

Community Safety Services

Annual Report

2021-2022



We are here to
protect our community, reduce harm
and save lives



WELCOME AND FOREWORD

Rob MacDougall

Director of Community Safety
and Chief Fire Officer

Throughout 2021/22 our teams continued to work towards our purpose ‘we are here to protect our community, reduce harm and save lives.’

We continued to build on the lessons learnt through our COVID working practices to make improvements, and develop our prevention activities across all of Community Safety Services which lead to a safer and thriving Oxfordshire.

Towards the later stages of the year, we launched our new vision and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2022-2026.

The new vision sets out our aims to continue to strengthen our services and improve over the next four years, through being community focussed, forward thinking, trusted and inclusive, and sustainable in all our work.

Our Community Risk Management Plan sets out what we need to achieve over the four years to make sure we continue to manage and reduce the fire related risks to Oxfordshire.

Our four strategic priority areas are:



Protection



Prevention



Response



People

This year saw our third inspection from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service’s (HMICFRS) in December. Inspectors assessed how effectively and efficiently the service prevents and protects the public against fires and how well it looks after staff. The Inspectorate awarded Oxfordshire three ‘good’ ratings in its effectiveness, efficiency, and people categories.

As the Cabinet Member and Director of Community Safety Services for Oxfordshire we are pleased to present this report on our performance over the last year to our local communities.

Councillor Jenny Hannaby

Cabinet Member for
Community Services
and Safety

Community Safety Services is part of Oxfordshire County Council and is made up of five teams.



These teams work together to achieve Oxfordshire County Council's vision

to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.

SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS

A snapshot of key achievements and highlights of the work done by Community Safety Services throughout the year.

3,034

Safe & Well visits completed ensuring our residents receive essential safety advice and we reduce risk in the home. Over 580 more than last year.

49

Road Traffic Enforcement prosecutions led by our Trading Standards department, resulting in fines and costs of £29,142.

130

businesses visited in our Fire Safety week, delivering preventative fire safety advice in person by specially trained fire crews.

500

Fire Safety Audits completed in commercial premises by our Fire Safety team. Over 200 more than last year.

747

electric blankets tested with a failure rate of 31%, ensuring residents using these have safe items reducing risk from a fire.

4,374

children took part in our cycle training programme which aims to teach children aged 7-11 to ride a bicycle safely. Over 1,800 more than last year.

£195,080

Saved or recovered for victims of doorstep crime, scams and other forms of financial abuse.

46,386

miles driven in our electric fleet, reducing the environmental impact of visits we need to make.



AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

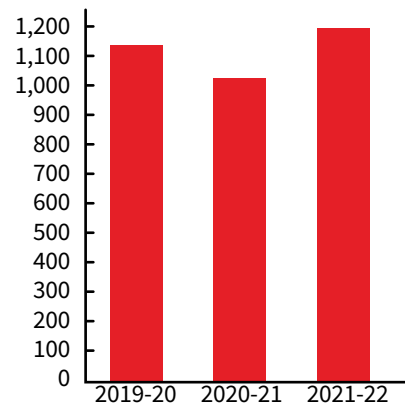
We have identified these areas of improvement, acknowledging they require long term objectives and programmes to establish lasting improvement. These form part of our strategies, linked to our Community Risk Management Plan.



On-call availability levels have not improved this year and we continue to review all elements which affect this and how we can improve our availability. We recruited fewer on-call firefighters this year than in the previous two years, 27 recruits compared with 52 last year. We recently launched our new inclusive recruitment campaign and we will evaluate the outcomes of this later in the year. We are also looking at retention of on-call firefighters through a project. This year, our turnover rate was 14.66% compared with 15.41% in the previous year. Whilst fairly static, it is higher than we would like it to be.



FALSE ALARMS IN COMMERCIAL PREMISES



Unwanted fire signals continue to rise, and this is an area being considered nationally as well as in Oxfordshire. These types of calls are automatic fire alarm activations to commercial premises. We are working with our Thames Valley partners and combined Fire Control to consider changes to policy and procedures which could reduce the burden of these calls. Our Fire Safety team is also proactively educating business owners of commercial premises about how manage these alarms themselves, preventing the need for call outs.



NEW INITIATIVES

We established a new training site for water rescue courses, using Europe's largest water testing facility at HR Wallingford. This provides our staff with a clean environment to train in and allows us to practice new scenarios, such as "vehicle in water", in a safe and controlled environment. Crews have fed back that the new site allows them to practice rescue techniques in a realistic but safe and clean environment.



We worked with cross-sector partners to launch Bike Libraries across Oxfordshire in primary schools, community settings, with faith groups and to support young, unaccompanied refugees who are making a new home in the county. Bike Libraries enable families and residents to actively travel to school, work or to participate in social activities where previously they were facing a barrier to doing so. Removing these barriers provides people with the means to travel safely and be active, creating employment opportunities and improving family cohesion, while having a positive environmental impact.



The creation of a new collaborative team, the Fire Forensic Scene Investigation Unit, working in partnership with Thames Valley Police, Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service and Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service to achieve the accreditation that is required by the Forensic Regulator.

Expansion of our electric fleet to include our two hydrant maintenance vehicles. In the previous year these two vehicles travelled over 9,000 miles. Converting these miles to electric miles helps mitigate our impact on the climate and work towards the council's priority of putting action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work



365 ALIVE PERFORMANCE

365 alive was Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's vision to ensure that we are working every day to save and improve the lives of people across Oxfordshire. The vision is supported by Road Safety, Trading Standards, Emergency Planning and Gypsy and Traveller's Services.



2021/22 objectives and targets

6 year objectives and targets

More people alive thanks to our prevention, protection and emergency response activities



Target

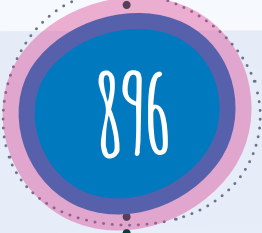
2021/22



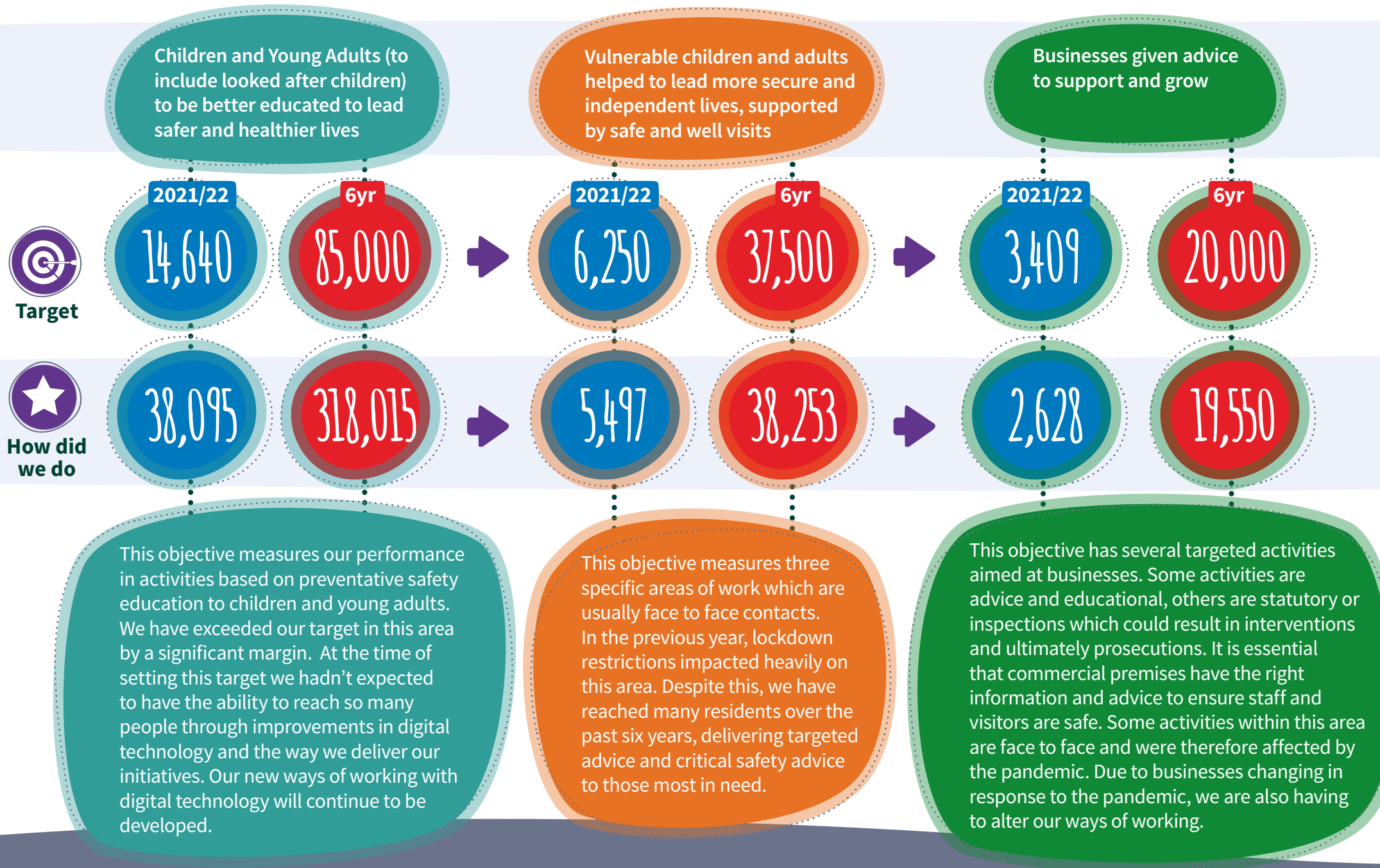
6yr



How did we do



This objective has five areas of performance activity. It is focussed on how our preventative activities help to reduce fatalities and injuries and reduce the risk to the public. Whilst we haven't met our overall target, we understand the reasons why. Some of our activities working with emergency partners were no longer required, such as co-responding for South Central Ambulance Service. We also recognise that there were more fatalities on our roads. A possible reason for this is that the nature of road users has changed with an increase in vulnerable road users, such as pedal cyclists. This is very much a focus of our prevention work.



THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE (TVFCS)

TVFCS handle emergency calls and mobilise appropriate resources to incidents. They ensure essential and relevant information is passed to firefighters. TVFCS liaise with other emergency services and outside agencies as necessary to deal with incidents we attend.

TVFCS EMPLOYS 39 FTE SHIFT-BASED STAFF
across four watches and management.

TVFCS handled over
35,000 (35,894)
emergency calls

which led to over
19,000 (19,395)
mobilisations to incidents.

Over
95%



Over 95% of calls were answered within five seconds and over 97% of calls were answered within ten seconds.

Over
97%






TVFCS has engaged with several national initiatives to improve sector resilience when a single FRS receives more 999 calls than it has the capacity to answer.

These arrangements were used on 18 February 2022, when the impacts of Storm Eunice caused emergency calls to be routed into TVFCS in numbers not seen for many years. TVFCS calls which exceeded capacity were answered by FRS controls across the UK and passed back to TVFCS for action.

In over 70% of calls, vehicles were mobilised to emergency incidents within 90 seconds of a call being answered.

Over 70%

RESPONSE STANDARDS AND OPERATIONAL AVAILABILITY

Response standards

Our core function is to respond effectively when an emergency incident occurs that requires fire and rescue service assistance. This response service is provided from 25 fire stations across the county.

We have set the following response attendance times:

We aim for 80% of attendances to be made within 11 minutes, and 95% to be made within 14 minutes of a call.





Our average response time
8 minutes 40 seconds
 08:36 2020/21



Six fire stations are crewed by whole-time personnel. Three of these provide 24-hour cover. The other three provide cover in the day and an on-call service at night. All 25 fire stations have an on-call crew; 19 fire stations are crewed only by on-call personnel. These stations provide an emergency response to our communities.

On-call availability

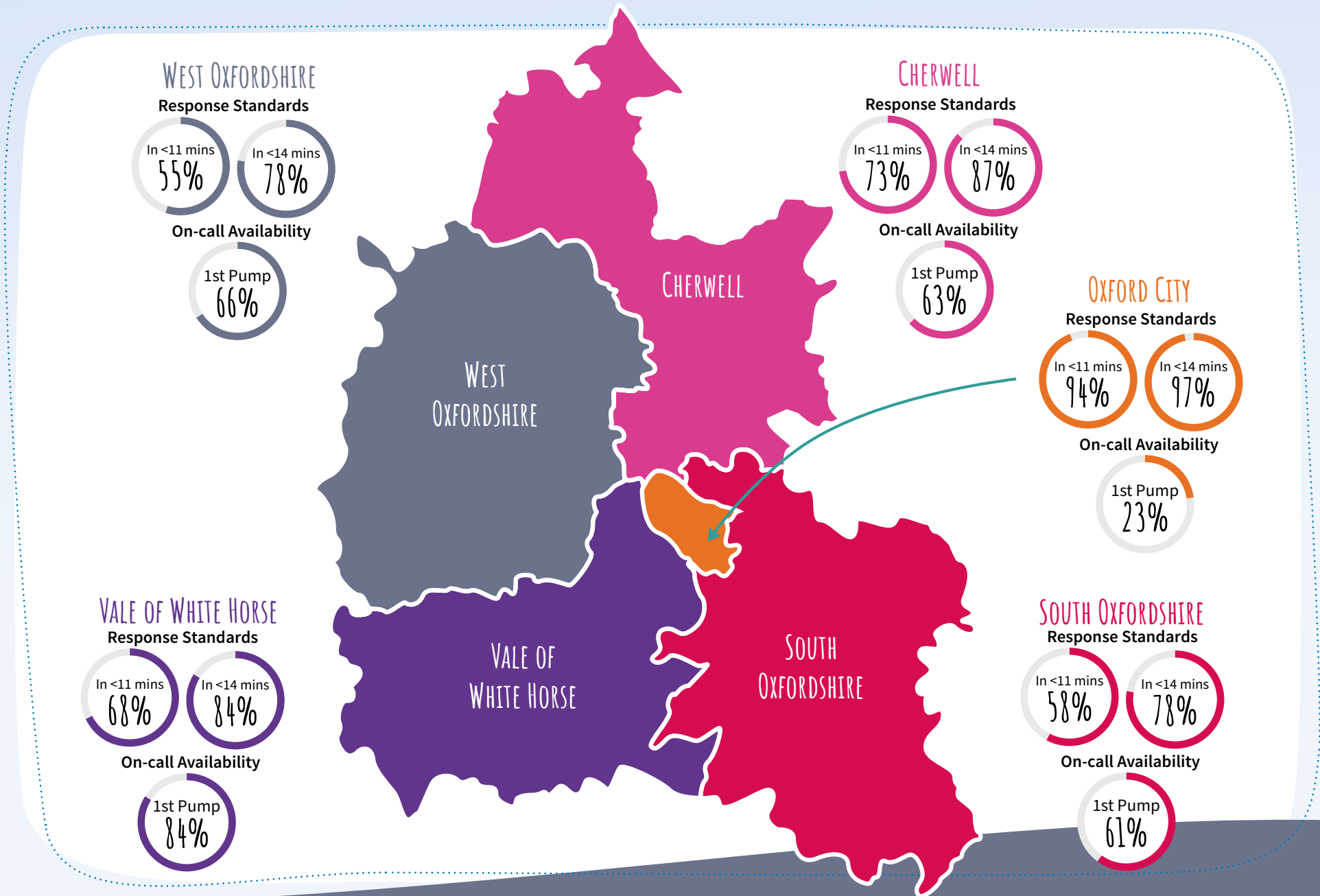


We aspire to provide 100% availability at all on-call fire stations.

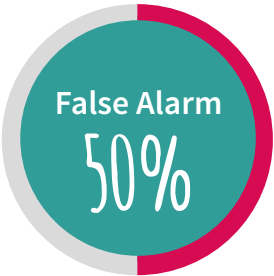
On-call availability across Oxfordshire for 2021/22 was 62.40% – a decrease compared with the previous year’s figure which was 72.30%.

There are many factors which impact on-call availability including recruitment, retention, contracts, cover from fulltime (wholetime crews and operational day duties staff).

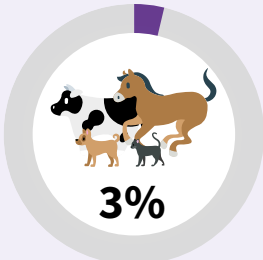




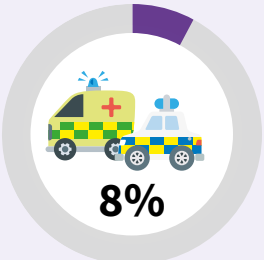
SERVICE DELIVERY ACTIVITIES AND INCIDENT INFORMATION



SPECIAL SERVICE TOP 10



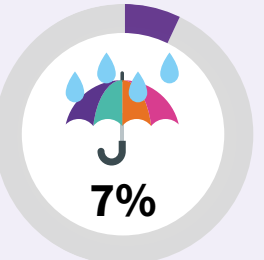
Animal assistance incidents



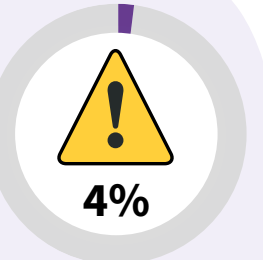
Assist other agencies



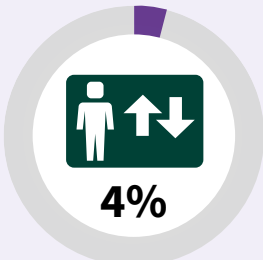
Effecting entry/exit



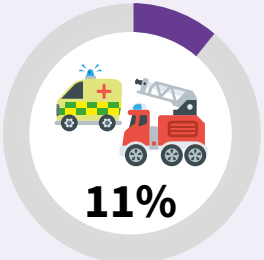
Flooding



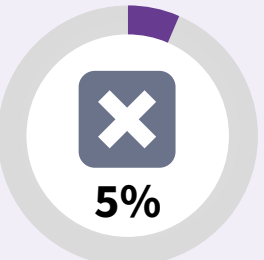
Making safe (not road traffic collision)



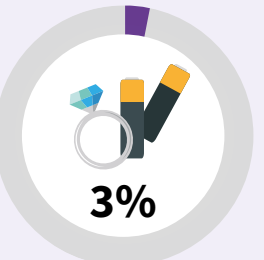
Lift Release



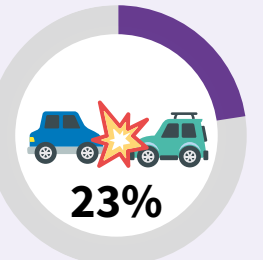
Medical Incident - Co responder



No action (not false alarm)



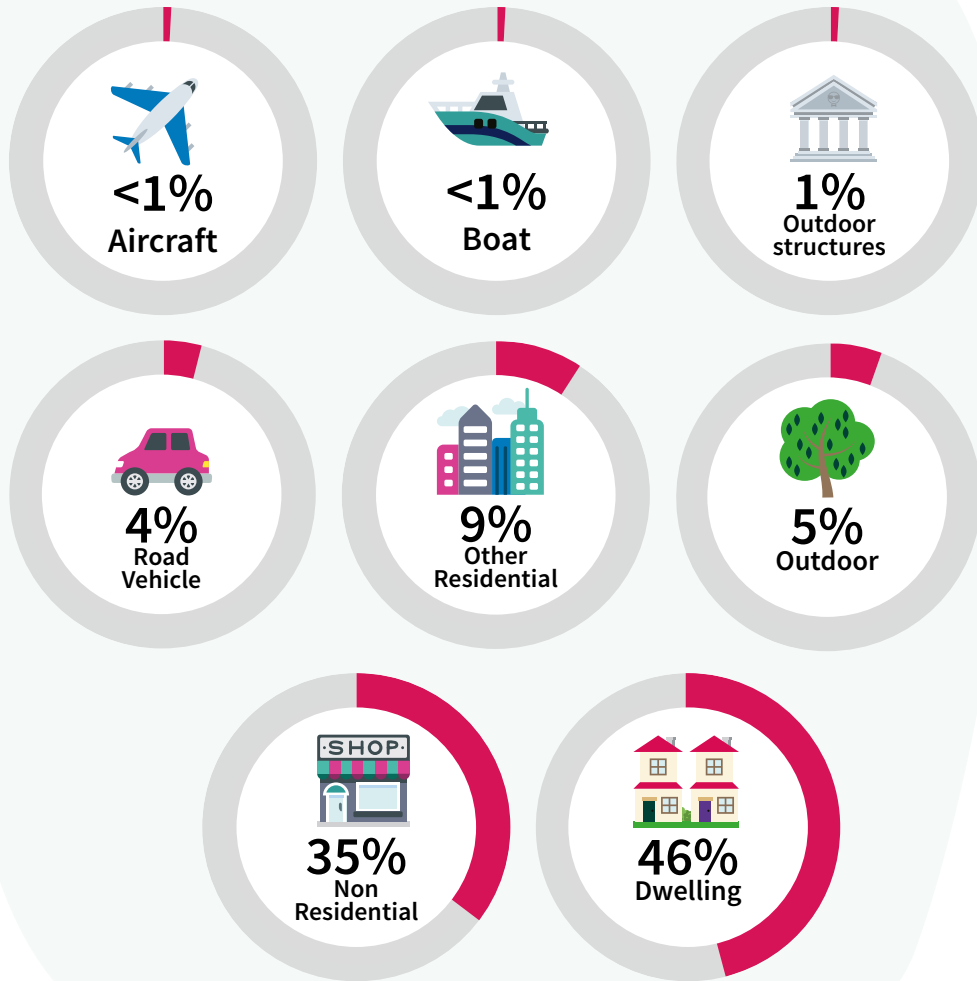
Removal of objects from people



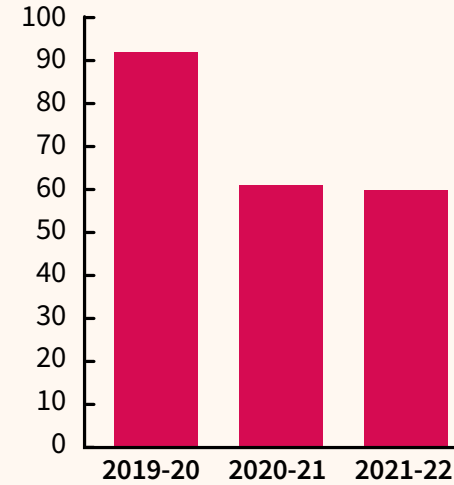
Road traffic collision

This year, we saw our incident numbers increase back to those of pre pandemic numbers. Almost half of incidents were classified as false alarms and the other half distributed equally between fires and special service incidents. The largest proportion of Special Service calls were road traffic collisions and effecting entry incidents. We are seeing a three-year reduction in injuries sustained in fires.

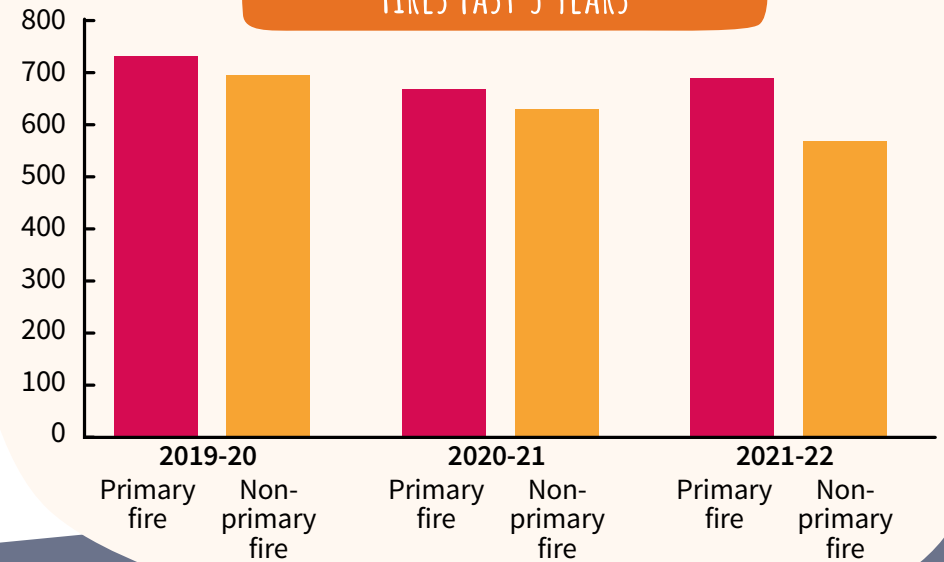
FALSE ALARM BY PROPERT TYPE



INJURIES FROM FIRE OVER PAST 3 YEARS



FIRES PAST 3 YEARS



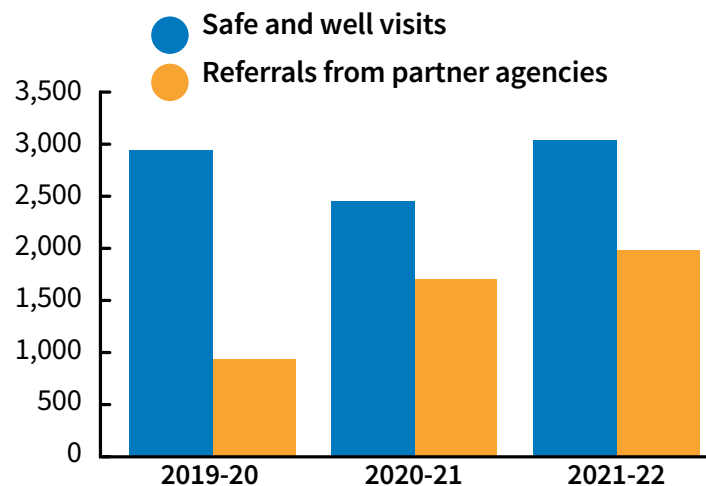


PREVENTION

Safe & Well

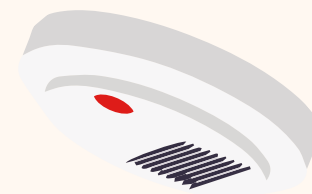
We have seen an increase in the number of Safe & Well visits this year which are undertaken by our specialist Home and Community Safety Advisors and operational crews.

We have also seen the number of referrals for a Safe & Well visit from partner agencies increase which is a benefit of our partnership working.



In January we ran a Safe & Well campaign aimed at those most vulnerable to dying in a fire. We targeted professionals and family members going into vulnerable people's homes, asking them to ensure that there was working smoke detection those homes. We saw a peak in referrals and requests for Safe & Well visits during this period.

A priority in 2022/23 for our Prevention team is to build on the success of Safe & Well, using data to help us target those most at risk alongside improving our online service. This will enable us to focus face-to-face visits to those who require specific support.



Safeguarding concerns and referrals

Overall numbers are increasing year-on-year for raising safeguarding concerns or making care and support needs referrals to partner agencies. This means we are helping more vulnerable residents receive the support that they need from the right agency, and building stronger partnership working through increased confidence in reporting.

Cycle Training and Road Safety education

Over the past year, 4,374 children have taken part in our cycle training programme (compared with 1,808 the previous year; and 4,401 the year before that) which aims to teach every child (aged 7-11) to ride a bicycle safely over a two year period.

We supported the family cycle training programme by working with Active Oxfordshire to set up a Bike Library and using fire stations to collect donated bicycles for Oxfordshire families who could not afford them previously.

We also supported local charities helping newly arrived families (from Afghanistan, for example) to feel safe in their new surroundings by providing road safety education/advice.

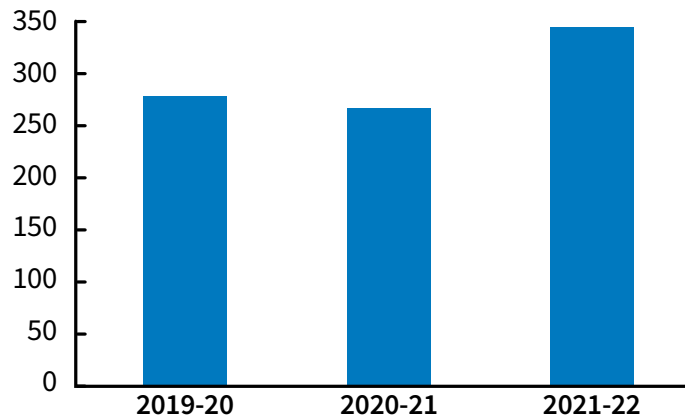
The number of fatalities on our roads has not risen. The education activities in all aspects of road safety are targeted to those most at risk, and we work with partner agencies to ensure our road safety campaigns are combined and consistent.



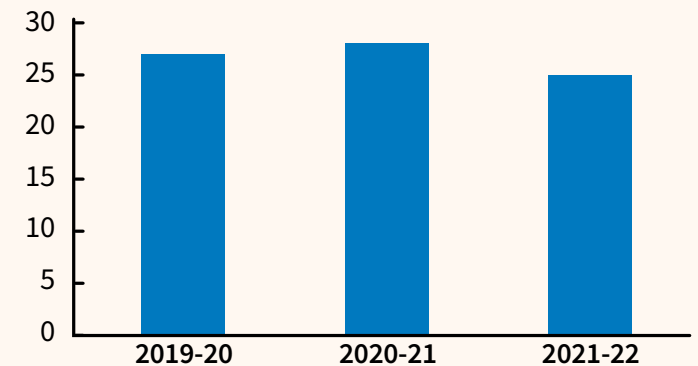
4,374

Children participated in our cycle training programme

Safeguarding concerns raised to social care and referrals to other partner agencies



Road traffic collision fatalities





PROTECTION

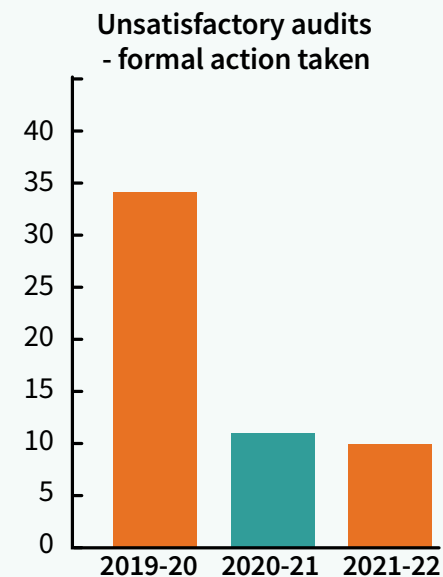
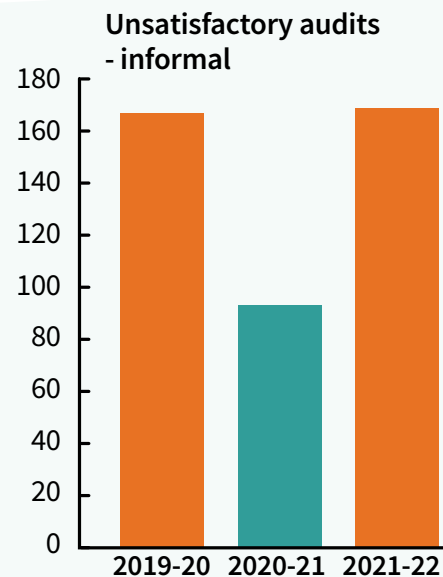
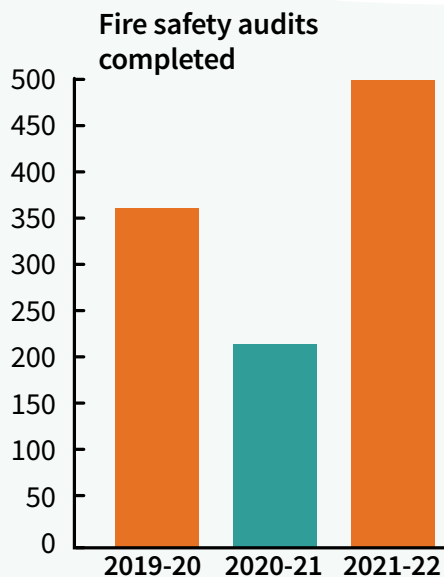
In 2021/22 our Fire Safety department has made enhancements and created opportunities, using the Grenfell grant uplift funding received from Government.


Fire Safety Audits

Last year, four ex-OFRS employees were recruited as additional Fire Safety Inspectors using the post-Grenfell fire protection funding from central government. This additional capacity, realised without the wait normally associated with training new staff, gave the resource to the department to deliver 500 audits – 24% up on the previous record set in 2018.

We target our activities to undertake audits at buildings we have deemed to be the highest risk, therefore ensuring safety to those who work and visit these premises. Finding fire safety precautions which are unsatisfactory during an audit is a sign that it has been well targeted. We have seen an increase in unsatisfactory audits in line with the number of audits completed.

500
Fire safety audits completed in 2021-22



 working under covid restrictions

Upskilling our workforce

The introduction of a new Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators sets new standards and expectations of qualifications for those working within Fire Protection. A member of the team is now undertaking a Fire Engineering degree and utilising the skills being developed. The inspecting officer attending the degree course runs regular development sessions for the team on areas of knowledge they are developing. Using the uplift grant gave our team the opportunity to improve our technical knowledge and ability. This sharing of the enhanced knowledge is extending to Operational Crews.



Business Engagement

Through the uplift grant we've been able to appoint a full-time Business Engagement Officer. Undertaking business engagement is a key area for Fire Safety and through this new post we hope to deliver a better understanding about fire safety for businesses which will reduce fires, deaths and serious injuries in commercial premises. A business engagement initiative was delivered in March. This saw a concerted campaign of social media content targeting restaurants and takeaways over a period of two weeks, running alongside in-person visits to 130 such businesses by local uniformed operational crews who delivered booklets and posters while answering any basic fire safety questions.



TRADING STANDARDS

Saved or recovered
£195,080
for victims of doorstep crime, scams and other forms of financial abuse (including responding to 76 incidents of doorstep crime).



We safety tested
747 ELECTRIC BLANKETS
of which 230 failed the test – a 31% failure rate.



seized nearly
750,000
illegal cigarettes



Legal metrology (weights and measures) – Inspectors of Weights and Measures tested and verified over
780 ITEMS
of weighing and measuring equipment.

Trading Standards have participated in Operation CeCe, a national initiative playing a significant role in disrupting the illicit tobacco trade, and in the last 12 months has seized nearly **750,000** illegal cigarettes and **60,000** grams of illegal hand-rolling and shisha tobacco in Oxfordshire. The availability of cheap, illegal tobacco can undermine smokers' efforts to stop and bring organised criminal gangs into local communities.

1245
visits to businesses - providing advice, checking compliance with legal requirements and testing products.

183 call blocking devices have been installed by Trading Standards since 2015, to protect vulnerable residents from nuisance and scam phone calls.



- We estimate that the project has already prevented **262** scams and made savings of **£1,930,560**.
- Over the operational life of these units, they will have blocked **316,516** nuisance calls (of which **86,879** will have been scam phone calls),
- Prevented **513** scams,
- Saved vulnerable households **£1,513,149** and led to a reduction of **£1,405,506** in public service costs (NHS, social care & police).
- There will be wellbeing benefits of **£353,739** across all users, and for those who would have been scam victims there are quality of life benefits of **£860,117**. This gives total project benefits of **£4,132,511** of which **£2,918,655** are direct financial benefits.
- We estimate direct financial savings of **62** times the cost of the project.

'Recruited'
307 FRIENDS AGAINST SCAMS
(friendsagainstscams.org.uk).



'Friends' learn how to protect themselves and their loved ones from scams and help to raise awareness throughout their community. Anybody can join Friends Against Scams and make a difference in their own way.

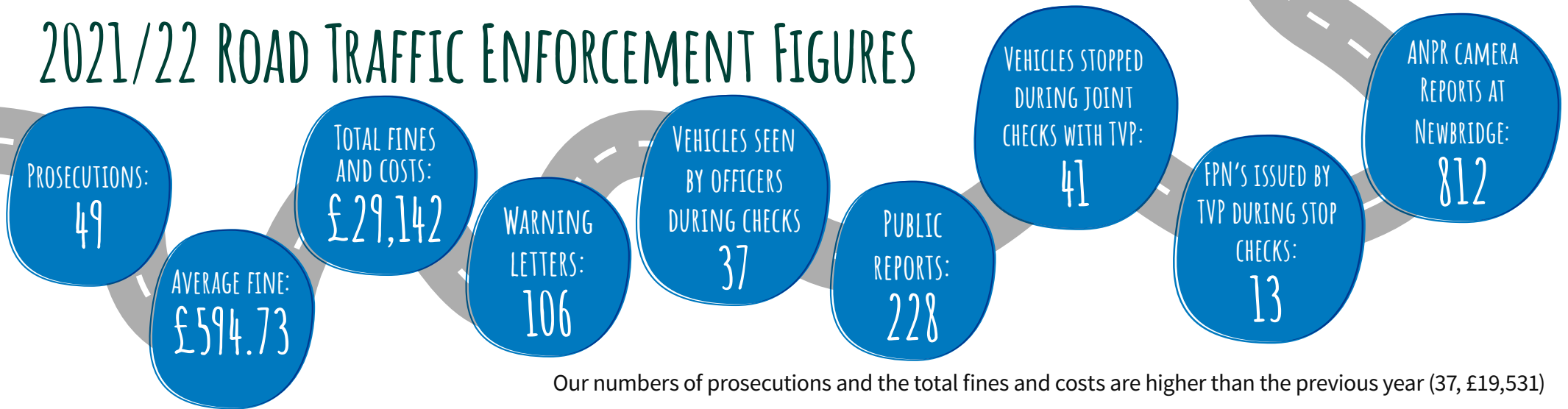


Trading Standards' prosecutions completed in 2021/22 led to offenders being sentenced to a total of almost eight years imprisonment – with many others given suspended sentences and/or ordered to complete unpaid work.

£26,676

was recovered from criminals, via the Proceeds of Crime Act and the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme – with such funds being put back into consumer protection and crime education activities.

2021/22 ROAD TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT FIGURES



Our numbers of prosecutions and the total fines and costs are higher than the previous year (37, £19,531)

RESTRICTION:	NO. OF PUBLIC REPORTS
Appleford	8
Bampton	23
Banbury	1
Blackthorn	2
Cassington	1
Charlbury	9
Clifton Hampden & Long Wittenham	21
Deddington	3

RESTRICTION:	NO. OF PUBLIC REPORTS
Faringdon	1
Garsington, Wheatley & Horspath	10
Goring	1
Halfpenny Lane (Moulsford/Cholsey)	18
Islip	1
Kidlington	3
Launton	54
Little Milton	4
Marsh Baldon	1

RESTRICTION:	NO. OF PUBLIC REPORTS
Radcot	1
Sonning	1
Sutton Courtenay	3
Warborough	2
Watlington	57
West Hagbourne	2
Whitchurch-on-Thames	1

GYPHY AND TRAVELLER SERVICE

Oxfordshire County Council has a duty of care to all Gypsy and Travellers within the county and will address their welfare, health and educational needs.

Gypsy and Traveller Services is committed to ensuring that all issues that affect Travellers staying on land within the county are dealt with in a balanced and proportionate manner. Decisions taken by the unit are open to audit under the Human Rights Act and The Equalities Act 2010.

Our Gypsy and Traveller Service attend unauthorised encampments in the county and manage the six council-owned permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites which have a total of 89 plots.

As with all our public facing service teams, work was undertaken to ensure that both our staff and those we were meeting were kept COVID safe. Many of our usual work practices were changed to comply with the Government guidelines and legislation for COVID.

Key activities for the team throughout 2020-21:

1

Responded to and resolved 29 unauthorised encampments during the year. This was a reduced number on last year (33) and remains a low number in comparison to previous years.

2

Last year Universal Credit was a serious issue with debts being incurred by the residents, we have been able to work with Universal Credits to ensure that residents do not fall into debt.

3

We are still working with all councils, landowners and developers within Oxfordshire on how best to protect open spaces and play areas from unauthorised encampments and have started doing site surveys for all councils. We have also produced information guidance where site visits are not possible.

4

We are awaiting the publication of the full details of the Police Bill which has just received Royal Assent. This will increase the powers of the Police service in respect of unauthorised encampments should they wish to use them.

EMERGENCY PLANNING UNIT

The Emergency Planning team helps Oxfordshire County Council to meet our statutory duties to have robust emergency plans and business continuity arrangements and promote resilience within communities.



Community Resilience: The team have statutory duties to help communities prepare for emergencies, assist with business continuity, and have processes to warn, inform and support the public in emergencies.

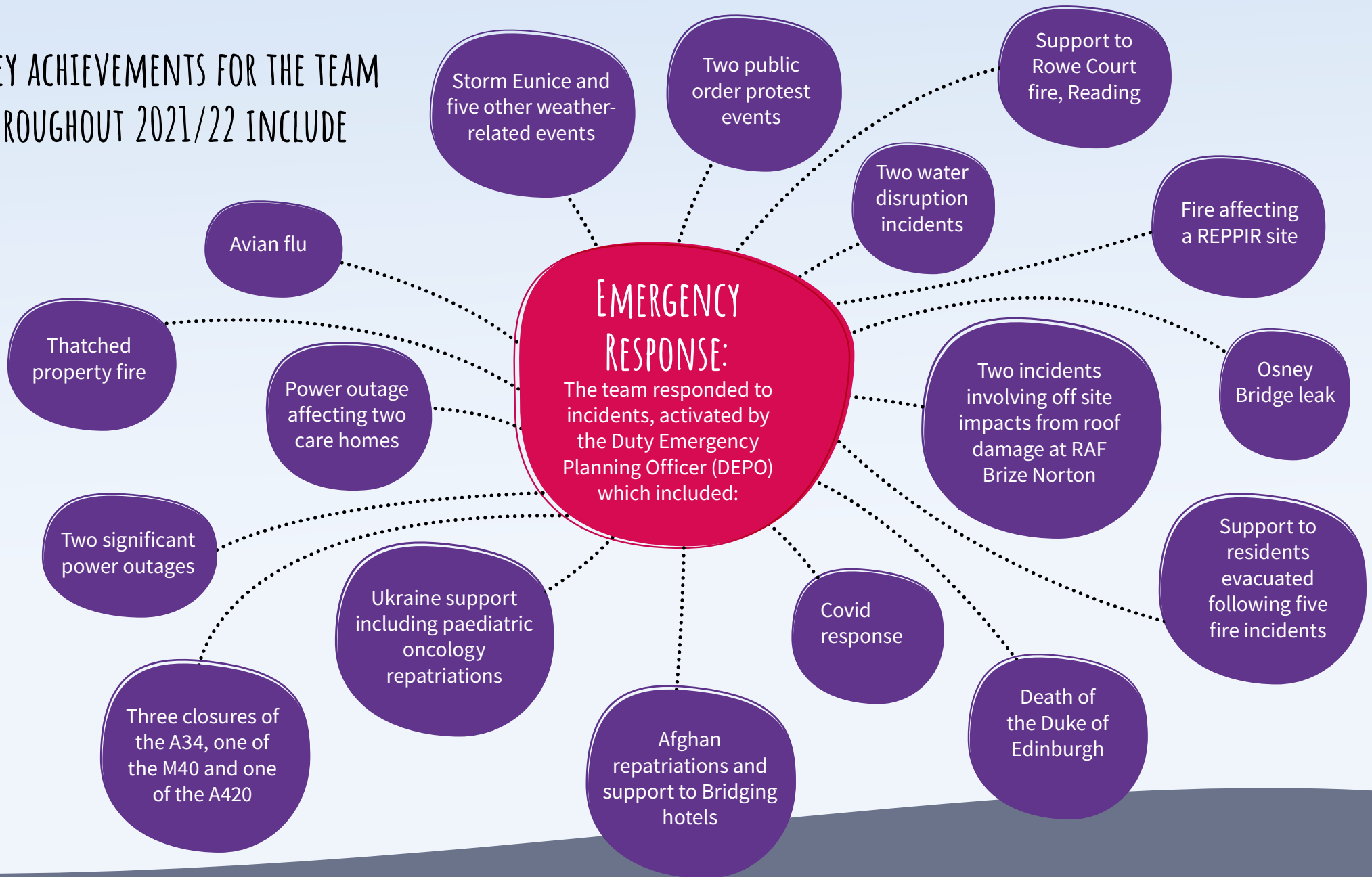
Over **2,000** In Case of Emergency (ICE) bottles issued to vulnerable households (compared to 600 in the previous year)

Over **1,700** Community Resilience bags distributed to residents (compared to 1,300 in previous year)

Our Emergency Planning Unit attended a variety of talks throughout the year including: Women's Institute talks, Parish meetings, Christmas Lights, Parish fetes, health on the move. This year we focused on social media engagement, with an agreement to post warning and informing messages on OFRS social media sites out of hours. Posts average between 10,000-25,000 engagements per post depending on the incident.

Additionally, a Community Resilience Framework is in its final stages with the team and looks to standardise our community resilience approach. The team has been working to clear a backlog of work from the COVID response and this has had an impact on the level of community resilience activities which have been able to take place. Moving forward, this should ease. Business engagement has been identified as an area to improve for 2022/23.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE TEAM THROUGHOUT 2021/22 INCLUDE



LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

We take every opportunity to learn both from ourselves and others.

We monitor incidents, crews, training and exercises, and use systems to examine skills, techniques, procedures and our interactions with others. After every incident or training event we provide an opportunity for staff to discuss what went well, what didn't go well, and how improvements can be made.

We have introduced a new Multi Department Operational Assurance group and process to ensure that we can triangulate lessons and good practice from throughout our service, regionally and nationally. The group discuss and agrees improvements through equipment, procedures, information and training and ensures that these are implemented and embedded.

Learning from Fire & Rescue incidents and training:

The purchase of new ratchet tools to assist with rescuing people from cars (this followed feedback and trial using the equipment by station personnel)

The purchase of different bags to keep RTC gear in a safe and effective manner as previous containers were breaking easily.



We feel that there are new tools to assist with RTCs and we should try them. This includes the ratchet tools.

The existing boxes that hold RTC rescue gear break too easily.



It enables our crews to gain access to vehicles in road crashes and rescue casualties more quickly.

It is important to protect our equipment to prevent damage and loss and to enable crews to access it in the speediest manner possible.



Trialled and subsequently bought the new ratchet tools to enable this.

Purchased new RTC bags to keep our equipment safe and easily accessible.

The planned rollout of 'Highrise boards' to improve recording of information to assist the searching of Highrise buildings during an incident.

We need to ensure that we can record search information when carrying out complex searches of buildings.

As we have seen the complexity of rescues from fires in some complex buildings such as Grenfell tower.

Bought and are in the process of rolling out these 'Highrise boards' to assist with fire survival guidance and rescues in complex buildings.

The use of thermal Image cameras by officers in charge to assess buildings and situations before committing crews.

We would like to be able to assess a building from outside using a thermal image camera.

It enables officers in charge to determine where the fire is, how best to rescue people and to be able to assess the scene throughout an incident.

Rolled out thermal image cameras for officers in charge across our fleet of fire engines.

Learning from National events

Following the tragic events in 2017 at Grenfell and the subsequent initial stages of the inquiry, we have explored how we can improve our service and our ability to prevent, mitigate and respond to an incident of this nature. We are working alongside our Thames Valley FRS partners through an agreed action plan of improvements. This includes operational procedures concerning similar incidents, communications with other services, call handling, incident command and training.

Following a tragic firefighter fatality whilst carrying out water rescue training in another county in 2019, a working group has been set up. This group is examining the equipment, procedures, command, risk information and assessment of risk generally concerning boat and water operations. This group is aligning the service with national best practice as promoted by the NFCC.



LOOKING FORWARD

Our service priorities for 2022-23 are aligned to the underpinning strategies for our new Community Risk Management Plan:

- To engage in the 'Delivering the Future Together' programme, revisiting 12:3:2 with our staff and the embedding of county values in one to ones, managing for performance, recruitment, promotion, to build on the positive culture and behaviours of Community Safety Services.
- Development of a mapping tool to improve the risk profiling of communities to enable crews to prioritise prevention activities to maximise the reduction of risk in the community.
- Analysis of the outcomes of our Fire Protection themed audits to inform whether certain commercial premises types should be included in our Risk Based Inspection Program (RBIP), to ensure that our RBIP remains focussed on the risks in the community.
- Review the nationally produced Home Fire Safety Visit and promote the use of it to lower risk requests for advice, releasing our resources to carry out face to face visits with those that are highest risk in the community.
- To continue our collaboration with partners, to deliver aligned training on newly procured breathing apparatus and formation of a Thames Valley fire investigation provision, to improve efficiency and interoperability between our partners.
- Develop an asset strategy that aligns with corporate objectives, incorporating a review our buildings and deliver options to include the opportunities in hybrid ways of working that COVID-19 has highlighted, to improve agile working and the most effective use of our premises.
- Increase our diversity by continuing to make improvements to the recruitment processes, we will continue to learn from our positive action campaigns ensuring this further improves the new joiners experience in the future. We will maintain the increase in community engagement with underrepresented groups across all 25 fire stations.
- Improve the operational availability of our fire appliances, through recruitment and retention of operational staff, ensuring we provide an effective and timely emergency response, increasing productivity of firefighters will further reducing the impact of fires and other emergencies.
- To further develop our wholetime watched based staff to confidently and competently complete increased activity in the areas of prevention and protection, to enable them to undertake a range of activities to support public and firefighter safety and delivery of efficiencies by increased work productivity.
- To implement alternative leadership succession and promotional processes in order to deliver staff development improvements and to support talent.
- To continue the transition of our fleet to electric vehicles in support of the county council's climate change agenda.
- To increase skills, competence and understanding of how appropriately enforced

regulation can assist carbon reduction activities, such as property energy performance certificates, 'green-claims' and alternative fuels (move from diesel/petrol storage).

- To review the Trading Standards approach to business consultancy services to ensure our structure and assess the potential for growth of those services.

We will monitor our progress through our key performance objectives for 2022-23:

- Deliver our Strategies (Year 1 milestones) which align to our CRMP, reducing risk and demand for services.
- Closely monitor response time targets for emergency incidents.
- Improve fire engine availability.
- Increase the diversity of the workforce.
- Work towards being carbon neutral to support the county council's climate action framework.



CONTACT US

Should you require any further information please contact us:

Community Safety Services
Sterling Road
Kidlington
OX5 2DU

Telephone: 01865 895 999

8.30am - 5pm, Monday – Thursday

8.30am - 4pm, Fridays

