

Fire service fail to reach its own 999 response targets

Wednesday, 19th Dec 2012



Reporter: Ellis Barker *Newbury News Reporter*
Email: ellis.barker@newburynews.co.uk
Contact: 01635 886639

MORE than 40 per cent of Berkshire fires are not being reached within target response times, according to the latest figures released by the fire authority.



Each blaze should be attended within eight minutes of a 999 call, with a second appliance within ten minutes to meet optimum response targets, however this was only achieved by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) 58 per cent of the time between April 2011 and March 2012.

However, the first pump was in attendance within eight minutes in over 80 per cent of incidents.

Standard response targets of 10 minutes for the first appliance and 12 minutes for the second were also met in 75 per cent of cases in the same period.

Overall, incidents attended within the optimum targets have dropped by 10 per cent in the past decade, with 68 per cent being attended within the allotted time in 2002.

Deputy chief officer for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Olaf Baars said traffic conditions and the rural location of many fires are partly to blame, adding that part-time, on-call firefighters in rural locations are at a shortage.

“These response times are some of the most stringent in the country,” he said. “Although dwelling fires have reduced by 49% in Berkshire ratios have changed in the proportion of urban to rural fires.

“The latter can take longer to get to as they are more remote.”

He added that measures are in place to reduce times, having established Retained Support Units (RSU) in Ascot and Newbury.

“The RSU’s support retained fire stations by crewing fire appliances where necessary and assisting with operational training,” he said. “Since the RSU was put in place in April 2012, we have already seen an improvement in response times.”

Newburytoday.co.uk