# Dozens of firefighters contain 14-acre grass fire on Wanstead Flats amid record heatwave



Dozens of firefighters were deployed to tackle a grass fire at Wanstead Flats in east London as temperatures soared during the latest heatwave to hit the UK. The incident on Friday saw around 14 acres of grassland alight, with crews from multiple stations arriving by early afternoon to bring the blaze under control by mid-afternoon. Fortunately, no injuries were reported.

This fire comes amid a severe wildfire risk rating across London, placed by the Natural Hazards Partnership due to prolonged dry conditions and soaring temperatures, which reached 34C on the day of the fire. The UK Health Security Agency has also issued a heat health alert covering London and much of southern and central England, which remains in effect until Monday morning. London Fire Brigade (LFB) officials underscored how the city's abundant green spaces—nearly half of the capital—are particularly vulnerable under such weather, increasing the threat to nearby homes and infrastructure.

The brigade urged caution to prevent fires as even small sparks can rapidly escalate amid dry vegetation. Station Commander Darren McTernan, who oversaw the response at Wanstead Flats, commended the crews’ efforts in difficult conditions and advised the public to steer clear of the affected area while operations continued. The London Fire Brigade spokesperson warned that with this summer’s driest spring in over a century, the risk of fire spread is heightened, especially with rising temperatures. They also reminded people to be vigilant about possible fire causes, including discarded smoking materials and barbecues.

This incident joins a series of recent wildfire warnings and calls for responsible behaviour issued by the London Fire Brigade in 2025. Earlier in the summer, the brigade highlighted two major grass fires in Rainham, both requiring extensive resources. Disposable barbecues have been pinpointed as a common ignition source, with hundreds of related callouts recorded over recent years, and several injuries attributed. The brigade advises against using such barbecues in parks and recommends safe barbecue practices at home, such as placing grills on level, non-flammable surfaces and ensuring they are fully cooled before disposal or cleaning.

The risks extend beyond just fire damage, with the brigade also responding to frequent water incidents as people seek relief from heat by swimming in unsafe open water. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Jamie Jenkins cautioned about the dangers of strong currents, underwater hazards, and cold-water shock despite tempting conditions.

Looking back, London has faced significant wildfire challenges in recent years. The largest grass fire in the brigade’s history took place in July 2018 on Wanstead Flats, when over 220 firefighters tackled a blaze comparable in size to 100 football pitches. At that time, the then Commissioner Dany Cotton emphasised the rapidity with which dry conditions can fuel fire spread and urged the public to avoid risky behaviour such as discarding cigarettes from vehicles or having barbecues on dry grass.

The sustained threat of wildfires has prompted the London Fire Brigade to enhance preparedness. In July 2025, they conducted a wildfire response training exercise in Richmond Park, working with The Royal Parks charity. This simulation aimed to protect both residents and London’s treasured wildlife, including sensitive nesting areas, from increasingly frequent fires linked to climate change effects. Richmond Borough Commander Rob Davies highlighted the crucial nature of such exercises in light of warming and drying trends afflicting London's parks and open spaces.

With meteorological forecasts predicting further heatwaves this summer, wildfire risk remains elevated, requiring continued vigilance from both authorities and the public. The London Fire Brigade continues to call on residents, landowners, and local councils to implement fire prevention measures like fire breaks while encouraging safe behaviour to prevent unnecessary fires. The ongoing changes in climate underscore the urgency of adapting urban fire safety strategies to protect both people and London’s natural environment.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/fire-london-park-brigade-issues-wildfire-warning-b2787362.html), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy488yvgkndo)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/fire-london-park-brigade-issues-wildfire-warning-b2787362.html), [[2]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/june/wildfire-warning-issued-for-london-as-people-urged-to-act-responsibly-during-the-heatwave/), [[5]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-weather-wildfire-warning-met-office-b2731010.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/fire-london-park-brigade-issues-wildfire-warning-b2787362.html), [[2]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/june/wildfire-warning-issued-for-london-as-people-urged-to-act-responsibly-during-the-heatwave/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/june/wildfire-warning-issued-for-london-as-people-urged-to-act-responsibly-during-the-heatwave/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/fire-london-park-brigade-issues-wildfire-warning-b2787362.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/fire-london-park-brigade-issues-wildfire-warning-b2787362.html)
* Paragraph 7 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-44848268)
* Paragraph 8 – [[6]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/july/london-fire-brigade-trains-with-partners-to-protect-london-s-wildlife-from-wildfires/)
* Paragraph 9 – [[2]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/june/wildfire-warning-issued-for-london-as-people-urged-to-act-responsibly-during-the-heatwave/), [[6]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/july/london-fire-brigade-trains-with-partners-to-protect-london-s-wildlife-from-wildfires/), [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/fire-london-park-brigade-issues-wildfire-warning-b2787362.html)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/fire-london-park-brigade-issues-wildfire-warning-b2787362.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/june/wildfire-warning-issued-for-london-as-people-urged-to-act-responsibly-during-the-heatwave/> - In June 2025, the London Fire Brigade issued a wildfire warning due to a heatwave, urging residents to act responsibly to prevent fires. The warning followed an assessment from the Natural Hazards Partnership, indicating an increased risk of grass and wildfires. The brigade highlighted that nearly half of London comprises green spaces, making it crucial for Londoners to take precautions to prevent accidental fires. Assistant Commissioner Pat Goulbourne emphasised the high risk of rapid fire spread due to temperatures exceeding 30 degrees Celsius and the driest spring in over a century. The brigade responded to two significant grass fires in Rainham earlier that week, both requiring at least four fire engines. Common causes of grass fires include barbecues, especially disposable ones, with 332 callouts recorded between 2022 and May 2025, resulting in 17 casualties. The brigade advised against using disposable barbecues in parks and open spaces, recommending safe practices for barbecues at home, such as positioning them on level ground away from flammable materials and ensuring they are cool before moving or cleaning. Proper disposal of smoking materials and rubbish was also emphasised to prevent fire risks. The brigade called on landowners and local authorities to take proactive measures, like creating fire breaks, to protect communities from wildfires. The Met Office predicted a greater chance of further heatwaves that summer, prompting continued efforts to enhance wildfire resilience across the capital. ([london-fire.gov.uk](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/june/wildfire-warning-issued-for-london-as-people-urged-to-act-responsibly-during-the-heatwave/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-44848268> - In July 2018, a significant grass fire occurred on Wanstead Flats in east London, described as the largest grass fire in the history of the London Fire Brigade. Over 220 firefighters attended the blaze, which was so extensive it was defined as a wildfire. Commissioner Dany Cotton urged the public to exercise caution amid the heatwave, warning that dry conditions can cause fires to spread rapidly. The fire service received more than 110 calls to the area on Sunday afternoon, with about 100 officers remaining at the scene on Monday to control the smouldering land. Ms Cotton cautioned against dropping cigarettes out of car windows or having barbecues on dry grass, as such fires can spread quickly. The fire was the same size as 100 football pitches at its peak, and no one was hurt, nor was property damaged. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-44848268?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy488yvgkndo> - In April 2025, the London Fire Brigade reported a sharp increase in callouts for grass and wildfires, coinciding with a dry and warm spell. Between Friday and Monday, the brigade received 2,215 calls, including 65 outdoor fires, a significant rise from 15 in the same period in 2024. The most serious incident was a grass fire in Bostall Woods in Plumstead, requiring around 25 firefighters to bring it under control. Provisional statistics from the Met Office indicated London recorded 4.8mm of rainfall across March, just 12% of its long-term average, contributing to the heightened fire risk. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy488yvgkndo?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-weather-wildfire-warning-met-office-b2731010.html> - In April 2025, the Met Office issued an amber warning for wildfires across much of the UK, including London, due to dry conditions and rising temperatures. The London Fire Brigade urged residents to avoid using barbecues in open spaces and to properly dispose of cigarettes, matches, and litter to prevent wildfires. The warning highlighted the heightened risk of wildfires in London, with temperatures expected to peak at 22°C. ([independent.co.uk](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-weather-wildfire-warning-met-office-b2731010.html?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/july/london-fire-brigade-trains-with-partners-to-protect-london-s-wildlife-from-wildfires/> - In July 2025, the London Fire Brigade conducted a wildfire response training exercise in Richmond Park, collaborating with The Royal Parks charity. The simulation aimed to prepare firefighters and partners to protect London's parks, open spaces, residents, and wildlife from the increasing threat of wildfires linked to climate change. The exercise simulated a wildfire approaching sensitive areas, including a skylark nesting field identified as a priority to protect. Richmond Borough Commander Rob Davies emphasised the growing risk of wildfires in London's grasslands, woodlands, and parks due to climate change, highlighting the importance of such training exercises. ([london-fire.gov.uk](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/july/london-fire-brigade-trains-with-partners-to-protect-london-s-wildlife-from-wildfires/?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/april/londoners-urged-to-act-responsibly-to-prevent-fires-as-amber-wildfire-warning-issued/> - In April 2025, the London Fire Brigade urged residents to act responsibly to prevent fires following an amber wildfire warning issued by the Met Office. Despite not experiencing high summer temperatures, the dry start to spring increased the risk of wildfires. The brigade reminded Londoners that even a small spark can ignite grass, shrubs, or litter, leading to rapidly escalating fires. Common causes of grass and land fires include discarded cigarettes, matches, and disposable barbecues. Assistant Commissioner Paul McCourt emphasised the importance of taking necessary precautions to stay safe and prevent grass fires. ([london-fire.gov.uk](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/april/londoners-urged-to-act-responsibly-to-prevent-fires-as-amber-wildfire-warning-issued/?utm_source=openai))