

**Staffordshire Fire  
and Rescue Service**

# Statement of Assurance

2023/24



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



**Staffordshire**  
Fire and Rescue Service  
preventing • protecting • responding

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### **Punjabi**

جے تہانوں ایس لکھت دی لسی ہور شکل یا زبان وچ لوڈاے تے مہربانی کر کے ساڈے نال رابطہ کرو تاں جے اسی تہاڈی درخواست تے غور کر سکئے۔

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إذا كنت بحاجة إلى نسخة من هذا المستند بتنسيق أو لغة بديلة ، فيرجى الاتصال بنا حتى تتمكن من النظر في طلبك.

### **Kurdish**

ئەگەر پێویستت بە وەشانێکی ئەم بەلگەنامەیە هەیە بە فۆرمات یان زمانێکی جیاوازی تەکایە پەڕیوەندیمان پێوە بکە بۆ ئەوەی بتوانین داواکارییەکەت ڕەچاوە بکەین.

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**0300 330 1000**

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# Welcome

**Welcome to our annual Statement of Assurance for 2023/24, where we will review the progress made toward the priorities outlined in our Community Risk Management Plan (referred to as our Safety Plan between 2020-2024).**

Through our service transformation programme, we are dedicated to delivering the highest quality service. We have been working closely with the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime Ben Adams to explore options for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of our fire and rescue service.

While managing the medium-term financial strategy remains challenging due to budget reductions, we remain committed to continued investment in both the Service and our staff. Industrial action was prevented through successful negotiations with the Fire Brigades Union, leading to an agreed pay increase. I would like to extend my thanks for the collaborative effort in resolving the matter.

Reflecting on a challenging year, the Service has delivered exceptional service to our communities across Staffordshire. Key achievements include the development of the falls response team and the home from hospital service, both providing support to vulnerable individuals and helping alleviate the pressures on the NHS and social care.

Despite a restructure, the prevention and protection teams have continued to work towards keeping people safe in their homes and businesses. New methodologies have been introduced to identify community risks and help us target our activities where they are needed most. Changes in fire safety legislation have increased demand, and the team has worked hard to adapt.

During the summer, we hosted community open days at our fire stations across the county, allowing the public to meet local firefighters, tour the breathing apparatus training house, watch live

demonstrations, and learn more about the services we provide. Positive feedback has been received from both the public and our crews, who have enjoyed engaging with the community through these and other activities like school visits, fetes, and community meals and meetings. These events aim to strengthen relationships, raise awareness of career opportunities within the Service and showcase the positive impact of the work we do.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) spotlight report on culture and values within the fire sector has sparked conversations about respecting one another and the importance of addressing inappropriate behaviour. It highlights the significance of cultivating a positive organisational culture and supporting challenge when behaviours fall short of what is expected.

This year the Service has once again demonstrated remarkable resilience and dedication. Looking ahead, next year promises new challenges, but I am confident that together we are ready and able to face them. I would like to extend my thanks to everyone at Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service for their ongoing hard work and commitment in safeguarding our communities across the county.

We cannot hope to capture every single thing we do in one document, but I hope this report will give you a flavour of the fantastic and innovative work we do across the Service with the aim of making Staffordshire the safest place to be.



**Rob Barber**  
Chief Fire Officer



# Governance and Assurance

## Scope of Responsibility

Since 1 August 2018, Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams has governed both Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Staffordshire Police. Elected by the public, Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams holds the chief fire officer and chief constable to account, ensuring services are delivered effectively and efficiently.

Commissioners do not manage police and fire and rescue services operationally, but ensure leaders perform effectively. Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams is also responsible for managing complaints and conduct matters involving the chief fire officer and chief constable.

As the Fire Authority, Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams holds Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service accountable, sets their priorities through the Fire and Rescue Plan, and establishes budgets. They collaborate with local partners to enhance community safety and represent local concerns.

## What is a Statement of Assurance?

We are required by the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England to produce an annual statement of assurance, demonstrating our financial, governance, and operational performance to ensure transparency and accountability to our stakeholders.

This Statement of Assurance outlines Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams' financial, governance, and response arrangements from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. It reviews the Service's progress against our priorities over the year and aims to reassure our staff, partners, and local communities of our commitment to safeguarding the public, reducing risks from fires and other emergencies, and enhancing firefighter safety.

This statement aims to provide clear, accessible information to our people and communities, including relevant extracts and links to key documents as guided by the Department for Communities and Local Government's Guidance on Statements of Assurance for fire and rescue authorities in England.

We also use the Statement of Assurance as an opportunity to address the impact of factors such as changing climate extreme weather, pressures on public sector resources, and share our plans for the future with you.

## Scrutiny and Performance Management

Robust governance arrangements allow Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams to monitor, scrutinise, support, and challenge the Service's performance, ensuring objectives are met and services are delivered efficiently and cost effectively.

Our performance management framework is overseen by senior management, using key performance indicators to track progress. Achievements are reported at the service delivery board, and the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime reviews monitoring reports at the strategic governance board (SGB). Quarterly, the SGB also reviews detailed financial reports on budget performance, savings, and efficiencies.

The Ethics, Transparency, and Audit Panel (ETAP), and separate finance panel, functions as the audit committee in the governance structure. The finance panel provides professional advice to ETAP members, facilitating detailed scrutiny and challenge.

## Public Performance meetings

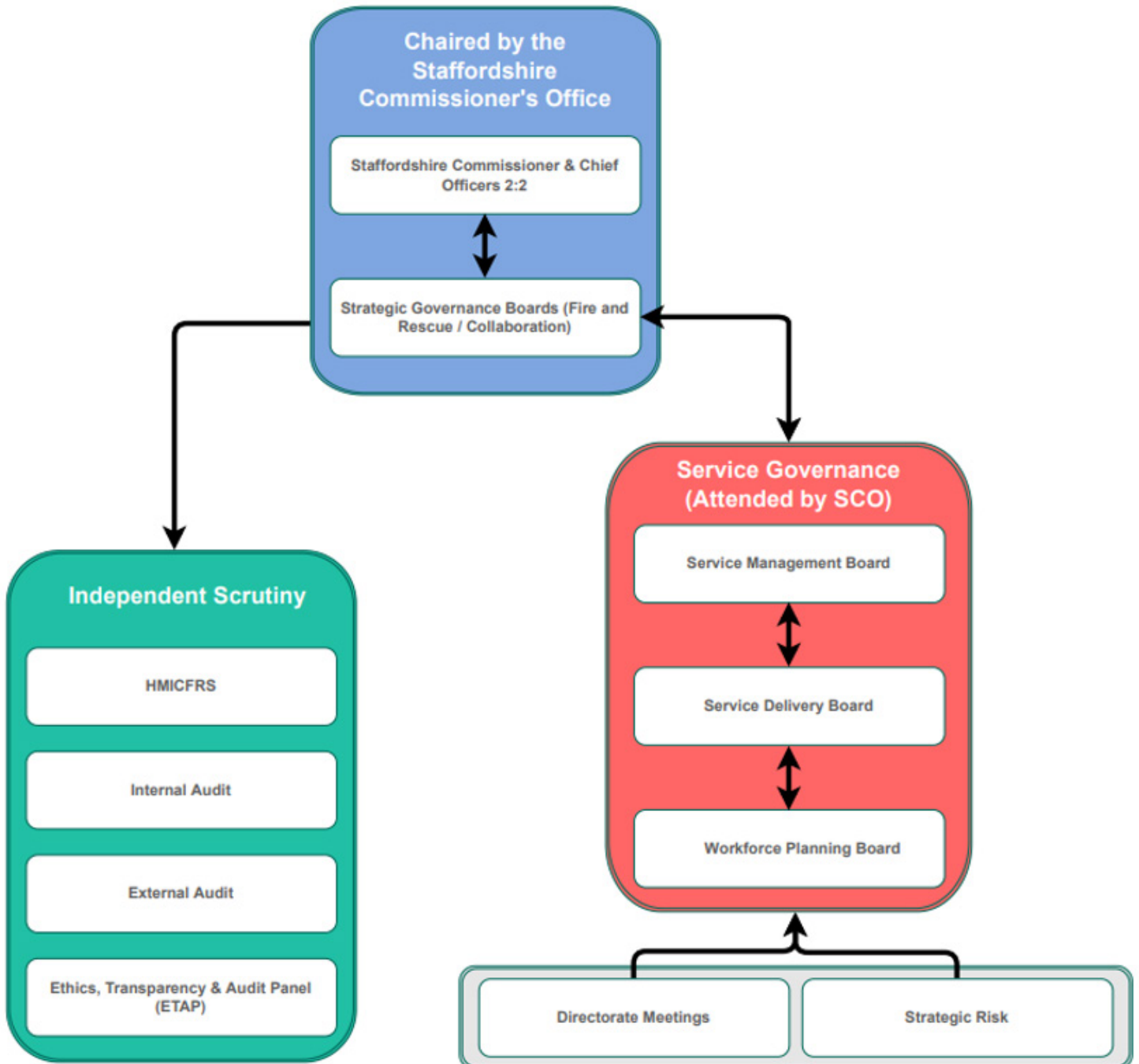
These biannual meetings allow Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams to review the Service's response, prevention, and protection activities, assessing progress against our Safety Plan 2020-2024 priorities. The areas of focus this year have included:

- Values and culture
- HMICFRS thematic inspection (the handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services)
- Extending the term of the Safety Plan 2020-24.



# Governance and Assurance

The Governance Structure in place under the Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams during 2023/24 is detailed below:



Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams has met the requirements of the Local Government Act 1999 by implementing measures for continuous improvement in service delivery, focusing on economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. This includes maintaining robust governance arrangements to manage the Service's operations and ensure effective risk management.





## **Operational assurance**

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority has fulfilled its functions in line with the required statutory and policy framework:

- **Safety Plan 2020-2024**
- **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004**
- **Civil Contingencies Act 2004**
- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**
- **Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007**
- **Localism Act 2011**
- **Fire and Rescue National Framework for England**
- **Health and Safety Act at Work etc. Act 1974**

Mutual aid agreements with neighbouring fire and rescue services have been set up to handle cross-border, large-scale, or complex incidents needing extra resources. Additionally, the Service collaborates with the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit to coordinate multi-agency training, planning, and responses for major incidents like pandemics, flooding, or terrorism, ensuring a coordinated and effective community response.

The Service is an active participant in the national resilience program, providing assets and resources for major incidents across the country. This ensures timely and effective support in situations where local resources are insufficient to meet the demands.

The Service has strong business continuity plans in place to manage corporate risks and maintain uninterrupted fire and rescue services in Staffordshire during major disruptions.

# Governance and Assurance

## Annual Governance Statement

Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams receives all funding for fire and rescue services, including government grants. However, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Staffordshire Police operate as separate entities with their own budgets, staff, and governance structures.

The Annual Governance Statement for April 2023 to March 2024, published on the website with the Annual Statement of Accounts, details the Service's governance and internal control measures. The accompanying narrative statement reviews the financial performance, covering funding, expenditure, and resource allocation aligned with the Safety Plan 2020-2024, highlighting the Service's commitment to strong financial management and internal control.

We are satisfied that during 2023/24, the Fire Authority's financial, governance, and operational assurance arrangements were effective, with business conducted in accordance with proper standards and laws to ensure efficient and effective use of public funds.

Furthermore, we have taken all necessary steps to adhere to the requirements of the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.



**Ben Adams**  
Staffordshire  
Commissioner



# Our **Priorities**

Under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, each service must have a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which contains an assessment of local community risks and outlines the Service's strategies to mitigate these risks.

Our current CRMP is referred to as our Safety Plan 2020-2024. When our new plan is launched in 2025, it will be renamed as our CRMP in accordance with National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) guidance. This report includes references to both the current safety plan and the new CRMP 2025-2028.

Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams has the responsibility of approving the Service's CRMP. The current Safety Plan 2020-2024 was approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams in 2020. This plan outlines the Service's strategic vision, priorities, objectives, and strategies to enhance and respond effectively to the needs of our communities across Staffordshire.

## **Extension of the Safety Plan 2020-2024**

Legally, the Service must have a new CRMP in place when the previous plan ends. We would normally have planned to develop the next CRMP for launch on 1 April 2024 in line with our financial, planning and performance cycles to cover the next four-year period, i.e. 2024- 2028. However, the elections for the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime take place in May 2024. The Staffordshire Commissioner's Office is required to produce its own Fire and Rescue Service Plan and approve the Service's CRMP and as such, the Commissioner needs time to develop and deliver its own plan and understand how the Service's plan and priorities support this.

The Strategic Governance Board agreed that the term of the current Safety Plan 2020-2024 be extended until the end of 2024 to allow time for the Commissioner to take office and to ensure that the governance arrangements for the Commissioner's office, police and fire are more closely aligned.

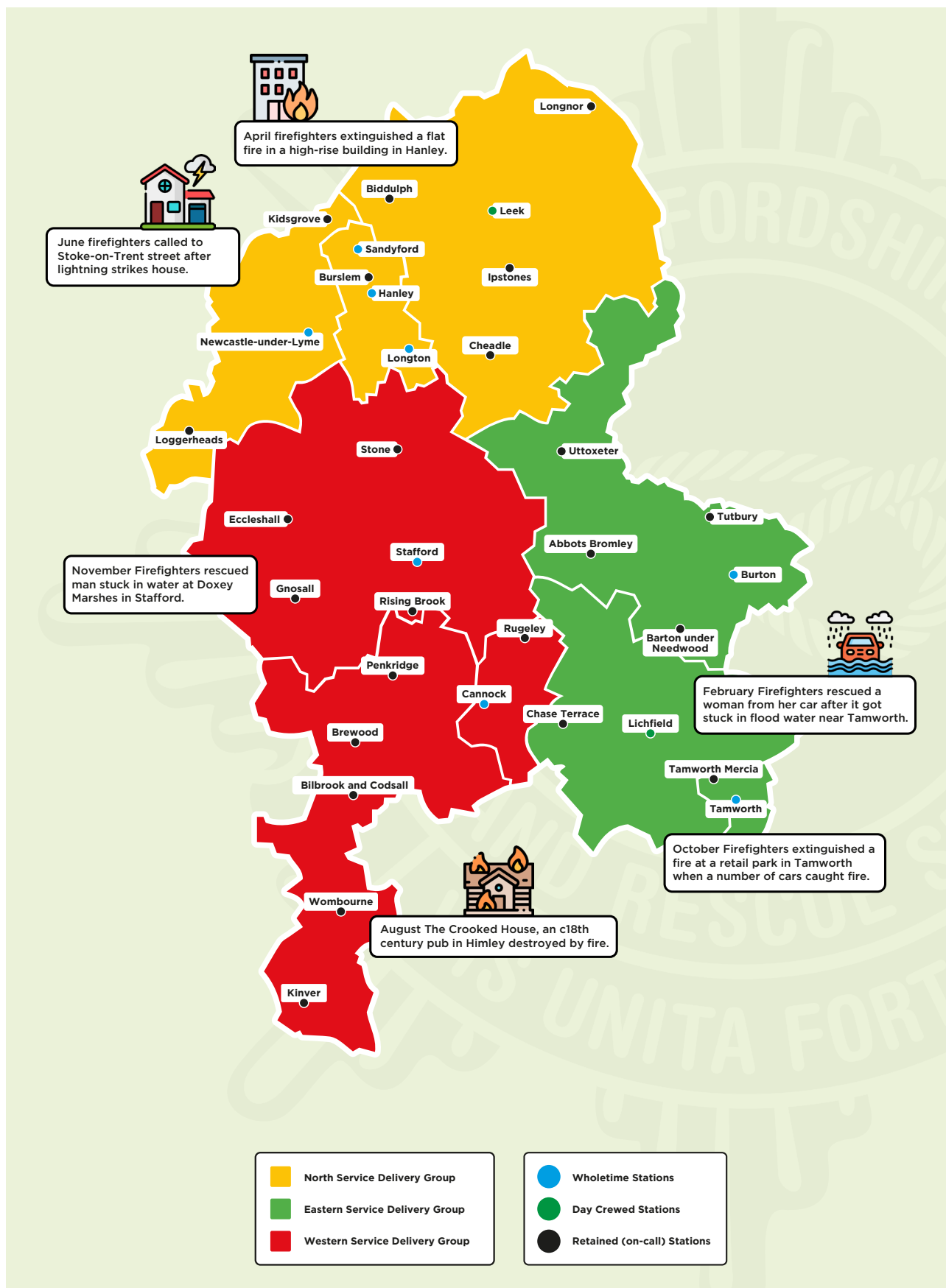
A review of strategic risks facing the Service is taken to ensure there are no significant changes or areas of concern and we consult with our workforce and our communities as part of our planning process for our new CRMP.

This report highlights the progress we have made against each of our four priorities set out in our Safety Plan 2020-2024 and meets the requirements of an Annual Statement of Assurance, confirming the adequacy of arrangements for effective management of financial, governance and operational matters for the period.

**The priorities in our Safety Plan 2020-2024 align with and support the objectives of the Commissioner’s Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024.**

<b>Our priorities</b>	<b>Commissioner’s objectives</b>
<b>Prevention and early intervention</b>	<b>Help people most at risk stay safe</b>
<p>We aim to develop a detailed community risk profile of Staffordshire, so that we can use our resources in the most efficient and effective way.</p>	<p>Deliver effective and targeted prevention work that provides early help to individuals, families and communities so that we keep people safe from fires and other incidents, they feel safer and there is less pressure on fire response services.</p>
<b>Protecting Staffordshire and its people</b>	<b>Protect people and places</b>
<p>We aim to reduce and remove risks in our communities using a combination of prevention, protection and response activities and help make Staffordshire a safer place to live, work and visit.</p>	<p>Protect people, premises and the environment through the right balance of education, advice and support and the use of regulatory and enforcement powers to keep people safe.</p>
<b>Public confidence</b>	<b>A flexible and responsive service</b>
<p>We aim to report regularly on our progress and communicate openly about our plans so that, they are clearly understood, meet our legal duties and provide assurance to the public in a way which is transparent and easy to scrutinize.</p>	<p>Ensure your local fire and rescue service continues to be accessible and responsive so that risk is appropriately and proportionally managed, community and firefighter safety remain paramount and high levels of public confidence and trust in the service are maintained.</p>
<b>Service reform</b>	<b>A fire and rescue service for tomorrow</b>
<p>We aim to develop and support a diverse, healthy and highly professional workforce who are motivated and empowered to improve our service.</p>	<p>Ensure that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue is fit for a changing future and is a leading example for other services to follow so that the people of Staffordshire can be reassured that their money is being used efficiently and effectively and the workforce better reflects the communities it serves.</p>

# Your Service



# Our Progress

## 1 Priority 1: Prevention and early intervention

To prevent fires and respond promptly and effectively to fires and other emergencies we said we would:



**Work together with our partners across the county to share information and create a more detailed understanding of the risks to our communities and identify the people and properties most at risk**

Our safe and well visits are focused on individuals most at risk of home fires, providing timely interventions to prevent fires and address underlying issues contributing to fire risk. In 2023/24, 13,973 safe and well visits were made to those most at risk, including people over 80 living alone or with others, up 7 per cent on the previous year.

Referrals are managed through partner networks and our contact centre. Extended safe and well visits address complex needs, providing significant support for issues like hoarding, mobility, mental health, drug and housing problems.

Monthly questionnaires are sent to residents who received safe and well checks to gather

feedback for improvement. Follow-up conversations occur with those who did not qualify for visits to check if their circumstances have changed.

Fatal fire conferences are held to review any interactions we have and share learning with partners, including housing, social care and health, to help prevent future incidents. Vulnerable residents are revisited by our prevention teams for further interventions, with cases monitored by community safety officers. We are also engaging with the NFCC's workstream on competencies for those carrying out home fire safety visits and will adopt necessary processes after evaluation.



**Prioritise these risks to ensure our activities have the most positive impact on community safety**

The NFCC, in conjunction with Operational Research in Health (ORH), have developed a new domestic dwelling fire risk model. This methodology assesses both the likelihood and potential consequence of fire incidents for every dwelling in the county.

We have adopted and applied this methodology locally and revised risk profiles for domestic dwellings were introduced in February 2024 to identify high-risk homes and individuals, allowing us to target the county's most vulnerable households in a smarter way.



## **Develop targeted activities to make the most efficient use of our resources and minimise our impact on the environment**

Safe+Sound live events take place across the county and places are offered to all Year 5 children in mainstream schools. The aim of these activities is to offer consistent, high-quality fire and road safety education, empowering children and young people to make informed and safe choices.

In 2023/24 over 7,000 children attended events which are supported by partners such as Staffordshire Police, HSBC Bank, the Canal & River Trust, Network Rail, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, DHL (Truck and Child Safety) and many others. It is also delivered online weekly via the Learn Live Channel.

Safe+Sound online, launched in May 2020, has grown significantly since its inception. The programme airs weekly on Wednesdays at 10am during term time, with all previous episodes available on demand. It is designed for Key Stage 2 students, featuring content from the Service and our partners, offering safety advice and guidance. It enables schools who would not be able to attend our events

on stations to participate and reduces the environmental impact caused by increased travel.

In the 2023/24 academic year, 201,898 Staffordshire devices tuned in to watch the live broadcasts, with each device potentially representing an individual or an entire school. The program can be accessed at [www.learnliveuk.com/safesound](http://www.learnliveuk.com/safesound)

Our updated Education Policy and Delivery Plan, launched in December 2023, focuses on delivering fire and road safety to Key Stage 1, deliberate fire education to Key Stages 3 and 4, and supporting uniformed public services students at colleges.

One-hundred-and-seventeen young people, aged between 16 and 30, participated in The Prince's Trust programmes, supported by our staff, leading to positive outcomes, with participants progressing to further education, work, or being referred to appropriate partners.



## **Work with partners to educate our communities and share goals to reduce duplication and inefficiencies in the public sector**

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service actively collaborates on various projects, activities, and services to benefit communities. The aim is to strengthen partnerships and improve service delivery. Staff are encouraged to share ideas or discuss potential areas for collaboration to further enhance community support and engagement.

Our falls response team has strengthened during its pilot in partnership with the NHS,

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board, and Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, leading to the extension of the scheme until at least 31 March 2024.

Our specially-recruited fire and health technicians are trained in using various lifting equipment so that they can safely respond to falls where people are uninjured but need help in getting up. Operating on a rota basis

# Our Progress

from 8am to 7pm, seven days a week including Bank Holidays, the team provides essential support to vulnerable community members in need.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, the falls response team were mobilised 939 times to falls in the community. The average attendance time is 38 minutes, and on 86 per cent of occasions no further assistance from NHS urgent care services was required

We can use these opportunities to also carry out safe and well visits for the individuals and referring them to additional support, such as the community falls team if required. This service helps support the NHS, potentially preventing unnecessary hospital admissions, and has received positive feedback from families.

Building on the success of our falls response team, the Service launched the home from hospital initiative in December 2023. This new service helps patients transition from hospital to home using two wheelchair-accessible vehicles for comfortable transport.

Specially-recruited fire and health partnership technicians now provide both falls response and home from hospital services, which include:

- Conducting safe and well visits
- Checking heating, water, and home safety

- Providing refreshments
- Testing lifeline systems
- Conducting basic security checks
- Addressing trip hazards to reduce fall risks.

Commissioned until at least March 2024, the service operates from the Royal Stoke University Hospital, covering Stoke-on-Trent and surrounding areas. Patients are referred via the Integrated Discharge Hub, ensuring seamless support upon discharge.

Both the falls response and home from hospital teams are funded through partnership with health and social care.

We continue to collaborate with Staffordshire Police on shared services, including finance, HR, occupational health, corporate communications, estates, stores and transport. A unified team now supports both organisations on equality, diversity and inclusion. Additionally, further areas of collaboration are being explored to enhance efficiency and leverage new technologies.

We continue to explore opportunities to make better use of our buildings by enabling fire and police staff to share accommodation, for example sharing facilities at some of our on-call stations, e.g. Chase Terrace, Uttoxeter, Kidsgrove, Stone, Kinver and Penkridge fire stations.





WARNING!  
THIS VEHICLE OPERATES  
A CO2 SYSTEM  
WITH RECORDING FACILITY

Staffordshire  
Fire and Rescue Service

Staffordshire  
Fire and Rescue Service

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# Our Progress

## ② Priority 2: Protecting Staffordshire and its people

To protect our people, buildings, the environment and reduce local risk we said we would:



**Continue to modify and develop our activities to embrace the changing needs of the county and use advances in technology and techniques to ensure our response to emergencies is efficient and effective**

The Service is enhancing its communications and data connectivity to support operational crews. Recent initiatives include issuing Samsung Galaxy tablets and phones to frontline appliances, enabling 4G/5G access to critical data, live streaming, video calling, and apps like what3words.

These devices complement existing mobile data terminals (MDTs) offering resilience and productivity tools such as Microsoft SharePoint for policies, risk data, and hydrant management. Future plans involve developing additional tools like electronic forms and crash recovery licensing. Feedback is encouraged to refine these systems.

We are planning a significant upgrade to our MDTs, with new software and hardware scheduled for implementation during the 2024/25 financial year. This joint initiative with West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service aims to improve MDT connectivity, operational response, and integration with fire control systems.

In the interim, efforts are being made to stabilise the current system, including fixes to cellular connectivity and software updates scheduled for early 2024. Samsung tablets are being used as a secondary solution, enhancing resilience until the new system is deployed. Staff are encouraged to report faults to ensure continued support and improvements.

The Service is trialling the JAAMA 'My Vehicle' App with local policing teams at Longton Community Fire Station, aiming for a wider

rollout in the new year. The app allows fire and police personnel to complete daily vehicle checks digitally, log mileage, and report defects in real time.

Data is directly submitted to the Joint Emergency Services (JETS) system, improving accuracy and efficiency in vehicle maintenance and scheduling. The app streamlines vehicle servicing, ensuring minimal disruption by keeping as many vehicles as possible in service. It also enhances safety by enabling quick defect reporting and vehicle lockout if necessary.

The Service has introduced two advanced drones to enhance emergency response, providing real-time aerial intelligence to improve safety and efficiency. Equipped with thermal imaging, night vision, and zoom capabilities, the drones assist in assessing structural integrity, monitoring fire spread, and identifying safe areas. Based in Hanley and Lichfield, they represent a £20,000 investment and have been deployed in incidents like a large industrial estate fire in Stafford.

The drones are particularly valuable for large building fires, wildfires, hazardous materials, water rescues, and missing person investigations. Their use helps prevent incident escalation, ensures earlier resolutions, and reduces environmental impact. Training is underway for firefighters, aiming to certify 12 pilots with general visual certificates (GVC) through online and practical assessments.



## **Contribute to building communities which are fit for the future – resilient, healthy and sustainable**

The Service has a safeguarding board and a robust process for identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns within the community and workplace.

In the six months preceding 31 March 2024, 48 safeguarding concerns were raised, the majority following an operational incident or arising during a Safe and Well visit. Prevention teams continue to support affected families and individuals, collaborating with environmental health and social care partners to secure additional assistance where needed.

We have an ongoing programme of safeguarding training for our operational crews and non-operational fire staff to raise awareness of safeguarding issues and how to raise concerns. A new in-house safeguarding module has been introduced and delivered to trainee firefighters as part of their two-day prevention and protection input. Feedback will be collected from recruits to evaluate the effectiveness and informativeness of the training.

Our safe and well technicians continue to deliver Covid-19 anti-viral medication and support Staffordshire County Council's 'Winter Warmth' project, helping individuals manage utility bills. During visits, they also refer vulnerable people for household support grants to assist with energy costs. Vaccination clinics are hosted at our community fire stations allowing ease of access for more vulnerable residents, especially in rural areas.

Since launching our Environmental and Sustainability Strategy in January 2022, the Service has made significant progress in its

green initiatives. These include monitoring our carbon footprint through an annual report, working on waste and utility usage measures.

In January 2023, a new sustainability lead was appointed for both Staffordshire Fire and Rescue and Staffordshire Police with the aim of guiding both organisations towards net zero compliance and to promote sustainable practices benefitting both the organisations and the environment.

Over the next five years, key areas of focus will include energy reduction, waste reduction, fleet management, estates, and green space generation. These efforts will aim to reduce usage and costs, improve working environments, and minimise operational incidents.

Already, several initiatives have been implemented, including embedding environmental key performance indicators into contracts, introducing a zero-to-landfill waste removal contract, implementing energy monitoring at stations, promoting sustainability campaigns, such as reducing single-use plastics.

The Service has leased three electric vehicles for a two-year trial and installed four electric vehicle charging points at key locations. The trial will be monitored in conjunction with the performance and assurance team to assess progress and benefits. Additionally, the Service has earned ISO 14064:1 certification, allowing it to report carbon emissions to national standards.

# Our Progress



## **Contribute to ensuring that buildings in Staffordshire are safe for residents and visitors for generations to come**

The Service conducts regular inspections of business premises to ensure compliance with fire safety laws and take action when lives are at risk. Key activities include:

- Fire safety audits: Inspecting premises and documents for compliance with fire safety regulations, focusing on high-risk premises
- Licensing consultations: Reviewing fire safety as part of licensing applications under the Licensing Act 2003
- Building regulation consultations: Ensuring new or modified buildings comply with fire safety standards, especially regarding escape routes and fire appliance access.
- Post-fire inspections: Investigating the cause of fires, ensuring business continuity plans, and implementing corrective actions where necessary.

The Service's revised risk-based inspection programme, launched in February 2024, is now fully integrated within our protection teams. Audit numbers remain steady, with increased activity in building regulations consultations alongside licensing and post-fire inspections.

The Service has undertaken a review of its protection function, with revised staffing structures and the formation of a new central protection team to oversee audit activities across all service delivery groups. Additionally, seven protection staff members are undergoing training for their Level 4 Diploma in fire safety, with one having started a degree in fire engineering.

Our protection teams work to reduce repeated demand and false alarms by monitoring high-demand locations, addressing vulnerabilities, and ensuring fire appliances are available for critical needs.

Several retrofits were completed as part of our community sprinkler project. Midland Heart buildings sprinkler installation was completed in April 2023 and water misting technology was installed in a Bromford Housing property. Stoke-on-Trent City Council continued with retrofitting sprinklers in nine of its high and medium-rise blocks.



## **Ensure that we have the capability to meet new and emerging risks from incidents that may involve flooding, wildfire, terrorism or supporting other emergency services**

As part of the Staffordshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF), the Service actively participates in planning and preparing responses to disruptive events, including adverse weather, public health crises, industrial incidents, transport accidents and terrorist attacks.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service collaborates extensively with police, emergency services, local authorities, and the voluntary sector in both formal and informal multi-agency settings. These include responding to major incidents, civil contingency planning, protecting vulnerable individuals, strategic crime and disorder meetings, joint training exercises, emergency planning, public safety, and supporting businesses. Such partnerships enhance public safety and operational effectiveness.

The Service played a key role in implementing recommendations from the Manchester Arena Inquiry through the LRF. There are 35 actions in progress, focusing on improving major incident plans, record-keeping, site-specific tactical plans, and emergency service interoperability.

The Service provided leadership in the LRF's planning for major events and emergency responses, leading multi-agency efforts to prepare for service disruptions and mitigate incidents with significant community impact. We also conducted joint training and exercises to ensure a coordinated and timely local resilience approach.

The threat of terrorism requires fire and rescue services to maintain specialised preparedness,

operational readiness, and interagency collaboration. Responders face complex risks during terrorist incidents, prioritising their safety while safeguarding lives and securing scenes.

Rigorous training, joint operations with police and intelligence agencies, and regular drills enhance coordination and effectiveness. Fire and rescue services also provide mass casualty and decontamination support through trained teams and liaison officers. Adapting to evolving threats involves continuous vigilance, intelligence updates, and resource investment, ensuring communities are protected and supported during and after incidents.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of fire and rescue services being prepared for health emergencies. Responders faced challenges in balancing emergency response with staff safety, necessitating enhanced infection control and collaboration with health authorities.

Fire and rescue teams played a key role during the pandemic by supporting healthcare services, assisting with vaccine delivery, and aiding vulnerable individuals. Community outreach initiatives included delivering essential supplies to isolated residents, particularly the elderly and those shielding. Their adaptability and commitment to public service were crucial in alleviating pressure on the healthcare system and supporting our communities effectively.

# Our Progress

## 3 Priority 3: Public confidence

To maintain public confidence and trust in the service we said we would:



**Ensure plans and resources are in place to provide a flexible efficient and resilient response to emergency incidents**

Service availability measures the percentage of time fire appliances are ready to respond to incidents, based on the availability of appliances at whole-time, on-call and day-duty fire stations. Whole-time stations are staffed 24/7, while on-call stations rely on on-call firefighters who may also have their main job elsewhere. Day-duty stations combine on-call and whole-time staffing during day shifts.

- Whole-time appliances are available for deployment 98 per cent of the time
- On-call appliances are available for deployment 60 per cent of the time.

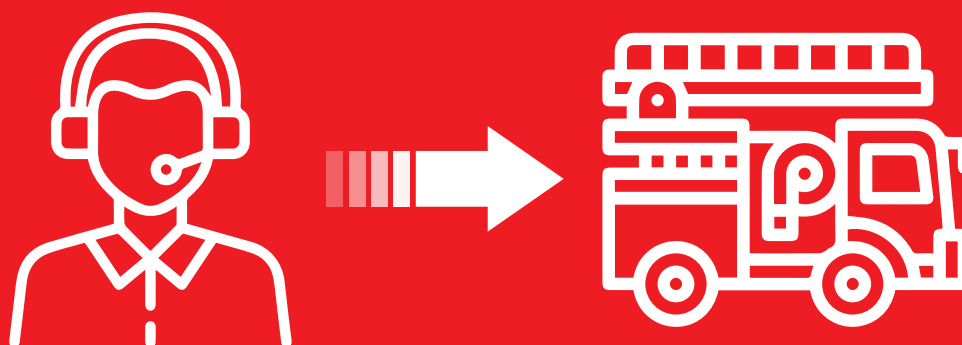
The main factor affecting availability at on-call stations is the number of staff available combined with the necessary skill set and qualifications to allow deployment to certain incidents.

Response times are measured monthly, reflecting the time taken for the first fire appliance to arrive at an incident. The average attendance time was 9.34 minutes, an improvement from 9.6 minutes the previous year.

The service attendance standard was met for 80.9 per cent of incidents (target 80 per cent), compared with 81.4 per cent in 2022/23.

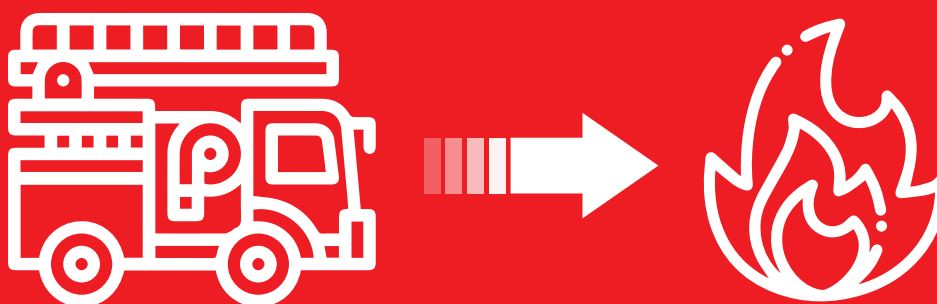


**Our response time is made up of the following sections and has specific measures:**



**Target of 80-85 seconds for category 1 incidents**

**Phone call answered time to fire engine mobilised time measured by Fire Control**



**An achievement target of 80%**

**Based on the standard of high risk: 8 minutes, medium risk: 10 minutes and low risk: 18 minutes.**

# Our Progress



## **Consult with our communities and listen to our people when developing our plans and services**

Three rider trial The transformation board has been working on mobilising reduced crews of on-call firefighters to respond to specific incidents more quickly and improve community safety. This initiative aims to prevent incidents from escalating and reduce risks to the public by deploying a crew of three, who can make faster interventions.

Since June 2023, a three-person crewing model for on-call staff has been piloted to improve appliance availability and response times, enhancing public safety while maintaining firefighter safety. This has resulted in an 11 per cent increase in on-call appliance availability, with a three-person crew arriving nine minutes and 45 seconds quicker than the next fully-crewed appliance. The Service continues to aim for four or more crew members on on-call appliances and is actively recruiting on-call staff.

The initiative is not about cost reduction, but about enhancing community outcomes and using staff effectively. Crews will respond to a broader range of incidents, with a focus on firefighter safety and maintaining proper crew standards, including trained personnel

and specific roles like breathing apparatus wearers and commanders. Feedback from stakeholders and operational crews will continue throughout the trial.

The roving resource concept is a pilot initiative aimed at improving appliance availability across south Staffordshire. It involves funding on-call crews over weekends as an alternative to relying on cross-border mobilisations from neighbouring services.

The aim is to develop an operating model based on evidence that ensures the right people with the appropriate skills are in the right place at the right time. This will enhance the response to fires and incidents and improve prevention and protection services, further reducing risk.

Robust evaluation processes are in place for pilots and crews, with no safety concerns reported during the period. On-call station availability has increased by an average of 12 per cent, and response times have improved, with On-call crews arriving nine minutes and 45 seconds faster than the next fully-crewed appliance.



## **Provide evidence that our activities are based on a recognised need and are targeted where they are needed most**

Home Office fire statistics The Home Office oversees fire services in England and publishes detailed incident data on its fire statistics webpage: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-statistics-monitor](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-statistics-monitor).

These publications provide detailed insights into fire incidents, fatalities, casualties, fire causes, non-fire incidents, and response times,

offering a comprehensive overview of the fire sector's performance in England.

Our performance and assurance team collect data and prepares an annual return to the Home Office. This information is sourced from the online incident recording system.





## Adopt a transparent and easily understood approach to planning and reporting throughout the Service

Our plans for 2023-2024 are driven by priorities in the Safety Plan 2020-2024, the Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams' Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024, government reports, and national sector issues. The Home Office, which oversees fire services in England, publishes fire statistics based on incident data.

Departments set objectives aligned with strategic priorities, with managers held accountable through performance meetings and governance boards. All plans are accessible on the intranet for staff to review and contribute to achieving the objectives.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published its report Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22 Effectiveness, Efficiency and People - an Inspection of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service in July 2022. The inspectorate found the Service effective in identifying and addressing community fire risks, with strong financial management and collaboration arrangements in place. As at 31 March 2024, of 20 recommendations made by the inspectorate, 19 had been addressed by the Service based on self-assessment.

### Reflections from the Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams:

*"I monitor the Service's performance and progress on improvement plans through governance meetings and improvement boards. The HMICFRS inspections, and subsequent findings, help compare local services to others nationwide, validate self-assessments and performance reviews, and ensure no unexpected issues arise. The alignment between internal findings and inspectorate evaluations is reassuring."*

*"The challenges faced by a modern fire and rescue service are complex and need comprehensive solutions and strong leadership. Efforts by the Chief Fire Officer and senior leadership team to address these*

*issues and achieve lasting improvements are reassuring."*

In the latest report, State of Fire and Rescue - The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2023, published in January 2023, Andy Cooke, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services, called for more powers to ensure the sector acts on recommendations. He said that:

- the inspectorate needs more powers to ensure the fire and rescue sector act on its recommendations. This includes making it a legal requirement for fire authorities to publish a response to inspection reports
- the Government should prioritise reform with clear achievable timescales for making its proposed changes
- Services must work harder to improve their values and culture to eliminate persistent issues of bullying, harassment, and discrimination
- Fire and rescue service leaders need to be more strategic in making improvements, as lack of strategy can lead to ineffective decisions that compromise public safety.

It was acknowledged that since inspections had started in 2018, whilst progress has been made, it has been too slow. The inspectorate's three remaining national recommendations which could be addressed through effective reform are:

- clarifying the role of fire and rescue services, to remove any ambiguity
- reviewing how effectively pay and conditions are determined
- granting chief fire officers operational independence through legislation or other means.

All reports are publicly available on the HMICFRS website:

[www.hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk](http://www.hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

# Our Progress

## 4 Priority 4: Service reform

To ensure we are effective, efficient and able to transform the Service to meet the challenges we face we said we would:



**Invest in our people by providing them with the right equipment, training and skills to keep them safe, encourage innovation and inspire our future leaders**

Our aim is to ensure the availability of appropriate resources to respond to incidents and carry out prevention and protection work, balancing whole-time and on-call firefighters, generalist and specialist roles, shift patterns, and working locations. This process should also include reviewing the vehicle fleet mix and associated crewing arrangements. To support this objective:

- Two new aerial ladder platforms (ALPs) were purchased to replace older vehicles at Longton and Burton, enhancing safety for tackling hard-to-reach fires. This is a circa £1.3 million investment in our fleet and equipment which will deliver improved firefighter safety and functionality.

Benefiting from new hydraulic technology they have greater outreach capability than our current vehicles and come with an upgraded cage with increased capacity, meaning the vehicles are much more capable for rescues and can now accommodate wheelchair users and bariatric casualties using newly-provided stretchers and support brackets.

Members of the Service worked closely with manufacturers to optimise vehicle design for functionality and efficiency, incorporating priorities like the 'clean concept'. A dedicated kit locker has been added at the rear of the ALP, separate from the cab and internal areas, to reduce contamination risks to the crew.

- Additionally, two new appliances with enhanced rescue capabilities were deployed at Longton and Stafford.

- Efforts continue to develop cabs and lockers to support the 'clean concept', focusing on exposure to post-fire contaminants for all staff, not just operational personnel, by reducing contamination of individuals, equipment, vehicles, and premises. Supported by both the organisation and representative bodies, it emphasises the importance of preventing contaminants from being transported from incident sites to workplaces.



- The approach involves three phases of cleaning, containing, and controlling contaminants, with actions ranging from low-cost, quick solutions to more complex, longer-term measures. A dedicated working group, active for over a year, has driven these efforts, resulting in noticeable changes such as the shower within the hour practice for smoke exposure, provision of hand and equipment wipes, and protective bags for appliances and officers' vehicles.



## **Continue to strive to improve the services we provide**

The Service has completed an internal review of its prevention and protection teams and implemented a new structure as of February 2024. This includes a revised management model for a centralised overview and support of activities.

Current workloads and priorities are being adjusted to accommodate a reduced staffing model. Additionally, a new data management system is being introduced to improve access

to and analysis of prevention and protection activity data.

In February 2024, a new risk-based inspection programme was launched and integrated into Service protection teams. A staffing review led to the creation of a central protection team at Service headquarters to enhance audit activities across all service delivery groups.



## **Be honest and open, encouraging people to be themselves and treat each other with kindness and respect**

The NFCC developed a Cultural Action Plan in response to the HMICFRS Report on Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services, with 35 recommendations aimed at improving culture and addressing discrimination, bullying, and harassment. Key completed actions for the Service include:

- Establishing accessible whistleblowing processes
- Reviewing support for individuals raising concerns
- Strengthening background checks
- Reporting potential gross misconduct to HMICFRS
- Gathering regular staff feedback on values, culture, fairness, and diversity
- Implementing systems to analyse team cultures and address identified issues
- Ensuring adherence to the Core Code of Ethics.

In February 2023, following the BBC Radio 4 programme File on 4 - Firefighters on Trial, the leadership team requested open discussions about reports of misogyny,

bullying, and harassment in the fire service. The feedback provided valuable insights, confirming that many employees felt confident to raise issues and challenge inappropriate behaviour, but also highlighted concerns about historical experiences. The principal officer team followed up with individuals and teams to further understand these issues.

Some staff shared personal, difficult experiences, and the leadership team is committed to acting on the information provided. Actions have been taken to address common themes, informed by the HMIFCRS Spotlight report on Culture and Values, as well as the NFCC culture action plan. These efforts are part of a broader ambition to ensure a safe, inclusive work environment where everyone can be their authentic self.

There are a number of key areas of work underway:

### **1. Independent and impartial investigation:**

An external company appointed to investigate reports of inappropriate behaviour and to handle serious allegations in the future.

# Our Progress

- 2. Staff engagement:** The introduction of a staff engagement platform called Hive to allow anonymous feedback and help identify trends and serious concerns.
- 3. Confidential reporting tool:** The Service offers Say So, an independent, confidential reporting line, where staff can report any concerns with the reassurance that it will be investigated, if appropriate, and they have the option to remain anonymous. Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service have no means of tracking who has raised the concern.
- 4. Communication of outcomes and lessons learned:** Efforts are being made to share the outcomes of complaints, disciplinaries, and grievances to ensure learning from these processes.
- 5. Welfare arrangements on the incident ground:** Concerns raised about welfare and hygiene arrangements are being addressed by the emergency response team, with proposals for improvements.
- 6. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) awareness:** EDI awareness sessions have been reintroduced for all staff.
- 7. Statement of Intent and Core Code of Ethics:** Chief Fire Officer Rob Barber has reinforced the Service's Statement of Intent, which emphasises expected standards, while efforts continue to embed the Core Code of Ethics within the Service to guide ethical behaviour.



**HMICFRS' report on Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services** was published in March 2023. This report was issued with a series of recommendations for the sector, government and services. The report highlighted the need for urgent improvements in equality, inclusion, diversity, and misconduct management in the fire sector, citing instances of inappropriate behaviour in some services.

There are 35 national recommendations which aim to improve culture and address discrimination, bullying and harassment across UK Fire & Rescue services. Nineteen are directed for chief fire officers to progress. Staffordshire has addressed all 19 national recommendations through self-assessment. Improvements include enhanced staff training, grievance handling, whistleblowing procedures, and recruitment practices.

Based on findings from the values and culture report and other reports of unacceptable behaviour, the Home Secretary commissioned HMICFRS to carry out a thematic inspection into the handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services across England. Staffordshire was among 10 selected services, representing a mix of sizes, governance models, and urban-rural areas.

This thematic inspection examined how fire services identify and investigate misconduct, the effectiveness and consistency of misconduct processes, staff confidence in these processes, and the role of authorities and organisations in handling misconduct. Inspections took place towards the end of 2023 and involved remote and on-site engagement over three weeks, including file reviews, interviews, focus groups and reality testing.

HMICFRS provided a general debrief to each service after their inspection, but the findings will apply to all services. There were no specific areas of concern specific to Staffordshire raised during this inspection. The associated report is published in August 2024.



## Promote a positive and supportive culture committed to improving the health, fitness and wellbeing of our people

Occupational health provides support to both Staffordshire Police and Fire and Rescue Service employees through a triage process, offering in-person or remote appointments. Services include counselling for work-related issues, bereavement, trauma, and mental health concerns, as well as health advice, sickness reviews, and pre-employment screenings. An Occupational health physician supports medical reviews, while external physiotherapists assist with injury management and recovery. The wellbeing nurse organises events and initiatives to promote health and wellbeing, fostering open conversations and supporting a healthy workforce.

Volunteer chaplains provide 24-hour pastoral care and support, offering a non-religious service focused on staff wellbeing. They assist with any personal or work-related issues and can discuss faith if needed.

The service has an active retired network and cohort of volunteers who assist in events, operational training, charity initiatives, and maintain the memorial garden.

A wellbeing bus tour took place during September, with the team visiting various fire and police locations across the county.

The tour focused on topics such as welfare, health, and wellbeing, financial wellbeing, sustainability, and musculoskeletal complaints. Principal officers, station managers, human resources, representative bodies, chaplains, trauma risk incident management practitioners, and newly-appointed mental health first aiders joined the tour to offer advice and support.

A cohort of staff have volunteered and taken part in training to qualify as mental health first aiders as an additional means of support to people who may be struggling with their mental health. They are not counsellors, but can offer a safe space, confidential conversations and signpost to appropriate sources of help and assistance.

The Thrive wellbeing app has been partnered with the Service for about a year, with 10 per cent of the workforce signed up. It aims to reduce the stigma around mental health and provide support when needed. The app is separate from organisational support and is fully confidential. It offers therapy services from professional psychologists, providing unlimited support, as well as tools to help individuals manage their mental wellbeing and understand their emotions.



# Our Progress



## Work with our communities and partners to improve the diversity of our workforce

The Service is participating in a pilot direct entry scheme, launched by the NFCC, to encourage applications for station manager operational firefighter roles from individuals without fire service experience. The scheme, is designed for those with proven leadership skills from other sectors. The aim is to diversify senior management in fire and rescue services, offering new perspectives and experiences.

The scheme will complement traditional progression routes and help attract talent from a wider pool. Our first direct entry station manager, joined the Service in September 2023 bringing with her the benefit of 20 years in the private sector – primarily in recruitment.

Positive action is a set of lawful measures under the Equality Act 2010 designed to overcome historic and current disadvantages in employment opportunities. It encourages individuals from diverse groups to apply but does not involve positive discrimination, such as setting quotas or preferential treatment.

Applicants are still considered based on merit, with selection criteria strictly followed.

The Service's commitment to positive action is driven by the need for a diverse workforce to address a wide range of incidents, better understand community needs, and reduce disadvantages that increase community risk. It helps improve recruitment and enhances the Service's ability to respond effectively to diverse community expectations.

For the Service, positive action is necessary due to an under-representation of women (18 per cent of staff, 8 per cent in operational roles) and ethnic minorities (5 per cent of staff, compared to 6.4 per cent in Staffordshire and 16.5 per cent in Stoke-on-Trent). The Service aims to better reflect the communities we serve by encouraging diverse applications. Positive action can also involve reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities.





## Response



- 8873** total incidents **DOWN 8.9%** from last year
- 869** road traffic collisions **UP 4.26%** from last year
- 416** accidental house fires **UP 1.96%** from last year
- 1604** small outdoor fires **DOWN 29.21%** from last year
- 4** accidental house fire deaths **NO CHANGE** from last year
- 14** accidental house fire injuries **DOWN 17.65%** from last year
- 132** accidental business fires **DOWN 12.58%** from last year
- 47** deliberate business fires **UP 34.29%** from last year

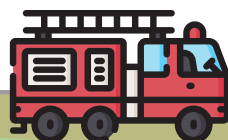


## Protection

- 12** Enforcement Notices issued
- 280** Total fire safety a

## Prevention

- 13973** Safe and Well visits **UP 7.02%** from last year



## Human Resources

- Recruited:**
- 70** on-call firefighters
- 34** wholetime firefighters
- 10** support staff

\*The figures reported in this report are based on the most up to date information available. other external influences, these performance figures may vary slightly from previous reports



ic below highlights our performance over the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March  
g our communities a quick and easy overview of our key achievements



es and **10** Prohibition

audits

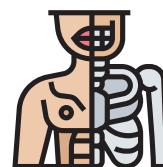


## Health and Safety

Injuries up to **33**, in comparison to **30** the previous year.

### Breakdown:

- 9** struck against object
- 6** manual handling
- 5** slip, trip or fall
- 4** struck by object
- 3** burns
- 2** musculoskeletal
- 2** entrapment
- 1** hazardous material
- 1** distress to wearer



## Resources

nters

efighters



## Finance

Budget set at **£46.5m**,  
Capital spend **£3.8m**

against a forecast of £4.2m.



Due to factors such as subsequent outcomes of fire investigations, Coroner's reports, and  
s and may be subject to change.

# Emerging Issues

The Service faces ongoing challenges in identifying vulnerabilities and emerging risks, requiring constant adaptation. New risks, including advancements in technology, battery storage facilities, climate change, and financial pressures on communities, demand increased attention.

To address these emerging issues, the Service will use national research, data models, and guidance from sources like academia and the NFCC. This approach will help tailor our emergency response, prevention, and protection strategies to safeguard both our firefighters and the communities they serve.

Firefighters are enhancing their understanding of emerging risks associated with new technologies, such as batteries in vehicles, homes, and businesses. Operational plans are being adapted to address these risks, with guidance shared through engagements with councils, planning authorities and MPs.

**Alternatively fuelled vehicles (AFVs)** are those powered by fuels other than petrol or diesel. When two or more fuel sources are used, the vehicle is called a hybrid. The most common type is a hybrid electric vehicle, which combines an internal combustion engine with one or more electric motors, though the term also covers other methods of capturing and using energy.

AFVs can be powered by high-voltage fuel cells, compressed natural gas, liquid natural gas, bio-fuels, hydrogen fuel cells, or rechargeable batteries. Identifying the presence of an AFV is crucial, and specialised skills and tools can be required for dealing with incidents involving these types of vehicles.

**Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)** pose significant risks to fire and rescue services, including fire, explosion, and complex electrical hazards due to their high energy density and chemical composition. These incidents require specialised firefighting techniques and equipment, as conventional methods are often ineffective. The high

voltages involved increase the risk of electrical shock, making safe isolation critical.

Effective management of BESS incidents requires coordination with system operators, manufacturers, and hazardous materials teams. Environmental risks, such as toxic fumes and chemical contamination, also need to be addressed. Ongoing training, national guidance, and adaptation to new technologies are essential to enhance safety and resilience in handling BESS emergencies.

**Cyber security** significantly impacts fire and rescue services by affecting both operational efficiency and data protection. Reliance on digital technologies makes these services vulnerable to cyber threats, which can disrupt communication and incident management, delaying emergency response. Cyber-attacks may compromise sensitive data, including personnel information and incident reports, undermining public trust. Financial and reputational damage can also result from such breaches.

To address these risks, robust cyber security measures, such as encryption and regular audits, are essential. Investing in staff training, implementing strong security policies, and staying updated on emerging threats help enhance the Service's resilience and protect its operational capabilities.

**Lithium-ion batteries** the growing number of electric vehicles (EVs) on UK roads, including e-scooters and e-bikes, poses challenges for fire and rescue services, primarily due to the safety risks associated with lithium-ion batteries. These batteries can undergo thermal runaway if damaged, leading to intense fires that are difficult to extinguish and may re-ignite, requiring continuous monitoring. High-voltage systems also pose electrocution risks during rescues.

Firefighters need specialised skills for safe extrication and incident management. The rapid evolution of EV technology demands ongoing learning and adaptation, with collaboration between fire services, EV

manufacturers, and industry experts being essential to update best practices and enhance emergency response capabilities.

Major changes to road and rail infrastructure present unique emergency response challenges, especially in complex environments like tunnels, bridges, and depots. New major road and rail routes could increase the risks of accidents, derailments, or collisions, requiring advanced response capabilities.

During construction, there is a need for specialised resources, training, and equipment to ensure effective fire suppression and rescue operations tailored to these settings. The scale of these projects may affect local fire service availability, necessitating strategic planning and resource management. Collaboration with stakeholders, thorough risk assessments, and ongoing training are essential to mitigate risks and ensure the safety of infrastructure, personnel, and our communities.

**Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC)** is a lightweight, reinforced material widely used in Europe since the 1950s as a cost-effective alternative to traditional concrete. Found in many UK public buildings, including schools and hospitals, RAAC is prone

to sudden, undetectable structural failures, with concerns intensifying after a 2018 school roof collapse.

The Department for Education has closed some schools with RAAC to ensure safety, while the NFCC works with the government to identify affected buildings. RAACs vulnerability to collapse, especially under added weight during fires, highlights the need for targeted safety measures and emergency response plans.

**Rising living costs** have led to an increase in fuel-poor households, particularly in Stoke-on-Trent, which ranks among the highest nationally. Financial constraints may elevate fire risks, potentially increasing the number of dwelling fires. Households may resort to unsafe heating methods, such as using candles, which have caused a decade-high number of fires. Additionally, financial pressures can lead to unsafe cooking practices, neglect of appliance maintenance, improper storage of flammable materials and lack of smoke alarms.

To mitigate these risks, the Service uses targeted interventions, fire safety education, and support referrals for vulnerable households.



# Financial summary

The Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams manages the authority's finances, ensuring value for money and financial stability while promoting operational efficiency and effectiveness.

The 2023/24 revenue budget of £46.5 million, approved on 13 February 2023, included a Band D council tax of £84.25, reflecting a 4.85 per cent increase for the year (£3.90).

The total revenue spend for the year was £46.3m, £0.2m under budget and in line with forecasts. This allowed a £0.7m additional contribution to capital projects and reduced reliance on reserves.

Pay spending for the year was £30m, £0.8m (2.5 per cent) below budget, due to held vacancies in on-call and non-operational fire staff roles:

- On-call full-time equivalent (FTE) increased by 23.1 (over 9 per cent), improving availability (up 12 per cent) and response times, despite recruitment challenges.
- Non-operational fire staff FTE ended 23.6 per cent below budget pending the Prevention and Protection review, with outcomes now incorporated into next year's budget and transformation plans.

Non-pay costs ended the year £0.2m over budget, driven by higher vehicle repair, fuel, oil, and tyre costs, as well as overspends on contracted services like external audits and over-the-border charges. These trends are accounted for in the 2024/25 budget.

The capital programme spent £3.8m, £0.4m below the forecast of £4.2m, with 53 per cent funded by earmarked reserves and revenue contributions, reducing the Authority's debt. The closing cash position was £16.3m, £4.9m better than budget, due to lower capital spend. Long-term loan borrowing totalled £16.7m, and earmarked reserves remained steady at £7.5m as of 31 March 2024.

The Statutory Accounts for 2022/23 were signed by Grant Thornton and the Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams on 8 April 2024. This Authority was ahead of most, as fewer than 10 per cent of 2022/23 Local Government Accounts were signed at the start of the year. The external auditor for 2023/24 changed from Grant Thornton to Azets for the next four years.

## Accounting Statements

The Annual Statement of Accounts provides a transparent overview of the financial position and activities of the Fire and Rescue Authority, following guidelines set by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). Key sections include:

**Statement of Responsibilities:** Outlines the duties of the authority and treasurer

**Annual Governance Statement:** Evaluates governance arrangements and highlights areas for improvement

**Statement of Accounting Policies:** Details how financial transactions are recorded and disclosed

**Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:** Summarises the authority's income, expenditure, and financial outcomes for 2023-2024

**Movement in Reserves Statement:** Links the Income and Expenditure Account with reserve balances for future spending

**Balance Sheet:** Displays the financial position as of 31 March 2024

**Cash Flow Statement:** Shows cash movements throughout the year.

Once approved, the full statement will be available on our website. Printed copies can be requested by contacting our finance team at **0300 330 1000**.

# STAFFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE FINANCE UPDATE



2023/24 NET  
REVENUE BUDGET

**£46.46M**



CASH POSITION 31.03.24  
UP 4.9M TO BUDGET

**£16.3M**



REVENUE SPEND FOR THE  
YEAR £0.1M FAVOURABLE  
TO BUDGET

**£46.31M**

RESERVES  
AS AT 31.03.24  
GENERAL RESERVES £1.9M  
EARMARKED RESERVES £7.5M

**£9.5M**



**2023/24**

CAPITAL FORECAST  
PROGRAMME

**£4.2M**

ACTUAL SPEND  
FOR THE YEAR

**£3.8M**

(91%)



## Interested in working for us?

**Firefighters** make up the majority of our workforce, taking on diverse roles that include responding to emergencies such as fires, road traffic collisions, water rescues, entrapments, and more. Equally important is their focus on prevention and protection, working closely with local communities and businesses to reduce fire risks before they occur.

**On-call firefighters** are paid, part-time responders who handle emergencies like full-time firefighters, fitting this role around their main jobs. They respond from home or work and play a key role in providing emergency services and promoting fire safety in Staffordshire.



### Alerter goes off

If an emergency is called in during their on-call period, they will be notified by their alerter.



### Go to fire station

They will then make their way to their local fire station, whether this is from their home or work.



### Respond to emergency

When at the station, they will then kit up, get in the fire engine and respond to the emergency.





There are lots of non-operational fire staff across the Service who support our frontline operational crews and who bring a range of expertise and skills in professional, technical, planning, and administrative services.

The Service's non-operational fire staff work across various teams and departments, including:

**Our Contact Centre**  
**Fire & health partnership**

**Learning & Development**  
**ICT**  
**Performance & Assurance**

**Prevention & Protection**  
**Risk Planning**

Additional services, such as human resources, finance, estates, transport, occupational health, stores, procurement and corporate communications, are shared with Staffordshire Police.

## **Join us and help make Staffordshire the safest place to be**

If you are interested in working for us you can find more information about the various career opportunities on our website: [www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/careers](http://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/careers)

## Tell us what you think

We value your feedback on the content of this Statement of Assurance. If you have any thoughts, suggestions, or feedback, please feel free to share them with us.

You can email us at [consultation@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@staffordshirefire.gov.uk) or visit our website [www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/contact-us](http://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/contact-us)

You will also find additional information about all our services and activities on our website.

## Contact

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Stone  
Staffordshire  
ST15 0BS



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



**Staffordshire**  
Fire and Rescue Service  
preventing • protecting • responding