

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23



**Bedfordshire**  
Fire & Rescue Service



# CONTENTS

|                           |    |                              |    |
|---------------------------|----|------------------------------|----|
| FOREWORD                  | 4  | HUMAN RESOURCES              | 25 |
| MONTH BY MONTH HIGHLIGHTS | 5  | TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT       | 27 |
| PERFORMANCE               | 10 | LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT       | 28 |
| PREVENTION                | 12 | PROJECTS & PROGRAMMES        | 29 |
| FINANCE                   | 22 | OUR WORK WITH EAST NHS TRUST | 36 |
| PREVIEW                   | 23 | CONNECT WITH BFRS            | 37 |

## OUR MISSION

Working together to keep Bedfordshire safe.

## OUR VALUES



We Are Accountable



We've Got Your Back



Every Contact Counts



We Dare To Be Different

 WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE

 WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK

 EVERY CONTACT COUNTS

 WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

# OUR CORE CODE OF ETHICS

---



## PUTTING OUR COMMUNITIES FIRST

We put the interests of the public, the community, and service users first.



## INTEGRITY

We act with integrity including being open, honest, and consistent in everything that we do.



## DIGNITY & RESPECT

We treat people with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.



## LEADERSHIP

We are positive role models, always demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.



## EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI, both within the FRS and the wider communities in which we serve.

We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrating difference.

 WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE

 WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK

 EVERY CONTACT COUNTS

 WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

# FOREWORD

**Welcome to our Annual Report for the financial year 2022/23 which seeks to highlight our progress and achievements over the past year.**

Reflecting back over the financial year that was 2022/23, it certainly feels like we are in a very different place to a year ago when most of the country was coming out the other side of the Covid pandemic and all the challenges that came with that.

2022/23 was a year that saw us continuing to drive down the risk of fire through our intensive prevention work with the total number of dwelling fires that year down to the second lowest number on record. Working with our partners, our efforts to increase and better target inspections of non-domestic buildings led to us discovering more dangerous premises that did not meet the necessary fire safety standards and which led to us taking enforcement action and prosecuting the persons responsible. 2022/23 saw a big increase in the number of emergency incidents we were called to, due in part to the busy summer of wildfires that were quickly followed by a spate of flooding incidents. We also responded to a number of major incidents, including the explosion in Redwood Grove in Bedford and the high rise fire in Green Court, Luton.

I am incredibly proud of how our firefighters, control operators and support staff really stepped up during a year of unprecedented demand both in the county and beyond, working tirelessly with our partners in new and innovative ways to make a difference and help keep the people of Bedfordshire safe whilst also delivering a wide range of improvement projects,

some of which are highlighted in this report. It is a real honour to be leading such a professional and hardworking team who are delivering great things for our communities and seen by many as a leading light in so many different areas.

Looking forward, in April 2023 we launched our new 4-year Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which sets how we intend to improve your fire and rescue service. We have listened to what our communities, businesses, our staff and other stakeholders have told us and taken on board the feedback from our most recent inspection. As a result, our latest CRMP has been developed to respond to this vital feedback and whilst it is clear there is still more to do, I believe we are in good shape to meet the challenges that lie ahead and you have my personal assurance that we will continue to strive to be the best we can be and to deliver on our mission of working together to keep Bedfordshire safe.

You can learn more about our work by checking out our website and following our social media channels and, of course, we welcome any feedback you have.

Yours sincerely



**Andrew Hopkinson**, Chief Fire Officer



# MONTH BY MONTH HIGHLIGHTS

## April 2022

Bedford Red Watch, Stacey Moore from Prevention and Fire Control created a video on **staying safe in the water when paddle boarding**. This included messaging about getting lessons or instruction beforehand, wear a buoyancy aid, taking a phone in a waterproof pouch and checking weather conditions before you leave.

The Service was called to a fire at a block of flats in Luton. Residents of **Green Court** had to be evacuated and one person sadly lost their life. BFRS worked with Police and Luton Borough Council to ensure the building was made safe and the prevention team undertook a targeted safe and well campaign in the area to reassure residents and talk about home fire safety. Two partnership community meetings were held to hear concerns and reassure residents.

## May 2022

In support of **Deaf Awareness Week** Kempston White Watch created a selection of videos with a British Sign Language interpreter. The videos covered topics such as escape plans, hearing impaired smoke alarms and the emergency text service.

In aid of **Mental Health Awareness Week**, Leighton Buzzard Fire Station and Bedfordshire Fire Cadets invited the local community to meet Frank Bruno, MBE, former professional boxer.

Ahead of the **Platinum Jubilee Weekend**, we issued outdoor safety warnings to the public. Any irresponsible use of fire outdoors can pose a significant risk to public fire safety, this includes taking care when using BBQs at street parties and setting off fireworks.

Prior to the Platinum Jubilee Weekend teams across the service were visited by principal officers and all eligible members were presented with their **Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee medals**.



## June 2022

**Volunteers Week** is an annual celebration to say thank you and recognise the fantastic contribution all volunteers make to our communities. We shared a few words from our volunteers who dedicate their time to help and support us.

We held our **Staff Values Awards Night** at Mitchell Hall, Cranfield, to recognise those who have gone over and above to support the Service over the last couple of years. The BFRS Staff Values Awards was the first celebratory event since the pandemic where BFRS Authority members and employees gathered together. The necessary restrictions imposed by the pandemic delayed our preparations to celebrate so many wonderful successes over the years.


A pass out parade at Service HQ welcomed friends and family of 10 wholetime and six on-call firefighters.

## July 2022

Emergency services were called to an explosion and fire in **Redwood Grove**, Bedford. A three-storey block of 20 flats was significantly damaged in the fire, which also caused a large section of the roof to collapse. One person died as a result of the incident and was later confirmed as the perpetrator. Bedford and Kempston firefighters stayed in the area after the event to reassure local residents.


On the **hottest day on record**, BFRS faced unprecedented working conditions and a huge number of incidents. The Chief Fire Officer thanked the workforce on social media: "Thank you to all my amazing control staff, firefighters, officers and corporate staff for their absolutely herculean efforts on the hottest day on record, responding to unprecedented demand both in the county and beyond."





# PETER HAILES

VOLUNTEER CADET INSTRUCTOR



**This is Peter Hailes. Peter first joined Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service in 1983, as an On-Call Firefighter in Leighton Buzzard. Over the years, Peter went on to progress through the ranks and achieve the rank of Watch Commander. He attended countless incidents and has been a role model to many people that are still currently serving firefighters.**

**Since retiring as an operational Watch Commander in 2012, Peter has continued to pass on his knowledge and experience to our cadets as a volunteer cadet instructor at Leighton Buzzard and has influenced them all.**

**Thank you Peter.**

## August 2022

As **temperatures soared and dry weather continued**, we issued a warning to urge the public to act carefully and responsibly to prevent fires. We advised against having BBQs, bonfires or campfires, properly extinguishing cigarettes and not to leave glass bottles in the sun.

We also collaborated with the NFU county advisers to appeal to local farmers to maintain their vehicles and supervise visits to their land. Many of the fires were on farmland and were standing crops and we wanted to show our support to farmers who may have lost income.

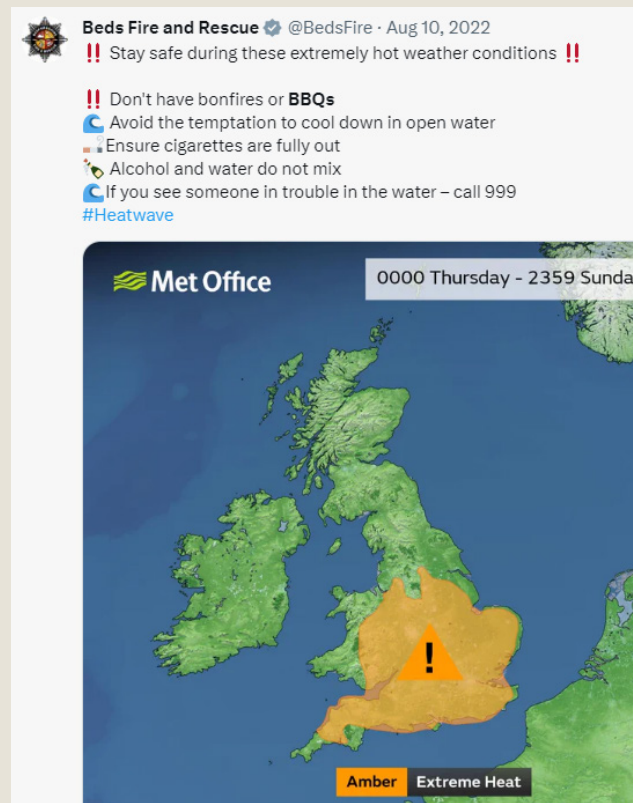
Serious incidents included:

- 🔥 large stubble field fire in Lower Sundon
- 🔥 large field fire in Cranfield, covering about 800 x 800m of standing crop
- 🔥 large fire at a waste management site in Elstow, Bedford
- 🔥 large rubbish fire near Sue Ryder on Ampthill Road, Bedford

## September 2022

On 8 September, the **death of HM Queen Elizabeth II** was publicly announced. The United Kingdom observed a national mourning period of 10 days during which BFRS followed protocols such as officers donning black ties and armbands, a reduction of some daily activities and events, and a social media blackout.

Led by Stopsley White Watch, **Business Safety Week** was a campaign targeted towards businesses who may be failing to comply with fire safety regulations or individuals who rely on a business to provide them with fire protection. Focusing on Park Street in Luton, the watch gave businesses advice and carried out compliance checks for a successful week of campaigning, supported county-wide by social media.



## October 2022

About 60 people were forced to leave their homes because of a **large fire at a recycling centre** in Kingsway, Luton. Eight homes and a block of flats were evacuated while other residents were asked to keep windows closed because of the smoke.

On **World Menopause Day**, BFRS hosted a staff event where we welcomed a guest speaker to encourage a conversation about how menopause can affect everyone.



## November 2022

Students of Sharnbrook Academy were given a **hard-hitting lesson in road safety** by a team from Harrold Community Fire Station. Using a decommissioned car and specialist rescue equipment, the team also cut a teacher volunteer from a simulated car crash site.

Remember, remember, the fifth of November. We ran a campaign educating on the importance of the safe use of fireworks and advised that people should instead attend organised events where possible. This included a video created by Dunstable White Watch highlighting safe steps to using fireworks at home.



## December 2022

During the December cold spell in which snow and ice gripped Bedfordshire, messages about keeping warm safely, driving safely and heating your home were communicated to members of the public. We also issued a warning for people not to venture onto **frozen water** after the tragic death of three children in Solihull in a frozen lake.

Twelve wholetime and two Control firefighters were formally welcomed to Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service at a pass out parade.





## January 2023

Toddington Fire Station hosted a **Have a Go Day** for on-call recruitment. Reporters from BBC 3 Counties Radio came along to have a go for their radio show and were put through their paces.

Kempston Fire Station hosted a visit from the **High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Lady Jane Clifford**. It gave us the opportunity to showcase latest innovations in training and rescue equipment, as well as a visit to Fire Control. She even volunteered to be extricated from a car using the Lukas cutting equipment.



## February 2023

To mark **National Apprenticeships Week**, we gave a shoutout to some of our apprentices for the work they do, from operational firefighter to support role apprenticeships.

As part of **Random Acts of Kindness Week**, Dunstable Fire Station worked with the charity Small Acts of Kindness to visit vulnerable people in Bedfordshire to assess their safety at home and to deliver winter warmth gift bags.



## March 2023

On **International Women's Day**, we shared the stories of Maisie, who joined BFRS as an on-call firefighter at Leighton Buzzard Fire Station last year, and showcased Aaliyah who recently joined as a wholetime firefighter at Luton Fire Station.

Dunstable Fire Station hosted a **workshop** for Richard Fuller MP and Andrew Selous MP to show them how we are working with the East of England Ambulance Service on urgent medical response and helping people who have fallen in their home.



# PERFORMANCE

## Total number of incidents attended

There were a total of 7,711 incidents attended in the county of Bedfordshire during 2022/23 up by 12% compared to 2021/22 (6,909). This was because of increases in fires, fire false alarms and non-fire incidents attended.

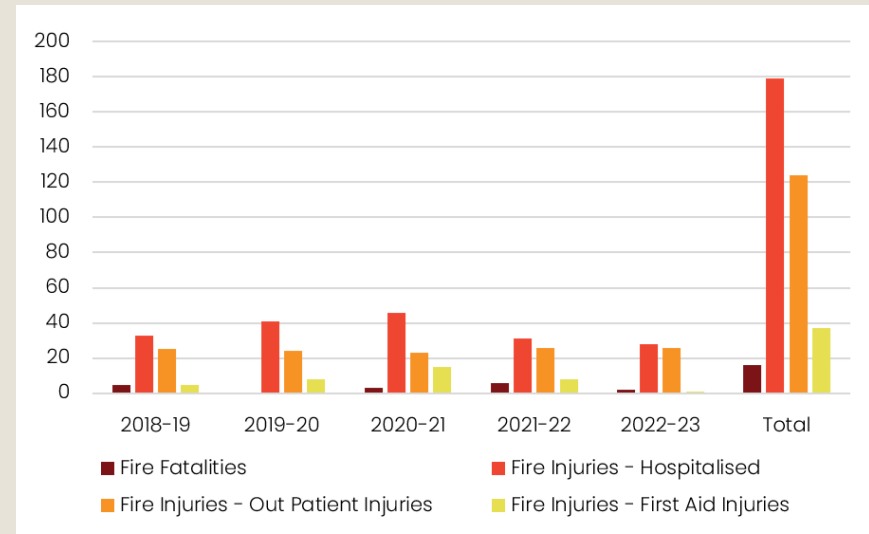
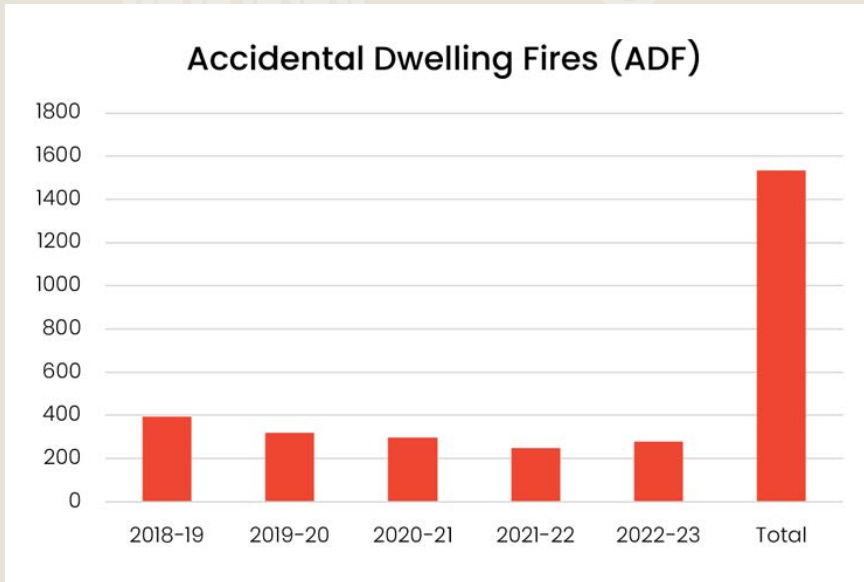
## Accidental dwelling fires

When comparing 2021/22 and 2022/23 data there has been an increase from 249 to 280 in primary accidental dwelling fires (up by 13%).

The 2022/23 total of 280 is 9% below the five-year average.

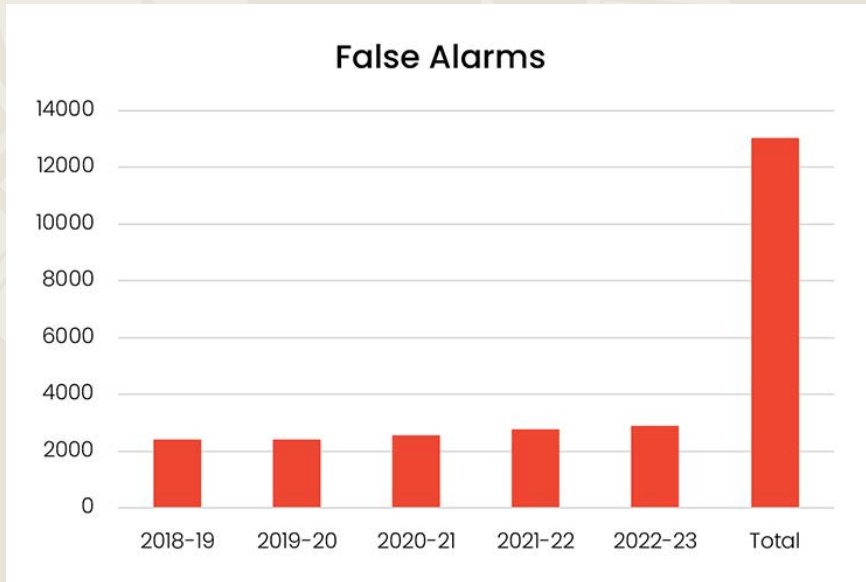
## Number of fire deaths, injuries and less serious injuries

In statistical terms the number of fatalities and casualties is low and prone to fluctuation. In 2022/23 we saw a slight downward trend of injuries.



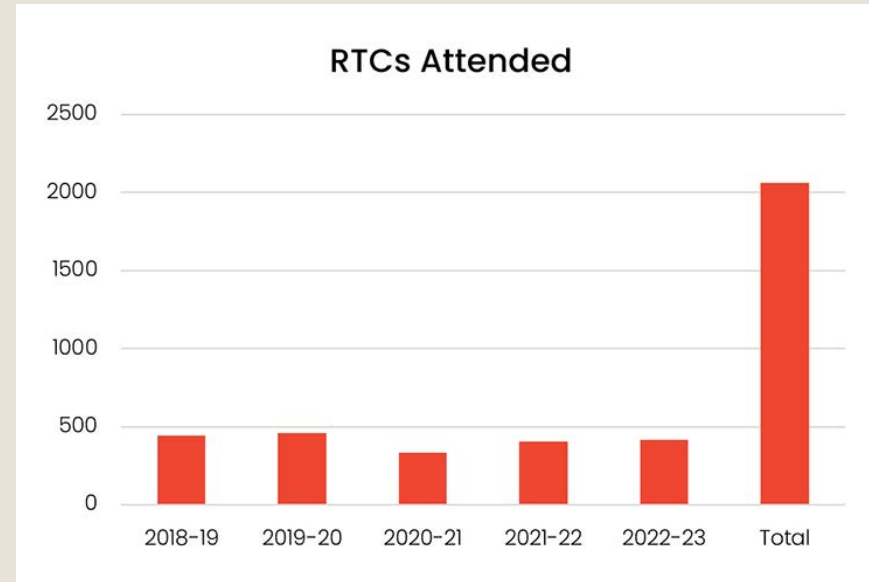
## Number of alarms from AFAs

Attendance to fire false alarms in dwellings has an increasing trend over the five-year period, with a 15% increase in 2022-23 from the previous year alone. This accounts for the highest number of false alarm attendances.



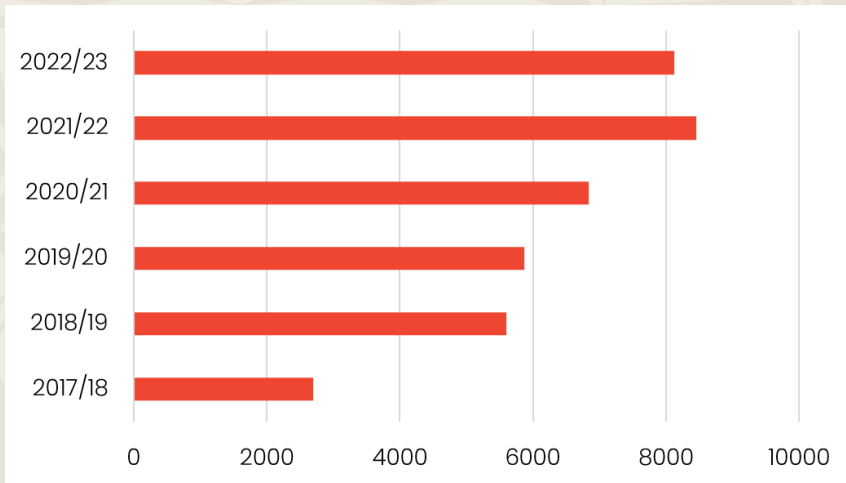
## Road traffic collisions attended

The number of road traffic collisions has generally seen a downward trend during the past five years. However, we have seen a slight increase for 2022/23.



# PREVENTION

## Home Fire Safety Visits



**Delivery of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) has contributed to a significant reduction in the annual number of accidental fires in the home in Bedfordshire.** Our HFSV is fully aligned to the national NFCC Person Centred Framework guidance. In addition, we support community health and wellbeing services by making referrals to specialist services for falls and frailty, alcohol consumption, crime prevention, smoking cessation, and difficulties meeting fuel costs.

We also work with other public sector organisations, such as housing providers and health services to exchange relevant information about people who need support and make sure they receive a visit from the person best placed to help them.

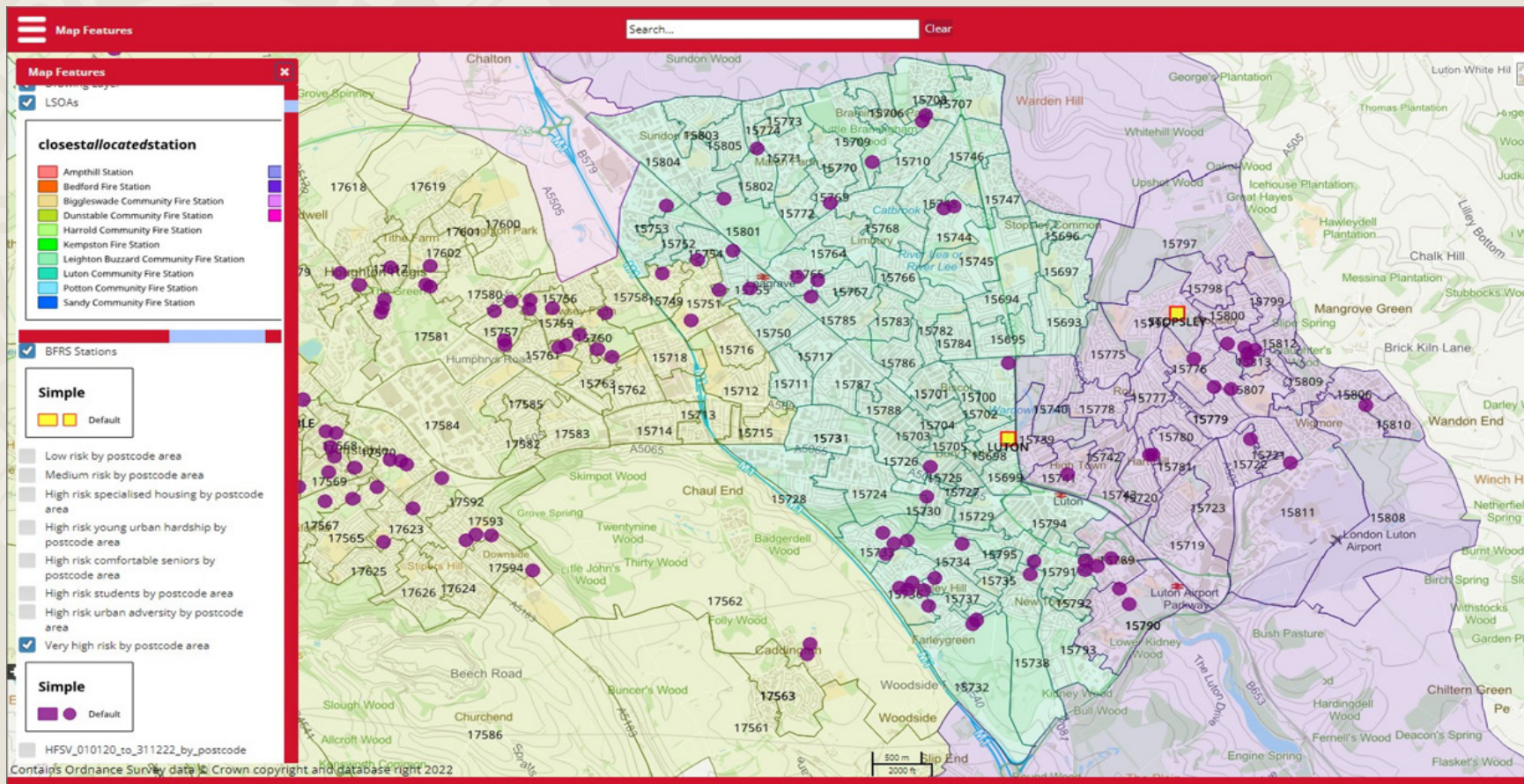
In April 2022 we started using Acorn data for web mapping. Maps help to support prevention activity by targeting the right activities in the right areas to the right people. Acorn data can be filtered by postcode area and shows BFRS where risk groups are located.

## Prevention modelling knowledge base

BFRS has invested in a new customer insight tool from CadCorp geographical information system (GIS) helping us to understand, analyse and manage community risks, and this was implemented on 1 April 2022. We use these new risk groups for prioritising home fire safety delivery and ongoing monitoring. We will use pen portraits of each group to support staff in understanding the types of households most at risk.

The high risk groups can either be searched individually or in any combination depending upon the nature of the planned prevention work. Areas are colour-coded by station ground to allow station-based staff to see where their risk groups are located. A separate index has been created to show sub-areas by their relative deprivation, which, combined with the Acorn risk groups, helps identify the higher risk areas.

The purple circles (data points) in the map on the next page show the location of a particular high risk group by post code area in the Luton, Dunstable and Stopsley station grounds. The users can zoom to find out more about any data point by simply clicking on it.



The ability of the new GIS to readily identify repeat locations and clusters or hot spots is very useful when it comes to planning prevention work as it enables users to quickly see where the problem areas are and thus where to focus prevention activity to maximise the risk the returns for the resources devoted to the campaigns.

February saw the launch of the mobile PowerApp, which forms part of the Service's digital transformation strategy and allows HFSVs to be completed on tablet devices at the time of the visit. As part of this project, referrals to external partners (e.g. safeguarding) are made via the PowerApp without the need for a paper referral form to be completed. The new PowerApp ensures comprehensive risk identification and interventions to address the health, behaviour and social needs of the people we visit.

Prevention has also been involved with dozens of events, safety talks and community engagement groups, covering everything from community runs, to winter warm events, family-focused fun days, to school visits.

## Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; we are committed to protecting children, young people and adults from abuse and neglect. We strive to promote the safety, dignity and wellbeing of people in the communities we serve.

Our targeted prevention work results in us interacting more with children, young people and adults who may be at risk of harm. Safeguarding is, therefore, an increasing part of our role.

Since 2022, we have employed a safeguarding advisor and established a safeguarding team. The safeguarding team has enhanced the Service's safeguarding practice by utilising in-depth knowledge and expertise to support those who raise concerns. In addition, it uses data and reports thematically to inform and work with partner agencies to support positive outcomes for victims of abuse and neglect.

Focus for 2023/24:

- Develop training packages reflective of NFCC, NHS and legislative guidance across child and adult safeguarding and to ensure frequency, content and delivery of training is maintained across the Service
- Ensure longevity of safeguarding referral pathways from the Service into the local authority and to continue to develop relationships with other local authority teams to enable a method of referral triage and signposting, where referrals may not necessarily meet safeguarding thresholds
- Ensure our safeguarding data influence and support local authority safeguarding agendas

## Arson reduction

BFRS has an arson reduction officer who leads on delivering the arson reduction strategy. We work in partnership with other agencies to reduce arson by implementing interventions in three key areas:

- **Environmental interventions:** aimed at removing the opportunities for arsonists to commit offences, removing potential targets for arson offences and improving security in respect of targets for arson offences that cannot be removed
- **Investigation-based interventions:** aimed at assisting the police and other partner agencies in the identification of patterns, series and trends in respect of arson offences
- **Educational interventions:** aimed at educating offenders and potential offenders to remove or prevent development of the motivation for engaging in fire setting behaviour

There was an increase from 565 to 759 deliberate fires (up by 34%) compared to 2021/22. Whilst all primary fires have exceeded the 2022/23 target by 2%, they remain under the five-year average.



## Road safety

The community safety officer road safety is supported by the part-time road traffic collision (RTC) reduction officers. The team has been working hard to ensure collaborative working and educational events have continued. These include:

**10 Biker Down courses** have run during 2022-23 with all courses having the full number of participants. There are sixteen spaces on each course, and this has enabled us to engage with 160 people. The course involves education on the science of being seen, what to do at the scene of a collision, basic first aid which includes helmet removal and CPR and the final module that is delivered by BCH Policing and educates riders with regards to road traffic laws.

The team has also worked in partnership with National Highways and supported large events such as Silverstone F1, Moto GP and Motorcycle Live.

The team has been involved with the Road Safety Partnership, which has given us access to different partners we can work closely with as we all have the same priority – to reduce KSI's on Bedfordshire roads.

Partnership courses that BFRS support include:

- **Motivational Observational Reactional Education (MORE) Course** – aimed at young drivers between the ages of 16-30 and is free to those living within Bedfordshire.

- **Project Edward – Every Day Without A Road Death.** BFRS attended with partners from the Bedfordshire Road Safety Partnership. The Project Edward Team filmed a podcast that was released later in the day and starred Assistant Chief Fire Officer Alison Kibblewhite. The event was about vulnerable road users and keeping everyone that uses the road safe.

Throughout the year we follow and support national campaign calendars and work together with partner agencies to have a bigger educational impact on our communities.

Events attended and campaigns facilitated include fire station car washes to give tyre maintenance advice, seatbelt safety campaigns and attending British Superbikes in partnership with National Highways.



## Water safety

There are annual national educational campaign weeks that BFRS support. These include:

- Be Water Aware – NFCC campaign 25 April – 1 May 2022
- RLSSUK Drowning Prevention week and RLSSUK
- Don't Drink and Drown week

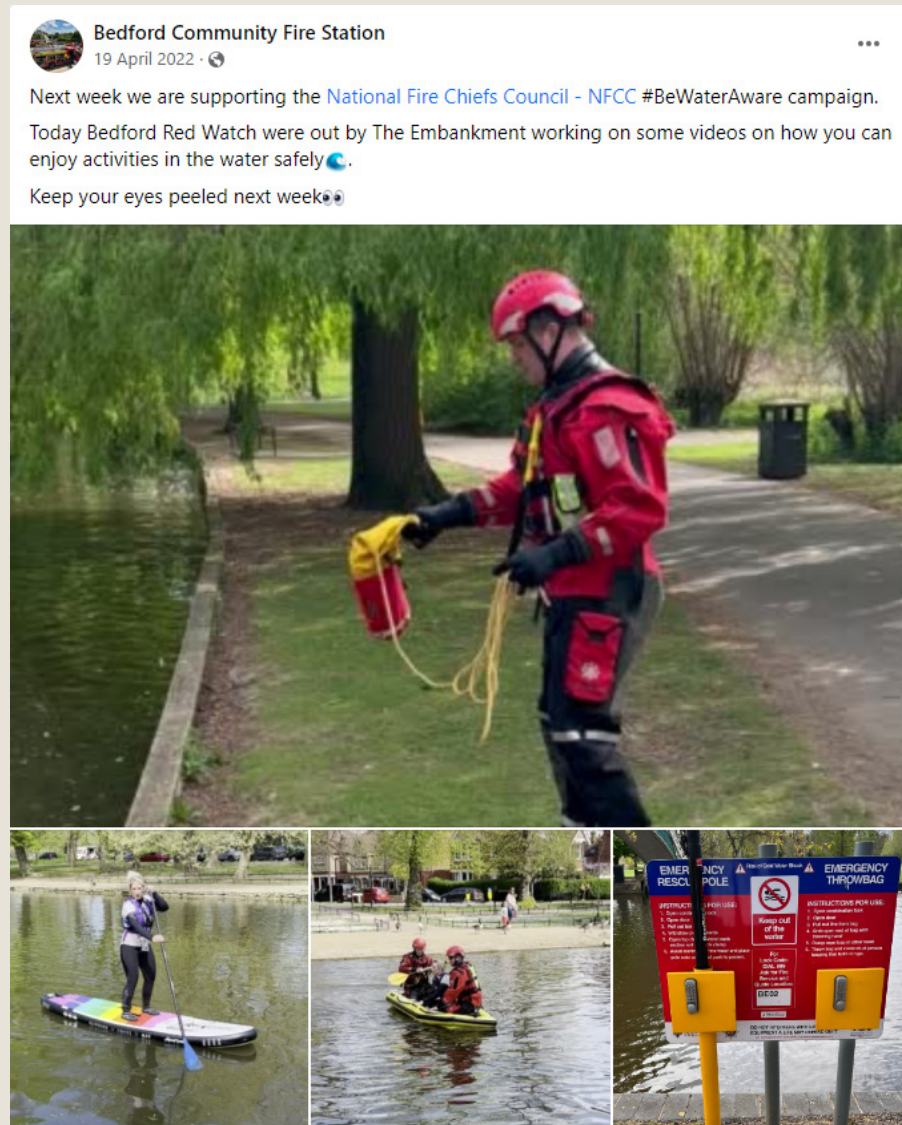
BFRS will also respond to local events if appropriate as part of a multi-agency approach.

## Bedfordshire drowning prevention advisory group

The Service is a key stakeholder in the collaborative partnership and chairs the meetings which include representatives from Luton Borough Council, Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. Since the last report, representatives from The Environment Agency and various town councils also attend the meetings. The group aims to provide standard water safety messaging across the three authorities and discuss any local issues. The group is still looking for representatives from organisations such as Bedfordshire Police.

Areas where the group has supported include:

- New throwline boards in known areas of risk
- Improved water safety signage in areas of known risk
- Joint attendance at community events





## Youth development and fire cadets

The youth officer has supported a variety of young person interventions this year with the core areas of the role including:

- 18 Safety Awareness and Fire Education (SAFE) referrals - intervention for children and teenagers who set fires
- StayWise scheme - fire safety sessions for all Year 2 primary classes, delivered by operational crews and supported by youth officer and station admins
- Fire cadets
- Early intervention - bespoke sessions that reduce risk and improve outcomes for children and teenagers
- Partnership engagement – working productively with other prosocial organisations in Bedfordshire

There have been reviews and updates to the SAFE policy and a review of our early intervention work to align with NFCC.

Internal quality assurance has started on a two-yearly programme to review StayWise Year 2 visits.

## Fire cadets

BFRS has fire cadet units based at Bedford, Sandy, Leighton Buzzard and Luton. The total number of drill sessions undertaken by each of the four units was approximately 40. The cadet units have supported a wide range of community events including fund raising events, and civic occasions such as Remembrance Day Parade.

Cadets have participated in a range of training sessions to support their personal resilience and Development, including first aid and mental health awareness.



## Early intervention

Bespoke sessions have been tailored for the educational need for each intervention. The input, resources and interactive activities draw from a range of sources including the CSOYD's broad experience of teaching and delivering interventions, the latest research in fire safety education and the NFCC guidance.

Examples of interventions this year include:

- Peter Pan Nursery and Cherry Tree Nursery: targeted support sessions following Redwood Grove incident
- YMCA Goldington Nursery: early fire safety messaging for children, support for staff

## Vulnerable/SEND

Areas where the group has supported include:

- 1:1 session for a 16-year-old male in care - threat of arson/smoking/disengaged (1)
- 1:1 visit to 10-year-old male child in own home - ADHD/fear/anxiety (1)
- Bedford College - home fire safety workshop for 15-17-year-olds with SEND needs (40)
- Ivel Valley College - home fire safety assembly and 1:1/small group discussions for 17/19-year-olds with SEND needs (80)
- SEND Open Day at Bedford station

## Partnership engagement

BFRS has engaged with local authorities in and out of Bedfordshire, with police and other agencies such as housing associations, schools, children's homes, foster parents, to support SAFE cases and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Amongst other activities, we delivered safety awareness sessions and provided learning resources which included posting BFRS fire safety leaflets, selecting and recommending StayWise resources. Examples include:

- Inspire Camp - Active Luton with 100+ young children engaged together with Stopsley
- CHUMS session undertaken with 11 young carers
- LBC joint meeting to arrange support for CYP affected by Green Court fire



## Protection

BFRS is the enforcing authority for the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The Fire Safety Order requires anyone in control of a premises (the 'responsible person') to carry out a fire risk assessment to determine what steps they need to take to reduce the risk from fire and make sure people can safely escape if there is a fire.

During 2022/23 we continued to refine our Protection approach in response to new legislation and guidance. This includes the Fire Safety Act 2021 (FSA 21), the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 (FSER 22) and the Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA 22).

The Government continued to provide significant grant funding to support an uplift in protection capacity and competency.

Over the course of 2022/23 BFRS has:

- Established a web portal enabling responsible persons to provide the information in accordance with FSER 22
- Invested a total of £136,800 of government uplift grant, with £112,100 spent on extra posts and £18,400 on training
- Recruited a new Fire Safety Regulator to support work arising from BSA 22
- Continued to refine our processes for effectively targeting protection activity towards higher risk people and places

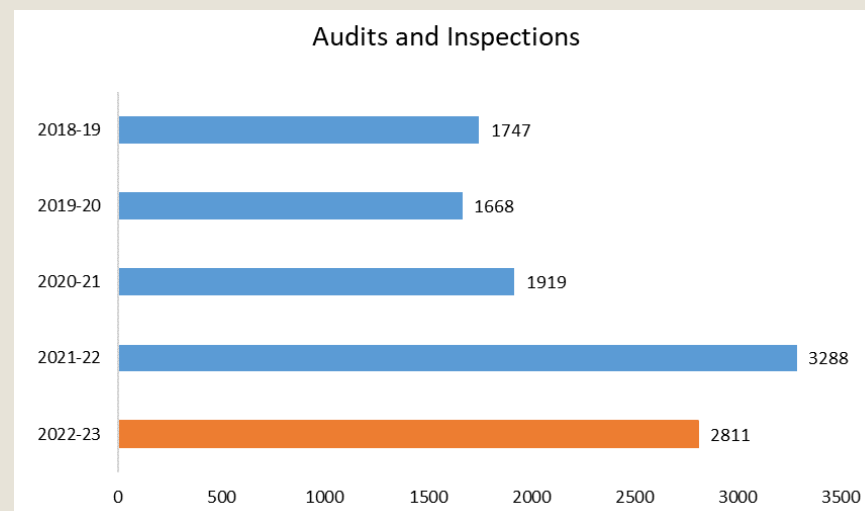
## Audits and inspections

As the enforcing authority, the Service undertakes a range of planned and reactive inspections of premises (normally buildings or parts of buildings) to which the Fire Safety Order applies. The Fire Safety Order applies very widely and there are

more than 26,000 premises within the county of Bedfordshire to which the Fire Safety Order applies. With so many premises, we target our finite resources on those buildings that present the highest risk to life safety in the event of a fire. This is predominantly those buildings used for sleeping or with vulnerable occupants, such as care homes, hotels, hospitals and other residential accommodation. We also sample other types of premises such as offices, factories and shops.

Our risk-based inspection programme includes the following types of activity:

- Planned audits of higher risk premises by specialist fire safety staff
- Basic fire safety checks of lower risk premises by operational staff
- Carrying out 'after fire' inspections
- Inspections to investigate complaints we receive about fire safety standards in premises



## Formal enforcement action

When BFRS finds the requirements of the Fire Safety Order have not been complied with, the action that can be taken ranges from informal advice through to prosecution. BFRS takes a firm but fair approach to enforcement in line with the Regulators Code. Formal enforcement actions include serving the types of notices set out below. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with these notices.

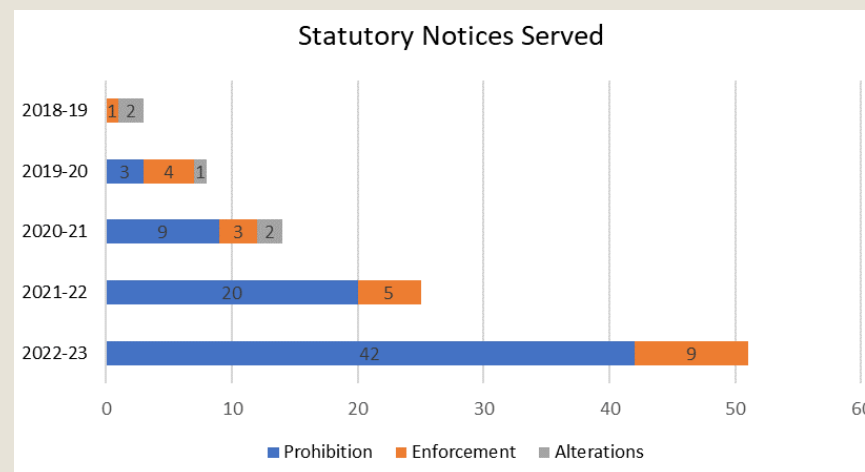
**Prohibition notice** – served where the risk is considered so serious that use of the premises needs to be prohibited or restricted until specified matters have been remedied.

**Enforcement notice** – served where there is a clear breach of the law, where the degree of risk of harm is significant, and where a remedy needs to be secured within a set period of time.

**Alterations notice** – served where there is a serious risk (or there would be with a change to the premises) and may require that before any changes are made details of the proposed changes must be submitted to the fire authority.

During 2022-23 BFRS served a higher numbers of Notices than in any previous year. Prohibition notices were served on 42 premises that were providing sleeping accommodation without adequate fire safety arrangements, such as fire detection and alarm systems, fire doors and escape routes. This includes houses in multiple occupation (HMO), working with the housing authorities to combat rogue landlords.

One premises accepted a caution for failing to comply with the requirements of an enforcement notice issued by BFRS. Where appropriate, cautions can be used as an alternative to prosecution.

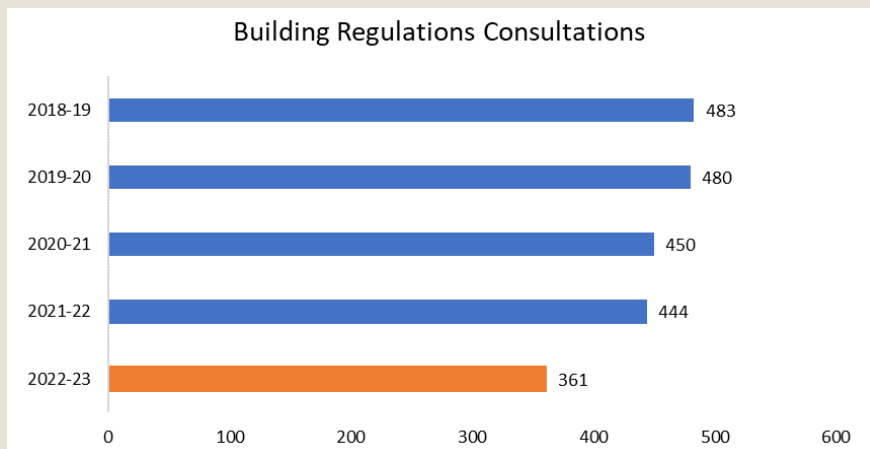


## Statutory consultations

In England and Wales, the Building Act 1984 and its Building Regulations apply to new buildings and to building work such as the erection, extension or material alteration of an existing building. Fire safety requirements are set out in Building Regulations and guidance on meeting the requirements is given in Approved Document B (Fire safety). The building control authority or approved inspector are responsible for checking for compliance with these requirements and undertake statutory consultation with the fire and rescue service as part of that process.

In 2022-23 BFRS made responses to 361 Building Regulations consultations received, which was fewer than in previous years.

In addition to Building Regulations consultations, BFRS also responds to other consultations including those relating to licensing, care standards, and Ofsted inspections. In 22-23 BFRS responded to 162 such consultations.



# FINANCE

## A financial summary of 2022/23

The Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) is a precepting authority – this means that its net cost, after receipt of government grant, is met by a proportion of local business rates and council tax via the unitary authorities of in Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton.

The FRA is acutely aware, particularly in the current economic climate, of the need to keep any increase in council tax to the minimum, always bearing in mind the need to adequately fund the fire and rescue service. Resources must, therefore, be enough to enable this emergency service to be fully operational throughout the year. For the 2022/23 budget, the FRA was able to keep its council tax increase to 1.99%. A Band D property in 2022/23 paid £104.45 for the annual council tax charge of the Service.

## A financial commentary of 2022/23

The settlement figures for 2022/23 were the fourth single year settlement. A three-year Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) was carried out over 2021, however a single year's funding information has again provided by to local government. We have been proactive in identifying changes that ensure continuity of our professional services whilst delivering the required efficiencies. Future financial settlements are likely to remain difficult. As such, we continue to plan for a range of financial scenarios that may emerge in the next few years. Our ability to mitigate our risks and realise opportunities is directly impacted

by our resourcing and budgetary make-up. Our current budgetary plans and assumptions determine the speed at which we will deliver our action plans. More information is available on our website. Our financial priorities are to:

- Ensure we deliver a balanced sustainable budget that provides value for money, aligns our resources to risk and supports the delivery of our CRMP;
- Be innovative in developing and delivering on our efficiency plan whilst maintaining a prudent level and utilisation of our reserves. Our medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) is a document that sets the Authority's financial strategy for the next four years. It focuses on the 2022/23 revenue budget and capital programme, but also sets the scene for future years. It covers national events such as the CSR and then breaks down how this impacts locally on the Authority. The MTFS details our reserves policy, planning assumptions behind the budget figures and other considerations that must be considered when setting the strategy, such as inflationary pressures, the tax base, efficiencies and shared services.

### Revenue budget:

For 2022/23 the FRA approved a revenue budget requirement of £33.393m circa 80 per cent of these costs are for employees.

## 2022/23 year end contribution to reserves:

The unaudited year-end contribution to reserves was £126.5k. The underspend was predominantly due to increased income from Treasury investments, grant income, income generated from providing training courses and sales. These income items were offset by some overspends in areas such as inflationary pressures on pay, supplies and services. This underspend had been reported during the year to the FRA and was allocated to the pay/pension reserve.

## Capital budget:

Our capital programme highlights spending on assets such as our fire stations and fire engines. Each year the Authority draws up a rolling four-year programme of capital projects. The capital projects for this year total £1.357m and these are being funded by contributions from the revenue budget and reserves utilisation. Projects for this year include:

- Investment in our vehicle feet, to maintain effective, economic and efficient fire appliances
- Investment in IT
- Investment in equipment
- Investment in the modernisation of our buildings

## Reserves:

The general reserve balance as at 31 March 2023 was £2.4m. This is following work undertaken over the last few years to establish specific earmarked reserves, which as at 31 March 2023 totalled £4.925m. The year-end revenue budget underspend of £125.6k has been allocated to the pension reserve. This is in line with the MTFs, which takes into account the back loaded, and on-going government funding reductions to fire and rescue services.

The capital receipts reserve as at 31 March 2023 was £548k.

*\*These figures (£) are yet to be externally audited as of August 2023, due to the external audit backlog across the public sector.*

A full explanation of the 2022/23 finances are held within the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts. The annual accounts are subject to external audit each year, the Service's external auditors are Ernst & Young. The link below will take you to the relevant page on the Service's website, please see the Statement of Accounts section: <https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/finance-and-budgets>

*NB; The Fire and Rescue Authority has a responsibility to publish a statement of assurance on an annual basis which sets out the approach taken to ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place in terms of governance and operational delivery. The statement of assurance will be published later this year (link to follow).*



## Where does the money come from?

|                                    | 2022/2023 (£m) | 2021/2022 (£m) |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Gross Budget                       | 35.8           | 34.2           |
| Income                             | -2.5           | -2.5           |
| Budget Requirement                 | 33.3           | 31.7           |
| Central & Local Government Funding | 9.9            | 9.5            |
| Council Tax                        | 23.4           | 22.2           |
| Total                              | 33.3           | 31.7           |

**65% COUNCIL TAX**

**28% CENTRAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING**

**7% INCOME**



## What the money is spent on?

|                              | 2022/2023 (£m) | 2021/2022 (£m) |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Employees                    | 27             | 25.1           |
| Premises                     | 0.9            | 0.9            |
| Transport                    | 0.7            | 0.6            |
| Supplies & Services          | 2.5            | 2.8            |
| Agency & Contracted Services | 0.7            | 0.7            |
| Capital Financing            | 1.6            | 1.0            |
| Total                        | 33.4           | 31.1           |
| Reserves Funding             | -0.1           | 0.6            |
| Budget Requirement           | 33.3           | 31.7           |

**81% EMPLOYEES**

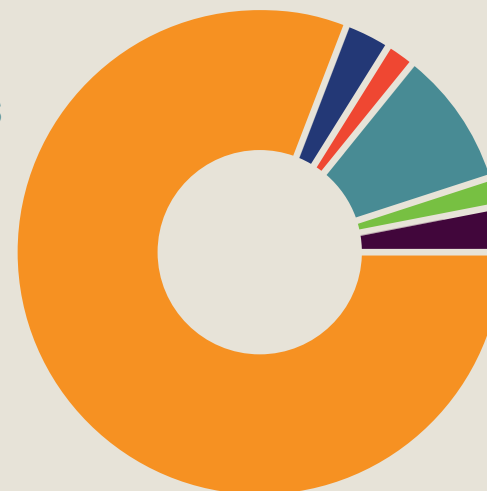
**8% SUPPLIES & SERVICES**

**4% CAPITAL FUNDING**

**3% PREMISES**

**2% TRANSPORT**

**2% AGENCY & CONTRACTED SERVICES**





# HUMAN RESOURCES

Within the HR team, 11 employees received their Long Service and Good Conduct Awards in 2022/2023.

This was another busy year for the resourcing team, at a time when the recruitment market is highly competitive, and roles are becoming increasingly hard to fill. During this time, the team recruited to 49 support roles (Green book), 4 Control posts, 22 on-call firefighters and 26 wholetime firefighters. All this recruitment activity inevitably resulted in pre-employment checks, contracts of employment and other onboarding activity for the HR Operations Team.

The dedicated Instagram page called WIREbedsfire (Wellbeing, Inclusion, Recruitment and Engagement) steadily saw its number of followers increase. This social media site is used to promote health messages – mainly targeted at mental health initiatives, both operational and support role vacancies, recruitment events including positive action Have a Go days, and some key corporate messages.

The Employee Relations Team has continued with the cycle of regular review and implementation of organisational policies, ensuring they are proactively developed in line with legislative change. This includes providing relevant training and guidance to promote consistency. They have continued to explore ways to support staff in the cost-of-living crisis, conducting a benefits survey to identify the benefits our staff would be keen to access, then promoting those that are of real value for example discounts on the weekly food shop to holidays.

We have conducted widespread consultation and research to develop a range of papers and guidance on HR procedures to support new ways of working in response to Service projects and improvement initiatives as well as helping the Service to better support employees.

The team worked on several post-pandemic legal and people management issues, advising individual managers and the wider Service and continued to support managers dealing with issues both informally and formally, particularly with the new hybrid working environment.

The Occupational Health Team continued providing support to employees and managers dealing with a wide range of absences and medical conditions. This includes the medical assessment of all new employees to the Service, to ensure they are fit and safe to carry out their roles; as well as ensuring potential recruits who participate in recruitment and selection processes are fit to perform the practical elements of the assessment process. The also continued to work closely with the Trauma Risk Incident Management (Trim) team to support operational and control colleagues exposed to traumatic incidents through their work.

Post Covid and the relaxing of government guidance, we have been able to re-introduce in-person statutory health surveillance and fitness programmes. We have also expanded the mental health and wellbeing support and advice for all employees beyond our Employee Assistance Programme and The Fire Fighters Charity, in collaboration with the public health shared service (Milton Keynes City, Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire) and Total Wellbeing – Luton.

Acting on the results of the employee benefit survey the Payroll Team successfully implemented a lifestyle benefits portal to highlight discounts and promotions available to employees ranging from offers on leisure activities to high street savings. They have also prepared for the introduction of a Shared Cost AVC scheme for Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) members, this will enable eligible staff to make additional pension contributions in a tax efficient way, at no cost to the Service.

The HR Operations Team kept up to date with the ever-changing landscape for pension schemes and ensured staff have been kept informed of developments within their relevant pension schemes and regularly provided advice and guidance. Both the HR Operations and Payroll Team have worked with pension providers to ensure the correct pension is paid to all existing and former employees in response to the legislative changes being introduced by central Government later in 2023.

### **Empowering – equality and diversity**

Having a representative workforce continues to be a Service priority but also remains a sector wide significant challenge.

The Service continues to actively engage with under-represented community groups, including, where appropriate, positive action initiatives, and we continue to work to improve our community representation to better reflect the diversity of the county for those we serve. The end of the Covid pandemic meant a return to in person events as part of our positive action and recruitment and engagement activity designed to raise awareness of the career opportunities available in the Service. This includes providing attendees opportunities to have a go at some of the more practical activities performed by operational firefighters.

Over the course of the year, seven of the 83 of new starters across the Service were from a minority ethnic background, indicating a drop of less than 1% compared to 2021/22. Performance in relation to the recruitment of women into operational roles was mixed, with a slight improvement in recruitment to on-call roles in comparison with the previous year. Regrettably recruitment to wholetime roles reduced slightly.



# TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

## Recruits' courses and conversion courses

The Training and Development Centre had an exceptionally busy year reacting to the recruitment needs of the Service, whilst simultaneously delivering new courses to support our advancement of breathing apparatus (BA) training and supporting operational resilience in the extreme hot weather event in summer 2022 and other events.

The Driver Training team had a jam-packed year. As well as training, supporting and revalidating our own blue light drivers, the team led a comprehensive standards review undertaken by the NFCC and also delivered eight driving training instructor courses for other fire and rescue services to allow their instructors to safely teach firefighters to drive on blue light for emergency response.

The Development Team took over responsibility for appraisals from HR towards the end of 2022, as we view appraisals as a development tool rather than a performance tool.

The Training and Development Centre continued to work alongside recruitment to provide courses for new recruits and transferees, including:

- 22 wholetime firefighter apprentices
- 15 on-call firefighters
- Five wholetime transferees

## A total of 42 new firefighters were trained to start with BFRS.

Furthermore, 17 previous wholetime apprentices successfully completed their apprenticeship end point assessments to become fully qualified operational firefighters.

## Training delivered

In 2022/23 the training and development centre delivered or facilitated more than 900 training courses. These ranged from half day basic life support courses, to 14-week wholetime apprenticeship courses.

**April 22** – Delivery of the new tactical firefighting module A course to advance, modernise and align BA training with National Operational Guidance.

**June 2022** – Commencement of the on-call modular course for eight new on-call firefighters and the pass-out of 10 new wholetime firefighter apprentices

**July 2022** – Commencement of the wholetime transferee firefighter course for four transferee firefighters

**September 2022** – Commencement of our first fully in-house wholetime firefighter apprenticeship course for 12 new recruits

**November 2022** – Re-commencement of flexi-duty system refresher modules for operational officers following Covid

**January 2023** – Commencement of the on-call modular course for seven new on-call firefighters

# LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

## Promotion gateways 2022–23

We have led several promotion gateways in 2022–23, which have enabled 29 successful candidates to enter our talent pool and are now eligible for temporary and substantive promotion.

We have continued to develop and support candidates by creating a development pool. This is designed for candidates that score above a set benchmark to enable them to retake elements of the process. Following feedback and development, these candidates are eligible for temporary promotion. Feedback and development opportunities are offered to support all individuals.

We have introduced the option for staff to be considered for an accelerated pathway, to be offered additional development activities on appointment and to undertake assessments leading to entry to the next level up within 12 months.

The learning and development team has completed **14 recruitment processes** over the past year which have included:

- Training delivery instructors
- Fire safety advisors
- Watch commander strategic support officer
- Temporary on-call crew commanders
- Watch commander NOG support
- Watch commander fire safety inspector
- Crew commander transferees

## Procurement tenders

2022/23 has been a busy year for the procurement team as we continue to support the service to obtain goods and services, and arrange for works to be completed in a compliant but efficient manner.

We have worked with colleagues in the service and across the sector to identify the most appropriate route to market, reviewing collaboration opportunities, framework agreements and the open market.

Highlights for this year's procurement

activity and awarded contracts include:

- Local Area Network Refresh
- New BFRS website
- Liquid Fuels
- Breathing Apparatus
- Thermal Imaging Cameras
- Fireground Radios
- Tyres
- Electric Vehicle Chargers
- Waste and Recycling Collection and Disposal

Market Engagement:

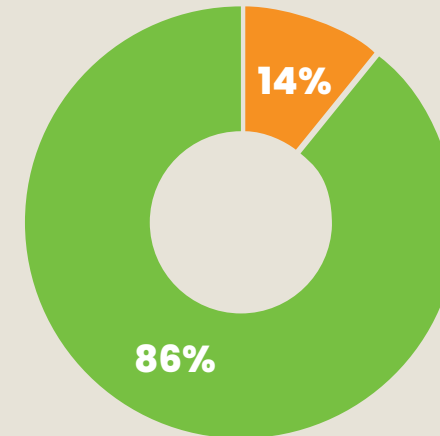
- Clothing
- Decarbonisation
- Fuel monitoring

# PROJECTS & PROGRAMMES

In 2022/23 the BFRS projects portfolio remained healthy and stable with the majority of the corporate projects (86%) on track to deliver their commitments successfully within the agreed tolerances. The picture below represents the portfolio status as of yearend.

| Projects     | Count of RAG status |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Amber        | 4                   |
| Green        | 25                  |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>29</b>           |

| Colour code | Project status key                    |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| GREEN       | No issues. On course to meet targets. |
| AMBER       | Some issues. May not meet targets.    |
| RED         | Outside of agreed targets.            |



## iTrent system – residual modules

In 2022/23 we delivered three additional iTrent workstreams:

- iTrent onboarding** – The iTrent onboarding workstream replaced previous paper based on-boarding process with electronic solution on the iTrent system to ensure new employees can acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviours to become effective organisational staff members. The onboarding data is now safely collated and stored in electronic format in the main iTrent system. The project is entailed process automation and reduced the reliance on paper-based processes, reduced requirements for printing and posting documents to new starters by the HR team thus realizing process efficiencies and consumables costs savings.
- iTrent wholetime (WT) recruitment** – we completed the WT recruitment module configuration and testing in readiness for the planned large WT recruitment campaign 2023. This module introduced an automated workflow to create a streamlined and more efficient WT recruitment process, delivered electronic repository of WT recruitment data on the main iTrent system and implemented a new report, which helped to expedite the shortlisting process.
- iTrent management dashboard** – the dashboard allows BFRS managers to understand the absence trends for their teams and act quickly and easily.

## PDR Pro appraisals project

This project delivered digital transformation of the appraisal process by replacing the paper-based solution with an electronic module on PDR Pro for both Green and Grey Book staff. The new PDR Pro appraisal system went live on 1 April 2023. The appraisals system will embed value led behavioural framework and will support promotion gateways and succession planning process within the Service. It will also enable improved performance due to increased focus on motivation and training needs being met.

## Assets tracking project

We successfully completed the work on the assets tracking project. The assets system is now live across all stations, training centre and HQ stores. The new system enables users to quickly track all BFRS kit across all sites, leading to cost reduction for replacing missing assets.

Key outcomes:

- Created an accurate asset database where BFRS now have a complete test and location history of our equipment assets
- Replaced current task and test paper-based processes leading to a reduced user effort
- Enabled effective task and test management via the assets system
- Reduced effort for administration at station level
- Contributed to the reduction of carbon footprint by reducing the need to use paper and consumables for printing

## GIS, risk and workload modeller and web map project

In 2022/23 BFRS completed the adoption of the Cadcorp GIS, Risk and Workload Modellers and Web Mapping tools within BFRS. This enabled a variety of risk and workflow modelling and web mapping functions, using customer insight and BFRS data, to inform management decisions. We now have a team of trained super users capable of creating models and sharing information with a community of users to aid prevention and protection activities and partnership working.

The implementation of the Cadcorp tools has reduced the BFRS reliance on external suppliers and have enhanced our ability to explore different ways of optimising the use of the BFRS resources in order to improve the services we provide to our community.



## Home Fire Safety Visits Project

The new Home Fire Safety Visits Power App was implemented successfully on 22 February 2023. The HFSV app delivered improved functionality and allowed BFRS to better adopt a person-centred approach to our prevention activity in the home, ensuring we reduce risk and put in place measures which address the health, behaviour, and social needs of the person we visit.

The referrals information is now collated automatically without the need to complete paper forms and the data is submitted electronically to our external partners thus increasing accuracy, improving efficiency, and ensuring data protection. The CFS Ops reporting to Control and child fires information is also generated by the system with less manual intervention.

The HFSV Power App was enabled for use by external partners, which will improve our reach across the community and will allow us to target a wider group of vulnerable people.

The wealth of data captured via the HFSV app gives us the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of our prevention activities at the home by analysing the persons, home, and behaviours factors, and to collate rich risk and performance data.

We continue to improve the HFSV Power App and database by developing additional features and HFSV database improvements which will be implemented during the next financial year.

Key outcomes:

- Digital transformation of the HFSVs and third party referral processes
- Significantly improved ability to identify those most at risk of injury or death in fire to prioritise our visits.
- Ability to collate and analyse richer data and to report on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to both internal and external stakeholders
- Enabled mobile working by using tablets and MDTs to complete HFSVs

## National Operational Guidance (NOG) Project

The NOG implementation project team is working together with our colleagues from East Region to ensure the latest national guidance has been adopted and embedded within the organisation, and a process for on-going maintenance has been defined and implemented. The delivery is divided into multiple product packs. In 2022/23 BFRS successfully implemented the incident command national operational guidance and is now actively working on five other product packs, including breathing apparatus and fires in buildings, which will be delivered by the end of 2023.

## Luton Pump Relocation Trial Project

The Luton pump trial delivered a strategic initiative to evaluate the efficiency and practicality of repositioning one of the fire appliances (08P1) from Luton Fire Station to Luton Ambulance Station at Leagrave. The exercise was focused on assessing our operational response capabilities and comparing the projections from Operational Research in Health (ORH) with real-time data. In 2022/23 we successfully completed the initial six months trial and started the data analysis. The analysis of the trial data focused our attention on the turn out times and the impact of the trial on the neighbouring stations and the overall BFRS response times. The project will be completed fully during the next financial year.

## Corporate KPI Data Hub

In 2022/23 we completed the delivery of the last phase of the Corporate KPI Data Hub which now provides performance information across the whole of BFRS and enables viewing of up-to-date performance data. It also provides an interactive display allowing users to explore the data we hold. The system features a new front end within Power BI allowing click-through reporting.

Key outcomes:

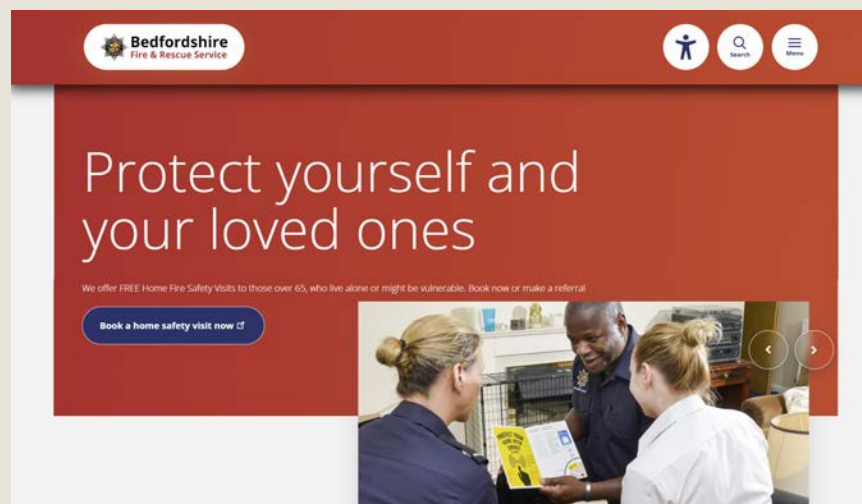
- Greater accessibility to performance data
- Time saving in producing Home Office, FRA and other reporting, including management reports
- Accountability and transparency in making data available to all BFRS staff

## Rural Water Tenders (RWTs) Project

The project uplifted the capability of the existing three rural water tenders to be able to attend RTCs and incidents requiring hydraulic rescue equipment, and through this, increased their availability to respond to demand. This was achieved by adding RTC equipment to the vehicles. A policy change enabling the vehicle to be deployed both as a rural water unit with a crew of two – for incidents that required off-road capabilities without the need for full crew, and as a rural water tender with a crew of four.

## BFRS Website Upgrade Project

In 2022/23 the website project delivered the procurement and build of a secure, reliable, and modern website solution which will aid the service significantly in delivering our mission. A new Website supplier was identified, and the project delivery started. By the end of the 2022/23 financial year, we successfully delivered the new Beta website and started parallel run with the current solution.





## MDT Phase 3 Project

This ongoing project delivers the digital transformation of a number of paper forms into Power Apps and e-forms available on MDTs and tablets, to take advantage of emerging technologies and support firefighters to be more effective and efficient at what they do. In 2022/23 we implemented an improved protection fire safety form, incident handover and con4 forms. We also upgraded the Hydra System software, SC Capture, and commenced SSRI Power App and other forms development. The latter will be completed during the next financial years.

## Red Fleet CCTV Cameras Project

This project aims to deliver an improved CCTV data recording system in BFRS appliances with 360-degree coverage and more efficient footage access.

In 2022/23 we successfully produced a requirements specification and completed supplier selection process. The project will be fully implemented during the next financial year.

Key outcomes:

- Eliminate the need to manually download footage by physically taking the storage device off the vehicle thus reducing time and travel costs
- Provide data for active monitoring of driving standards by Service driving Instructors
- Provide data for investigation of external or internal complaints about driving standards
- Provide data for internal, police or insurance investigation following RTC involving Service appliances

- To deter attacks on firefighters and provide data for police investigation in the event of such attacks
- To capture footage of incidents for use in operational debrief
- To reduce vehicles insurance premium
- Provide the ability to live stream footage from the CCVT cameras if required

## Station End Equipment (SEE) Project

The SEE Project was commissioned to procure and implement reliable, fully supported, resilient and GD92 compliant station end equipment, which is user friendly, scalable, future proofed and works effectively with the existing 3TC Guardian Command Mobilising system. Current BFRS SEE equipment is aging and whilst limited support is provided by Telent, this relies of being able to source increasingly scarce components and equipment.

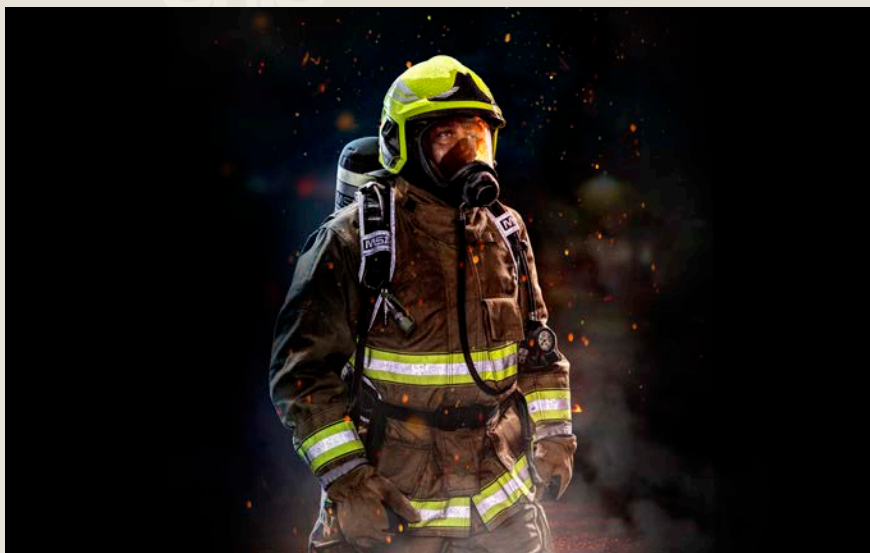
In 2022/23, the project team finalised the business and technical requirements, completed market research and engagement and identified a preferred supplier.

The SEE installation, testing and implementation will be completed during the next financial year.

## Breathing Apparatus (BA) Replacement Project

In 2022/23 we commenced work on the BA replacement project. This project supports the safety and wellbeing of our firefighters. Fire and rescue service personnel operate in dynamic and at times extremely hazardous environments e.g., incidents involving fire, chemicals, biological hazards, radiation etc. The wearing of breathing apparatus by personnel is one of the risk controls measures likely to be employed within the overall operational plan for incidents of this type. Breathing apparatus enables the wearer to breathe safely in an otherwise irrespirable and/or toxic atmosphere. This project also delivers compliance with general Fire and Rescue Services Legislation.

The BA replacement procurement made very good progress during the past financial year with a preferred supplier identified. The new BA kit is expected to be rolled out by the end of 2023.



## Protection Fire Risk Data Warehouse

The project goal is to create a Protection Fire Risk Data Warehouse which would allow BFRS to assess premises foreseeable risk level, and to support a locally determined Risk-Based Inspection Programme for enforcing the Fire Safety Order, in order to meet the service's requirements under The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018). The project delivery made good progress in 2022/23. The first iteration of the fire risk score calculation has been developed. The risk scores are being calibrated and the risk assessment methodology refined further to improve the risk assessment. This project will be completed by the end of the next financial year.

Key outcomes:

- Identify, classify and create a process allowing the service to maintain accurate data on the number and type of premises, and to identify the ones to which the Fire Safety Order applies
- Implement a methodology that generates a risk score based on set criteria to assess risk across all premises to which the Fire Safety Order applies
- Improve the identification and allocation of audits / inspections process efficiency by utilising the output of the Data Warehouse solution and the FloSuite campaign function and batch tagging functionality
- Align the BFRS methodology to the national preliminary guidance on high risk occupancies
- Assure that BFRS has effective systems and processes in place to manage our risk-based inspection programme

- Assure that the BFRS enforcement plan prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk. It should also include appropriate monitoring and evaluation
- Review AddressBase taxonomy vs. Flosuite Taxonomy vs. FSEC and make use of the supplemental codes to establish more granular premises classification

### Pension Data service Project

The fire pensions administrator changed their software provider from Heywood's to Civica to reduce their spend and cost to BFRS in the long-term. Civica requires BFRS to report fire pensions data monthly rather than annually as we previously did.

This project delivers monthly pension reports for Fire Fighters Pension Scheme (FPS) and will also prepare a similar change for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) reporting. Retrospective FPS reports have been created and are being tested with the supplier. This project will be fully delivered during the next financial year.

### New Projects Started

In 2022/23 BFRS also commenced work on several new projects which will be delivered in subsequent years:

- **Prevention road safety vehicle virtual reality** – BFRS are continually striving to look at new innovative ways to deliver road safety education. With the collaborative work that we do with our partners on the Beds Road Safety Tactical Group, BFRS have successfully won a funding bid to support the development of a road safety vehicle (RSV) that will utilise modern technology to engage, entertain and educate the young drivers utilising virtual reality videos to enhance the learning experience in various areas of road safety awareness.

A new van has been ordered and quotes have been received for provision of the other elements of the solution.

- **Fire control resilience project** – this project aims to increase Fire Control resilience, remove single points of failure, increase effectiveness and optimise office space.
- **On-call improvements project** – This multi-workstream project aims to improve the on-call availability and ensure that we are using our on-call crews effectively to respond to incidents based on risk, and by empowering more autonomy and decision making to on-call stations.
- **Fleet project** – The aim of the project is to introduce a replacement vehicle servicing and defect system to replace an out of support legacy MIS application and to replace the existing paper-based processes with electronic equivalents, including management of defects, vehicles servicing and MOT and scanning / tracking spare parts in and out of store.
- **Vehicle and equipment workshop project** – This project is in discovery stage which aims to produce a business case to explore opportunities to expand business offering and thereby generate income from the retention of a skilled and specialist workforce, as well as the provision of a suitable and sufficient working space within a prime location to enable growth.

# OUR WORK WITH EAST OF ENGLAND AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS TRUST

It has been another successful year of partnership with EEAST. The relationship continues to develop new ways of working and better outcomes for vulnerable patients. The Service values award evening was attended by Tom Able the Chief Executive of EEAST who presented an award on the night to one of our co-responding teams.

Work completed this year has included:

- Production and lead of a best practice emergency medical response guide for all FRS to use in the Eastern region. BFRS have led and chaired the strategic group for the last 12 months.
- Review and update of our effect entry MOU with Bedfordshire Police and EEAST.
- Procurement of electric vehicles for co-responding with joint livery and badges for EEAST and BFRS.
- Creation of a new health pioneer role hosted by BFRS and funded by EEAST, Delivering prevention activity and medical response to the most vulnerable in Bedfordshire.
- Harrold, Potton and Leighton Buzzard are still successfully co-responding to medical incidents and we are funded by EEAST to deliver this with cost recovery and budget held by BFRS. We have got 25 trained responders across these stations and in 2022-23 helped 591 patients. In some cases, this can be a much quicker response with discharge at scene, allowing EEAST staff to deal with more acute patients.

- Falls team continue to be a success with the team cementing its position as a key fixture. They have changed their delivery format and now dual crew the vehicle with East London Foundation Trust nurses. This has increased the availability of the vehicle and improved the range of treatments for patients and referral pathways available for future support.
- EEAST hosted the redeployment of a BFRS fire appliance at Luton ambulance station to allow us to test some modelling to improve first pump attendance times. The trial lasted for six months, and our teams were made to feel very welcome during the period of the trial. The outputs of this trial will inform the wider risk cover review work.



# CONNECT WITH BFRS



**Bedfordshire**  
Fire & Rescue Service

[www.bedsfire.gov.uk](http://www.bedsfire.gov.uk)

@bedsfire   

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Southfields Road, Kempston,  
Bedford, MK42 7NR



 WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT  
 EVERY CONTACT COUNTS  
 WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK  
 WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE

