

Annual Fire Safety report

2024/25



Executive Summary

This report presents the fire safety performance for the Trust during the 2024/25 reporting period and identifies key priorities for 2025/26.

There were four fire safety objectives set for 2024/25, of which one was delivered, two were partially delivered and one was not delivered.

2024/25 Objective	Achieved?
Implement new Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) programme ensuring all individual wards and departments have assessments available.	Yes
Recruit volunteer Fire Wardens for each department across the Trust.	Partially
Increase number of F2F fire training for clinical colleagues.	Partially
Reduce number of fire service attendances to unwanted fire calls (false alarms).	No

Key updates include:

A fire safety audit was conducted by Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service at Buckingham Hospital in May 2024. All identified actions were completed by December 2024. A follow-up visit in January 2025 confirmed full compliance.

A fire door survey focused on high-risk areas across all sites was completed in December 2024. The Fire Safety, Estates and Capital Development teams are working collaboratively to explore options for ongoing maintenance, via a combination of internal resources and certified external contractors and utilising the capital awarded to the Estates Safety Fund.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2024/2025 were introduced, focusing on face-to-face fire training, fire warden training, and the reduction of unwanted fire service calls

There are five objectives for 2025/26 as follows:

2025/26 Objective
Fire Wardens: All departments/wards to have a minimum of two fire wardens.
8 x 8 System: The fire safety team is working closely with the digital support team to ensure all fire calls can be activated by using this system across all sites in event of an emergency
E-Bikes and E -Scooters: The fire safety policy is going to be amended to cover the emerging national guidance for electrical bikes and scooters
Fire Compartmentation/ Fire Door Trust Wide: A new fire door programme for high-risk areas has been authorised across all the sites
Fire Doors Repairs: BM Trada qualified contractor to oversee the Trust carpenters carrying out this work

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1. INTRODUCTION

Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust is committed to meeting its statutory obligations for fire safety, as outlined in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO). The Trust has a clearly defined fire safety policy aligned with these legal requirements. Responsibility for fire safety at Board level lies with a designated executive Director, accountable to the Chief Executive, while a dedicated Fire Safety Manager (FSM) oversees the implementation and coordination of all fire safety activities.

A robust fire safety management strategy is in place, supported by the implementation of new protocols and the regular review and updating of existing procedures.

2. DELIVERY OF 2024/25 OBJECTIVES

2024/2025 Objective	Achieved?	Evidence	Further action needed
Implement new Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) programme ensuring all individual wards and departments have assessments available.	Yes	Database now on Estates shared drive of all FRA across the Trust.	Working with IT to make this database available to all staff members in read only format.
Recruit volunteer Fire Wardens for each department across the Trust.	Partially	12 volunteers have come forward in this reporting year. Total of 20 Fire Wardens.	Approximately 300 additional Fire Wardens are required. Key priority to be carried over.
Increase number of F2F fire training for clinical colleagues.	Partially	Staff availability to attend F2F sessions has dropped off quite substantially. Online training has maintained over 90% compliance.	Continue to offer bespoke F2F training sessions.
Reduce number of fire service attendances to unwanted fire calls (false alarms).	No	The previous year's total was 2 and we have had the same number in this reporting year.	Key priority to be carried over.

3. FIRE SAFETY POLICY AND PROTOCOLS

The Trust's fire safety protocols are subject to ongoing review, with several new protocols introduced to support the existing Fire Safety Policy. The updated Training Needs Analysis (TNA) for fire training has been approved by the MAST Committee and endorsed by the Health & Safety Committee, strengthening the Trust's approach to managing fire safety.

3.1 Fire Risk Assessments (FRA)

A new fire risk assessment programme has been introduced and completed. Each ward and department will now have its own comprehensive fire safety package, including a fire risk

assessment, fire logbook, and evacuation plan. These will be audited on a risk-based schedule.

The risk assessment process follows the HTM 05-03 Part K methodology, which quantifies risk using a high, medium, and low-risk classification. Existing FRAs are regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect current risks.

After completing a fire risk assessment, an action plan is generated. Actions may be resolved via the helpdesk, by the departmental manager, or escalated through the Health & Safety and Governance Risk Committees.

- **Low-risk** items can typically be addressed at the departmental level or through helpdesk services.
- **Medium and high-risk** items are managed in line with the Trust's Risk Management Strategy and are added to the relevant risk registers with defined timeframes for resolution.

3.2 Property Services Risk Register

All significant fire-related risks identified through the fire risk assessment process are recorded in the Property Services divisional risk register. High-level risks are escalated to the Corporate Risk Register as necessary. Currently, there are two high-level fire safety risks logged on the Property Services register. The first of these risks identified through the fire risk assessment audit programme, relates to compartmentation and fire door deficiencies in the retained estate. The second of these risks relates to fire door deficiencies in the PFI estate at Wycombe and Amersham Hospitals.

A five-year compartmentation and fire door remediation programme is being introduced to reduce and eventually remove the retained estate risk from the register. While these issues are listed as risks, the Trust has made significant progress in mitigating them through completed projects that have improved compartmentation and upgraded the fire alarm systems.

All new builds and refurbishments are conducted using compliant fire-stopping procedures. These works are performed by certified contractors, and all associated records are maintained by the Estates Department.

To address compartmentation concerns in the retained estate, a comprehensive fire door survey was conducted in December 2024, focusing on high-risk areas across the Trust. A total of 962 fire doors were assessed, covering all escape routes, hospital streets, and ward areas.

In relation to the risk in the PFI estate at Wycombe and Amersham, a detailed report was commissioned by Project Co and undertaken by Tenos, which identified defects with the fire doors. The Trust is in dialogue with Project Co to ensure that a plan of remedial works is implemented, and this will be a priority for 2025/26.

3.3 Summary of high-risk fire doors throughout the Trust

- **69 door sets** are fully compliant. These will be included in a planned preventative maintenance (PPM) schedule going forward.
- **495 door sets** require repairs. A quotation has been received from BM Trada for two full-time carpenters over one year, at an estimated cost of **£170,000** (excluding materials). Please note, there is no guarantee that all repairs will be completed within this timeframe.

- **267 single doors** require full replacement, with an estimated cost of **£400,500**. This estimate does not include potential asbestos-related expenses or additional compartmentation works.
- **131 double doors** also need replacing, at an estimated cost of **£327,500**, similarly excluding asbestos and compartmentation costs.

The Fire Safety, Estates and Capital Development teams are working collaboratively to explore options for ongoing maintenance, via a combination of internal resources and certified external contractors and utilising the capital awarded to the Estates Safety Fund.

Table 1: Property Services Risk Register

Subject: Containment of Fire ID 614 Risk Score:8 Hazard: Compartmentation in the form of fire stopping and fire doors requires addressing.	12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fire audits undertaken on an annual basis. 2. Fire detection will give early warning should a fire incident occur. 3. All staff receive fire training on an annual basis. 4. Where projects are undertaken and containment requires addressing, this is completed as part of the project. 5. Survey completed to identify priority areas. 6. Fire door survey completed to identify priority areas. 7. On-going projects to identify compartmentation 	8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Business case completed and presented to Capital Management Group for approval. 5. Capital funds to be made available to complete works. 6. Architect and supplier to be contracted to prioritise and complete works. 7. Poor compartmentation in areas already identified is highlighted and improved within the property services project. 8. Fire door program for high-risk areas across the Trust will commence once the capital funds are made available. 	4
Subject: Maintenance of Fire doors ID 899 Risk Score:8 Hazard: Servicing and maintenance of fire doors on the PFI estates (WH & AM)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PFI Fire audit undertaken on an annual basis. 2. Fire alarm early detection 3. PFI Staff fire safety training 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A robust maintenance programme inline with all the relevant legislation and British Standards. 	

4. FIRE TRAINING

4.1 Payday Training

Payday fire training continues to progress well. This training is designed to ensure that all Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) colleagues (i.e. clinical, non-clinical, and community-based) receive appropriate and consistent fire safety education.

4.2 Specialist Training Packages

A tailored fire training package has been developed and introduced for medical students, doctors (F2+), community staff, and external agencies visiting BHT sites. This package covers key emergency procedures, including the Trust's emergency contact number, horizontal evacuation processes, and designated escape routes.

4.3 Drop-in Training Sessions

In December 2024, a successful drop-in fire safety training session was held at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. The event was well attended by staff from all care groups, demonstrating strong engagement across the Trust. The Fire Safety Team is now exploring the expansion of these drop-in sessions to other sites soon.

4.4 Virtual Reality (VR) Headsets

The Fire Safety Team currently has access to two VR headset units on long-term loan. These headsets feature a basic fire extinguisher training program and are being integrated into all face-to-face fire training sessions. However, the software is not healthcare-specific, has limited functionality, and experiences connectivity issues with the Trust's Wi-Fi network.

To improve training quality, the Fire Safety Team is exploring alternative AI-based equipment that meets the specifications outlined in HTM 05-03 Part A for fire extinguisher training.

4.5 eLearning Fire Training

Overall, eLearning fire safety training is performing well. However, some care groups have not yet consistently achieved the monthly compliance target of 90%.

According to data in Table 2, training completion rates across Care Groups are relatively stable and approaching the 90% target each month.

A fire training package has been introduced for medical students/Doctors (F2+) community staff and outside agencies who attend BHT. This package provides an explanation to colleagues on the emergency procedures incorporating the emergency number, horizontal evacuation, and escape route.

The data in **Table 2** shows that staff training across Care Groups is consistent and is approaching the 90% target each month.

Table 2 – training by Care Group

Fire Safety	Corporate			Integrated Medicine			Surgery and Critical Care			Specialist Clinical Services			Community and Rehabilitation			Total				
	Required	Certified	Not Certified	%	Required	Certified	Not Certified	%	Required	Certified	Not Certified	%	Required	Certified	Not Certified	%	Required	Certified	Not Certified	%
30-Apr-24	847	753	94	88.90%	1254	1103	151	87.96%	1341	1200	141	89.49%	1459	1261	198	86.43%	1807	1636	171	90.54%
31-May-24	830	745	85	89.76%	1259	1132	127	89.91%	1352	1216	136	89.94%	1455	1278	177	87.84%	1806	1639	167	90.75%
30-Jun-24	839	776	63	92.49%	1263	1124	139	88.99%	1370	1232	138	89.93%	1468	1287	181	87.67%	1818	1662	156	91.42%
31-Jul-24	830	747	83	90.00%	1232	1063	169	86.28%	1346	1186	160	88.11%	1456	1250	206	85.85%	1777	1598	179	89.93%
31-Aug-24	833	760	73	91.24%	1151	1013	138	88.01%	1251	1115	136	89.13%	1432	1265	167	88.34%	1750	1581	169	90.34%
30-Sep-24	813	739	74	90.90%	1144	999	145	87.33%	1209	1083	126	89.58%	1387	1228	159	88.54%	1712	1529	183	89.31%
31-Oct-24	840	758	82	90.24%	1149	990	159	86.16%	1215	1080	135	88.89%	1405	1248	157	88.83%	1701	1527	174	89.77%
30-Nov-24	871	784	87	90.01%	1217	1049	168	86.20%	1347	1167	180	86.64%	1449	1285	164	88.68%	1711	1530	181	89.42%
31-Dec-24	864	778	86	90.05%	1180	1031	149	87.37%	1348	1160	188	86.05%	1467	1323	144	90.18%	1736	1581	155	91.07%
31-Jan-25	885	800	85	90.40%	1166	1015	151	87.05%	1320	1155	165	87.50%	1512	1371	141	90.67%	1733	1576	157	90.94%
28-Feb-25	894	820	74	91.72%	1206	1054	152	87.40%	1353	1171	182	86.55%	1536	1400	136	91.15%	1739	1584	155	91.09%
31-Mar-25	854	801	53	93.79%	1145	1004	141	87.69%	1293	1135	158	87.78%	1500	1371	129	91.40%	1687	1537	150	91.11%

4.6 Face to Face Training

A total of 640 staff members have completed face-to-face fire training this year, which represents a 47% decrease compared to the 1,227 staff trained in the previous year.

The primary reasons for this decrease include fewer staff being available for training and a reduction in the number of training sessions offered compared to last year. A more detailed analysis will be provided in the KPI section.

Table 3 below presents the data for this year's face-to-face fire training, while Table 4 shows the figures from the previous year.

Table 3 – Monthly breakdown for face2face fire training from April 24 - March 25

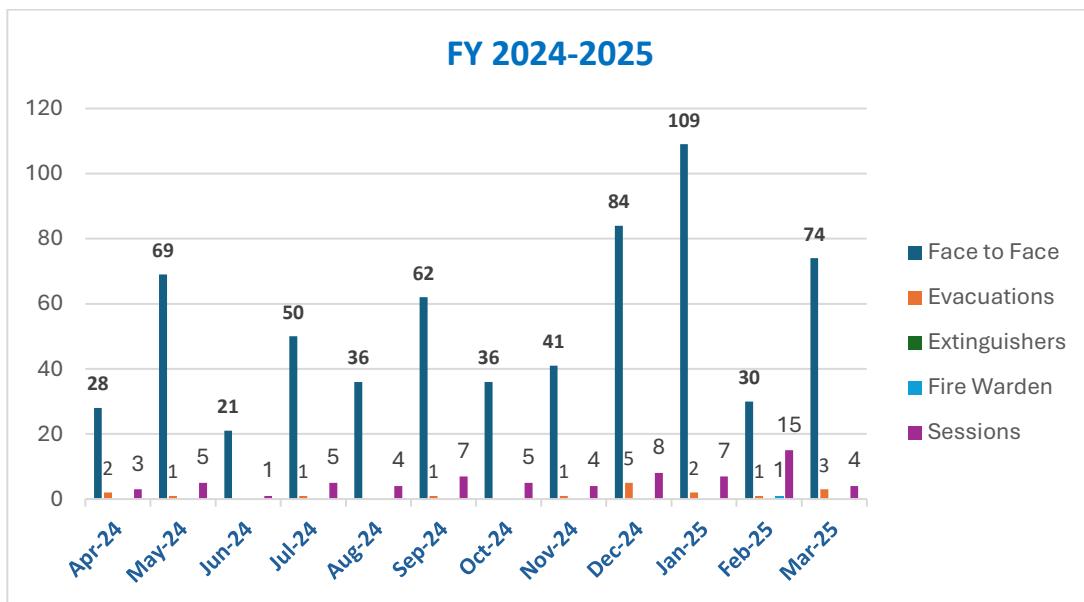
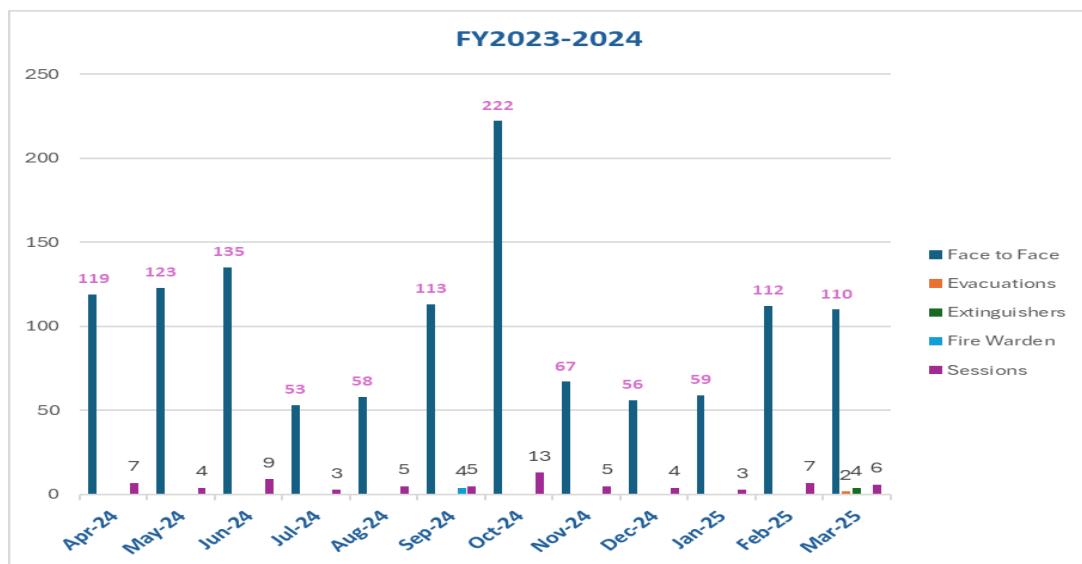


Table 4 - Monthly breakdown for face2face fire training from April 23 - March 24



4.7 Actual Fire Evacuations

This year a small decrease was recorded and the Trust conducted **2 actual fire evacuations** compared to 4 activations in the previous year.

Actual Evacuations

- In December 2024, a fire call in the Emergency Department (ED) affected Ward 18, ED Outpatients, and Theatres.
 - Ward 18 staff initiated a horizontal evacuation, moving patients to the J Corridor.
 - The ED department evacuated both patients and staff to the fire assembly point in the car park.
 - ITU and Theatres prepared to transfer patients and close operations as necessary.
- At Buckingham Community Hospital, staff in the admin area were evacuated to the car park fire assembly point due to an IT server incident.

All evacuations were carried out efficiently and professionally, with staff deserving commendation for their prompt and effective actions.

4.8 Fire drills

In total, **15 fire evacuation drills** were carried out across the Trust in 2024/25. These drills included full building evacuations as well as simulated evacuations of wards.

4.9 New Fire Evacuation Programme

A revised fire evacuation programme has been introduced by the Fire Safety Team, which includes assessments of both high-risk and medium/low-risk areas.

- **High-risk areas** (such as wards and theatres) will undergo a six-monthly assessment cycle, alternating between tabletop drills and practical drills.
- **Medium/low-risk areas** will be assessed annually.

To maintain this programme will require significant commitment from the fire safety team and the limitations placed on a small team, as well as the availability of the ward staff to attend this training will affect training progress.

5 FIRE ALARM INCIDENTS

Across Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust sites, a total of **61 fire alarm activations** occurred between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

November saw a higher number of activations, partly due to the Hillview accommodation building, which had been unoccupied for over 12 months which was in poor condition. The building's leaking roof had caused issues with the smoke detectors, leading to frequent fire alarm activations. To address this, the Fire Safety Team had collaborated with the Trust's fire alarm contractor to reduce unwanted activations.

The strategy agreed upon involves replacing the smoke detectors with heat detectors. These will only activate when two heat detectors are triggered simultaneously. Early results have shown this approach has been effective, significantly reducing the number of alarm activations.

Some false alarms were caused by visitors mistakenly confusing fire call points with door release buttons. To reduce these incidents, additional signage and clear plastic covers are being installed on fire call points.

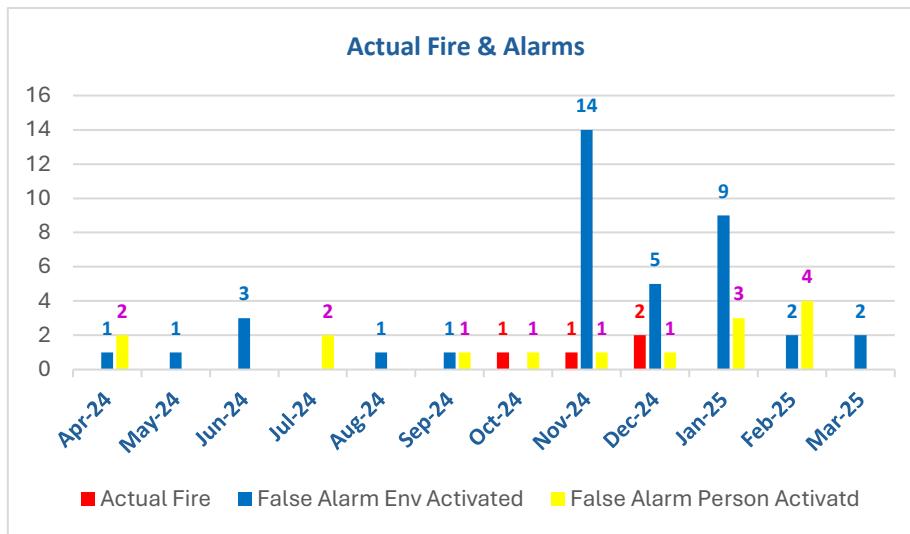
There have also been several instances where patients smoking or vaping on the wards triggered the fire alarms. In each case, staff followed procedure by informing patients of the Trust's fire policy and confiscating any smoking or vaping materials.

The Datix system is being used to track and analyse these incidents. The data gathered allows the Fire Safety Team to identify common causes and target training efforts for staff in high-activation areas, as well as to alert the fire alarm contractor to any system faults.

Compared to 71 fire alarm activations in the previous year, the current total represents a 14% decrease, which is attributed to the effectiveness of the fire training provided to Trust staff and its positive impact on fire safety across all sites.

Table 5 below provides a detailed breakdown of the fire alarm incidents and their causes for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, based on data from the Datix system.

Table 5 – Breakdown of fire alarm incidents



Between April 2024 and March 2025, there were no serious fire incidents reported in any of the Buckinghamshire Healthcare buildings.

5.1 Fire Service Attendance for fire calls

Compared to the previous year, there has been a small increase during this reporting period; these were the following:

- **Wycombe Hospital:** Estates Department: A malfunctioning strip light emitted a strong burning plastic smell. The fire service attended, checked the light fitting, and made the area safe. The maintenance team subsequently repaired the light fitting. The fire service advised that fire doors in the area had been left open, and the Fire Safety Team provided staff with guidance on ensuring fire doors remain closed.
- **Buckingham Hospital:** The fire service responded to an overheating IT server in a stairwell. Upon arrival, the fire service turned off the server, and staff in the admin area evacuated. The IT department repaired the server. This IT server had been identified as a risk during the fire service inspection in May 2024, and it was agreed that the server would be enclosed in a fire compartment. While this work was completed in December, the incident occurred before the enclosure was finished.
- **Stoke Mandeville Hospital:** An electrical component in an air handling unit (AHU) connected to Ward 18 overheated and caught fire. The resulting smoke entered the ductwork and spread into the Ward 18 utility room and the ward itself. Ward staff decided to initiate the horizontal evacuation procedure, moving patients and staff into
- **J Corridor, Stoke Mandeville Hospital:** The fire service, with assistance from on duty estates staff, located the affected AHU, made the area safe, and allowed ward staff to return to the ward. A full debrief was conducted by the Fire Safety Manager, and any lessons learned were implemented.

6. FIRE SAFETY INSPECTIONS & EXERCISES

6.1 Inspection

In May 2024, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service conducted a fire safety audit at Buckingham Community Hospital. The audit revealed that an IT server was in an escape route. An action plan was created, and the server was then enclosed in a fire-rated

cupboard. In January, the fire service returned to inspect the modifications made to the IT server setup and expressed satisfaction with the work completed.

The Fire Safety Team has continued to keep the Fire and Rescue Service informed about changes to our buildings and services, both during and after construction phases.

Additionally, Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service has conducted Site-Specific Risk Assessments and visits across the main sites to provide fire crews with crucial topographical and local knowledge.

6.2 Exercises

A practical exercise was conducted by the fire service at SMH, specifically at the Hydrotherapy Pool, to test the Trust's continuity plans for managing a chemical incident. Following the exercise, a debrief was provided, and the lessons learned were applied to improve future responses.

7. FIRE SAFETY PROJECTS COMPLETED 2024/25

The Fire Safety Team is assisting the Capital Projects team across the Trust with the installation and enhancement of fire safety measures in ward areas and departments, ensuring a safe environment for both staff and patients receiving care.

7.1 Fire Alarm System - Stoke Mandeville Hospital

The X-ray department, J Corridor, and Emergency Department have received upgraded fire alarm panels, with installation completed in December 2024.

A new fire alarm system has also been installed in the multi-storey car park, which is now connected to the main switchboard.

7.2 Fire Alarm System - Wycombe Hospital

At the L&Q accommodation, a new fire alarm system was commissioned by the Trust's fire alarm contractor and became operational in March 2025.

7.3 New Standalone Fire Alarm System – Amersham Hospital

New MRI building has been commissioned and the fire alarm linked to the main fire alarm system.

7.4 Projects

The fire safety team has supported the capital team in the following sites:

Stoke Mandeville Hospital

- MRI/Xray refurbishment
- SDEC – refurbishment works
- Research & Innovation centre – consultations and works
- EMRU -consultations and works
- John Hampden Unit – demolition and reconfiguration internally
- MRI scanner and associated project works – reconfiguration and refurbishment
- A&E Reception – reconfiguration and refurbishment
- Outpatients Department all phases – demolition – reconfiguration and refurbishment
- ICU department within PFI Day Surgery theatre recovery room – reconfiguration and refurbishment

Wycombe Hospital

- Tower block – decommissioning (part)
- Corporate Hub – reconfiguration and refurbishment
- Endoscopy Level 5 – reconfiguration and refurbishment
- Private Patient's suite – reconfiguration and refurbishment

Community Hospital/Buildings

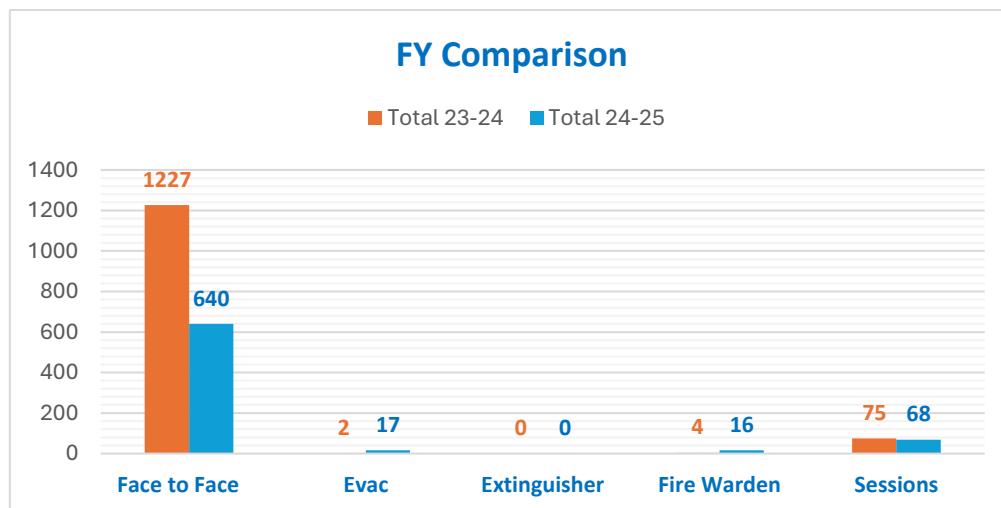
- Buckingham Hospital – reconfiguration and refurbishment
- Brookside Clinic – reconfiguration and refurbishment

8. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) 2024/25

The following updates are provided against the KPI's set at the end of 2023/24 for 2024/25.

Progress to agreed Key Performance Indicators				
Indicator	Objective	2023/ 24	2024/25	Change
Staff fire training	To increase Clinical wards/theatres staff numbers	1227	640	47%
Fire service attendance (unwanted calls)	Reduce by 50 %	2 Attendances	2 attendances	0%
Volunteers for fire warden training	2 per department/ward 159 departments	8 Volunteers	12 Volunteers	12%

KPI 1 Fire training comparison

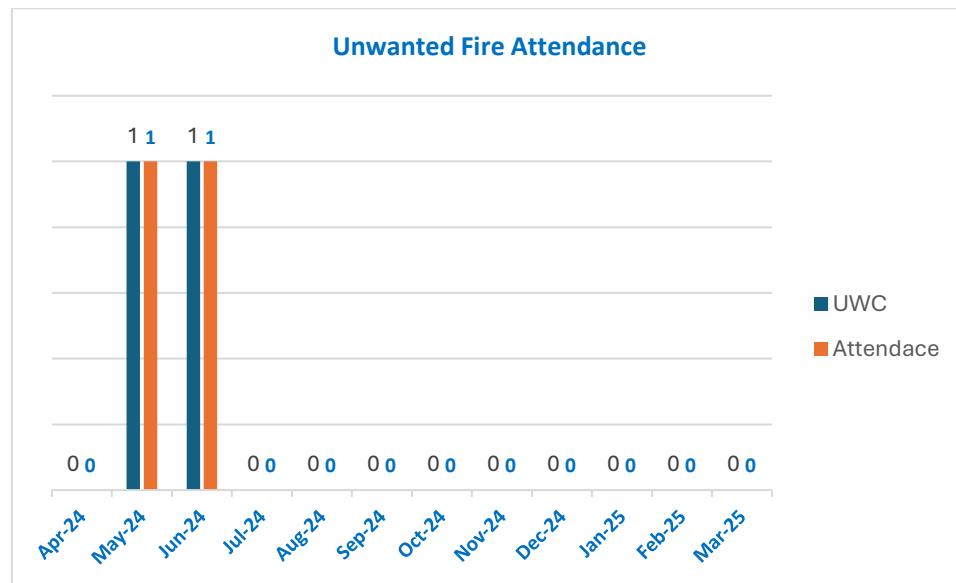


The graph indicates a decrease in the annual figures compared to last year, primarily due to the limited availability of staff from clinical wards to attend training sessions provided by the Fire Safety Team.

This training is a tailored program offered to all clinical staff, and the Fire Safety Team is requesting that all Care Groups notify them in advance when a training day is scheduled, so the team can be present.

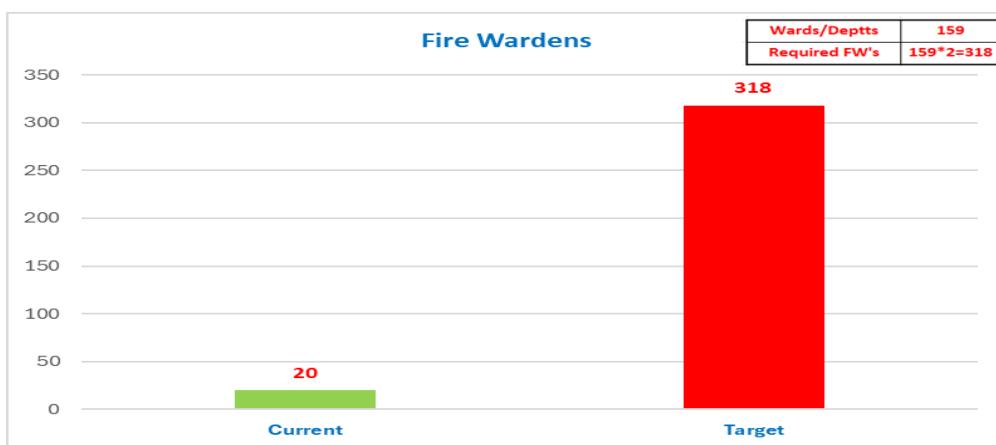
Last year, attendance reached 1,227 staff members, while this year it was 640, reflecting a 47% decrease. The number of sessions are comparable with a slight decrease in sessions but the amount of staff released was greatly reduced attending the sessions.

KPI 2 Fire service attendance (unwanted fire calls)



Since July 2024, there have been no Fire Service attendances for unwanted calls. This KPI target has been partly achieved and maintained for nine consecutive months to March 2025, thanks to staff adhering to fire safety procedures and the fire safety training sessions (F2F) provided by the Fire Safety Team.

KPI 3 Fire wardens



According to HTM05-03 Part A, the Trust must have an adequate number of Fire Wardens in place. A target of 318 fire wardens (2 per department/ward, based on 159 FRA issued) has proven to be a significant challenge, as the graph clearly indicates that the target of 2 fire wardens per department has not been met. Only a small percentage of staff have volunteered to take on the role of Fire According Warden.

The Fire Safety Team will continue to request volunteers through the communications system and during fire training sessions.

The team is also working diligently to come up with creative solutions to encourage staff to become fire wardens, and this remains an ongoing effort.

This voluntary role should be assigned to colleagues who have the capacity to take on the responsibility, rather than adding it as an extra duty to clinical staff in charge of wards and theatres. To mitigate the situation, the Trust has established a site response team at the main locations, who coordinate with ward managers to assist with any fire-related calls. This deficiency has been discussed previously and been escalated at Health and Safety Committee. This will be an area of focus for 2025/26.

The fire safety training package provided to line managers emphasises the importance of visually checking the fire alarm panel daily and monthly, inspecting fire doors, fire extinguishers, and exit routes.

During their routine patrols, the Fire Safety Team also checks communal areas. If the Trust had sufficient volunteers in place, this responsibility could be transferred to the Fire Wardens.

9. KEY PRIORITIES 2025/26

The following table provides information on projects in which the Fire Safety team are continuing to improve and deliver over the next five years:

Table 6 – Fire Safety Priorities

Priority	Objective	Factors to achieve
Fire Wardens	All departments/wards to have a minimum of two fire wardens.	The fire safety team are working hard with creative ideas to encourage staff to become wardens, and this is an ongoing process.
8 x 8 System	The fire safety team is working closely with the digital support team to ensure all fire calls can be activated by using this system across all sites in event of an emergency	Fire safety team is in regular meetings with the digital team to oversee any problems with the emergency numbers across all sites.
E-Bikes and E - Scooters	The fire safety policy is going to be amended to cover the emerging national guidance for electrical bikes and scooters	A safety guidance package will be introduced showing the dangers of lithium batteries in these bikes and scooters and will be cascaded to all staff via the comms system on a quarterly basis. This will also be introduced in the fire safety training package for all staff.
Fire Compartmentation/ Fire Door Trust Wide	A new fire door programme for high-risk areas has been authorised across all the sites	This will be a five-year rolling program starting with high-risk areas i.e. escape routes, hospital corridors, wards, and electrical/switchboard rooms. This

		will be carried out by a certified contractor.
Fire Doors Repairs	BM Trada qualified contractor to oversee the Trust carpenters carrying out this work	Trusts carpenters will be able to carry out minor repairs to the fire doors and the certified fire door contractor will certify the doors once the repairs have been completed and this will bring the cost down of repairing fire doors to the trust and make considerable savings.

APPENDIX A – Abbreviations

BHT	Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
FSM	Fire Safety Manager
FRA	Fire Risk Assessments
AHU	Air Handling Unit