



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Public Health &
Community Safety Services

Annual Report

2022-2023

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service



Protecting
our communities
reducing harm
and saving lives



OXFORDSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Welcome to Oxfordshire Community Safety Services



Rob MacDougall
Director of Community
Safety Services, Chief
Fire Officer

Welcome to Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's Annual Report for 2022 to 2023. As the Cabinet Member and Chief Fire Officer for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, we are pleased to report on how we met the statutory duties of the Fire and Rescue Services Act, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, Civil Contingencies Act and the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

The year has seen Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service deliver many successful initiatives by engaging with our diverse communities. For example, our Trading Standards Team saved Oxfordshire's most vulnerable communities thousands of pounds from scams by

*Working in partnership to
make Oxfordshire a greener,
fairer and healthier county.*



OXFORDSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

highlighting how fraudsters work. At the same time our firefighters tackled an unprecedented number of fires as a result of extreme summer temperatures linked to climate change.

Community Safety Services continues to deliver forward thinking services that aim to prevent incidents from happening in the first place. We recognise that this can only be achieved by putting Oxfordshire's communities at the heart of what we do.

Oxfordshire County Council invests heavily in the wellbeing of our staff and working culture. Our staff are well motivated, equipped and trained to respond to the challenges we face in a rapidly changing world. We are working hard to become one of the countries leading inclusive fire and rescue service by creating an environment where everyone is valued and can bring their whole selves to work.

We look forward to building on our successes and are firmly committed to continuing to improve wherever we can.

Councillor Dr Nathan Ley
Cabinet Member for Public Health,
Inequalities and Community
Safety

Rob MacDougall
Director Community Safety
Services, Chief Fire Officer



*Proud to protect
our communities,
by reducing harm
& saving lives*

Councillor Dr Nathan Ley
Cabinet Member for Public
Health, Inequalities and
Community Safety



Key achievements in 2022-2023

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



Our fire safety officers conducted more than **566** fire safety Audits of businesses.

Our trading standards officers seized **810** packs of cigarettes and **229** packs of tobacco.

Thames Valley Fire Control took over **42,535** calls. An **18.5%** increase compared to the year before

Our firefighters attended over **6300** incidents between 2002 and 2023

Only **3%** of the Council Tax budget was spent by Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. That is less than **10.8** pence per resident per day

173 Bikeability cycle training courses benefited over **4,103** children across Oxfordshire



Over **£220,000** saved or recovered from scams, doorstep crime and other financial abuse

We provided **11,429** leaflets to residents about how to prepare for flooding events and other emergencies

ROAD SAFETY

2742 Community Resilience bags issued to vulnerable residents ensuring emergency information is available when its needed most. This is **900** more than the year before.

About
Oxfordshire
Fire and Rescue
Service
A lot more than fire!

COMMUNITY SAFETY SERVICES

Covering an area over

1,006 Square miles

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is part of Oxfordshire County Council. By being part of the County Council we can work in close partnership with other council teams such as education and social care. This arrangement ensures our work is closely connected with the wider strategies of the County Council.

It also avoids duplication and by sharing and connecting our systems and properties we can save money to realise the best value for our residents.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is made of five teams who work together to lead positive change by working to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.

Protecting a diverse community

725,300 people

Spending in 2022/23

£28.6 million

We employ skilled operational and non-operational staff

576 firefighters

342 On-Call firefighters, 234 Whole Time firefighters and 84 Support Staff

24/7
emergency service
for only 10.8p a
day per resident
across
Oxfordshire



34 appliances

We also have specialist vehicles and 4x4 capabilities



25 Stations

19 On-Call stations. Firefighters respond from their homes or work places to the station



3 Wholetime and On-Call stations. These stations are crewed 24/7 by both Whole time and On-Call firefighters

3 Day Crewed stations. Whole time crewed during the day and combined with On Call firefighters at night overnight

**OXFORDSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE
SERVICES**

**EMERGENCY
PLANNING**



A 24/7 county wide service that costs £28.6 million. That's £39.46 per year for each resident or 10.8 pence per day. Only 3% of the Council tax budget went towards the fire and rescue Service.

**TRADING
STANDARDS**



**GYPSY AND
TRAVELLER
SERVICES**

**ROAD
SAFETY**

Emergency Response what we attended in 2022/23

A lot more than fires!

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service responded to 6341 incidents between 2022 and 2023. Incidents ranged from wildfires caused by extreme summer temperatures to road traffic collisions to incidents involving flooding.

The service also responded to 1799 special service calls. This type of incident could involve anything from rescuing trapped large animals or supporting our blue light partners to using our specialist skills and equipment to gain access to properties where an elderly or vulnerable person might be trapped.

Our operational response is provided through a dedicated team of over 576 firefighters. Crews work a number of shift and duty systems with more than half of our firefighters (342) employed through the On-Call duty system.

On-Call firefighters come from all walks of life and are mobilised to a fire station near their home or work address. Many are closely connected to their communities and can bring to bear valuable local knowledge when responding to incidents or supporting prevention work. All of our operational response crews play a central role to help prevent accidents and incidents occurring in the first place.

Firefighters carry out prevention work by visiting people's homes, schools, hospitals, community venues and local businesses. Operational staff dedicate time on top of their response and training activities to understand risks in their area by visiting commercial premises and businesses. You can read about how we carry out our prevention and protection activities further along in this report.

6341

Incidents attended
between 2022-23

438 Road
Traffic
Collisions

66

Animal rescues

384 Gaining entry for

other services 111 lift rescues

18 Rescues from water 63

Hazardous materials events 16

Incidents involving other types
of transport including aircraft

6 Evacuations 306

Residential fires

1451
Fires

176
Flooding
Incidents

3097

False Alarms

almost half of what we
get alerted to are
false alarms.
We are working
hard to reduce
this.

Our
Firefighters
work in partnership
with a wide range of agencies
including Health, Police, the
Environment Agency, Social
Services and many community
groups to keep you safe



Our values and looking after our staff



We have continued to build positive cultures through regular staff engagement, monitoring diversity and community centred service delivery to help create a fully inclusive and diverse organisation. Our values and vision encompasses our lived values and expectations at every level of the organisation. These include:

We have the third lowest firefighter sickness rates out of 40 Fire and Rescue Services

- ✓ **Be kind and care.** We value our staff; we respect and treat everyone with understanding and compassion, we care not just for our communities but each other. We take care of our own and others wellbeing.
- ✓ **Taking responsibility,** we hold ourselves accountable, take responsibility for what and how we deliver; we give and seek to be empowered to make a difference; we actively contribute to delivering the best for all
- ✓ **Daring to do it differently.** We innovate, we look to do things differently and improve the way we do things every day; we're not satisfied with the status quo and work creatively to solve problems.
- ✓ **Equality and integrity.** We embrace equality, diversity and inclusion valuing the difference in others. We always act with integrity, working in honest, ethical and supportive ways, building effective relationships; we trust each other to do what we promise

Wellbeing for our employees is always at the front of our thoughts and this is reflected in our absence rates for our Wholtime Firefighters. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has the third lowest absence levels compared with over 40 fire and rescue services that report on this. Our staff have access to a range of resources to maintain both their physical and mental well being. This ranges from gym facilities to maintain fitness, to staff discount schemes and counselling support.

Research comissioned by the Fire Brigade Union identified that firefighter mortality rates were 1.6 times higher than the general population. OPerational staff are exposed to many differenttypes of hazardous chemicals and toxins at the incidents they attend. The Service is rolling out equipment and improved ways of working to decontaminate staff and minimise contact with post fire toxins. This includes introducing a “clean cab” policy where any equipment or PPE used at a fire can be stored outside the fire engine cab.

Our staff help develop a positive and supportive culture through staff networks. For example, the Inclusive Network, REACH, Christian and Women's Network share learning and run activities to help understand issues around equality, well being and development.



A place where
everyone is welcome
and valued

+10%
of our Firefighters
are female

Delivering the future with staff that reflect the communities we serve

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Employee Relations Team have continued leading recruitment events to encourage people from across the community to consider joining the Service.

18 people attended fire and rescue service's 'have a go' days and women now represent over **10** per cent of the service's operational workforce. **43** On Call Firefighters passed the entry tests between 2022/23 with **28%** successful female candidates. This is an improvement on previous years but we realise that we are still not reflective of our communities.

High performing organisations are diverse and inclusive ones. When people can bring their different experiences, skill sets and whole selves to work, teams collectively solve problems quicker and more effectively. As a service we welcome diversity that goes beyond simple tick box compliance and actively encourage people who may be neuro-diverse or who have a hidden disability to consider joining.

Our teams regularly engage with schools, community groups, churches and mosques. We know that being a fire-fighter is not for everyone, but we want to make sure everyone knows that they would be welcomed and supported from the time they express an interest, to the time they put on their uniform. We also want our staff to have careers not just a job. Our staff are encouraged to continue learning and we are developing new processes to help maximise individual potential. We want to equip those interested in management and leadership to get the best academic and professional exposure possible. We invest heavily in training and developing our managers to be dynamic but caring leaders.

Running an emergency service also requires many other types of specialist who are not firefighters. Without their support our operational crews would not be able to their job. This includes the many dedicated staff who look after our fire engines, stations, IT systems, HR, facilities management and communication. We are working hard to remove barriers to develop and progress across our staffing groups.

Equality and
Integrity in
everything
we do

Daring to
do things
differently

Taking
responsibility

Be kind
and care

Always
learning



24/7 Emergency Response across Oxfordshire

Number of emergency Incidents attended by Station between



Wholetime and On-Call stations

These stations are crewed 24/7 by both Whole time and On Call firefighters



Day Crewed stations. Crewed during the day and jointly by on call and whole time On Call overnight



On-Call stations. Firefighters respond from their homes or work places to the station

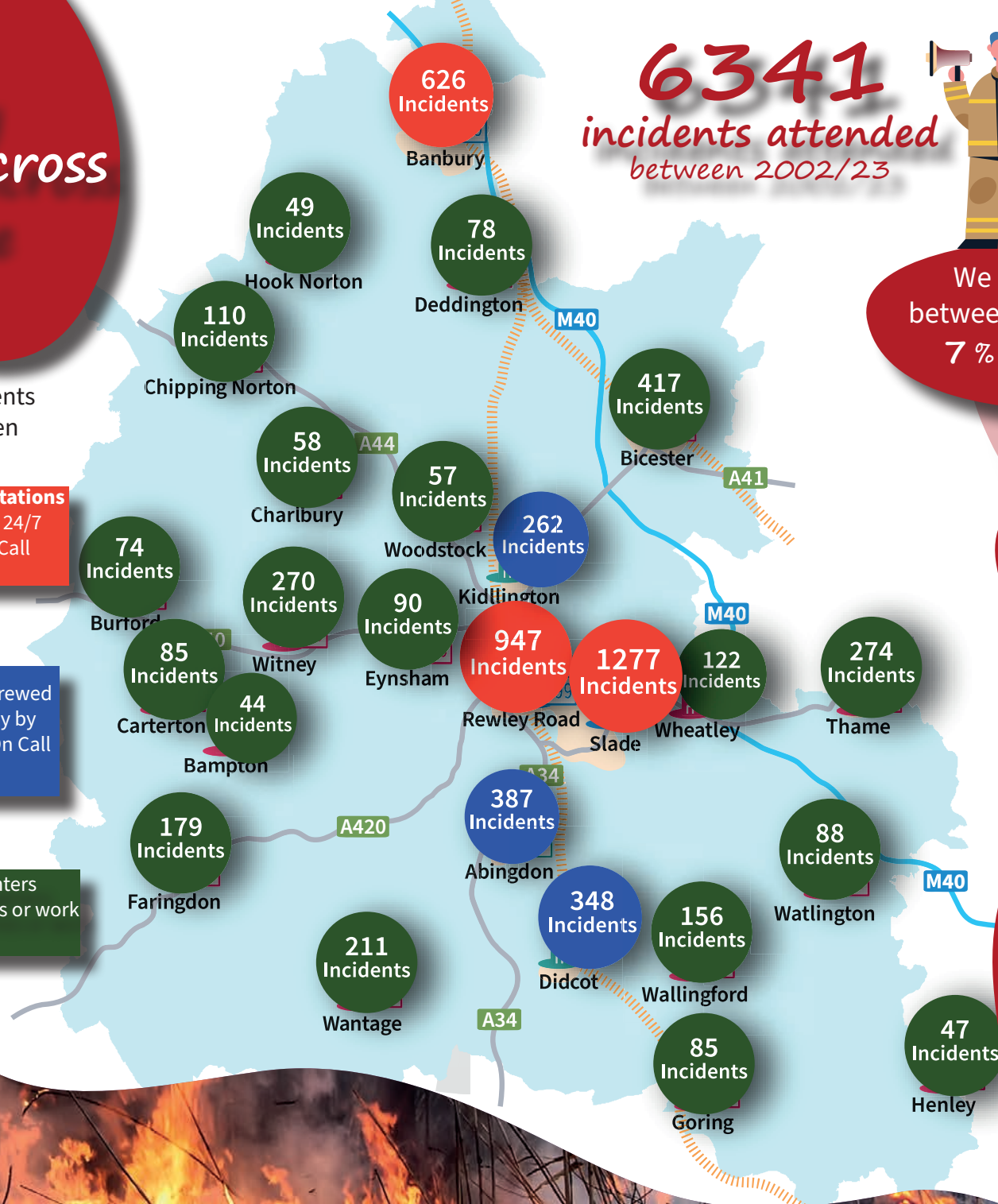
6341
incidents attended
between 2002/23



We attended **6341** incidents between 2022 and 2023. An increase of **7 %** compared to the year before

Our On Call stations responded to **2494** incidents between 2022 and 2023. An increase of **5.77 %** compared 2021/22

1451 emergency incidents attended were related to fire. Fire accounted for **22%** of the total incidents we responded to an increase from **17.86%** compared to the year before. The extreme summer temperatures saw many more outdoor fires than normal between 2022/23. There was **1** fire related fatality compared to 2 the year before.





Thames Valley Control Services (TVFCS)



When members of the public ring 999 and ask for the fire service anywhere in the Thames Valley area, it is TVFCS that takes and manages these emergency calls. Operators quickly mobilise fire engines and other resources to incidents ensuring essential and relevant information is passed to firefighters. At the same time, TVFCS also liaise with other emergency services such as the police, ambulance and other agencies to resolve incidents.

Between 2022 and 2023, TVFCS were directly involved in supporting major national events including supporting the funeral arrangements for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth at Windsor Castle. We also carried out a full hardware update of the command and control system ensuring our systems are ready for the future. In 2024 there are plans for a further technical upgrade of the communications system as part of the proposed Emergency Services Network (ESN). This government led national infrastructure project plans to replace the current Airwave communication service used by the emergency services across Great Britain. ESN will enable fast, safe and secure voice, video and data communication allowing first responders immediate front-line access to life-saving data, images and information in live situations and emergencies.

ESN's critical secure mobile technology will mean communication between the emergency services will take priority over other network traffic, even at peak times in busy built-up locations and more rural areas.



999

Thames Valley
Fire Control Service

EMERGENCY CALL

42,535 emergency calls were responded to between 2022-23. That is an 18.5% increase from the year before. During the summer heatwaves of 2022, TVFCS handled 580 fire calls in a single day in July! Two members of staff received awards from the Home Secretary for their work during this time.



94.64% calls answered



seconds

Hello!



97.02% calls answered



seconds

Hello!

42,535 emergency calls responded to
18.5% increase on the year before

This will allow emergency services and other first responders to share vital data, information and expertise quickly and securely when it is needed most.

TVFCS also has robust arrangements in place with other services across the country. During extremely busy periods 999 calls are automatically and quickly re-routed to other service centres. This arrangement is reciprocal and TVFCS will also answer and manage calls for other services experiencing unprecedented demand.

Always Learning

We are an always learning organisation.

We have identified these areas that we will be working hard to improve. Oxfordshire fire has a number of long term objectives set out in our Community Risk Reduction Plan 2022-2026. Some of the benefits and changes are longer term objectives. However, the fire and rescue environment is dynamic and we continuously review risks to our communities and firefighters to meet new challenges.

False alarms in commercial premises

False Alarms in commercial premises increased to 1037 (3071). Over 50% of our total calls are false alarms we are working hard to reduce this.

False Alarms

The number of false alarm at commercial premises rose **3%** compared to the year before. While this rise may be related to more premises being equipped with fire detection systems, false alarms continue to be a disruptive and inefficient use of valuable operational resources nationally. The Service continues to engage in robust and pro-active action with business to ensure crews are only called out to respond to confirmed fires. This is balanced with ensuring safety where fire in high-risk premises is suspected. A collaborative project planned with neighbouring Thames Valley fire and rescue services between 2023-24 has the objective of reducing false alarms as much as possible.

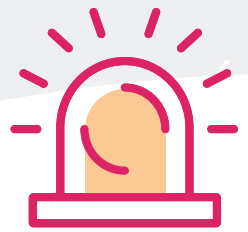


On-Call availability

On-Call availability reduced from **62.40%** in 2021-2022 to **59.32%** this year.

On-Call fire firefighters make a fantastic contribution across the County helping us to provide emergency services particularly in our more rural areas. On-Call firefighters come from all walks of life and are often closely connected to their villages and towns. However, maintaining high levels of availability once again continues to remain a challenge both in Oxfordshire as well as nationally. The majority of our stations have seen decreasing levels of availability particularly during the working week. Rural communities where On-Call stations are traditionally based no longer have as many people able to respond directly from work or home within a few minutes of their fire station. As On Call firefighters retire or increasingly work away from their station areas it is becoming increasingly difficult to replace them. Oxfordshire fire and rescue has embarked on a wide ranging campaign to attract members of the community who would not normally have considered applying with some success. At the same time emergency cover is continuously monitored and any potential shortcomings are managed through re-distributing staffing capacity from other stations. The Service is also currently engaged in a review of alternative models to ensure improvements in emergency cover remains sustainable and response times are appropriate.





Response standards and operational availability

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

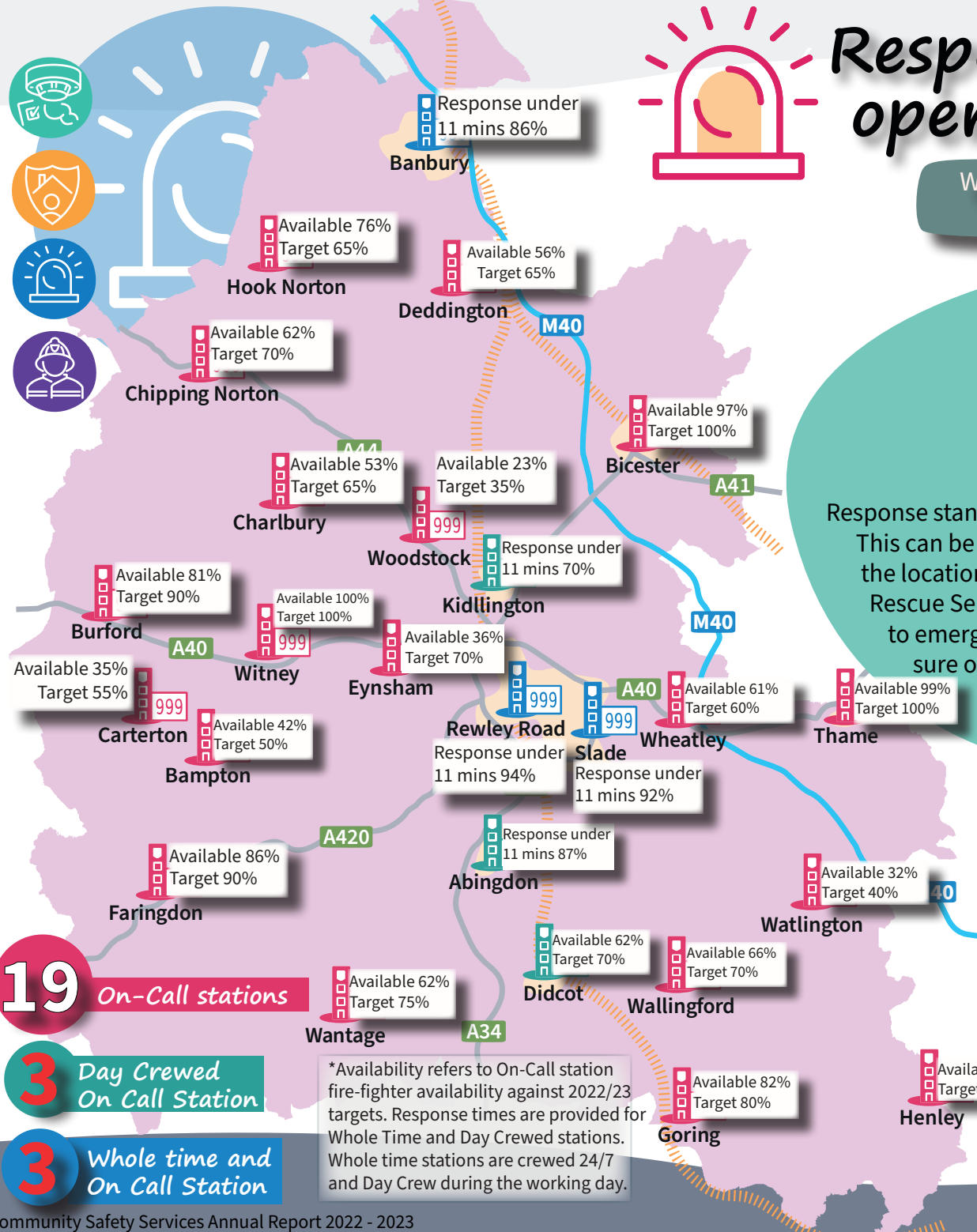


Between 2022/23 we responded to **72% of incidents within 11 minutes**. This was 2% slower than the year before and below our performance target of 80%.



Response standards for attendance **within 14 minutes** also reduced by 2% from 87.37% to **84.64%** compared to 2021/22.

Response standards are the ideal target times we set ourselves to get to an emergency. This can be affected by many factors ranging from weather, road traffic conditions, the location of the nearest appliance, availability of crews etc. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is currently examining different models to ensure we can respond to emergencies wherever they occur in an appropriate time. We want to make sure our resources are placed and managed in the most effective way to meet current and future risks.



- 19** On-Call stations
- 3** Day Crewed On Call Station
- 3** Whole time and On Call Station

*Availability refers to On-Call station fire-fighter availability against 2022/23 targets. Response times are provided for Whole Time and Day Crewed stations. Whole time stations are crewed 24/7 and Day Crew during the working day.

Our Fire Stations & Crews

6 fire stations are crewed by whole-time personnel. **3** of these are staffed 24/7. The other **3** are staffed during the day and with On-Call crews at night. All **25** fire stations also have an On-call crew. **19** fire stations are crewed only by On-Call personnel. On Call firefighters are trained and equipped to the same standards as whole time firefighters but respond to a station from their work or home address.

Safeguarding

Looking out
for the most
vulnerable in our
society



40

Training sessions
for staff across the
service

Training our staff to recognise concerns and support families

In 2022-23 we delivered safeguarding training to all front-line staff and managers, we completed 40 sessions and trained over 370 personnel. By having staff who are able to identify when things are not quite right and do something about it is vital. Support and intervention at an early stage helps families and individuals get advice and help that is available.

For example, a safeguarding concern was raised by firefighters following a Safe and Well visit. A specialist Fire Setter advisor from the Home and Community Safety Team then visited the family. They worked together and identified that the mother would benefit from additional social care and GP support. A partnership of coordinated support involving the childrens school, health and social care resulted in the family managing to live their lives safely and independently.

We recognise preventing incidents happening in the first place is vital and we are focussing additional resources into Prevention training to build our skills and capacity further. This includes producing a Safe and Well competency framework for all staff employed involved in safe and well work.

Safeguarding and supporting vulnerable people

Raising safeguarding concerns or making care and support referrals to partner agencies is increasing annually. This means we are helping more vulnerable residents receive the support that they need from the right agency. At the same time our partnership working through increased confidence in reporting.



350+

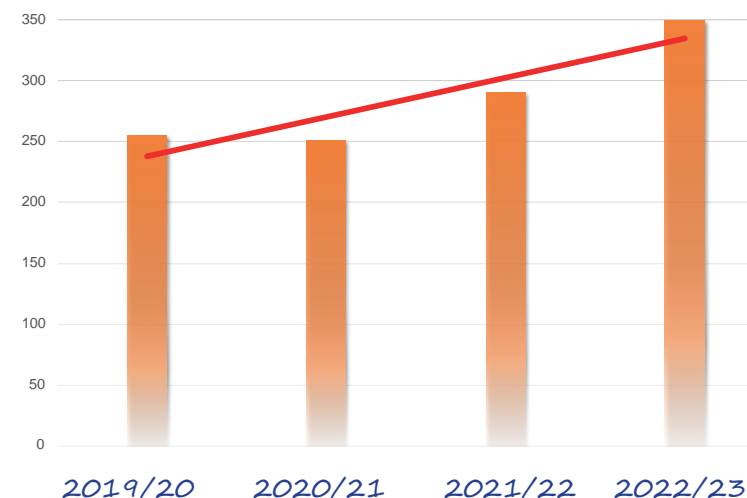
Safeguarding concerns
raised to Social care
and other agencies



370

Staff trained to
recognise safeguarding
concerns and make
referrals

Rise in safeguarding concerns raised to
Social Care and other partner agencies



Safe and Well

Keeping you safe at home through prevention

Carrying out safe and wells helps people remain in their own home

Safe and Well visits play a vital role in helping to keep our residents safe, and to reduce risks within our own homes. During the year a total of **2849** visits were carried out by our specialist team of Home and Community Safety Advisors, operational fire crews and in some instances external agencies. Those most at risk were prioritised by fire risk indicators such as a lack of working smoke alarms, smoking and fire loading in the property.

To keep improving what we do, we ask the people who we visit what they thought of the service and how we might improve. Customer satisfaction with the service provided was high with **98%** willing to recommend the service to friends and family, and **100%** describing the service provided as helpful/very helpful. Being able to provide an intelligence based approach to targeting Safe and Well visits based on risk is to be enhanced over the next year.

More than 32% of all safe and wells results in a referral for additional support being made

Within the prevention team we are fully invested in making our communities safer and working closely with other agencies helps us to achieve this. During Safe and Well visits there is an ideal opportunity to make a greater impact on the resident's safety by signposting or referring to other agencies.

There were **462** onward referrals this year giving people the opportunity to live full lives or stay living in their own homes. This demonstrates a truly person centred approach to the visit and shows our commitment to supporting people to live independently. This was a **3.5%** increase in referral rates compared to 2021/2022. Great examples of this increase can be seen by the onward referrals to falls prevention, and sensory impairment, making up **32.9%** and **32%** of the 2022/23 referrals.

2849

The number of Safe and Well visits carried out between 2022/23

100% Customer satisfaction. 98% willing to to recommend the service to friends

100%

462

Onward referrals made to other agencies to help people to continue living at home.



Prevention **#bewateraware**

keeping our communities safe on the roads and waterways



April/May saw the launch of our **#bewateraware** campaign, to reduce the loss of life in water related incidents. The aim is to create safer habits for life around waterways, be it rivers, canals or at the beach. The campaign was delivered through face to face work and online through social media.

Almost half of those involved in water related incidents fell into the water accidentally while walking, cycling or running. To target the intervention the face to face aspect was delivered at local town markets, and to runners at park runs in Oxford and Abingdon. The part of the campaign run on social media included short videos and a questionnaire. This questionnaire was evaluated for its effectiveness at changing behaviours and was able to show a significant shift away from risk taking behaviours. One sample question was related to perceived danger around open water, and following the intervention a greater number of the same people were able to identify the risk associated with open water sources.

Bikerdown

Bikerdown is a FREE workshop which offers people the chance to learn practical skills to help avoid being involved in a crash. The training includes essential first aid and scene management skills should they find themselves first on the scene of a crash where someone is injured. In 2023, **21** sessions resulted in **221** bikers attending. This included clubs events and military groups supported by the Firebike team. Riders are given Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) membership and we continue to support additional IAM road safety charity, RoSPA and Bikesafe safety courses as well.



Helping children to think about traffic and roads

Footsteps road safety training helps children to learn to think for themselves and gradually get better at dealing with roads and traffic and is aimed at KS1 children. We provide schools and parents with a guide which includes holding sessions for parents to help support them use the guide.

6786
visits to our
walking with
children web
page

In 2022/23 we had **6786** visitors to our footsteps web page Walking with children.

Our road safety team are linked into the key Council initiatives and priorities. This includes Vision Zero and Active Travel to ensure that we are consistent in our messages. Our input into road safety activities works alongside strategies and initiatives being carried out across Oxfordshire County Council to increase active travel. help people live healthier lives and reduce our climate impact.



**21 training sessions
attended by 221 bikers.
Learning how to avoid
crashes and life saving
skills intervention**

Education and learning how to stay safe

Training the next generation and making cycling safer for thousands of Oxfordshire's children

We have **6** cadet groups with **84** children aged between **12-18** based at Banbury, Kidlington, Bicester, Witney, Slade Park and Watlington. Cadets get involved in activities aimed to build their confidence, team working and respect. The cadets are registered for UK cadet awards and support major community events across the County. So far this year **3** cadets have achieved the Duke of Edinburgh Community Safety award, **3** have achieved the UK Fire Cadet award 1 and **14** have achieved their Social Action award. **Overall we have 84 cadets, with some stepping into a role as a firefighter beyond the age of 18.**



Bikeability- educating young people and adults on how to stay safe while cycling

In 2022/23 we ran **173** Bikeability Courses and we now have **181** Bikeability Schools benefiting **4,103** children. Bikeability is the Department for Transport's flagship national cycle training programme for schoolchildren in England. We receive grant funding support from the Bikeability Trust to run courses through Oxfordshire. Teaching children to ride safely and confidently safety supports the Council's key vision for a healthy start, encouraging travel that reduces our climate impact.



Alongside the Bikeability courses we also run additional cycle training for children. This included **104** training courses covering **71** schools benefiting **769** children receiving training. But its not only children who need to stay safe while cycling. We also launched our adults cycling with confidence courses running **3** courses with **9** adults who are now a lot more confident and safer on the road.



3,628 Children attended our Junior Citizens Project at Rewley Road Fire station to learn how to keep safe in fire and other emergencies

181
"Bikeability"
schools
supported

4,103
Children
trained
under
bikability

104
cycling
courses with
schools

3
Adult
cycling with
confidence
courses

769
children
cycle
trained

122
Schools were
visited by the
central fire
prevention team
to talk about fire
safety



Trading Standards

Consumer protection,
business compliance, scams,
licensing and so much

We work with
business to help them
comply with the law,
and we also show
vulnerable people how
to avoid scams

60

Trading standards
officers investigated
hundreds of reports
regarding HGVs
inappropriately using
weight-restricted
roads and bridges,
leading to over **60**
prosecutions.

The Trading Standards Service fulfils the County Council's responsibilities for the enforcement of a wide range of consumer protection and public safety legislation. Our responsibilities are widespread and include, Legal metrology (weights and measures), product safety, food and farming standards, trade representations and trademarks, unfair trading practices, animal health, disease control and welfare, environmental requirements, price marking and price comparisons, supply of age restricted products, licensing and inspection of explosives and petroleum storage facilities, safety certification of sports grounds.

Between 2022/23 our teams carried out a wide range of activities from educating business and members of the public to testing electric blankets. We also take enforcement action when laws are broken.

£220,000

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

2718

People directly
given trading
standard advice

100

Total number of
food operator business
attending training to learn
about their food allergen
responsibilities

246

"Friends
against scams"
recruited

2,400

non
compliant
e-cigarettes seized.
Over **30** retailers
visited resulting in **3**
prosecutions. We also
seized **810** packs
of cigarettes and
229 packs of
tobacco

1377

Business
Interventions including
advice, sampling and testing
activities **30%** more than
last year

100%

High risk
food standard
inspections
completed



County Emergency Planning Team

Working and preparing communities and organisations for major events

We help prepare business and communities to plan for incidents that could cause major disruption. We are available 24/7 to advise and support our partners



Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's, Emergency Planning Team supports business continuity from major events. We achieve this through our partnership with the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (LRF) risk group and by integrating with the Oxfordshire County Council response strategy. The service also chairs the LRF CBRN (Chemical Biological Radioactive and Nuclear) group and engages in regular interoperability training with Category 1 and 2 responders.

Notable achievements of 2022 and 2023 include:

- Supporting RAF Brize Norton to run a Major Accident Control plan exercised with multi agency partners

Supporting communities through major emergency road closures, heat wave, water and gas leaks

- 3 smoke plumes requiring warning and informing local communities
- Providing response and support to reduce Industrial Action impacts
- Setting up an emergency reception centre to care for those involved in a bus crash
- Providing coordinated support through 4 storms and 8 flooding responses
- Supporting the state funeral arrangements of the Queen including mutual aid support to Windsor



1112

Business given continuity guidance to help ensure they are prepared for emergencies. The team provides advice and a 10 minute Business Continuity assessment.

53

Community Resilience events attended these include talks to WI groups to ensure residents are prepared for emergencies and visits to brownie and scout groups to educate.

2742

Community resilience bags and ICE issued (In Case of Emergency) bottles issued these ensure that vulnerable residents have contact phone numbers and information to prepare for emergencies. As well as providing essential information for first responders.

11,429

We provided 11,429 leaflets to residents on how to prepare for a flood.

Our team also dealt with 11 water supply disruptions, a gas leak, 4 fires requiring community support and helping setting up a reception centre following a bus crash.

Fire Protection and building safety

Our Fire Protection Team has invested heavily to work with business to prevent tragedies like Grenfell from happening

Our fire protection officers carry out hundreds of audits working with local business to ensure they understand and comply with the latest fire safety legislation. This not only minimises risk to their business, but also their staff and local residents.

Our Fire Protection department continues to build on the successes from the previous year. Central government funding aimed at preventing future tragedies by learning from events such as Grenfell Towers enabled us to invest and significantly improve our staff training, systems, and capacity.

Key activities included using a Fire Protection uplift grants employ additional, qualified fire safety inspectors to undertake auditing and enforcement work. This continued investment enabled us to complete **566** fire safety building audits, a **13%** improvement compared to the previous year. Our fire safety audits use a clear risk-based approach to ensure that we focus on protecting Oxfordshire's most vulnerable communities safe from fire.

We have also continued to up skill our staff across the department to ensure we continue to meet, and often exceed, the requirements of the national competency framework. This included specialist courses being provided to improve fire safety in schools and hospitals and heritage building fire safety training.

We support compliance to fire safety standards in commercial premises ranging from small bed and breakfasts hotels to hospitals and large factories. Between 2022-23 our Business Engagement lead delivered themed activities targeting premises identified through the audit process. Our campaign focused on visiting over **140** premises providing guest house and bed and breakfast facilities. Businesses were provided with leaflets and advice to help them comply with the latest fire safety legislation. This activity was run alongside an engaging social media campaign which recorded over **18,000** viewing.

Our Fire Protection Teams were finalists in the NFCC Fire Prevention and Protection Awards 2023!

550

Our Fire Safety Officers conducted more than **550** fire safety inspections of business

140

140 inspections of guest houses and bed and breakfast premises. Making sure Oxford's many visitors stay safe

18,000

Views on our website. This helped many business learn about changing legal responsibilities



Fire Protection and Building Safety

Our Fire Protection Team has invested heavily to work with business to prevent tragedies like Grenfell from happening

1822

False Alarms in commercial premises

+3% from 2021/22

Educating business is an important part of our

work. Face to face activity was supported with a social media campaign that achieved a reach of 18,000 with an impressive 5% engagement rate (anything above 1% is widely considered 'good'). Our Primary Authority team also signed two new agreements with social housing providers which allow us to extend our provision of assured advice for the management of fire safety in organisations that support and house the most vulnerable in society.

As mentioned earlier, we have invested heavily in up-skilling our staff across the department to ensure we not only meet but often exceed the requirements of the national competency framework. This included one member of the team entering the final year of a fire engineering degree,

Training builds confidence in our staff and enables them to give great advice where it is needed and take formal enforcement action where businesses are wilfully failing to meet their obligations to keep people safe from fire.

Unfortunately, the number of false alarm incidents at commercial premises continues to rise – up 3 % on last year. While this rise may be evidence that more buildings being equipped with the latest fire detection systems to raise an alarm, it is nonetheless an unwelcome drain on our limited operational resources which could be better used elsewhere. A new project is now underway in collaboration with the other two Thames Valley Fire Services to identify ways to reduce our attendance at false alarms.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has led an ambitious collaborative project with Thames Valley Police and our two Thames Valley fire and rescue service partners to establish an ISO accredited joint forensic fire scene investigation unit. This project will ensure all our forensic investigation activities and evidence is delivered to demanding ISO standards so that it remains admissible in court.



Gypsy and Traveller Services

Oxfordshire County Council manages six permanent gypsy and traveller sites

Oxfordshire County works closely with our gypsy and traveller communities. We help with welfare, health and educational advice as well as managing council owned sites.

Gypsy and Traveller Services work in close partnership with representatives from these communities to avoid unsuitable encampments being set up in the first place. On the occasions where an unsuitable encampment takes place we support council teams and landowners with tackling and removing these. We also continue offer guidance to landowners on how to protect open spaces and recreational areas from unauthorised encampments.

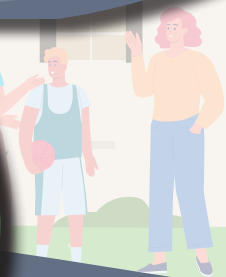
In 2022/23 we visited **35** gypsy and traveller site plots to provide advice on fire safety compared to **26** the previous year. We also responded to **28** unauthorised encampments, which is **1** less than in then the year before.

Statutory Guidance for the Police has been published in June 2022. It is a comprehensive summary of the current powers that are available to the Police in respect of unauthorised encampments.

We have established a good relationship with the Department of Work and Pensions Universal Credit department. A majority of the rent fees we collect are now being paid directly to us. These include rental arrears for individuals previously struggling to manage debt.

Our partnership with Property and Facilities Management Department, resulted in an agreement for utility blocks on the Oxfordshire County Council static sites to be upgraded. The refurbishment works are essential towards improving the standard of living and quality of life for our Gypsy and Traveller communities. The site surveys, plans and project will be developed and actioned throughout 2023.

£362,090 Received in rent from fixed traveller sites in 2022/23



Operational training and Development

High quality training equipping our staff with skills ranging from the latest firefighter techniques to leadership and management skills.

OFRS places great importance on operational staff being highly skilled and knowledgeable, enabling them to respond safely to different types of emergencies at any time. Training is delivered in many different ways ranging from on station firefighting practice to major exercises involving our blue light partners, emergency planning officers and specialist advisors. Firefighters are exposed to wide ranging scenarios including incident command virtual reality simulations at our state-of-the-art VRX suite in Slade, to large commercial building live fire exercises at the National Fire College or water rescue training at the Wallingford Hydrology centre.

Our training Instructors have nationally recognised teaching and assessing qualifications covering breathing apparatus, road traffic collision and water rescue techniques. We have also enhanced our capability to assess at nationally accredited Skills for Justice (SFJ) levels. This means we can now provide in house training and assessment from firefighter all the way up to station manager.

Innovative and inclusive training material to support varied learning styles have been extensively developed through the 2022-23. Many training packages have been refreshed and re-launched into videos and recorded formats. A review of the training and recording database resulted in a software upgrade in. Managers can now better monitor training and staff competence while firefighters will have enhanced access to training material across a range of mobile platforms.

242

Training courses run covering breathing apparatus, introductory core skills, casualty care, water rescue and working at height

157

Incident Command courses to give our managers the skills needed to manage incidents from house fires to a major emergency.

Our Training and Development Team help equip our staff with all the skills they need to respond to a wide range of emergency incidents. This includes not just core operational fire and rescue skills but more specialist hazardous material training. We also facilitate training on improving leadership, management skills and auditing

77

Emergency Driving specialist training and assessments carried out. Courses from 1 day to 10 covering fire engines to response cars

500+

Firefighters trained to use the new Breathing Apparatus sets. Equipped with the latest in telemetry and communication systems

Health & Safety managing risk

We continuously learn from safety events incidents locally and nationally. Combining high quality accredited training, risk information with robust assurance and audit processes ensures we keep our staff and communities safe.

Having a skilled and safe workforce who can quickly identify hazards and manage risks is vital. It helps us keep both staff and the public safe across the wide range of emergency incidents we attend every year.

Our technical and practical training packages are aligned to National Operational Guidance. This is a nationally recognised platform for best practice related to fire and rescue operations. We are one of the first fire and rescue services to do so, and this subsequently assures that our training is delivered to staff at the highest level.

Development programmes for operational staff is regularly internally and externally assured and accredited by Skills For Justice. Our Operational level incident commanders are also assessed internally with Skills For Justice accredited Level 1 and 2 incident command qualifications, whilst our Tactical and Strategic commanders are assessed externally, again using accredited systems.

Our training Instructors have nationally recognised teaching and assessing qualifications as well as specific instructor qualifications in core skill areas such as Breathing Apparatus, Road Traffic Collision and Water Rescue. We have a robust internal quality assurance process to ensure internal assessment decisions are accurate and fair.

Risk information where you need it most

A revised site-specific risk information system with improved mapping and supporting data has significantly enhanced the ability of our firefighters to quickly access safety critical information on all medium and high-risk sites. This information is quickly available to operational crews attending incidents using mobile data terminals installed in appliances or through portable devices.

Health and Safety

Establishing a Health Safety and Wellbeing culture continues to underpin all aspects of our work. In 2022/23, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team completed an internal audit process followed by a peer audit from our South East regional fire and rescue partners. We were really pleased with the results and areas of improvements identified are being actively addressed. A further comprehensive audit is planned for 2023/24.

Key achievements 2023/24 include

- Improved Health and Safety recording through a revised electronic recording system
- Prioritising wellbeing through providing access to webinars on financial wellbeing as well as mental health and physical wellbeing resources.
- Over 99% of our Firefighters passed their annual fitness tests

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What next?

We have number of exciting initiatives planned between 2023-24. These will look at improving our stations, culture, performance and how we deliver services

Between 2023 and 2024 we will be working on an exciting project to look at upgrading and developing two of our fire stations. This includes establishing a partnership with local business to significantly re-develop and modernise Rewley Road station. We are also exploring plans to build a community safety education centre as well as new training facilities. Most of our fire stations were built over 50 years ago and we want to make sure they are fit for the future.

We are carrying out a comprehensive review of how we deliver our services. Housing developments, climate change and changing community dynamics means we have to make sure our future service delivery model meets changing risks. The majority of our firefighters are On Call, and changing lifestyles and working patterns means it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff in many rural services. The review will help us to look at different service delivery models. The review will help us continue to provide a highly professional, responsive service that also provides best value for money for our Oxfordshire's residents.

Over the coming year we are upgrading our training and development software. This will allow a much more integrated, accessible and user friendly way to access training packages on a range of devices. A large percentage of our operational workforce are On Call firefighters who do not work from a fire station permanently. The new software will also allow firefighters and managers to update learning records and monitor training needs more effectively.

Between 2023/24 we will be replacing ageing front line fire engines with modern and more efficient appliances as part of our fleet replacement strategy

Building a fully inclusive Service that is committed to our values remains a priority. High performing organisations are both diverse and places where staff feel comfortable to bring their whole selves to work. To ensure we fully understand how are staff feel working for us we plan to carry out an independent cultural review towards the end of 2023 to help with this. We are also developing an Inclusive Service framework and cultural plan with our staff networks.

We are developing and rolling out a new performance reporting platform supported by our colleagues in the County Council. The software will provide at a glance data on how we are meeting our targets and look at ways to improve. Having the right information also allows us to quickly identify, monitor and respond to trends and changes in the many incidents we attend including the numbers of fires, their locations, who was affected, times of day and incident types. Our managers can also can also easily get service wide performance data on areas ranging from staff well being to the number of policies that require reviewing.



Contact us

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8.30am - 5pm Monday – Thursday
8.30am - 4pm Fridays

Find out more

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