

# Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

## Public Performance Meeting

May 2026

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 Chief Fire Officer Foreword

As I prepare to formally take up my appointment as Chief Fire Officer in June, I am proud to be leading Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service at a time of both opportunity and change. Serving the communities of Staffordshire is a responsibility we take extremely seriously, and I continue to be impressed by the professionalism, dedication and public service commitment shown by our staff every day.

I am pleased to confirm key leadership appointments that will support the Service as we move forward. Michelle Hickmott has secured an appointment as the next Deputy Chief Fire Officer, bringing with her considerable experience and strong leadership. We are also delighted to welcome Sarah Wilkes as our new Director of Finance, Assets and Resources. These appointments form part of the continuing development of a strong and effective Executive Leadership Team, which will help guide the Service through a period of transition over the coming months.

In terms of performance, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service continues to deliver a stable and reliable service to the public. Although we have experienced an increase in the number of incidents attended which have been driven by a range of external factors, our teams have worked tirelessly to maintain fire cover, appliance availability and fast response times. This ensures that communities receive prompt and professional help when emergencies occur.

Our work across prevention, protection and response remains central to keeping people safe. Protection activity continues to help secure the safety of the built environment and support economic confidence across the county. Prevention is a key priority, with strong performance in Safe and Well activity and ongoing, successful collaboration with NHS partners. This joint work plays an important role in reducing risk, preventing harm and improving outcomes for the most vulnerable in our communities.

Looking ahead, the Service is preparing for several significant changes. These include the transition of governance from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to a new Police, Fire and Crime Board, alongside wider changes in local government and policing. While our financial position is stable in the current year, we are aware of future financial pressures that will have to be managed, and they will influence how we transform the Service. Careful planning and responsible decision making will be essential to ensure we continue to deliver value for money while meeting the needs of our communities.

The Service is also entering its next inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), with fieldwork taking place in June. This inspection provides an important opportunity to demonstrate how we have built on our previous positive results, how we deliver high quality services efficiently, and how we support and value our workforce.



My vision for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service is clear: to create a future where more lives are saved than ever before, the wellbeing of our people is protected, and our Service is transformed to make our communities and environment safer. It is essential that we build a fire and rescue service that is smarter, stronger and ready for the future.

My pledge to the Service is equally clear. Every member of staff, at every level of the organisation, will be trusted and empowered to promote a culture of safety, accountability and continuous improvement. By investing in our people and working together, we will continue to make a positive difference for the communities we are proud to serve.

This is a busy and challenging period for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, but it is also an exciting one. With a strong workforce, committed leadership and clear direction, we remain focused on delivering an exceptional service to the public - today and into the future.

## 1.2 HMICFRS 2025-27 inspections update

Phase 1 of the **HMICFRS 2025-27 inspection programme** started in September 2025. The first four inspection reports from this round have recently been published in March 2026, with final reports for all Fire and Rescue Services inspected due to be published by **Spring 2028**.

The new framework places greater emphasis **on leadership, culture, governance, and financial resilience**. Desktop reviews and focus groups will explore **misconduct handling, communications, and major incident preparedness**.

### Thematic areas of focus:

- **Leadership:** How effectively leaders at all levels guide and support their teams.
- **Values and Culture:** Progress made in strengthening positive behaviours and workplace culture.
- **Governance Impact:** How Fire and Rescue Authorities provide oversight and scrutiny – for our Service, this oversight is currently achieved through the governance of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire.

### Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service - Upcoming inspection dates:

- Inspection activity starts **week commencing 1st June 2026** for a **10-week** period.
- Inspection activity will be a blend of virtual and in-person delivery. HMICFRS inspection teams will be arriving on site through weeks commencing **22<sup>nd</sup> June** and the **6<sup>th</sup> of July 2026**.
- **Document requests** and **workforce surveys** will be issued six weeks before fieldwork begins. This is anticipated to be circa **4th May 2026**.



## Considerations and Planning:

- An **inspection reporting line** will be open to provide all staff with a mechanism to inform HMICFRS of any issues or areas of good practice which they feel should be considered as part of the Service's inspection.
- Our **Service Liaison Officer** is working with managers, crews, and teams to help best prepare them for the inspection, and this support will continue over the coming weeks and months ahead of the inspection schedule.
- Pre-engagement has already started with in-service visits by our appointed HMICFRS **Service Liaison Lead** meeting with strategic leaders and other staff members. These visits offer valuable insight into the Service's progress since our last inspection and context around future plans and challenges.

HMICFRS previously made recommendations for **five** Areas for Improvement within our last inspection report published in September 2024. At Service Delivery Board in March 2026, progress against the final **three** areas for improvement was thoroughly reviewed, and under the scrutiny of the board; all were signed off as complete. All areas for improvement are now considered to be addressed from the previous inspectorate report.

## Other Areas of HMICFRS National Recommendation that have also been completed in 2025/26:

**HMICFRS Thematic Inspection: Handling of Misconduct** – All **15** recommendations adopted were signed off through Service Delivery Board in March 2026.

**HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services** – All **20** recommendations for Fire and Rescue Services adopted were signed off through Service Delivery Board in March 2026.

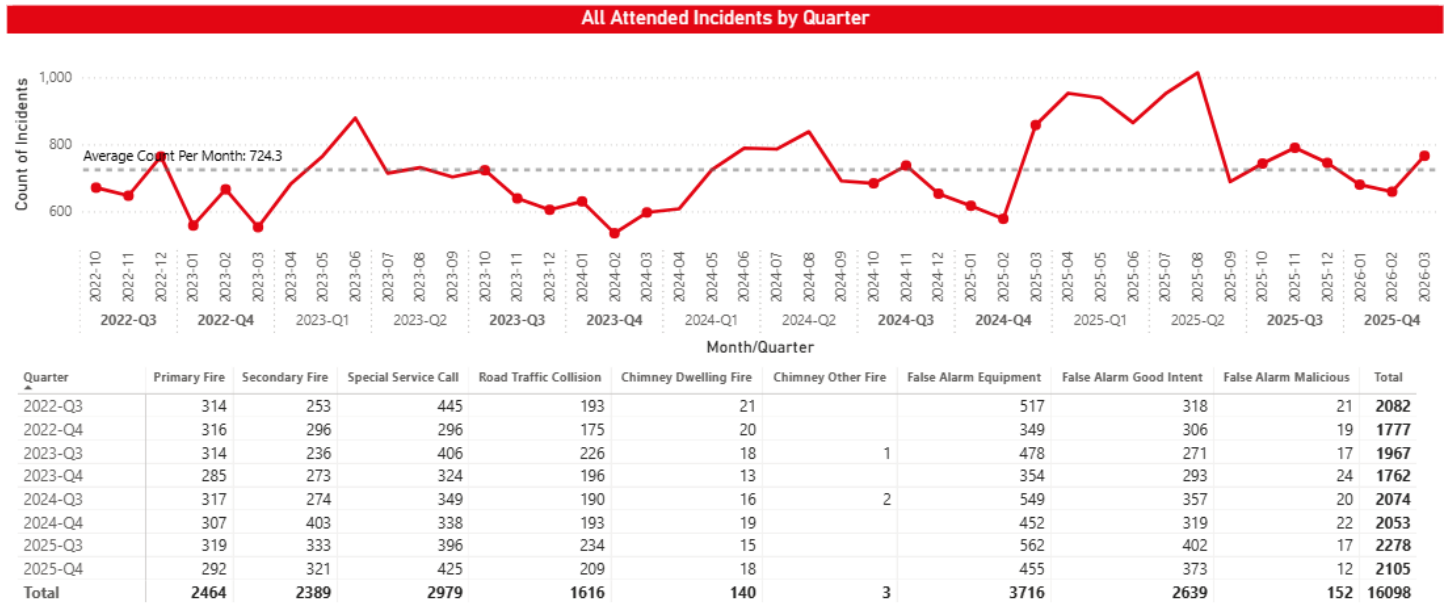
In line with HMICFRS expectations, the Service also publishes a summary of our progress against all HMICFRS national recommendations and directed areas for improvement on our website.



# 2.0 An Outstanding Fire & Rescue Service

## 2.1 Incidents Attended

**Figure 1: Yearly Comparison of Total Incidents Attended October to March with breakdown of incident type**



**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.



**Figure 2: Three-year trend of Incident Types Attended**

Incident Trend by Quarterly Periods

**Emerging Demand Q3&Q4 2025/26 (October 2025 – March 2026)**

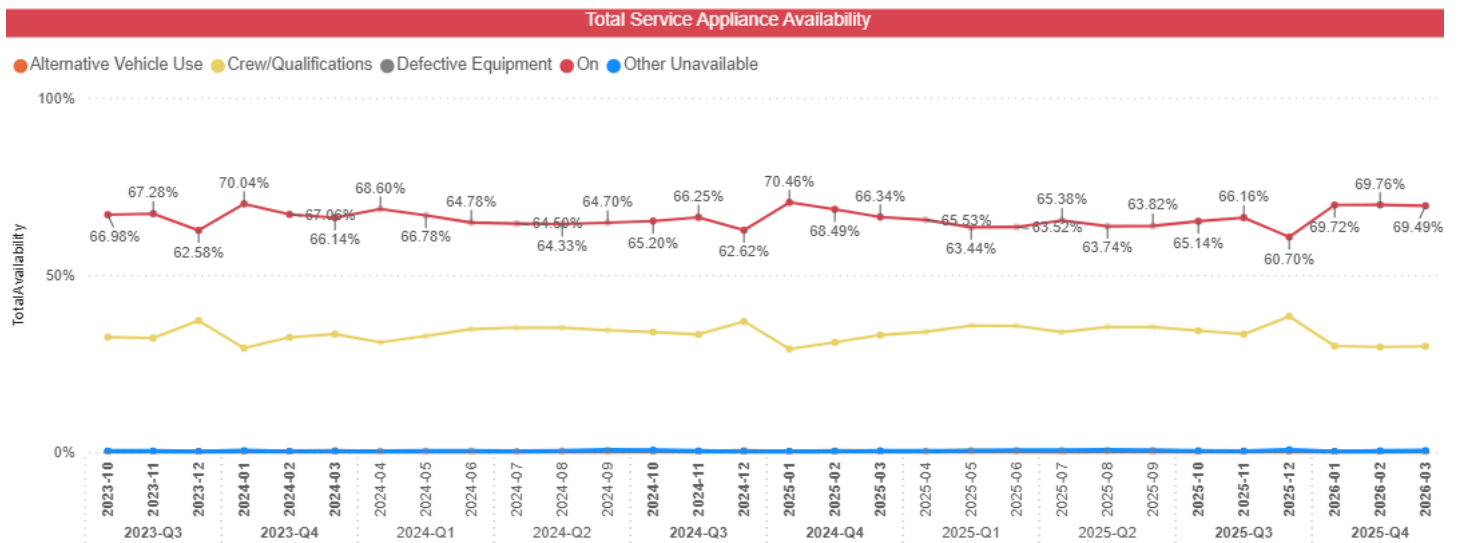
- Between October 2025 and March 2026, a total of **4,383** incidents were attended by the Service. This is a total increase of **(6.20%)** from the **4,127** incidents attended in the same period within the previous year.
- **611** Primary Fires were attended by the Service in this period in comparison to **624** incidents attended in the same period within the previous year displaying a **(2.08%)** decrease.
- **654** Secondary Fires were attended by the Service in this period in comparison to **677** incidents attended in the same period within the previous year displaying a **(3.39%)** decrease. The proceeding period of **April to August 2025** displays a significant increase in demand for attendance at Secondary Fires with similar demand levels to those noted under **national SPATE conditions** experienced in 2022. For the Q3&Q4 period Secondary Fire attendance has returned to expected seasonal levels.
- **821** Special Service Calls have been attended by the Service in this period in comparison to **687** incidents attended in the same period within the previous year displaying a **(19.50%)** increase.
- **443** Road Traffic incidents have been attended by the Service in this period in comparison to **383** incidents attended in the same period within the previous year displaying a **(15.66%)** increase.
- **1,017** False Alarm incidents caused by equipment have been attended in this period in comparison to the **1,001** for the same period within the previous year. This remains consistent between periods.
- **775** False Alarm incidents classified as 'Good Intent' have been attended in this period in comparison to **676** in the same period within the previous year displaying a **(14.64%)** increase.
- **29** False Alarm incidents classified as 'Malicious intent' have been reported in this period in comparison to **42** in the same period within the previous year displaying a **(30.95%)** decrease.

## 2.2 Service Availability

**Service Availability** is based on the percentage of time that an appliance is available to attend an incident. The Total Service Availability is calculated from all fire appliances at Whole Time, On Call, and Day Duty Fire stations. ‘Unavailability’ factors such as insufficient numbers of qualified crew, equipment defects, or training events can contribute to the percentage of time that the Service appliance is unavailable to respond to incidents.

- **‘Whole-Time’** Fire Stations means firefighters are based at the station 24/7.
- **‘On Call’** Fire Stations are covered by part time firefighters and are not staffed 24/7.
- **‘Day Duty’** Fire Stations are a combination of the two models above with Whole-Time crewing during day shift periods.
- **‘Alternative Vehicle Use’** was previously recorded when an appliance was crewed by three persons. Since the three-person crewing trial began in June 2023, this percentage of availability is now counted towards the ‘On’ (or available) category.
- **‘Crew/Qualifications’** refers to the percentage of non-availability due to either insufficient crewing numbers or qualifications/training required for mobilisation.

**Figure 3: Three-year trend of Total Service Availability**



Between October 2025 and March 2026, the total average Service availability is recorded as **66.82%**.

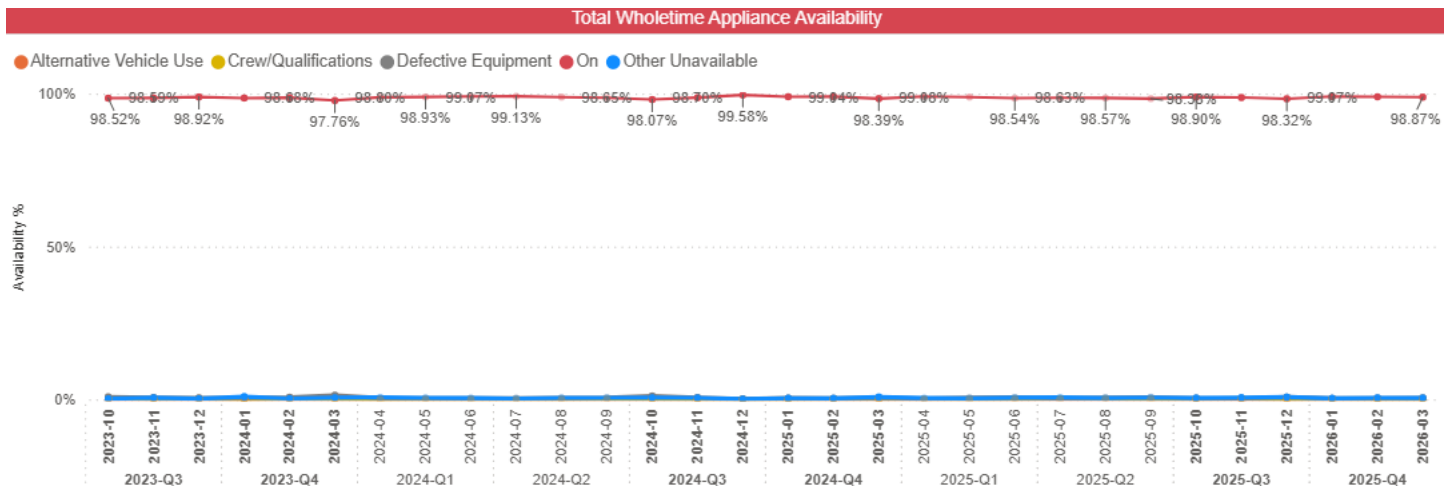
In the same period in the previous year this was recorded as **66.56%**

For the last three months the Service has maintained consistent levels of overall availability nearing **70%** which has been primarily due to sustaining On Call availability levels above **60%**.

There are many factors that can affect the ability for a Fire Service to respond to incidents.

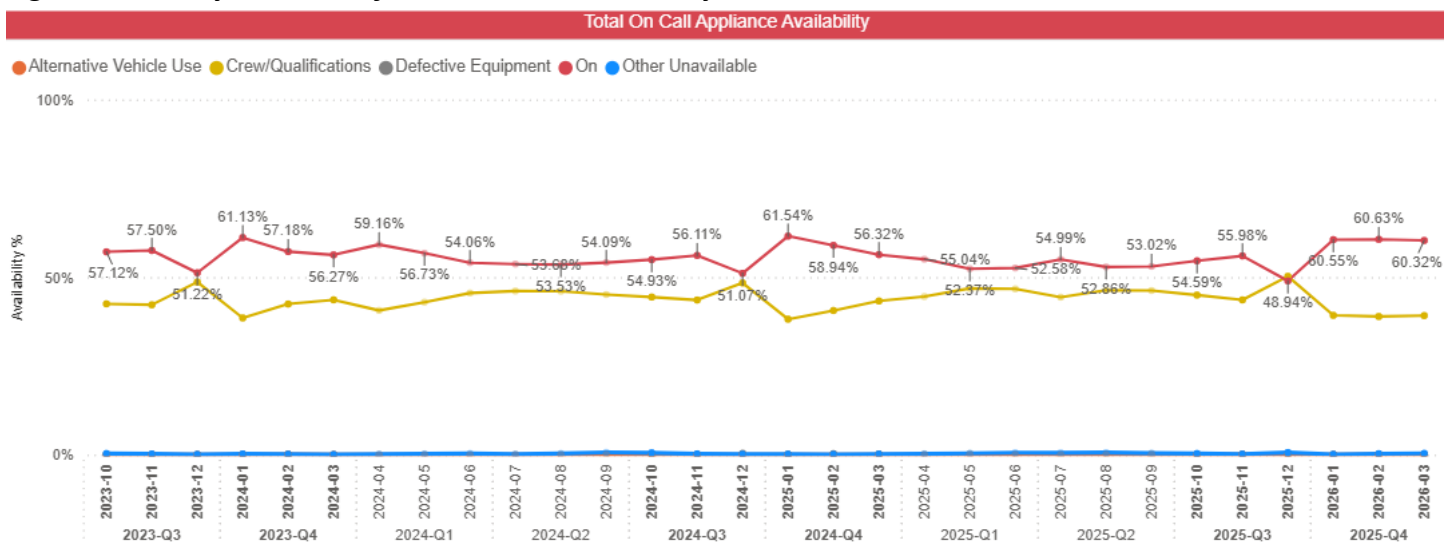
A breakdown of appliance availability at Whole Time and On Call stations is provided below in further detail.

**Figure 4: Three-year trend of Total Wholetime Availability**



Between October 2025 and March 2026, the total Whole Time Service availability is recorded as **98.81%**. This has consistently remained between **97% and 100%** over the previous three year period.

**Figure 5: Three-year trend of Total on Call Availability**



Between October 2025 and March 2026, the total On Call availability is recorded as **56.83%**. In the same period in from the previous year this was recorded as **56.48%**.

The main contributory factor for appliance unavailability at On Call stations is the number of On Call crew available, and the number of those crew that have the necessary operational training and qualifications to allow a deployment to an incident. This is the largest single factor affecting the Total Service Availability.

Overall, the Service has improved availability over the respective periods, despite an overall increase of **6.20%** in incident attendance and a notable increase of **19.50%** in attendance at Special Service Call incidents and an increase of **15.66%** attendance at Road Traffic Collisions from the previous year.

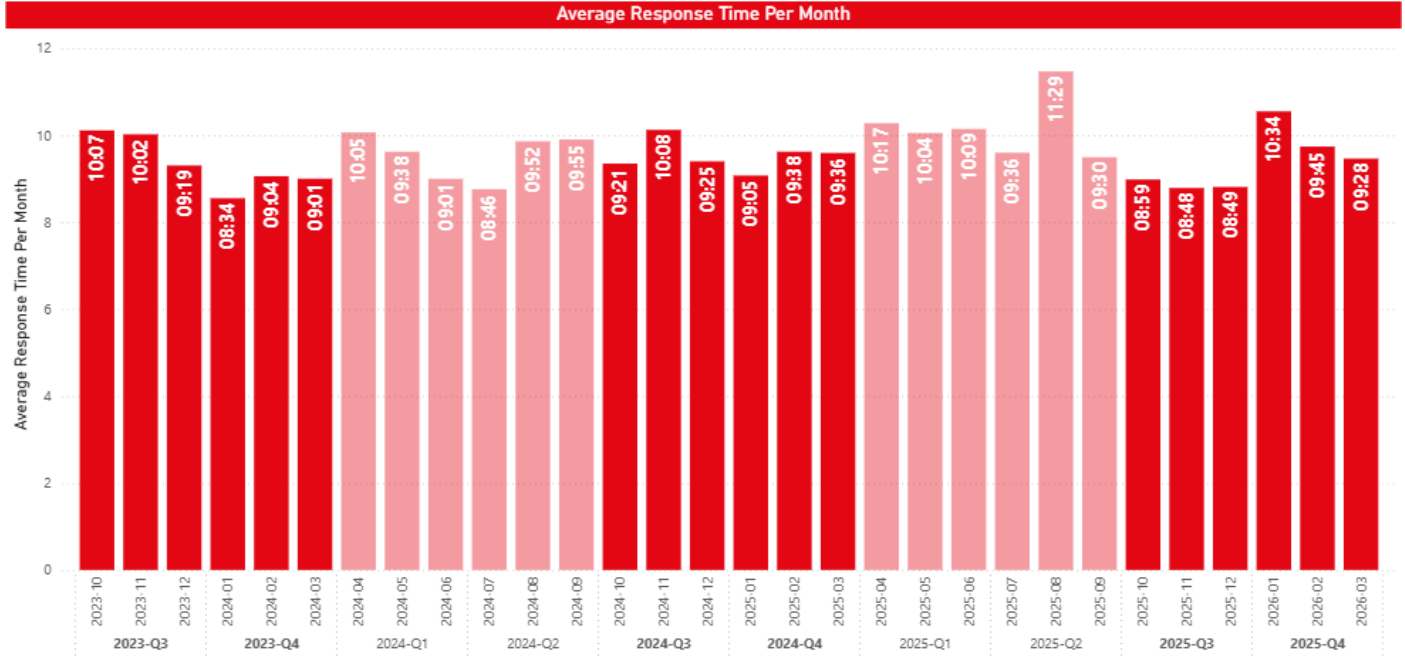
On Call availability has also improved from the same period in the previous year, with the months of January, February and March 2026 all consistently displaying an availability figure of above **60%**.



## 2.3 Service Response Times and Standards

Service response times are measured monthly and are based upon the time taken for the first fire appliance to attend an incident from the point of mobilisation by Fire Control. The Total Average response time is below, which is calculated from all fire appliances at Whole Time, On Call, and Day Crewed Fire stations that have been mobilised to incidents during each month.

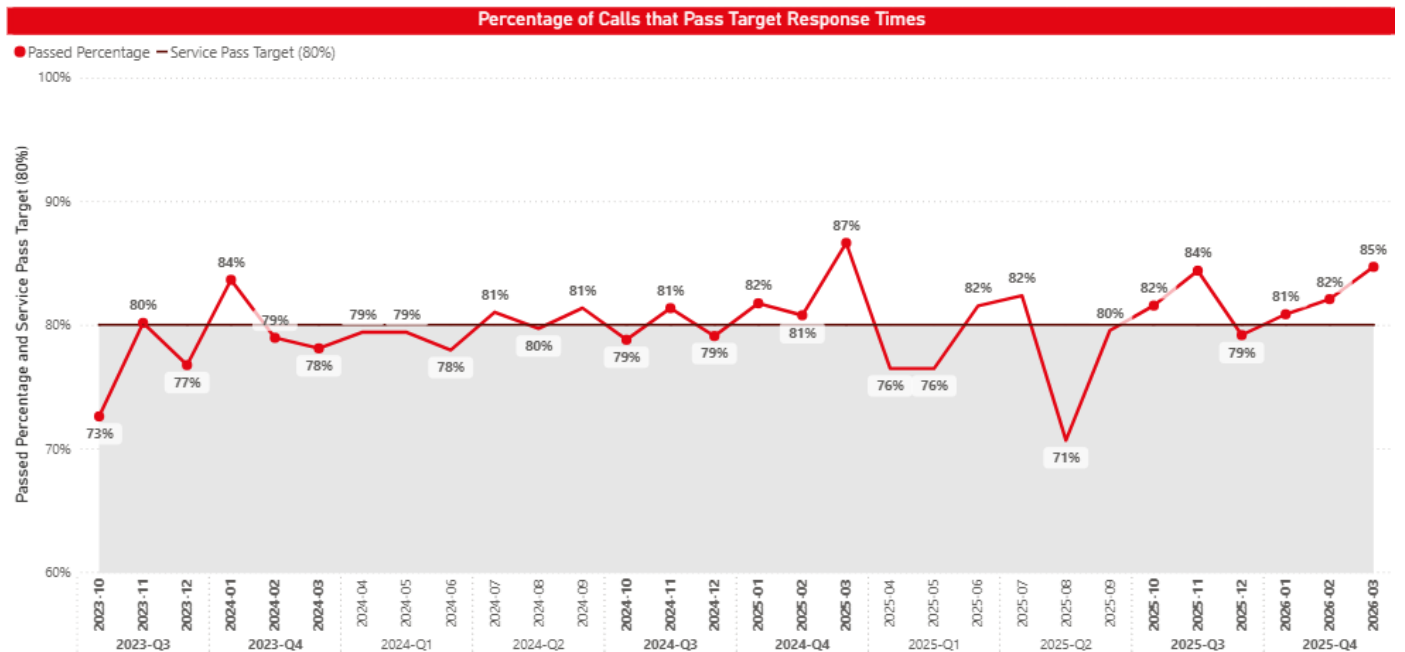
**Figure 6: Three Year trend of Average Service Response Time**



Between October 2025 and March 2026, the average Service response time is recorded as **9 minutes 23 seconds**. In the same period in the previous year this was recorded as **9 minutes 35 seconds** displaying a reduction of **12 Seconds** in average response time between these periods.

During the month of August of 2025 there were **1,013** incidents attended by the Service displaying the most significant demand since July and August of 2022 which were months associated with **SPATE conditions**.

**Figure 7: Three Year trend of Service Response Standard (All Incident Types)**



Response standards are based on achieving arrival at an incident within a given time using the criteria below.

High Risk areas	Medium Risk areas	Low Risk areas
Arrival within 8 minutes	Arrival within 10 minutes	Arrival within 18 minutes

The Service looks to achieve a target that **80%** of the time a response is completed within either **8 minutes for areas of high risk, 10 minutes for areas of medium risk, and 18 minutes for areas of low risk.**

Areas of the county have been classified as **High, Medium or Low** risk based on a geographical analysis made up of the following factors and risk indicators:

- *Frequency of life risk incidents*
- *Index of Multiple Deprivation factors*
- *Limiting Long term illness*
- *Population density*
- *Rented accommodation*
- *Number of Lone elderly persons & single parents*

Between October 2025 and March 2026, the overall pass rate has been **82.16%**, which is an increase from the **81.50%** recorded for the same period in the previous year. This is mainly due to the **85%** figure recorded for the month of March 2026.

## Summary

Overall, Service attendance times fluctuate between **8 mins 30 secs** and **10 mins 30 seconds** and will be dependent on whether appliances are busy at an incident or unavailable due to crewing, meaning the next nearest appliance will then attend.

In most cases the Service is meeting the **80%** monthly target for high, medium, and low risk area attendance. Some of the current challenges are due to an increased attendance at prison fires in the South Staffs area where it is challenging to meet the **10min target time** and will affect the ability to meet the **80%** target for attendance standards. There are also some rural locations which will, in some cases, take longer to attend due to reduced road infrastructure and access issues.

Exceptional periods of increased demand such as **National SPATE conditions**, will affect the Service availability, response times and the response standard due to high levels of demand for attendance across the county; particularly at incidents associated with secondary outdoor fires which is an emerging area of national attention. Similar levels of demand to previous SPATE periods were observed between **April and August 2025**.

Overall, the Service has improved average response time by **12 seconds** between the respective periods and improved the overall percentage pass rate of the Service response standard from **81.5%** to **82.16%** despite an overall increase of **6.20%** in incident attendance and a notable increase of **19.50%** in attendance at Special Service Call incidents and an increase of **15.66%** attendance at Road Traffic Collisions from the previous year.

On Call availability has also improved from the same period in the previous year, with the months of January, February and March 2026 all consistently displaying an availability figure of above **60%**.

The Service continues to consider **NFCC guidance in relation to On Call Availability** and is reviewing the findings from national research to assist in directing our local approach to improving availability in this area.



## 2.4 Transformation Update

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.”***

As a result, the Service has been undergoing a multi-phase transformation from 2022 onwards in order to meet financial sustainability targets set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Following the successful completion of the first transformation stage, which delivered substantial recurring savings, the focus has shifted to the implementation of Phase 2 initiatives regarding the identification and delivery of additional financial savings required from 2026 onwards.

### Phase 1 Transformation Achievements (2022–2025) £1,300,000 of recurring savings achieved

Phase 1 was delivered successfully in 2025, meeting targets through a combination of:

- Prevention and Protection Reviews
- Workforce efficiencies with savings made from reducing wholtime crewing figures and reviews of prevention and protection staff.
- Process improvements around operational crewing and training.
- Strategic project completions which have seen investments in the On-call service and procurement of new innovative appliances.

### Phase 2 – Savings Requirement (2025–2029) Current initiatives and savings. Savings Target: £1,000,000 (recurring) – On Track to be achieved.

Declared Savings to Date at the end of the 2025/26 period: **£500,000**. These declared savings are made up of:

- A structural review and removal of unoccupied posts such as a Programme/Project Management role,
- An administrative review resulting in streamlining and standardising administrative functions within Service delivery groups that will provide reoccurring savings realised from September 2025 onwards,
- HR review and restructure,
- the closure of the Community Sprinkler project,
- MRP savings from the year end position,
- Revenue review of vacancy controls and removal of a business support manager post,
- Contingent Asset returns from high level projects and additional income from the Unitary Charge and water rebates.

### Further areas currently in progress within Phase 2:

- Estates sharing and asset reattribution towards strategic partners regarding the Stafford site, and options for leaseback to be discussed in Q1 2026/27.
- Awaiting final consultation; is the removal of a number of On Call support officer roles from the current structure which will be finalised in Q1 2026/27.
- It is anticipated that once completed; all savings identified in Phase 2 will equal or exceed **£994,000**.



## 2.5 Collaborative Shared Estates

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service has a building portfolio consisting of **35** premises/sites. The portfolio consists of **21** Private Finance Initiative (PFI) buildings and **14** residual buildings/sites.

The PFI buildings are split across **2** outsourced contracts which are managed from within the Estates Team, which is a shared service with Staffordshire Police. One contract consists of **10** fire stations, whilst the other PFI contract is made up of **11** fire stations. The remaining **14** residual buildings/sites are maintained by an in house facilities management team within the Estates team.

Last financial year (2025/26) saw the Estates Team deliver circa **£0.7m** worth of investment across the residual sites, and this financial year (2026/27) the team are aiming to deliver circa **£1.4m** worth of investment across the residual estate. Due to changes internally within the Estates Team a number of projects have been paused but works to the JETS site at Trentham Lakes were completed in October 2025, and at Pirehill road resurfacing works were completed and replacement fire doors were installed within the control building.

Design and feasibility works are well underway to refurbish Brewood fire station. The project will focus on the installation of an external portacabin which will provide an onsite gym facility for the staff. Further refurbishment will be done internally to the building, improving the current layout and condition of the station. Investment is also planned at Stafford fire station, including replacement of the fire alarm, external lighting and the automated gate.

Staffordshire Fire Service is committed to further reducing its carbon footprint, in particular within the building portfolio. A feasibility study is underway to assess the installation of electric vehicle charging points at a number of stations; Stafford, Hanley, Newcastle, Cannock and Tamworth have been reviewed. Furthermore, options around the installation of sustainable heating systems are being explored, and further LED lighting will be rolled out across the estate to reduce our utility bills as well as reduce our carbon footprint.

The Estates team is working closely with the Staffordshire Commissioner's office to build upon successful collaborative building projects recently undertaken. This has seen the creation of new police posts at Chase Terrace, Kinver and Penkridge fire stations, and shared fire and police stations at Uttoxeter and Stone over the last two years. Furthermore, police drop-in facilities have been added in Abbots Bromley and Barton-under-Needwood fire stations in recent months, allowing Staffordshire Fire Service to share collaborative accommodation with colleagues in Staffordshire Police.

The Estates Team is committed to utilising the building portfolio to explore further collaborative opportunities between both Fire and Police as well as other public body organisations.



# 3.0 Protecting

## 3.1 Protection Activity

The Service completes a number of Protection activity types:

- **Fire Safety Audits**

*A Fire Safety Audit is an examination of a premises and relevant documents to ascertain how the premises are being managed regarding fire safety to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Audits are generally targeted to those premises where the occupants could be deemed at most risk should a fire occur.*

- **Licensing Consultations**

*Under the Licensing Act 2003 and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the licensing authority is required to consult and give Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service the opportunity to make representation with regards to public safety (fire safety), before issuing the licence.*

- **Building Regulation Consultations**

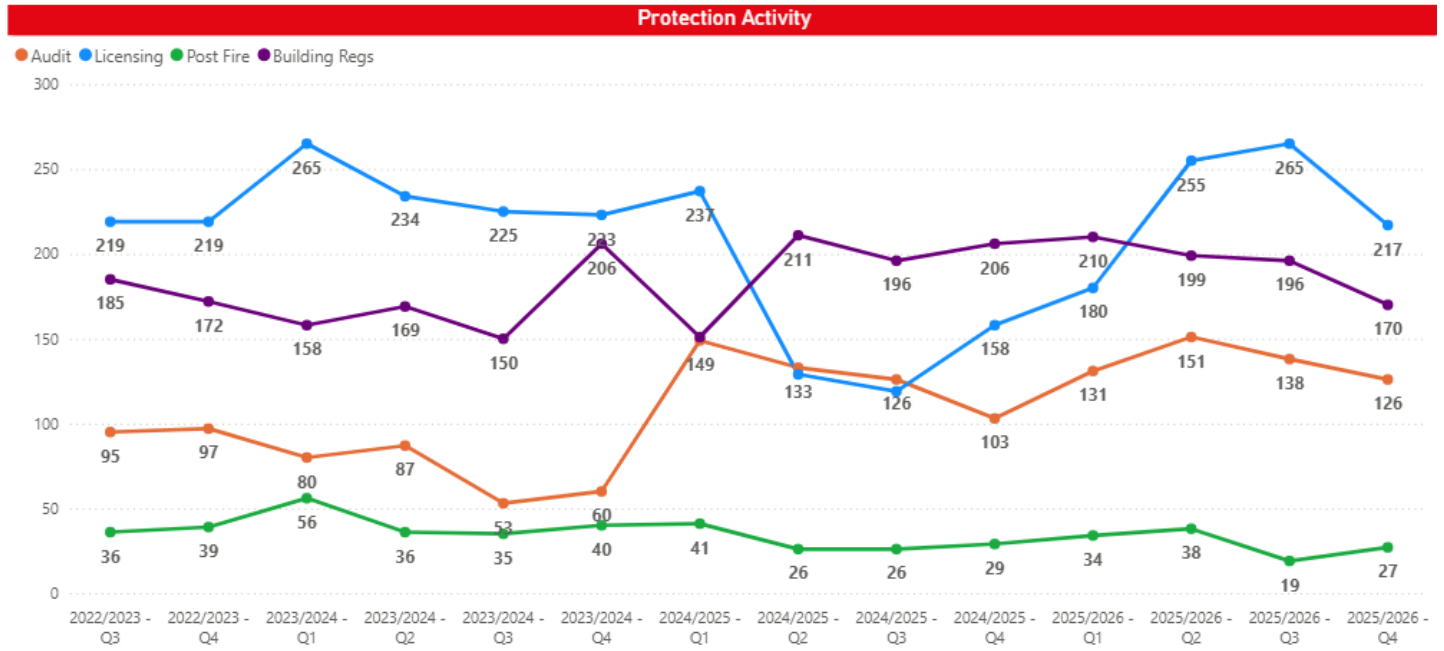
*Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service is a statutory consultee as part of the Building Regulations process. Whenever a new building is to be built, or alterations are proposed to an existing building then Building Regulations approval will be required. Proposed plans for new premises and those undergoing alterations are usually sent for approval to either the local Authority Building Control department or an Approved Inspector. The proposed plans will then be passed to the local Fire and Rescue Service as a statutory for consultation where they will be checked to ensure occupants will have a suitable means of escape and that fire appliances can access the premises should they need to.*

- **Post Fire Inspections**

*When a fire has occurred, it may indicate a failing of some elements of fire safety within that premises. Therefore, a post fire inspection will be carried to ascertain the details of the fire, work with the business to ensure business continuity arrangements are in place, and in some cases carry out a full fire safety audit so measures can be put into place to prevent reoccurrence and ensure future compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.*



Figure 8: Protection Activity Trend



**Between October 2025 and March 2026:**

**264** Fire Safety Audits were carried out, which is an increase from the **229** completed within the same period within the previous year. Of those premises audited, Care Homes, Hotels, Tall Buildings and Hospitals make up the majority of those visited.

**366** Building Regulation Consultations were completed, which is a decrease from the **402** completed within the same period within the previous year.

**482** Licensing Consultations were completed, which is a significant increase from the **284** completed within the same period within the previous year.

**46** Post Fire Inspections were completed, which remains similar to the **55** completed for the same period within the previous year.

**Fire Safety Audits**

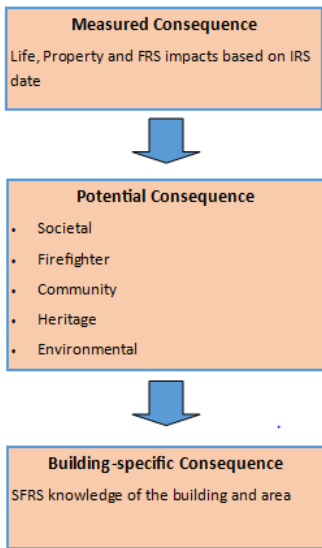
The number of Fire Safety Audits completed has remained stable through the period of October 2025 to March 2026. This can be attributed to the updated Risk Based Inspection Programme giving greater insight and overview of premises to be audited, as well as much improved performance statistics being available to Protection Teams.

**Risk Based Inspection Programme**

The Fire Safety (England) Regulations have now been fully adopted by the Service. All plans and external wall reports for tall buildings have now been received from members of the public that manage or are responsible for high rise buildings within Staffordshire. The Service has also been receiving and actioning any faults with regards to fixed installations within tall buildings through our Fire Protection teams.



The logic for defining risk in non-domestic means each premises received a risk rating of Very High, High, Medium, Low or Very Low. Those premises deemed Very High or High risk will be audited by a Fire Safety Inspecting Officer who holds a Level 4 Diploma in Fire Safety. A selection of lower risk premises will receive a compliance check by operational crews.



**To be allocated a risk category the following has been considered:**

**Measured Consequence** – This is based on historical incident data across a range of premises types (Care Home, Sheltered Housing, HRRB etc.) to give a generic risk score for each building type.

**Potential Consequence** – This gives a generic score for each of the 5 risk areas mentioned for each building type. These can be manually adjusted by Fire Protection Teams based on local knowledge. Where Firefighter Risk has been defined by a Site Specific Risk Inspection (SSRI), that Firefighter Risk level will be taken. Where no SSRI has been carried out the generic score will be used.

**Building Specific Consequence** – Fire Protection Teams can adjust scores based on local knowledge. E.g. generically a Care Home would score low for Heritage risk, however if this is Grade 1 listed, this score could be adjusted which would have an impact on the overall risk category.

The level of risk and the outcome of the previous audit will influence the reinspection timeframe. The table below displays the planned revisit schedule in numbers of years relative to risk and previous outcomes. As inspections move in cycles, sustaining 100% completion for an extended period of time is unlikely.

**Revisit Schedule based on risk and outcome of Fire Safety Audit (years)**

	Standard	Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		Enforcement / Prohibition
		Satisfactory	Fire Safety Matters	Fire Safety Matters	Action Plan	
VH	3	4	4	3	2	2
H	4	5	5	4	2	2
M	<i>Covered by inspections where necessary (Post Fire, Complaint etc...) or via Compliance Check carried out by Operational Crews as part of an SSRI</i>					
L						
VL						

**Compliance Checks**

An area the Service has developed over the previous months is the completion of fire safety compliance checks by operational crews. Crews have been receiving training to the Level 2 Award in Fire Safety Checks with 175 operational crew members now having received the training. This has led to 365 Compliance Checks being carried out in premises deemed medium, low or very low risk as part of the Services Risk Based Inspection Programme (as previously reported those premises deemed high or very high risk receive a full fire safety audit by specialist Protection staff).



## 3.2 Fire Hydrants

Over recent months, the hydrant testing programme across the county has undergone significant revision. The original seven-year, risk-based schedule has been accelerated to a two-year delivery plan following a full review of testing areas.

This revised approach is supported by operational crews achieving monthly targets of **13 hydrants per watch**, alongside hydrant technicians delivering inspection coverage within allocated areas.

Phase One has focused on validating hydrant locations and improving mapping accuracy as well as adding essential information to support incidents. This has resulted in clearly defined testing zones, enabling more efficient working and supporting response times.

Phase Two is now underway. Personnel from Tamworth station commenced this on the 1st of March 2026, with Stafford and Burton stations following on the 1st of May. Remaining stations will transition on a phased basis throughout 2026.

A total of **17,951** hydrant assets are currently adopted under a risk-based approach by Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service.

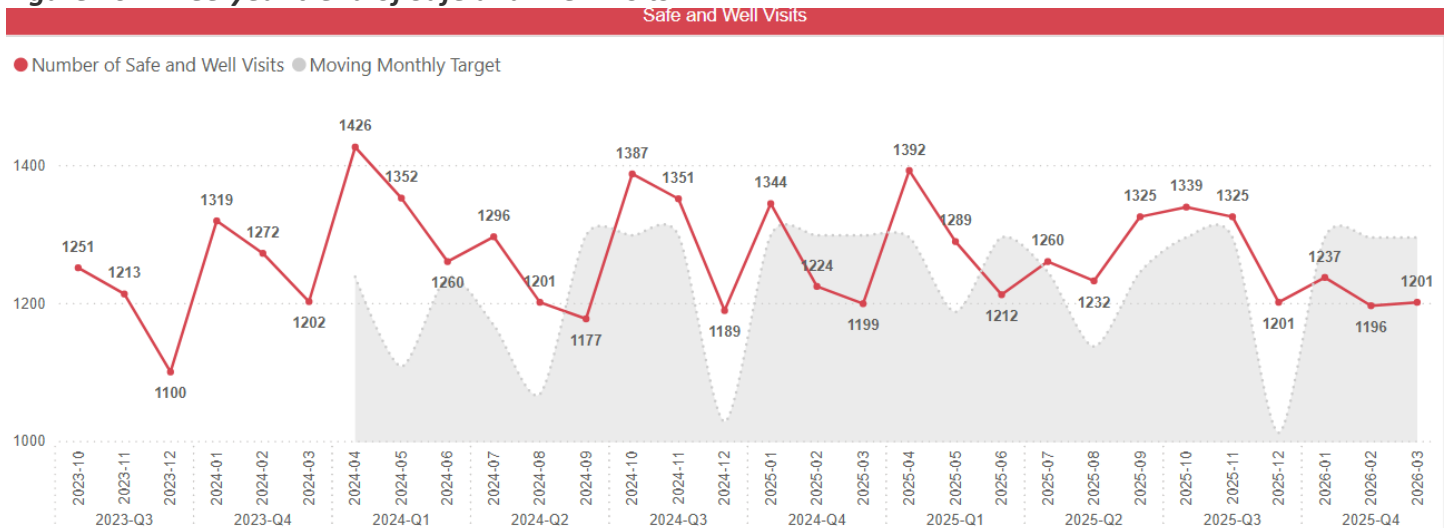
Between 1 October 2025 and 31 March 2026, **4,419** inspections have been completed by operational crews and hydrant technicians.

To complete Phase One, **6,209** hydrant inspections remain outstanding, including **1,767** of these within wholetime station areas.

# 4.0 Preventing

## 4.1 Safe and Well Visits

Figure 10: Three-year trend of Safe and Well Visits



**7,499** Home Fire Safety Visits have been completed between October 2025 and March 2026. Although being under target in the months of January, February and March due to staffing changes; targets across the whole Q3 and Q4 period (**7,487**) have been exceeded by **12** visits. This indicates that the target setting for the total time period was realistic and achievable.

As the Service moves into a new fiscal year, these targets have been redefined further to take into account a better understanding of all conflicting demands, which has resulted in a reduction of expected visits from **14,891** to **14,684** over the next fiscal year. The Service will continue to monitor demand and performance in this area and will review and adjust where necessary.

The Service is in the process of moving to a new platform for Home Fire Safety visit recording utilising the Community Fire Risk Management Information Systems (CFRMIS). Following a pilot period with the Contact Centre the wider Service will move across to CFRMIS for HFSV recording in the coming months.

The Prevent and Protect Board approved the launch of our Water Safety Plan which was developed and will be used by the service to address concerns around incidents involving water during Winter and Summer months, the aim of the plan is to give strategic direction to Prevent Teams, Operational Crews and the Communication Teams around relevant safety advice which can be used to address the associated risks. This plan is a live document advising on routine and triggered activities that can take place during set times during the year when required.

In addition, the Service has also introduced the on-line Home Fire Safety Check process hosted via Safelincs, which gives members of the community the opportunity to complete an easy-to-follow on-line Home Fire Safety Check which has been developed through a partnership between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Fire Kills and Safelincs. It takes members of the community through a series of questions regarding their home, one room at a time and the simple questions will help them to spot fire risks as they complete the questionnaire. The tool offers tips and advice on the steps that can be taken to reduce those risks. If a Home Fire Safety Visit is required, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service will be notified and will arrange a visit, if low risk the user will be given a personalised fire safety action plan to help keep them and their household safe from fire risks.

Olive Branch learning is now hosted via our own website; Olive Branch training is aimed at professionals who visit vulnerable members of the community in their homes in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. The training helps staff to identify potential fire hazards and other risks in the home; it includes how to refer “at risk” people for a Home Fire Safety Visit.

## 4.2 Fire and Health Partnership Team

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service has been delivering a Falls Response Service and Home from Hospital Service to the communities of Staffordshire since December 2022 and December 2023 respectively. The Service has worked closely with Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Integrated Care Board (SSOTICB) and Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT) to achieve this and continues to do so.

Discussions regarding the future funding of these initiatives are currently underway, with the objective of securing sustainable financial support beyond the current funding period. These discussions are taking place within a context of significant structural transformation across the NHS, which has influenced both the pace and complexity of funding decisions.

Despite this, funding has been formally approved for both services until 31 May 2026. During this period, there is a clear ambition to progress further funding discussions to extend delivery to at least March 2027 or beyond.

Whilst the overall initiative is described as the Fire and Health Partnership Team, they are two distinctly different services that are detailed separately below.



## Falls Response Team

The falls response service went live on 7th December 2022 and has provided live service every day since. The below performance data is up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026:

- There have been **3,489 mobilisations**, which averages **2.88 calls per day**, which is marginally higher than the previously reported average of **2.74 calls per day**. Activity levels in more recent months have increased to over **3 calls per day**, indicating a sustained upward trend in demand.
- The majority of patients continue to be elderly with **94% being over 60**, which is a risk factor associated with fire and enables us to carry out Home Fire Safety Visits
- The team responds to the whole county of Staffordshire and has an average attendance time of **under 38 minutes**, which has increased by **1 minute** over the reporting period
- Overall, each job takes an average of **67 minutes** to complete, an increase of **2 minutes**

The data shows that the triage process works well and the vast majority of time we are assigned to calls that are suitable for our team. Although this has reduced slightly since the last report, some changes will be reflective of the additional 'Failed Contact' work:

- **80%** of the time the patient is picked up and has no injuries
- **8%** of the time the patient has been picked up or managed to get up prior to our arrival
- **11%** of the time the patient is picked up but requires a referral back to ICC for further attention.
- Less than **1%** of the time the patient has suffered injuries, therefore is not picked up and referred to the Integrated Care Centre (ICC) and West Midland Ambulance Service (WMAS).

In August 2025, the Falls Team assumed additional responsibilities to support the ICC service by responding to 'Failed Contact' jobs. These are cases initially triaged by West Midland Ambulance Service as fallers, but where the ICC has been unable to make further contact with the patient.

The Falls Team as part of this response the now undertakes the following actions in response:

- Attempt contact via home inspection
- Attend the property and assist if the patient is present and requires fall assistance
- Escalate the case to CRIS or WMAS if the patient requires further medical attention

Since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 the Falls Response Team have carried out:

- **212** Failed Contact Jobs
- **76%** - Contact Made - No Further Action Required
- **8%** - Contact Made - Faller Picked Up No Issues
- **7%** - Contact Made – Picked Up Prior
- **5%** - Contact Made – Referred to ICC
- **4%** - Other (e.g. Immediate WMAS Support Required or Not Picked Up)

A Clinical Team Lead from the ICC recently reflected on the failed contact jobs stating:

***"We greatly appreciate the importance and effectiveness of this service and endeavour to utilise it at every opportunity to ensure timely and appropriate care for our patients."***

As a direct result of these mobilisations, since its inception, SFRS have completed **1,756 Home Fire Safety Visits**.

## Home from Hospital Team

The Home from Hospital service (HfH) went live on 4th December 2023 and has provided live service every day since, excluding Christmas day, as the Integrated Discharge Hub is closed.

The below performance data is up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026:



- There have been **4,751 mobilisations** since the Service went live, with **3,430** of those being for the Discharge and Settle in Service (DSI). The average is **4.05 discharges per day**, which has increased since the last reporting period.
- The majority of patients continue to be elderly with **95% being over 60**, which is a risk factor associated with fire and enables us to carry out a Home Fire Safety Visit.
- On average each DSI job takes **85 minutes** to complete, which has increased slightly over the reporting period.
- Just under **96%** of the time the DSI is conducted with no issues. On **4%** of occasions there may be some minor issues which have required support from the IDH.

Since expanding the role and taking on new responsibilities in July 2024, which further support and facilitate the transfer of patients to their homes, the team has completed the following:

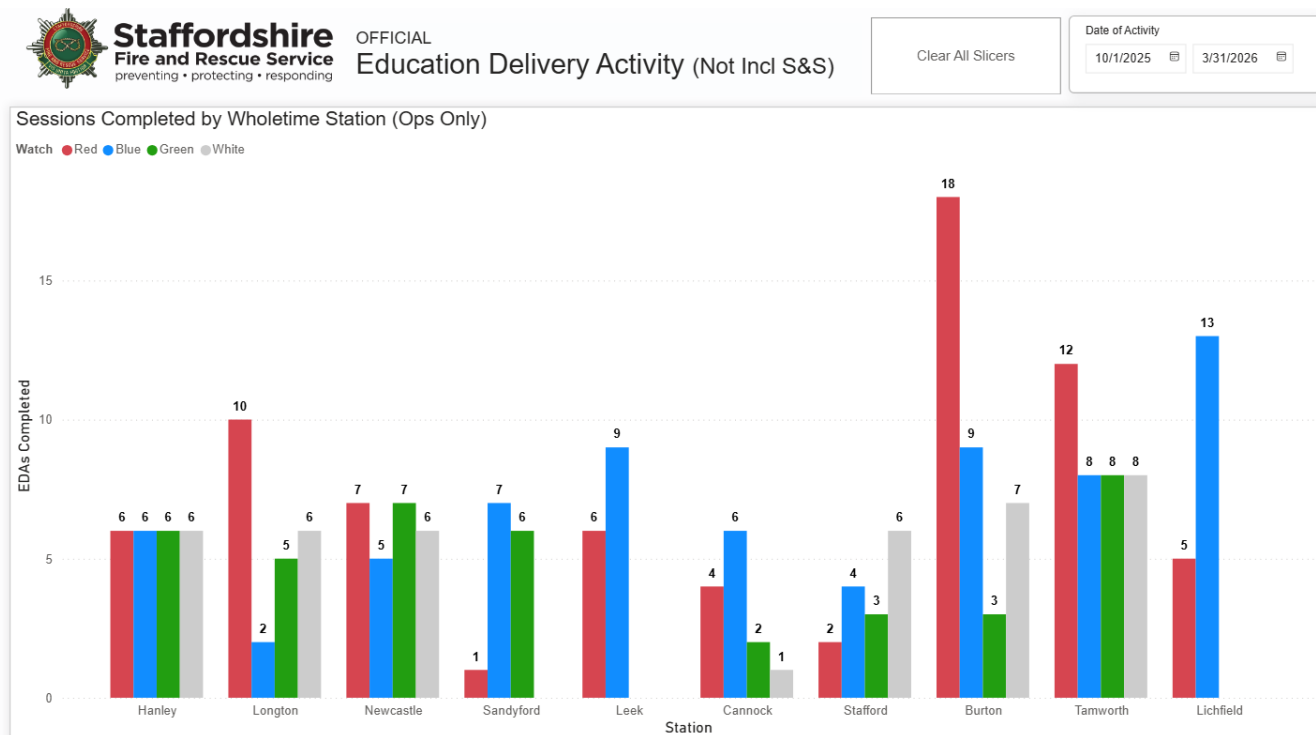
- **1,031** key safe installations
- **249** furniture move jobs
- **33** property inspections

With all activities combined the team is now completing between **6-7 jobs per day** on average. Effective from 1st November 2025, a revised shift pattern will be implemented, enabling greater flexibility and capacity for mobilisations. It is anticipated that this adjustment will lead to more timely interventions, improved patient outcomes and a more efficient use of resources across partner agencies. This change is designed to support IDH’s objective of increasing patient transportation and improving overall service responsiveness, reflecting our ongoing commitment to collaborative working and continuous improvement in service delivery.

### 4.3 Education and Volunteering Update

#### Education Delivery by Whole Time Watches

Between October 2025 and March 2026, the visual below demonstrates delivery per Watch by whole time station. This is only a partial picture of the academic year and includes the school holidays but over the whole year most Watches achieved their **target of 9** educational visits.



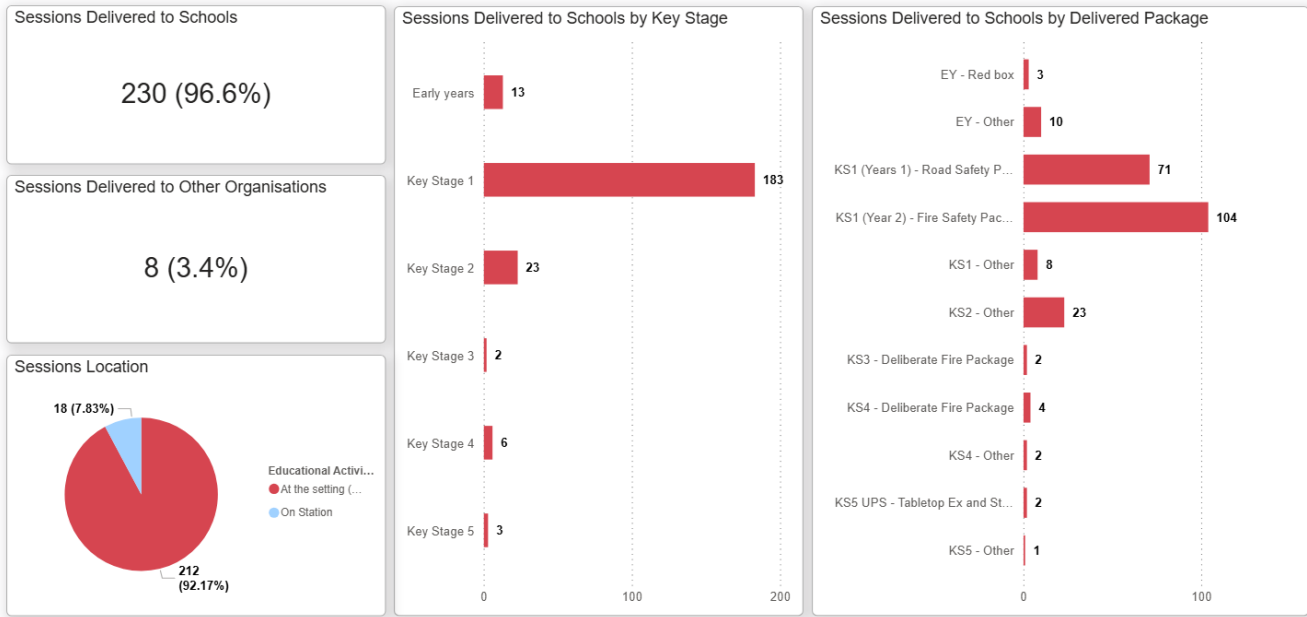
## Topics and Key Stages delivered to Whole Time Watches



OFFICIAL  
Education Delivery Activity (Not Incl S+S)

Clear All Slicers

Date of Activity  
10/1/2025 3/31/2026



## Safe+Sound Live Events

Between October 2025 and March 2026 Safe+Sound was delivered to **3,761** Year 5 (Key Stage 2 children)

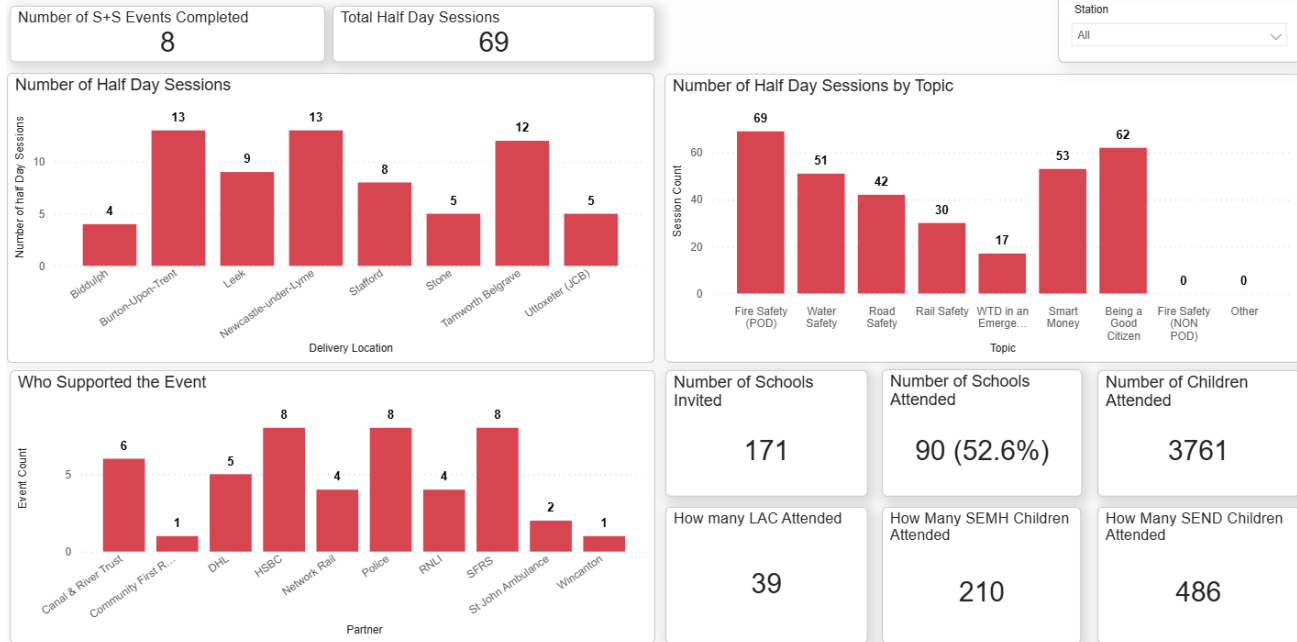


OFFICIAL  
Education - Safe+Sound Delivery

Clear All Slicers

Date  
10/1/2025 3/31/2026

Station  
All

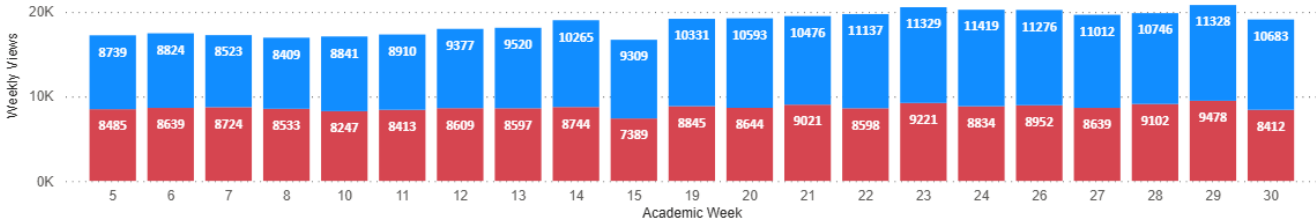


## Safe+Sound weekly on-line Programme

Online delivery of Safe+Sound on the Learn Live Channel is still going very well with a weekly programme every Wednesday (term time only)

### Weekly Views

● National Devices ● Staffordshire Devices



**393,113** devices tuned in to the programme, of which **182,126** were from Staffordshire and **211,047** National, giving an average weekly viewer number of **18,719**. Feedback from participants and partners remains positive.

### Volunteering Update

There are currently **27** volunteers in the service. Examples of volunteer engagement include:

- Support with hosting and delivering at Safe+Sound events across the County.
- Continued support for all operational and support staff by our Chaplains.
- Educational visits to stations for local Beavers, Cubs and Brownies groups.
- Supporting our Community Engagement Officer with local events and open days across the county.
- Helping to maintain and upkeep the Memorial Garden
- Local community events with Crews
- A total of **1,703.45** volunteer hours were given between October 2025 and March 2026 and the Service is currently undertaking a review of the Chaplaincy offer.

## 5.0 Emerging Issues

Staffordshire is entering a period of significant and overlapping governance reform affecting **Fire, Police, and Local Government**. These changes are nationally driven but have direct local implications for accountability, leadership assurance, financial resilience, workforce stability, and the overall continuity of service delivery. The principal strategic challenge is not reform in isolation, but the convergence of multiple reform programmes on similar timescales. This increases cumulative risk and extends and complicates future transitional periods.

For Fire and Rescue Services in particular, reform has progressed beyond policy intent and into active national implementation. As such, this is an emerging area outside of local control that is being closely followed and regularly reviewed by the Service.

### 5.1 Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Governance and Transition of Oversight

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) currently operate under a Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) governance model which provides clear single-point accountability.

Government policy requires that PCC / PFCC arrangements will cease by May 2028, with responsibilities transferring to interim collective governance arrangements and potentially onward to mayoral or strategic authority models as part of the English devolution programme nationally.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent have been identified as an early Foundation Strategic Authority (FSA) area. As a result, the Service faces an elevated risk of sequential governance change within a relatively short period. A dedicated Fire Transition working group has been established within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to manage the transfer of Fire governance functions and develop detailed policy proposals, with the involvement of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC). The current Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire leads on this group and represents the county in this regard.

#### Potential implications and Key Risks for Fire:

- **Governance instability from multiple transitions, increasing strategic drift and reducing organisational focus.**
- **Lack of clarity for the operational independence of Chief Fire Officers within the proposed models, which had been the focus of a previous white paper requiring reform of the fire Sector in 2022/2023.**
- **Dilution of fire-specific accountability where governance is absorbed into broader public safety or place-based structures.**
- **Interruption or loss of joint police working, or accountability, which provide key support services, including, HR, Finance, Estates, Comms, Occupational Health, EDI and other provisions as currently agreed.**
- **Workforce risk arising from repeated employer transfers, impacting confidence, morale, and retention.**
- **Financial exposure where transition costs are not fully and consistently funded by central government.**
- **Reduced influence over long-term fire governance during the Foundation Strategic Authority transition phase. Future transitions from FSA to local Mayoral or later Regional Mayoral models is yet unknown.**

Overall, the principal risk is not reform itself, but prolonged uncertainty and repeated structural change, which could weaken accountability, resilience, and service focus if not actively managed.



## 5.2 Staffordshire Local Government Reorganisation

Local government reform is progressing in parallel with Fire and Police reform. Proposals for reorganisation and unitary structures are intended to support devolution, as well as the establishment of a Foundation Strategic Authority for oversight.

There is a risk of increased leadership and corporate capacity pressure as well as disruption to local partnership arrangements that currently support prevention and resilience activity.

There is also a greater degree of uncertainty regarding future accountability and scrutiny mechanisms.

These reforms may indirectly impact Fire and Police governance through altered arrangements with existing partners within Local authority areas and also have the potential to affecting funding, collaboration and oversight arrangements.

## 5.3 Staffordshire Police Reform and Shared Services

The abolition of PCCs is accompanied by wider police reform, transferring governance functions to mayors or collective boards aligned with devolved structures. Staffordshire Police and Fire have in the past several years benefitted from shared governance, estates, and support services through collaboration.

Emerging risks include fragmentation of shared service arrangements during transition, inconsistent commissioning and performance frameworks, and the potential loss of collective efficiencies achieved under the PFCC model. Changes may also affect the ability to have joint working support teams across organisational boundaries.

The intention of the government, through the Police Reform Programme, is to eventually migrate to **8-10 regional mayors** overseeing a reduced number of police forces from the currently established **43**.

This is in order to equate regional boundaries towards mayoral areas which may coincide with current Regional Organised Crime Unit boundary arrangements.

A National Police Service will be also established replacing the National Crime Agency, and key specialist teams will also be regionalised or absorbed nationally, leaving local police to deal with more localised crime. Ultimately these intentions will see the end of overall initiatives led from an approach of localised decision making and change the county-based identity towards a more encompassing national approach.

From the Fire and Rescue perspective, reductions to the number of fire authorities are also expected under the revision of overall governance models.

## Conclusion

Staffordshire is entering a period of compounded governance reform affecting Fire, Police, and Local Government simultaneously. The overriding risk is that transitional arrangements endure longer than intended placing sustained strain on accountability, workforce stability and financial resilience. Opportunities for cross service integration are likely to be diminished during this period of uncertainty. Early clarity on end-state arrangements and robust transition management will be critical.

# 6.0 Enabling Services

## 6.1 Recruitment Activity

### Promotion Processes

During 2026, the Service is implementing a structured promotion process designed to ensure workforce resilience, operational continuity and effective succession planning. This process takes into account the anticipated retirement of a number of experienced personnel, whose departure will result in the loss of significant organisational knowledge and leadership capability. By proactively managing these transitions, the process minimises organisational risk and supports the timely appointment of suitably qualified personnel into key roles.

The approach enables newly appointed Officers and managers to be supported through a period of organisational change, underpinned by continued investment in learning and development. Given that newly appointed personnel may initially have limited experience in role, the provision of targeted training, coaching and mentoring will be essential to support effective transition, maintain leadership consistency and build confidence. This aligns with established change management principles, supporting the Service to adapt effectively, retain performance standards and drive continuous improvement during a period of workforce transition.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service is approaching a period of leadership restructure from a position of strength. Following robust recruitment processes the PFCC has successfully appointed a new Chief Fire Officer and the service has appointed a Deputy Chief Fire Officer, providing strong strategic continuity at the top of the organisation.

Recruitment activity across the Service is demonstrating very positive market confidence, with a strong influx of applicants across key leadership and operational levels, including Group Manager, Station Manager, Watch Manager and upcoming Crew Manager roles. Across promotion processes, external recruitment continues to attract greater diversity than internal pipelines, particularly in relation to gender, ethnicity, disability and LGBT+ representation. While internal applicant diversity remains limited at senior and middle management levels, application data at Station Manager and Group Manager levels indicates positive progress in external interest, providing a foundation for improving workforce representation over time.

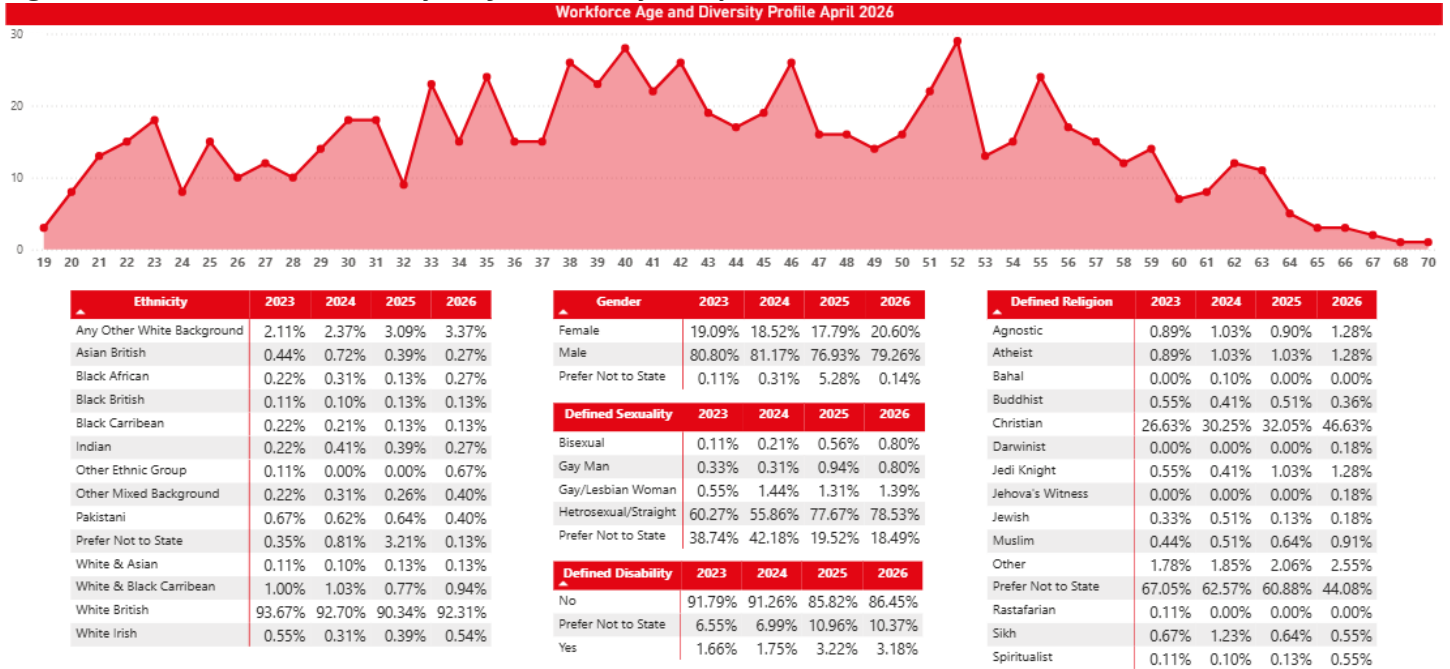
This sustained interest across both internal and external candidates is a clear testament to the reputation, stability and attractiveness of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service as an employer and provides assurance that the Service is well-placed to maintain leadership capacity and resilience during this next phase of change.



## 6.2 Workforce Diversity

The chart below displays the workforce diversity position **2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026** for all Whole Time, On Call, and Support staff including Principal Officers. These charts are based upon declared data collected during the recruitment and on boarding process. This data is provided voluntarily by individuals. Changes to numbers in the overall workforce can also influence the percentages shown.

**Figure 14: Total Service Diversity Profile % Yearly Comparison**



## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

### Service-wide data cleanse

Supported by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), the EDI and Recruitment teams have launched a campaign to encourage staff to update their protected characteristic data on Firewatch. By improving data accuracy, the Service can move beyond assumptions to provide tailored support, ensuring all staff have the tools and environment necessary to thrive in their roles.

### Key Objectives:

- **Transparency:** The communications clearly explain how the data is used, helping to demystify the process and build trust across the Service.
- **Enhanced Reporting:** A new Firewatch function now allows staff to specifically distinguish between **neurodivergence, physical disability, and dyslexia.**
- **Targeted Support:** This granular data enables the Service to build a more accurate picture of workforce needs, ensuring that reasonable adjustments and specialist support are correctly allocated.
- **Leadership Alignment:** Messaging from the Assistant Chief reinforces the importance of this initiative in creating an inclusive and supportive working environment.

### Women’s Conference

On 21 October 2025, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) held a dedicated **Women’s Conference Day** to support and encourage women interested in joining the service. The event targeted those who had previously engaged with the service via taster days or careers fairs.



## Key Activities:

- **Recruitment Coaching:** Advice on CV writing, interview techniques, and communication.
- **Hands-on Experience:** "Day in the Life" sessions, equipment demonstrations, and station tours to provide a realistic view of the working environment.
- **Fitness & Resilience:** Discussions led by the Fitness Adviser on meeting the physical and mental demands of the role.
- **Role Model Q&As:** Panel discussions with current female staff sharing their personal career journeys and successes.

## Taster Sessions

To address On-Call recruitment needs, two-hour Positive Action Taster Days were held at Penkridge and Hanley Fire Stations. These sessions were designed to encourage diverse applicants and provide a realistic preview of the role.

## Session Highlights:

- **Engagement:** Attendees met with firefighters and recruitment staff to learn about the service and the support available through Positive Action.
- **Practical Experience:** Participants engaged in hands-on drills, including hose running, ladder climbs, breathing apparatus familiarisation, and casualty rescue simulations.
- **Fitness & Preparation:** Staff provided guidance on physical requirements, demonstrated fitness tests, and shared training tips.
- **Future Support:** The days concluded with signposting to mentorship and information on upcoming recruitment windows.

## Measuring Success

The service will use the Oleo recruitment platform to track the impact of these sessions.

By asking applicants if they attended a Taster Day, the service can directly map how these activities contribute to successful recruitment outcomes and increased diversity.

## Community Engagement

Promoting recruitment whether it is for Wholetime, On-call or support roles has been something that has been completed at all community events along with the usual fire safety messages. An increased presence at community events across the county over the past 3 years has generated more interest in roles with the fire service. Moving forward we will get information to all Watch's about recruitment campaigns and materials to promote as this could be a much more effective when attending events.

There is now a strong base of connections in the community with links to the Sudanese, Eritrean, Afro-Caribbean and Asian populations. It is important that we record and collate data about the community events we attend so we can review what kind of engagement is taking place with the different demographic of people we interact with. This can be done using the revised Community Engagement form which is now accessed by staff on PowerApp.

Moving forward the guidance will be given to the Operational Watch's around embedding Positive Action conversations into general engagement at all events as well as each station hosting a Positive Action event on an annual basis.



## Fitness Testing

The Service continues to deliver a partnership programme focused on careers within the fire and rescue service, incorporating presentations and workshops delivered by representatives from a range of departments. These sessions aim to explain the roles and responsibilities associated with both operational and support functions, alongside outlining the fitness requirements and personal attributes best suited to each role.

Events are held at fire stations across the county and are targeted primarily at young people **aged approximately 14–15**, with attendance comprising a mixed group of male and female participants.

In October 2025, a female-focused recruitment conference was delivered at Service Headquarters. The conference provided a comprehensive overview of the recruitment process from initial application through to appointment. Attendees were offered practical examples and demonstrations of key elements, including interview techniques, the job-related physical tests, and information on how the Service supports neurodiversity. A panel question-and-answer session was also held, during which individuals representing a range of roles and ranks shared their experiences and engaged openly with participants.

The opportunity to observe the process in detail, take part in practical equipment demonstrations and have the opportunity to ask questions in an open and supportive environment proved beneficial in addressing perceived barriers and confidence issues that can deter females from applying to the fire service, particularly in operational roles.

Following the success of this event, planning commenced immediately to deliver a further conference at the end of April 2026. While this session will continue to support under-represented groups, it will also be opened to a wider audience to ensure equal access to the opportunity for all. The long-term objective is to establish the conference as a biannual event, running each April and October, to build sustained familiarity with the Service and strengthen relationships with the community over time.

Planning and preparatory work is underway to introduce a firefighter fitness bootcamp aimed at individuals aspiring to join the Service. The initiative will provide participants with the opportunity to attend fire stations and take part in firefighter-related fitness sessions, with the dual aim of improving physical preparedness and strengthening relationships with local communities.

The sessions will be led by a female firefighter, offering visible representation and reinforcing the message to under-represented groups that there are no barriers to the role where the required fitness standards are met. The proposal is to pilot the programme within a single station area, with a phased rollout across the county to ensure engagement with a wide range of communities. While planning and initial promotion are underway, the first programme is scheduled to launch in spring/summer 2026.

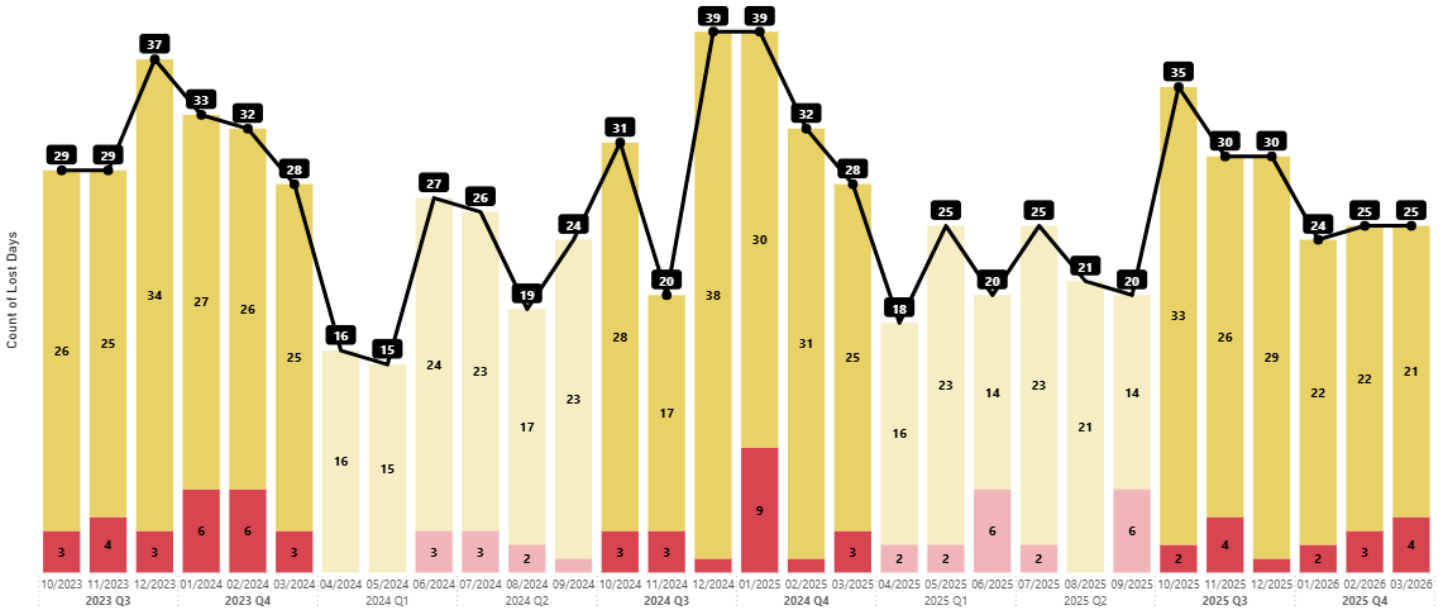


## 6.3 Workforce Sickness

Figure 15: Total Number of Wholetime Days Lost Due to Sickness

Lost Days Due to Sickness: Wholetime

Long Term Yes No Count of Lost Days



The above illustrates both short term and long-term sickness absence for Wholetime Firefighters.

Between October 2025 and March 2026, the data indicates a continued reduction in overall sickness absence across Wholetime Firefighters, building on the downward trend observed earlier in the year.

Both short-term and long-term absence levels have decreased when compared to the first half of the year, suggesting that earlier interventions and absence management approaches are having a positive impact. Musculoskeletal conditions remain the primary driver of absence, although overall days lost in this category have reduced in line with the wider trend.

The profile of absence remains consistent, with no emerging new causes of concern, and a general stabilisation in absence levels is evident.

### All Sickness Type Whole Time

Type	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4
Sick: Respiratory	41	31	11	16	24	28	6	8	34	8
Sick: Musculoskeletal	12	21	25	16	21	21	18	16	16	17
Sick: Stomach/Abdominal Conditions	22	9	9	14	19	18	14	9	14	18
Sick: Disease/General	5	10	2	6	12	15	4	5	13	8
Sick: Psychological	4	9	1	5	3	5	5	10	3	10
Sick: Surgery/Screening	5	3	3	2	4	3	3	4	6	1
Sick: Facial,Eyes,Ears,Dental	3	3	2	1	1	1	2	6	3	4
Sick: Skin	1	2	2	4	2	4	4	6		1
Sick: Neurological		2	1	3	3	4	1	1	3	2
Sick: Cardio Vascular	1	2	1				2	1	2	2
Sick: Genital/Gynaecological/Urological				2	1	1	2		1	2
Sick: Blood/Immune System	1	1				3	1			1
Sick: Circulatory/Metabolic			1				1			
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>74</b>

### Long Term Sickness Type Whole Time

Type	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4
Sick: Musculoskeletal	4	5	3	2	3	6	4	3	2	2
Sick: Psychological	2	5		3	1	3	3	1	1	4
Sick: Surgery/Screening	1	1			2	1	2	1	2	
Sick: Respiratory	1	1		1		1		1		
Sick: Blood/Immune System	1					2				1
Sick: Stomach/Abdominal Conditions	1							1	1	1
Sick: Cardio Vascular		1					1		1	
Sick: Disease/General		1			1					
Sick: Facial,Eyes,Ears,Dental		1								
Sick: Genital/Gynaecological/Urological										1
Sick: Neurological								1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>

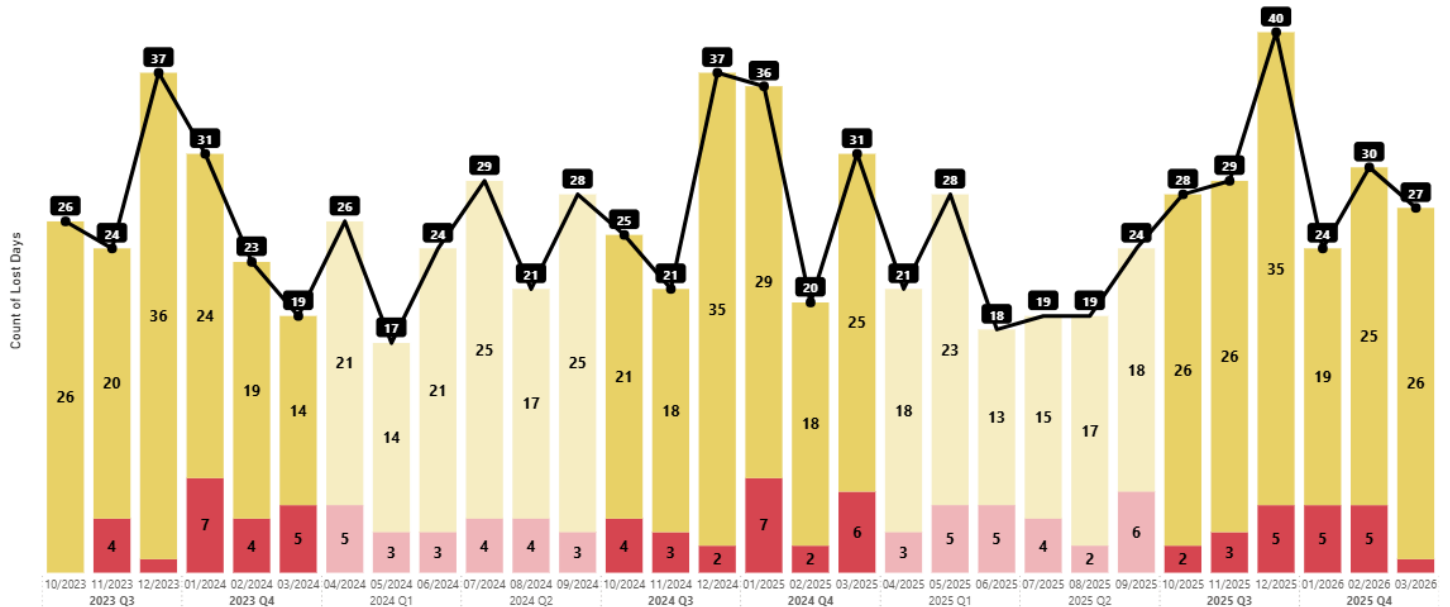
For Wholetime staff over the same period in the last three years the following is noted for the top 5 contributory factors:

- A significant decrease in total days lost to Respiratory sickness
- A small decrease in total days lost to Musculoskeletal sickness
- A decrease in total days lost to Stomach/Abdominal sickness
- A small increase in days lost to Disease/General
- Psychological sickness levels remain consistent



**Figure 16: Total Number of On Call Days Lost Due to Sickness**  
 Lost Days Due to Sickness: On Call

Long Term ● Yes ● No ● Count of Lost Days



The above illustrates both short and long-term sickness absence for On-Call Firefighters.

Between October 2025 and March 2026, the data indicates that overall sickness levels for On Call staff have remaining broadly similar to those within the past 3 year period.

Musculoskeletal conditions continue to represent the most significant cause of long-term absence, with a mixed trend across the three-year period. Respiratory-related long-term absence continues to be minimal, reflecting a consistently low impact in this area. Similarly, conditions relating to the cardiovascular system, neurological issues, skin conditions, and blood/immune disorders remain low frequency and do not show any sustained upward trend. Overall, while musculoskeletal and psychological conditions continue to account for the majority of long-term absence within On-Call staff, the wider profile remains stable. This supports a targeted rather than systemic focus for ongoing intervention and wellbeing activity.

**All Sickness Type On Call**

Type	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4
Sick: Musculoskeletal	12	15	22	15	22	24	22	15	16	24
Sick: Respiratory	32	21	12	12	25	17	6	10	36	9
Sick: Stomach/Abdominal Conditions	12	9	16	17	12	14	13	10	20	17
Sick: Disease/General	10	5	4	4	7	11	6	6	12	12
Sick: Psychological	7	8	3	10	2	8	4	10	6	8
Sick: Surgery/Screening	4	6	3	4	4	2	6	3	3	2
Sick: Facial,Eyes,Ears,Dental	5	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	1	3
Sick: Skin	1	1	1	6	5	1	3	4	1	1
Sick: Neurological	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	1	1	2
Sick: Blood/Immune System	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1
Sick: Genital/Gynaecological/Urological	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Sick: Cardio Vascular	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
Sick: Circulatory/Metabolic	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sick: Pregnancy Related	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>81</b>

For On Call staff over the same period in the last three years the following is noted for the top 5 contributory factors:

- A small decrease in days lost to Musculoskeletal sickness
- A similar level in days lost to Respiratory sickness
- A increase in days lost to Stomach/Abdominal sickness
- An increase in days lost to Disease/General
- A similar level in days lost to Psychological Sickness

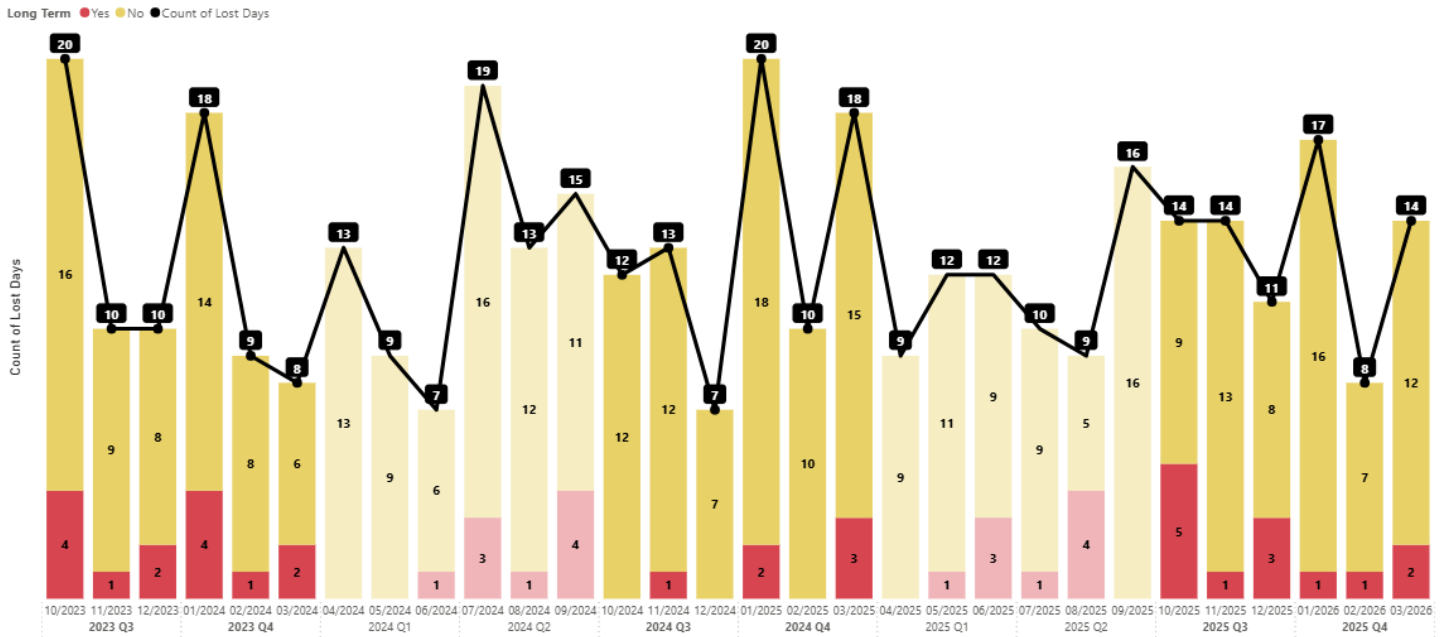
**Long Term Sickness Type On Call**

Type	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4
Sick: Musculoskeletal	1	8	7	2	5	3	6	2	4	6
Sick: Psychological	2	5	2	5	2	4	2	5	4	4
Sick: Surgery/Screening	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1
Sick: Stomach/Abdominal Conditions	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
Sick: Respiratory	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Sick: Cardio Vascular	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sick: Blood/Immune System	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Sick: Disease/General	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sick: Neurological	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sick: Skin	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>



**Figure 17: Total Number of Support Days Lost Due to Sickness**

**Lost Days Due to Sickness: Support**



The above illustrates both short and long-term sickness absence for Support staff.

For Support staff, a three-year comparison of October to March data indicates a positive reduction in respiratory-related absence, which remains the most significant improvement across the period. In contrast, there have been small increases across stomach/abdominal, psychological, general illness, and musculoskeletal categories. Overall, the data reflects a broadly stable absence profile with a positive movement in respiratory conditions.

Long-term sickness absence within Support staff across Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 remains low and broadly stable over the three-year period. Psychological-related absence is the most significant contributory factor, although it shows fluctuation rather than a sustained upward trend. Other categories remain minimal, with no emerging concerns identified.

**All Sickness Type Support**

Type	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4
Sick: Respiratory	18	11	12	15	16	13	6	11	14	15
Sick: Stomach/Abdominal Conditions	4	5	5	8	3	8	6	7	6	7
Sick: Psychological	4	4	5	9	2	4	4	4	5	3
Sick: Disease/General	2	6		1	1	6	5	2	4	4
Sick: Neurological	3	2	5	3	3	5	3	2	1	1
Sick: Musculoskeletal	1	1		4	1	3	2	5	4	3
Sick: Surgery/Screening	2	2	1	1	1	3	4	1	2	1
Sick: Genital/Gynaecological/Urological	1			2	3	4			1	1
Sick: Facial,Eyes,Ears,Dental	2	2		3			1		1	
Sick: Skin	1			1	1			1	1	1
Sick: Cardio Vascular	1		1				1	1	1	
Sick: Pregnancy Related						1	1	1		2
Sick: Blood/Immune System	1	2			1					
Sick: Circulatory/Metabolic										1
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>

**Long Term Sickness Type Support**

Type	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4
Sick: Psychological	3	4		5		3	3	2	4	
Sick: Surgery/Screening	2	1		1	1	1		1		
Sick: Musculoskeletal		1							2	2
Sick: Respiratory	1		1			1		1	1	
Sick: Neurological		1		2				1		
Sick: Skin	1									1
Sick: Stomach/Abdominal Conditions									1	1
Sick: Cardio Vascular							1			
Sick: Disease/General									1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>

For Support staff over the same period in the last three years the following is noted for the top 5 contributory factors:

- A similar level in days lost to Respiratory sickness
- A small increase in days lost to Stomach/Abdominal sickness
- A similar level in days lost to Psychological Sickness
- A similar level in days lost to Disease/General
- A small decrease in days lost to Neurological sickness



## Notable Actions

Long- and short-term sickness absence continues to be a key organisational priority, with activity across HR, Line Management, Occupational Health, and the Service Fitness Advisor closely aligned to the main drivers of absence identified within the data, particularly musculoskeletal and psychological conditions.

Between October 2025 and March 2026, monthly case conferences have remained well embedded, providing a structured forum to review complex cases, support early intervention, and agree appropriate absence management strategies. This continues to support a consistent approach to managing both short- and long-term sickness absence, including those on modified duties.

Occupational Health has introduced dedicated clinical duty time to support the triage of Occupational Health Referral Forms (OHARFs). This improvement is supporting earlier identification of need and ensuring cases linked to both physical and psychological absence are appropriately prioritised. As a result, cases are either fast-tracked to clinical assessment or supported through timely management advice, contributing to more efficient case progression and return-to-work outcomes.

In response to the continued prominence of musculoskeletal conditions within sickness absence data, the Fitness Advisor maintains a strong focus on functional MSK assessments across both On-Call and Wholetime staff. This work is closely integrated with HR and Line Management oversight of modified duties, ensuring structured rehabilitation pathways and timely decision-making in relation to phased return to work, redeployment, or ill-health retirement where appropriate.

A further area of development between October 2025 and March 2026 has been the collaborative work between HR and Occupational Health to improve the asbestos clinic process. This has involved a joint review of current arrangements to improve consistency, efficiency, and case tracking. The outcome of this work is due to be rolled out across the wider Service within the next month, supporting improved oversight and alignment with occupational health risks and long-term absence management.

The Wellbeing Improvement Committee (WIC) continues to meet every six weeks and remains an important engagement forum, rotating across different stations to ensure accessibility and direct engagement with operational teams. The meetings actively capture feedback from staff and provide an opportunity for local views to inform wellbeing priorities and initiatives. Most recently, a guest speaker from West Sussex shared their approach to the use of wellbeing dogs within their Service. While this is not currently an area the Service is seeking to pursue, it was considered an interesting example of alternative wellbeing approaches and may be reviewed in the future as part of broader wellbeing development discussions.

**“Total Health Tuesdays”** continue to provide a key preventative and early intervention offer, bringing together the Wellbeing Nurse, Fitness Advisor, and Physiotherapist. This initiative supports conditions frequently reflected in absence data, particularly musculoskeletal and psychological issues, by enabling informal support, early advice, and access to self-referral pathways. This approach continues to encourage early engagement and proactive self-management of health conditions.

The wider wellbeing offer has also continued to develop, with enhancements to the Service intranet improving access to mental health resources for both employees and managers. This supports early identification of psychological-related absence and provides practical tools for managing wellbeing concerns in the workplace.



Between October 2025 and March 2026, HR has delivered targeted training sessions focused on strengthening early intervention and improving consistency in absence management practice. These sessions have been informed by service absence data and have reinforced the importance of timely action, particularly in relation to emerging musculoskeletal and psychological absence trends. Feedback has been positive, with increased engagement from operational leaders and Station Managers through follow-up discussions at the Operational Forum, helping to further refine approach and practice.

Alongside this, broader engagement and prevention work continues to support long-term absence reduction objectives. The Fitness Advisor has supported partnership initiatives focused on promoting careers in the Fire Service and improving understanding of operational fitness requirements. These include school engagement sessions across the county and a female-focused recruitment conference held at Headquarters in October 2025. The conference provided practical exposure to recruitment processes, fitness testing, and role expectations, and has informed plans to repeat the event in April 2026 on a biannual basis to support sustained engagement with under-represented groups.

Planning has also commenced for a pilot “fitness bootcamp” initiative aimed at aspiring firefighters, designed to improve understanding of fitness requirements and build early positive engagement with communities. This programme is expected to launch in spring/summer 2026.

Overall, there is clear alignment between operational activity and the key drivers identified in sickness absence data. The focus on early intervention, MSK management, psychological wellbeing, and improved occupational health processes continues to support a more proactive and preventative approach to absence management across the Service.

## Future Activity

Over the coming period, the Service will further strengthen its approach to absence management through continued policy review, earlier intervention, enhanced welfare support, and improved management capability. It is also recognised that clear, scripted guidance is required to support managers in consistently managing short-term and long-term absences, employees returning on modified duties, and cases where a return to duty is not foreseeable and consideration of the ill-health retirement process is required.

In collaboration with the Occupational Health Team, new terms of reference have recently been developed for the monthly case conference. This ensures that discussions focus only on relevant cases and that appropriate professional guidance is provided to progress the more complex cases effectively and in a timely manner.

Welfare provisions will continue to be enhanced, with Trauma Risk Management (TRIM) being actively communicated face-to-face across the Service to improve awareness, accessibility, and engagement. This approach will help ensure employees are better supported following traumatic incidents and contribute to improved wellbeing and attendance outcomes.

Learning from last year’s low flu vaccination uptake and the resulting high levels of influenza-related absence, consideration is being given to alternative methods of delivering or promoting flu vaccinations. This may include more accessible vaccination opportunities or targeted communications to increase participation and reduce seasonal sickness absence.



All Human Resource Officers will be set a specific objective to work collaboratively with their Station Manager cohort to actively manage absence in line with policy. This will include supporting and guiding managers to take timely, appropriate, and supportive action, with the aim of reducing overall absence levels and implementing clearer, more focused plans to support employees and address persistent absence.

To further support this approach and ensure consistency, long-term absence cases and employees working on modified duties will be reviewed at the weekly HR meeting. This forum will provide focused oversight and challenge, with the overall aim of reducing absence levels and increasing the availability of personnel to undertake operational duties.

The HR Department will deliver HR Training Days before the end of 2026, building on last year's rollout. The sessions will cover updates to the revised absence management policy and provide practical guidance for managing absence effectively. In response to feedback, particularly around the use of "Notes for File" the updated policy will take a more supportive, early-intervention approach, with clear escalation to formal stages where attendance does not improve. The training will equip managers to manage absence with confidence, compassion, and accountability.

## Wellbeing, Inclusion and Culture

The Service places a strong emphasis on supporting the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of its employees. This includes a network of trained Mental Health First Aiders who are accessible across the Service and, where appropriate, deployed to stations to provide targeted support to specific crews.

There is an increasing recognition of the impact that exposure to traumatic incidents and sustained operational pressures can have on workforce wellbeing. In response, the Service continues to strengthen early intervention arrangements and improve management awareness to support individuals in maintaining positive wellbeing. Welfare provisions are being further enhanced, with Trauma Risk Management (TRIM) actively promoted through face-to-face engagement across the Service to improve awareness, accessibility and staff engagement. This approach helps to ensure employees are appropriately supported following traumatic incidents and is expected to contribute to improved wellbeing outcomes.

Alongside this, the Service continues to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across recruitment processes and day-to-day working practices. Recruitment arrangements have been enhanced to provide tailored support for neurodivergent candidates, resulting in a more inclusive, well-organised and accessible process. These improvements help ensure candidates feel comfortable, supported and able to perform at their best throughout the recruitment journey.



## 7.0 Finance Performance Update

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the Authority's financial position as at the end of February 2026 (Period 11). It summarises progress across key financial areas as year-end approaches. The report also presents the latest forecast for the year ending 31 March 2026, which has been updated to reflect the budget efficiencies achieved during this year's budget-setting process and also latest trends and information available. These efficiencies have contributed positively to the overall forecast position.

The revenue budget for the year 2025/26 was approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner at **£52m** in February 2025 which included a Band D council tax of **£91.77**, an increase of **£5 (5.8%)** in line with the Council Tax referendum limit.

The total revenue spend as at 28 February 2026 was **£45.4m** with the headline revenue position overall showing an improved position and a **£0.5m** reduction in the forecast use of reserves, this is despite the overspend on pay which is estimated to close **c.£0.7m (2%)** above budget. This pay overspend has been driven by the significant increase in operational demand experienced during the summer with incidents up **c.20%** on last year. The year-end pay forecast has been updated but On-call pay spend remains above budget showing a forecast overspend of **£0.95m** for the year.

Total non-pay expenditure is currently favourable against budget and is forecast to close the year **£0.3m** under budget. This position aligns with the efficiencies identified by budget holders during the 2026/27 budget-setting process and will continue to be closely monitored at year end. Income performance also remains positive, with interest receivable delivering returns above expectations and a year-end forecast of **£250k** ahead of budget and general income showing a positive variance which includes the monies received following the Truck Cartel litigation (**£136k**). Bank of England interest rates have been held at **3.75%** and interest receivable remains ahead of budget due to favourable cash balances. Further interest rate cuts are now unlikely due to the uncertainty in the Middle East and impact upon world markets.

The capital programme forecast for 2025/26 is **£3.7m**, reflecting the latest position across a range of projects and ensuring alignment with current priorities. While this represents a **£3.2m** adjustment from the approved budget, it demonstrates proactive programme management which includes **£0.5m** of savings identified. The capital programme forecast reduced in January due to the 1<sup>st</sup> stage payments for the next four appliances moving into quarter one of 2026/27. As of 28 February 2026, **£3.2m** of capital spend has been committed.

The Authority is on track to fully deliver the **£0.4m** of transformation savings budgeted in year and efficiencies have now been identified to fully deliver the **£1m** savings included within the medium term financial strategy. The closing cash balance as at 28 February 2026 was **£16.9m** which is **£4.9m** better than budget with delays in pension payments following the two Remedy projects (Matthews and McCloud) is a significant contribution to the favourable cash position, in addition to the reduction in capital spend.

The balance of the General Reserve remains unchanged at **£1.9m**. Earmarked reserves are forecast to reduce by **£0.8m** in year which is **£0.5m** favourable to the approved budget reflecting the additional budget efficiencies identified in year.

