

Annual report 2024-25

Community Safety Services

Protecting our community,
reducing harm and saving lives.



OXFORDSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL



1 Welcome and foreword

Welcome to Oxfordshire Community Safety Services' annual report, highlighting our performance and achievements from April 2024 to March 2025. This report covers the **fire and rescue** service, **Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team**, **road safety** and the **trading standards** services.

This past year, we have focused on protecting our community, reducing harm, and saving lives. Our vision is to create a greener, fairer, and healthier Oxfordshire. We have worked tirelessly with communities to ensure inclusivity in everything we do. Our commitment to trusted, inclusive and sustainable services has never been stronger.

Throughout 2024/25, we attended over 6,200 incidents, including 1,201 fires. Our prevention and protection efforts have been pivotal in reducing the number and severity of emergencies. We have optimised our fire engine availability and response times, ensuring our teams are well placed and well equipped to handle any situation – making sure they can respond quickly to emergencies, especially during extreme weather and major incidents.

Our prevention and protection work includes educating the community about fire risks, conducting safety inspections and implementing rigorous safety standards. By engaging directly with residents and businesses, we offer advice and support that helps address potential hazards early. Collaboration with partners across our county strengthens community resilience, making Oxfordshire safer for all.

We want to be a workplace where everyone feels valued and understands their contribution towards our vision. By attracting talented individuals from every part of our community, we aim to be recognised as an employer of choice – where everyone wants to come and be part of our team.

Thank you for taking the time to read the report.

Rob MacDougall
Chief Fire Officer and
Director for Community Safety

Cllr Dr Nathan Ley
Cabinet member for Communities

2 Our service direction statement

Protecting the community

through more prevention, more protection and effective response

We will continue to work to **reduce the number and severity of emergencies** through our targeted prevention and protection work, looking at how we can better use our fire crews to support the work of our dedicated teams.



We will work to make sure we have **fire engines located and crewed effectively** to meet both the foreseeable day to day demand, but also peak demand where there may be multiple incidents and extreme weather conditions.



We will work to **improve our fire engine availability and response times** to incidents, as our communities need us to have the right people in the right place with the right skills and the right equipment..



We will be **a workplace where everyone feels valued**, understands how their contribution delivers on our purpose and moves us towards our vision. We will continue to attract talented people to work with us by ensuring we are recognised as an employer of choice by every part of our community.

3 2024-25 in figures

Our firefighters attended over **6,200** incidents

1,201 fires
(19 per cent of total incidents)



243 incidents
involving flooding



66
animal rescues



125
incidents
where we assisted
other agencies

2,310
false alarms
(49 per cent
of total incidents)



403
road traffic
collisions

60
incidents involving
hazardous materials



4 Prevention

Oxfordshire County Council
priority: **Healthier**

Community Safety Services
strategic priority: **Prevention**

Prevention work focused on the most vulnerable people

- Visited over **2,300 vulnerable households** providing safe and well advice.
- **Referred 208 residents** on to partner agencies, helping more vulnerable residents receive the support they need from the right agency.
- The **community safety van** has been deployed 27 times to various locations, providing safety messages and support to the community.
- Promoted **631 safety messages** to the public. Effective communication of safety messages can significantly reduce harm and save lives.

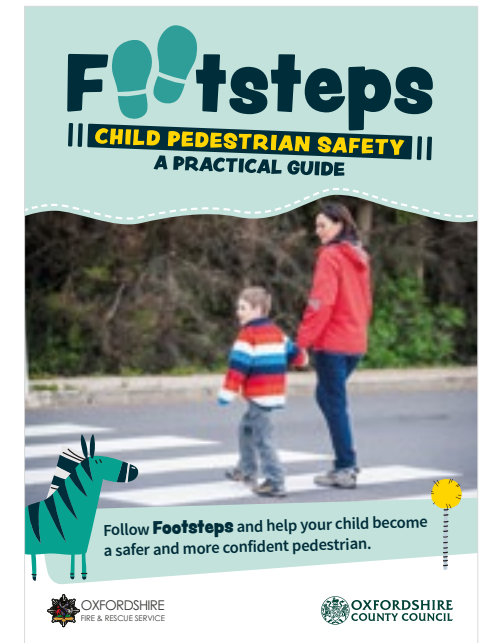


In partnership with Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire County Council highways, and other organisations, work has been done to improve the safety of residents in Oxfordshire. Vision Zero involves many organisations working together. The statistics below reflect the prevention efforts and demonstrate our commitment to Vision Zero.



Safer people

- There were 15 road traffic fatalities, a **44 per cent decrease**, 12 fewer than previous year..
- The **Footsteps guide** was downloaded over 1,100 times from our website. It is aimed at school-age and young school children to help them understand how to be safe when near traffic.
- Produced a data-led annual themed **prevention calendar**, targeted specifically at at-risk groups including smoking in the home, cooking safety, fire safety at Christmas time, student safety and more.
- Over 6,000 children and 280 schools took part in our **cycle training programme**. It teaches every 7-11 year old child to ride a bicycle safely over a two year period.
- Worked with local mosques to deliver cycle training. This initiative is part of a broader effort to **engage with diverse communities** and promote safety and wellbeing.
- The **Biker Down** programme trained 80 motorcyclists, providing them with the skills and knowledge to handle emergency situations effectively. This training helps reduce the number of accidents and fatalities involving motorcyclists, contributing to overall road safety.
- Worked with Active Oxfordshire and the cycling and walking activation programme within Oxfordshire County Council to deliver **bike libraries** to disadvantaged communities.
- Partnered with Oxfordshire County Council, the University of Oxford and Thames Valley Police to hold a **Vision Zero safety event** focusing on 'Be Bright Be Seen', which aims to educate cyclists who put themselves and others at risk when riding without lights.
- Conducted road traffic collision demonstrations for the Ministry of Defence's **drink driving campaign**, showcasing extrication techniques. This includes a presentation on the 'Fatal 4' which highlights the dangers of drink and drug driving.



5 Protection

Oxfordshire County Council
priority: **Fairer**

Community Safety Services
strategic priority: **Protection**

Protection work focused on the highest risk property

- Proactively completed **491 audits** and identified 211 (43 per cent) that were unsatisfactory. The audits address fire safety concerns, providing improvement measures to those that are unsatisfactory and improve overall safety standards.
- Completed 731 formal fire **safety building regulation consultations** and achieved 100% response rate within 15 days. This ensures that new premises being constructed and alterations to existing premises in the county meet fire safety standards. And that consultations are being addressed within the target timeframe.
- Continued to engage with the local business community to deliver **preventative safety advice** – with one initiative seeing 125 businesses visited in person by trained fire crews.
- Changed our approach and **reduced the number of responses to automatic fire alarms**. This ensures our resources are available for our most critical incidents and helped to reduce our climate footprint.

Risk information

- Completed **165 fire risk audit workbooks** which collect and disseminate operational risk information to prevent injury, ill health, or death of emergency responders and the public, as well as to limit damage to property, infrastructure, and the environment.
- We completed **71 Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI)** - a detailed assessment and documentation of risks associated with specific sites or premises. The information is used to ensure that operational risk information is available to emergency responders.

6 Response

Oxfordshire County Council priority: **Greener and Healthier**

Community Safety Services strategic priority: **Response**

Right people in the right place with the right skills and the right equipment

Right people and right place

Our core function is to respond effectively to emergency incidents from 25 fire stations across the county. **80 per cent** of attendances should be achieved within 11 minutes, and 95 per cent within 14 minutes of receiving a call.

- We responded to **70 per cent** of incidents within 11 minutes. This was the same as the previous year and below our performance target of 80 per cent.
- Response standards for attendance within 14 minutes remained, similar to 2022/23 at **84 per cent**.
- Our average response time during 2024-25 were **9 minutes and 12 seconds**.

2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
09:00	09:02	09:12

What have we done to improve this?

- An interim **availability model plan** has been developed to improve availability and response times during 2025-26. This plan aims to enhance the efficiency of the fire service and ensure that fire appliances are always ready to respond to incident.
- Continued to actively **recruit firefighters** into our on-call system which support cover during the hours where our availability needs to improve.
- Actively **identified where key skills are needed** to ensure the availability of the fire appliances so fire fighters can respond quickly and effectively to emergencies, reducing harm and saving lives.
- **Reviewed our on-call contract** to identify where changes can be made to improve availability.
- Trained **33 new firefighters** and **11 new incident commanders**.
- **Planned support for significant events**, including the 4th European political community summit at Blenheim Palace. This ensured leaders from across Europe were protected.
- Ensured operational **fire cover** was maintained across the county, providing continuous protection for the community and resource to handle emergencies.

Right skills



Incident emergency care:

16 courses held
148 staff trained or revalidated in incident emergency care.

Road traffic collision:

13 courses conducted
105 staff trained or revalidated in handling road traffic collisions.



Practical firefighting:

4 courses
33 new firefighters.

Breathing apparatus:

60 courses
452 staff attended.



Water safety:

27 courses conducted
223 staff trained or revalidated in water safety.

Hazardous materials:



11 courses conducted
102 staff trained or revalidated in handling hazardous materials.



Incident command:

116 staff trained or revalidated
11 new incident commanders.

Driving:

184 driver training courses delivered
18 new emergency response drivers trained.

Right equipment



Inspected 11,393 fire hydrants

to ensure that they were working properly and there was an adequate supply of water in case of a fire.

Developed a **new contract for workwear**

which promotes gender inclusivity, improved safety, standardisation and a professional image. The uniform reinforces the connection between the fire service and the county council, highlighting their collaborative efforts in serving the community.

Started a project called HYER Power working with Oxfordshire County Council and others to develop a **hydrogen-powered fire appliance**.

This initiative aligns with the council's commitment to reduce carbon emissions and achieving net-zero targets. This innovative approach could pave the way for sustainable emergency response vehicles.

Received several **new fire appliances**,

built with breathing apparatus mounted outside the cab to enhance crew safety by minimising exposure to contaminants.



Continued to replace the support fleet with **electric vehicles**

to align with the Oxfordshire County Council decarbonisation policy.

7 Fire investigation

The Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue forensic fire unit investigates fires in the Thames Valley. They attend fire scenes, offer CPD sessions for investigators, train external partners, perform peer reviews, and assist with the Thames Valley Police Crime Scene Investigator Tier 2 training.

- We have nine tier trained fire investigators.
- Conducted **four** continuous professional development sessions for fire investigators and

delivered six additional training sessions to external partners on fire investigation – gaining new insights and techniques and sharing best practice.

- Conducted over **90** peer reviews for fire investigations across the Thames Valley which play a crucial role in maintaining high standards and fostering collaboration.
- Delivered dedicated input to the Thames Valley Police crime Scene Investigator Tier 2 training course in March 2025

8 People

- Recruited **32** on-call staff, and **16** wholetime firefighters were recruited through an apprenticeship scheme.
- Took part in a regional health and safety audit, leading to us creating an action plan of improvements.
- Developed our response and procedures so we could prevent contamination of our firefighters.

- Ran a promotion process for crew managers, station managers, group managers, area managers and the assistant chief fire officer, providing staff with development opportunities.
- Created a new career pathways role to ensure synergy between our promotion processes and professional development.
- Made improvements to our occupational health process - meaning employees are seen efficiently.

9 Trading Standards

Oxfordshire County Council priority: Healthier and Fairer

- Saved or recovered **£104,000** for victims of doorstep crime, scams and other forms of financial abuse.
- Inspectors of weights and measures tested and verified over **600** items of weighing and measuring equipment
- Tested **744** electric blankets resulting in a **31%** failure rate.
- Seized **15,780** illegal cigarettes, **3,150g** illegal hand-rolling tobacco and **47,749g** illegal waterpipe tobacco.
- Identified **5** concealments where contraband was hidden in false walls and shelving and operated by electromagnet.
- Raised awareness of the risks of nicotine pouches and gained **2.9 million** views on TikTok.
- In partnership with Public Health, we restricted children's access to vapes by visiting **54** retailers. Illegal vapes were found at **27** premises, resulting in the seizure of **4,398** products.
- Fitted **49** call blockers, leading to approx. **46,448** calls being blocked* Estimated savings to police, social care and the NHS was **£554,411**.

*data provided by Truecall and Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards service.

- Delivered scams education talks to **1,048** people and visited or intervened in **354** scams.
- Conducted over **2,000** interventions with Oxfordshire businesses, providing advice and support, testing products and procedures.
- Took **104** food samples, examining allergens, composition and labelling. **45 per cent** of samples were satisfactory and **55 per cent** unsatisfactory.
- Took part in Careers Fest – connecting **3,000** students with careers in the service.

4,398
illegal vapes
were seized

10 Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team

Oxfordshire County Council priority: **Healthier and Fairer**

- The Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team distributed **1,351** community resilience bags.
- **1,656** leaflets with business continuity information were distributed to businesses, helping them to manage emergencies, maintain operations, and recover successfully.
- Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team responded to **114** emergencies and major incidents.

11 Awards

New year's honours list



Chief Fire Fighter **Rob MacDougall** was honoured in the new year's honours list.

Excellence in the Fire and Emergency Services Awards



Shortlisted for Excellence in Fire and Emergency Services Award alongside regional partners, recognising our forensic fire investigation work in criminal cases.

2024 CTSI awards



Prevention team highly commended at 2024 Chartered Trading Standards Institute Awards for wide-ranging community support and education work



Contact us

Thank you for reading.

Contact us

Should you require any further information please contact us:

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