**Diesel Exhaust Emissions** – With diesel being upgraded to a Group 1 carcinogen, an aging red fleet and stations that do not have a local exhaust ventilation system the Health and Safety Manager procured the services of specialist scientific advisors Bureau Veritas to conduct air sampling for diesel

exhaust emissions at various fire stations to accurately determine the levels of diesel particulates and levels of exposure to crews.

The rationale for the stations selected was based on duty systems, the size and age of stations and appliance types. These stations were Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Newport Pagnell and Winslow.

The sampling took place over two days with tests running for a minimum of four hours at each station. The results clearly indicated that the air quality within the appliance bays of the stations tested was within acceptable limits and no substances were found to be present in a concentration likely to present any significant risk to fire fighters and other personnel carrying out their normal duties in the area.

This was excellent news and provides assurance of compliance with the guidance on Diesel Exhaust Emissions set out by the Health and Safety Executive. There is also no requirement to retrospectively fit local exhaust ventilation (LEV) systems which would have had considerable cost implications. The typical cost of an LEV system is between £10K and £20K thus saving the Authority a minimum of £150K.

Future mitigation of this risk is the appliance replacement programme and the installation of local exhaust ventilation systems in any new build premises.

**Asbestos removal from Authority premises** – As part of the Property strategy, a significant asbestos removal programme was undertaken in the appliance bay at Beaconsfield Fire Station. Despite the high risk nature of this work, the Property Department, the contractors and station personnel worked together to enable the fire station to remain operational for the duration.

The removal of the asbestos eliminates the risk and ensures continued compliance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations. A further programme of asbestos removal is due to take place at Olney Fire Station in the near future.

**RoSPA Audit**- In November the lead auditor returned to review progress with the action plan created following the audit in October 2015. He was very pleased to see that good progress has been made on all of the action points in the action plan and went on to say 'well done to all of you and others in your Service'. The final action point will be completed by the end of September upon which it will be closed off.

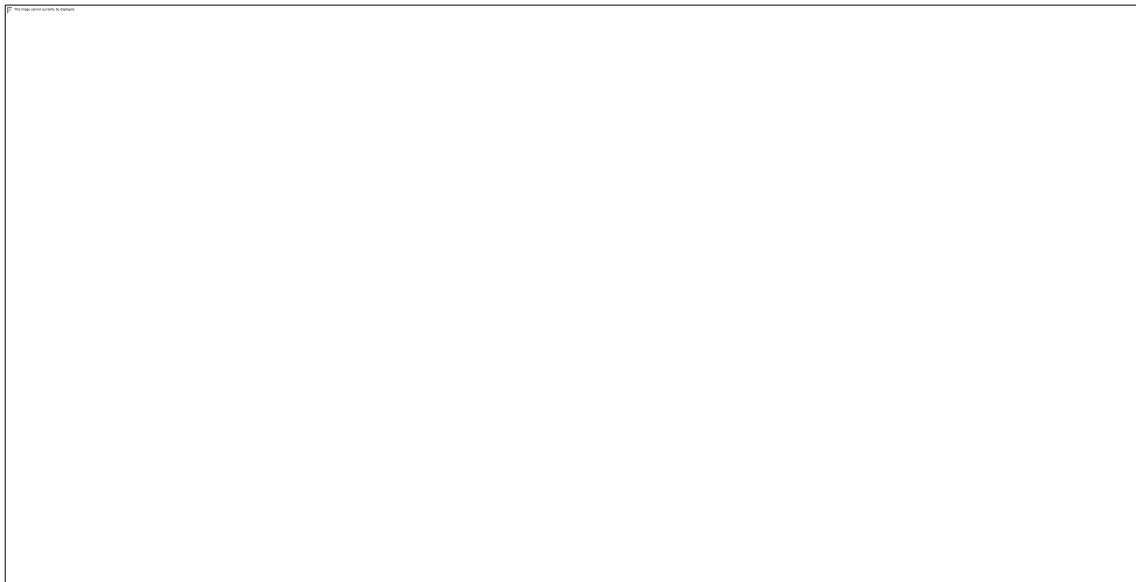
Once again, the prompt action taken by the stakeholders in completing the action plan is testament to the commitment to health and safety throughout the Service.

**Behavioural Safety Culture survey** – In a bid to further improve our performance in terms of reporting of safety events and proactive reporting and

monitoring, the department purchased the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) Behavioural Safety Culture survey in order to determine the behavioural safety culture of the Service and provide a benchmark from which to improve performance moving forwards.

The survey commenced in May and ran until the end of July. There were 127 responses to the survey which represents 27% of the Service. Whilst this is just above a quarter of the workforce, in terms of internal survey response research this is a positive response.

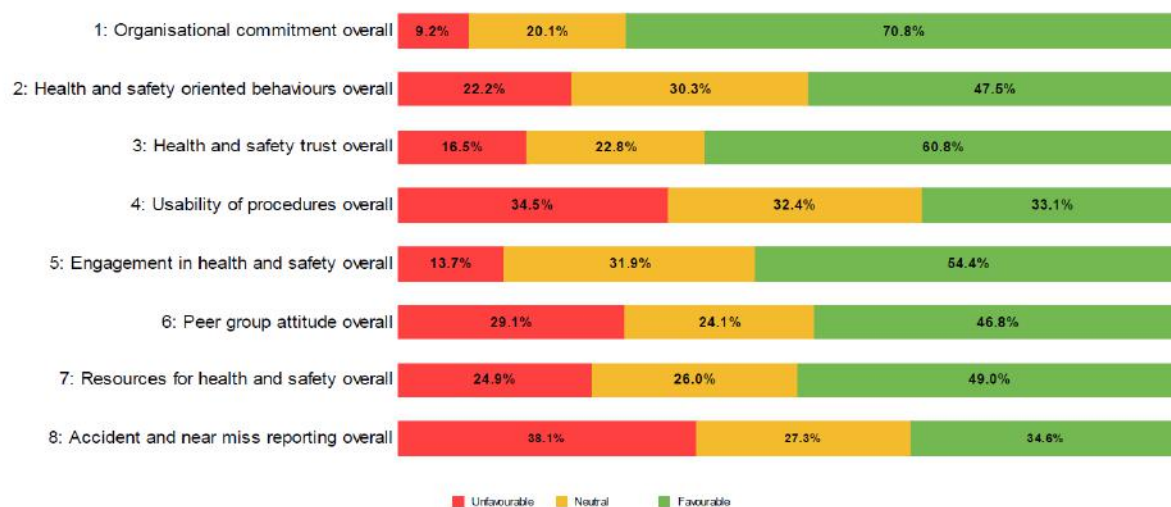
The graph below shows the percentage of personnel who responded by their role (some respondents chose not to state this information). Initial findings are detailed below:



The responses are divided into eight sections and an overview is provided overleaf. Please note, the areas in red are 'unfavourable' responses; amber are 'neutral' and green are 'favourable' responses.

## Summary of overall responses by factor for all respondents

Summary of overall responses by factor for all respondents



The most 'favourable' responses directly taken from the survey were:

- "Good communication of health and safety information" - 80% strongly/agree.
- "Line Managers rarely check that people here are working safely" – 75.2% strongly/disagree.
- "H&S equipment works well" – 74.2% strongly/agree.

The most 'unfavourable' responses that have been highlighted as areas to work on are:

- "Sometimes it is necessary to take risks to get the job done" – 68.8% strongly agree. 83.9 per cent of Wholetime or On-call personnel who responded strongly agree.
- "There are always enough people available to get the job done safely" – 55.6 per cent strongly disagree.
- "Near misses are always reported" – 49.6 per cent strongly disagree.

These initial findings have been communicated to staff via the Intranet.

Once full analysis has been completed the department will be asking for volunteers to be part of a focus group to seek ways of improving in those areas identified, concentrating on the key areas of 'usability of procedures' 'peer group attitude' and 'accident and near miss reporting'.



In addition, a review of the suggestions made in the open questions for feasibility will take place with implementation where appropriate.

Key performance indicators will be set for safety event and 'near miss' reporting for 2018-19.



# Working with others

**Internally** – Health and safety is the golden thread that runs through all Service activities and remains high profile at every level. Whilst performance is excellent there is work to be done in ensuring health and safety is considered from the outset of any new equipment/system procurement process and in general cohesion between departments.

**Working at Height activities** – The Health and Safety Manager has been nominated to undertake the role of Governance Manager for all working at height activities. This is to ensure that a holistic overview is maintained at all times to ensure compliance with legislative requirements. All training activities remain with the specialist Area Trainer and under the remit of the Group Commander for Operational training.

**Thames Valley FRs and Thames Valley Police** – the Thames Valley fire services Health and Safety Managers continue to meet regularly.

BFRS have initiated and are developing strong links with the head of health and safety for Thames Valley Police with a view to seeking opportunities for collaborative working. Following a one day visit to headquarters, discussions are underway on the potential for joint risk assessment, training and alignment of processes opportunities.

He is now a regular attendee at the Thames Valley meetings and is keen to work with all three FRs.

Both Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire have been invited to purchase licences to use the eSafety safety event reporting and investigation system. The benefits to BFRS is a reduction in the hosting and support costs, ownership and control of the system and places BFRS in a strong position to lead on any health and safety department amalgamation in the future. Benefits for the other Services are: no set up costs; no requirement to build and configure the system; signing up to an established system which has been through 'de-bugging'; and, only a third share of the hosting and support costs.

Oxfordshire are currently seeking authorisation from their senior management team to go ahead and Royal Berkshire have deferred temporarily.

**South East region.** BFRS has strengthened its position on the South East Regional Health and Safety Committee with the Health and Safety Technician taking on the role of Secretary and the department agreeing to collate and disseminate the safety event statistics for all Services in the region.

The fire service specific health and safety audit tool has been approved by both the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) and the HSE. The guidance and scoring

mechanism has been written and promulgated. All that remains is for the NFCC to determine the level of qualification for the auditors.

The East of England region is currently trialling it and will feed back their findings before the South East region trial it early in 2018.

## Performance Indicators

### **Budgets**

The final outcome of this year's budget saw a slight overspend due to training costs for the team in the use and administration of eSafety and accrued overtime costs from rolling out the eSafety training programme for the On-call personnel.

### **Objectives for 2016/17**

Please see below the health and safety objectives set in line with the Authority's Public Safety Plan for this year:

1. Improve H&S performance measurement framework reflecting the ROSPA audit;
2. Improve proactive monitoring of HSW by staff;
3. Undertake a focussed review of the Authorities fire safety arrangements;
4. Explore possible collaborative approach;
5. Look to commission CFOA literature research on incidence of cancer in Firefighters;
6. Look for opportunities to use HSW as a brand promotion.

It has been a successful year with all objectives being met where possible.

Objective 5 is being actioned through the NFCC Health and Safety national committee with literature research being carried out by the Centre for Applied Science and Technology (CAST).

Objective 6 is ongoing and will continue to be so.

### **Health and Safety Business Administration Apprentice**

A Business Administration Apprentice joined the department in August on a two year contract. After familiarisation and general training she has been given responsibility for the monitoring and administration of eSafety which includes giving training to personnel as required. She also undertakes the administration for the department which includes preparation for the Health, Safety and Well-being Committee and minute taking.

She has achieved the IOSH Managing Safely qualification and has undertaken a course in minute taking. She is also a trained Fire Warden.

At the end of her apprenticeship she will have achieved a BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Business Administration.

### **RoSPA Achievement Award**

In December the Health and Safety Manager decided to enter BFRS into the annual RoSPA Achievement Award, these awards are the most prestigious in health and safety and are held in high regard around the world.

To be eligible for an achievement award RoSPA examines the safety management system of an organisation and how well it is implemented throughout. This is determined through the collation of evidence and detailed accounts of how the criteria is achieved and requires an extensive amount of work by the applying organisation.

In April notification was received to say that BFRS had won the Gold Award, the highest in its class which was an outstanding result as the last award given was in 2012. The Health and Safety team were proud and delighted to go to London in June for the Awards ceremony which was a memorable occasion.

This is a fantastic achievement and one that could not have been happened without the dedication and commitment of all BFRS personnel.



# Appendix 1

## Family peer group performance comparison tables 2015/16 and 2016/17

The H&S department are required to report on BFRS end of year accident statistical returns to the Home Office on 31 May 2017 for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

### **Summary:**

The Health and Safety Department provided returns for:

**HS1-** Injuries during operational incidents, encompassing both Whole-time and On-Call employees and sub-divided into injuries at fires, at road traffic collisions and at other Special Service calls.

**HS2-** Injuries during training and routine activities also encompassing Whole-time and On-Call employees and sub-divided into injuries during operational training, fitness training and routine activities.

**VE1-** Vehicle accidents displayed as a comparison against our peer group.

### **Findings:**

**HS1** – there has been an increase in the number of personnel injured at operational incidents from twenty one to thirty seven for this reporting period which is disappointing. Of these injuries twenty five were of a minor nature and twelve were moderate.

**Reason:** Analysis indicates that, as a result of the training carried out in 2015, personnel are reporting more accidents than in previous years.

**HS2-** Injuries at training events have seen an increase from seven in 2015/16 to sixteen and injuries during routine activities has increased from seven in 2015/16 to eleven.

**Reason:** Analysis of these events highlight that this year saw the implementation of a new swift water training initiative resulting in several musculoskeletal strains and sprains. A review of this training has taken place confirming that this type of training in swift running water is necessary to improve fitness of personnel.

Work is underway to determine the reasons for the increase in injuries during routine activities.

These figures are calculated using the Annual Incidence Rate which is calculated by the number of reportable injuries in the financial year divided by the average number employed during the year x 100,000, giving the number of injuries per 100,000 workers. This calculation provides a more accurate picture of the overall health and safety performance in the operational arena.

Detailed below are the league tables which provide a visual view of the overall safety performance of BFRS in the operational arena. An explanation of performance can be found in the Performance Overview section of the report on page six.

| <b>Total Number of Persons Injured</b> | <b>2015-16</b> | <b>2016-17</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Bedfordshire                           | 75             | 32             |
| West Sussex                            | 42             | 33             |
| Warwickshire                           | 35             | 34             |
| <b>Buckinghamshire</b>                 | <b>21</b>      | <b>37</b>      |
| Berkshire                              | 64             | 42             |
| Oxfordshire                            | 38             | 42             |
| Northamptonshire                       | 63             | 47             |
| Suffolk                                | 61             | 55             |
| Hereford and Worcester                 | 38             | 56             |
| East Sussex                            | 82             | 63             |
| Norfolk                                | 76             | 83             |
| Cambridgeshire                         | 98             | 115            |

| <b>Total Number of Injuries at fires</b> | <b>2015-16</b> | <b>2016-17</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Buckinghamshire</b>                   | <b>5</b>       | <b>5</b>       |
| Warwickshire                             | 7              | 5              |
| West Sussex                              | 7              | 7              |
| Suffolk                                  | 18             | 8              |
| Bedfordshire                             | 9              | 9              |
| Oxfordshire                              | 7              | 9              |
| Berkshire                                | 16             | 10             |
| East Sussex                              | 20             | 10             |
| Northamptonshire                         | 16             | 12             |
| Hereford and Worcester                   | 7              | 14             |
| Norfolk                                  | 16             | 22             |
| Cambridgeshire                           | 17             | 33             |

| <b>Total Number of Injuries at Special Services</b> | <b>2015-16</b> | <b>2016-17</b> |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Hereford and Worcester                              | 3              | 4              |
| Oxfordshire   | 2              | 4              |
| Suffolk   | 6              | 4              |
| <b>Buckinghamshire</b>                              | <b>2</b>       | <b>5</b>       |
| Warwickshire  | 1              | 5              |
| Bedfordshire  | 7              | 6              |
| West Sussex   | 12             | 6              |
| Norfolk   | 8              | 8              |
| Northamptonshire                                    | 10             | 8              |
| Berkshire   | 5              | 9              |
| East Sussex   | 15             | 10             |
| Cambridgeshire                                      | 18             | 22             |

| <b>Total Number of Injuries during Routine Activities</b> | <b>2015-16</b> | <b>2016-17</b> |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Bedfordshire  | 26             | 6              |
| Oxfordshire   | 6              | 6              |
| Hereford and Worcester                                    | 6              | 7              |
| West Sussex   | 6              | 7              |
| Berkshire   | 23             | 9              |
| <b>Buckinghamshire</b>                                    | <b>7</b>       | <b>11</b>      |
| Suffolk   | 11             | 11             |
| Northamptonshire  | 22             | 13             |
| Norfolk   | 12             | 16             |
| Warwickshire  | 16             | 16             |
| East Sussex   | 15             | 20             |
| Cambridgeshire  | 29             | 21             |



| <b>Total Number Injuries during Training</b> | <b>2015-16</b> | <b>2016-17</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Warwickshire                                 | 11             | 8              |
| Bedfordshire                                 | 33             | 11             |
| West Sussex                                  | 17             | 13             |
| Berkshire                                    | 20             | 14             |
| Northamptonshire                             | 15             | 14             |
| <b>Buckinghamshire</b>                       | <b>7</b>       | <b>16</b>      |
| East Sussex                                  | 32             | 23             |
| Oxfordshire                                  | 23             | 23             |
| Hereford and Worcester                       | 22             | 31             |
| Suffolk                                      | 26             | 32             |
| Norfolk                                      | 40             | 37             |
| Cambridgeshire                               | 34             | 39             |

| <b>Total Number of Over 7 Days Injuries</b> | <b>2015-16</b> | <b>2016-17</b> |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| West Sussex                                 | 3              | 1              |
| Bedfordshire                                | 10             | 3              |
| Warwickshire                                | 5              | 3              |
| Norfolk                                     | 22             | 4              |
| Berkshire                                   | 12             | 5              |
| Cambridgeshire                              | 2              | 5              |
| Oxfordshire                                 | 6              | 6              |
| <b>Buckinghamshire</b>                      | <b>2</b>       | <b>7</b>       |
| Hereford and Worcester                      | 5              | 7              |
| Northamptonshire                            | 4              | 9              |
| Suffolk                                     | 6              | 9              |
| East Sussex                                 | 24             | 9              |

| <b>Total Number of Major Injuries</b> | <b>2015-16</b> | <b>2016-17</b> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Bedfordshire                          | 7              | 0              |
| Berkshire                             | 0              | 0              |
| <b>Buckinghamshire</b>                | <b>0</b>       | <b>0</b>       |
| Hereford and Worcester                | 0              | 0              |
| Northamptonshire                      | 0              | 0              |
| Oxfordshire                           | 2              | 0              |
| Suffolk                               | 0              | 0              |
| Warwickshire                          | 0              | 0              |
| West Sussex                           | 1              | 0              |
| Norfolk                               | 0              | 1              |
| East Sussex                           | 1              | 7              |
| Cambridgeshire                        | 0              | 7              |

| <b>Annual Incidence Rates</b>    |                                  |                                      |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Fire &amp; Rescue Service</b> | <b>Total number of employees</b> | <b>Total number of safety events</b> | <b>Incident rate</b> |
| West Sussex                      | 649                              | 33                                   | 5084                 |
| Bedfordshire                     | 590                              | 32                                   | 5424                 |
| Oxfordshire                      | 627                              | 42                                   | 6698                 |
| Berkshire                        | 599                              | 42                                   | 7012                 |
| <b>Buckinghamshire</b>           | <b>506</b>                       | <b>37</b>                            | <b>7312</b>          |
| Suffolk                          | 748                              | 55                                   | 7353                 |
| East Sussex                      | 854                              | 63                                   | 7377                 |
| Warwickshire                     | 454                              | 34                                   | 7489                 |
| Hereford and Worcester           | 745                              | 56                                   | 7517                 |
| Northamptonshire                 | 539                              | 47                                   | 8720                 |
| Norfolk                          | 822                              | 83                                   | 10097                |
| Cambridgeshire                   | 661                              | 115                                  | 17398                |

The Home Office has changed the criteria for reporting to include the total number of personnel rather than operational personnel only. The figures above show that of five hundred and six personnel, thirty seven safety events occurred in 2016/17 which equates to an incidence rate of 7312 a significant decrease from 8108 in 2015/16.



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