

# Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

## Public Performance Meeting

November 2022

Protective Marking: **Official**



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

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# 1.0 Current Areas of Priority

## 1.1 Service Transformation

The requirement for Service Transformation is to ensure that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service: “Is able to provide a modern, efficient and sustainable level of service to the public which does not compromise the safety of our staff or our communities.”

There are a number of topics that are actively being worked upon which all connect under the banner of future transformation of the service. The work is aligned to the Safety Plan 2020-2024 (*Service Reform*) and the Commissioners Fire Plan 2021-2024 under the two priorities of having *a Flexible and Responsive Service* as well as *a Fire Service for Tomorrow*.

Initially 18 topics were identified which consist of a range of short to medium term work streams linked to the Service’s Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). A Transformation board was established in February 2022 with a number of representatives from across the service in order to deliver the work and significant progress has been made to date.

The board meets frequently to ensure progress is discussed on work streams which includes consultation responses, coordination issues, communications and recommendations are made through the appropriate governance structures. The Service tracks progress in each area through an action plan which is reported through the governance structures.

**A number of the workstreams have already been completed such as the following:**

- A corporate restructure
- The change to a minimum of 4 staff on whole-time appliances
- The completion of a Retained Support Officers (RSO) project
- A review of operational exercises
- A review of incident command and outreach training
- The option to remove watch managers from whole-time appliances
- A review of attendance standards
- The ‘On-call Nine-Point Plan’ to improve availability of fire appliances and crews

Other workstreams are incorporated in to normal working within the directorates; for example, the work on a ‘Clean Concept’ and reducing the risk of contaminants to operational staff from fires, as well as a project involving a review of the standards and accreditation for fire investigation.

**There are also a number of projects nearing completion such as:**

- The productivity review
- The ‘South Staffordshire Roving Model’ for on-call responses,
- The Enhanced Rescue Pump (ERP) and crewing at Longton
- The crewing policy review



More in depth work is continuing with the mobilisation of on-call crews by numbers, the joint Fire/Police estates projects and the review of prevention and protection.

The work is transforming the Service to ensure that it delivers even better outcomes for the community and at the same time means that the Service is working more efficiently. It is estimated that the delivery of the transformation programme will achieve a recurring saving of circa £1 million for the Service.

### **Horizon Scanning, volatility and cost pressure**

There are serious concerns across all public sectors about the financial situation as a result of high inflation, pay awards, pension costs and increasing costs of running the Service. The cost of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts, the cost of fuel, insurance and capital expenditure are all adding pressure on the Service's budgets.

The increasing cost of the project involving Stafford meant that the Service had to pause it based upon its viability which resulted in Service not benefitting from an expected on-going saving and a capital receipt. The uncertainty of pay awards for 2022 for employees is another significant factor because any unfunded pay awards mean that the Service would need to find additional efficiencies within existing budgets. This could mean a reduction to front-line services to the public and as a result a remodelling of the Service's medium term financial strategy is underway.

It is evident that the transformation project has been delivered so far in an extremely challenging and dynamic situation owing to these external factors which are largely beyond control of the Service. It is therefore appropriate that the workstreams evolve with the situation and further work is required in terms of reviewing the growing cost pressure on the MTFS which at the start of the current financial year was expected to see a deficit of around £2 million by 2025. This pressure is additional to the requirements to ensure that the Service is fit for tomorrow; taking into account the Staffordshire Commissioner's 'Fire and Rescue Service Plan', the HMICFRS inspection outcomes and the 'White Paper for Fire Reform'.

**This may mean the following options are now brought into focus for the Service through dialogue with the PFCC, the workforce and its representative bodies:**

- A larger review of prevention and protection roles, structure and service delivery to allow savings to be made
- An increased emphasis on the Fire/Police collaborative estates project at Stafford fire station with the Police in order to remodel the site and create savings for both organisations
- A widening of the number of the estate to be shared with Police teams to generate more savings for both organisations
- A change for some whole-time stations to 'Day-Duty Shift' stations
- A Removal of on-call Stations and disposal of sites in order to release a capital receipt



## 1.2 HMICFRS Fire and Rescue Service Inspection 2021/22 (Effectiveness, Efficiency & People)

HMICFRS has now completed its second full assessment of fire and rescue services in England. The inspection focused on our effectiveness, efficiency and our people. It looked at how effective and efficient we are at keeping people safe from fire and other risks and how well we look after our people.

The HMICFRS report– *Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2021/22 – Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service* was published on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The full report is available publicly from the inspectorate website.

- The report acknowledged that we are ‘**Good**’ at being effective in understanding and preventing fires and other risks and responding to major and multi-agency incidents.
- Inspectors also said we are ‘**Good**’ at identifying people in our communities who are most at risk from fire and we work with our partners to reduce this risk.
- The inspection noted how we have responded positively and proactively to learning from the Grenfell Tower tragedy and have improved the safety of residents in Staffordshire who live in high-rise buildings through our sprinkler scheme.
- We were also rated as ‘**Good**’ in how we make the Service affordable now and in the future. We continuously look for ways to improve our effectiveness and efficiency and in doing so we need to make sure that we make best use of new technologies to transform the way we provide our services.
- The Inspectors rated us ‘**Good**’ at getting the right people with the right skills, managing performance and developing leaders as well as how we look after the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.
- However, there were a number of areas in which we were rated as ‘**Requires Improvement**’. Whilst disappointing, only by going through this inspection process can we identify and make improvements, in order to make things better for our staff and our communities.

### Areas for Improvement

HMICFRS has made some recommendations in the report, and has also identified 20 ‘Areas for Improvement’ which the Service has now created an action plan to address. The progress of this action plan is scrutinised internally through Service governance boards, and also by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire. A full list of these ‘Areas for Improvement’ is below.



## Overall Judgement for Service Effectiveness: GOOD

Question Judgment	Areas for Improvement	Comments & progress
<p>Understanding the risk of fire &amp; other emergencies</p> <p><b>Good</b></p>	<p><b>1. The Service should make sure that firefighters are confident and suitably trained in gathering risk information</b></p>	<p><i>To ensure compliance with the Fire and Rescue Services act 2004; the Service has completed a full review of the current risk information system. The overarching consideration of improving the approach to firefighter safety is a shift towards a dynamic and flexible approach to delivery. Staff online surveys and face-to-face briefings have been conducted and staff engagement remains ongoing in respect of the current Provision of Risk Information (PORIS) system, in order to gain valuable feedback and to identify further areas for improvement.</i></p> <p><i>Areas such as - providing an improved ability to implement a risk scoring matrix, simplifying terminology to improve understanding for users, allowing risk inspection forms to be designed within the Service to better meet the national drivers and legislation, have now been designed into the planned software update within the new Web Risk Manager (WRM) system. The system is currently in testing and is expected to be implemented fully by the end of 2022. A full rollout of training packages will be completed for both operational and non-operational staff shortly after.</i></p>
	<p><b>2. The Service needs to improve how it engages with seldom-heard people and groups in its local community to build a comprehensive profile of risk in its service area</b></p>	<p><i>The Service has started to develop an approach to increasing community engagement through community networks. This work is being led by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer. Work is underway with the Equality Diversity and Inclusion, and Communication teams in order to improve the understanding of community groups and look at alternative ways of communication for those that do not have access to social media. It is proposed that an internal risk planning engagement group be set up in order to ensure activity is coordinated effectively.</i></p>
<p>Preventing fires &amp; other risk</p> <p><b>Good</b></p>	<p><b>3. The Service should make sure it puts in place measures to catch up on the backlog of safe and well visits. – COMPLETED</b></p>	<p><i>The Service has worked hard to deal with the backlog of safe and well visits following the removal of national lockdown restrictions. During lockdown periods, Prevention staff were unable to complete all home safety visits in person, but an alternative 'socially distanced' method was established using telephone to ensure that those most vulnerable were still supported. In person, visits have now been re-established and visits are scheduled by crews and technicians according to priority. The total number of open referrals has been reduced from over 600 to 45.</i></p> <p><i>Safe and Well activity has returned to business as usual with the overall focus to increase engagement and to refine and improve assessment alongside the development of technology, data integration, and information sharing capabilities.</i></p>
<p>Protecting the public through fire regulation</p> <p><b>Requires improvement</b></p>	<p><b>4. The Service should assure itself that its Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.</b></p>	<p><i>There is currently an ongoing review of the Service's RBIP. The factors that have already been identified as contributing to a high-risk premises are - Societal life risk, Likelihood of a fire occurring, Likelihood of non-compliance with fire safety regulations and standards. These are to be supplemented with the Protection risk profiles and the Experian list of high-risk premises, which will form the basis of the Service's revised RBIP. Further guidance is expected from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) by the end of this year at which point the final draft for consultation will be released.</i></p>

	<p><b>5. The Service should make sure it has an effective quality assurance process, so that staff carry out audits to a consistent standard.</b></p>	<p><i>A quality assurance process has now been developed to work with our Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS), which will ensure that records are reviewed and signed off by the fire safety managers. Policy and procedures have also been revised in line with this approach. The Service is developing the Prevention, Protection and Hydrant Management system (PPHMS) to manage this information in the future, which will improve the consistency of quality assurance by setting out a standardised approach to data entry and provide further analytical tools around quality assurance.</i></p> <p><i>A managerial review process, through data sampling will also be implemented in order to improve the quality of data captured by staff throughout prevention and protection activity.</i></p>
<p>Responding to fires &amp; other emergencies <b>Requires improvement</b></p>	<p><b>6. The Service should make sure that it has effective systems in place to reliably understand resource availability.</b></p>	<p><i>The Service has previously created the position of Resource Manager. This position is responsible for the monitoring of daily availability for the Whole-time part of the business.</i></p> <p><i>As an extension of this, the Retained Support Officer (RSO) watch managers now monitor daily availability for the on-call side of the business and use a predictive statistical tool in order to undertake resource planning.</i></p> <p><i>Firewatch / Vision integration and development is also planned to reduce the extent of manual Fire Control processes around obtaining and interpreting availability. These Improvements will also allow the Service to complete an assessment of up to the minute availability, which can then be automatically shared with the Command and Control system to improve the timeliness and consistency of decision making around the mobilisation of resources.</i></p>
	<p><b>7. The Service should improve the availability of its fire engines to respond to incidents in line with its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).</b></p>	<p><i>A new Response performance management board has been established, which will meet on a monthly basis and will include feedback from service delivery leads for each station availability plan. This will focus Group and Station managers on improving availability as a performance priority.</i></p> <p><i>The implementation of the new Retained Support Officers (RSO) structure has been completed which provide more flexibility for the Service in its ability to implement core skills training to operational staff. This will ensure that the qualifications required for the operational deployment of firefighters are monitored and maintained.</i></p> <p><i>The next steps are an end-to-end review of the recruitment process as part of a new transformation project, and to continue exploratory work for the potential to mobilise by numbers, e.g. appliances available with three riders. The Service is looking towards the end of 2022 to review suggested options and to complete any required consultation.</i></p> <p><i>A transformation trial of pairing stations is underway in South Staffs, with the intention of increasing the mobility and flexibility of firefighters between stations to increase overall appliance availability. This trial will be reviewed for feasibility towards the end of the year.</i></p>
	<p><b>8. The Service should make sure that it improves the way in which it captures and shares learning from operational incidents.</b></p>	<p><i>A new quarterly training and action plan meeting has been formed to discuss outstanding actions from incident debriefs and to direct improvement activity. These insights are then shared with the workforce and retained as organisational learning for areas such as; operational procedure, risk assessment and equipment use.</i></p> <p><i>The process of debriefing is under review; with the intention of increasing the number of multi-agency debrief sessions to improve shared learning opportunities. A central training planner for five appliance and Over the Border operations training has also been set up to further ensure organisational learning is captured and circulated.</i></p>

## Overall Judgement for Service Efficiency: REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT

Question Judgment	Areas for Improvement	Comments & progress
<p>Making best use of resources</p> <p><b>Requires improvement</b></p>	<p><b>9. The Service should have effective measures in place to assure itself that its workforce is productive and that their time is used as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet the priorities in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).</b></p>	<p><i>The Service is actively revising its crewing and staffing arrangements for response activity through the Service Transformation Board. The Service is also assessing the terms and conditions of Protection staff to ensure that staff retention within those roles is maximized in comparison with other similar employers. A theme of increasing productivity and improving performance management is being worked on via transformation work streams.</i></p>
<p>Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future</p> <p><b>Good</b></p>	<p><b>10. The Service should assure itself that its IT systems are resilient, reliable, accurate and accessible</b></p>	<p><i>The Service has now set the strategic direction within the Service Digital Strategy, most notably full adoption of Office365 and greater integration of Infographics products such as, Firewatch and the development of the Prevent, Protect &amp; Hydrants Management System (PPHMS). Work is underway to achieve this with the first elements of the system due to be delivered by late 2022.</i></p> <p><i>The Firewatch mobile App has now been rolled out to all on call personnel, which gives easier access to key information and remote functionality.</i></p> <p><i>Preparation for the adoption of Firewatch as an asset management function is currently in development, which will improve the Services ability to track, maintain, and plan accurate predictions against future needs. The adoption of Firewatch for Health and Safety reporting is also planned.</i></p>

## Overall Judgement for People: REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT

Question Judgment	Areas for Improvement	Comments & progress
<p>Promoting the right values &amp; culture</p> <p><b>Requires improvement</b></p>	<p><b>11. The Service should make sure all staff understand and demonstrate its values.</b></p>	<p><i>The Service has adopted the national Core Code of Ethics and work is hand to embed this within the organisation alongside a framework to include recruitment, training, promotion, and supervisory management training.</i></p> <p><i>The Ethics Diversity and Inclusion team are developing a robust approach that will underpin and promote long-term sustainability within the Service. In order to improve staff engagement, a diary of events is being created which will be launched in the near future on the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue intranet, and notice boards will be reviewed and unified at stations.</i></p>
	<p><b>12. The Service should assure itself that senior managers are visible and demonstrate service values through their behaviours.</b></p>	<p><i>Work is ongoing in terms of culture and insights to ensure that all managers and staff model the values and behaviours, which are underpinned by the Core Code of Ethics. We now have a process of regular face-to-face briefings and managers are being asked to discuss these publications with staff to ensure all are engaged, messages are consistent, and people have the opportunity to raise any issues.</i></p>



	<b>13. The Service should monitor secondary contracts and overtime to make sure working hours are not exceeded.</b>	<i>The Service adopts the current guidance set out in the National Joint Council Scheme of condition of service (Sixth Edition). Any pre-arranged overtime hours carried out by operational staff are self-monitored by local line managers and the Resource Manager to ensure the wellbeing of staff is maintained. We are working to review the systems and processes in order to make this easier; including developing improved monitoring and reporting of these areas at a Service-wide level.</i>
Getting the right people with the right skills <b>Good</b>	<b>14. The Service should review its succession planning to make sure that it has effective arrangements in place to manage staff turnover while continuing to provide its core service to the public.</b>	<i>A workforce planning board has been created and is attended and chaired by members of the senior management team to improve the approach to succession planning.  Performance measures and data analytics are in development, which will enable the Service to identify potential retirements and to highlight skills-gaps, and areas where development or recruitment is needed within the Service to minimise the impact on service delivery.</i>
	<b>15. The Service needs to review its reliance on overtime to consider whether there are more effective arrangements to provide its core service.</b>	<i>The Service has recently undertaken a review of how much it spends on overtime to fulfill our establishment level of response. It has now agreed and implemented new policy arrangements which allows for a minimum crew of four to be mobilised to certain incidents, reducing the need to employ overtime to reach the previous crewing level of five.</i>
Ensuring fairness & promoting diversity <b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>16. The Service should assure itself that staff are confident using its feedback mechanisms.</b>	<i>The Service has adopted and incorporated 'Say So', an independent service designed to enhance the voice of staff enabling them to raise concerns anonymously. The HR team will also be actively visiting stations to discuss the options available and ensuring awareness of the mechanisms through face-to-face interaction and internal communications.</i>
	<b>17. To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the Service should make sure diversity and inclusion are a priority and become important values of the Service.</b>	<i>A collaborative approach with Staffordshire Police on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is being introduced with an investment from the Service into a new 'Positive Action' role and improved engagement with recruitment teams, which will allow a greater focus on diversity and inclusion. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion is also a focus of the Workforce Planning Board, and statistics are published on the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue web site.</i>
	<b>18. The Service should review how effective its policy on bullying, harassment and discrimination is in reducing unacceptable behavior towards its staff</b>	<i>Monthly case reviews have been introduced for grievances and this process is now embedded within the Service. Oversight of grievances is to be provided by the Head of Human Resources in conjunction with the Chief Fire Officer. Regular overview of these issues will ensure that any trends are quickly identified and dealt with, and that staff are provided with training and support where required.</i>

	<b>19. The Service should make sure HR policy is consistently applied in the management of employment cases.</b>	<i>Oversight of all employment cases is to be provided by the Head of Human Resources in conjunction with the Chief Fire Officer and a review is completed as they arise to ensure that cases are managed effectively, fairly, and consistently. Policies and Procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose in respect of employment cases.</i>
Managing performance & developing leaders <b>Good</b>	<b>20. The Service should aim to diversify the pool of future and current leaders</b>	<i>The Equality Diversity and Inclusion team has now become part of the Human Resources department, allowing all to work together more effectively to address the challenges in this area.</i>  <i>Work continues in updating Service policies and promoting engagement within the communities of Staffordshire to increase knowledge and interest in the career options that the Service can offer. Further work is also scheduled to look at the possibilities of partnering with local higher education establishments in providing opportunities, and also in supporting and developing the potential of staff already within the Service to increase the pool of skilled future leaders.</i>

## 1.3 Management & Governance of the Community Safety Plan

The Fire and Rescue National Framework requires that every Fire and Rescue Service must produce a high-level Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which outlines how a Service uses their resources to respond to and reduce the risks they have identified in their local area. The Staffordshire Commissioner is responsible for approving the Service's CRMP, which we call our Safety Plan. In the summer of 2020, the Commissioner approved our current Safety Plan 2020-2024 which set out the Service's strategic vision, priorities and objectives and considers how we will best respond to and improve the services we deliver to our communities across Staffordshire.

Our Safety Plan (2020-2024) directly aligns with the priorities set out in the Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan (2021-2024).

### The four priorities outlined within our Safety Plan are:

1. Prevention and Early Intervention;
2. Protecting Staffordshire and its people;
3. Public Confidence; and
4. Service Reform.

The Service has recently received a grading of '**Substantial Assurance**' from an independent audit conducted by RSM Risk Assurance Services.

As a part of this audit, RSM have reviewed the consultation activity, governance, and reporting arrangements in place that the Service utilises to gain assurance regarding the Service's performance against the Safety Plan. This was reviewed at both an operational and strategic level; and included the overall management of the Safety Plan, as well as the planning processes for future updates.

### The following comments were provided by RSM in conclusion of this audit;

*'Taking account of the issues identified, the Authority can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage the identified area are suitably designed, consistently applied and operating effectively.'*

A full copy of this report will be made publically available in the near future.



# 2.0 Providing a Flexible & Responsive Service

## 2.1 Incidents Attended & Road Traffic Collisions

- The Service attended a total of **4881** incidents between April 2022 and September 2022.
- In the same 6 month period Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service attended **4575** incidents in 2021 and **4602** incidents in 2019.
- There is a **6-7%** increase in the total number of attended incidents from the same period in both 2019 (Pre Covid-19) and 2020/21.

**Figure 1: Yearly Comparison of Total Incidents Attended between April and September with breakdown of incident type**

2019/2022 (Pre Covid-19) Comparison Apr-Sep

Attendance Type	Total Number of Incidents Attended APR-SEP 2019	Total Number of Incidents Attended APR-SEP 2022	% Change 2019 - 2022
01.Primary Fire	782	649	↓ -17.01%
02.Secondary Fire	976	1609	↑ 64.86%
03.Special Service Call	680	656	↓ -3.53%
04. Road Traffic Collision	367	373	↑ 1.63%
05.Chimney Dwelling	13	16	↑ 23.08%
06. Chimney Other	0	0	0.00%
07.False Alarm Equipment	820	798	↓ -2.68%
08.False Alarm Good Intent	894	748	↓ -16.33%
09.False Alarm Malicious	70	32	↓ -54.29%
Grand Total	4602	4881	↑ 6.06%

2021/2022 Comparison Apr-Sep

Attendance Type	Total Number of Incidents Attended APR-SEP 2021	Total Number of Incidents Attended APR-SEP 2022	% Change 2021 - 2022
01.Primary Fire	687	649	↓ -5.53%
02.Secondary Fire	1097	1609	↑ 46.67%
03.Special Service Call	726	656	↓ -9.64%
04. Road Traffic Collision	352	373	↑ 5.97%
05.Chimney Dwelling	21	16	↓ -23.81%
06. Chimney Other	0	0	0.00%
07.False Alarm Equipment	820	798	↓ -2.68%
08.False Alarm Good Intent	796	748	↓ -6.03%
09.False Alarm Malicious	76	32	↓ -57.89%
Grand Total	4575	4881	↑ 6.69%

**Primary fires** are potentially more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property and meet at least one of the following conditions:

- Any fire that occurred in a (non-derelict) building, vehicle or (some) outdoor structures
- Any fire involving fatalities, casualties or rescues
- Any fire attended by five or more pumping appliances.

**Secondary fires** are generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property. These include refuse fires, grassland fires and fires in derelict buildings or vehicles, unless these fires involved casualties or rescues, or five or more pumping appliances attended, in which case they become primary fires.



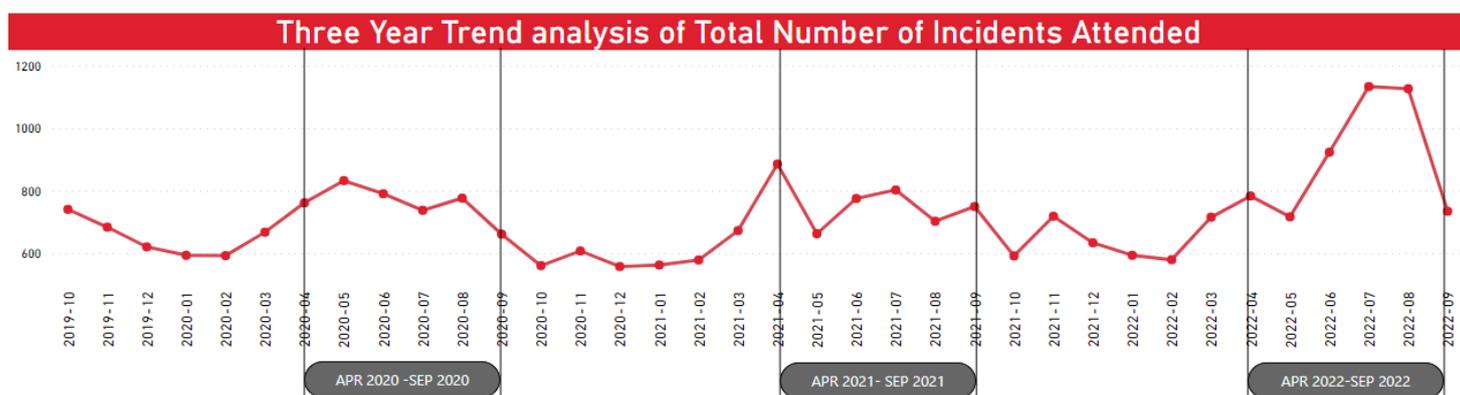
**Special Service Calls** are defined as any incident which falls outside the scope of the function of fire attendance. These incidents include both emergency and non-emergency response. Examples of Special Service Calls can be animal rescue, hazardous materials attendance, road spillages, gaining entry and exit in emergency situations and assisting other emergency services and the military with environmental catastrophe such as flooding.

**Emerging Demand**

The most notable area of increased demand change for the Service over the period of April to September 2022 has been concerned with attendance at Secondary Fire incidents.

A **46.67%** increase is noted from the number of Secondary Fires attended between April-September 2021, and a **64.86%** increase is noted from the number of incidents attended in the same period from 2019.

**Figure 2: Three year trend of Total Incidents Attended**



# 3.0 Protecting People and Places

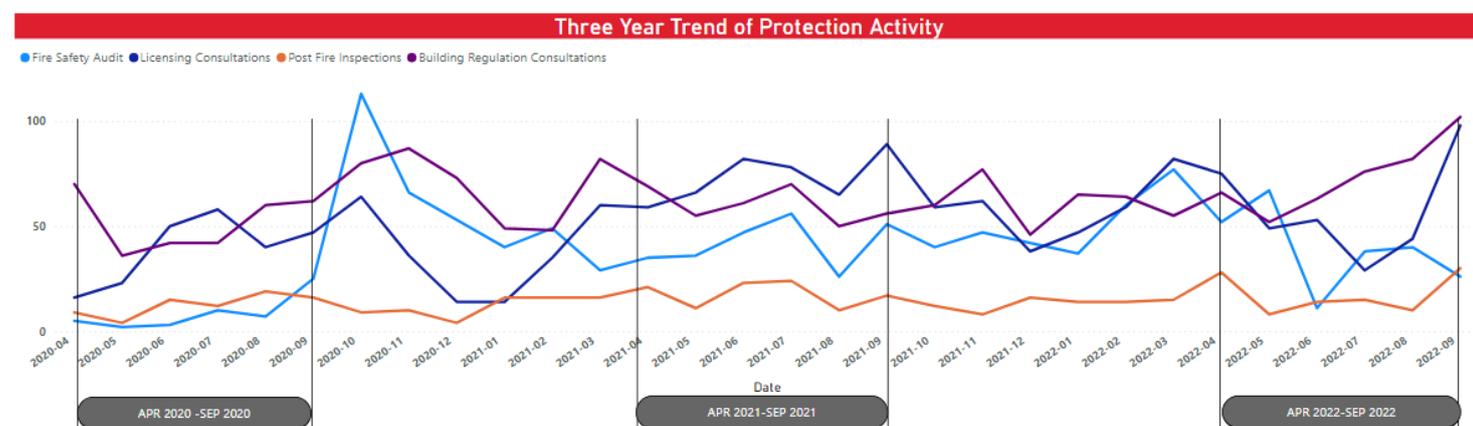
## 3.1 Fire Safety Audits & Building Regulation Activity

### Protection Activity

Protection activity has now returned to business as usual following the COVID-19 pandemic. All audits are now taking place 'in person' and numbers are increasing to the levels they were pre-pandemic. Between April and September 2022 a total of **272** fire safety audits were carried out, **339** building regulation consultations received and **250** licensing consultations were also received.

For the same time period in 2019/20 (pre-pandemic) there were **327** fire safety audits carried out, **337** building regulation consultations received and **240** licensing consultations received. The reduction in audits could be explained by a reduction in competent staff due to retirements and leavers, however 6 new members of protection staff have recently been recruited into SFRS to ensure capacity with regards to the completion of fire safety audits can now be achieved.

Figure 3: Three year trend of protection activity



### Fire Safety Audits

Fire Safety Audits have increased between April 2022 and September 2022 in line with the removal of COVID-19 restrictions; which have allowed more in person visits to be completed.

Figure 4: Breakdown of Business Types Audited



## Risk Based Inspection Programme

There is currently an ongoing review of the Services 'Risk Based Inspection Programme'. Preliminary guidance on higher risk occupancies and relative priorities for Risk Based Inspection Programmes were published in October 2021.

### The factors contributing to a high-risk premises will be:

- Likelihood of a fire occurring
- Likelihood of non-compliance with fire safety regulations and standards
- Societal life risk

There are a number of types of premises included within the above which when supplemented with the Protection risk profiles and the Experian list of high-risk premises, will form the basis of the Service's Risk Based Inspection Programme.

Following liaison with the NFCC we are expecting further guidance to be released in early 2023 which will shape the future of Risk Based Inspection Programmes nationally. Once in receipt of this further guidance SFRS will tailor their Risk Based Inspection Programme to best suit the requirements of the people of Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire.

## Fire Safety (England) Regulations

The Fire Safety (England) Regulations will come into force nationally in January 2023. Work is currently underway across a number of departments to ensure SFRS are best prepared to deal with any extra demand this may place upon us. A summary of the changes are detailed below:

Regulations are being introduced under article 24 of the 'Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005' (Fire Safety Order) to implement the majority of those recommendations made to government in the 'Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report' which require a change in the law.

These regulations will make it a requirement in law for responsible persons of high-rise blocks of flats to provide information to Fire and Rescue Services to assist them to plan and, if needed, provide an effective operational response.

Also, the regulations will require responsible persons in multi-occupied residential buildings which are high-rise buildings, as well as those above 11 metres in height, to provide additional safety measures.

In all multi-occupied residential buildings, the regulations require responsible persons to provide residents with fire safety instructions and information on the importance of fire doors. The regulations apply to existing buildings, and requirements for new buildings may be different.

### In high-rise residential buildings, responsible persons will be required to:

- **Building Plans:** provide their local Fire and Rescue Service with up-to-date electronic building floor plans and to place a hard copy of these plans, alongside a single page building plan which identifies key firefighting equipment, in a secure information box on site.



- **External Wall Systems:** provide to their local Fire and Rescue Service information about the design and materials of a high-rise building's external wall system and to inform the Fire and Rescue Service of any material changes to these walls. Also, they will be required to provide information in relation to the level of risk that the design and materials of the external wall structure gives rise to and any mitigating steps taken.
- **Lifts and other Key Fire-Fighting Equipment:** undertake monthly checks on the operation of lifts intended for use by firefighters, and evacuation lifts in their building and check the functionality of other key pieces of firefighting equipment. They will also be required to report any defective lifts or equipment to their local Fire and Rescue Service as soon as possible after detection if the fault cannot be fixed within 24 hours, and to record the outcome of checks and make them available to residents.
- **Information Boxes:** install and maintain a secure information box in their building. This box must contain the name and contact details of the Responsible Person and hard copies of the building floor plans.
- **Wayfinding Signage:** to install signage visible in low light or smoky conditions that identifies flat and floor numbers in the stairwells of relevant buildings.

### **In residential buildings with storeys over 11 metres in height, responsible persons will be required to:**

- **Fire Doors:** undertake annual checks of flat entrance doors and quarterly checks of all fire doors in the common parts.

### **In all multi-occupied residential buildings with two or more sets of domestic premises, responsible persons will be required to:**

- **Fire Safety Instructions:** provide relevant fire safety instructions to their residents, which will include instructions on how to report a fire and any other instruction which sets out what a resident must do once a fire has occurred, based on the evacuation strategy for the building.
- **Fire Door Information:** provide residents with information relating to the importance of fire doors in fire safety.

A further update will be provided in terms of progress with the implementation of the regulations locally in the subsequent report.



## 3.2 Community Sprinkler Project

**18** out of **42 identified blocks of flats over 5 storeys** have now been fitted with sprinkler systems.

In 2017, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service identified 42 blocks of flats over 5 storeys within the county that required sprinkler systems to be fitted. It was the aim of the Service to get these systems in place within a 10 year period. By the end of this year work on 18 of those buildings are to be completed meaning the Service is well on track to meet that objective.

In late 2020 Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service also entered into collaboration with 'Midland Heart' to provide sprinklers in a number of their properties. What started as an idea to retrofit sprinklers in a single block of flats in Staffordshire has now turned in to a much bigger project to provide sprinklers in 8 different buildings across the wider West Midlands area. Charnwood House, Lichfield has been completed and Andrews House which is scheduled to finish at the end of this year.

At the same time, Stoke on Trent City Council have continued their own programme of retrofitting sprinklers in all their high rise blocks of flats with 4 systems put in place over the past year and a further 2 installations already underway. They also have a new build programme in place which is building sprinklers in to new 3 storey developments such as Rialto, Beardsmore and Sutherland Courts providing a level of fire safety over and above that provided by developments adhering to the minimum legal requirements.

However, it is the completion of the sprinkler system at Andrews House in Lichfield which will mark the most recent success of our Community Sprinkler Project. This 8 storey, 59 flat, retirement housing, block of flats formed one of the original 42 premise we identified back in 2017. It also marks the 17th high rise block of flats that have been retrospectively fitted with sprinklers through partnership working with social housing providers and is due to be completed by the end of this year/beginning of next.

Following the fire that occurred on the 11th floor at Northwood Court in Hanley in March, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service have taken the opportunity to reengage with local social housing providers about the benefits of sprinklers. Using our fire engineer, we are able to support housing providers by liaising with sprinkler companies, providing technical support as well as engaging with residents directly, offering advice and reassurance on the positive impact that sprinklers will have.



## 3.3 Fire Hydrants

Over an eight week period all whole-time crews have received face to face guidance and training to introduce the hydrant inspection programme into the service. Equipment has been supplied with the use of an electronic form to record the testing process. The information is then reflected back to the Water Manager to disseminate to the appropriate departments. Risk categorisation has been implemented into the inspection process to support future testing regimes; which will improve the ability to align this data to risk in the coming year.

In total **3709** adopted fire hydrants have now undergone statutory testing and inspection in accordance with the requirements the Fire Services Act 2004. These hydrants are subject to an ongoing testing programme which is carried out by trained individuals.

- **3419** adopted fire hydrants have been tested and inspected by Service Hydrant Technicians.

Additionally to this;

- **114** adopted fire hydrants were tested and inspected during the operational hydrant testing trial completed by two watches at Lichfield Fire Station. This trial employed the use of operational crews to assist in testing and inspection activity.

Due to the success of this trial a further;

- **176** adopted fire hydrants have undergone inspections by four whole-time stations currently involved in the statutory testing programme within the county. These stations are Cannock, Stafford, Leek and Lichfield.

The further six whole-time stations will be joining the programme on receipt of the appliance smartphones expected to arrive imminently.

## 4.0 Helping people most at risk from Fire

### 4.1 Safe and Well Visits

**5954** Safe and Well visits have been completed between April 2022 and October 2022.

During this period, there has been an increase in the number of Safe and Well visits completed by the Service and any referrals that were taken over the COVID-19 period have been actioned.

The number of visits completed has also notably increased from **3574** in the previous six month period. (October 2021 – March 2022).

The Service have now returned to pre-COVID procedures relating to Safe and Well visits, with policy and risk assessments being amended to reflect these changes and our central team are looking at



issues relating to the cost of living crisis. Operational Crews have resumed their daily prevention activity and commenced work on the new prevent risk profiles in June 2022. These are targeted Safe and Well visits to vulnerable members of our communities, over the age of 80; data which has been collated by our Risk Planning Team.

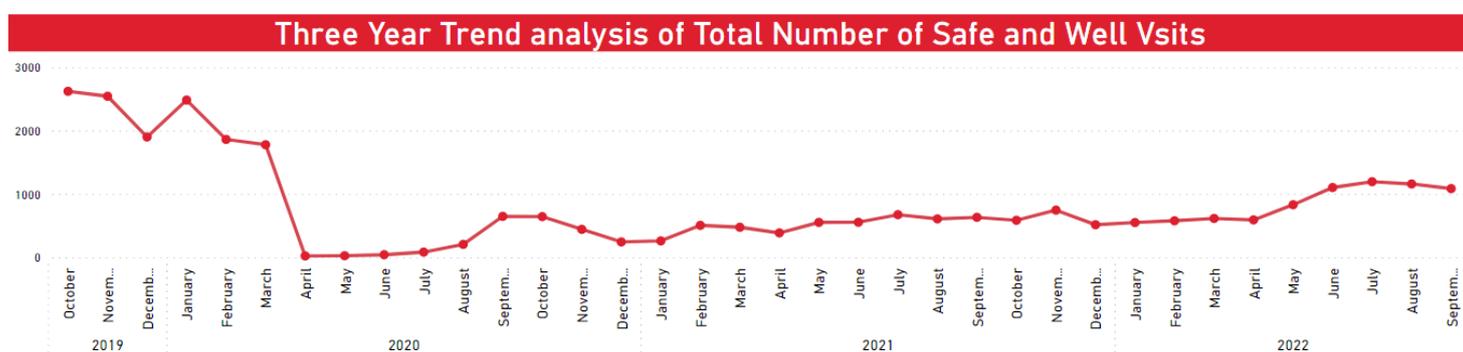
As we return to business as usual, the technicians and crews have been visiting homes within our communities and carrying out the safe and well visits in person, giving home fire safety advice and installing Smoke alarms. The COVID backlog that we had in relation to Safe and Well visits that were unable to take place in person posed a significant challenge, and it is positive to note that this has now been successfully addressed and that there is a return normalised figures for outstanding visits.

The Contact Centre continue to manage our Safe and Well booking procedures. In addition, they are assisting with several projects across the county, where we are working in partnership with different organisations to provide safety interventions to vulnerable members of the community. These include the fitment of carbon monoxide alarms, energy efficient light bulbs and research studies for mental health projects.

Safe and Well technicians continue to deliver COVID-19 anti-viral medication to members of the community, when requested through our Contact Centre.

Work continues to be progressed on the new PPHMS (Prevent, Protect, and Hydrant Management System). The PPHMS will provide one integrated location and database for fire safety audits, enforcement, home fire safety visits and hydrant information.

**Figure 5: Three year trend of Safe and Well Visits**



## 4.2 Prince's Trust Activity

During the period of April to September 2022, **73** young people have been supported by Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service through our Prince's Trust Programmes 'Team' 'Get Started' and 'Explore'. This figure is lower than our projected numbers due to the continued after effects following the pandemic. However, we are now beginning to see a rise in our numbers and anticipate these will continue towards pre-pandemic levels.



After starting the year with significant staff shortages that resulted in the Cannock and Stone team programme combining. This now has recently been resolved having recruited a new team programme leader for Stafford, alongside two new assistants one for Stafford, one for Cannock. These new personnel are actively in place and training is being provided. Allowing the normal schedule to resume at separate sites independently; as it was pre-pandemic.

The existing Prince's Trust Stone site is in the process of moving to Stafford, where there is more of a need in the area for our young people.

We are now looking at seconded police officers working alongside our Prince's Trust teams, this collaboration will have a positive impact, not only will this support and make our teams more resilient but most importantly it is about youth engagement and understanding.

On our last program some notable individual successes were achieved. Following the encouragement of the SFRS Prince's Trust team; improvements in communication and confidence were displayed amongst young individuals.

Below is a full list of the completed programmes we have delivered during this period:

#### **'TEAM' Cannock 2022 Apr – Sept**

- 7<sup>th</sup> Feb – 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022, **13** young people
- 11 July 2022 – 30 Sept 2022, **7** young people

#### **Stone 2022 Apr - Sept**

- Ran combined from Cannock due to staffing levels

#### **'GET STARTED': 2022 Apr – Sept**

- 'Get Started with Theme Park's, May 2022, **14** young people
- 'Get Started with Conservation and Bush craft', July 2022, **8** young people
- 'Get Started with Animal Care' running from Rodbaston in August 2022, **14** young people

#### **'EXPLORE': RUGELEY 2022 Apr - Sept**

- Explore 7: 11th April – 13th May, **8** young people
- Explore 8: 6th June – 7th July, **9** young people
- Explore 9: August/Sept – postponed due to staff sickness

With the stabilising of the Prince's Trust following the pandemic going forward we will again run a total of 17 programmes in conjunction with the Prince's Trust, with an average of 200 young people being supported annually.

- **Stafford Community Fire Station – Prince's Trust 'Team'**, 3 times a year with an approximate 15 young people on each programme
- **Cannock Community Fire Station – Prince's Trust 'Team'**, 3 times a year with an approximate 15 young people on each programme
- **'Explore'** – 6 programmes per year, with an approximate 10 young people on each programme
- **'Get Started'** – 6 programmes per year, with an approximate 10 young people on each programme



## 4.3 Education Update

### Safe+Sound

April 2022 – September 2022

Safe+Sound aims to support communities to make informed and positive lifestyle choices, improving their health, safety and wellbeing.

The weekly programmes are still being produced via the Learn Live Channel for Key Stage 2 children and a full overview of all sessions is available from [www.learnliveuk.com/safesound](http://www.learnliveuk.com/safesound).

Each weekly programme is broadcast live at 10am on a Wednesday (term time only) and is then available on demand.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 13<sup>th</sup> July (end of summer term) **91,312** devices tuned in, of which **35,862** were from Staffordshire. The highest week recorded 6,014 devices watching nationally. The start of the new term in September 2022 has seen a total of 11,139 devices tuning in so far with a peak of 4,075. Work is being undertaken with Learn Live through our local Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) leads and our internal communications team to promote the programme to increase numbers of devices tuning in as the year progresses by spreading awareness and linking all programmes into the PSHE curriculum to enhance its usefulness to teachers.

#### Examples of content so far this term include;

- 'Back to school' – Calm Careers
- 'Making a 999 call' – West Midlands Ambulance Service
- 'At the level crossing' – Network Rail
- 'Litter' – Andy the Ranger from Silverdale Country Park
- 'The recovery position' – Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- 'Hazard Perception' – Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership
- 'Who are you talking to on line?' – Staffordshire Police

#### As part of Key Stage 2 weekly programmes there were also Special editions;

- 6<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April – these programmes focused on the arrival of 'Knife Angel' in Stoke on Trent. Knife Angel visited Stoke on Trent for the month of April. Safe+Sound were proud to record the programme as the Knife Angel arrived, to be involved in the partnership approach to maximising the impact of Knife Angel across schools in Stoke on Trent, and to include interviews with local Police about the statue and the Knife Angel project. Safe+Sound viewing numbers helped achieve Knife Angel targets set by Stoke on Trent, and supported the objective of promoting the Angel's visit across the County
- 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May – these programmes linked into 'Dementia Action Week' and included the reading of local author Barry Coleman's book 'Scary Aunt Sally'
- 8<sup>th</sup> June was our World Environment week which included content about wildlife, using water and about litter and its impact on the environment
- 13<sup>th</sup> July was all about staying safe in the holidays – staying safe on the beach, wellbeing, and staying safe at home (testing your smoke alarm and escape plans) amongst other areas



## OFSTED Inspection Programme – Firefighter Apprenticeships

The Service has undergone a full Inspection regarding our Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship provision in May 2022. This follows on from a previous monitoring visit in 2019 whereby the Service was recognised as having made **‘Substantial Progress’**.

Over this period, inspectors from The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (OFSTED) met with a number of staff from different roles within the Service; including members of the Executive Team, Workforce Development, Trainers and Training Managers, Whole-time Trainees and Apprentices across the county, as well as Assessors and Internal Quality Assurance staff.

Four key areas within the Education Inspection Framework were considered within this report:

- Quality of Education
- Behaviours and Attitudes
- Personal Development
- Leadership and Management

The results of this inspection have now been published and the Service has been awarded an overall judgement of **‘Good’** for apprenticeships, with some **‘Outstanding’** areas of note within the Education Inspection Framework for ‘Behaviour and Attitudes’ and ‘Personal Development’. A full copy of this report is available publically.

Overall Effectiveness	Good
The Quality of Education	Good
Behaviour and Attitudes	Outstanding
Personal Development	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good



# 5.0 A Fire & Rescue Service for Tomorrow

## 5.1 Climate Change Environmental Protection Strategy

Since we launched the new Environmental Strategy in January 2022, we've seen momentum building and individuals across the service contributing to some excellent green initiatives. We still face challenges in our journey to reduce our carbon footprint though. In 2021/22 our carbon figures increased slightly compared to the year before, this is the first year on year increase we've seen in more than 10 years.

However, as 2020 wasn't a normal year, with some staff working remotely and less journeys made, an increase was to be expected. To build upon our progress so far, it's clear that we need to do even more to develop innovative solutions to ensure carbon generation continues to fall in future years. I'm really pleased with the progress made so far this year and I'd like to encourage more people to join in to help us reach our goals.

Here's a quick update on the projects we've been working on recently:

- Lithium Battery Conference:** The Chief Fire Officer and other members of the Service supported the NFCC Lithium Battery Conference held at the National Memorial Arboretum. As the strategic waste fire Lead for the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) the CFO facilitated the conference giving an overall assessment and impact that Lithium Batteries are having upon the fire sector. The NFCC Waste Fire Tactical Advisor lead gave an update on how Lithium Batteries are impacting some of the fire incidents that Fire and Rescue Services attend nationally. This included an overview of the work the fire sector is carrying out with the Joint Unit for Waste Crime (JUWC). A number of fire sector staff attended and demonstrations we provided by businesses around the latest technology available on the market to assist in dealing with Lithium Battery fires.
- Waste management:** Following staff feedback in the waste and recycling survey, we've been working on plans with our new waste contractor to provide recycling facilities at some of our sites. Recycling bins will initially be available at our residual sites, helping us to reduce the amount of waste going to disposal. More information will be circulated when this new recycling scheme launches.
- Air quality improvement:** JETS, Estates and Procurement teams have been working on exciting plans for the trial of four new electric service vehicles, which will be based at four different sites across the service. A paper will be submitted to December's Service Delivery Board for approval to go to tender, with the hopes that this trial will allow us to test the technology and monitor its effectiveness in reality before committing to any larger scale moves across to electrification technology. Work is underway to provide a predictive analysis of the reduction of carbon emissions over the lifetime of electric service vehicles.
- Green space generation:** We aim to provide a wildlife haven, as well as a wellbeing opportunity for staff, work is continuing on developing the green space area at Stone Fire Station. To launch this project, a 'wild play day' was held in August with support from Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. Local primary school children had a go at creating bug hotels and bird boxes, giving them the chance to learn new skills as well as generating safe spaces for local wildlife.



## 5.2 Enhanced Rescue Pumps (ERP's)

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service took the decision to procure two new Enhanced Rescue Pumps (ERP's) as part of the replacement program for existing ageing vehicles and, from a decision made originating from the transformation work stream, the removal from service of the current Rescue Tender from Longton. In essence; the new concept was combining a pump rescue ladder with a rescue tender, to form an enhanced rescue pump. The new vehicles will be located at Stafford and Longton.

So the service can continue to provide a resilient operational response for incidents requiring technical rescue capabilities, the requirement for Enhanced Rescue Pumps has been based on current and foreseeable risk within Staffordshire, and the analysis of previous incidents attended.

The Enhanced Rescue Pump project has progressed well within the last 6 month period. A consultation exercise with operational crews has been carried out and a detailed specification written taking into account the feedback which led to a recent tender process being completed. The chassis order for both appliances was placed at the beginning of August. Due to global parts shortage we are expecting a 12 month lead time which will be followed by a 20 week body build. Delivery to Staffordshire is expected to be April 2024. This will be the latest version of the AT (Advanced Technology) and will include features which surpass any front line appliance currently in the Service.

**We are now working towards introduce a 'Clean Cab concept' into Staffordshire on these vehicles which will include:**

- The removal of BA sets and other equipment which could carry contaminants from the fireground, to the crew cab area; and to be stored within an easily accessible locker
- Easily cleanable and contaminant reducing surfaces and materials in the crew cab design
- Filtered air-conditioning within all areas of the vehicle cab

A Premarket Engagement Day as part of the project for purchasing a 'Battery Powered Hydraulic Rescue Tool' has taken place. 3 suppliers attended and discussed the features and innovations available.

The ERP's will be capable of attending all types of technical rescue incidents but additional to the current capability, crews will have specialist training and will be better equipped to carry out rescues from heavy goods vehicles, train carriages and similar incident types.



## 5.3 Collaborative Shared Estates

Staffordshire Fire Service has a building portfolio consisting of 35 premises. The portfolio consists of 21 Private Finance Initiative (PFI) buildings and 14 residual buildings. The PFI buildings are split across 2 outsourced contracts which are managed from within the Estates Team; one contract consists of 10 buildings and is maintained by Equans FM, whilst the other PFI contract is made up of 11 buildings and is maintained by Kier FM. The remaining 14 residual buildings are maintained by an in house facilities management team within the Estates Team.

At present the Estates team are involved in the planning and delivering of major refurbishment programmes, with Abbots Bromley Fire Station currently under refurbishment as well as future projects currently being in design stage at Brewood Fire Station and Tutbury Fire Station. In line with the major refurbishment programme there are a number of other investment programmes being carried out across all residual fire stations to ensure buildings are continually maintained to a standard and facilities are fit for purpose.

Staffordshire Fire Service and the Estates team are committed to further reducing their carbon footprint in particular within the building portfolio, currently the Estates Team are working with Commercial Services in the procurement of a consultancy practise who can work closely with the Estates Team to look at sustainable and renewable technologies for Ipstones fire station, with the intention of rolling this out across the other fire service premises in the coming years.

The Estates Team are working closely with the Staffordshire Commissioners office to build upon the current successful collaborative building projects recently undertaken at Hanley Fire&Police Station and Tamworth Fire&Police Station which sees Staffordshire Fire and Staffordshire Police working together and co-locating within the same building. The Estates Team are committed to utilising the building portfolio to explore further collaborative opportunities between both Fire and Police as well as other public body organisations.

It has been agreed to review shared services within Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service within three distinct phases.

This phasing is in part driven by the 'Fire Reform White Paper' which has yet to complete its journey through the parliamentary process potentially bringing about changes in the support services required by the Fire and Rescue Service and the Staffordshire Commissioners Fire and Rescue Authority.

### The phasing of these reviews are:

- Phase 1 – Corporate Communications, Procurement and Fleet Services
- Phase 2 – Finance and HR (noting HR was reviewed within the last 12 months)
- Phase 3 – Estates within the current live phase (phase one)



## 6.0 Emerging Issues

### 6.1 Climate Change and Extreme Weather Conditions

This year saw the UK's first ever red weather warning as heatwave temperatures soared to 40.3 degrees, the highest ever recorded in Britain. The Met Office advises that climate change is likely to mean hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters. Extreme events such as heatwaves and heavy rainfall could become more frequent and intense meaning more flooding and wildfires, thus having a direct impact on our frontline services.

In 2020, Staffordshire experienced significant flooding which impacted communities across the county. Nationally, some of the worst flooding conditions in the last 20 years were recorded over this period. Storms such as Ciara, Malik and Eunice ripped through the UK in February 2020 leaving roads blocked, residential dwellings flooded, affected power and water services to homes, and sadly caused loss of life. Storm Eunice was reported to have wind speeds of 122mph, making it the worst storm in decades according to The Met Office. Storms like these will no doubt become more prevalent due to the impact of climate change.

Extreme weather conditions have also been experienced in particular over the second quarter of 2022, with SPATE conditions being observed nationally for many Fire Services due to the significant and sustained increase in the number of incidents over this period.

Between April and September 2022 within Staffordshire; an increased demand of **46.67%** was noted for the number of Secondary Fires attended in the same period in 2021, and a **64.86%** increase is noted from the number of incidents attended in the same period from 2019.

This year Staffordshire has recorded **21** 'wildfires', with **13** of these incidents requiring 5 or more fire appliances to be in attendance.

**15** of these incidents also involved an area of fire damage of over 200 square meters.

This brings a significant challenge to the Service in resourcing additional demand throughout periods of seasonal trend change.

Considerations are not only limited to front line crews, but to the Service as a whole. Areas such as risk and contingency planning, reviewing and adapting operational training requirements and allocation of resources, and engaging with the communities of Staffordshire and border Services are essential components of preparing for future periods of unpredictable and extreme weather conditions.

Another area of importance is the introduction of equipment and technology that can improve our flexibility to respond. Kinver Fire Station is equipped with a 4x4 ranger vehicle, featuring a 656ft wildfire hose, backpacks and a high pressure blower on board to enable crews to deal with serious wildfires. The vehicle can also be converted to extract water to assist in responding to flood incidents.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service are taking a proactive approach to climate change and we are monitoring our own Environmental and Sustainability Strategy, which sets out plans for Staffordshire to work towards carbon neutrality as a Service and to ensure environmental concerns are embedded in all future considerations.



# 7.0 HR Performance Update

## 7.1 Recruitment Activity

Between April 2022 and September 2022 the following activity has taken place:

**17** Support roles have been filled

**13** Operational roles have been filled

**6** Individuals currently at Pre-Employment/Offer stage

**6** Roles currently out for advert

**14** Firefighters commenced within On Call on the 20 week training plan

**3** Group managers were appointed

The role of 'Positive Action Coordinator' has been recruited to. The post holder will be responsible for organising and participating in positive action initiatives to improve equality, diversity and inclusion within the Service from underrepresented groups.

**Figure 6: Establishment Data\***

	Last Month At 31 August 2022	This Month At 30 September 2022	Actual Movement in Period	Budget 2022-23	Variance Budget to Actual
Management Team	12.0	12.0		12.0	
Station Managers	23.0	23.0		21.0	(2.0)
Watch Managers	61.0	61.0		65.0	4.0
Crew Managers	42.0	42.0		40.0	(2.0)
Wholetime FF	163.3	163.1	(0.1)	162.0	(1.1)
Wholetime FF - Casual Contracts	2.0	1.0	(1.0)		(1.0)
	<b>303.3</b>	<b>302.1</b>	<b>(1.1)</b>	<b>300.0</b>	<b>(2.1)</b>
On-Call FF	253.4	257.6	4.2	387.0	129.4
Support Staff	126.9	125.0	(1.9)	147.7	22.7
Secondments / Funded Posts	6.6	6.6		7.0	0.4
<b>TOTAL HEADCOUNT</b>	<b>690.2</b>	<b>691.4</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>841.7</b>	<b>150.3</b>

\*This report shows headcount as FTE (Full Time Equivalent) WT Firefighters refers to Whole-Time Firefighters.



## 7.2 Workforce Diversity

The attraction, development and retention of a diverse workforce, as a characteristic of our staff profile and contract type, is a significant area of development for the Service. In recognition of this we have committed to investing in the provision by recruiting to specialised positions such as a Positive Attraction Coordinator and an Insights and Engagement Manager.

We are also working on development plans to fully embed the monitoring of our workforce profile; including equality of opportunity and promoting the progression of staff through the Service via promotion pathways.

Tools have been developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council and we are working closely with the NFCC to develop our local direction in harmony with the National Fire and Rescue sector. Our planning will enable specific targeting, and will be supported by the recently adopted 'Workforce Planning Board' that is chaired by the ACFO and provides oversight of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) with the Service.

The Workforce Planning Board also promotes discussion and understanding, accountability, and strategic direction for EDI areas as well as influencing the approach to future considerations through the review of retirement profiles and our approach to recruitment.

Our policy and strategy are also being reviewed to ensure cultural development, targeted attraction practices and EDI issues are a fundamental consideration within all HR policy and procedure.

Work will be undertaken to ensure the EDI Strategy is well aligned with the next Corporate Safety Plan through consultation and working directly with stakeholders. A specific EDI Plan will be developed alongside the overall objectives of the Service and will set out specific and measurable goals to further embed EDI within the mind set of all members of staff as an overarching principle; which is founded upon our core Code of Ethics.

EDI will also continue to be a consideration in prevention and protection work within the communities of Staffordshire.

CPD forums will allow awareness to be raised around specific EDI issues.

This input will also include Neurodiversity, Menopause, Prostate cancer, the Armed Forces Covenant, and People Impact Assessments. These areas may be delivered to staff by expert organisations.

The EDI Plan will also include a diary of events that the Service will agree, to promote aspects of wider social recognition; in support of staff, partners and the community we serve.

These may be Pride events, LGBT History, Domestic Violence awareness in all aspects, as well as Black History and Disability events.



## Diversity within Recruitment

The following information is taken from applicants applying for positions within the service:

**319** Total applicants from April – Sep 2022

**5%** Ethnic Minority

**28%** Female

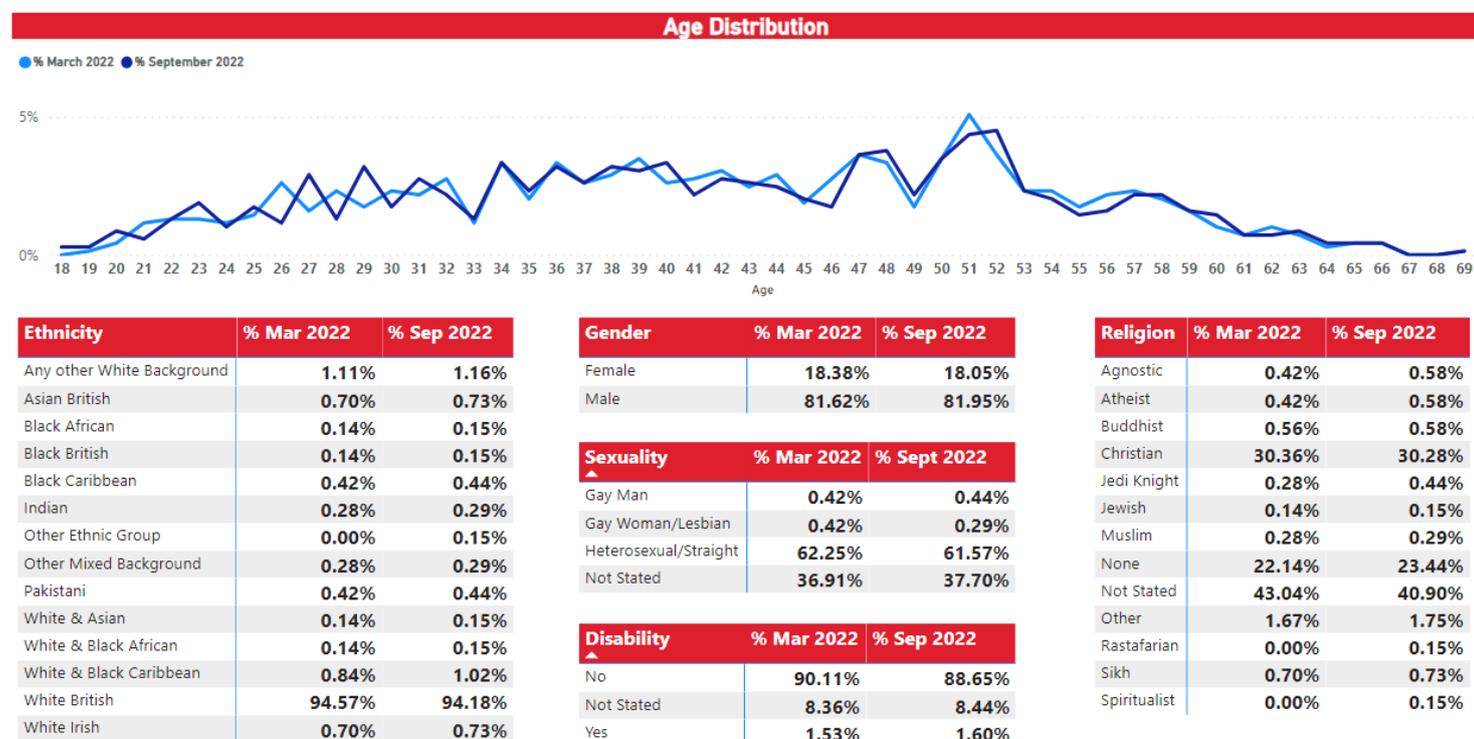
**4%** Declared disability

**8%** LGBTQ+

## Workforce Diversity Profile

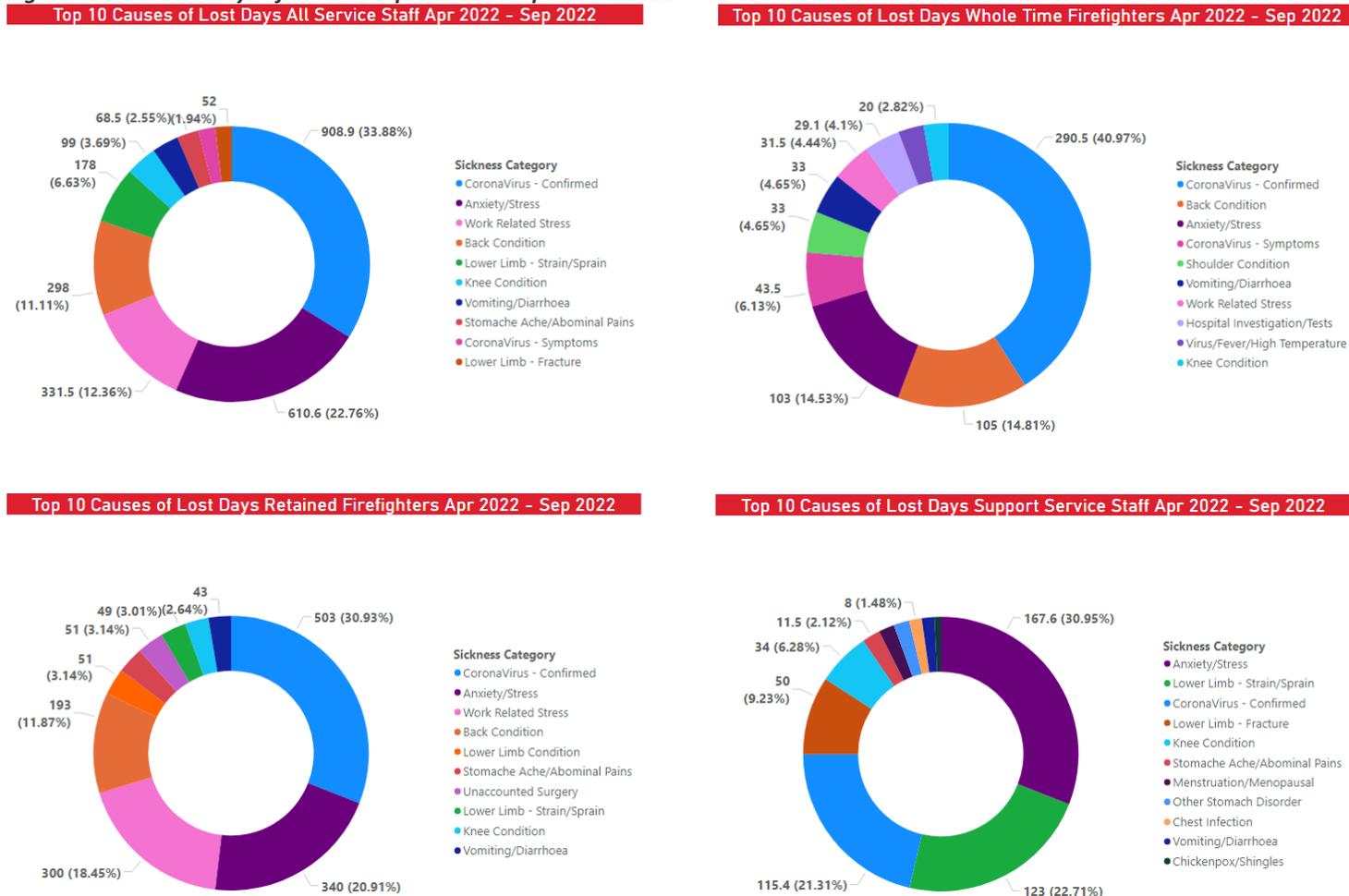
The chart below displays the workforce diversity position as at March 2022 and September 2022. These charts are based upon declared data collected during the recruitment and on boarding process. This data is provided voluntarily by individuals.

**Figure 7: Workforce Diversity March 2022 – September 2022**



## 7.3 Workforce Sickness

Figure 8: Total Lost Days of Sickness April 2022 – September 2022



- Month on month long term sick and modified duties cases have significantly reduced, bringing Staffordshire Fire and Rescue significantly below the national levels for ‘average working days lost to sickness’ for whole-time and on-call employees between April and June 2022 in comparison to other Fire Services.
- Coronavirus is still the main cause of absence with All Service Staff, Whole Time Firefighters and Retained Firefighters between April 2022 to September 2022 and follows the trend set in the last Report published May 2022.
- Coronavirus has contributed to **33.88%** of lost days due to sickness across the Service, this is in line with National Statistics in the UK where the virus increased in May / July 2022. This trend now appears to be decreasing nationally.
- The only area where this trend is not followed is in Support Service Staff where Anxiety / Stress is cited as the main reason for individuals absence at **30.95%** followed by lower limb injuries at **22.71%** then Coronavirus at **21.31%**.
- Work related stress features in the top ten causes for absence in both Whole-time and On Call functions. Occupational Health are raising awareness of positive mental health at work in the National Work Life Week.
- In addition a new App has been launched across the service to support with Mental Health and anxiety and we are in the process of providing clear guidance to the Welfare Support across the Service.

- On entering the winter months flu vaccination clinics are being set up.
- The programme of Covid vaccinations has continued on station with access for all employees
- The engagement of a temp Fitness Advisor to ensure our operational work force are physically able to complete the roles.

## 8.0 Finance Performance Update

This update covers the financial position for the Authority for the period ending 30th September 2022. The revenue budget for the year was approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner at £42.5m in February 2022 which included a Band D council tax of £80.35, an increase of 1.99% for the year (3p per week).

The total revenue spend of £21.9m as at 30 September 2022 remains broadly in line with budget. This position includes an underspend year to date on pay across Whole-time, On-call and also Support staff. However, pay is £194k worse in the month due to pay accruals being increased to reflect the anticipated pay settlement for both Operational (5%) and Support Staff (average 5%+).

Whole-time overtime costs include the benefit of the recently approved minimum crewing of four for whole-time appliance mobilisation. Lower overtime costs as part of the crewing change have been reflected in the year-end forecast alongside the additional pay award costs. Overall the pay cost forecast remains slightly favourable and will be closely monitored during the second half of the year.

Non-pay costs are currently adverse to budget and this include higher costs being incurred on a number of key areas due to significant inflationary pressure e.g. for higher fuel and supplies and services costs. Income and finance costs are marginally behind budget due to the timing of receipts. The forecast for the unitary charge (UC) also reflects the increase in the variable cost element of the UC following the increase in RPIx.

The latest forecast position has been incorporated for the first time this year, and despite additional pay and non-pay cost pressures the year end forecast remains within the approved annual budget. The MTFs for 2022/23 to 2026/27 has now been updated and presented to the Strategic Governance Board and the Police, Fire and Crime Panel during October. The impact of pay awards above budget and inflationary impact have resulted in an increasing funding gap into the medium term.

The latest Capital Programme forecast for 2022/23 is £6.9m. This includes the carry-over of £1.7m from 2021/22 and the removal of the investment at Stafford Fire Station. The capital programme includes the replacement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), with delays in replacing the PPE currently resulting and higher repair costs for the existing stock of clothing e.g. repairs to tunics and trousers. New PPE is now being received by the Service.

The Cash position closed at £22m and is cumulatively £2.3m higher than budget, with the Firefighters' Pension Top-up grant of £9.4m received in July, and is £0.9m higher than budget following the year end reconciliation. Cash remains in a very healthy position and new borrowing will not be required in year.

