

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

Director of Legal & Governance, Graham Britten  
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service  
Brigade HQ, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1BD  
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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

27 November 2023

**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, **BLUE LIGHT HUB, 3 THORNBURY, WEST ASHLAND, MILTON KEYNES. MK6 4BB** on **6 DECEMBER 2023** at **11AM** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Graham Britten".

Graham Britten  
Director of Legal and Governance

**Health and Safety:**

There will be limited facilities for members of the public to observe the meeting in person. A recording of the meeting will be available after the meeting.

Chairman: Councillor Rouse

Councillors: Adoh, Bagge, Carr, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Christensen, Darlington, Exon, Fuller, Hall, Hussain, Lambert, McLean, Stuchbury, Waite and Walsh



**MAKING YOU SAFER**



## **To observe the meeting as a member of the Press and Public**

The Authority supports the principles of openness and transparency. To enable members of the press and public to see or hear the meeting this meeting will be recorded. Please visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxl3vIiv7bh1Q>

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 adjourn a Meeting to hear a member 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.

A request to speak on a specified agenda item should be submitted by email to [gbritten@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:gbritten@bucksfire.gov.uk) by 4pm on the Monday prior to the meeting. Please state if you would like the Director of Legal and Governance to read out the statement on your behalf, or if you would like to be sent a 'teams' meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

If the meeting is then adjourned, prior to inviting a member of the public to speak, the Chairman should advise that they:

- (a) speak for no more than four minutes,
- (b) 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.

## **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. Such attendance will be facilitated if requests are made to [enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk) at least two clear working days before the meeting. Statements can be read out on behalf of the Member by the Director of Legal and Governance, or the Member may request a 'team's meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

## **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 (as above). 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*, 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.
  - (i) the Capital Strategy
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**

**2. Minutes**

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 11 October 2023. **(Pages 9 - 24)**

**3. Minutes**

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Fire Authority held on 24 October 2023. **(Pages 25 - 38)**

**4. Matters Arising from the Previous Meetings**

The Chairman to invite officers to provide verbal updates on any actions noted in the Minutes from the previous meeting.

**5. 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.

**6. Chairman's Announcements**

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

**7. Petitions**

To receive petitions under Standing Order SOA6.

**8. Questions**

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order SOA7.

**9. Firefighters Manifesto Presentation**

To receive a presentation.

**10. Health and Safety Policy**

To consider item 10 (Pages 39 - 66)

**11. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report 2022-23**

To consider item 11 (Pages 67 - 94)

**12. Protection Strategy 2023-2025**

To consider item 12 (Pages 95 - 124)

**13. Operational Learning and Assurance: Progress against Grenfell and Manchester Arena Inquiry Recommendations**

To consider item 13 (Pages 125 - 138)

**14. Input to the Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Authorities in England 2023**

To consider item 14 (Pages 139 - 142)

**15. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) - Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Action Plan**

To consider item 15 (Pages 143 - 170)

**16. White Ribbon Presentation**

To receive a presentation item 16 (Pages 171 - 180)

**17. Exclusion of Press and Public**

To consider excluding the public and press representatives from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the minutes contains information relating to any individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the minutes contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a person (including the Authority); and on these grounds it is considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**18. Exempt Minutes**

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 11 October 2023.

## **19. Date of the Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 14 February 2023 at 11 am at The Oculus, The Gateway Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP19 8FF.

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)



## **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY**

### **ROLE DESCRIPTION**

#### **LEAD MEMBERS**

1. To take a lead role in providing support and constructive challenge to senior officers in the development of strategies and plans and contributing towards the strategic direction of the Authority, within the Authority's overall policy objectives.
2. To act as a 'sounding board' for senior officers on issues within the portfolio, and be supportive in dealing with any problems at a strategic level.
3. To review, in conjunction with senior officers, the service within the portfolio.
4. To keep abreast of related developments and policies at national, regional and local level.
5. To take the lead in reporting to the Authority, one of its committees, or panels on issues within the portfolio.
6. To attend the Overview and Audit Committee, at its request, in connection with any issues associated with the portfolio which is the subject of scrutiny.
7. To act as a spokesperson for the Authority on issues within the portfolio.
8. To represent the Authority on bodies, at events and at conferences related to the portfolio, as appointed by the Executive Committee and to feedback to the Authority any issues of relevance / importance.

(Approved 8 June 2007)

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2023 AT 11 AM.

**Present:** Councillors Adoh, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Christensen (part), Exon, Fuller (part), Hall, Khan, McLean, Rouse (Chairman), Stuchbury and Waite

**Officers:** M Osborne (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), A Carter (Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO), D Buchanan (Head of Protection, Assurance and Development), A Stunell (Head of Human Resources), S Gowanlock (Corporate Planning Manager), C Newman (Data Intelligence Team Manager), O Finch (Station Commander – HR Projects) and S Grosse (Group Commander – Service Delivery South)

**Apologies:** Councillors Bagge, Darlington, Hussain, Lambert and Walsh

The Chairman advised that although members of the public were able to attend and observe in person, following the meeting, a video recording would be uploaded to the Authority's YouTube Channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxpL3vIiv7bh1Q>

## **FA18 MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 14 June 2023, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## **FA19 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The Chairman advised that there were the following matters arising from the previous minutes:

FA13 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2025 Year Three Update - The Chairman asked for a list of identified works needed to upgrade premises in line with EDI objectives – the Deputy Director of Finance and Assets had circulated this list to Members.

The Operational Assurance Improvement Plan which included recommendations from Grenfell and Manchester Arena

would be presented at the next Authority meeting in October  
– This had been deferred to the December Meeting

FA14 - Exploring our Culture - Split out the two actions from recommendation 4. Review RAG on recommendations 20 and 21. Review narrative and presentational aspects. The plan had now been updated and furthermore the Service was looking to rollout standardised RAG ratings across all areas following an assurance review undertaken by Internal Audit.

FA16 - Performance Management – Q4 2022/23 - showed that fewer appraisals were completed this year, and a slight improvement in mandatory elearning but still some way to go. The Chairman asked if these could be elevated up as the focus. Also, it was very important to get some climate change metrics in place. The climate change metrics had been updated for the Q1 report and the Service continued to emphasise the importance of the completion of appraisals and mandatory elearning.

Elearning / Appraisals should be the next key focus. This was a priority for the OD team and 360 appraisals had been completed at SMT level and were currently being rolled out to middle managers.

FA17 - Recent Changes to Fire Safety/Building Safety Legislation and Regulations - Protection workshop hybrid/virtual once new NFCC guidance on enforcement is finalised.

A Member asked if the slides from the presentation by the Group Commander Community and Business Safety Policy to the Annual Meeting could be circulated to Members.

(Councillor Fuller joined the meeting)

**FA20 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

None.

**FA21 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that:

Doug Buchanan was attending his first meeting of the Authority since his appointment into the role of Area Commander Protection, Assurance and Development in September 2023. Doug joins from Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, where he was Head of Response and Resilience.

Head of Protection,  
Assurance and  
Development

Group Commander  
Community and  
Business Safety Policy

Today the Prince of Wales is visiting the Blue Light Hub to highlight the importance of supporting the mental health of emergency responders during the week of World Mental Health Day. The Prince will meet with a group of young people who have recently joined the emergency services. His Royal Highness will hear first-hand from those in the early stages of their careers about the challenges they face. The conversation will be focussed on the vital importance of equipping those working in the emergency services with the skills to help protect their mental health and build their resilience, and will be joined by broadcaster, journalist and psychologist Dr Sian Williams. Supporting the mental health of this community is a cause close to the heart of The Prince of Wales, as he saw first-hand the challenges emergency responders face on a daily basis whilst serving as a pilot with RAF search and rescue and East Anglian Air Ambulance.

Seven Apprentice Firefighters commenced on 29 August and a further eighteen started on 27 September. This brings the operational establishment to 314, the first time it has been at this level for ten years. The recruitment campaign for eighteen Apprentice Firefighters is open until 5 November to allow for a more targeted campaign and increased lead time for applications to be submitted. Successful applicants would start in late May 2024.

The service advertised for Crew Commander and Watch Commander transferees and invited three Crew Commanders to the Organisational Development Selection process on 2 October and a Watch Commander to the process on 5 October.

Members will have seen in the news reports that Luton Airport was closed overnight due to a significant fire in one of the short stay multi-story carparks. Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service received calls to a fire involving a car on level three of the multi-storey car park at 8.47pm.

It is believed that the fire started in a vehicle that would have arrived shortly before this time, which rapidly spread to other vehicles and the building, in all affecting over 1200 vehicles and causing significant structural collapse of the car park.

Just after 10pm last night, Thames Valley Fire Control were contacted by Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service Control, requesting Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) resources to assist with this declared major incident.

An Aerial appliance supported by a Rescue pump was mobilised from West Ashland and remained on scene for a number of hours, until relieved by the Aerial Appliance from High Wycombe and Rescue Pump from Amersham. Officers from BFRS were also mobilised to support BFRS resources.

BFRS resources were stood down at around 4am this morning.

At its peak there were 15 Rescue pumps, three aerial appliances and over 100 firefighters on scene at this incident. Resources from Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire, and London Fire Brigade, along with Bedfordshire Police and East of England Ambulance all supported this incident. Bedfordshire FRS will remain in attendance for a significant amount of time, BFRS will continue to support if further requests are received.

Reports state that a number of firefighters were treated for smoke inhalation, but all have thankfully been released from hospital (no one from BFRS treated).

Another great example of cross border working, where BFRS had supported over the border colleagues.

(Councillor Christensen joined the meeting)

## **FA22 MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY**

To note that Milton Keynes City Council appointed on 19 July 2023 the following Members to serve on the Authority:

### Milton Keynes City Council (5)

From: Councillors Darlington, Exon, Fuller, Hopkins and McLean

To: Councillors Darlington, Exon, Fuller, Khan and McLean

## **FA23 COMMITTEE MATTERS**

- (a) Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

Conservative Group:	10 seats	(58.82%)
Labour Group:	4 seats	(23.53%)
Liberal Democrat Group:	3 seats	(17.65%)

- (b) Committee Appointments

RESOLVED –

That seats to the following Committees be allocated as follows:

Executive Committee (8 Members):

- (i) Conservative – 5 seats
- (ii) Labour – 2 seats
- (ii) Liberal Democrat – 1 seat

Overview and Audit Committee (9 Members):

- (i) Conservative – 5 seats
- (ii) Labour – 2 Seats
- (ii) Liberal Democrats – 2 seats

1. That the following Members be appointed to the Executive Committee:

Councillors Darlington, Fuller, Lambert, Adoh, Hall, McLean, Rouse and Walsh in accordance with the Group Leaders' wishes.

2. That the following Members be appointed to the Overview and Audit Committee:

Councillors Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Hussain, Waite, Khan, Stuchbury, Christensen and Exon in accordance with the Group Leaders' wishes.

**FA24 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor McLean be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for 2023/24.

RESOLVED –

That Councillor McLean be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Authority for 2023/24.

**FA25 LEAD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each having been nominated and seconded it was:

RESOLVED -

That the following Members be appointed as Lead Members for 2023/24 as follows:

Responsibility	Lead Member
People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance	Councillor Adoh
Health and Safety and Corporate Risk	Councillor Hall

## **FA26 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES**

### **Overview and Audit Committee – 19 July 2023**

#### **(a) Protocol on Member and Officer Relations**

The Director of Legal and Governance advised Members that this report was being presented to the Authority as part of the quadrennial review of the Authority's Protocol on Member and Officer Relations. The Protocol complements the Authority's Members' Code of Conduct. The report was recommended by the Overview and Audit Committee, and was reviewed by employee representatives via the Joint Consultation Forum at its meeting on 1 March 2023 who were in agreement that the Protocol should include reference to the five ethical principles from the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services, which were also subsequently incorporated into the updated employee Code of Conduct 2023 when approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 22 March 2023.

RESOLVED –

That the Protocol on Member and Officer Relations be approved for adoption.

### **Executive Committee – 13 September 2023**

#### **(b) 2025-30 CRMP Listening and Engagement Consultation Outcomes**

The Corporate Planning Manager advised Members that this Consultation was carried out as part of wider consultation and engagement activities with other key stakeholders, including the Authority's own staff and partner organisations, the findings from which would be included in summary form in the draft CRMP ahead of the formal public consultation stage.

Officers carried out initial consultations at an early stage in the CRMP development process in order to comply with the National Framework and Fire Standard requirements and, also, those long established by the Gunning Principles, as they set out the legal tests that define what constitutes a legitimate consultation. Including, for example, that proposals were consulted on when they were still at a formative stage, to ensure that decisions had not been subject to pre-determination; and, that there was sufficient

information to enable intelligent consideration resulting in an informed response.

These requirements tend to favour qualitative methods of consultation when dealing with complex issues, hence the use of independently and expertly facilitated focus groups that allowed participants to discuss and consider CRMP related issues and proposals in depth.

Members would see in the report a diverse and broadly representative sample of the population was recruited to participate in the consultation. Because of this, Opinion Research Services, who carried out the consultation, advised that the outcomes were broadly indicative of how the public at large would incline if engagement with a much larger proportion of the population was undertaken.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised Members that the consultation was structured into two main parts, firstly, an exploration of the participants' perceptions of risk in their communities and of BFRS as a Service, covering things like their awareness of what it does, whether it was value for money etc. As with previous consultations of this type, fire was seldom mentioned spontaneously as something that the participants worry about on a day to day basis, even though they knew that the consultation had been commissioned by the fire and rescue service. However, there was a good exploration of some topical fire risks later on in the discussions such as wildfire and those related to lithium-ion batteries.

The second part explored some of the challenges that the Service faced and potential ways that it might respond to them. These included key issues raised by the HMICFRS in their Round 2 inspection report including the future of on-call services, automatic fire alarms and workforce diversity.

The Chairman asked about workforce diversity and setting out the perception challenge that the Service had, both around the importance of diversity and how it attracted different parts of the community that it serves, as well as informing the CRMP process. It was important to include it in the ongoing communication and recruitment activity.

The Head of Human Resources advised that with regard to recruitment, the Workforce Planning Group met on a monthly basis, and now the Service had reached the establishment target, were looking at what to focus on next. The five key areas were diversity, communication,

recruitment, succession and talent management and retention.

The Chairman asked about on call availability and the future of the on call service, and stated he was surprised that options were being explored with residents as it did not need to go through formal consultation. The Chairman felt there were things the Service could be doing now and asked officers what they could be getting on with as there was significant challenge with on call availability.

The Head of Protection, Assurance and Development advised there were currently on call trials which were trialling different things at different stations. At some stations the traditional on call model was extremely challenging, and the trials were making the most of the number of on call firefighters rather than the number of on call stations. The CRMP was key to future delivery, but Officers were doing work in the meantime to seek improvements around response.

The Chairman asked for a report on the on call strategy to be brought to a future Executive Committee meeting and then Fire Authority meeting.

A Member asked in terms of recruitment of diversity, in Milton Keynes 46% were from a diverse background how was the Service targeting young people from different backgrounds.

The Head of Human Resources advised that the current recruitment campaign was focused on women. Previously work was done on the South Asian community. When a recruitment campaign was undertaken, reports were run on who was applying, their protected characteristics and when they were falling out of the application process. This gave information on what needed to be targeted.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

**(c) Performance Management – Q1 2023/24**

The Data Intelligence Team Manager was pleased to present to Members the key performance measures report for Q1 2023/24. As Members would see, there had been a number of changes based on feedback throughout the last year. The most notable changes were an improved layout of the report which allowed for more detailed measure descriptions and increased commentary. There were also some new measures

Interim Chief Fire Officer



added, including prison fires, forecast-outturn, website engagements, carbon emissions and printing.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised Members that with regard to performance within the report, it was encouraging to see the impact of the incidents in the home and workplace were generally where they were expected to be based on the targets set. However, it would be remiss not to highlight the area detailed in the response model. This area primarily detailed the availability of appliances across the wholetime fleet and on call. As seen in the report, this area had yet to reach its expected position. In relation to wholetime figures, there were a number of reasons that attributed to these figures; however, the Service had identified the largest impact of these numbers was the skills gap within the current workforce, primarily in relation to drivers and junior officers. As mentioned within the commentary, a range of initiatives had been agreed to improve resilience of front line resources.

A Member asked how bank shifts worked, the risk of attacks on staff members and vehicle accidents.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that with bank shifts there was a direct correlation between numbers of wholetime staff and the number of bank shifts required. Now that the Service was above establishment with the current new apprentices, looking at the figures for the same period last year, the Service was 36% down on bank shifts requirements which was positive.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that with regard to the risk of attacks on staff members, thankfully the numbers were very low, and Officers engaged with the public a lot on this matter, and any attacks would always be reported to the Police. There was also a new law that had come out regarding attacks on emergency workers. A report that came out in June this year, reported attacks on firefighters had increased significantly.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the information on vehicle incidents was captured in other reports. The Health and Safety Committee drill down into every vehicle incident to see if it could have been avoided.

A Member asked around the format of the report as there were different types of targets and methods of comparison, some targets were aspirational and some were there to ensure minimum standards were met. Would it be possible to

mark out clearer which were aspirational, and which were minimum standards.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that this was something officers could look at.

The Chairman advised that the report was showing deteriorating availability of wholetime pumps and the on call response model was way off where it needed to be which feeds through to the issue of a serious deterioration in the over the border mobilisation from supporting services. When will the investment made in resourcing feed through into appliance availability and reduced the use of other services. When would Members start to see that and what more needs to be done to get availability where it needs to be and significantly reduce the over the border reliance.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised he had already started looking at Q2 and the benefits were already being seen. Response times were not good in Q1 but in Q2 were looking very good.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that availability was improving, although there was an issue around skills, with supervisory officers and drivers, and these were being addressed in a number of ways. A new area was being trialled called a 'safe to command' approach, whereby firefighters who had aspirations to be Crew Commanders, could command an appliance and an incident which gives the Service greater resilience. Also, when the 25 firefighters currently at the Fire Service College, were on station, this would be a further improvement.

RESOLVED -

That the Performance Management – Q1 2023/24 be noted

#### **FA27 PEOPLE STRATEGY 2020-2025 – YEAR THREE UPDATE**

Station Commander – HR Projects advised Members that the People Strategy 2020-2025 was approved at the October 2020 Fire Authority meeting. The Service reviewed progress and provided an update to Members on an annual basis.

Key area one – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I), the Service secured a Change 100 Intern working within the Resource Management Team. The candidate started on 10 July 2023, additionally the Service had delivered bespoke ED&I training for all employees to embed ED&I throughout

the Service. The Service had also been awarded the ENEI Silver accreditation.

Key area two – Employee Engagement, the Culture Survey Working Group had evolved into the Employee Engagement Working Group and was made up of employees from across the Service. The group continued to use the feedback loop as a tool to encourage idea generation and capture feedback and crucially ensure the Service remains focussed on completing the cycle by offering feedback and celebrating success. The People Awards were held in July to celebrate employee achievements.

Key area three – Organisational Development and Resourcing the Organisational Development Team were developing a BFRS staff development pathway project which was being designed to align to the NFCC's Core Learning Pathway and Leadership Framework. The Pathway will provide clarity to employees looking to develop themselves either within their existing role or with aspirations for the next level role within BFRS or another organisation.

Key area four – Training, Learning and Development there had been a significant commitment delivering a range of wholtime recruitment, transferee and on call firefighter courses supporting the Service's strategic objective of increasing the operational establishment. This had been delivered alongside recruitment for support roles.

Key area five – Employee Health and Wellbeing the Service's mental health support network, had been reviewed and updated providing a robust support structure across the Service. 37 mental health champions had been trained to provide a range or support to employees. Trauma support training had been provided for 12 new debriefers, bringing the cadre of available trauma support debriefers to 22. The purpose of trauma support was to provide reassurance about natural reactions to traumatic situations and an opportunity to discuss coping strategies.

The paper identified future opportunities of the Strategy for year four. These opportunities would allow the Service to measure and record progress made in each key area, identify further opportunities to develop the People Strategy, and improve how both existing and future employees are developed.

A Member asked about the Equal Pay Act, and the section on diversity and also that the strategy did not mention the unions.

The Head of Human Resources advised that there was a Equal Pay Audit in 2020, and that report was presented to Members. The gender pay gap was reported every March and next year the Service would also be looking at the ethnicity pay gap. The People Strategy goes out to the Trade Unions through the Joint Consultative Forum, to get their input.

The Chairman asked about the equality impact assessment, a number of areas were assessed as a positive impact from the strategy, but there were two that stood out where it was highlighting no negative impact and asked why. Also, the staff survey was due to take place in January, had altering the month been considered.

The Head of Human Resources advised that in terms of the equality impact assessment, and those areas shown as neutral, this was only for the People Strategy.

In terms of the survey, the last two surveys had been undertaken in January and also it had been balanced against the HMICFRS survey which was part of the HMICFRS inspection and so it did not clash at the same time. It was also trying to be set at the same time each year, so staff knew when to expect it. January had been chosen as it allowed the results to be fed into next year's plans.

The Chairman requested that consideration be given to having the staff survey later in the calendar year as it has been noted in some sections surveys in January can produce more negative responses.

Head of Technology,  
Transformation and  
PMO

RESOLVED -

That the contents of the update and progress made in the key areas are noted.

**FA28 EXTEND THE TIME PERIOD OF THE BFRS RESPONSE STRATEGY**

Group Commander – Service Delivery South advised Members that the current BFRS Response Strategy had been live since 2018 and was due to end in 2023. The strategy had been reviewed and officers were content that it was still fit for purpose for an extension period. A new response strategy could be written now, but with the CRMP consultation currently underway, and with the good engagement and information currently being heard from the community, it would be used to better understand future needs of the

community. It was important that the response strategy aligns with this new CRMP. The risks for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes were being considered, work had progressed with the high rise response, wildfire provision and also engagement with battery energy storage systems which were appearing across the county. There was also an Emerging Risk Group to look at risks within the area.

The Chairman asked that it be reviewed regularly if the circumstances around it changed. Part of the issue around this Response Strategy was that it was put in place in 2018 and should have been updated with the 2020 Public Safety Plan. When the CRMP was launched, the Response Strategy should be aligned to it.

A Member stated that his support for the recommendation was contingent on the Strategy being submitted to the Authority for review and approval in 12 months' time.

A Member advised that some people who had solar panels had batteries in their houses. He knew the Service did risk assessments on commercial buildings but was the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) doing anything about domestic properties. Should the solar panel companies have a database that could be accessible by the fire service.

The Group Commander - Service Delivery South advised that there was a lot of new technology coming out and the Service was beginning to gain information on larger solar farms, private installations. It collected certain amounts of information on domestic dwellings but not solar panels or lithium batteries in private houses.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that after every incident the Service attended, Officers complete an incident report, which was currently being reviewed by the Home Office. This was probably their hottest topic on how this information was captured so that trends could be seen and pushed back onto the industries. It was also a hot topic for the NFCC too.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that there was a dedicated resource within the NFCC working on this whole area and there were a number of competing priorities around electric vehicles, e-scooters, e-bikes as these were the greatest risks moving forward, where people were charging them in hallways etc., there was a huge emerging risk around those areas. With regard to the domestic energy battery storage, there were companies that were very reputable,

who do inform a register that the Service can access, but equally, people were buying batteries off ebay etc., and installing them themselves in airing cupboards, crews would not know what they were facing until they get there. The crews were well trained in identifying this and there was operational guidance in place around attending premises where there were solar panels and a potential for that risk to be there. Training packages were also being developed around battery energy storage systems and how to tackle those fires.

The Chairman asked if there was an awareness campaign that the Service could run about storage of solar panels etc. and provide advice to people on how they best protect themselves.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that it would form part of the Prevention Strategy moving forward. There were national campaigns, but this could also be look at locally as it was one of the emerging risks.

RESOLVED –

That the extension of the Response Strategy be approved, so that the strategy aligns with, and is informed by, the new Community Risk Management Plan (and be reviewed by the Authority in 12 months' time)

**FA29 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED –

It was moved and resolved that the public and press representatives be removed from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contains information relating to any individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of a person (including the Authority); and on these grounds it is considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The Corporate Planning Manager, Data Intelligence Team Manager, Station Commander – HR Projects and Group Commander – Service Delivery South left the meeting.

**FA30 SUCCESSION PLANNING**

RESOLVED –

Head of Protection,  
Assurance and  
Development

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

**FA31 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 6 December 2023 at 11 am.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 12.40PM

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON TUESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2023 AT 11 AM.

**Present:** Councillors Adoh, Carr, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Darlington (part), Exon, Fuller, Hall, Hussain (part) Lambert, Rouse (Chairman), Stuchbury, Walsh (part)

**Officers:** M Osborne (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), M Hemming (Director of Finance and Assets), A Carter (Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO), P Mould (Head of Response and Resilience) K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer), R Wilsher (HMICFRS Inspector) and J Hayden (HMICFRS Chief of Staff)

Online: K Richardson (HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead)

**Apologies:** Councillors Bagge, Christensen, McLean (joined online) and Waite

The Chairman advised that although members of the public were able to attend and observe in person, following the meeting, a video recording would be uploaded to the Authority's YouTube Channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxpL3vliv7bh1Q>

## **FA32 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

None.

## **FA33 MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY**

To note that Milton Keynes City Council appointed on 18 October 2023 the following Members to serve on the Authority:

Milton Keynes City Council (5)

From: Councillors Darlington, Exon, Fuller, Khan and McLean

To: Councillors Carr, Darlington, Exon, Fuller and McLean

## **FA34 COMMITTEE MATTERS**

- (i) Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

Conservative Group: 10 seats (58.82%)

Labour Group: 3 seats (17.65%)

Liberal Democrat Group: 4 seats (23.53%)

(ii) Committee Appointments

That seats to the following Committees be allocated as follows:

Executive Committee (8 Members):

(i) Conservative – 5

(ii) Labour – 1

(iii) Liberal Democrat – 2

Overview and Audit Committee (9 Members):

(i) Conservative – 5

(ii) Labour – 2

(iii) Liberal Democrat – 2

1. That the following Members be appointed to the Executive Committee:

Councillors Darlington, Christensen, Lambert, Adoh, Hall, McLean, Rouse and Walsh in accordance with the Group Leaders' wishes.

2. That the following Members be appointed to the Overview and Audit Committee:

Councillors Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Hussain, Waite, Stuchbury, Carr and Exon in accordance with the Group Leaders' wishes.

(Councillors Darlington and Hussain joined the meeting)

**FA35 HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) INSPECTION REPORT 2023**

The Chairman welcomed His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) Roy Wilsher and Chief of Staff Jo Hayden from HMICFRS and advised Members that as it was an important session, he would allow Members a longer time to ask questions than usual.

HM Inspector advised Members that the Service had made some improvements but had not done enough since the last inspection to improve. Four of the 22 areas for improvement and three of the eight recommendations from the cause of

concern in the 2021 report had been addressed. Prevention and Protection both needed clear direction and prioritising targets in the highest risk. Although mobilising the nearest fire appliance in the Thames Valley was a good thing, BFRS was over reliant on neighbouring fire services attending incidents. There was a need for better direction setting and prioritisation from senior leaders, but also a concern for the workload levels within the Service.

The report had 26 areas for improvement and three causes of concern. The Inspectorate expect an action plan within 28 days of publication of the report to show how the causes of concern would be addressed.

Starting from the base document, the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), does not cover all risks within Buckinghamshire and does not allocate resources in the way they would expect prevention, protection and response in a proportionate manner. There had not until recently been sufficient community engagement in the CRMP process, although the Service does gather local risk information well.

The first cause of concern was prevention. There had been some improvement, a revised strategy and some direction to the work, but the Service was not identifying and prioritising people most at risk. Work had been concentrated on the over 80's and high rise residential. Although these were both risk factors, there were others. Health deprivation, alcohol and drug abuse etc. Prevention work needed to be evaluated. The staff who work on prevention had the right skills and make appropriate referrals, e.g. forms to social services and they also work well with partners. Staff were also good at safeguarding matters.

Cause of concern for protection. There was a need to review the strategy and the risk based inspection programme, to ensure the highest risk premises were identified and audited. There were more staff in protection, which was a good thing. They were well trained and carried out good quality audits within buildings and the building consultations were also good. The IT systems needed upgrading, and more direction and prioritisation was required for the staff.

Cause of concern on fairness and promoting diversity. The Service had not made enough progress since the last inspection to improve equality, diversity and inclusion. Although the Service had done some work, it had not done enough. The Service had completed one of the recommendations for reviewing its equality impact assessment process, but the other recommendations still required action to be taken or completed, i.e. raise awareness, feedback systems for staff, collecting data and recruiting a diverse workforce. The Service was good at tackling bullying and harassment and discrimination, but workloads would often mean that deadlines for those cases were not met.

In terms of response, there was no cause for concern, but the Service was very lean and struggled to resource fire appliance availability. 30% fire appliance attendance to incidents was from other Services. Risk information needed to be updated and available on the Incident ground and on the mobile data terminals.

There were good plans for fire station locations, officers knew how to command incidents, and Thames Valley Fire Control worked well. BFRS was well prepared to attend major and multi-agency incidents, although more needed to be done to complete all the Grenfell recommendations. The Service had comprehensive financial plans, but falls short on allocating resources to prevention, protection and response. The general IT systems were poor and required more investment.

Prevention and Protection information systems had failed, and mobile data terminals could not be removed from fire engine cabs to enable incident command. There was limited capacity and capability within the Service to bring about this change. The Service had struggled to recruit IT and Project Management specialists, which had an impact on the ability to change. Senior managers needed to be more visible and consistently demonstrate the right behaviours.

96% of staff who responded to the HMI survey do know the Service's values, which was a good thing, and staff were proud to work for the Service. However, complaints go through the chain of command, and this could affect confidence from staff in reporting, and the time scales that

issues were resolved. At the time of inspection, there was not an independent reporting line for complaints, but this was now in place. Inspectors witnessed middle managers who were not supportive of each other, and were told there was a lack of confidence in some of the senior leaders.

The Service had a good wellbeing provision, but it was not always accessed or implemented correctly. The Inspectorate was told of high workloads and pressures, which linked to the capacity issues. Workforce planning needed improving, although there had been some progress, there needed to be a fully open and fair promotion process. The Service was good at background checks for employment, and staff were proud to work for the Service.

(Councillor Walsh joined the meeting)

A Member asked about retained firefighters and the ability to staff on call stations.

HMI Wilsher advised Members that regarding retained, on call firefighters, this was a countrywide problem trying to get enough people to crew on call appliances. This was something that would come out in the Chief Inspector's State of Fire report, later in the year. Something needed to be done as this society had changed, and although it was not just BFRS, there were one or two stations in Buckinghamshire where it was an acute problem.

A Member asked with regard to the finances that were mentioned in the report, additional resource had been provided to improve head count, and estate improvements. A detailed financial review had been undertaken which had also improved the financial situation of the medium term forecast and that was very positive, but when looking at HMICFRS's concerns with over the border usage, because of the geographical nature of the county, and former parts that used to be part of Buckinghamshire, makes it quite challenging to resource without building a new station, or having a wholetime crew elsewhere with very significant cost. Where should the Service be in terms of over the border usage?

HMI Wilsher advised Members that because of crewing systems and the availability of some fire stations, the Service was a little over reliant on over the border usage. Mobilising the nearest fire engine was a good thing. Mobilising the

nearest fire engine across border was a good thing and that was where Thames Valley Fire Control worked well. The balance had got a bit out of line. Locations of fire stations were fine, and the HMICFRS were not expecting the Service to spend money on building another whole time station. It just needed a thorough review with neighbouring Services.

A Member stated that ever since the 1947 Act, fire services helped each other over the border, the report said there was a 30% reliance on over the border, but equally BFRS would be going into other authorities on an initial call, of two or three pumps, and one could well be from BFRS. So was the 30% net, or does it take into account BFRS going into the other authorities, does it bring the percentage down?

HMI Wilsher advised that the calculation had not been done exactly so he could not give a percentage but speaking to the Chief Fire Officers of Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire, BFRS did not go into their areas as much as they come into Buckinghamshire.

The Interim Chief Fire Officer advised Members that Buckinghamshire was a net receiver from some authorities because it was landlocked, and was bordered by a number of authorities, and it was also seasonal. With Oxfordshire the Service was a net provider in the wintertime, but net receiver in the summertime. Northamptonshire was similar. The Service was a net receiver from Royal Berkshire and from Hertfordshire as well. As previously mentioned, the area around Slough which use to be part of Buckinghamshire, even if the Service had a wholetime pump available 24/7 in that area, Slough would still beat BFRS into the area. There were some anomalies due to the shape of the county.

The Interim Chief Fire Officer could provide these figures to Members.

A Member asked if there was an area within the county that was weaker and relied more on over the border activity or was it all the way round the county.

HMI Wilsher advised Members that the Interim Chief Fire Officer could provide more information on that, but his perception was that Slough and Rickmansworth would provide most of the over the border reliance.

The Interim Chief Fire Officer advised Members that with the 30%, it could be interpreted that 30% of incidents had the initial response from someone over the border but that was

not the case. The 30% included if there was a six pump fire and there were five appliances from BFRS and one from over the border. The Service had been working with those Services across border around charging arrangements.

A Member asked if the 30% included false alarms.

HMI Wilsher advised that it included all incidents, including false alarms, and the percentage of false alarms were particularly high in Buckinghamshire.

The Interim Chief Fire Officer advised that the number of false alarms in Buckinghamshire was below the national average.

A Member asked about protection and the new responsibilities for the Service following Grenfell, particularly in high rises, which tended to be located, not exclusively, in Milton Keynes. What does HMICFRS think the Service could do to improve it. Also, of the two reports that were released on the same day, this Authority was just over £30 per head and the other Service was over £50 per head, what extra pressure does this gap cause the Authority. Lastly, one of the main conclusions was that the Service did not make enough progress from the last report, how can Authority Members support the senior management team and could HMI Wilsher elaborate on the point about senior leaders.

HMI Wilsher advised Members that the staff in Protection were well qualified, and when they undertook audits of premises, they did it well. The issue had been the actual risk based inspection programme, deciding which buildings to go to first and that could be high rise. HMI Wilsher had been advised by the Interim Chief Fire Officer that officers were already talking to the National Fire Chiefs Council getting some help and reviewing the risk based inspection programme.

With regard to finance, BFRS was a very lean service, which does cause capacity issues, but the financial plans were very good, it was just the Service did not have much money.

In terms of supporting the senior leaders moving forward, scrutiny of the areas for improvement and the recommendations from the causes of concern. Officers would come up with an action plan, that Members should be scrutinising. In terms of senior leaders, there was a lack of visibility and senior leaders could be Group Managers up.

Visibility, and how they take feedback and how they support and interact with each other was important.

A Member stated that the Service attended all automatic fire alarms, was the recommendation that it does not, and if that was the case, there would be an operational change which would change the cost profile. Please could HMI Wilsher elaborate more on what was meant by productivity in the report.

The people risk mentioned over 80s and above, this was a chosen area the Service was addressing, but in the report it said the Service now need to concentrate on the 65 plus age group and it was marked down for not including this group.

The high level of equality, diversity and inclusion work within the Service, does not seem to be recognised within the report, it mentioned characteristics, but you cannot make employees divulge their protective characteristics unless it was mandatory, going against what legislation said, that seemed to be the gap in the report.

HMI Wilsher advised that with regard to automatic fire alarms, that was a decision for the Authority and the Service. What was meant by productivity was the Service getting the best out of the workforce when they come to work. It was focused on Stations and if they were doing as much as they could be doing with their time. Were they doing safe and well visits, were they training as much as they should. Attending incidents could be measured, but what they were doing on Station was not easy to measure.

Over 80s, of course was a risk factor, but was concentrating on over 80s and high rise residential, meaning the Service was missing other risk factors. The staff know what they were doing with safe and well checks, it was just widening the risk base to make sure the Service was getting to the most vulnerable in those areas.

In terms of equality, diversity and inclusion, there was good plans, leadership and strategic intent, but it was not getting through how it should in some areas of the Service and that was what was concerning. You could not force anyone to give their characteristics, and there was not any government that was going to legislate that, in fact the change in legislation was to ensure you could not.

The Interim Chief Fire Officer gave Members assurance around the operational matters, there were good plans in



place already, and the Service had been working with HMICFRS since the hot debrief at the end of June and the National Fire Chiefs Council, to make sure that all the plans that were being brought forward, were best practice and had been peer reviewed across the board. The Service was working closely with all its partners and colleagues. 15 November was the 28 day deadline to respond, and the Service would have strong, robust, operational plans in place for those areas.

A Member asked regarding the concerns raised about availability, and highlighted four individual Stations that had acute problems, and suggested a review of operations, was HMICFRS asking officers to go away and look at the fire station base and rationalise it, potentially to close some stations and relocation resources elsewhere.

HMI Wilsher advised that this comes under the integrated risk management plan and something that was already being looked at. Many of the locations were good locations and Stations were where they needed to be, but if there was only 5% availability at a Station, it does raise the question as to whether that Station was required or not, but that was for the professional advisers and the Fire Authority to make those decisions.

The Chairman advised that when looking at some of the root causes in the report there were three main areas. The financial plan situation of the Service, the Public Safety Plan 2020-2025 and leadership. With regard to the financial plan, the Authority cannot change what went on 10 to 15 years ago, but in terms of where the Authority now sits, and this was recognised in the report, the reserves position and the operational resources position had both been strengthened and set a platform for transformation. The challenge now was that any investment for transformation had the impact that was needed.

The Chairman advised that there were two observations made in the report. One was that the Service had not properly looked at the allocation of resources between prevention, response and protection, and he would like to know what was meant by that. Identified in the report was that protection had been well resourced, but the resource had not been well directed, what were the key lessons the Service should take from that.

On the Public Safety Plan, the 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan could not be unpicked, but the Service recognised that it needed to change and that was why the community risk management planning process had been brought forward and there was good progress being made on it. Was there anything else that the Service should have done differently and was there anything between now and the publication of the Community Risk Management Plan that the Service should be encouraged to do, that would take away some of those concerns.

The Chairman advised that the Service had become more reliant on over the border over the last 12 months. Some of that was about whole time resources, but hopefully the Service was starting to see a change. The root cause was availability and again it would be helpful to know any best practice. As you say retained firefighters were a national problem, was there best practice from other inspections elsewhere of a similar rural area, that would help this Service with the availability challenge.

The Chairman also asked HMI Wilsher to explain the leadership points, the report referred to a fully open recruitment process, please could the issues around that be explained.

The Chairman advised that the Service was visited at the beginning of the year regarding the two causes of concern, and from the feedback, it felt that good progress was being made. It did not feel that the feedback was going to lead us to the content of this report. Moving forward, how could the Service ensure it was getting the right feedback from HMICFRS that suggested it was not making enough progress.

The Chairman asked that looking at other reports published, where does this report put the Service against its peer group. How concerned should Members be.

HMI Wilsher advised that with regard to finance, if it was not in the base budget from years ago, building back up was very difficult. The plans the Service had for finance were good, the reserves were building and over the coming years as more was invested, whether it was through precept, or any other way, the Service would start to reap the benefits. One of the issues the Service does suffer with was location. The job market and the pressures on how much the Service could pay, as a local public sector, made it difficult to recruit. It was an acute problem in the South East.

Resource allocation sits within the CRMP and it was very important where resources were allocated. Fortunately, now, there were standards for CRMP's from the Standards Board, advising Services that they should be looking at the national risk register, the community risk register, floodplains, demographics, there was a whole list of things. Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) was a good one to look at, because it was more rural and did risk management well. Also, with regard to rural availability, again look at KFRS, they had done some different things, but most services were struggling with on call retained availability. There had been talk of a national project for a while now as something needed to be done and it was something that HMICFRS would push the government on.

HMI Wilsher advised that with the open promotion progress had been made, but the perception was that it was not as open as it should be and through communication and how things were done to ensure that people understood and perceived it to be open.

HMI Wilsher advised that regarding feedback on the causes of concern, he guaranteed while he was the Service's HMI, he would advise exactly where the Service was, and how it was improving or not improving and he would make suggestions to help the improvement.

HMI Wilsher advised that with regard to peer competition HMICFRS tried not to do league tables. It was not a good report, improvement was needed, and the Service could improve. The commitment was there, proudness of the Service was there. With the help of the Authority scrutinising the senior management team, the Service would improve.

The Chairman reiterated what he said at the start of the meeting, he was exercising a degree more latitude over the normal Standing Orders. He reminded Members that they were in a public meeting and to take a degree of care over some of the points that were being made. Also, he encouraged Members to ensure they were not repeating questions that had already been covered.

A Member asked if the 30% was linked to any specialised service or any specialised unit and wondered if this had contributed to the issue. Also, in terms of climate management, how was the Service going to predict and manage that in terms of financial support. Was there any best practice that would assist the Service, in particular in terms of

heat waves, flooding, particularly for Milton Keynes. Also, if the Service doesn't address these points within the report, what would the outcome be.

HMI Wilsher advised that the 30% was very much day to day incidents. The specialist resource and national resilience resource were all built on the national resilience advisory framework. With regard to the report, things would start to improve, and HMICFRS would assist with that. The National Fire Chiefs Council, Local Government Association and the Home Office would all help with the improvement as well. Ultimately, although it would never happen, the Home Secretary could put in a team of people to run the Service, but that would be the real bottom line. The HMI's job was to make sure that doesn't happen. There would be a revisit inspection, and the Service Liaison Lead would keep in constant contact, and HMI Wilsher would speak to the Chief Fire Officer regularly.

A Member asked about the section on promoting the right values and improvement and governance and scrutiny. Would it be worth looking at what governance and scrutiny other Authorities do in order to ensure the processes were robust enough. The Member was concerned about comments around occupational health and mental health and additional welfare for staff, and asked where HMI would recommend the Authority improve its governance and scrutiny to help improve welfare.

HMI Wilsher advised Members there were very good welfare provisions within the Service, but it was people accessing the system, understanding the system, and having the time to go and do the things they needed to do. There were a lot of workload pressures, people were working 'hot', working all the time, so it was about people taking that little bit of time to access some of that provision.

In terms of scrutiny, HMICFRS do not have any remit for inspecting Fire Authorities, but how they do scrutiny is very important. Good governance was very important. HMI Wilsher suggested discussion with the LGA because they do a lot of peer assessment and know how these things work. Through the Fire Services Management Committee of the LGA was probably the best way.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the Authority note the BFRS HMICFRS 2023 inspection report (Appendix 1).
- 2) That the Interim CFO be delegated to prepare and publish an Action Plan on behalf of the Authority in consultation with the Chairman and the Vice Chairman.
- 3) That the Overview and Audit Committee be delegated the monitoring of progress of delivery against the Action Plan.

The Chairman thanked HMI Roy Wilsher, Chief of Staff Jo Hayden and Service Liaison Lead Kathryn Richardson (online) for attending the meeting.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 6 December 2023 at 11 am.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 12.02PM

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Fire Authority, 6 December 2023

**Report title:** Health and Safety Policy

**Lead Member:** Councillor Gary Hall

**Report sponsor:** AC Doug Buchanan, Head of Protection, Assurance and Development

**Author and contact:** Daniel Cadwell, [dcadwell@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:dcadwell@bucksfire.gov.uk)

**Action:** Decision

**Recommendations:** That Members approve the Health and Safety Policy.

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**Executive summary:** Annual review of the Health and Safety Policy which has undergone minor changes to reflect the most up-to-date information for approval by Fire Authority members. This policy provides the overall framework, within which a suite of health and safety procedures have been developed to provide further clarification of how the commitments within the policy will be met to comply with legislation.

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**Financial implications:** If risks are not managed and controlled effectively, they 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.

**Risk management:** Risk management involves understanding, analysing and addressing risk to ensure the Service can achieve its objectives.

**Legal implications:** The safety management system is well embedded throughout the Service and its performance is subject to regular audit by peer fire and rescue services to ensure it remains fit for purpose, as well as ensuring compliance with legislation. If this scrutiny does not take place, it is possible that breaches of health and safety legislation may occur.

**Privacy and security implications:** There are no personal details contained within in this policy document.

**Duty to collaborate:** This policy document highlights the collaboration work within the NFCC South East Health and Safety group's ongoing audit process to maintain high standards.

**Health and safety implications:** This policy document details the arrangements within the organisation in conjunction with the HSG-65 model. This enables the

organisation to have a structured safety management system and details the roles and responsibility of all in order to ensure this model remains effective and enable a positive health and safety culture and safe workplace.

**Environmental implications:** N/A

**Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:** This policy applies to all staff; the information provided within should have a positive impact by instilling a positive health and safety culture. An equality impact assessment (EIA) has been carried out for all areas of work covered by the policy document. EIA's will be carried out on project work as necessary.

**Consultation and communication:**

This strategy has followed the appropriate governance route for approval including the Business Transformation Board, Strategic Management Board, and the Fire Authority.

This included consulting with all key stakeholders, as well as the Lead Member for H & S, endorsed by the CFO and Chairman.

Following approval of the Policy, communication will be via the normal policy publication and amendment process.

**Background papers:**

Fire Authority Meeting, 7 December 2022, Health and Safety Strategy 2023 – 27

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/authority/fire-authority-meeting-7-december-2022/>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Health and Safety Policy, 2023 – 27	N/A
2	Equality Impact Assessment	N/A





## Introduction

All employees, trade union and staff representatives have been consulted on this policy.

This policy provides the overall framework, within which a suite of health and safety procedures have been developed to provide further clarification of how the commitments within the policy will be met in order to comply with legislation.

As a Service we are aiming to diversify our workforce and that we consider these differences in a positive light, when undertaking risk assessments and activity.

Health and safety does not negate the need for equality in the workplace. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recognises the importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in creating a safe and healthy work environment.

The nature of emergency response, with its inherent unpredictability, means that providing a 'safe place', 'safe process' and 'safe person' can be challenging and complex. This does not excuse the Fire Authority (the Authority) from its legal and moral obligations in relation to health and safety. It does require that the Authority recognises and responds to the challenge it is presented with by the unique nature of the firefighter's role, which places a greater burden on the Authority in providing a safe working environment.

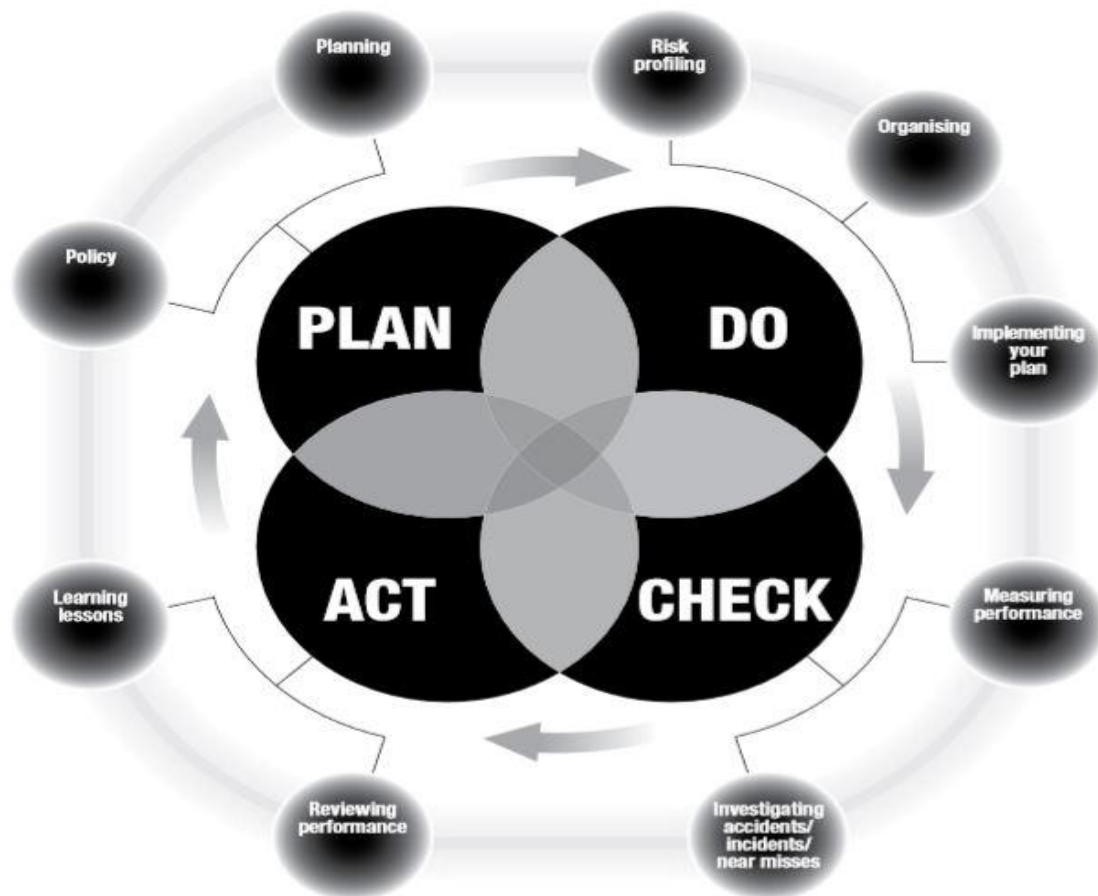
In order to cope with the demands placed upon it, the Authority must have adequate systems in place to:

- Develop and implement policy and procedures;
- Clearly define its organisational arrangements;
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of all in relation to health and safety;
- Plan and adequately resource requirements;
- Measure and review its health and safety performance.

To achieve this, a robust safety management system is in place.

The Safety Management System (SMS) adopted by the Authority is based upon HSG65 "Managing for Health and Safety". This standard sets out a simple and straightforward approach to managing safety and can be applied to any business. It is also endorsed and used by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

HSG65, (HSE) guidance document on the successful management of health and safety uses the "Plan, Do, Check, Act" cycle. This cycle is reproduced below and the structure of the Authority's own approach will follow the four broad sections that sit under "Plan, Do, Check, Act" as detailed in the diagram.



**Element 1 – Plan:** The policy statement of intent for health and safety is endorsed by the Chief Fire Officer and the Chairman of the Fire Authority. It contains a clear commitment from the most senior management levels, throughout, to all aspects of health and safety. Not only is it written to meet the legal requirements under health and safety but to demonstrate to all staff, in whatever function they perform, that members of the Authority and Service managers are committed to achieving the safest working environment possible.

An individual station/site policy statement is contained in Appendix 1 and is to be signed by the local site manager and displayed on the Health, Safety and Wellbeing noticeboard in all Authority sites.

Further details on individual aspects of health and safety are contained within the suite of health and safety procedures held in the Authority's electronic document management system. These Service documents are the primary source of information that staff must refer to and comply with when dealing with the day-to-day demands of the Authority whilst maintaining the health and safety of personnel and those affected by their activities.



An effective system for health and safety management requires the Authority to plan to control risks, react to changing demands and sustain positive health and safety attitudes and behaviours. Planning is essential for the implementation of health and safety policies. Adequate planning assists in the identification of specific needs and enables those issues to be addressed whilst taking into consideration the overall needs of the Authority and those affected by its activities. Planning will also define those requirements placed upon the Authority by other authorities and legislation.

**Element 2 – Do:** This section of the safety management system details the structure and arrangements in place, which ensure that the procedures contained within the Policy Statement are delivered. The overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of policy and procedures is a function of senior management but particular responsibilities are assigned to specific posts and groups within the Authority. To ensure that a positive and open safety culture prevails, it is imperative that all staff understand their specific responsibilities and are empowered and trained to act appropriately and work safely. Effective communications, the establishment of appropriate levels of assessment, competence and participation will be encouraged to achieve integration at all levels.

Application of the plan enables the policy defined by the safety management system to be implemented in a controlled and reasoned manner with adequate consideration of resource implications and possible effects on the whole range of activities undertaken by the Authority.

A risk assessment-based approach to all activities is an integral part of the safety management system and will assist in prioritising those areas that present the greatest risk to staff. Included in this approach are operational activities, assessment of competence and training needs, new or revised procedures and the selection and procurement of vehicles, equipment and products.

Where risks are identified, every attempt will be made to effectively eliminate them or to reduce them to the lowest levels that are reasonably practicable. This may be achieved through the introduction of physical controls, new or revised systems of work, information, instruction, training and supervision or, as a last resort, through the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

**Element 3 - Check:** The measurement of a range of performance indicators established by both the Authority and external auditors will enable a positive approach to be taken to health and safety. This in turn should assist in the reduction of events that have either resulted in, or have the potential to cause injury, ill health or loss (near misses). Targets for continuous improvement in these areas will be set and monitored using benchmarking against comparable organisations.

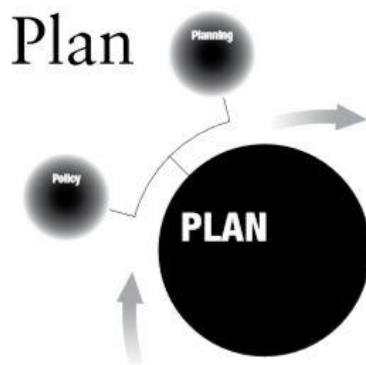
By actively analysing safety event and near miss reports, monitoring the number of hours worked by staff, monitoring absence through work related injury or ill health, hazard reporting and conducting workplace inspections, the Authority will



be able to identify trends and any weakness in the current arrangements and then act to drive improvement. This approach will be embedded and underpinned, by the action taken, in developing and implementing corporate planning and performance management within the Authority.

**Element 4 Act:** To enable the Authority to ensure that its policies, procedures and management of health and safety are effective it must audit and review its performance. Included in this review must be the examination of the safety management system itself and the practical implementation of the same, to determine its effectiveness. All aspects of the system from reporting procedures to the working effectiveness of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee are audited and action taken to address any deficiencies.

The performance of the Authority will also be assessed by comparison with other fire and rescue services, other organisations and any national fire or industry standards. It is essential that processes are supported by active learning from both internal and external information sources, to ensure that the Authority continues to apply global best practice standards.



The overriding purpose of the safety management system is to actively prevent injuries and accidents, rather than just passively react to them. For this system to be effective, the Authority must invest effort in properly planning, implementing and maintaining the safety management system.

Reacting to safety events rather than proactively working to prevent them leads to the reliance on reported data and serious events or reported diseases before introducing appropriate control measures. It also leads to reliance on safety event reports and investigations that focus too sharply on the front-end cause of an accident/near miss and take insufficient account of underlying causes and procedural failings.

Health and Safety is central to all Authority activities and as such it is vital that health and safety objectives are set and met. The broad objectives of health and safety planning are listed as follows. Stations and other departments should be able to use these broad principles to assist in their local arrangements and plans for health and safety.

The key objectives are:



- To reduce the number and severity of work-related injuries and ill health including mental ill health;
- To reduce working days lost due to sickness absence and the associated costs and liabilities;
- To ensure the Authority maintains its current compliance with legislative requirements in relation to health and safety matters;
- To ensure full reporting and investigation of all safety events, near misses, hazards and work related ill health;
- To improve the quality of all procedural reporting systems, policies, procedures and information systems relating to health and safety.
- To maintain, through adequate information, instruction, training and supervision, an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding on health and safety matters;
- To continue to monitor, audit & review current systems and procedures in relation to health and safety.

In addition, the Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan set out the strategic objectives for the Authority from which the health and safety department individual objectives are set. These objectives will be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Timely

**Integrating health and safety into local planning:** Station and departmental plans must specifically address those health and safety issues identified through the local audit and inspection process, or which have been raised centrally, because of learning from experiences elsewhere.

The health and safety team will work with managers to provide advice and support where required to assist them in achieving their aims, resolving their health and safety issues and to ensure a safe working environment for all.

The Head of Protection and Assurance is responsible for updating the Strategic Management Board and the Health and Safety Manager is responsible for updating the lead Fire Authority Member for Health and Safety by means of regular Health and Safety reports.

The principle of identifying important health and safety issues within departments and stations will include an analysis of risk and priority given to those areas that present the most significant risk of injury.

**Information on health and safety:** The Authority's instructions defining safe systems of work and safe working practices can be found in the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) and via the Intranet in Service Documents.

The National Operational Guidance (NOG) provides authoritative guidance on safety issues and will be the default position of the Authority, unless a positive



decision has been made by the Strategic Management Board to adopt an alternative procedure. Should this be the case a clear communication of the distinct Authority position will be recorded as an Authority document and circulated to all relevant staff.

The Authority have fully adopted the National Operational Guidance which comprises a suite of operational guidance documents, training packages, assessment and assurance tools and risk assessments. Compatibility mobilising arrangements are also in place, which will ensure greater collaboration, improved interoperability, and, where appropriate, the adoption of common approaches to emergency response procedures.

In relation to National Resilience assets, national published guidance will be the default position of the Authority, subject to the completion of those risk assessments which fall within the legal duties of employers to carry out themselves.

The health and safety team subscribe to an online information service, which provides a comprehensive library of safety related information. Employees are encouraged to request such information via the health and safety team.

Managers must ensure that all staff have direct access to the relevant publications in relation to their own duties. Adequate arrangements will be in place for all staff to be made aware of any new documentation or changes to policy, or procedures and records of these must be kept.

Managers should ensure that they have direct access to current copies of all relevant Authority documents dealing with health and safety matters. All Authority sites are provided with a specific health, safety and wellbeing notice board, which is to be kept up to date, with a nominated person identified for this function.

Health and safety must always be included as a standard item on Station/Departmental management meetings including those meetings organised principally for ancillary matters, such as Social Clubs, with issues acted upon where appropriate.

## **Health and safety communications**

The Authority has established and maintains a number of routes of effective communication on the subject of health and safety and provides specialist advice to all employees of the Authority.

In particular, the active involvement by staff members in development work, establishment of safe systems of work and hazard identification are to be encouraged using internal lines of communication.

Information can come from a number of sources; internally from the outcomes of risk assessment, incident debriefs and safety event investigations and



externally from other Fire Services, the Health and Safety Executive and from other external health and safety information providers.

Where urgent Health and Safety information requires circulation faster than Service Documents notes can be revised, or where particular emphasis must be placed on an existing policy or procedure, a "That's Safe" notice, or a "That's Training" notice will be issued.

Where immediate notification is essential, an Urgent Safety Information Notice will be sent by Fire Control. Less urgent but none the less important information may be communicated by a "Health and Safety Bulletin" issued by the Health and Safety Department.

Minor events that have occurred or minor areas to address are published alongside monthly statistics in the "Keeping Safe" briefs by the Health and Safety Department.

Regular Station / Department discussions on health and safety issues are to be encouraged whether as part of station management meetings, health and safety 'tours' or as a result of a workplace inspection.

Further specialist advice is available to all staff via the health and safety team.

## **Training and supervision**

It is the Authority's legal responsibility to ensure that suitable instruction, information, training and supervision is provided to all members of staff to ensure that they carry out their duties without risk to themselves or to others through their activities. Newly appointed employees must be given appropriate training on induction and existing employees must complete the appropriate training as identified which will include annual refreshers.

All new employees must be provided with the appropriate level of supervision until such time as they are deemed competent and able to work unsupervised. When employees change role, the new line manager must ensure that any new or additional health and safety training is identified and provided. They must also ensure that the appropriate level of supervision is provided until such time as the employee is deemed competent and able to work unsupervised. Records of all health and safety training must be kept.

Each manager has a duty to identify the training needs within their department or workplace and an informal risk assessment process will be used to establish training requirements. It is also essential that those supervisors responsible for identifying those needs have adequate training to enable them to carry out this function.

The overall responsibility for identifying and analysing the Authority's needs in terms of resourcing and funding for training rests with the Organisational Development department.



Appropriate recording of all training given, and assessments carried out within departments and stations is an essential element of any training development programme and all supervisors are to ensure that adequate records are kept.

Supervisors will ensure that employees are made aware of the hazards and risks relevant to their role and workplace both on induction, during probationary periods, where development needs are highlighted and when any changes to premises, plant, processes and people occur.

## **Health and safety training**

All members of staff, in addition to the basic training required to carry out their duties, are required to have training on health and safety. This training will take place during work hours and will be related to policies and procedures for health and safety and the employee's responsibilities within current legislation. Training will be carried out by a competent person with experience relevant to the training taking place.

On commencement in role, the Line Manager will provide further training, using a variety of methods, on specific workplace risks and how they are controlled.

This training will be undertaken as part of the staff induction process and for certain health and safety matters, at regular intervals throughout their employment. Should circumstances emerge that impede this process, the training is to be completed at the earliest opportunity, and in all cases, records of the training or any inhibiting factors are to be maintained. In the case of existing staff moving between departments, or sites, or through promotion, specific relevant hazards together with any additional training requirements and / or policies or procedures will be drawn to their attention.

Additionally, the Authority will provide specific health and safety training to individuals commensurate with the role undertaken:

- |                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Health and Safety Manager      | NEBOSH Diploma                    |
| • Health and Safety Advisor      | NEBOSH General Certificate        |
| • Health and Safety Assistant    | IOSH Managing Safely              |
| • Chair/Vice Chair/Lead Member   | IOSH Safety for Senior Executives |
| • Strategic Management Board     | IOSH Safety for Senior Executives |
| • Station/Site managers          | NEBOSH General Certificate        |
| • Watch/Crew/Team manager        | IOSH Managing Safely              |
| • Firefighters (Safe to Command) | IOSH Managing Safely              |

Individuals and groups will have specific training relevant to their role as identified through a training needs analysis or as required under legislation.





Employees delivering health and safety training or development activities must be a minimum IOSH Managing Safely qualified. In addition, best practice is that persons delivering training should hold the appropriate teaching certification.

Where, through movement of staff, it is anticipated that a newly appointed Health & Safety Team Manager will not already hold a NEBOSH Diploma, the Authority will make arrangements for provision of technical support from Diploma qualified advisors from external specialist providers and other Fire & Rescue Authorities. Such arrangements should be formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding or formal contract and should be tested for efficacy.

## **Authority arrangements for occupational health**

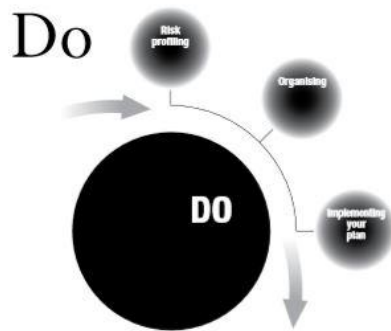
The Authority recognises that operational personnel, through their normal course of duties are exposed to occupational hazards. Every attempt is made to eliminate or reduce that exposure through a variety of measures. This also applies to non-operational personnel who may be exposed to different occupational hazards.

To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, the Authority has a contract with an Occupational Health provider. Full details of the arrangements are available through Human Resources. A brief outline of the arrangements are as follows:

- Wholetime and On-call recruitment medicals;
- Periodic medicals and fitness assessments in line with national recommendations;
- Specialist medicals and health advice for all employees;
- Psychological ill health;
- Referrals following extended periods of sickness absence for all staff;
- Sickness absence monitoring and trend analysis;
- Medical assessments for staff on alternative duties or returning to full duties;
- Ill health retirement medicals;
- Specialist advice on exposure to hazardous substances and any other matter related to an employee's health within the working environment.

In addition to these services Human Resources has access to a wide range of support facilities that are available to all staff members; these include arrangements for rehabilitation, physiotherapy and psychological support for matters such as traumatic incidents, workplace and personal stress. These services are accessible via the Occupational Health provider. Confidentiality is to be maintained at all times.

The contact within the Authority will be the Human Resources Employee Relations Team.



The fundamental principle applied within the Authority is that management of health and safety is a core responsibility of all staff. It is not the exclusive preserve of a specialist team and is never somebody else's problem.

To ensure the success and effectiveness of the safety management system, all levels of staff need to understand their responsibilities relating to such. All managers and employees need to be aware that they have:

- Responsibilities for the health and safety of themselves, those they manage and others who may be affected by their actions;
- Responsibilities for the health and safety of people who may be affected by their activities, e.g. other emergency services, members of the public, contractors and visitors to their site;
- An active part to play in the Authority's safety management system.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Safety reporting lines will normally follow the established management structure. However, there are certain post holders within the Authority who have specific responsibilities to other managers and to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

**Chief Fire Officer and Elected Members:** Have ultimate responsibility for health and safety within the Authority. This rests with the Chief Fire Officer and the elected members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority.

**Fire Authority oversight:** The Fire Authority has appointed a lead member for Health and Safety who will report to the Fire Authority on matters relating to health and safety. The Head of Protection and Assurance is the responsible person for health and safety policy authorisation, structure and implementation and reports on matters relating to health and safety to the Strategic Management Board, as necessary.

**Health and safety team:** The health and safety team have the following responsibilities, however this list is not definitive:



- Provide/source specialist technical advice relating to health and safety;
- Supports Head of Protection and Assurance for health and safety policy/procedure development;
- Support Officers undertaking investigations into safety events as appropriate;
- Audit and review the management of health and safety within the Authority
- Communicate health and safety information to the Authority, SMB and to all staff;
- Interpret existing, new and forthcoming legislation and the possible impact on the Authority and report the outcomes of their findings as appropriate.

**Health and Safety Manager:** Reports to Head of Protection and Assurance for health and safety and is responsible for the systematic review and assessment of the Safety Management System together with policy/procedure creation and review, strategic planning for health and safety and the management of the health and safety function. They are responsible for setting and driving the strategic direction for health and safety.

Additionally they are responsible for:

## Corporate Management

- To contribute to the development of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP);
- To advise the Strategic Management Board and elected members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority, as appropriate, on the development of policy and procedures, and to promote and implement actions to achieve the Authority's strategic corporate objectives;
- To conduct, support, manage and contribute to internal and external audits, Authority development, reviews and the management of risk;
- To manage the health and safety department and act as the Authority's competent person for health and safety;
- To participate in the Authority's performance management processes.

## Authority Delivery

- To advise the Head of Protection and Assurance on Authority compliance with statutory and national guidance and best practice requirements regarding health and safety;
- To support and monitor the Health & Safety Advisor in the activities of the department, ensuring any deadlines are met and the correct policies, procedures, plans and documentation are in place, as directed by line management;
- To develop and lead a positive and effective health and safety culture with staff and representative bodies including active membership of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, and ensuring all communication is delivered through appropriate means;



- To liaise with external agencies and all areas within the Authority on health and safety matters;
- To monitor the effectiveness of health and safety policies, procedures and practices throughout the Authority;
- To ensure appropriate risk management and assessment processes are in place within the Authority and to monitor compliance
- To stop work taking place that contravenes legislation and implemented organisational policy and procedures;
- To provide professional advice and guidance as required to managers and staff;
- To promote and monitor the development of safe systems of work procedures and identify best practice and contribute to national and regional work regarding health and safety, as required;
- To advise on the identification of health and safety qualifications commensurate with roles within the Authority, contribute to the health and safety training requirements and support their delivery, enabling managers and staff to fulfil their health and safety responsibilities, as required and support their delivery via the Organisational Development Team;
- To research and advise the Authority on technical matters relating to health and safety;
- To monitor, audit and report on safety event, injury, near miss and hazard reports and make recommendations, to prevent reoccurrence, as required;
- To participate in and report on internal and external health and safety inspections / audits, as a qualified auditor, working in conjunction with the South East region and any other Fire and Rescue Authorities, as required.

To be the nominated person with responsibility for health and safety for the:

- Efficient operation of the health and safety team;
- Implementing the requirements of the policy document;
- Providing a health and safety plan detailing objectives and priorities for the financial year, within the corporate planning schedule, which is approved by the Head of Protection and Assurance and the Strategic Management Board;
- The health and safety plan includes the health and safety objectives for the financial year which are approved by the Strategic Management Board;
- Delivering the health and safety plan, and providing quarterly update reports on completion of the business plan to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing committee and Strategic Management Board
- Oversight of the health and safety budget

## Health and Safety Advisor

Reports to the Health and Safety Manager and is the technical expert on health and safety matters within the Authority. Their duties and responsibilities are:

- To advise on and carry out a systematic risk assessment process;
- To carry out health and safety inspections as required;
- To contribute to the preparation and updating of relevant Authority policies, procedures and associated Authority documents;



- To liaise with external agencies and all areas within the Authority on health and safety matters;
- To monitor the effectiveness of health and safety policies, procedures and practices throughout the Authority;
- To research and advise the Authority on technical matters relating to health and safety;
- To monitor and audit safety event reports and make appropriate recommendations;
- To carry out internal and external health and safety audits when required
- To deputise for the Health & Safety Manager in their absence, within the parameters set by Authority policy.

**External advice:** Professional independent advice is secured by contract through a third party. This advice will be followed when planning work, monitoring processes and where necessary halting work if it is found to be putting employees and those affected by the work of the organisation at risk.

**Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee:** The purpose of the committee is to provide a forum for consultation and active involvement between the management of the Authority and the recognised representatives of the workforce. The committee reports to the Strategic Management Board, on Health and Safety policy, performance and other related matters. The detailed role and structure of the committee is set out in the guidance note.

**Line Managers:** Supervisory Managers will be responsible for the implementation of health and safety policies and procedures pertaining to all Authority activities and to ensure that all work equipment is tested, maintained, serviced and used correctly, by competent personnel.

**Group Commanders and Department Heads:** Group Commanders and Department Heads will hold responsibility for the monitoring of health & safety within their departments. The Health & Safety team will use them as their first point of contact with line management, unless there is an over-riding and time-critical safety imperative which necessitates direct contact with other staff within departments.

**Station Commanders and Site Managers:** The Station Commander's or Site Manager's function, through active supervision and inspection, is to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees, contractors and visitors to the site or location that the manager is directly responsible for by:

- Implementing the safety management system;
- Ensuring the provision of adequate resources;
- Ensuring adequate control measures and local arrangements are in place to manage the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees, contractors and visitors;
- Identifying employee training and development needs and highlighting them via the appropriate communication route to the Organisational Development team;
- Ensuring that workplace risk assessments are in place and are regularly reviewed in consultation with health and safety representatives, changes



to working practices, new equipment or material alterations to premises, to ensure the safety of staff;

- Ensuring that workplace inspections are carried out to identify existing provisions for safety remain in place and to take steps to deal with any deficiencies and outstanding matters;
- Identifying potential weaknesses in procedures, systems and equipment and taking immediate steps to rectify where required;
- Monitoring all working practices, equipment and accommodation standards and ensuring that they comply with all current statutory and Authority instructions in respect of health and safety performance;
- Ensuring all safety events and near misses are reported as soon as possible after the event or, in the case of personal injury, within 24 hours and investigated. Where appropriate, local managers and department heads must implement initial control measures and make recommendations to prevent reoccurrence;
- The regular use of auditing, as detailed in Annual Safety Audit and Inspection Procedure will assist in complying with the above list.

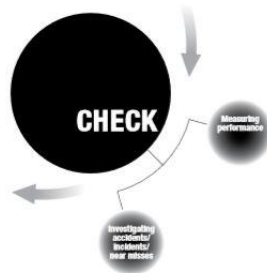
## **All employees:**

The legal duties of all employees are as follows:

- They have the responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others;
- They must co-operate with their managers, comply with policies and procedures and implement any control measures, which have been provided to ensure a safe working environment e.g. safe systems of work and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
- Use any equipment or substance in accordance with training or instruction given;
- They must avoid any act or omission, which may endanger themselves or others, and report, immediately, any hazards or unsafe conditions which they become aware of;
- They must wherever possible remove, protect or inform others of any hazards that have been identified. They must report this to the local manager as soon as possible and advise of any action taken to prevent or reduce the hazard.



## Check



HS(G)65 defines measuring performance both actively, by monitoring compliance with standards and legislation, and reactively, by investigating the causes of non-compliance. For the Authority, that means active assessment of risk and implementing appropriate control measures, and reactive investigation of and satisfactory resolution of identified safety problems.

### Risk assessment

The Authority recognises that in order to meet the requirements of health and safety legislation it must adopt a consistent approach to both hazard identification and the introduction of control measures to deal with those hazards.

The system that has been adopted is easily transposed to all areas and utilises a simple scoring system (1-5) based on a calculation of severity and likelihood. The multiplication of the figures gives a numerical value to the incident or hazard and assists in determining its seriousness in relation to other similar events. This value then enables the Authority to react accordingly.

The system requires that immediate, underlying and root causes are identified by the appropriate level of investigation i.e. Minor, Moderate or Major.

### Safety event, near miss, hazard reporting and investigation

Without comprehensive reporting of safety related issues, the Authority lacks the fundamental information gathering tool by which lessons can be learned, shared, and used to prevent reoccurrences. The Authority's reporting processes are designed to fulfil two requirements:

- **Proactive:** through recognition and rectification of things that have the potential to cause a safety event. Near misses, hazard reports, change management proposals, and station inspections are examples of such work.
- **Reactive:** through recognition, investigation and corrective action when an event has occurred. Safety event investigations, incident debriefs and the circulation of information, such as significant safety events that have occurred in other Fire Authorities, are disseminated as appropriate. 'That's Safe' notices, Health and Safety bulletins and the 'Keeping Safe' brief are examples of reactive work in health and safety.

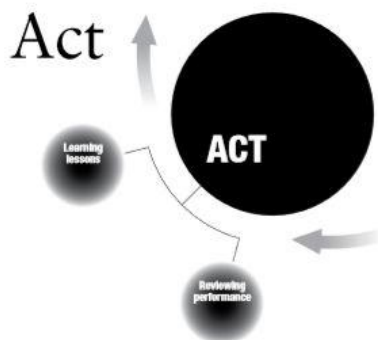
All safety events, injuries, illnesses, dangerous occurrences, near misses and hazards which arise out of work activities will be reported and investigated in



accordance with Authority documents and where appropriate the statutory requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

The detailed arrangements are contained in both the Safety Event Reporting procedure and Hazard Reporting procedure, and also detailed on the inside cover of the Accident reporting book. The Authority has adopted procedures that apply to all staff and will assist in ensuring that:

- All safety events, near misses and hazards are reported;
- All safety events, near misses and hazards are fully investigated;
- Employees are referred to Occupational Health following personal injury safety events and/or hazards;
- Human Resources are notified of any workplace injury as soon as practically possible after the event;
- The level of investigation is proportional to the potential harm that may be or has been caused to persons, vehicles or items of equipment;
- The investigation seeks to identify organisational and systematic failings as well as the primary cause;
- The results of the investigation highlights organisational and systematic failings as well as the primary cause;
- The results of the investigations are analysed and acted upon to prevent reoccurrence.



As part of the overall management of health and safety within the Authority, effective arrangements are required both to inspect premises and audit management arrangements to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of employees, and those who may visit Authority premises.

Policies and procedures will be reviewed when changes to legislation occur and periodically to ensure compliance with legislation and to ensure the continued relevance of service documents. During the review process, any information highlighted through hazard reports and safety events relating to service documents will be included to ensure policies remain suitable and sufficient.





The procedure for the annual health and safety audit and inspections details the process by which annual audits will take place within all Authority premises. The procedures contained within this document are to ensure comprehensive health and safety audits are undertaken.

In addition to these arrangements, suitably qualified staff from fire authorities in the National Fire Chief's Council South East Regional Health and Safety group, or from other independent external auditors may conduct external audits.

## Auditing and inspection arrangements

The Authority will carry out an internal audit using the Fire and Rescue Service specific audit tool. An employee of the Authority who has been trained and qualified as an auditor will conduct the audit.

The audit will be carried out every three years, with the findings being presented to the Area Commander Protection, Operational Learning and Assurance. who will use it to form the basis of a report to the Strategic Management Board and to inform the health and safety business plan.

## Station/departments

Every station and department within the Authority shall carry out a self-audit and inspection using the form FB1.9 located: N:\Common\Health & Safety\Station Audits

The manager of the site, who will be qualified to NEBOSH General Certificate standard, will carry out the inspection (Note: should the Site Manager not hold the General Certificate, they must obtain assistance from a colleague that does) with the support of a member from the Health and Safety Team and Facilities Team. An employee or staff representative must be invited to attend.

All audits will be carried out over the course of each financial year and any matters arising will be prioritised using the following action levels:

- Dealt with immediately using local resources (I);
- Dealt with in the medium term (6 months) using local resources (M);
- Included as key tasks within the local plan for the forthcoming year (L).

The audit action plan is the principal tool for tracking actions arising from the annual inspection. Progress updates on health and safety issues identified as key tasks will be recorded at the first Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee meeting quarterly. Progress against these key tasks will be monitored by the Line Manager or Group Commander.

The working environment should also be regular assessed to ensure that it is accessible to all staff, such as those with physical disabilities. The Equality Act 2010, requires employers to make reasonable adjustments for staff and potential staff, to ensure equal access to employment opportunities, for those visible and not so visible needs.



Conditions should be provided that are welcoming and equal to everyone, safe and free from any unwanted conduct or behaviours.

Records of the audit will be kept on station and an electronic copy sent to the Health and Safety department.

The Health and Safety department will collate the results and present a report to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

The health and safety department will review the audit process annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

At the time of the review, individual items may be added to the FB1.9 in light of the results of generic risk assessments, changes in legislation or hazard, safety event and debrief reports.

## Appendix 1

This is to be displayed in all Authority sites on the Health, Safety and Wellbeing noticeboard next to the Health and Safety law Poster.

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

### **Health and Safety Policy Statement**

**(Insert station/site here)**



Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority are committed to securing, as far as is reasonably practicable, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of employees and other persons likely to be affected by its activities.

Effective management of Health and Safety is a fundamental contributor to the Authority's performance:

- It will reduce injuries and ill health
- Protect the environment
- Reduce unnecessary losses and liabilities; and,
- Contribute positively to a safe working environment

This commitment operates from the principle that legislative requirements form the minimum standard of policy application and action within the Authority. This policy statement applies universally to all activities undertaken by the Authority



and makes no distinction between emergency and non-emergency work, and whether an individual employee's role includes emergency response duties.

***Safety is a fundamental requirement of every activity we undertake.***

The Authority recognises that its employees are its most valuable asset. Effective health and safety performance can only be achieved through the engagement, involvement, support and commitment of its management and staff, all of which are essential components to drive continuous improvement.

In addition to the arrangements of routine activities, the unique nature of Fire Authority work requires that hazards associated with all of its activities, are systematically identified, adequately assessed and effectively controlled.

**Statement of principles:**

In order to adequately control risk, the Authority is committed to a Safety Management System that embodies the concepts of the "safe place, safe process and safe person" principles. The wellbeing of employees and those affected by their work is achieved through:

- The rigorous recruitment and selection of personnel;
- A system of training, promotion and retention, based on the demonstration and maintenance of competence;
- The provision of information relating to hazards, their associated risks and appropriate control measures;
- Simple and effective processes, procedures and systems;
- Competent supervision, applying discipline and clear command and control of all operational activities, training scenarios, emergency incidents and routine work activities;
- The reasonable provision and commitment of the financial and physical resources required to support the legislative and policy commitments detailed within this document;
- The purchase, testing, inspection, maintenance and instruction in the use of suitable equipment;
- The provision, testing, inspection, maintenance and use of the most suitable personal protective clothing and equipment;
- The application of a communication structure, which facilitates the transfer of information relative to the Safety Management System and its function;
- Consultation with all of its employees via the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and representative bodies;
- The inclusion of health and safety objectives as a core element of overall corporate planning objectives;
- The ability to call upon external experts for advice and guidance;
- The provision of training for investigating all safety events and 'near misses' to ensure appropriate action is taken to avoid recurrence.



It is the policy of the Authority that the organisational structure and arrangements contained in this document are strictly adhered to and this Policy Statement will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Station Commander/Site manager commitment:

Signed: (sign here and print as below)

Signed:

Louise Harrison

Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Signed:

Councillor Simon Rouse

Chairman, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Date: 06/12/2023

## **Appendix 2 –Safety Management System Organogram:**

## Service Document Standard Form:

### Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note



**Buckinghamshire**  
**FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**  
*we save lives*

#### 1: Overview information

Name of activity / change / policy / procedure/project:	Health and Safety Policy
Directorate/department:	Health and Safety
Name(s) of person(s) completing the assessment	Daniel Cadwell
Date of commencement of assessment:	August 2023

#### 2: What is the aim and purpose of the activity / change / policy / procedure / project you are assessing?

The policy is being reviewed to reflect the current information relating to roles and responsibilities as well as detailing the safety management system and how the Service ensures it is effective. This policy provides the overall framework, within which a suite of health and safety procedures have been developed to provide further clarification of how the commitments within the policy will be met in order to comply with legislation.

#### 3: Who will be affected by the activity / change / policy / procedure / project, and how? Consider members of the public, employees, partner organisations etc.

All employees will be affected as the policy ensures that the safety management system is effective to instill a positive health and safety culture and safe workplace. This policy will also affect contractors, and members of the public as this document sets out the safety management system which will help ensure a safe working environment for them to visit.

#### 4: What information is already available that tells you what impact the activity / change / policy / procedure / project has/will have on people? (*please reference*) Consider quantitative and qualitative data, consultation, research, complaints etc. What does this information tell you?

The policy has been published previously on the intranet and the N Drive and the need for review has been discussed in the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee meeting. The Lead member will have sight of this document prior to its governance journey.

5: Does the activity/change / policy/procedure/project have the potential to impact differently on individuals in different groups? Complete the table below by ✓ the likely impact.

*This information is held for organisational and legal reasons and will be retained for only as long as necessary*

## Service Document Standard Form:

### Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: *Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note*



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Assessment of impact on groups in **bold** is a legal requirement. Assessment of impacts on groups in *italics* is not a legal requirement, however it will help to ensure that your activity does not have unintended consequences.

Protected characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Rationale for decision ( <i>use action plan in section 14 for negative impacts</i> )
<b>Individuals of different ages</b>			✓	No discernible impact on this protected characteristic
<b>Disabled individuals</b>	✓			The station audit sets out to ensure that the welfare facilities are maintained to their highest standards, highlighting any areas for improvement and also any future needs that are required to be factored in to cater for all staff and visitors with health conditions or impairments.
<b>Individuals transitioning from one gender to another</b>			✓	No discernible impact on this protected characteristic
<b>Individuals who are married or in civil partnerships</b>			✓	No discernible impact on this protected characteristic
<b>Pregnancy, maternity and new parents</b>	✓			The station audit sets out to ensure that the welfare facilities are maintained to their highest standards, highlighting any areas for improvement and also any future needs that are required to be factored in to cater for all staff and visitors.
<b>Individuals of different race</b>			✓	No discernible impact on this protected characteristic

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**Service Document Standard Form:****Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

Linked documents: *Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note*



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<b>Individuals of different religions or beliefs</b>	✓			The station audit sets out to ensure that the welfare facilities are maintained to their highest standards, highlighting any areas for improvement and also any future needs that are required to be factored in to cater for all staff and visitors.
<b>Individual's gender identity</b>			✓	No discernible impact on this protected characteristic
<b>Individual's sexual orientation</b>			✓	No discernible impact on this protected characteristic
<i>Individuals living in different family circumstances</i>			✓	No discernible impact on this protected characteristic
<i>Individuals in different social circumstances</i>			✓	No discernible impact on this protected characteristic
<i>Different employee groups</i>			✓	No discernible impact on this protected characteristic
<i>Other, please specify</i>				

6: What further research or consultation is needed to check the impact/potential impact of the activity/change/policy/procedure/project on different groups? If needed, how will you gather additional information and from whom?

The document will pass through Business Transformation Board, Strategic Management Board and the Fire Authority for comment before finally noting and approval.

7: Following your research, considering all the information that you now have, is there any evidence that the activity/change/policy/procedure/project is impacting/will impact differently or disproportionately on some group of people?

N/A

8: What amendments will you make/have been made to the activity/change/policy/procedure/project as a result of the information you have? If a

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**Service Document Standard Form:**

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

*Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note*



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negative effect has been identified, how could it/has it been lessened, does the original plan need changing?

N/A

9: After these amendments (if any) have been made, is/will there still be a negative impact on any groups?

**Yes** – please explain below

**No** – go to section 11

N/A

10: Can continuing or implementing the proposed activity/change/policy/procedure/project, without further amendment, be justified legally? If so, how?

11: How can you ensure that any positive or neutral impact is maintained?

The safety management system is audited externally by other South East Region Fire & Rescue Services.

12: How will you monitor and review the impact of the activity/change/policy/procedure/project once it has been implemented?

This policy document will be reviewed every 3 years with the policy statement being reviewed annually to ensure it remains current and effective.

13: Sign off

Name of department head / project lead

Calum Bell

Date of EIA sign off:

Date(s) of review of assessment:

30/08/2023

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**Service Document Standard Form:**

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

*Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment  
Guidance note*



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**Service Document Standard Form:**

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

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14. Action Plan - the table below should be completed to produce an action plan for the implementation of proposals to:

- Lower negative impacts
- Ensure the negative impacts are legal under anti-discriminatory law
- Provide an opportunity to promote equality, equal opportunity and improve relations within equality target groups i.e. increase
- the positive impact

Area of impact	Changes proposed	Timescales	Resource implications	Comments

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Fire Authority, 6 December 2023

**Report title:** Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report 2022-23

**Lead Member:** Councillor Gary Hall

**Report sponsor:** AC Douglas Buchanan, Head of Protection, Assurance and Development

**Author and contact:** Daniel Cadwell, [dcadwell@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:dcadwell@bucksfire.gov.uk)

**Action:** Noting

**Recommendations:** That Members note the health, safety and wellbeing performance as detailed in the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report for 2022/23.

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**Executive summary:** The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 including:

- Statistical overview
- Employee Wellbeing
- Risk Management
- New Safety Event Reporting System
- Thames Valley BA Project

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**Financial implications:** If risks are not managed and controlled effectively, they 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.

**Risk management:** Risk management involves understanding, analysing and addressing risk to ensure the Service can achieve its objectives.

**Legal implications:** The safety management system is well embedded throughout the Service and its performance is subject to regular audit by peer fire and rescue services to ensure it remains fit for purpose, as well as ensuring compliance with legislation. If this scrutiny does not take place, it is possible that breaches of health and safety legislation may occur.

**Privacy and security implications:** A Data Protection Impact Assessment for this report exists and has been reviewed. There are no personal details provided in this report and statistical data is generic rather than specific to protect the identity of

those involved. The data collected as part of personal injury safety events is name, date of birth, gender and home address when required for Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reporting – a legislative requirement.

**Duty to collaborate:** Collaboration work continues with our Thames Valley FRS counterparts and this report highlights the on-going collaboration work.

**Health and safety implications:** The report highlights safety event trends and details the analysis of these within the organisation. Ensuring the reporting of this data assists in the investigation process to create actions to prevent recurrence to ensure the safety of all staff and help ensure the working environment is as safe as it can be.

**Environmental implications:** N/A

**Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:** The data collected as part of personal injury safety events is name, date of birth, gender and home address when required for RIDDOR reporting. Where the number of personal injury safety events is so low that there is the potential for affected individuals to be identified, they are reported generically rather than specifically.

**Consultation and communication:** As this is a report on Health, Safety and Wellbeing for the year 2022/23 there is no requirement to consult with other stakeholders.

**Background papers:**

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report 2022/23	



**2022-23**

**Health, Safety and  
Wellbeing  
Annual Report**

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# Forewords

*"I am very pleased to be writing my fourth foreword to the annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing report. Whilst the impact of Covid-19 has significantly reduced the lessons learnt have been incorporated into the business-as-usual operations; we hope that we will not need to reintroduce the severe prevention and control measures.*

*It is pleasing to report again the low level of health and safety incidents across the Service. This is testament to how all employees understand that health, safety and wellbeing is paramount to themselves and to the public that we serve. As always, the key message is prevention but if incidents do occur that lessons are learnt and fed back as preventative initiatives.*

*The Health and Safety team is small, dedicated and professional; all members are very well respected throughout the Service. The team works with operational and support staff to understand how best to deliver the safe working environment that is something from which all staff and the public benefit."*

Councillor Keith McLean  
Lead Member for Health, Safety and Wellbeing, 2022 - 2023  
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

"2022/23 was another busy and challenging year for Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) and Health & Safety remained a key focus. The Thames Valley Breathing Apparatus project is just one example of collaboration being used to not only realise financial benefits, but also to ensure that frontline staff are provided with the most technologically advanced and safety enhancing equipment. The Health & Safety team procured and rolled out Visor, the Services new accident reporting system. This system not only ensures the timely reporting, investigating and monitoring of safety events, but provides real time performance data which informs BFRSs key performance indicators. Safety events continue to place a significant financial burden on the Service; however, a cost cannot be placed against death or serious injury, which is why we must continue to maintain a positive health and safety culture which is inclusive for all."

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

# Executive summary

**Our Performance:** The safety event statistics for the year 2022/23 identify that there has been a **decrease** in the number of vehicle damage safety events **by 13.6%**. This is an excellent result; however, there has been **an increase** in the number of personal injury events, and also an **increase of 20%** in the number of equipment damage safety events; more detail is provided in the report.

**Employee Wellbeing:** Trauma support training has been provided for 12 new debriefers, bringing the cadre of available trauma support debriefers to 22.

Service procedures and guidance documents have been updated or created, from supporting menopause in the workplace, flexible working, supporting employees with mental and physical disabilities, supporting employees experiencing domestic abuse and violence, supporting employees with neurodiversity and hybrid working.

The Service has also worked closely with The Fire Fighters Charity to introduce online wellness workshops, specifically designed to help and support the health and wellbeing of employees.

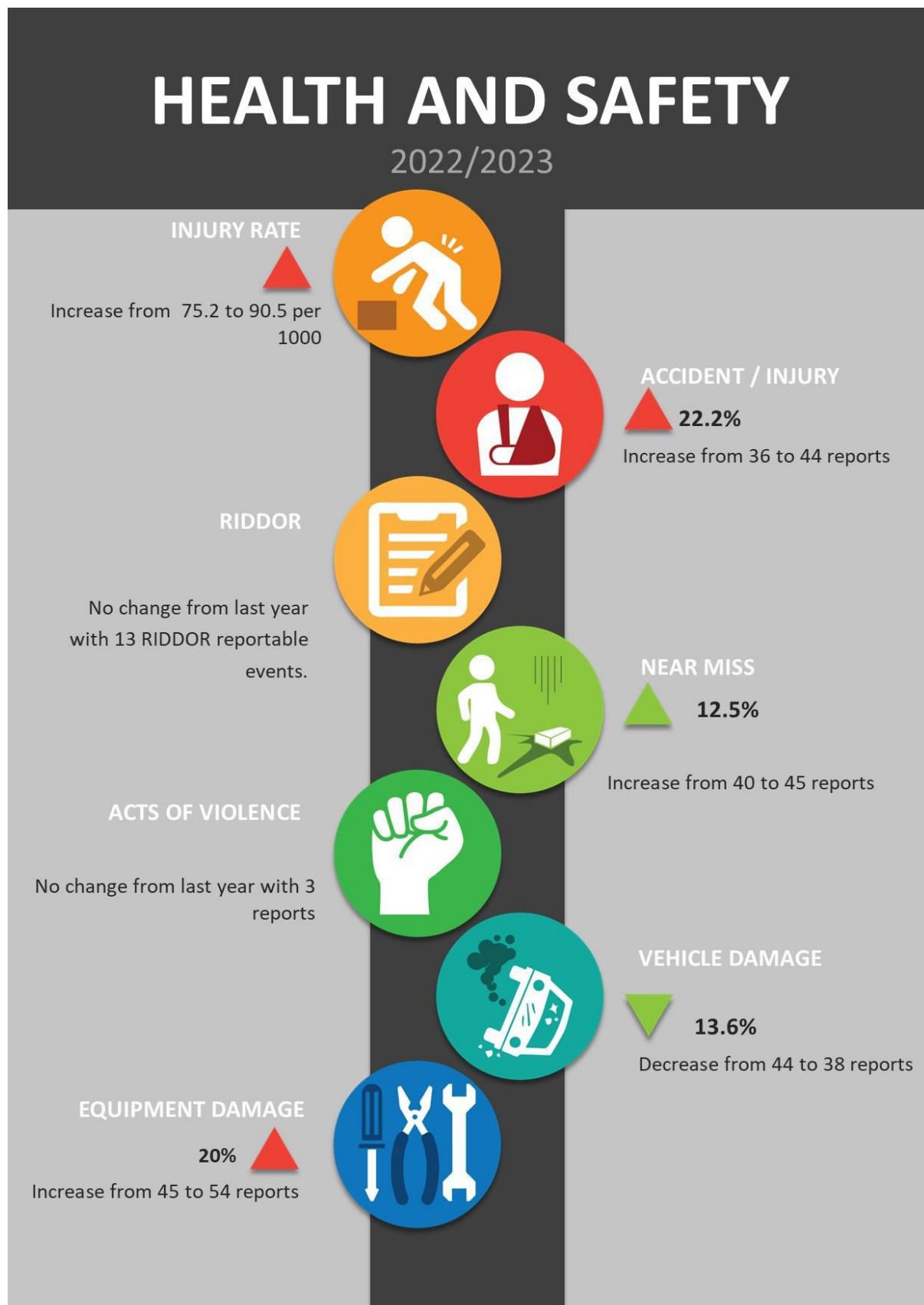
**New Safety Event Reporting System:** March 2022 saw the 'go live' of the new safety event reporting and investigation system, Visor, supplied by Cuttlefish Software. The system has been in place for a whole financial year within the Service and feedback from users has been very positive.

**Thames Valley Breathing Apparatus (BA) Project:** As part of Operational Alignment with the other Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services, Royal Berkshire (RBFRS) and Oxfofshire (OFRS), Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) are leading the Thames Valley BA Project. The Interspiro 'incurve' BA set was selected with the new equipment being delivered in February 2023 in preparation for its "go-live" date in April 2023.

**Protecting Firefighters Against Contaminants:** In September 2021, following research carried out by Professor Anna Stec and the University of Central Lancashire, into the effects of exposure to contaminants, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) launched a "DECON" Campaign. Whilst the Service has robust processes in place, the Health and Safety team continue to work closely with the FBU, and South East Region Health and Safety Group to implement the recommendations from the report so far as is reasonably practicable.



# Our performance at a glance



# Performance overview

In 2022/23 the number of incidents attended was 7,659 and the number of mobilisations was 10,184. These figures do not include co-responding incidents or officer mobilisations.

Overall, there has been a reduction in one of the seven categories. Vehicle damage safety events have decreased significantly which is a great achievement. There has however been an increase in the number of equipment damage safety events and an increase in personal injury safety events. There has been no change in the total number of acts of actual violence, and the number of events that come under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) as detailed in "Our performance at a glance" graph above. The number of 'near-miss' reports has increased this year from 40 to 45. An overview of the figures is provided below.

**Personal injury:** The *injury rate* is determined by calculating the number of incidents reported; divided by the number of employees and multiplied by 100,000 as set out by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). For the year 2022/23 the *injury rate* is 90.5 per 1000 employees compared to 75.2 in 2021/22 which is a slight increase. In terms of the actual numbers of personal injury safety events, there has been an increase from 36 in 2021/22 to 38 in 2022/23.

The severity of a safety event is determined by multiplying the 'likelihood' of the safety event occurring again by the 'severity' of the injury sustained. The resulting figure is known as the risk factor score:

- 1 to 5 is deemed a minor event
- 6 to 12 is moderate and
- 15 to 25 is a major event

Of the 44 personal injury safety events, 15 have been recorded as minor in nature and 29 as moderate, 6 of which occurred at the Fire Service College and the Service is working with them to reduce reoccurrence.

There was a safety event which attributed to 7 injuries following a chemical exposure caused by an inexperienced contract cleaner. The persons affected were removed to fresh air following suffering ill effects from the exposure. A thorough investigation was conducted, and this was picked up with the contractor to address the issues raised from this event.

Serious workplace injuries, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences are reportable to the HSE under the RIDDOR Regulations.

The number of RIDDOR reportable events for 2022/23 is 13, the same total as 2021/22. Analysis of these events resulted in:

- 5 dangerous occurrences relating to Breathing Apparatus
- 4 "major" injuries (heat-induced illness and a fracture)

- 4 'over 7 days' sickness absences

2022/23 has seen a decrease in the number of vehicle safety events with 38 safety events compared to 44 in 2021/22. 28 were of a minor nature, and 10 were classified as moderate. There has again been a pleasing downward trend in the total number of moderate events. Slow speed manoeuvres continue to be a problem for fire and rescue services nationally. 7 of these moderate safety events were due to slow speed manoeuvres, 3 were attributable to either vehicle damage or identified issues to Service vehicles.

There has been an increase in the number of equipment damage safety events compared with 2021/22 from 45 to 54; 45 of these were of a minor nature and 9 were moderate. Analysis carried out by the Health and Safety team identified that the moderate events have decreased from last year which is pleasing and that they were mostly isolated incidents with 2 of the 9 incidents related to teething issues from the new Interspiro equipment.

In the category "Acts of violence against firefighters", unfortunately there were 3 separate, unrelated incidents to report this year. 2 of these events were as a result of members of the public targeting fire appliances with fireworks, none of which resulted in any injuries. This remains at the same level as 2021/22. It is important to note that any act of violence against a member of staff is taken seriously and reported to the police.

For the year 2022/23 there has been an increase in the number of "near-miss" reports of 45, compared to 40 in 2021/22. This result highlights that staff are reporting more "near misses" which is pleasing. It is positive as "near miss" reporting reduces the likelihood of issues becoming safety events. The increase in "near misses" correlates to the increase in safety events, but the percentage increase of "near misses" (12.5%) is higher than the increase in safety events (4%). As standard practice, staff are continuously encouraged to report "near misses" no matter how trivial as inevitably these reports can reduce the increase in safety event numbers.

**Working Time Regulations compliance:** The Resource Management Team monitor the hours worked by operational personnel focusing on those who have more than one contract with the Service. This is managed via the resource management system and has proved to be very successful in eliminating breaches of the Working Time Regulations.

A breach may occur when a worker does not have a full 24-hour uninterrupted rest break in any 7 days or 48 hours in 14 days, or the total of hours worked per week exceeds 84. The Service has implemented a limit on the number of hours worked at 78 per week to build in extra protection against fatigue for staff. Two periods of 24-hour uninterrupted rest are also given in line with the national terms and conditions for firefighters – the Grey Book.

From April 2022 to March 2023 there were 4,750 Bank shifts worked and of those there were 0 breaches. This is an excellent result and highlights the positive work the Service has taken to ensure compliance with the Working Time Regulations.

**Performance Statistical data:** The performance statistical data received from the Home Office for 2022/23 **relates solely to operational personnel** and is displayed as league tables of fire and rescue services with similar numbers of employees 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 30 in 2021/22 to 35 in 2022/23. Of these, 17 occurred at training events, 9 during routine activities, 8 at fires and 1 from non-fire incidents. Overall, this resulted in BFRS remaining in third position in the league table.

The total number of **injuries at fires** has increased from 6 in 2021/22 to 8 in 2022/23 resulting in BFRS placing in fifth position of the National Peer Group Performance Comparison table detailed in Appendix 1.

The total number of **injuries at non-fire incidents** has decreased from 4 in 2021/22 to 1 in 2022/23. With this decrease, BFRS retains its position at the top of the peer table.

There has been no change in the total number of **injuries during training events** with 17 in 2021/22 and 2022/23 resulting in BFRS placing in seventh position in the league table.

In terms of **injuries during routine activities** there has been an increase in the figures from 3 in 2021/22 to 9 in 2022/23 which was skewed by one event resulting in 7 injuries caused by a third party. This has resulted in BFRS placing in seventh position in the league table.

**Injuries over 7-day absence** figures have reduced from 5 in 2021/22 to 4 in 2022/23 which places BFRS in sixth position in the peer table.

Finally, there were 4 *major injuries* for the year 2022/23 resulting in BFRS taking eleventh position in the league table.

Health and safety performance is reported quarterly at the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. Key stakeholders, the representative bodies and the Representative of Employees are invited to attend these meetings. Governance is via the Performance and Senior Management Boards on a six-monthly basis. The reports include statistical data on the number and type of safety events occurring at operational incidents, training and routine activities and the number and types of safety events involving Support staff.

# Employee Wellbeing

## **Attendance Management** – authored by Faye Mansfield, Human Resources

The Service continues to promote the value of health and wellbeing with employees throughout all roles and is committed to establishing a positive health and wellbeing culture within the workplace. This, includes promoting awareness and understanding of wellbeing, implementing effective and fair processes, and instilling positive behaviour by all. The Service recognises that mental and physical health and wellbeing are equally important and acknowledges the potential impact that work can have on both.

All long-term sickness absence cases are flagged within Human Resources, who then work with the line manager, employee, and Occupational Health in managing the employee's absence and return to work. All employees with over 28 days sickness absence are managed under the Attendance Management procedure and referred to Occupational Health.

For any sickness due to stress, anxiety or depression, the employee is automatically referred to Occupational Health regardless of the length of their absence. Occupational Health determines how work, or the workplace might impact on an employee, as well as how health, lifestyle or personal circumstances may impact on their ability to attend work or to return to work. The Service will seek advice from Occupational Health to guide in the management and progression of attendance management cases, ensuring employees receives appropriate support.

Measures are in place to support employees and a safe place of work is provided; however muscular skeletal sickness absence resulting away from the workplace cannot be mitigated by actions taken by the Service. Working with Occupational Health, the line manager and employee, every effort is made to get the employee back to work as soon as reasonably practicable. Where appropriate and when recommended by Occupational Health, physiotherapy is provided to employees. For cases of long-term sickness absence relating to stress, anxiety, depression and PTSD, and when recommended by Occupational Health, specialist counselling can also be provided.

All employees have access to an employee assistance programme, a free, independent, and confidential service, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, online or on the phone. The service offers expert advice, guidance, and support to help resolve a wide range of issues, and they will aim to answer any questions immediately or refer the employee to the most appropriate advisor, counsellor, or source of information. In addition, monthly newsletters and webinars on a variety of topics are available to employees via the Health Assured App and online, and regularly published on the Service's Intranet.

The Service's Welfare Officer is an additional point of contact to ensure employees have access to appropriate welfare support arrangements by providing advice, guidance, and assistance to those absent from work, returning to work, or going

through difficult personal circumstances. In addition, the Welfare Officer will provide advice and guidance to line managers to assist with individual cases where welfare support is required, including return to work plans and ongoing support. The Welfare Officer, along with members of the Service's mental wellbeing support network (another source of support) can signpost employees to appropriate wellbeing support.

The mental wellbeing support network has been refreshed, resulting in a total of 37 mental health first-aiders being trained from roles across the Service. This information has been shared with employees throughout the Service and members of the team are easily identifiable with dedicated lanyards being worn and names posted on noticeboards in all Service Premises.

Trauma support training has been provided for 12 new debriefers, bringing the cadre of available trauma support debriefers to 22. The purpose of trauma support is to provide reassurance about natural reactions to traumatic situations and an opportunity to discuss coping strategies. The focus of debriefing sessions is to see how individuals are coping following a traumatic event in order for appropriate support to be provided and to help individuals adjust post incident after a traumatic event.

Service procedures and guidance documents have been updated or created, for supporting menopause in the workplace, flexible working, supporting employees with mental and physical disabilities, supporting employees experiencing domestic abuse and violence, supporting employees with neurodiversity and hybrid working. A suicide awareness package has been added to the Service's online training system and is accessible by all employees. National campaigns are supported and communicated to employees throughout the year and a range of "me too" articles have been produced and published on the Service's Intranet, as a way of sharing employees' stories to help others; analysis showed that these were some of the most frequently visited pages in the Service.

The Service has a social media Wellbeing group on Facebook with over 100 members (and growing), this allows Human Resources to share wellbeing messages with employees using a range of more modern mediums.

The Service has worked closely with The Fire Fighters Charity to introduce online wellness workshops, specifically designed to help and support the health and wellbeing of employees. In addition, The Fire Fighters Charity and Hope for The Community have partnered to run self-management programme for individuals looking to improve their mental wellbeing and resilience, called the Hope Programme, a six-week interactive online programme, focusing on individuals and their wellbeing. Working with The Fire Fighters Charity, the Service has also established "living well" groups. The intention of these groups is to provide a meeting place for former employees to network and access support where necessary. The Fire Fighters Charity also offers residential mental wellbeing and rehabilitation programmes that are available to current and past employee.

# Risk Management

**Health and Safety audits and Fire Risk Assessments** – are conducted across all stations and sites on an annual basis. The form has been reviewed this year to ensure that the question set remains relevant with additional questions added mainly in relation to the management of contaminants on station.

This year these were conducted by the Station Commander or site manager who are minimum NEBOSH General Certificate qualified in conjunction with a member of the Health and Safety team and Property team. On submission of the completed audit both the Health and Safety and Property teams devise an action plan to remedy any issues that have been highlighted. Outcomes and progress on the identified actions are discussed at the quarterly Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee meetings.

**Protecting Firefighters against contaminants and Fire Brigades Union (FBU) DECON Campaign** – In September 2021, the FBU launched their “DECON” campaign to help firefighters protect themselves and others from harmful contaminants encountered when fighting fires. “DECON” encourages firefighters to make simple changes at work and at home that can help to prevent cancer and other diseases.

As background information, the FBU commenced a contaminants project, in conjunction with Professor Anna Stec from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) to investigate rates of cancer and other diseases in UK firefighters; understand the long-term health effects of fire contaminants and find ways to reduce exposure to contaminants whilst fighting fires.

UCLan’s 2020 Interim Report found that UK firefighters are 4 times more likely to get cancer in their working life. Key findings include:

- Contaminants can be inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through the skin
- Skin absorption of fire effluents increases as body temperature increases. Some studies suggest that skin absorption increases by 400% when body temperature increases by 5°C
- Contaminated kit such as dirty gloves and helmets re-expose firefighters
- Skin, head, and neck cancers are more common than average in UK firefighters.

The Report recommends:

- Using BA more effectively
- Avoiding cross-contamination
- Cleaning kit, clothes, and spaces
- Washing and changing after fires

The campaign has published 11 key steps that firefighters should take to reduce their exposure to contaminants as part of their training package. These steps are:

#### Before an Incident:

- Firefighters before an incident must clean their kit regularly
- Handle dirty kit with care – if dirty kit is to be touched then disposable gloves must be worn

#### During an Incident:

- Firefighters must wear BA until the job is done
- Contain any dirty kit by sealing any clothing or PPE exposed to fire in an airtight bag or box before taking it into the appliance

#### At the Station:

- Upon return to station from an incident firefighters must shower within an hour
- Firefighters must not eat or drink until themselves and their clothes are clean
- Firefighters must also check their kit for visible damage every shift

#### Going Home:

- When returning home from work, firefighters must shower and change clothes if they have attended a fire before driving as well as wiping down the steering wheel, dashboard and handles regularly
- Firefighters must clean what they carry e.g., regularly wipe down mobile phones, wallets and other belongings brought to work
- Firefighters must have a shower when arriving at home if showering and changing clothes at the station was not possible
- Firefighters must ensure if any clothes are taken home that have been near a fire are put straight into the washing machine from the bag or box they are sealed in; these clothes must not be touched with bare hands, mixed with other laundry, or left lying out.

The campaign also encourages current and retired firefighters to sign up to the UK Firefighters Cancer and Disease Registry to help researchers understand and tackle firefighter health risks. Funded by the Firefighters100 Lottery and administered by UCLan, the Registry helps researchers to study the long-term health risks of firefighting.

After completion of the training package, the "DECON" campaign encourages everyone to sign their pledge to follow the everyday "DECON" habits and encourage other firefighters to take daily action against contaminants.



“DECON” asks firefighters to step up and become the first generation that takes daily action against contaminants to change the culture. The campaign encourages firefighters to tell other firefighters about why “DECON” matters and how they can use it to protect themselves, their colleagues, and their families.

In January 2023, UCLan confirmed that firefighters are “substantially more likely to get cancer” with new research finding that toxic contaminants in fires are directly linked to increased rates of cancer and mental health issues among firefighters. The findings support the ruling from the International Agency for Research on Cancer, which says that exposure through working as a firefighter is carcinogenic.

The Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services have agreed to adopt the training package which has been tailored to meet the needs of each of the three Services. This package has been added to the Service’s eLearning platform and is a mandatory requirement for all operational staff to complete.

As improvements are identified which can mitigate the risk of exposure to contaminants, the Service will take a consistent approach across all its stations and sites to ensure it enables staff to protect themselves within the workplace so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Service is working closely within the Thames Valley region and also the South East Region Health and Safety group with regards to implementing measures to reduce the risk from contaminants within the workplace. The group is steered by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) in implementing any measures that they produce. The NFCC have initiated working groups for contaminants where the South East region is leading on safe systems of work and risk assessments.

# New Safety Event Reporting System

In 2020, the Health and Safety team initiated a project to source a new safety event reporting and investigation system.

The previous safety event reporting and investigation system had been in use since 2017 and allowed the Service to move from paper-based reporting and investigation to an electronic system.

It had become apparent however, that despite the positive step in moving to an electronic based system; reporting and investigating safety events was not as intuitive for the user as it could have been. As a result, the standard of the data captured was not always consistent and led to the project being initiated.

Initially, the market was researched for alternative systems, and from this, three potential systems were identified.

To ensure that the most appropriate system was selected, a working group was formed. The group comprised a mix of support and operational staff across a range of levels to enable feedback from all groups of staff that could potentially use the new safety event reporting system.

Demonstrations were arranged with all three suppliers with feedback received from the working group.

As well as engaging the working group for the system, it was important to involve key stakeholders within the project such as Procurement and ICT. This was vital to deliver the project on time and ensure that the governance procedures were followed correctly.

After reviewing the information supplied by the companies it became apparent that only one solution was viable given the budget. After analysis of the feedback, it was decided that Cuttlefish Software's "Visor" safety event reporting system would be chosen to replace the "eSafety" system.

The "Visor" system is a configurable and fire service bespoke system which was the driving factor in deciding to opt for it rather than remaining with the current system. The system has many other benefits such as:

- A single log in facility removing the need for passwords
- An audit log which captures the history of an investigation
- Linked to Microsoft Power BI which is a system that provides facilities for in depth investigations into the trends of safety event data
- A simpler process for monitoring investigations and actions, an improved quality assurance process to ensure a consistent and high standard of investigations
- Provides access to those in different departments to improve the efficiency of data collation such as Insurance and the Operational Assurance Team
- A more transparent system which keeps the investigator updated via e-mail notifications on the progress of their investigation as it goes through the different stages of sign offs and assigned actions

Weekly meetings were held with Cuttlefish Software to prepare and build the system before “going live” with it. This process was important so that the system was designed to follow the current safety event reporting and investigation process. The system was initially built for OFRS and was developed further to meet the needs of this Service. Part of this development was to ensure that the system would be as simple to use as possible, but also designed so that quality of the data could be assured.

In addition to this, the transferring of data from the old system had to be factored in. It was agreed that all personal injury data would be transferred along with the basic information of all other types of safety event investigations and actions so that all appropriate records were retained.

Once the system had been built to a standard where it was due to “go live”, the members of the working group attended a practical demonstration of the system where they could trial it using the test system.

Following the success of the live demonstration, the “go live” date was 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The active investigations were transferred onto the new system to ensure their completion, and since the implementation of the system there has been numerous amounts of positive feedback from different members of staff who have been impressed with the functionality, ease of use and access.

Following the use of the system for a whole financial year it is pleasing to note the numerous positive feedback from end users from the system. Feedback to the department consisted of the system being user-friendly and more intuitive and easier to use than the previous system. In some cases, it has been stated that it has encouraged users to report more events as they feel that the system flows well and is not as time-consuming.

Users have reported minor bugs or suggested minor amendments to the system which have been implemented. During the use of the system, the Health and Safety team have also identified areas of improvement which have either been worked on or identified for system changes which will be implemented in the very near future to allow for better reports to be made from the system.

The team meets with the supplier regularly and any updates on the system are discussed and actioned effectively.

The implementation of the new system has been a success and for the product which the Service has now compared to before, it has proven value for money with improvements in the completion of investigations on time, higher quality reports and analysis of data using Microsoft Power BI which interlinks with the system, and stricter auditing of the system to ensure investigations and actions are fully completed.

# Thames Valley BA Project

As part of the alignment work between the three Thames Valley fire services; BFRS OFRS and RBFRS, the project for procuring the replacement BA set was initiated to ensure that all Services are using the same Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE). A tender process took place with trials of sets from 3 suppliers being undertaken at the Fire Service College.

The trials were supported by training instructors from each Service who devised and facilitated the scenarios used to put the equipment through its paces. This was also overseen by other members of the project team including the Health and Safety Manager, Procurement Manager and the FBU. Each exercise was then used as a scoring mechanism for the candidates on the equipment they used.

The areas tested included:

- Mounting and dismounting appliances
- Hose running, equipment carries and ladder climb
- Working at height
- 'Confined space' / obstacles
- Guidelines
- Searching for and rescuing casualties
- Set removal
- Extinguishing fires / compartment firefighting
- Gas tight suits
- Communications
- Cable entanglement
- Emergency air supplies
- Use of telemetry

Following a robust procurement process, Interspiro Ltd. was selected as the supplier of choice.

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

The completion of this project means that all BA wearers in the Thames Valley will be using the same equipment, so will be able to be committed to incidents through the same Entry Control Boards at cross border incidents, thereby further enabling all the benefits that come with improved Operational Alignment including firefighter safety.

The equipment was delivered to the Service in February 2023, and Interspiro technicians worked through the Service, visiting all sites to carry out some minor changes and upgrades to equipment.



The equipment delivered was the station stock moving into the go live phase and was used from February until the go live date to improve training opportunities on stations. All staff have been reminded that they must keep up competence with the equipment and ensure it is always maintained correctly. Final items including tripods and ECB covers were delivered into Service soon after along with any remaining small items.



The project team continued to meet regularly to discuss the progress of the project along with any areas of concern to insure they were addressed; especially with the go live for RBFRS which took place in March 2023, and to ensure a successful go live for BFRS in April 2023, and OFRS in July 2023.

The risk assessment set was reviewed in conjunction with the Technical team leads and the health and safety teams of the three Services to ensure that they were suitable and sufficient.

# Working With Others

## **Internally**

Following a couple of incidents where the management of asbestos at incidents was highlighted as a concern, the Health and Safety team met with the HazMat lead, the investigating officer for the incident which occurred, and Ops Assurance to ensure the areas of concern were addressed. This included further education with additional training being added to the HEAT online learning system, update of the Asbestos Thames Valley Operational Information Note, and an article written to be published in the Ops Assurance newsletter.

It was also highlighted that lone workers within the Service with public facing roles did not have an effective Safe System of Work (SSoW) implemented to manage their interactions safely. The Health and Safety team have worked closely with Protection and Prevention in terms of relaunching the use of the lone worker device currently within the Service. Meetings were held with the respective teams to set out the process for the relaunch which included locating all devices and sending them back to the team to assign to users. This work also included engaging PeopleSafe to provide clearer training materials so that the Health and Safety team can implement the devices effectively so persons can use them when conducting 1 to 1 visits.

Further work on this is to be carried out, with the introduction of new lone working devices from PeopleSafe expected in Autumn 2023 which will involve further engagement work with the Protection and Prevention teams.

## **Externally**

The Health and Safety Manager sat on the National Fire Chief's Council Health and Safety Committee until August 2022 where topics discussed are fed into the South East Region Health and Safety Committee. These matters are also fed into the Service's own Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee meetings.

The Health and Safety team attend the South East Region Health and Safety Committee regularly and within this forum it gives the opportunity to share information within the region with the ongoing work with contaminants and welfare at the incident ground following the summer pressures of 2022.

As part of the audit process within the South East Region, the Health and Safety team have volunteered to offer support to the lead auditors for the West Sussex and Oxfordshire audits respectively in 2023/2024.

The Driving Centre, which is a partnership with OFRS delivering a common and shared approach to emergency response driving training, continue to monitor trends to ensure avoidable safety events can be reduced and improve driving performance and standards.

# Health and Safety Training

Health and safety training is provided to all employees as part of an induction programme when joining the Service and regularly for Manual Handling and Display Screen Equipment as a legislative requirement.

Additionally, any health and safety training relevant to role is provided, ideally, as acquisition training prior to an individual going into role. This has been one of the objectives set by the Health and Safety Manager over the past four years and it is pleasing to confirm that this is now routinely the case.

Funding of £26,910 was allocated to Health and Safety training and was used to provide the following courses:

## **External providers**

An **Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Managing Safely** course was delivered this year which took place in January 2023.

This year, as there were only a small number of employees who needed to undertake the **National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) General Certificate**, BFRS procured 2 places from OFRS as it was more cost effective.

A **Fire Warden** course took place to boost the number of fire wardens at SHQ to support the fire alarm testing and monthly fire warden check programme.

A **Level 2 accident investigator** course was delivered at West Ashland Fire Station to increase the numbers of support staff trained to carry out these investigations as well as a small number of staff in the Station Commander pool.

A **First Aid at Work** course was delivered as it was identified that coverage between SHQ, Workshops and Unit 7 required increasing. Following the course, this has ensured sufficient coverage of first aiders on duty should assistance be required.

# A Look Forward

**Lone Working** – Work will continue with Protection and Prevention to ensure a sufficient system is in place to ensure the protection of lone workers. Training is to be provided in the interim on the current devices with emphasis on users testing their devices regularly to ensure that it works and to give them confidence that they can be used in uncomfortable situations.

Once the new equipment is provided by PeopleSafe, the Health and Safety team will ensure training materials are provided to the respective teams. The teams will then manage their lone working safe system of work and review if it is working for them.

**Contaminants** – Work on contaminants will begin to ramp up in 2023-24 as it has been agreed that zoning of stations will begin with 3 trial stations being looked at first as part of the exercise. This will be carried out between Health and Safety, the Station Commander for the station and a member of the FBU.

Alongside the zoning, work will continue and increase on requirements for managing contaminants at the incident ground, PPE and Workwear, and reviewing the work RBFRS have carried out on contaminants exposure recording to see what can be implemented within BFRS.

**Safe to Command Training** – The proposed training for Firefighters is to provide them with the vital skills to take on the “Officer in Charge” role at the incident ground. As part of this health and safety is one of these skills, and depending on the approval of this training, a Health and Safety input to include training on risk assessments and safety event reporting will be provided.



# Performance Indicators

## **Budgets**

The Health and Safety budget for the year 2022/23 resulted in an underspend of around £46K due to the vacancy of the Health and Safety Manager role.

The total spent on training was £12,947 which resulted in an underspend of £13,963 which went back into the training budget. 2 courses were deferred; however, the remaining courses which took place come in under budget as the original predicted direct cost was £21,415.

## **Health and Safety Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)– 2022/23**

The objectives set for the year 2022/23 were in line with the Public Safety Plan in terms of managing risk. They were:

1. Investigations to be completed within the set timeframes of 2 weeks for a level 1 investigation and 4 weeks for a level 2- achieved on 75% of occasions with a 10% tolerance.
2. Health and safety acquisition training to be completed prior to going into role on 85% of occasions and 100% of occasions on substantiation of the role.
3. Health and Safety training packages to be completed on 90% of occasions with a 10% tolerance.

Progress on these KPIs were reported on quarterly at the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee meetings.

The above objectives will remain in place for the next financial year and progress against these will be regularly reported on at each Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee meeting.

The KPI set will be reviewed again for the 2024-25 to ensure that they remain useful and relevant measures of performance.

# Appendix

## National peer group performance comparison tables 2021/22 and 2022/23

The Health and Safety department is required to report on BFRS end of year accident statistical returns to the Home Office on 31 May 2023 for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

### Summary:

The Health and Safety department provided returns for:

**HS1** - injuries during operational incidents, encompassing both Wholetime 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 Wholetime and On-Call employees and sub-divided into injuries during operational training, fitness training and routine activities.

### Findings:

**HS1** – The year 2022/23 has seen no change in the *total number of personnel injured at operational incidents* which remains at 17. Injuries at fires increased from 6 to 8, whereas injuries at non-fire incidents reduced from 4 to 1.

**Outcome:** In the national peer group league tables for *total number of injuries*, BFRS has remained in third position in 2022/23. For *injuries sustained at fires* BFRS has moved up from fifth position to second position with an increase of 2 from 6 to 8 injuries. For *injuries sustained at non-fire incidents* BFRS experienced a reduction from 4 to 1, and still retaining the top position.

**HS2-** *Injuries at training events* has remained at 17 in 2022/23. *Injuries sustained during routine activities* has increased from 3 to 9 in 2022/23.

**Outcome:** BFRS' position in the peer group table for *injuries at training events* has moved remained in seventh. For *injuries during routine activities*, BFRS are placed in joint seventh.

Below are the league tables which provide a visual image of the overall safety performance of BFRS in the operational arena compared to their peer group. BFRS are in the top three of three of the seven categories.

*\*Please note the Services shown in the tables below are placed in alphabetical order where the totals are the same.*

<b>Total number of persons injured</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Oxfordshire	32	6
Northamptonshire	38	29
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>35</b>
Suffolk	27	37
Warwickshire	20	38
Berkshire	31	42
Hereford and Worcester	44	43
West Sussex	47	45
Cambridgeshire	69	47
Norfolk	57	57
East Sussex	46	60
Bedfordshire	47	63

<b>Total number of injuries at fires</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Oxfordshire	2	1
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
East Sussex	7	9
Hereford and Worcester	14	9
Berkshire	5	11
Suffolk	5	11
Norfolk	17	13
Northamptonshire	9	14
West Sussex	13	15
Bedfordshire	9	17
Warwickshire	1	17
Cambridgeshire	11	29

<b>Total number of injuries at non-fire incidents</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
Berkshire	6	1
Oxfordshire	5	1
Warwickshire	4	1
Suffolk	5	4
Northamptonshire	5	5
Hereford and Worcester	7	6
West Sussex	7	6
Cambridgeshire	17	13
Norfolk	7	15
Bedfordshire	9	16
East Sussex	23	22

<b>Total number of injuries during training</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Northamptonshire	15	1
Cambridgeshire	21	2
Oxfordshire	20	3
East Sussex	14	11
Warwickshire	9	11
Bedfordshire	18	14
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>
Berkshire	11	20
West Sussex	17	20
Norfolk	25	21
Suffolk	12	21
Hereford and Worcester	14	22

<b>Total number of injuries during routine activities</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Oxfordshire	5	1
Suffolk	5	1
Cambridgeshire	20	3
West Sussex	10	4
Hereford and Worcester	9	6
Norfolk	8	8
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>
Northamptonshire	9	9
Warwickshire	6	9
Berkshire	9	10
Bedfordshire	11	16
East Sussex	2	18

<b>Total number of over 7-day injuries</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Warwickshire	2	0
Norfolk	6	1
Northamptonshire	4	2
Bedfordshire	6	3
Hereford and Worcester	5	3
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
East Sussex	4	5
Suffolk	2	5
Cambridgeshire	12	6
Oxfordshire	4	6
West Sussex	10	6
Berkshire	4	7

<b>Total number of major injuries</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Hereford and Worcester	0	0
Norfolk	0	0
Northamptonshire	0	0
Oxfordshire	1	0
Suffolk	0	0
West Sussex	1	0
Bedfordshire	1	1
Berkshire	1	1
Cambridgeshire	0	1
Warwickshire	2	1
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
East Sussex	1	5



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Fire Authority, 6 December 2023

**Report title:** Protection Strategy 2023-2025

**Lead Member:** Chairman of the Authority

**Report sponsor:** Area Commander Doug Buchanan

**Author and contact:** Group Commander Steve Hawkins – [shawkins@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:shawkins@bucksfire.gov.uk)

**Action:** Decision

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that the Protection Strategy be approved by the Fire Authority.

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## **Executive summary:**

The Community Risk Management Plan 2025-30 (CRMP) will shape future considerations relating to service provision. However, in recognition of changing legislation, new guidance from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the findings from the Services' inspection report, it is appropriate and prudent to review and realign the protection strategy with immediate effect. This proposed Protection Strategy is for a shorter period than usual, noting a requirement to align future strategy with the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

This revised strategy is designed to ensure the Service are giving due consideration to our legislative requirements and that our activities in respect of protection are considered and targeted to manage those premises considered to be highest risk and/or low compliance. The introduction of a risk-based interventions programme will provide clarity on how the Service will prioritise resource against planned and demand led activity.

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## **Financial implications:**

There is no anticipated increase in budgetary requirements within the life of the Strategy.

## **Risk management:**

The Risk Based Interventions Programme (RBIP) is at the heart of this revised strategy. It is underpinned by a number of locally agreed data sets, which broadly align to NFCC guidance. This data allows the Service to identify the highest risk

commercial and residential premises and target our resources accordingly across planned and demand led activity.

Whilst the Service are committed to taking a supportive and advisory approach to businesses, as the enforcing authority for fire safety legislation, we also have a duty to take legal action where appropriate.

### **Legal implications:**

The Authority has responsibilities under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to promote fire safety and to give advice about how to prevent fires, how to restrict their spread and about means of escape. However, it is also the enforcing authority for dealing with breaches by any Responsible Person (RP) of fire safety requirements imposed by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Order).

The Order does not apply to most domestic premises, but it does apply to the 'common parts' of residential properties, such as high-rise residential buildings, where typically the RP will be the owner of the freehold or leasehold.

This strategy and revised approach to protection interventions positions the Service appropriately to balance our various legislative requirements.

### **Privacy and security implications:**

There are no direct privacy or security implications identified as part of the Protection Strategy.

### **Duty to collaborate:**

Whilst there is no specific requirement to collaborate on Protection programmes, BFRS continue to work closely with the other Thames Valley FRs on a variety of protection activities.

There are regular meetings with Thames Valley Protection colleagues to discuss and progress opportunities of joint working and best practice.

Home Office Protection programmes are standing agenda items for the NFCC Southeast Protection and Business Safety Group. This group is currently exploring the feasibility of a Southeast Fire Engineering specialist.

The Protection team also consults upon and feeds back to both the Home Office and NFCC on all its programmes and proposed legislative changes.

### **Health and safety implications:**

Any general Health & Safety issues have been considered as part of business-as-usual activities.

The continued delivery of the activities above, will lead to a reduction of risk for all residents in BFRS's highest risk buildings and improvements in firefighter safety due to more compliant premises.



### **Environmental implications:**

There are no direct environmental impacts identified as part of the Protection activities considered within in this paper though throughout all Protection Activity there is an implicit acceptance that fire safety is concerned with the environment and the local community and any reduction in fires will have a positive impact on both.

The Authority will be working with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) from October 2023. The BSR will be tasked with looking at the full impact (including environmental) of the full life of new high rise residential buildings.

### **Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:**

An increase in Protection activity and engagement will support life safety and assist businesses to comply with relevant legislation, supporting business continuity and the economy.

This continued and increased engagement with the Home Office through the NFCC around recent changes to legislation and guidance will assist in understanding different community needs and deliver accessible local services, building safer places.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to accompany the Protection Strategy.

### **Consultation and communication:**

Joint Consultation Forum (JCF) – July 2023

Business Transformation Board (BTB) – November 2023

Strategic Management Board (SMB) – October 2023

### **Background papers:**

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Protective Marking</b>
1	Protection Strategy 2023-2025	
2	Risk-based interventions programme	
3	Equality Impact Assessment for the Protection Strategy 2023-2025	

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## **1. Changes since the last version**

**Version:** 3.0

**Information Asset Owner:** Head of Protection, Assurance and Development

**Author:** Head of Protection, Assurance and Development

**Approval:** Fire Authority

**Date:** 06 December 2023

- This strategy Document supersedes version 2.0, the previous Protection Strategy 2018 – 2023 and is intended to cover the remaining period of the current Public Safety Plan 2020-25. This updated Strategy provides clarity on Protection objectives, with a focus on intelligence led targeting of risk through a risk-based interventions programme.

**Please note that as Service Documents are frequently updated, if you print a document, its accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Always check the intranet for the latest version.**



## **Introduction**

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) is responsible for enforcing fire safety legislation in most premises in Buckinghamshire other than single private dwellings. Our role is to ensure that those responsible for the premises, maintain appropriate and compliant fire safety standards.

Our protection staff meet our regulatory duties as detailed in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 predominantly through the following activities:

- Responding to statutory building and licencing consultations
- Planned audits of high risk commercial and residential premises
- Re-active audits addressing complaints, post fire incidents and unwanted fire signals
- Providing advice and where necessary enforcement notices
- Prosecution of the most serious offenders

## **Key objectives for the period 2023-25**

- Ensure protection activity is aligned to the Service Delivery priorities outlined in the Public Safety Plan 2020-25
- Ensure the Service is prepared and able to deliver against its legislative responsibilities in respect of protection requirements
- Make provision for adequate resource by means of qualified staff proportionate to identified risk
- Ensure that resource is appropriately directed by way of an evidence driven risk-based interventions programme
- Engage in Primary Authority Scheme partnerships
- Make provision for a suitable and supportive programme of business engagement through use of Protection grant funding
- Ensure our protection staff are appropriately qualified to deliver the above objectives
- Ensure our protection activities and interventions are suitably quality assured and evaluated

## **Our Priorities as described in the Public Safety Plan 2020-25**

“Our priorities are always to prevent incidents that cause harm from happening and to render humanitarian services. We will do all we can to protect homes, public buildings and businesses from the effects of fire.”

“Our duty is also to ensure that wherever required, we provide a timely and proportionate emergency response to incidents, ensuring we are there to save life, mitigate damage and help safeguard our environment.”

“To achieve these priorities, we will identify and assess the full range of foreseeable risks within our area, from across a spectrum of local and national influences, and give our employees the tools they need to succeed in ensuring



these risks are assessed and managed in the most effective, efficient and safest way.”

“We will align and integrate our Prevention, Protection and Response strategies, ensuring they complement each other towards achieving our vision.”

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a focus on the Protection, Assurance and Development Directorate’s priorities for Protection over the next two years in line with the above objectives and priorities. This will ensure that Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service deliver the most effective activities to the risks and challenges set out in the Authority’s Public Safety Plan.

### **Legislative Requirements**

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) discharges all its functions under a backdrop of some key pieces of legislation. This legislation establishes the duties and obligations to provide an effective and efficient fire and rescue service. Those listed below are the primary ones pertaining to fire safety (protection):

#### The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

This is the core legislation for fire and rescue authorities (FRAs), establishing the legal powers and responsibilities of a fire authority. The Secretary of State prepares the Fire and Rescue National Framework under Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to establish a set of key priorities, objectives and direction for fire authorities to follow.

#### The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO)

Every enforcing authority must enforce the provisions of this Order and any regulations made under it in relation to premises for which it is the enforcing authority’.

#### The Fire Safety Act 2021

The Fire Safety Act 2021 amends the existing Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. It provides additional areas which the responsible person/duty holder for multi-occupied residential buildings must consider when managing and reducing risk of fire within their premises.

#### The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022

These Regulations have been introduced following on from the recommendations of the Phase 1 Grenfell Tower Inquiry. The Regulations impose additional measures on the responsible person for multi-occupied residential buildings.

#### The Building Safety Act 2022



The Act provides for a new regulator (the Building Safety Regulator [BSR]) to be established under the Health and Safety Executive. The aim of the regulator is to secure the safety of people in and around buildings with respect to the risk arising from them and to improve the standards of buildings.

### **Protection resources**

It was recognised post Grenfell that the built environment posed a greater and more complex risk to communities than was previously understood to be the case. The Fire Authority has been prudent during the term of the Public Safety Plan 2020-25 in enhancing the resourcing of the protection establishment. The Service's full complement to conduct its protection activities is:

- 1 x Group Commander overseeing the protection function
- 4 x Station Commander managing protection staff and PAS (one of which is a level 5 fire engineer)
- 1 x Enforcement and Training Officer
- 3 x Watch Commander fire safety inspecting officers (level 4)
- 1 x PAS officer (also a level 5 fire engineer)
- 9 x non operational fire safety inspecting officers (level 4)
- 2 x non operational fire safety advisors (level 3)
- 4 x business engagement apprentices (subject to recruitment process)

The delivery of effective regulation depends on the competency of the professionals who carry out the work and BFRS is committed to complying with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Competency Framework for Business Safety Regulators. This Framework takes cognisance of and includes all of the essential elements within the 'Common Approach to Competency for Regulators' produced by the Better Regulation Delivery Office.

In addition to our qualified inspecting officers, BFRS has provided a level of fire safety training to our operational staff. Not only does this enhance the frontline crews' understanding of how to respond to incidents in the built environment, but it also builds a stronger relationship with our protection teams. The crews can signpost fire safety concerns to qualified protection officers and in some cases provide advice and make the necessary interventions with commercial premise owners.

### **Risk Based Intervention Programme**

Whilst this strategy focusses predominantly on Protection activity, BFRS recognise the importance of integrated risk-based interventions across the Prevention, Protection and Response functions to ensure effective community outcomes.



BFRS has adequate provision of qualified protection staff, proportionate to the risks the Service have identified (see appendix 1). However, unless activity is triaged and focussed, demand will outweigh available resource. For this reason, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service will take a risk-based approach to all of its protection activity, underpinned with intelligence led data sets. This approach will identify a 'live' list of premises on which the Service can programme its risk-based intervention activity. The data identifies the highest risk commercial and residential premises which will be subject to a three yearly audit programme. These same data sets will inform other fire safety activity such as consultations, complaints, unwanted fire signals and post fire audits, which will also be prioritised on the same risk-based approach.

Broadly speaking, the focus of activity will apply to premises where there is identified to be a risk to life, premises with historically poor compliance and premises with a greater risk of high economic, social value and historic value loss.

The Statutory Regulators' Code is a central part of the Government's 'Better Regulation Agenda'. Its aim is to embed a risk-based, proportionate and targeted approach to regulatory inspection and enforcement among regulators and seeks to ensure that the enforcement of regulation does not unnecessarily inhibit economic progress. In support of the Regulators' Code, BFRS follows the Enforcement Management Model (EMM) for its audits. The EMM is a logical system that provides enforcers with a framework for making fair and consistent enforcement decisions.

BFRS aims to work with those who wish to engage with it and comply with the RRO; however, it will take enforcement action under the RRO where compliance or a willingness to comply is not demonstrated.

### **Primary Authority Scheme**

BFRS can support a consistent approach to fire safety legislation and support business through the Primary Authority Scheme (PAS). PAS is a statutory scheme providing a means for businesses to receive assured and tailored advice on meeting environmental health, trading standards or fire safety regulations through a single point of contact where businesses have a presence in more than one local authority area.

Primary Authority is based on legal partnerships between businesses and individual local authorities. Businesses can set up their own partnership or belong to a trade association (or other type of group) with an existing partnership.

A business can enter a legal partnership with a single local authority to secure greater coordination of regulatory and enforcement activities. It applies to a range of regulations, including the Fire Safety Order.



The advantages to business include:

- consistency of interpretation of Fire Safety regulations
- better intelligence
- advice and guidance
- access to specialist advice about Fire Safety

This in turn saves time and money whilst also ensuring compliance and supports economic growth and business continuity.

The advantages to BFRS include: more productive relationships with business, wider input into the safety agenda, quicker enforcement actions and enhancement of compliance across the relevant industries.

BFRS currently have 14 active PAS partners.

### **Business Engagement**

The commercial landscape across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes is constantly changing and the types of businesses are varied.

The overarching aim of its business engagement is to make communities safer, healthier and more prosperous environments for the public, businesses and their employees across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. BFRS will achieve this by promoting best practice across business sectors, provide advice and guidance to businesses on fire safety, arson prevention and sprinkler systems, in addition to our work on Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) and Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS).

BFRS promotes and encourages the use of Automatic Suppression Systems when working with businesses and premises occupiers while carrying out consultations.

In order to continue to do this valuable work, but not to the detriment of the risk-based interventions, the Service will employ additional staff making valuable use of the protection grant funding.

### **Assuring and Evaluating our Activities**

BFRS are committed to ensuring the quality of the Services we deliver and understanding the impacts of our interventions. Our quality assurance and evaluation framework (in draft) identifies how we will periodically assess the range of activities undertaken by our staff to ensure competency and consistency. Additionally, we will evaluate the effectiveness of our interventions through regular review of the risk-based programme, taking account the correlation between audits and enforcement outcomes. Furthermore, we will develop a customer satisfaction survey for businesses which we have engaged through our activities.

### **Consultation/Publication/Communication**



# **Service Document Strategy: Protection Strategy 2023 – 2025**



**Buckinghamshire**  
**FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**  
*we save lives*

Development of this strategy is supported by engagement with:

The Protection Team

Joint Consultation Forum – October 2023

Business Transformation Board – November 2023

Following approval at the Fire Authority, the strategy is published on the BFRS Document Management System with an externally facing version published on the Bucks Fire website.

## **Appendix items**

**1) Equality Impact Assessment**

**2) Guidance Document for Risk Based Intervention  
Methodology**

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## Service Document Guidance Note:

### Protection Risk-Based Intervention Methodology



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#### 1. Changes since the last version

**Version:** 1.0

**Information Asset Owner:** Head of Protection, Assurance and Development

**Author:** Head of Protection, Assurance and Development

**Approval:** Fire Authority

**Date:** 06 December 2023

This guidance is an initial document to set out the new guidance for the undertaking of the Service's new risk based intervention programme.

**Please note that as Service Documents are frequently updated, if you print a document, its accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Always check the intranet for the latest version.**

#### **Introduction:**

There are close to 24,000 commercial premises, HMOs, care homes and other residential properties within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes which are required to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Whilst Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) has regulatory power over the entirety of these 24000 premises, in order to appropriately apply resource to risk, the Service must make provision for a risk-based intervention programme. This programme will align to the "NFCC guidance on risk, highest risk occupancies and prioritising fire safety interventions". The vast majority of our activity will be focussed on those premise types which fall under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, but there may be exceptions, for example HM Prisons.

Utilising this methodology, the Service will triage planned and demand led activity applying proportionate activity to support our legislative obligations and our management of community risk. It is important to acknowledge that risk-based interventions should be integrated across

## Service Document Guidance Note:

### Protection Risk-Based Intervention Methodology



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prevention, protection and response activity, but for the purposes of defining our approach to protection activity, this methodology focuses specifically on protection interventions and supports the intent of our Protection Strategy.

The property types identified by this methodology as highest risk are as follows:

- Hospitals
- Residential Care homes and institutions
- Hotels/motels/ boarding/Guest house
- Other commercial medical facilities
- Schools with sleeping risk
- HM Prisons
- Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Complex and large buildings open to the public

#### **Risk groups:**

The NFCC guidance sets out six risk groups as shown in the diagram below. The approach BFRS intends to take in terms of assessing risk and allocating protection interventions is aligned to those identified to be:

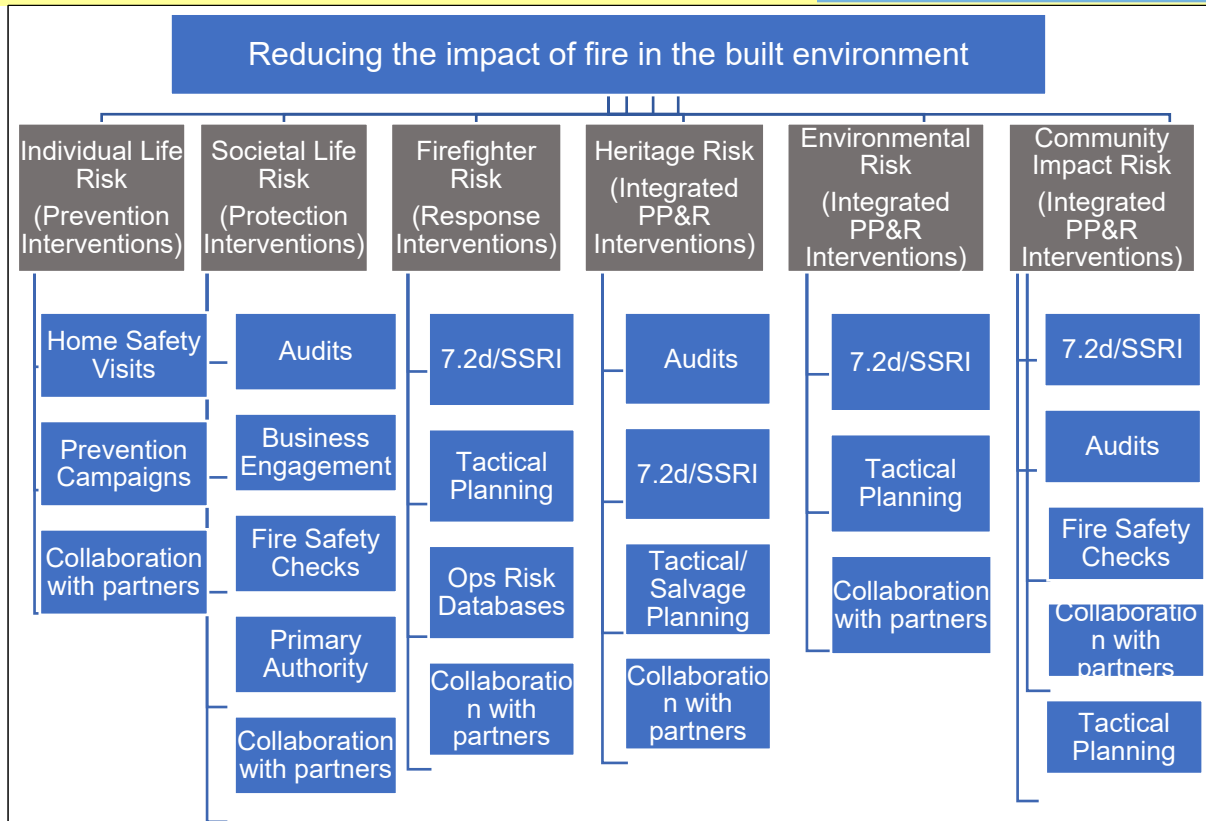
- Societal life risk
- Heritage risk
- Community impact risk

# Service Document Guidance Note:

## Protection Risk-Based Intervention Methodology



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\*7.2d – Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requirement to make arrangements for obtaining information needed for the purpose of extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in the event of fires.

\* SSRI – Site specific risk information. The recorded outcome of a 7.2d visit

### Identifying highest risk occupancy types:

The focus for BFRS risk-based interventions is to target those premises where there is risk to life in the event of a fire. The risk analysis that underpins the identification of “highest risk” is based on a number of considerations and factors in relation to both the likelihood and consequences of a fire occurring. Further consideration is given to the likelihood of non-compliance to meet the required level of fire safety management within a premise.

The factors that have been applied in developing a hierarchy of risk by commercial property type include the following:

- Sleeping risk
- Historic Fires (Nationally)
- Historic Fatalities (Nationally)
- Historic Injuries (Nationally)
- Historic inspection outcomes
- Index of multiple deprivation
- Residential within 10m
- Number of employees

## Service Document Guidance Note:

### Protection Risk-Based Intervention Methodology



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- Poor Food Hygiene
- Building size
- Address Age
- Surge Funding Property
- Travel time

In addition to commercial property types, it is recognised that residential flats also fall within the risk groups of societal life risk and community impact risk. As such, these are also considered within our risk-based intervention programme and are scored based on the following factors:

- Property Type (Gazetteer Classification)
- Count of Properties
- Height (OS Building Height)
- Commercial in Same Building (Dual use building)
- Industrial Building (within 100m)
- Index of Multiple Deprivation
- Demographic Classification of Residents
- Estimate Building Volume
- Travel Time of Nearest wholetime appliance
- Travel Time of Turntable Ladder

### Weightings

Each factor is weighted differently based upon the level of risk that it represents. In order for scoring to be weighted evenly across the multiple buildings and a comparison can be effectively made the scores are weighted evenly to compare the same risk factors. The data within the range of each factor is proportionally scored within this range to come up with a score for 'poor inspection outcome'.

### Data Quality:

The output data was compared with the historical inspection data. From this comparison it was identified that of the inspection outcomes which were moderate, significant or dangerous 36.2% fell within the top risk group calculated by the weightings. Fifty percent fell within the top two risk groups and 83.3% fell within the top half of the risk groups. This information provided an additional element of support to the weighting of the attributed factors.

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### Protection Risk-Based Intervention Methodology



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#### **Outcome:**

The Outcome of the factors as measured and weighted above places the following premises as higher risk occupancies:

- Hospitals
- Residential Care homes and institutions
- Hotels/motels/ boarding/Guest house
- Other commercial medical facilities
- Schools with sleeping risk
- HM Prisons
- Houses in Multiple Occupation
- High risk buildings with high occupancy such as night clubs and shopping centres and specific large events
- Other premises and activities deemed high risk by the Protection Teams

This outcome is aligned with the higher risk occupancies as identified in the 'Higher Risk' occupancies – supplementary guidance on relative priorities for Risk Based Inspection Programme as compiled by the NFCC.

#### **BFRS Risk-Based Intervention Resource allocation:**

##### **Planned interventions:**

**Audit:** It is imperative that protection resources are effectively targeted. Planned audits of higher risk property types identified will be prioritised with a target of 1000 per year. Due to the nature of being high risk, this will likely involve a physical audit, but short audit and even remote audit can be considered where appropriate.

**Business safe and well visits:** in addition to audit, a supportive programme of business safe and well visits will be programmed throughout the year to target both high risk property types and other commercial premises as identified and directed by protection managers. These will not be resourced by inspectors qualified to level four or above.

**Primary authority scheme (PAS):** to supplement the interventions above, BFRS will continue to be an active PAS partner.

In addition to planned activity, there are other demands on protection resource which include:

## Service Document Guidance Note:

### Protection Risk-Based Intervention Methodology



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- Fire safety complaints
- Post fire audits
- Unwanted Fire Signals
- Building and licencing consultations

In order to make the most efficient and effective use of the protection teams time, BFRS will apply the same risk-based approach to the demand led activity to ensure the highest risk occupancy types remain our key focus.

#### **Demand led interventions:**

Complaints, unwanted fire signals and post fire occurrences: If these relate to property types identified as high risk, they will receive the same level of intervention as the planned audits. Where they do not originate from high risk property types, a triage approach should be taken and interventions other than physical audit should be utilised where possible, e.g. business safe and well visit or desktop audit.

Building and licensing consultations: as with the complaints and post fire occurrences, a triage approach should be taken to responding to consultation. Where they do not relate to property types identified as high risk, consideration should be given to how much time is spent, if any on this activity.

#### **Review:**

The identification and understanding of high risk property types should be kept under constant review and it is reasonable to assume that the audit process will identify individual properties which should be higher or lower on the list. Additionally, there may be themes that become apparent which raise or lower a particular property type in the order.

Furthermore, whilst it is appropriate to align resources based on a risk-based identification process, protection managers and staff are invaluable in terms of professional expertise, so it is entirely appropriate to allow some flexibility in terms of how and when interventions are delivered.

#### **Compliance:**



## **Service Document Guidance Note:**

### Protection Risk-Based Intervention Methodology



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Given that audit activity is targeted at high risk and often complex premises as well as low compliance, it is reasonable to expect a correlation between audit numbers and outcomes. I.e, we should expect to see a reasonable percentage of audit outcomes to not meet the broadly compliant criteria. In order to assure the risk-based targeting, BFRS will monitor this correlation.

### **Consultation/publication/communication**

Development of this guidance is supported by engagement with:

The Protection Team

Business Transformation Board – November 2023

### **Appendix Items**

#### **Equality Impact Assessment**

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## Service Document Standard Form:

### Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note



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#### 1: Overview information

Name of activity / change / policy / procedure/project:	Protection Strategy
Directorate/department:	Protection Assurance and Development
Name(s) of person(s) completing the assessment	GC Steve Hawkins
Date of commencement of assessment:	19/06/2023

#### 2: What is the aim and purpose of the activity / change / policy / procedure / project you are assessing?

The aim and purpose of this strategy is to provide a focus on the priorities of the Protection Department over the next year, to ensure BMKFA can deliver the most effective response to the risks and challenges set out in the Authority's Public Safety Plan. To align the Protection Strategy with the current Public Safety Plan.

#### 3: Who will be affected by the activity / change / policy / procedure / project, and how? Consider members of the public, employees, partner organisations etc.

Responsible persons for non-domestic buildings and all the local community who work, live or visit the buildings and those who might be affected by it.  
Fire Service personnel who are involved in Fire Safety visits (Protection and Prevention) and those involved in operational response and visits.  
Specifically Protection Department personnel.  
Local Authority and other partner agencies who might be involved in the regulations and processes involving non-domestic buildings.

#### 4: What information is already available that tells you what impact the activity / change / policy / procedure / project has/will have on people? (please reference) Consider quantitative and qualitative data, consultation, research, complaints etc. What does this information tell you?

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## Service Document Standard Form:

### Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note



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Previous Protection Strategy  
Public Safety Plan  
Corporate Plan  
Medium Term Financial Plan

Sets the constraints and organisational expectations regarding the fire safety activity undertaken by BFRS.

5: Does the activity/change / policy/procedure/project have the potential to impact differently on individuals in different groups? Complete the table below by ✓ the likely impact.

Assessment of impact on groups in **bold** is a legal requirement. Assessment of impacts on groups in *italics* is not a legal requirement, however it will help to ensure that your activity does not have unintended consequences.

Protected characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Rationale for decision ( <i>use action plan in section 14 for negative impacts</i> )
<b>Individuals of different ages</b>	✓			The Strategy is devised to contribute to the safety of the whole community including this protected characteristic. Specific activity identifies highest risk buildings and occupants which will include the elderly particularly those sleeping within care homes. If any additional risk is identified within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this protected characteristic then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy.
<b>Disabled individuals</b>	✓			The Strategy is devised to contribute to the safety of

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**Service Document Standard Form:**

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

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			the whole community including this protected characteristic. If any additional risk is identified within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this protected characteristic then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy. As part of the fire risk assessment the inclusion of the understanding of risk for those with disability is included and is an area that an audit would identify and challenge with reference to Emergency Evacuation Information Sharing.
<b>Individuals transitioning from one gender to another</b>	✓		The Strategy is devised to contribute to the safety of the whole community including this protected characteristic. If any additional risk is identified within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this protected characteristic then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy.
<b>Individuals who are married or in civil partnerships</b>	✓		The Strategy is devised to contribute to the safety of the whole community including this protected characteristic. If any additional risk is identified within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this protected

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**Service Document Standard Form:**

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

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				characteristic then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy.
<b>Pregnancy, maternity and new parents</b>	✓			The Strategy is devised to contribute to the safety of the whole community including this protected characteristic. If any additional risk is identified within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this protected characteristic then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy.
<b>Individuals of different race</b>	✓			The Strategy is devised to contribute to the safety of the whole community including this protected characteristic. If any additional risk is identified within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this protected characteristic then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy. Advice on our website includes different languages and all inspecting officers have access to language line dedicated to Protection dept.
<b>Individuals of different religions or beliefs</b>	✓			The Strategy is devised to contribute to the safety of the whole community including this protected characteristic. If any additional risk is identified

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**Service Document Standard Form:****Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

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				within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this protected characteristic then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy.
<b>Individual's gender identity</b>	✓			The Strategy is devised to contribute to the safety of the whole community including this protected characteristic. If any additional risk is identified within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this protected characteristic then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy. If any additional risk is identified within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this protected characteristic then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy.
<b>Individual's sexual orientation</b>	✓			The Strategy is devised to contribute to the safety of the whole community including this protected characteristic. If any additional risk is identified within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this protected characteristic then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy.
<i>Individuals living in different family circumstances</i>	✓			The Strategy is devised to contribute to the safety of

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**Service Document Standard Form:**

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

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				the whole community including this particular group. If any additional risk is identified within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this particular group then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy.
<i>Individuals in different social circumstances</i>	✓			The Strategy is devised to contribute to the safety of the whole community including this particular group. If any additional risk is identified within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this particular group then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy. If any additional risk is identified within a building that might be affected by a vulnerable person under this particular group then this will be considered within any fire safety strategy.
<i>Different employee groups</i>	✓			The Strategy is devised to contribute to the safety of the whole community including this particular group. With a more joined up process the intention is to ensure that all pertinent people working for BFRS who will in any way be affected by or require to attend the building will have the necessary information to contribute to the safety of all

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**Service Document Standard Form:**

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				employees.
<i>Other, please specify</i>				

6: What further research or consultation is needed to check the impact/potential impact of the activity/change/policy/procedure/project on different groups? If needed, how will you gather additional information and from whom?

There is no direct further research within the Protection Strategy but changes in legislation and guidance continues to change and often focuses on vulnerable groups. This will continue to inform how the Protection team will enforce and instruct responsible persons. However, the department will be responding to legislation and guidance that comes from the government.

7: Following your research, considering all the information that you now have, is there any evidence that the activity/change/policy/procedure/project is impacting/will impact differently or disproportionately on some group of people?

There is an ongoing issue relating to evacuation of those with disabilities from high rise residential buildings that still hasn't been fully resolved. BFRS will wait for further guidance on this.

8: What amendments will you make/have been made to the activity/change/policy/procedure/project as a result of the information you have? If a negative effect has been identified, how could it/has it been lessened, does the original plan need changing?

Because BFRS will be following guidance and legislation there will be no need to change the strategy.

9: After these amendments (if any) have been made, is/will there still be a negative impact on any groups?

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**Service Document Standard Form:**

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

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**Yes** – please explain below

**No** – go to section 11

**10:** Can continuing or implementing the proposed activity/change/policy/procedure/project, without further amendment, be justified legally? If so, how?

**11:** How can you ensure that any positive or neutral impact is maintained?

The way in which the Protection staff engage with all responsible persons will remain positive and will always take account of identified vulnerable persons within a building which will maintain the positive impact.

**12:** How will you monitor and review the impact of the activity/change/policy/procedure/project once it has been implemented?

We will respond to any inquiry and complaint that will identify concerns for vulnerable or those with protected characteristics. If we identify that our strategy needs to reflect a change to include something identified then we will look to review and ensure that this area has not been overlooked.

**13:** Sign off

Name of department head /

Steve Hawkins

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**Service Document Standard Form:**

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

*Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment  
Guidance note*



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project lead	
Date of EIA sign off:	19/06/2023
Date(s) of review of assessment:	19/06/2024

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**Service Document Standard Form:**

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

*Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note*



14. Action Plan - the table below should be completed to produce an action plan for the implementation of proposals to:

- Lower negative impacts
- Ensure the negative impacts are legal under anti-discriminatory law
- Provide an opportunity to promote equality, equal opportunity and improve relations within equality target groups i.e. increase
- the positive impact

Area of impact	Changes proposed	Timescales	Resource implications	Comments



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Fire Authority, 6 December 2023

**Report title:** Operational Learning and Assurance: Progress against Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena Inquiry Recommendations

**Lead Member:** Councillor Simon Rouse

**Report sponsor:** Area Commander Doug Buchanan – Head of Protection, Assurance and Development

**Author and contact:** Group Commander Matty Burn - [mburn@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:mburn@bucksfire.gov.uk)

**Action:** Noting

**Recommendations:** That Members note the report.

---

## **Executive summary:**

This report outlines the Services' approach to Operational Learning and Assurance, accounting for local, sector and multi-agency events from which we can identify and implement improvement.

Whilst the content will provide members with some insight into the wider Operational Learning and Assurance process, the focus of this report is to update on progress against two significant inquiry recommendations, those being Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena.

---

## **Financial implications:**

BFRS make provision for resource to be allocated to delivering against the Operational Learning and Assurance programme. However, given the scale of the two inquiries, it is difficult to accurately account for the financial implications of addressing the necessary changes required.

Grenfell has impacted the fire sector significantly, not least in the identification of greater investment into the Protection functions within Services. BFRS have received specific allocations of grant funding in support of delivering against recommendations, which the Service monitors expenditure and reports to the Home Office.

Manchester Arena is also likely to have some easily identifiable, but also some less clear financial implications in respect of how we will implement changes to responding to terror related incidents.

**Risk management:**

Risks specific to the delivery of the two projects are recorded, managed and monitored in line with the Service Corporate Risk Management Procedure.

**Legal implications:**

Any legal implications have been / will be considered as the respective strands of the inquiry recommendations are addressed.

**Privacy and security implications:**

There are no identified privacy issues or security implications.

**Duty to collaborate:**

Whilst the Service deliver Operational Learning and Assurance locally, the team work closely with colleagues in the Thames Valley and wider South-East region. Both Grenfell and Manchester Arena recommendations have been co-ordinated with Thames Valley Fire colleagues and other partners as appropriate.

**Health and safety implications:**

Operational Learning and Assurance is a fundamental part of keeping our Firefighters safe.

**Environmental implications:**

None identified.

**Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:**

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion matters are considered routinely as part of Operational Learning and Assurance processes. Equality impact assessments are undertaken in line with the Services' procedure.

**Consultation and communication:**

Business Transformation Board

Strategic Management Board

**Background papers:**

[Grenfell Infrastructure Update \(16 March 2022\)](#)

[Grenfell Infrastructure Update \(10 November 2021\)](#)

[Grenfell Infrastructure Update \(17 March 2021\)](#)

[Grenfell Infrastructure Update \(September 2022\)](#)

[Phase 1 report | Grenfell Tower Inquiry](#)

[Manchester Arena Inquiry Volume 2: Emergency Response- Part One](#)

[Manchester Arena Inquiry Volume 2: Emergency Response – Part Two](#)

[Manchester Arena Inquiry - Volume 1: Security for the Arena\)](#)

Appendix	Protective Marking	
1	Operational Learning and Assurance: Progress against Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena Inquiry Recommendations	None

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# Operational Learning and Assurance: Progress against Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena Inquiry Recommendations

(December 2023)

## Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

December 2023



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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the Services' approach to Operational Learning and Assurance, accounting for local, sector and multi-agency events from which we can identify and implement improvement.
- 1.2 Whilst the content will provide members with some insight into the wider Operational Learning and Assurance process, the focus of this report is to update on progress against two significant inquiries recommendations, those being Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) and Manchester Arena Inquiry (MAI).
- 1.3 The Service takes opportunities to learn from a range of internal and external sources and this process is well embedded and understood across staff groups. By understanding and incorporating the lessons learned from external inquiries the Service assures itself that constant improvement and preparedness for current and emerging risks is built into its processes.
- 1.4 Inquiries like GTI and MAI include monitored recommendations which receive scrutiny by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and whilst the delivery of the recommendations has a significant financial and physical resource implication we have shown that this is a priority for the Service by our allocation of resource to the project.
- 1.5 This report demonstrates the achievements that have been realised following our approach to GTI, which includes a suite of operational information for response crews, training and assurance across a number of staff groups over a sustained period and the purchase of new operational equipment all of which support our response to a wide range of incident types including but not limited to Fires in Tall Buildings and Major Incidents.
- 1.6 As the Service progresses through the MAI project it can be anticipated that we will see a similar range of improvements to our response to significant multi agency incidents that are not limited to the circumstances of the MAI. The introduction of Operational Response Plans (ORP) could be considered an early benefit of the MAI project and it was effectively utilised in the multi agency environment of the recent AI conference at Bletchley Park.

## 2. Operational Learning and Assurance

2.1 The Fire Standard for Operational Learning states that its desired outcome is:

“A fire and rescue service that has developed a learning culture, acting on learning from operational and non-operational activity as well as external sources, to improve their operational response. The service will have embedded the management of learning into their policies, procedures, tailored guidance and training.

The service will have developed a culture which seeks to share their learning with others to improve operational response within their own service; with other fire and rescue services; and with the wider sector if appropriate.”

2.2 The Service’s approach to meeting the requirements of the above standard is delivered by the Operational Assurance Team (OAT).

The OAT co-ordinate the various strands of Operational Learning and Assurance on behalf of the Service, including:

- Exercising
- Station assurance visits
- Incident monitoring
- Operational feedback
- Debriefs
- National operational learning (NOL)
- Joint organisational learning (JOL)

## 3. Operational Assurance Improvement Plan (OAIP)

3.1 The OAIP is a product of the above activities. It is the mechanism the Service utilises to identify and share learning from local and national events and reports emanating from audits and public inquiries.

3.3 A key element of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) Doctrine is that learning is shared across all CAT 1 and 2 Responders through the JOL portal and via the NFCC. The Service can also access and share “Learning Events” through the NOL framework.

## 4. Grenfell Tower Inquiry

- 4.1 This section of the report outlines the progress that has been made by Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) in response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy which took place on 14 June 2017. It highlights the extensive work undertaken across the Service in response to the formal recommendations made by the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report published on 30 October 2019.
- 4.2 The report reflects the transparent approach undertaken by the Service to see the improvements that needed to be made following the Phase 1 Report recommendations. This in turn meets the requirements detailed in a letter from Lord Greenhalgh on 30 September 2021, about informing the local communities of the Service's progress in this area. This report also summarises the central support funding being made available to BFRS and how this has been used to assist in the development and implementation of new technologies to address the formal recommendations made in the Grenfell Tower Phase 1 report.
- 4.3 As a result of the Grenfell Tower fire, BFRS has undertaken a significant amount of work to enhance how it manages the risks associated with large, complex buildings across the Service Delivery functions of prevention, protection and response. Much of this work has been delivered in collaboration with partners ensuring operational alignment.
- 4.4 Of the 46 recommendations BFRS adopted 46 actions that were identified in the Phase 1 report. To date, BFRS have completed 37 of them and made significant progress in the 9 that have transferred to business as usual.

## 5. What has been achieved?

- 5.1 Response Activity
- A suite of training packages for operational staff have been created or updated. These include packages for - external wall systems (EWS), evacuation alerting systems and fires in tall buildings
  - Promotion of premises information boxes (PIBs) / building information boxes (BIBs) and awareness for operational crews in how these can be used to support response
  - Thames Valley aligned guidance for operational roles such as Evacuation Commander
  - A programme of operational training and assurance on high-rise procedures and knowledge covering all operational station based staff in the service
  - BFRSs largest ever high-rise exercise completed at Mellish Court
  - Station improvement and preparedness programme dedicated to high-rise carried out

- All high-rise buildings identified, updated and placed on yearly SSRI review schedule. Any new high-rise buildings to be placed as a minimum 'high' risk
- All high-rise risk information to contain the current evacuation policy
- All high-rise building risk information within 10km of neighbouring Services shared on a reciprocal basis
- Service policy was reviewed to consider implications of GTI recommendations – several Thames Valley aligned Operational Information Notes (OINs) produced
- A Thames Valley Command Support project is progressing
- Purchase of equipment such as loud hailers, smoke hoods, additional thermal imaging cameras (TICs) and gas monitors
- Technology upgrade and refresh on Incident Command Unit (ICU)
- Procedures to deal with Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) tested between Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) and incident grounds at a number of exercises
- Further objectives identified for the Thames Valley command support alignment project
- Training, assurance and exercising carried out with Thames Valley Fire Control staff in line with new national guidance
- National testing and assurance with Fire and other blue light partner control rooms
- Single point of contact (SPOC) now to be nominated in control for a high rise fire with FSG

## 5.2 Prevention Activity

- A regular programme of interventions at high-risk residential buildings has been instituted to provide residents of higher risk sites with preventative advice
- Prevention staff have received accredited training to recognise fire safety issues and a process to report to Protection teams has been established

## 5.3 Protection Activity

- An inspection of all high-rise buildings in BFRS has been carried out and they now feature in the Services risk-based inspection programme
- All high-rise building SSRI has been updated to include recording of external cladding systems
- Fire Safety training delivered to Operational and Prevention staff
- Webpage set up to allow responsible person (RP) to contact BFRS and inform us of information on design of external walls and other relevant information for high rise buildings
- The role of Station Commander High Risk Residential Buildings was created

- 5.4 Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry focused on the cause of the fire, its subsequent development and the course of events during the night, the principle focus of Phase 2 of the inquiry is on how and why the decisions were made that led to a highly combustible cladding system that was fitted on to Grenfell Tower. Phase 2 will also explore other areas that emerged from the information gathered during Phase 1. The Inquiry has concluded hearings for Phase 2. The Inquiry Panel are preparing the final report. It is anticipated that there will be additional recommendations for fire and rescue services to review and action once the phase 2 report is published.

## 6. Funding

- 6.1 In April 2020 an announcement was made by Lord Greenhalgh, the Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities, offering a grant to assist with the implementation of the Phase 1 findings. BFRS received an initial payment of £123,549, a second payment instalment of £97,962 in February 2022, a third payment of £86,060 in September 2022 and an additional payment of £86,060 received in March 2022 to drive improvement in Protection. A further £60,000 was allocated to facilitate a review of all high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres and additional funding of £46,253 was provided which BFRS has set aside for research and development and procurement of new equipment.
- 6.2 The initial payment and follow up allocation of £60,000 has been set aside for Protection. This has been used for fixed term employment contracts, training, IT equipment and continues to be used for website development and collaborative working both internally and externally.
- 6.3 The funding BFRS has set aside for research and development and equipment has been used for purchasing equipment such as loud hailer and escape hoods. Additionally, work is presently underway to investigate the equipment and software required to improve the effectiveness of communication between the operational incidents and TVFCS. This will allow the Service to maintain effective control and communication in more complex and dynamic incidents such as the potential evacuation of high-rise buildings.

## 7. HMICFRS

- 7.1 In the most recent HMICFRS report (October 2023) the inspectorate reported that 'The service should address all the Grenfell Tower inquiry recommendations'.

- 7.2 Of the 9 outstanding actions 5 are actions for TVFCS and 3 have been adopted by the Thames Valley Command Support project.
- 7.3 With a shared control service across the Thames Valley it is vital that where recommendations relate to how our control service deal with incidents that a common, single approach is taken.
- 7.4 BFRS has made good progress in addressing the Grenfell recommendations and continues to be proactive in implementing the remaining actions from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

## 8. Manchester Arena Inquiry

- 8.1 This section of the report outlines the progress that has and is currently being made by BFRS in response to the Manchester Arena Attack which took place on 22 May 2017. It highlights the approach being undertaken across the Service in response to the formal recommendations made by the MAI which were published on 3 November 2022.
- 8.2 As with Grenfell, the report reflects the transparent approach undertaken by the Service to see the improvements and changes that need to be made following the publication of MAI Volume 2: Emergency Response.
- 8.3 The MAI made 149 recommendations, of which 74 have been incorporated into a dedicated improvement plan.
- 50 recommendations apply directly to Fire and Rescue Services (FRS)
  - 24 recommendations apply to multiple agencies including FRS

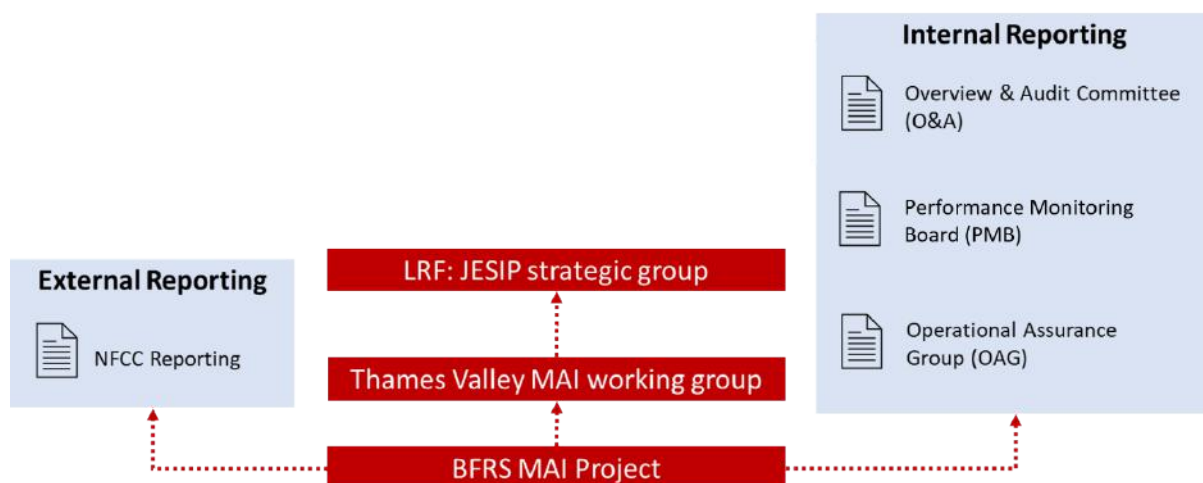
## 9. BFRS approach and progress to date

- 9.1 Following the publication of the Kerslake Report, BFRS Operational Assurance Team (OAT) completed a gap analysis of the recommendations which are actioned and managed by the Operational Assurance Group (OAG) and progress against the actions was monitored and recorded on the Operational Assurance Improvement Plan (OIAP).
- 9.2 BFRS have been working closely with Thames Valley FRS colleagues and also partners within the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to ensure an appropriate and coherent response to the recommendations.
- 9.3 Monthly Thames Valley (TV) MAI working group meetings have commenced with representation for the three TV FRS and TVFCS. A single action plan has been created to ensure alignment in progress and response to recommendations. Progress with the action plan delivery is



monitored by the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) strategic group which feeds into the Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

- 9.4 BFRS action plan progress will be reported internally by the MAI project team to the Overview and Audit Committee via the Performance Monitoring Board and Operational Assurance Group.
- 9.5 External progress reporting will be delivered to the NFCC which will help to track our progress against FRS across the UK.



- 9.6 National progress to date has led to a new set of Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) Joint Operating Principles (JOPs) being implemented for the 3 blue light services. The primary intent behind the changes is to ensure emergency responders make interventions quickly, which was not the case with Manchester Arena. Locally, a co-ordinated effort between the three emergency services has ensured all BFRS commanders above the rank of WC have attended the multi-agency training required to implement the change.

- 9.7 A new mass casualty triage system called the “Ten Second Triage” (TST) has been signed off by NHS England and is now in the process of being implemented in the various trusts across the country. This is targeted to be fully implemented by April 2024. This is designed to be utilised by all emergency responders as a single system, so will be trained and tested by BFRS. We are working with our Thames Valley Fire Service partners, South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS), Thames Valley Police (TVP) and the LRF on the joint procurement and training on TST products and their application. TST is already incorporated into the training our new recruits receive in Immediate Emergency Care (IEC) and a package of training will be rolled out to all relevant staff by our OAT.

## 10. National Fire Service Challenges

10.1 The sector currently faces a challenge in respect the role of a “non-specialist” responder ie frontline firefighters and the ability to satisfy the requirement of the JOPS principles. Nationally, the FBU contest whether MTA response sits within the role of a firefighter. London Fire Brigade (LFB) and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) have reached Collective Agreement with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) in relation to response to an MTA incident for all operational staff. These agreements include a skills-based payment enhancement of 2%. Within the Thames Valley, our current policy position is more reliant on the specialist response, but the project will consider our initial response to an incident of this nature.

Several Fire and Rescue Services provide Specialist MTA capability. These are dedicated FRS teams who work closely with Police and Ambulance services to provide a multi-agency response to MTA incidents. These teams fall under the remit of National Resilience in much the same way that Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) does.

## 11. Look Forward

11.1 Many of the recommendations relate to responding to major incidents, which the latest HMICFRS report (2023-25) rates BFRS as adequate. The implementation of these recommendations can only strengthen this position.

11.2 Progressing the agreed actions to address the recommendations from the MAI will be a priority. The Thames Valley FRS and LRF governance structures will enable continued progress and there is extensive work being undertaken to meet the demands of the inquiry as well as the learning points that have come out of identified areas for improvement.



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Fire Authority, 6 December 2023

**Report title:** Input to the annual assessment of fire and rescue authorities in England 2023

**Lead Member:** Cllr Simon Rouse

**Report sponsor:** Mick Osborne, Interim Chief Fire Officer

**Author and contact:** Mark Hemming, Interim Chief Operating Officer

**Action:** Noting

**Recommendations:**

That the Authority note the response provided to His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services.

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**Executive summary:**

On 15 November 2023 the Chairman and (Interim) Chief Fire Officer (CFO) both received a letter asking for their advice and assistance in connection with the preparation of the annual assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of fire and rescue authorities in England (attached as Appendix 1). This is the report which His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services is required by section 28 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to submit to the Home Secretary and lay before Parliament. On this occasion, the questions asked of the Chairman and CFO are identical, so one response covering both letters has been submitted.

The plan is to publish the annual assessment in spring 2024. Responses to the letter were requested no later than 1 December 2023. To meet this timescale the proposed response was approved by the Lead Members and Group Leaders and is being presented to the Fire Authority for noting (Appendix 2).

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**Financial implications:** No direct impact.

**Risk management:** No direct impact.

**Legal implications:** No direct impact.

**Privacy and security implications:** No direct impact.

**Duty to collaborate:** No direct impact.

**Health and safety implications:** No direct impact.

**Environmental implications:** No direct impact.

**Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:** No direct impact.

**Consultation and communication:** No direct impact.

**Background papers:** None

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Protective Marking</b>
1	Letter from Andy Cooke QPM DL, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services, to Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities	None
2	Response to the letter from His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services	Item to follow.

**Andy Cooke QPM DL**

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary  
His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire &  
Rescue Services

**Sent by email:**

Chairs

Fire and Rescue Authorities

15 November 2023

Dear Chairs,

## **Annual assessment of fire and rescue authorities in England**

This letter asks for your advice and assistance in connection with my preparation of the annual assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of fire and rescue authorities in England. This is the report which I am required by section 28 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to submit to the Home Secretary and lay before Parliament. I greatly value your views.

The 2023 annual report will provide my second annual assessment as His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services. I intend to take this opportunity to reflect on the overall progress made since July 2017, when HMICFRS had its remit extended to include inspections of England's fire and rescue services. In particular, I will reflect on progress that we have seen since the start of our second full round of inspections commenced in February 2021.

My annual report will provide my assessment of the state of fire and rescue authorities in England. I appreciate your input, to ensure the report concentrates on the things which matter most.

To this end, I should be grateful for your views on the following questions in particular:

1. Do you consider that the delay in publishing the Government's White Paper on reforming the fire and rescue sector (published in May 2022) had a negative effect on the sector? And do you consider that the subsequent delays to bring about reform have also affected the sector? If so, what consequences have there been?
2. How would a College of Fire and Rescue be beneficial to the sector?
3. What has your organisation done to implement the recommendations made in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 1 report (published on 30 October 2019)?

4. What challenges are you facing when it comes to making your service more efficient and effective and providing public value?
5. To what extent has our spotlight report on values and culture in fire and rescue services and our misconduct thematic inspection changed your prioritisation of work in these areas?
6. For those organisations that have been subject to our values and culture spotlight report recommendations, what problems, if any, have you experienced when implementing the recommendations?
7. What challenges do you think the current on-call model presents and do you think it is sustainable?
8. What do you see as your biggest challenges in making progress against your organisation's future plans?
9. What do you think your fire and rescue service is doing well?
10. What changes have occurred or are planned – both locally and nationally – in response to the second round of our inspections; what effect have they had, or do you expect them to have?

The plan is to publish the annual assessment in spring 2024. It would be greatly appreciated if I could have your views no later than 1 December 2023.

If you have any queries about this request, and indeed wider views on what I should include in my assessment, please let me know.

I would also be grateful if services could please submit images that we can use as a cover image for my report.

Finally, we are considering our post-2024 approach to fire and rescue inspections, we will ensure you will have an opportunity to provide feedback and inform our plans.

Yours sincerely,



**Andy Cooke QPM DL**

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services



By Email: Andrew.Cooke@hmicfrs.gov.uk

Andy Cooke QPM DL  
HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary  
HM Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services  
His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and  
Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)  
Clive House, 70 Petty France  
London, SW1H 9EX

Our ref: SRAM 0014.23  
Enquiries to: Mick Osborne  
Ext no:  
Direct line: 01296 744434  
Date: 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023  
Email: AMccallum@bucksfire.gov.uk

Dear Andy

### **Annual assessment of fire and rescue authorities in England**

**1. Do you consider that the delay in publishing the Government's White Paper on reforming the fire and rescue sector (published in May 2022) had a negative effect on the sector? And do you consider that the subsequent delays to bring about reform have also affected the sector? If so, what consequences have there been?**

We do not believe the delay to the White Paper has had a negative effect on the sector. There are however areas where resolution and progress would be welcome. This is particularly true of areas of reform where legislation is not needed. We set out our position on these areas in our response to the consultation on the White Paper.

As per our response to the consultation on the White Paper, there are some key areas the Service would like to see resolved:

- We do not support the proposed forced transfer of responsibilities from Fire Authorities to single elected individuals. It is not clear that there is a compelling case for this change currently. It risks unnecessary distraction and costs for the Fire and Rescue Service. In respect of the placing of Fire under a single Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, we believe this would be detrimental to the attention given to Fire and Rescue Services. Any change in governance should be entirely for local decision.
- Fire and rescue services should have the flexibility to deploy resources to help address current and future threats faced by the public beyond core fire and rescue duties. However, unless the Grey Book contractually obliges firefighters to undertake duties beyond core fire and rescue activities they cannot be required to do so.



- A national data analytics capability would provide consistency in the way data is analysed and reduce duplication of effort across services. Benchmarking across services would be more meaningful and lead to better outcomes for the service and community.

## **2. How would a College of Fire and Rescue be beneficial to the sector?**

A centrally funded College of Fire and Rescue has the potential to enhance the development of staff, be more inclusive and enhance the leadership of the fire and rescue service. We believe that the College must be separate from the College of Policing to ensure sufficient focus on the needs of Fire and Rescue Services.

## **3. What has your organisation done to implement the recommendations made in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 1 report (published on 30 October 2019)?**

As a result of the Grenfell Tower fire, the Service has undertaken a significant amount of work to enhance how it manages the risks associated with large, complex buildings across the Service Delivery functions of prevention, protection and response. Much of this work has been delivered in collaboration with partners ensuring operational alignment.

Of the 46 recommendations the Service has adopted 46 actions that were identified in the Phase 1 report. To date, the Service completed 37 of them and made significant progress in the 9 that have transferred to business as usual.

From a protection perspective, there are still a number of buildings within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes which require remediation. The Service will continue to utilise its regulatory powers and work with partners such as DLUHC and local authorities to ensure that those responsible for the buildings have appropriate short term measures in place to keep residents safe, whilst also making progress with full remediation.

## **4. What challenges are you facing when it comes to making your service more efficient and effective and providing public value?**

According to our most recent HMICFRS report the Service only spends £35.51 per head of population, compared to the national average of £41.88. Our Band D Council Tax is only £77.16 compared to the national average of £87.70. The additional precept flexibility afforded to the Service in the past two years has allowed us to significantly increase our operational establishment and we are starting to see the benefits of that in terms of operational effectiveness. However, as a Service we are still extremely lean in many areas.

The Service has an ambitious plan to improve efficiency, which exceeds the national target of 2% savings against non-payroll costs each year. However, uncertainty about future precept referendum limits, funding for urban search and rescue and lack of a longer-term financial settlement makes it difficult to plan longer-term transformational change with the necessary degree of assurance about our future financial position.





**5. To what extent has our spotlight report on values and culture in fire and rescue services and our misconduct thematic inspection changed your prioritisation of work in these areas?**

Following the publication of the report an extraordinary meeting of the Fire Authority was convened. At the meeting the Authority accepted the recommendations allocated to the Chief Fire Officer in full and resolved to fully engage and support the delivery of the remaining recommendations.

Furthermore, the Authority escalated the risk of poor culture to the corporate risk register. While values and culture have always been a priority for the Service, this provides an extra level of scrutiny and assurance to these areas.

**6. For those organisations that have been subject to our values and culture spotlight report recommendations, what problems, if any, have you experienced when implementing the recommendations?**

Not applicable.

**7. What challenges do you think the current on-call model presents and do you think it is sustainable?**

The main challenge is the ability to recruit and retain on-call firefighters. Availability of on-call appliances will become more challenging as the requirements for emergency response driver training become even more onerous on individuals. The traditional on-call model is becoming less and less sustainable, although variations to the model to suit local circumstances can ensure that on-call firefighters are still an integral part of any response model.

**8. What do you see as your biggest challenges in making progress against your organisation's future plans?**

The biggest challenge relates to the issues articulated in our response to question 4, namely the lack of capacity in key areas and uncertainty over precept referendum limits, specific funding streams and lack of a longer-term financial settlement.

**9. What do you think your fire and rescue service is doing well?**

Our most recent inspection report highlighted many areas where the Service is doing well:

Prevention - staff are good at completing fire and wellness visits for older people and are good at responding to safeguarding concerns. The Service works well with others to prevent fires and other incidents and has arrangements to tackle fire-setting behaviour. Prevention and Response teams have better direction and oversight of their productivity.

Commissioning of education of children, young people and adults in fire, road and water safety through a partnership arrangement with the 'Safety Centre MK'

Protection - the Service's protection team is well trained and resourced and responds well to building consultations and licencing requests. The Service is working with others when necessary, is able to adapt to new legislation and takes enforcement action when needed.



Response - the Service has good command of incidents and is making good progress to align its procedures with national operational guidance. The Service works well with Thames Valley Fire Control and attends incidents within a reasonable time frame. The Service is prepared to respond to major and multi-agency incidents and uses national learning to update its procedures.

Resources - the Service has a comprehensive financial plan, continues to have sound financial management and has identified financial savings from collaboration. The service has developed a range of future spending scenarios and has a sustainable plan for its reserves. The Service's fleet and estate are being improved.

People - the Service provides good well-being provisions to its workforce and has a positive health and safety culture. The Service provides learning and development opportunities for most staff and staff complete regular assessments in risk critical skills. The service has reviewed its equality impact process, is raising awareness of EDI and staff are confident in tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination. The Service has developed its promotion and progression processes and has improved how it manages individuals' performance. The service carries out robust background checks on its current and future staff.

**10. What changes have occurred or are planned – both locally and nationally – in response to the second round of our inspections; what effect have they had, or do you expect them to have?**

Following the second round of inspections the Service continued to invest in increasing the wholetime establishment. At the time of the third round of inspections the impact of this increase was not fully apparent. For example, the Service is now starting to see the benefits of this increase in terms of improved appliance availability and the significant increase in the number of home fire safety visits that are being undertaken on a regular basis.

As a result of the second round of inspections we brought forward the timetable to produce our next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). This will provide assurance to the public that resources are being allocated to prevention, protection and response activities in relation to risk.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Rouse  
**Chairman, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority**



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Fire Authority, 6 December 2023

**Report title:** His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Action Plan

**Lead Member:** Cllr Simon Rouse, Chairman

**Report sponsor:** Interim Chief Fire Officer, Mick Osborne

**Author and contact:** Anne-Marie Carter, Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO – [Acarter@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:Acarter@bucksfire.gov.uk)

**Action:** Noting

**Recommendations:**

That the Authority note the BFRS HMICFRS 2023 Action Plan (Appendix 1)

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**Executive summary:**

In July 2017, HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue service. They assess and report on the efficiency, effectiveness and people of the 44 fire and rescue services in England.

HMICFRS published the BFRS Round 3/2023-2025 report on 19 October 2023. The report can be found here: [BFRS 2023-2025 - HMICFRS](#)

This report sets out HMICFRS inspection findings for Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service following the inspection during May and June 2023.

The latest report for this Service identifies three causes of concern, accompanied by 10 recommendations, and 26 areas for improvement. The report was noted at the Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting on 24 October 2023.

**Cause of Concern**

The Service was issued with two causes of concern that continue from Round 2 and one new cause of concern, relating to Protection.

- 1) The first cause of concern from round three relates to Prevention activity.  
The report states:  
Some improvements in prevention have been made since our last inspection. The service has revised its prevention strategy, and this is giving its prevention and response teams better direction. But the service is still not adequately identifying and prioritising those most at risk from fire.

Within 28 days, the Service should review its action plan to make sure that:

- It has an effective system to define the levels of risk in the community;
- Its systems and processes for dealing with referrals from individuals and partner agencies effectively manage and prioritise those referrals with the highest identified risk.

2) The second cause of concern from round three relates to Protection activity.

The report states:

The service hasn't done enough since our last inspection to address its areas for improvement and provide clear direction to make sure that its teams can prioritise work according to risk.

Within 28 days, the Service should provide an action plan that:

- clearly defines its risk-based inspection programme, within a revised protection strategy, which is aligned to its next public safety plan;
- makes sure its increased number of staff complete a proportionate amount of activity to reduce risk and work to effective targets;
- assures the system to record fire safety activity is robust and well supported to enable prioritisation of highest risk;
- makes sure it has an effective quality assurance process so that staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.

3) The third cause of concern relates to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The report states:

The service hasn't made enough progress since our last inspection to improve equality, diversity and inclusion. The service has done enough to complete one of our recommendations by reviewing its equality impact assessment process. But the other recommendations still require action to be taken or completed.

Within 28 days, the Service should review its action plan, detailing how it will:

- give greater priority to how it increases awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation;
- make sure that it has appropriate ways to engage with and seek feedback from all staff, including those from under-represented groups;
- make improvements to the way it collects equality data to better understand its workforce demographics and needs;
- be more ambitious in its efforts to attract a more diverse workforce that better reflects the community it serves.

As per requirements set out in the report covering letter to the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer on 17 October 2023, a copy of the action plan detailing how the Service will address the recommendations must be submitted to HMICFRS within 28 days of the report. Therefore, at its extraordinary meeting held on 24 October 2023 the Authority resolved that the Interim CFO be delegated to prepare and publish an Action Plan on behalf of the Authority in consultation with the Chairman and the Vice Chairman. It also resolved that the Overview and Audit Committee be delegated the monitoring of progress of delivery against the Action Plan.

Although much of the work to address the causes of concern is included in other plans including the Prevention Improvement plan and the Equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives for 2020-2025 the Service has built a new HMICFRS Action plan. (Appendix 1).

Following a review of the previous action plan, we have taken the following actions for the Round 3 action plan including:

- 1) The plan has prioritised the actions needed to meet the recommendations.
- 2) The associated actions are clear, measurable and achievable.
- 3) The plan has been built with feedback from Chairman, Vice Chairman, NFCC and other partners.

The action plan will be managed as part of the Portfolio Management Office (PMO), with regular reporting through internal governance structures. As stated in the recommendation at the Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting on 24 October 2023, the Authority will be kept informed of progress in delivering against the HMICFRS Action Plan via regular reporting to both the Overview and Audit Committee and full Authority. These updates will include progress on the recommendations, impact on KPI's and progress on Areas for Improvement.

A copy of the action plan was sent to HMICFRS within 28 days of the report publication; on the 15 November 2023.

The Service continues to have ongoing dialogue with HMICFRS at both a strategic and tactical level to ensure our progress is in line with their expectations.

In a letter received on 21 November 2023 (Appendix 2), HMICFRS informed the Service that it will now be entering the supportive Engage process. The Engage process provides additional scrutiny and support from the Inspectorate.

The focus of the engage phase is to assist the Service in finding ways to improve and resolve the identified causes of concern and provide a better service for the public, a process we are fully committed to.

The Service is already working hard to address the issues raised in its recent inspection and welcomes the support of HMICFRS in assisting with our improvement journey.

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### **Financial implications:**

The prioritisation of improvements to address the specific recommendations raised within the causes of concern may introduce additional financial implications, either through reprioritisation of other projects, or through new workstreams.

Consideration will be given to ensure associated costs, both direct and indirect, are fully understood and managed effectively.

### **Risk management:**

There remains reputational corporate risks to the organisation. The Service continues to take steps to mitigate this through having extensive internal and external audits of a number of areas of the Service, in addition to the HMICFRS inspections. The internal audit plan for 23/24 can be found here: [Internal Audit Report – Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Internal](#)

### **Legal implications:**

The current Fire and Rescue Service National Framework issued under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, to which the Authority must have regard when carrying out its functions, states as follows at paragraph 7.5:

‘Fire and rescue authorities must give due regard to reports and recommendations made by HMICFRS and – if recommendations are made – prepare, update and regularly publish an action plan detailing how the recommendations are being actioned. If the fire and rescue authority does not propose to undertake any action as a result of a recommendation, reasons for this should be given.’

It continues: ‘When forming an action plan, the fire and rescue authority could seek advice and support from other organisations, for example, the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Local Government Association’.

### **Privacy and security implications:**

No privacy or security implications have been identified that are directly associated with this report or its appendices.

The report and its appendices are not protectively marked.

### **Duty to collaborate:**

Each fire and rescue service is inspected individually. However, the latest report includes findings relating to the Service’s ability to collaborate effectively with partners. The report states: “We were pleased to see the service meets its statutory duty to collaborate. It continues to consider opportunities to collaborate with other emergency responders.”

### **Health and safety implications:**

The HMICFRS report states:

- The service provides good well-being provisions to its workforce, but work-related stress is not being fully addressed
- The service has a positive health and safety culture

The areas for improvement relating to working hours and secondary contracts will feed into the health, safety and wellbeing group.

### **Environmental implications:**

The HMICFRS report states:

“The service didn’t identify all the potential climate impacts and mitigation measures required in its 2020–2025 public safety plan. This is what it calls its integrated risk management plan. It has now recognised that it needs a different range of equipment to be ready to respond to this risk both now and in the future.”

### **Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:**

The Service has been judged as ‘requires improvement’ in the area relating to ensuring fairness and promoting diversity, along with a cause of concern and four recommendations relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. All the findings from the HMICFRS round three inspection report have been fully considered and prioritised to ensure continual improvement is established and maintained.

The Authority’s equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives 2020-2025 – year 3 progress was presented to the Fire Authority on 14 June 2023.

### **Consultation and communication:**

Specific areas identified for Service improvement are being captured in relevant plans and will be reported on in line with the recommendations.

### **Next steps -**

- Report published on BFRS website

### **Background papers:**

HMICFRS BFRS Home Page: [Buckinghamshire - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

16 February 2022 – Fire Authority: Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Inspection Report 2021

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/02/fa-item-10-16022022.pdf/>

16 March 2022 – Overview and Audit Committee: Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) –Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Improvement Plan Update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/03/oa-item-14-160322.pdf/>

20 January 2023 - State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022

[State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022 - HMICFRS](#)

24 October 2023 – Extraordinary Fire Authority: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Inspection Report 2023

[bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/10/extraordinary-fire-authority-meeting-24-october-2023-item-9-hmicfrs-inspection-report.pdf/](https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/10/extraordinary-fire-authority-meeting-24-october-2023-item-9-hmicfrs-inspection-report.pdf/)

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Protective Marking</b>
1	BFRS HMICFRS 2023 Action Plan	N/A
2	Letter from HMI Roy Wilsher Bucks Engage	N/A





**Bucks Fire &  
Rescue Service**

# **HMICFRS Action Plan**

Building and Delivering a High Performing Fire and  
Rescue Service

November 2023

# Introduction

Between May and June 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) completed their third inspection of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS)

HMICFRS gives a rounded assessment of every FRS, including an assessment of:

- the operational service provided to the public (including prevention, protection and response);
- the efficiency of the service (how well it provides value for money, allocates resources to match risk, and collaborates with other emergency services); and
- how well the service looks after its people (how well it promotes its values and culture, trains its staff and ensures they have the necessary skills, ensures fairness and diversity for the workforce and develops leadership and service capability).

As part of each inspection cycle, HMICFRS publish an assessment on the performance of every service. This report includes graded judgments for each of the 11 questions. (See next page)

For Round 3, His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services Roy Wilsher said:

"I have concerns about the performance of Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks."

"The service has made some improvements since our 2021 inspection, but we were disappointed to see that it hasn't made enough progress in more areas.

"We recognise that it has faced challenges over recent years, including the capacity to change, although there is a clear commitment from staff in the service to improve.

"Given the nature of some of the problems we have identified, we will keep in close contact with the service to monitor its progress in addressing areas for improvement, causes of concern and associated recommendations."

HMICFRS identified three Causes of Concerns, they are:

*1) Preventing Fires and other risks*

- The service is still not adequately identifying and prioritising those most at risk from fire

*2) Protecting the public through fire regulation*

- The service hasn't done enough since our last inspection to address its area for improvement and provide clear direction to make sure its teams can prioritise work according to risk

*3) Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity*

- The service hasn't made enough progress since our last inspection to improve equality, diversity and inclusion

Causes for concern will always be accompanied by one or more recommendations, which FRSs should seek to address.

BFRS has worked together with the NFCC, partners and lead Fire Authority members to develop this action plan which sets out:

- The governance structure and accountabilities to drive forward the required changes
- The priority actions that will be taken in relation to the three areas identified
- The measures that will be used to assess our performance and achievements

We will meet regularly with the HMICFRS as we implement the plan.

# Judgements

The inspection assessed how well Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has performed in 11 areas. We received the following graded judgements leading to 3 Causes of concern:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
		Responding to major incidents	Understanding fire and risk	Public safety through fire regulation
			Preventing fire and risk	
			Responding to fires and emergencies	
			Best use of resources	
			Future affordability	
			Promoting values and culture	
			Right people, right skills	
			Promoting fairness and diversity	
			Managing performance and developing leaders	

# Governance and Accountabilities

Fire Authority

**Fire Authority Scrutiny**

Progress against the HMICFRS action plan will be monitored and scrutinised through our existing governance processes.

Overview &  
Audit  
Committee

**Fire Authority Member scrutiny**

These established committees provide the leadership, scrutiny and challenge that will drive forward change in the 3 key areas, and as such will ensure:

- the identified actions are the right actions that will lead to change
- progress is reviewed objectively and challenged where it falls short
- impact is reviewed and further actions are agreed where required
- outcomes are high quality and have a positive impact on our communities and staff

Strategic  
Management  
Board

**BFRS Strategic ownership and governance of the HMICFRS action plan**

This level of governance reflects the Service's commitment to achieving the ambitions of the HMICFRS action plan and the importance of getting it right first time to ensure we keep the communities we serve safe from fire and other risks.

Performance  
Monitoring  
Board

**Oversight and review of all action plans**

Directorate  
Teams

**Implementation of specific actions**

# Priority 1: Prevention

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service **requires improvement** at preventing fires and other risks.

## Outcomes we are seeking to achieve:

Fire and rescue services must promote fire safety, including giving fire safety advice.

To identify people at greatest risk from fire, we should work closely with other organisations in the public and voluntary sectors, and with the police and ambulance services. We should share intelligence and risk information with these other organisations when we identify vulnerability or exploitation.



**SMT Sponsor:** Head of Prevention,  
Response and Resilience

**Lead Member:** Cllr Simon Rouse

**External Scrutiny:** NFCC

# Priority 1: Prevention Action Plan

**Recommendation 1: We have an effective system to define the levels of risk in the community.**

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
1.1.1	Implement the Prevention Risk Stratification (PRS) process based on the NFCC guidance.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	November 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRS guidance note written and published</li> <li>• PRS is live across all channels</li> <li>• All staff understand the PRS methodology</li> </ul>	<b>On track</b>
1.1.2	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) developed and reported to support Risk Stratification guidance.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	January 2024	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KPI's in place</li> <li>• Management control processes in place.</li> <li>• All referrals are dealt with in line with PRS guidance thresholds</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>

# Priority 1: Prevention Action Plan

**Recommendation 2: Our systems and processes for dealing with referrals from individuals and partner agencies effectively manage and prioritise those referrals with the highest identified risk.**

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
1.2.1	Ensure all current referrals are processed and up to date.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	June 2023	November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All referrals are in line with delivery expectations associated with the descriptors for levels of risk as per the Prevention Risk Stratification Guidance</li> </ul>	On track
1.2.2	Launch Online Home Fire Safety Check form (OHFSC) developed to complement the Person-Centred Framework.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	November 2023	February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New route available for the public to complete a person-centred self-assessment of fire risk</li> <li>All OHFSC are handled with the relevant treatment and timescales</li> </ul>	On track
1.2.3	Introduce a recognised way of recording and processing all prevention referrals directly into the Premises Risk Management System (PRMS) to ensure there is one database recording all prevention engagements as well as activity.	Administrative Support Manager	November 2023	February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referral processing guidance note written and published</li> <li>Guidance note utilised to support training</li> </ul>	On track
1.2.4	Update PRMS to reflect Risk Stratification guidance.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	December 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All agreed requirements have been developed, testing by all relevant users and live</li> </ul>	Not started
1.2.5	Ensure all appropriate staff are adequately trained on the referral process and understand the methodology.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	January 2024	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff have received appropriate training</li> </ul>	Not started

## Priority 2: Protection

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is **inadequate** at protecting the public through fire regulation.

### **Outcomes we are seeking to achieve:**

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in certain buildings and, when necessary, require building owners to comply with fire safety legislation. We decide how many assessments we do each year. But we must have a locally determined, risk-based inspection programme for enforcing the legislation

**SMT Sponsor:** Head of Protection,  
Assurance and Development

**Lead Member:** Cllr Simon Rouse

**External Scrutiny:** NFCC



# Priority 2: Protection Action Plan

**Recommendation 1: Clearly define our risk-based inspection programme, within a revised Protection strategy, which is aligned to its next Community Risk Management Plan.**

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
2.1.1	Review and update current Protection strategy intended to provide clarity on how the Service will conduct its Protection business in line with legislative requirements and focussing resource on highest risk premises types.	Head of Protection, Assurance & Development	September 2023	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer review from NFCC sector advisors</li> <li>Appropriate level of stakeholder engagement in developing revised strategy</li> <li>Scrutiny and acceptance of revised strategy by Fire Authority Members 6th December</li> </ul>	On track
2.1.2	Introduce risk-based interventions programme to underpin revised strategy.	Group Commander Protection	September 2023	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk-based inspection methodology identified and clearly articulated</li> <li>Based on methodology, identify planned audit schedule for very high / high risk premise types</li> </ul>	On track
2.1.3	Ensure the Protection strategy 2025-30 is embedded and fully aligned with the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30.	Head of Protection, Assurance & Development	February 2024	October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence-led approach to management of protection resources</li> <li>Extensive internal / external consultation</li> <li>Due consideration to integration / alignment with Prevention and Response strategies</li> </ul>	Not started



# Priority 2: Protection Action Plan

**Recommendation 2: Make sure our increased number of staff complete a proportionate amount of activity to reduce risk and work to effective targets.**

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
2.2.1	<p>Embed the revised Protection strategy and Risk-Based Interventions Programme (RBIP) guidance.</p> <p>As directed within the revised strategy, teams will now be focussing on planned and demand-led activity on high risk / low compliance property types .</p>	Group Commander Protection	November 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good stakeholder engagement when developing the strategy and RBIP guidance and during transition</li> <li>• Direction and performance management to ensure a smooth transition in terms of ways of working</li> <li>• KPI's monitored to assure embeddedness</li> <li>• Very high/High risk premises schedule delivered</li> </ul>	On track
2.2.2	<p>Introduce new Protection KPI's captured at team and person level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planned audit numbers against RBIP.</li> <li>- Monitor audit outcomes (compliance) against audit numbers to assure that the RBIP is targeting the right premises.</li> </ul>	Group Commander Protection	November 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KPI's presented to Performance Monitoring Board quarterly</li> <li>• 1000 audits annually</li> <li>• Proportionate number of audits resulting in non-satisfactory outcomes</li> </ul>	On track
2.2.3	<p>Introduce four apprentice Business Safety Advisor roles utilising Protection grant funding to support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enable more qualified Protection staff to focus on high risk / low compliance</li> </ul>	Group Commander Protection	November 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New roles resulting in greater levels of co-ordinated and targeted support to local businesses</li> <li>• Less time spent by qualified officers doing low risk activity.</li> </ul>	On track

# Priority 2: Protection Action Plan

**Recommendation 3: Assures the system to record fire safety activity is robust and well supported to enable prioritisation of highest risk.**

Ref	Action	Accountable Lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
2.3.1	Ensure schedule for planned audits is easily accessible to staff who require it.	Group Commander Protection	November 2023	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified very-high risk and high risk audits are provided to teams</li> </ul>	<b>On track</b>
2.3.2	Premises Risk Management System (PRMS) – training input to ensure standardisation / consistency in data input and extraction.	Group Commander Protection	December 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training input received by relevant Protection staff</li> <li>Consistency monitored by Station Commanders</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
2.3.3	PRMS system – make provision for standard Protection outcome letters to improve efficiency and consistency.	Group Commander Protection	January 2024	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard letters available for use</li> <li>Training provided as appropriate to support implementation</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
2.3.4	Review provision of admin support to Protection teams to ensure efficiency.	Head of Protection, Assurance & Development	December 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrative requirements identified</li> <li>Qualified Protection staff enabled to focus more time on planned activity</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>



# Priority 2: Protection Action Plan

**Recommendation 4: Make sure we has an effective quality assurance process so that staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.**

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
2.4.1	Introduce a Protection Quality Assurance (QA) process.	Group Commander Protection	October 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(QA) process documented, consulted and agreed through governance</li> <li>Relevant staff are trained on the QA process</li> <li>QA activity recorded and reported</li> </ul>	<b>On track</b>
2.4.2	Review suite of Protection procedures and guidance to ensure it is aligned with best practice and supports staff in relation to consistent application.	Group Commander Protection	December 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Published revised procedures and guidance</li> <li>Training / input (as required) delivered to Protection staff</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>



# Priority 3: EDI

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service **requires improvement** at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

## Outcomes we are seeking to achieve:

Creating a more representative workforce gives fire and rescue services huge benefits. These include greater access to talent and different ways of thinking.

It also helps create a better understanding and supports engagement with local communities. We should make sure staff throughout the organisation firmly understand and show a commitment to EDI. This includes successfully taking steps to remove inequality and making progress to improve fairness, diversity and inclusion at all levels of the service. We will proactively seek and respond to feedback from staff and make sure any action we take is meaningful.



**SMT Sponsor:** Head of HR

**Lead Member:** Cllr Shade Adoh

**External Scrutiny:** Natalie Donhou Morley, Senior Policy and Partnerships Officer (Equalities Specialist)

# Priority 3: EDI Action Plan

## Recommendation 1: Give greater priority to how we increase awareness of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) across the organisation.

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
3.1.1	Develop a role to include dedicated EDI support to ensure the delivery of EDI objectives.	Head of HR	October 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated staff member in place/ recruited</li> </ul>	Risk to progress
3.1.2	Review current EDI training across all levels including management and look at options to implement additional regular, measurable, bitesize session(s) on EDI.	Station Commander HR Projects	November 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EDI online training has a completion rate of 90%+ supported by regular reporting, to ensure managers can follow up on non-completion</li> <li>Staff at all levels can demonstrate a good understanding of EDI and how this needs to be reflected in the way we work and deliver services</li> </ul>	On track
3.1.3	Rollout 360 feedback process to all middle managers, which includes a section on how they promote EDI.	Organisational Development Manager	December 2023	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All relevant staff have completed 360 feedback including the manager appraisal session and workbook</li> </ul>	Not started
3.1.4	Utilise EDI data to better inform station plans to facilitate targeted community engagement activity adding specific action(s) related to EDI.	Station Commander HR Projects	January 2024	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service delivery area plans include EDI related data and actions</li> </ul>	Not started
3.1.5	Review and relaunch of our values/code of ethics to support a positive workplace culture.	Station Commander HR Projects	January 2024	October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff understand what each value means for/to them and can share how it supports the communities we serve</li> </ul>	Not started
3.1.6	Work with our staff networks to gain their input, to develop policies, projects and initiatives.	TBC	July 2024	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A representative from these groups is included in the development of procedures before consultation.</li> <li>Increased staff engagement and inclusion</li> </ul>	Not started

# Priority 3: EDI Action Plan

**Recommendation 2: Make sure that we have appropriate ways to engage with and seek feedback from all staff, including those from under-represented groups.**

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
3.2.1	Launch and review "Speak Up" campaign.	HR Advisory & Development Manager	October 2023	February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff aware of Speak Up facility</li> <li>Ongoing process in place to review take up/usage</li> </ul>	On track
3.2.2	Develop mechanisms to reduce the mystery of the Service's governance processes.	Head of Technology, Transformation & PMO	November 2023	January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Extra Chair" take up is 50%</li> <li>A summary of internal governance meetings is published on the intranet within 2 weeks of the meeting taking place</li> </ul>	On track
3.2.3	Explore further options to establish staff networks for underrepresented groups, including exploring options to join with external networks (other FRS's and national networks).	Area Commander Response & Resilience	November 2023	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established networks which feed into the EDI group.</li> <li>Increase in the number of staff networks from underrepresented groups. (internal or external).</li> </ul>	On track
3.2.4	Move to an annual staff survey supported by embedding the feedback loop. Utilise pulse surveys to support assessment of progress against specific actions.	Head of Technology, Transformation & PMO	November 2023	August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain completion rate at 70+ percent</li> <li>Increase "the Service will take action from the survey" score</li> <li>Instigate action where the outcomes/scores are low</li> </ul>	On track
3.2.5	Investigate and implement reporting at senior level on whistleblowing/ Speak Up/ grievance/ disciplines/investigations to monitor, identify and take action on potential themes.	HR Advisory & Development Manager	January 2024	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased visibility of issues being raised and the Service's lessons learnt through regular reporting internally and externally on activity</li> <li>Additional activity to reduce reoccurrence of themes as and when identified</li> </ul>	Not started
3.2.6	Ensure all line managers have regular structured contact with all their staff.	Organisational Development Manager	April 2024	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development pathway programme includes training/ education on being a people manager.</li> <li>Increased percentage of staff who have a 121 every month</li> </ul>	Not started

# Priority 3: EDI Action Plan

## Recommendation 3: Make improvements to the way we collect equality data to better understand our workforce demographics and needs.

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
3.3.1	Relaunch the Equality Monitoring campaign encouraging individuals to input their own equality data on the HR system in a safe and secure environment, supported by ongoing communications.	Head of Human Resources	January 2024	July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A continuous increase of equality data being inputted</li> <li>Increased messaging about the benefits of a diverse workforce and the reasons for declaration</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
3.3.2	To review recruitment and promotion processes to ensure they include and promote the importance of staff providing their equality data.	Head of Human Resources	February 2024	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase of equality data</li> <li>Staff know how to enter their equality data</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
3.3.3	To embed a process to monitor EDI data completions with a quarterly update to the Leadership team to identify if particular teams require additional support to understand why completion is of benefit.	Head of Human Resources	April 2024	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to identify areas of the service that require additional support/training</li> <li>Better understanding of the diversity of the workforce through ongoing data tracking</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
3.3.4	A quarterly review of equality data by the EDI group to ensure we have an understanding of the workforce demographics and needs. Appropriate action taken where necessary.	Head of Human Resources	April 2024	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the availability of data which will allow the organisation to make more informed decisions that will have a positive impact</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>





# Priority 3: EDI Action Plan

**Recommendation 4: Be more ambitious in our efforts to attract a more diverse workforce that better reflects the community we serve.**

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
3.4.1	Develop a programme of works to ensure all workplace facilities (both on premises and at incidents) meet the needs of current and future staffing demographics.	Area Commander Response & Resilience	November 2023	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of premises facilities</li> <li>Programme in place to improve identified gaps</li> <li>Welfare facilities in place at incidents</li> <li>Adequate facilities in place for all protected characteristics</li> </ul>	On track
3.4.2	Introduce a sustained "Have a Go" operational programme for identified underrepresented groups, including a plan for positive action, offering a range of targeted activities across the county.	Station Commander HR Projects	December 2023	November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual programme in place including at least six "Have a Go" events held for underrepresented groups per year</li> <li>A clear plan in place to deliver and maintain positive action.</li> </ul>	Not started
3.4.3	Map out and review recruitment process end to end to understand impact on different underrepresented groups, including the applicants' feedback at various stages of the application.	Station Commander HR Projects	January 2024	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment processes are adapted.</li> <li>Increased uptake from underrepresented applicants.</li> <li>Data collected from applicants will be used to inform process changes</li> </ul>	Not started
3.4.4	Identify and report on areas of underrepresentation within the Service, identifying groups we would benefit from attracting across all levels,	HR Operations Manager	January 2024	October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant and up-to-date data which can be used to inform recruitment actions</li> </ul>	Not started
3.4.5	Ensure recruitment resources are utilised to ensure more applications from diverse/underrepresented people from our local communities.	HR Operations Manager	January 2024	October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement/recruitment activities such as career fairs are prioritised to those that meet our target audiences</li> <li>More applications from diverse/underrepresented applicants</li> </ul>	Not started

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**Sent by email:**

[mosborne@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:mosborne@bucksfire.gov.uk)

Mick Osborne  
Chief Fire Officer  
Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue

21 November 2023

Dear Mick,

**INVITATION TO THE FIRE PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT GROUP**

Further to our recent conversation, I confirm that I have recently been considering concerns that I have with Buckinghamshire Fire Service's approach to several aspects of performance, specifically in prevention, protection and promoting fairness and diversity.

HMICFRS has introduced a fire monitoring process which has two phases – scan and engage. The scan phase uses data and information from a range of sources to flag poor or deteriorating performance and identify potential areas of concern. All services are at the 'scan' phase. If a cause of concern is identified in a service, HMIs consider progress made against the cause of concern, using the following key tests.

- (a) Does the service recognise the cause of concern and understand the implications?
- (b) What is the prospect that the service will succeed in managing, mitigating or eradicating the cause of concern (taking into account capacity and capability)?
- (c) Is the cause of concern likely to be short-lived or enduring?
- (d) The need for public protection to be attained by the service becoming more efficient and effective above the stated cause of concern;
- (e) Public confidence in the service; and
- (f) The public law requirement of fairness.

I applied these tests to the causes of concern (which I have outlined below) and following discussion at the internal HMICFRS Monitoring Group on 14 November 2023 with HM Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services, my fellow HMIs and other HMICFRS staff, HM Chief Inspector has decided that Buckinghamshire Fire Service should now be moved to the 'engage' phase.

All services who are 'engaged' with HMICFRS are discussed at the Fire Performance Oversight Group (FPOG), chaired by Andy Cooke. Its members consist of the regional HMIs, HMICFRS's chief operating officer, senior HMICFRS analysts and representatives from the Home Office, LGA and NFCC. The focus of the engage phase is to assist the service in finding ways to improve and resolve the identified cause(s) of concern, where they have not been successful in doing so independently. At this stage, services are asked to carry out a comprehensive analysis and develop an improvement plan to set out how the cause of concern will be addressed.

The causes of concern for Buckinghamshire Fire Service are set out below:

- (i) Some improvements in prevention have been made since our last inspection. The service has revised its prevention strategy, and this is giving its prevention and response teams better direction. But the service is still not adequately identifying and prioritising those most at risk from fire.
- (ii) The service hasn't done enough since our last inspection to address its areas for improvement and provide clear direction to make sure that its teams can prioritise work according to risk.
- (iii) The service hasn't made enough progress since our last inspection to improve equality, diversity and inclusion. The service has done enough to complete one of our recommendations by reviewing its equality impact assessment process. But the other recommendations still require action to be taken or completed.

These are concerns that are facing the service. The lack of improvement, and in some cases, deterioration in performance, mean that there is work to be done to assure HMICFRS that appropriate leadership and governance arrangements are in place to drive the necessary activity, ensuring timely and sustainable improvement.

I would therefore like to invite you to attend a meeting of FPOG where you will be able to update the group on plans to improve the service's performance. HMICFRS's Monitoring Team will be in touch to confirm either 7 February 2024 or 5 March 2024 in London. Attendance in person is preferred.

I am sure that you and members of the service will work hard to address the issues raised in our recent inspection and I am committed to providing you and your service with support to assist with that work.

I will be monitoring the service closely over the coming months and will re-apply the key tests in due course. I will of course invite you to make representations to help inform any

future decision that I may make with a view to de-escalating the service to the scan phase of the monitoring process, when the causes of concern described in this letter have been addressed. I look forward to seeing you at the FPOG meeting.

If you would like to discuss this letter, or if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me. My team will be in touch with members of the Buckinghamshire Fire Service to discuss our programme of engagement and to agree milestones for improvement. I will be writing to Simon Rouse in similar terms to ensure we can collaboratively support improvements in the service.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RW', is placed over a light grey dotted rectangular area.

**Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM**

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

His Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

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Bucks Fire &  
Rescue Service



# White Ribbon Campaign

#ChangeTheStory

06 December 2023



Buckinghamshire  
Fire & Rescue  
Service

- White Ribbon paper presented to BTB and SMB in May 2023 seeking approval to go ahead with accreditation process
- Budget growth bid to support process approved in May 2023
- Accreditation application process started in July 2023
- First Steering Group meeting took place on 27 July





**Congratulations!** Your application to become a White Ribbon Accredited Organisation has been approved!

We are delighted to welcome your organisation, and all your staff, to this diverse and inspiring community. In deciding to take on this commitment, your organisation has made a conscious and deliberate choice to say no to a world where violence against women and girls is tolerated. We thank you for this, and firmly believe that, in making this step, you will serve as an example to others in your industry.

Accreditation White Ribbon – 14 August 2023



Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

WHITE RIBBON ACCREDITED

August 2023 - August 2026

WHITE RIBBON ACCREDITED ORGANISATIONS



Never use, excuse or re about men's violence ag

charity n... Company No: 03617302

# CURRENT WORK



Buckinghamshire  
Fire & Rescue  
Service



16 Days of Action - #ChangeTheStory





# OTHER ACTIVITIES



Buckinghamshire  
Fire & Rescue  
Service

- 3 members of staff attended the national WR conference in September
- Attendance at the TVP VAWG event in October
- Early discussions with OFRS regarding work that could be done together to develop our action plan
- Conversations with the TVP and Council WR leads
- Conversation with Lisa Squire regarding how we could work with her to raise the awareness of Bystander Training



# NEXT STEPS



Buckinghamshire  
Fire & Rescue  
Service

- Work to begin on developing the 3-year action plan – small working group to be established to achieve this (hopefully working with other TV fire services)
- 3-year action plan to be submitted to WR by 14 February 2024
- Envisaged that the plan will focus on raising awareness internally for the first year with WR stand attendance at as many events as possible
- The remaining two years will focus on maintaining internal focus but also demonstrating to our communities that we are committed to the WR ethos



# GOVERNANCE / REPORTING PROGRESS



Buckinghamshire  
Fire & Rescue  
Service

- White Ribbon Steering Group chaired by male member of staff
- Regular highlight reports will be delivered to BTB / SMB
- Verbal updates to be delivered to Executive Committee
- Annual review to be delivered to White Ribbon to ensure progress is being made
  - will also be presented in-house

*NB: White Ribbon work is now on the agenda of the Thames Valley Collaboration Boards (Interop, Exec and Steering Group)*



# WHITE RIBBON PROMISE



Buckinghamshire  
Fire & Rescue  
Service

I PROMISE TO...

**NEVER**  
**USE, EXCUSE OR**  
**REMAIN SILENT ABOUT**  
**MEN'S VIOLENCE**  
**AGAINST WOMEN**



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