

News Release

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Fire Service Welcomes Deaf Communities to Open Day

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service welcomes local Deaf communities to a station open day next month.

Each year the Service holds station open days, opening their doors to everyone in their local communities. This year, the Service are making sure they are inclusive of all community members by making an open day accessible to its Deaf community members.

The open day will take place at [Birstall Fire and Rescue Station](#), Geoff Monk Way, Leicester, on **Saturday 11 May, between 10:00hrs and 14:00hrs – BSL Interpreter available.**

These hugely popular days feature a wide variety of events and activities to give communities an opportunity to meet firefighters and to see a working fire and rescue station. Their overall aim is to promote fire safety messages in an engaging way, by incorporating lots of fun activities for children and adults.

Sophie Smith, Community Educator at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, said: "The purpose of the event is to bring the Deaf community together and provide access to the services we offer. On the day we will have the police, Red Cross, and Dexter the Fire Investigation Dog in attendance, and we will be offering biker advice, road safety advice and so much more.

"Growing up in a Deaf community, I understand the barriers that this community face when it comes to accessing information. There will be a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter at our event, as well as two members of staff who have BSL skills. We are very much looking forward to welcoming Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing adults and children and their families to our fun-filled open day."

The event, which is supporting [British Sign Language](#) and [The Firefighters Charity](#), will include demonstrations from firefighters, a smokehouse

experience, and give visitors a chance to look round fire engines and a Red Cross vehicle, as well as meeting Dexter the Fire Dog.

There will be plenty of free fun for all the family, including refreshments, stalls, games and more!

In September 2018, the Service joined neighbouring fire and rescue services, Nottingham and Derbyshire, to sign the British Sign Language (BSL) Charter. Signing the Charter shows the commitment by the Service to promote better access to public services for members of the Deaf community.

The Community Safety team has received Deaf awareness training and one member of the team has BSL NVQ Level 6 British Sign Language, so the Service can provide home safety checks to profoundly Deaf people.

During the open day, the Community Safety team will be available, so you can find out more about the services Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service offer, including Home Safety Checks, deaf smoke alarms, and the non-emergency and emergency contact numbers for people who are unable to make a phone call.

For more advice for people with hearing difficulties, and to book a Home Safety Check, visit leics-fire.gov.uk/your-safety/at-home/advice-for-people-with-disabilities/hearing/.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Interviews can be arranged through prior arrangement with Corporate Communications on the details below.

About the Service

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service provides emergency response, prevention and protection services from 20 stations across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Its headquarters is based in Birstall, Leicester.

The Service's prevention, education, enforcement and inspection programmes have resulted in significant reductions in the number of incidents. In the last ten years, fire-related incidents have reduced by 43 percent.

During 2016/17, the Service attended 694 road traffic collisions, of which 148 were extrications from vehicles, in addition to 2,259 fires. 272 schools were visited as part of the Service's schools programme, delivering fire and road safety education to pupils. Staff organised or took part in 1,613 community safety events, promoting fire and road safety and arson prevention, and 145 Virtual Fatal Four (VF4) events as part of the Service's young drivers' road safety project.

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