

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Public Performance Meeting

December 2025

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 HMICFRS inspection report for Staffordshire: Fire & Rescue Service 2023-25 Effectiveness, efficiency and people

HMICFRS evaluates and reports on the **efficiency**, **effectiveness**, of England's **44** fire and rescue services and how well they look after their **people**. These inspections provide insight into how your local fire and rescue service is performing across key areas, assessing:

- *The operational service delivered to the public, including prevention, protection, and response activity.*
- *Efficiency, focusing on value for money, resource allocation based on risk, and collaboration with other emergency services.*
- *How the service upholds its values and culture, trains and develops staff, ensures fairness and diversity, and strengthens leadership and overall capability.*

In our latest inspection report, published in September 2024, the inspectors graded us as outstanding at responding to major and multi-agency incidents. The inspection assessed how well the service has performed in 11 areas, the majority of which were graded as good. The inspectors stated we had made progress since the last report and highlighted ten areas where they have seen improvements.

Outstanding	Good	Adequate
 Responding to major incidents	 Understanding fire and risk	 Preventing fire and risk
	 Responding to fires and emergencies	 Public safety through fire regulation
	 Best use of resources	 Promoting fairness and diversity
	 Future affordability	 Managing performance and developing leaders
	 Promoting values and culture	
	 Right people, right skills	

**HMICFRS measure fire and rescue services against the 11 characteristics of 'good' awarding potential gradings of Outstanding, Good, Adequate, Requires Improvement or Inadequate.*

In the rest of the report, HMICFRS sets out its detailed findings about the areas in which the service has performed well and where it should improve. HMICFRS highlighted two areas of promising practice: our collaboration with the Civil Contingencies Unit for major incidents and our partnership with the NHS on falls response and home-from-hospital services. You can read the full report which is publicly available by clicking [here](#).

The report contained **five** areas for improvement (AFIs). We are managing these AFIs through the use of an online tracker, and these are monitored via our internal governance arrangements and reported on regularly.

Progress has been made on these recommendations; with one of the areas now considered to be addressed. Actions are scrutinised by our Service Delivery Board prior to sign-off as complete. Scrutiny will remain ongoing until improvements are embedded.

In line with HMICFRS expectations we publish a summary of our progress against those recommendations on our website which you can read by clicking [here](#).

1.2 HMICFRS Thematic Inspection: Handling of Misconduct

Between October 2023 and January 2024, HMICFRS conducted a 'thematic' inspection of misconduct handling in fire and rescue services across England. The inspection focused on:

- *The identification and investigation of misconduct within services.*
- *The effectiveness and consistency of misconduct processes.*
- *Staff confidence in raising concerns and in misconduct procedures.*
- *The role of fire and rescue authorities, as well as other organisations, in managing misconduct.*

Ten services (including Staffordshire) were selected to represent a diverse sample of the sector in terms of size, location, governance, and performance. The full report is publicly available by clicking [here](#).

The report included **15** national recommendations for all fire and rescue services. We are managing these recommendations through the use of an online tracker, and these are monitored via our internal governance arrangements and reported on regularly.

Progress has been made on these recommendations; with **12** areas now considered to be addressed. Actions are scrutinised by our Service Delivery Board prior to sign-off as complete. Scrutiny will remain ongoing until improvements are embedded.

In line with HMICFRS expectations we publish a summary of our progress against those recommendations on our website which you can read by clicking [here](#).

1.3 HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services

The HMICFRS report on values and culture in fire and rescue services, published in March 2023, included **35** national recommendations: one for the police, **14** requiring action at a national level, and **20** recommendations specific to all fire and rescue services. You can read the full report which is publicly available by clicking [here](#).

Progress has been made on those recommendations; with all **20** areas now considered to be addressed. All actions were reviewed by our Service Delivery Board in June 2025 and have been signed off as complete. Scrutiny will remain ongoing until improvements are embedded.

In line with HMICFRS expectations we publish a summary of our progress against those recommendations on our website which you can read by clicking [here](#).

We are also required to report to HMICFRS quarterly with an update on our progress against all recommendations.

1.4 HMICFRS 2025-27 inspections update

Earlier in the year, HMICFRS published its 2025-27 Fire and Rescue Service inspection programme and framework which will include greater focus on:

- *How well FRSs lead their people, including leaders at all levels of the organisation*
- *Building on the important work done to improve values and culture*
- *Understanding and evaluating how each FRS is affected by its Fire and Rescue Authorities governance, oversight and scrutiny arrangements (in our case the impact of the Commissioner's governance on the way we deliver our services)*

1. Inspection programme overview

- Completion of Round 3: all 44 FRSs have now been inspected and reports published, with 20 revisits, and two thematic reports published (Values & Culture and Misconduct)
- Launch of a new inspection cycle with phased planning for flexibility.
- First inspection reports from this round expected Spring 2026; final reports by Spring 2028.

2. Methodological Changes

- Reduction in principal questions from 11 to 10 (Characteristics of "Good")
- Inclusion of financial, geographic, and demographic context on circumstances in which Fire and Rescue Services deliver in reports.
- New inspection activities include interviews with audit committee, trade union and leadership focus groups, and desktop reviews on leadership, communications, and misconduct.



3. Governance and Oversight

- Commissioner's office will not be directly inspected, the review will consider the impact of its governance on the Service
- Emphasis on internal governance: scrutiny arrangements, delegation schemes, and reporting to the Commissioner's office.
- No formal ratings or direct recommendations will be issued.

4. Key Lines of Enquiry (Characteristics of Good)

In terms of Effectiveness and Efficiency; governance should ensure robust financial oversight, strategic risk management, and performance monitoring. For People we need to be able to demonstrate that culture, wellbeing, and staff feedback mechanisms are supported.

Effectiveness: HMICFRS will -

- Assess how well the Fire and Rescue Service understands and manages fire and emergency risks.
- Examine whether governance supports local risk awareness and helps shape service priorities.
- Will comment on the quality and consistency of updates provided to the Commissioner on prevention, protection, and response activities.

Efficiency: HMICFRS will -

- Assesses how well resources are used to manage risk.
- Evaluate strategic oversight of management and internal controls.
- Review how senior officers are held accountable through scheme of delegation.

People: HMICFRS will -

- Assess how well the Fire and Rescue Service promotes a positive culture and supports staff wellbeing.
- Review governance oversight of people strategies and conduct.
- Evaluate systems for feedback, complaints, and grievances.
- Check if the Commissioner receives regular updates on people issues.

5. New Documentation Requirements

In addition to those documents requested in previous inspection rounds. HMICFRS will want to see:

- Policies on leadership, recruitment, complaints, and misconduct.
- Governance meeting minutes, budget reports, and project documentation.
- Specific project documents (to be submitted for scrutiny early in inspections).

6. Desktop Reviews and Focus Groups

HMICFRS have tested new areas of its inspection methods to ensure they are fit for purposes. The evidence from these pilots will not inform any judgments / reports for those Fire and Rescue Services involved (Kent, Merseyside, Essex, Cornwall). New or refined activities will include;

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Discipline & Grievance Review | • Leadership Review |
| • Communications & Engagement Review | • Major Incident Desktop |
| • Recruitment & Promotions Review | • Leadership Focus Group |

Data collection update

This exercise ran from 22nd April to 30th May 2025. The Service submitted our response within the designated timeframe. Working with its technical advisory group, the data request process was streamlined. Fire and Rescue Services will now only be asked to submit data once a year in spring, rather than twice annually. However, HMICFRS may request additional data in autumn if needed to support the likes of thematic inspections or lines of enquiry.

NEXT STEPS...

2025-27 inspections timetable has been released with the inspection dates for the first 14 services confirmed. The date for Staffordshire's inspection has not yet been confirmed. Based on those dates already confirmed, we do not expect this to be before April 2026, but this may be subject to change. Over the coming months we will work to prepare managers, crews and teams for our inspection so that they are aware of what is expected from them and to answer any queries they may have as best we can.

1.5 HMICFRS State of Fire & Rescue Report

In November the **"State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services"** report was published.

This report assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of fire and rescue services in England and details improvements, as well as areas where progress needs to be made. The report is based on the findings of inspection reports carried out by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service have been highlighted in the report for "positive practice" in relation to our Falls Response Team and our Home from Hospital Team.

We were also praised as one of five services who have addressed most of the areas for improvement that we were issued in our previous inspections. The report refers to this as *"the result of clear strategic planning, robust action plans and focused leadership."*

This acknowledgement reinforces the importance of the work that the Service is engaged in which is now being recognised nationally.

More widely the report does state that nationally, whilst progress is being made, persistent issues continue to slow the pace of change.

1.6 Grenfell Tower Inquiry Recommendations for Fire & Rescue Services

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry phase two report was published on the 4th of September 2024.

This inquiry was established to examine the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the fire at Grenfell Tower on the night of 14th June 2017.

Phase One: was focused on the factual narrative of the events.

Phase Two: examines the causes of the fire, including how Grenfell Tower came to be in a condition which allowed the fire to spread in the way identified by Phase One.

The Phase Two Report lists **58** recommendations that traverse a number of sectors, including the Construction and Fabrication industry, Architects and Contractors, Regulatory bodies, Building control, and both Local and national Government.

Emergency responders such as Fire and Rescue Services are also included.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service have adopted **18** of the recommendations from the report that are aimed at Fire and Rescue Services.

All 18 of these recommendations have now been completed, and this has been signed off at internal Service Response Board on 6th October 2025.

Internal reviews have been completed and learning outcomes have been identified and implemented within the following areas:

- *Procedure for access to lifts within high rise buildings.*
- *Fire Control and the training and effectiveness of fire control staff towards large scale incidents associated with high rise buildings.*
- *Incident command fire ground communication.*
- *Operational assurance internal debriefing and learning procedures.*
- *Incident ground radio provision and procedure.*
- *Firefighter training provision, including both for new starters and refresher training.*
- *The procedure of communication with water authorities in relation to supply and pressure for firefighting purposes.*
- *The approach to training for local resilience forums.*

This report is publicly available here:

<https://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/phase-2-report>

1.7 Manchester Arena Public Inquiry Recommendations for Fire & Rescue Services

The Manchester Arena Public Inquiry was established to examine the circumstances leading up to and surrounding a fatal terrorist attack which occurred at the Manchester Arena which took place on 22nd May 2017 during a pop concert.

Findings, conclusions and recommendations were compiled across three volumes:

Manchester Arena Inquiry Volume 1: **Security for the Arena**

Manchester Arena Inquiry Volume 2: **Emergency Response**

Manchester Arena Inquiry Volume 3: **Radicalisation and Preventability**

149 recommendations were identified across the three volumes concerning a number of sectors, including Venue owners, Event Organisers, Public and private security services, Category One and Two responders, Counter Terrorism agencies, Health organisations, Education authorities, Prison and rehabilitation services, Local and National Government.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service identified and adopted **54** Recommendations which were aimed at the Fire Service either in part or full. Of these **37** actions formed SFRS action plan and **17** formed Shared Fire Control action plan.

The sign off and closure of the action plan only concerns SFRS owned action plan.

All 37 recommendations adopted by the Service have now been completed, and this has been signed off at internal Service Response Board on in October 2025.

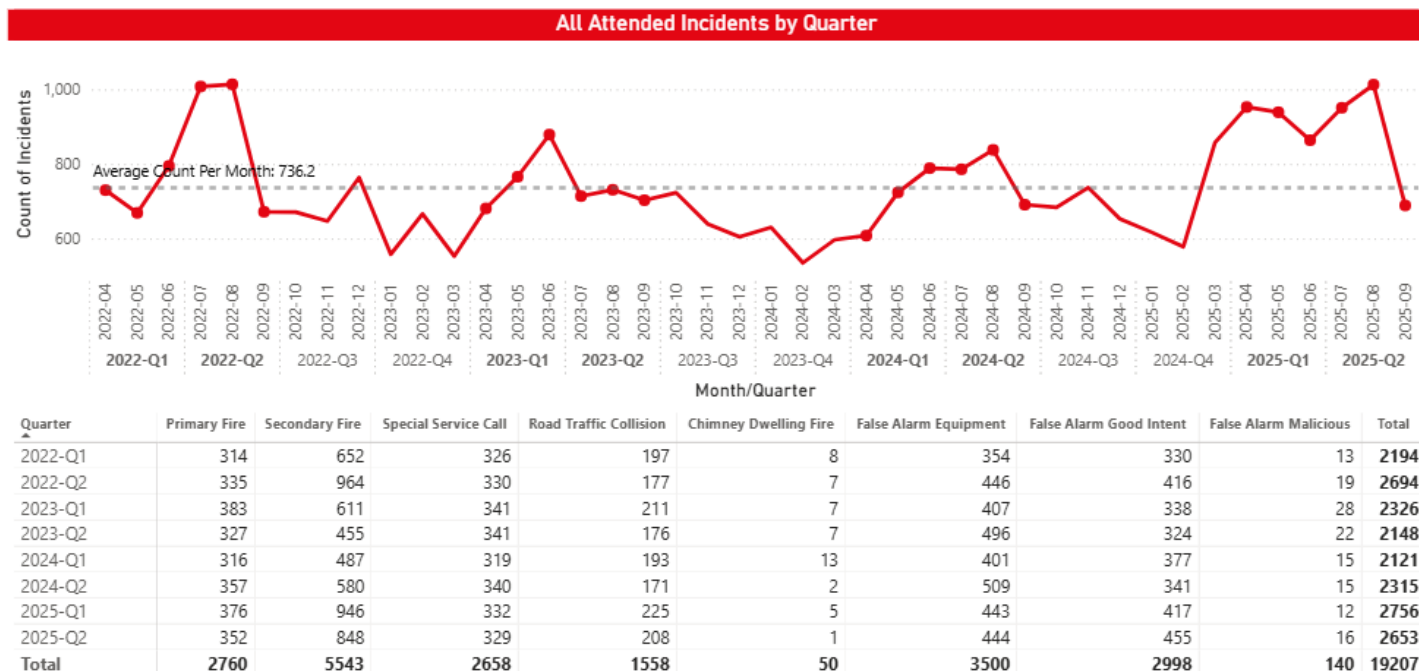
Internal reviews have been completed and learning outcomes have been identified and implemented within the following areas:

- **Major Incident reporting and communications**
- **Major Incident policy and procedures**
- **Major incident exercising**
- **Resilience forums and Civil Contingencies Unit**
- **National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers**
- **Incident Command-Operational Discretion**
- **Incident Command-JESIP**
- **Incident Command-Joint Operating Principles-Marauding Terrorism**
- **Notification of and planning for major events**
- **Triage, Trauma care and medical intervention**

2.0 An Outstanding Fire & Rescue Service

2.1 Incidents Attended

Figure 1: Yearly Comparison of Total Incidents Attended April to September 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.

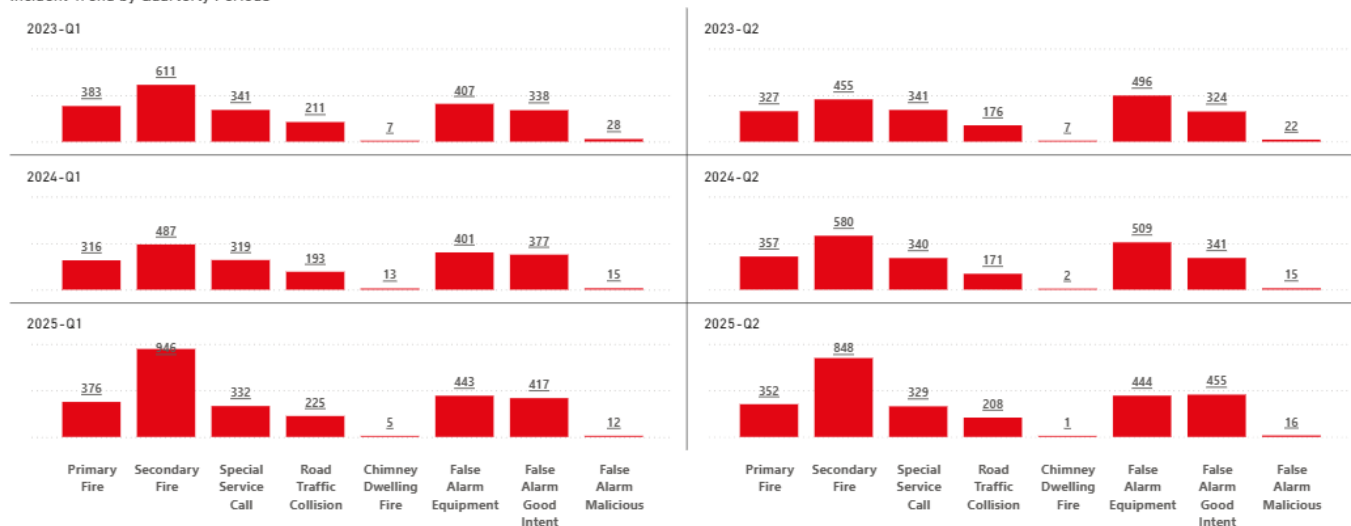
Secondary fires are generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property. These include refuse fires, grassland fires and fires in derelict buildings or vehicles, unless these fires involved casualties or rescues, or five or more pumping appliances attended, in which case they become primary 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 Q1&Q2 2025/26**

- Between April and September 2025, a total of **5,409** incidents were attended by the Service. This is an increase of **(21.93%)** from the **4,436** incidents attended in the same period within the previous year.
- 728** Primary Fires were attended by the Service in comparison to **673** attended in the same period within the previous year. An increase of **(8.17%)**.
- Secondary Fires is the most significant change in demand over the period, with **1,794** incidents attended displaying a **(68.13%)** increase noted in comparison to the **1,067** same period within the previous year. This also displays a significant increase in demand for Secondary Fires from the same period in the previous three years and has demonstrated similar demand levels to those noted under **national SPATE conditions** within Q2 of 2022.
- 661** Special Service Calls have been attended over the period. This has remained in line with the **659** Special Service Calls attended by the Service in comparison to the same period within the previous year.
- 433** Road Traffic incidents have been attended over the period. This has increased by **(18.95%)** in comparison to **364** for the same period within the previous year.
- 887** False Alarm incidents caused by equipment have been attended in comparison to the **910** in the same period within the previous year. This displays a small decrease of **(2.57%)** in attendance to this False Alarm Type from the same period in the previous year.
- 872** False Alarm incidents classified as 'Good Intent' have been attended in comparison to **718** in the same period within the previous year. This displays an increase of **(21.44%)** in attending this False Alarm Type.
- 28** False Alarm incidents classified as 'Malicious intent' have been attended in comparison to **30** in the same period within the previous year. This has remained in line with data from previous years.

2.2 Service Availability

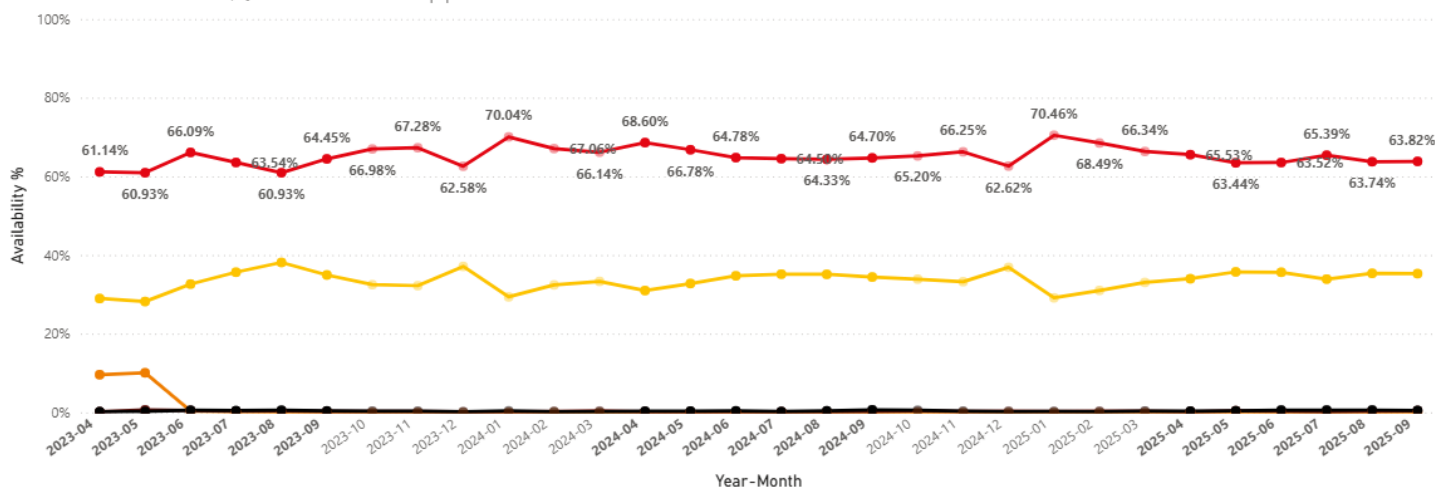
Service Availability is based on the percentage of time that an appliance is available to attend an incident. The Total Service Availability is calculated from all fire appliances at Whole Time, On Call, and Day Duty Fire stations. 'Unavailability' factors such as insufficient numbers of qualified crew, 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.

Figure 3: Three-year trend of Total Service Availability

Availability Breakdown

Alternative Vehicle Use Crew/Qualifications Defective Equipment On Other Unavailable



Between April and September 2025, the total average Service availability is recorded as **64.24%**.

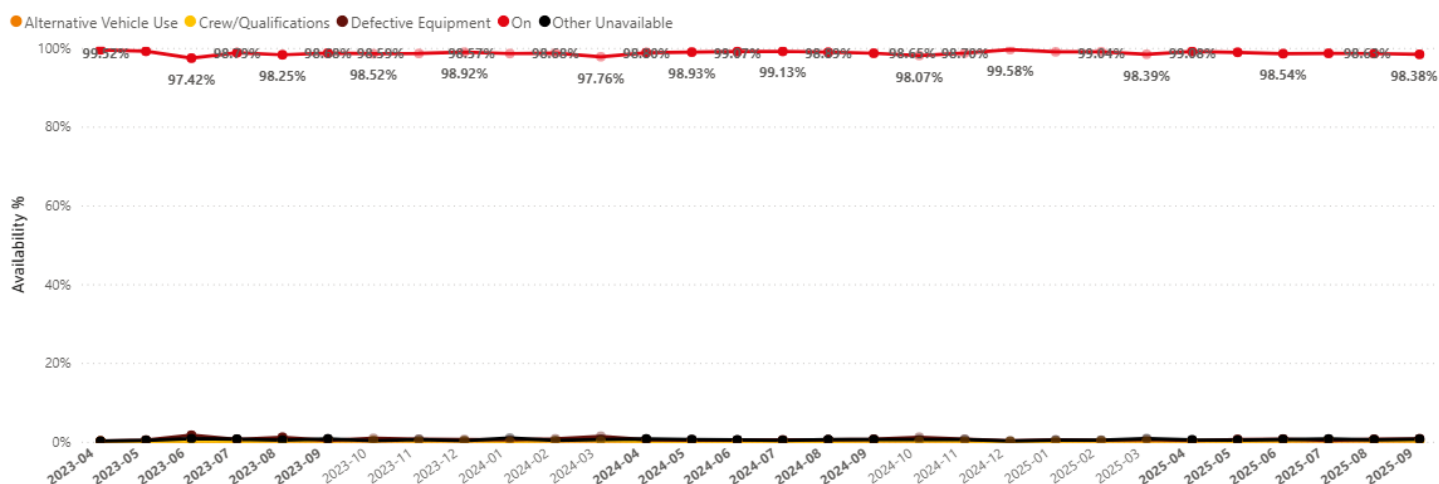
In the same period in the previous year this was recorded as **65.61%** and between April and September 2023 this was recorded as **62.84%**.

Overall, the Service has maintained similar levels of availability over the respective periods, despite an overall increase of **21.93%** in demand and a notable increase of **68.13%** in attendance at Secondary Fire incidents between April and September 2025.

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.

Figure 4: Three-year trend of Total Wholetime Availability

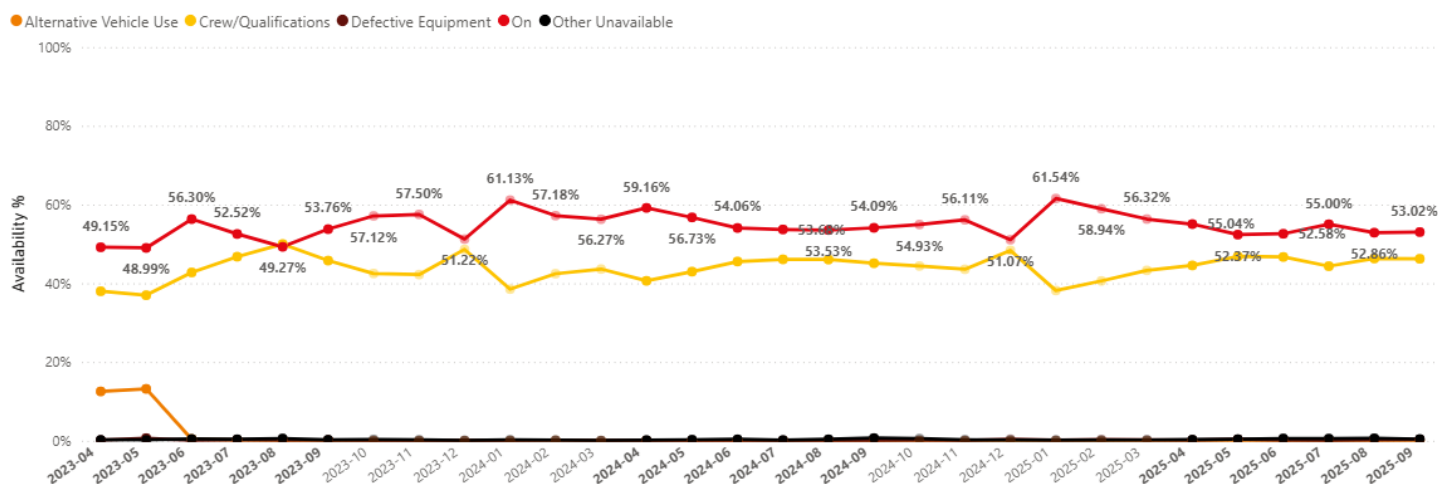
Availability Breakdown



Between April and September 2025, the total Whole Time Service availability is recorded as **98.68%**. This has remained consistent over the previous three year period.

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

Availability Breakdown



Between April and September 2025, the total On Call availability is recorded as **53.47%**.

In the same period in from the previous year this was recorded as **55.20%**.

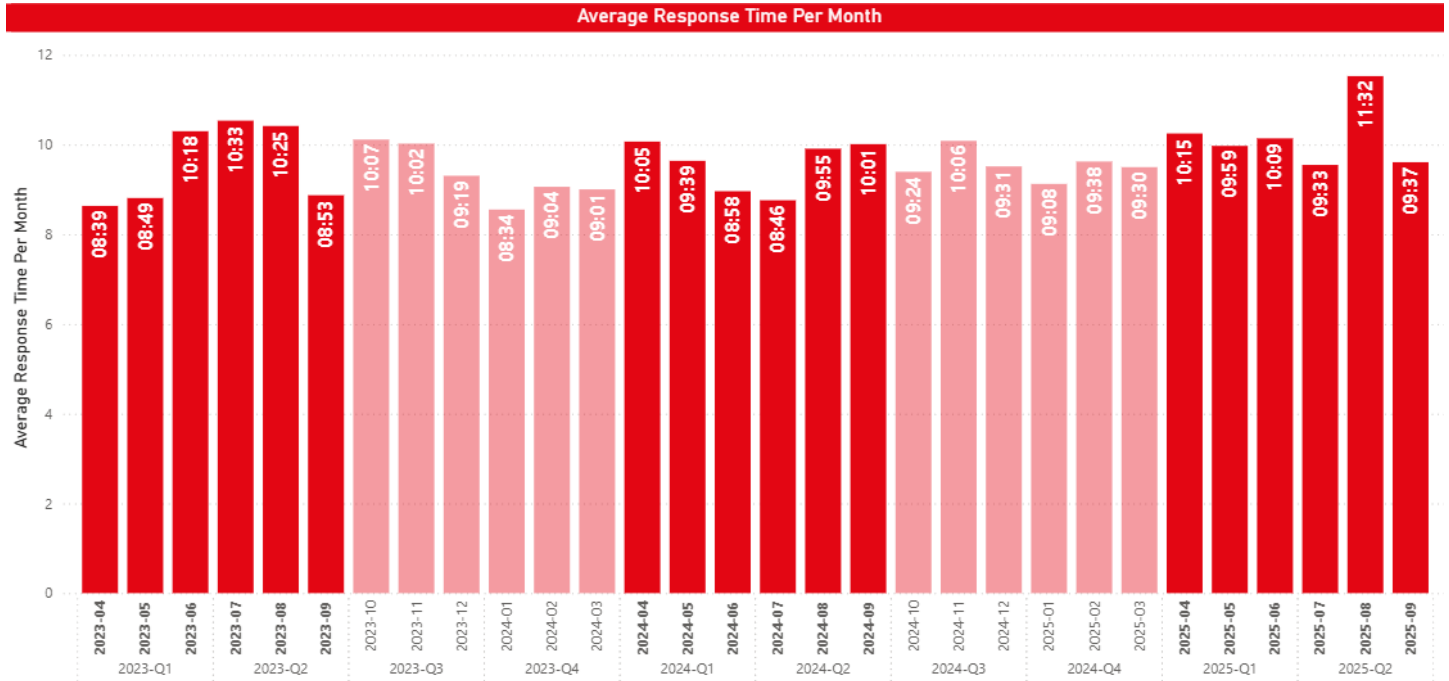
Overall, the Service has maintained similar levels of availability over the respective periods, despite an overall increase of **21.93%** in demand and a notable increase of **68.13%** in attendance at Secondary Fire incidents between April and September 2025.

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.

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

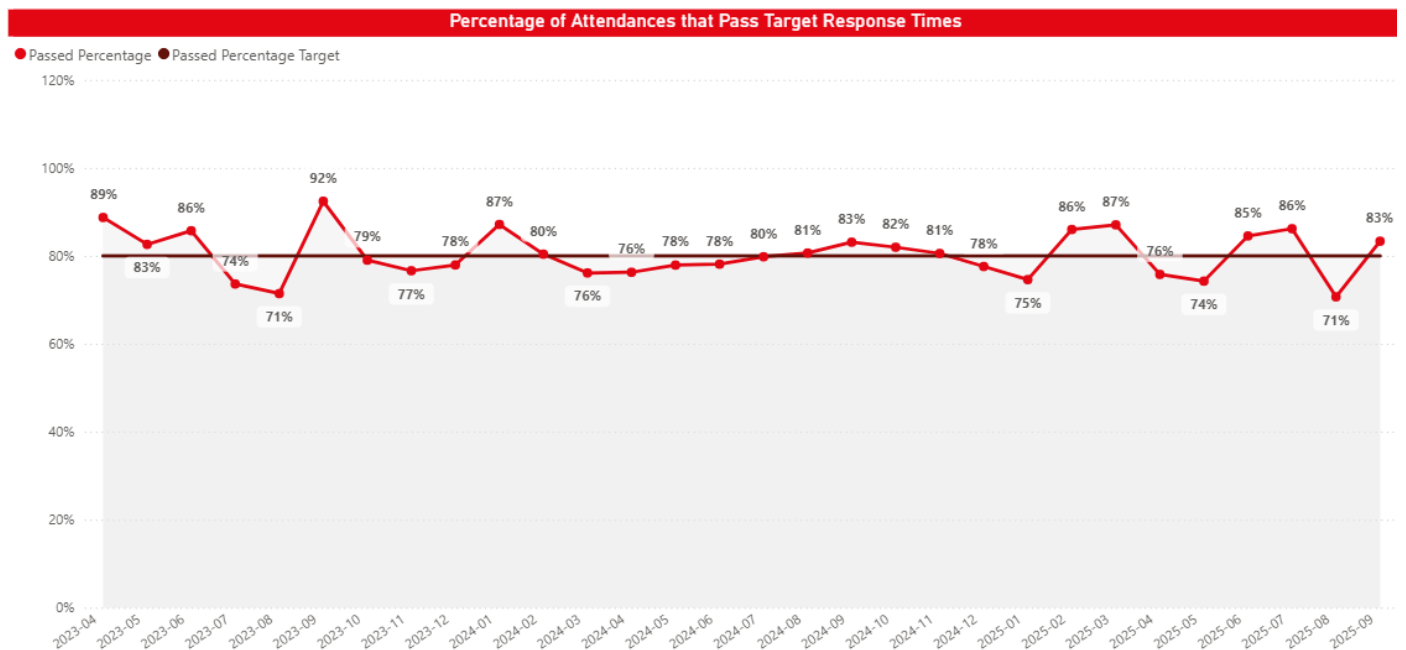


Between April and September 2025, the average Service response time is recorded as **10 minutes 10 seconds**.

In the same period in the previous year this was recorded as **9 minutes 34 seconds**.

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



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 April and September 2025, the overall pass rate has been **79.16%**.

This is mainly due to the **71%** figure recorded for the month of August 2025, which was a period of significant demand for the Service.

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. Further work is ongoing around this.

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 such as **National SPATE conditions**, will affect the Service response standard due to high levels of demand for attendance across the county; particularly at incidents associated with secondary outdoor fires.

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 to meet financial sustainability targets set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Following the successful completion of Phase 1, which delivered substantial recurring savings, the focus has shifted to the implementation of Phase 2 initiatives. At the same time, attention has now been focussed upon the identification and delivery of additional financial savings required to secure the required savings from 2025 onwards as a result of the (Draft) Fair Funding Formula review under the three-year comprehensive spending review which due to be confirmed in Autumn/winter 2025.

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

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

- Workforce efficiencies with savings made from reducing wholetime 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)

- New Savings Target: £1,000,000 (recurring).
- Deadline: By the end of financial year 2028/29. This target aligns with the ongoing commitments within the current MTFS.

Transformation Phase 2 – Current Initiatives and Savings

- Declared Savings to Date for 2025/26: £500,000. The declared savings are made up of:
- the removal of a Project Manager role,
- the re-alignment of a fire engineer role,
- HR Restructure,
- the closure of the community Sprinkler project,
- MRP savings from the year end position,
- Motorola – contingent Asset return and additional income from the Unitary Charge and water rebates.
- Remaining Savings to be Delivered: £500,000.
- The £1 million saving is planned to be delivered incrementally by 2028/29, with only £400,000 expected in 2025/26. This has already been surpassed, and early delivery of additional savings will accelerate progress toward this goal.

Significant progress has been made under both phases of the transformation programme. Phase 1 has already delivered over **£1.3 million** in recurring savings, and Phase 2 is progressing to achieve its **£1 million** savings target by 2029, with half already declared for 2025/26. At present there is still **£200,000** of savings yet to be identified. Continued focus on ICT optimisation, environmental sustainability, and efficiency reviews will be critical to meeting long-term financial goals whilst maintaining an excellent level of service delivery to the public.

2.5 Collaborative Shared Estates

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue 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, 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 are maintained by an in-house facilities management team within the Estates Team.

Last financial year (2024/25) saw the Estates Team deliver circa **£0.7m** worth of investment across the residual sites, and this financial year (2025/26) the team were aiming to deliver circa **£1.7m** worth of investment across the residual estate. Due to changes internally within the Estates Team a number of projects have been paused. Whilst works to JETS site at Trentham Lakes has now been completed, 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. Road resurfacing works have recently been completed at Pirehill, as well as replacement Fire Doors installed within the control building

Staffordshire Fire Service is committed to further reducing its carbon footprint, in particular within the building portfolio. A feasibility study is currently underway to assess the installation of Electric Vehicle charging points at a number of stations; Stafford, Hanley, Newcastle, Cannock and Tamworth are currently being reviewed.

Options around the installation of a Building Energy Management System (BEMS) across HQ are being explored. This system initially will allow heating systems to be controlled automatically, with the aim to reduce our utility bills as well as reduce our carbon footprint.

The Estates Team are working closely with the Staffordshire Commissioner's office to build upon the current successful collaborative building projects recently undertaken, which saw the creation of new police posts at Chase Terrace, Kinver and Penkridge Fire Stations. During 2024/25 schemes were delivered at Uttoxeter and Stone Fire stations where Staffordshire Fire Service now shares 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.

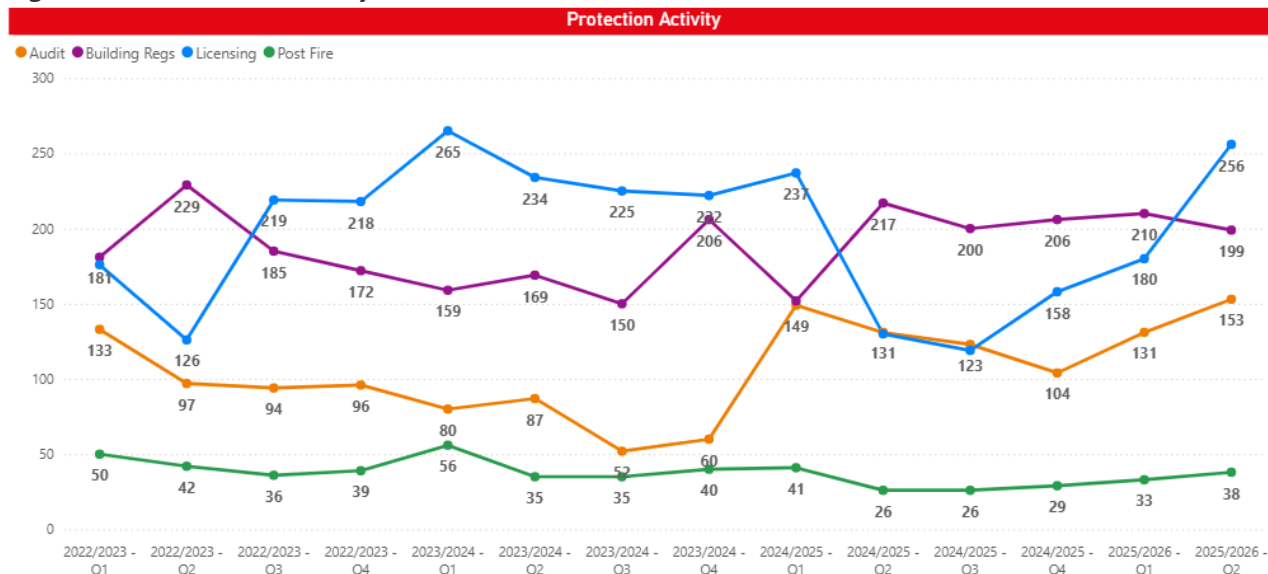
- Building Regulation Consultations**

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 April and September 2025:

284 Fire Safety Audits were carried out, which remains in line with the **281** 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.

409 Building Regulation Consultations were completed, which is an increase from the **367** completed within the same period within the previous year.

436 Licensing Consultations were completed, which is an increase from the **368** completed within the same period within the previous year.

71 Post Fire Inspections were completed, which is an increase from the **67** completed for the same period within the previous year.

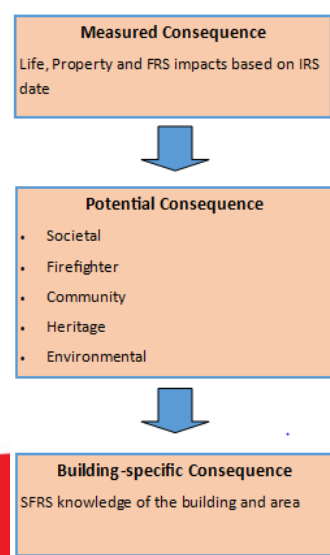
Fire Safety Audits

The number of Fire Safety Audits completed has remained stable through the period of October 2024 to March 2025. This can be attributed to a new 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. A recruitment campaign was completed in May 2025 which saw 5 new members of staff join the Protection Teams across the county.

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. To date **133** faults have been received with regards to firefighting installations in tall buildings allowing the Service to action defined action plans for each premises on receipt of each fault. As at the end of March 2025, the Service has achieved a **92%** completion rate of the Risk Based Inspection Programme, since this time the service has further increased this to **94%**.

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. Due to inspections moving 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 **160** operational crew members now having received the training. This has led to **220** 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

10 whole-time fire stations have been actively testing fire hydrants within Staffordshire since March 2024. Joining them shortly after were **4** on-call fire stations in the west of the county as part of a trial testing programme.

Alongside the operational crews testing fire hydrants are our dedicated team of three Hydrant Technicians each with their designated On-Call testing areas.

The testing programme using the newly appointed 3tc Water Management solution provides a simple intuitive interface enabling the user to capture hydrant data essential for operational use.

17,975 fire hydrant assets are currently adopted via a risk based process by Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service within Staffordshire.

63.9% of these hydrants have now been subject to a test or inspection as at the end of September 2025. As at the end of March 2025 **38.9%** of hydrants had been inspected displaying a significant increase in assurance regarding adopted water assets.

11,488 of these adopted fire hydrant assets have now undergone statutory testing and inspection to date since the introduction of the hydrant management system in January 2024. These hydrants are subject to an ongoing testing programme in accordance with the requirements off the Fire Services Act 2004. The position at the end of March 2025 was that **7,179** had been inspected as a part of this programme.

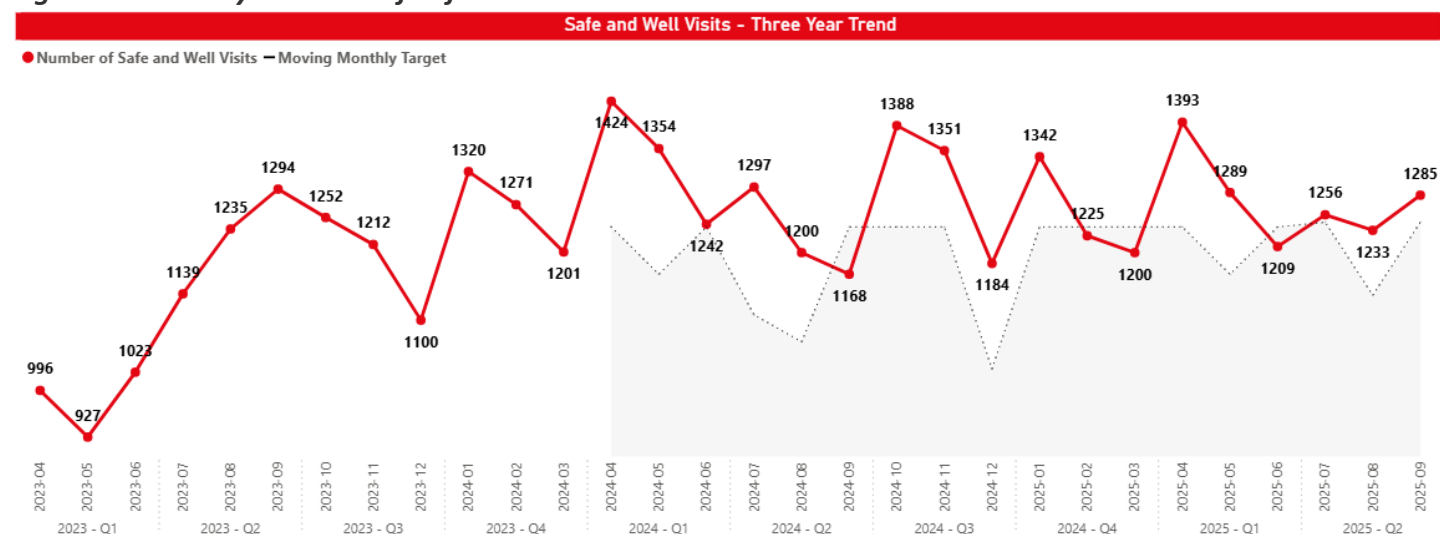
Figure 9: Hydrant Risk Categories and Inspection Schedule

Risk Category	Inspection Schedule	Risk Factor / Property Type
Very High	12 months	Risk Area Very High / Identified High Silt areas.
High	36 months	Residential – High Risk Area Semi / Detached / Terrace / Mobile / Flat / Apartment / Maisonette Village Halls / Places of Public Entertainment / Sports Grounds / Community Facilities / Shopping Complexes / Primary Schools / Secondary Schools / Colleges / Universities / Nurseries / Farms / Agricultural / Animal Boarding Kennels / Animal Rescue Centres / Industrial Parks / Warehouses / Laboratories / Office Buildings / Multi Storey Car Parks / Service Stations / Transport Stations Hospitals / Care Homes
Medium	60 months	Residential - Low Risk Area Semi / Detached / Terrace
Low	84 months	Rural Areas non-residential

4.0 Preventing

4.1 Safe and Well Visits

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



7,665 Safe and Well Visits have been completed between April and September 2025, which is over the target of **7,404** set for the period. As target setting is relatively new for the Service, we will work to review the targets as some teams are exceeding set targets, but other teams are not reaching targets. It is pleasing to see that the overall target was exceeded and particularly important to note that these achievements were delivered when there was high service demand due to secondary fires.

The “one knock rule” for Direct Engagement and Post Incident Activity may be giving the teams more capacity to deliver Safe and Wells Visits as they are not revisiting properties, the appropriate letter is being issued; this work will be examined in the future to confirm if this has had a positive impact on Safe and Well Visits.

However, on reviewing the data it has become clear that the Homes from Hospital Team and Falls Team are not routinely meeting their targets. This could be due to some of the Home from Hospital team jobs are often for the same patients who will already have had a Safe and Well Visit and also occasionally the Team are performing jobs when the patient is still in hospital, for example; fitting key safes or moving furniture, these jobs are important and help to get the home ready to allow the patient to be discharged from hospital. It also means the team cannot do a Safe and Well Visit as the patient is still in hospital. However, details are passed to other staff to conduct the Safe and Well Visit so the opportunity for engagement is not missed. The Falls Team are also often visiting repeat fallers who have previously received a Safe and Well Visit, however, Central Prevent and Protects (CPP) Management Team will continue to seek improvements in these areas.

In addition, Safe and Well Technicians have not met their target for 5 consecutive months, however, in September the cohort exceeded their target, again CPP’s Management Team will work with the teams to ensure we understand any barriers and that we have consistency in performance in the future.

The Service is reviewing its “Olive Branch Fire Safety Training” offer which is currently hosted on the LearnLive platform and is accessed on-line, 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 to the Service for a

Safe and Well Visit. The vision for future delivery of Olive Branch will be to host it via our website; this will allow the training materials to be reviewed and amended more easily and for the Service to produce reports in a more timely manner.

The Contact Centre continue to manage our Safe and Well Visit booking procedure and to support this function, processes undertaken by the Contact Centre have recently been reviewed and performance measures have now been introduced to help ensure that emerging trends are recognised quickly and that mitigating measures can be introduced when required.

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.

Future funding has now been secured by the Service to continue these initiatives, with funding for the Home from Hospital team confirmed until 31st March 2026 and the Falls Team confirmed until 31st December 2025 with the aspiration to obtain additional funding to extend this to March 2026 to align the funding cycle of both initiatives.

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 8th September 2025:

- There have been **2802** mobilisations, which averages **2.74 call per day**, however more recent months have been running at over **3 calls per day**
- 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 36 minutes**, which has reduced by **1 minute** over the reporting period.
- Overall, each job takes an **average of 65 minutes** to complete.

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:

- **83%** of the time the patient is picked up and has no injuries
- **7%** of the time the patient has been picked up or managed to get up prior to our arrival
- **9%** 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).



On 13 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:

- *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*

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."

More detailed reporting on the figures related to these types of mobilisations will be included going forward into the next quarter.

As a direct result of these mobilisations SFRS have completed **1462 Home Fire Safety Visits** since its inception.

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 8th September 2025:

- There have been **3433** mobilisations since the Service went live, with 2601 of those being for the Discharge and Settle in Service (DSI). The average is **3.32** discharges per day, which continued to decrease 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 **76 minutes** to complete, which has increased slightly over the reporting period.
- Just under **98%** of the time the DSI is conducted with no issues. On **2%** of occasions there may be some minor issues.
- To date there has still only been **1** readmission within 24 hours.

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:

- **581** key safe installations
- **142** furniture move jobs
- **17** 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.

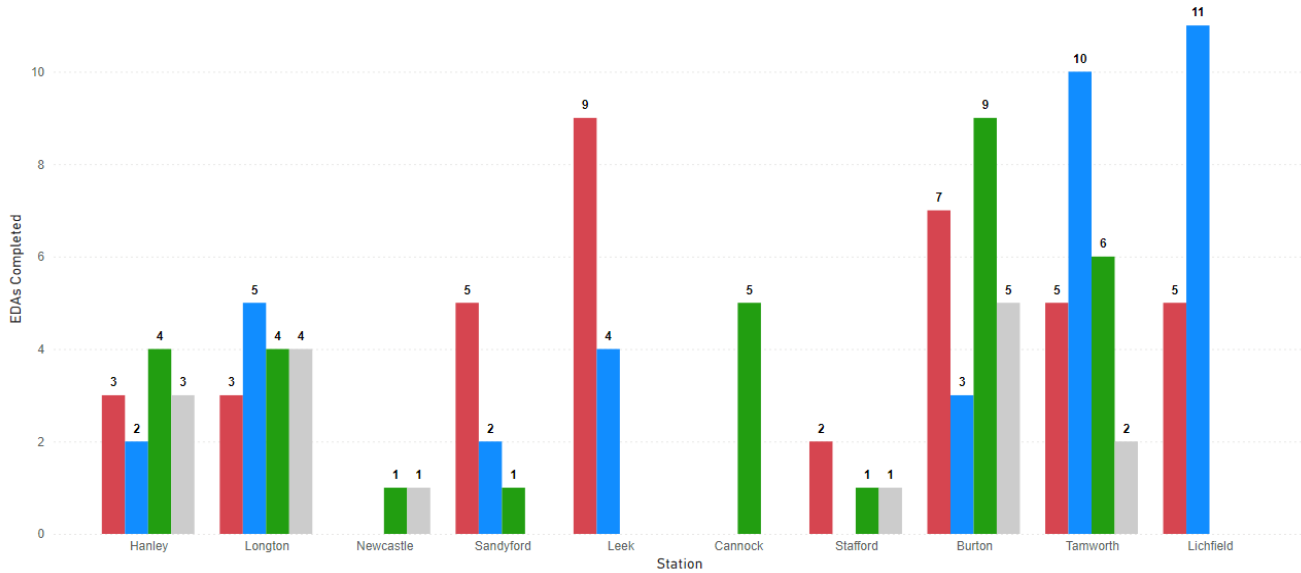
4.3 Education and Volunteering Update

Education Delivery by Whole Time Watches

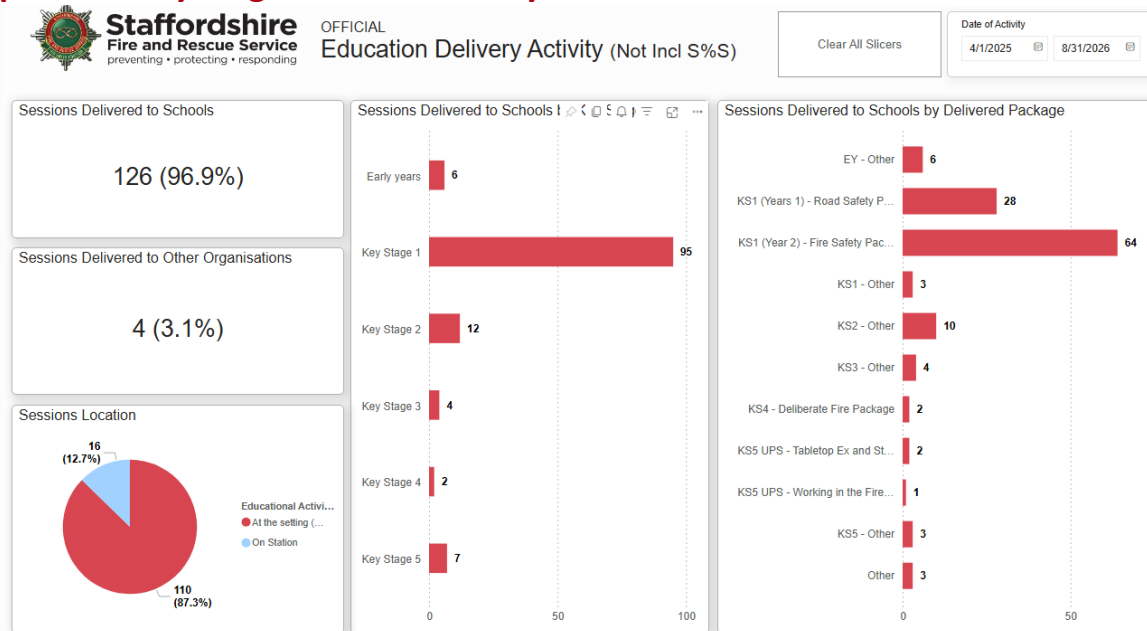
Between April and September 2025, the visual below demonstrates delivery per Watch by whole time station. This is only a partial picture of the academic year and includes the school holidays but over the whole year most Watches achieved their **target of 9** educational visits.

Sessions Completed by Wholetime Station (Ops Only)

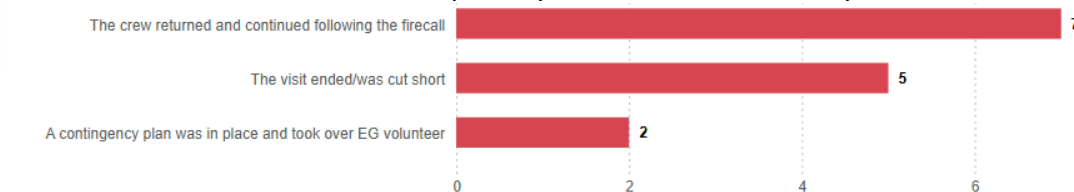
Watch Red Blue Green White



Topics and Key Stages delivered to by Whole Time Watches

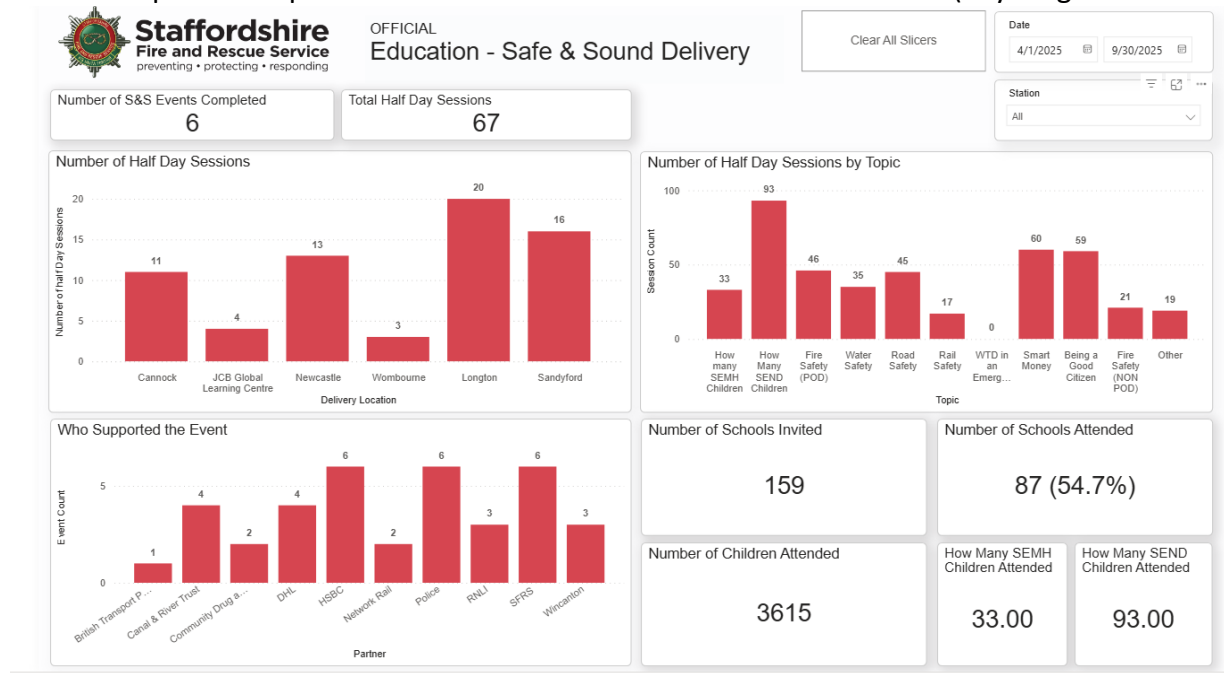


The below shows the visits interrupted by a fire call – overall only 5 visits were cut short



Safe+Sound Live Events

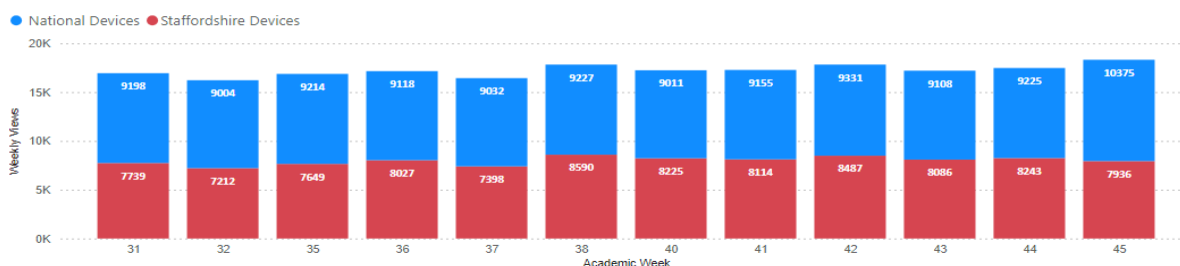
Between April and September 2025 Safe+Sound was delivered to Year 5 (Key Stage 2 children)



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



206,704 devices tuned in to the programme, of which **95,706** were from Staffordshire and **110,998** National, giving an average weekly viewer number of **17,225**

- Feedback from participants and partners remains positive.

Volunteering Update

There are currently **31** 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 **2281.15** volunteer hours were given between April and September 2025 and the Service is currently undertaking a review of the Chaplaincy offer.



5.0 Emerging Issues

5.1 Climate Change and the Impact on Fire & Rescue Services

Between April and September 2025, the Service has seen a significant increase in demand for attendance at Secondary Fires. **1,794** incidents were attended over the period, displaying a **(68.13%)** increase noted in comparison to the **1,067** same period within the previous year. This also displays a significant increase in demand for Secondary Fires from the same period in the previous three years and has demonstrated similar demand levels to those noted under **national SPATE conditions** within Q2 of 2022.

Climate change manifests in several ways that directly challenge the capacity of fire and rescue services:

- **Increased Wildfire Frequency and Intensity:** Warmer, drier conditions, prolonged heatwaves, and changing seasonal patterns create perfect conditions for vegetation to ignite and fires to spread rapidly. This means firefighters are tackling larger, more unpredictable, and longer-duration wildfires, sometimes in areas previously considered lower risk.
- **Wider Range of Emergencies:** The effects extend beyond fire. More frequent and intense rainfall leads to widespread flooding, requiring FRS to deploy specialist water rescue teams and assist in evacuations. Extreme cold, storms, and high winds also generate increased demand for responding to structural damage and supporting other emergency services.
- **Organisational Strain and Resource Limits:** Major incidents like large-scale wildfires or widespread flooding often require a significant proportion of a service's operational fleet and personnel for prolonged periods. For example, during the record-breaking heat of July 2022 in the UK, some FRS declared major incidents as control rooms saw a 500% increase in 999 calls. This strains the ability to maintain "business as usual" services and necessitates shifting resources from other areas of the in specialized equipment, training, and welfare provisions for crews working in intense heat.
- **Predictive Challenges:** A lack of access to accurate, long-term predictive modelling based on climate data hinders effective risk management and planning, making it a challenge for services to prepare adequately for future climate related events.
- **The Post-2022 Spike:** The hot, dry summer of 2022 served as a significant inflection point, resulting in a record number of outdoor fires, including incidents like the Wennington wildfire where homes were destroyed. The underlying trend points toward increasing risk and severity that is likely to continue into the future.
- **Early-Season Incidents:** A concerning trend is the increase in outdoor fires occurring earlier in the year, particularly in the spring. This is often fuelled by dead grasses and heather that dry out quickly in warm, dry spells. For instance, data from early 2025 showed that the number of recorded wildfires was already surpassing figures for the same period in the record-breaking year of 2022.
- **The Rural-Urban Divide:** Wildfires are increasingly impacting areas where natural vegetation meets the built environment, raising the stakes for property damage and necessitating complex, multi-agency responses.

6.0 Enabling Services

6.1 Recruitment Activity

On Call and External Wholetime Transfers

The transfer in process commenced on 15th September and relates to the recruitment of firefighters from both internal on call candidates and external wholetime candidates. The application stages for both areas of recruitment were separated, and then the process was merged for the purposes of sifting and interviews.

The application process closed on the 28th of September and an interview stage has since been conducted, with 25 candidates being assessed in total. In order to move the process forward to appointments; a moderation panel will be arranged in the near future to provide the final stages of assessment for these roles. The anticipated start date for successful individuals will be January 2026 to allow pre-employment checks to be completed.

Status of applications for Transfer in Process

Stage	On Call Transfer in Process		External Wholetime Transfer in Process	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Application not submitted	22%	8	38%	8
Withdrawn	6%	2	10%	2
Shortlisted	72%	26	52%	11
Shortlisted Rejected	11%	4	33%	7
Interview Stage	61%	22	19%	4
Total		36		21

Diversity Breakdown of Interviewed Candidates (On-call Transfer in)

- 10% identified as Female
- 0% identified as having an ethnicity other than White British
- 0% identified as LGBT+
- 10% identified as having a Disability

Diversity Breakdown of Interviewed Candidates (External FS transfer in)

- 0% identified as Female
- 0% identified as having an ethnicity other than White British
- 10% identified as LGBT+
- 0% identified as having a Disability

Figure 13: FTE Headcount Report 30th September 2025

FTE Headcount Summary as at 30th September 2025

	Last Month At 31 August 2025	This Month At 30 September 2025	Actual Movement in Period	Budget 2025-26	Budget Variance 2025-26	Last year At 30 September 2024	Actual Movement last 12 Months
Management Team	14.0	14.0		13.0	(1.0)	14.0	
Station Managers	22.0	21.0	(1.0)	22.0	1.0	22.0	(1.0)
Watch Managers	57.0	60.0	3.0	61.0	1.0	59.0	1.0
Crew Managers	46.0	47.0	1.0	46.0	(1.0)	48.0	(1.0)
Wholetime FF	161.0	156.0	(5.0)	157.0	1.0	155.5	0.5
Wholetime FF - Casual Contracts	2.0	3.0	1.0		(3.0)	6.0	(3.0)
	302.0	301.0	(1.0)	299.0	(2.0)	304.5	(3.5)
On-Call FF	300.1	303.2	3.1	387.0	83.8	285.3	17.9
Support Staff	131.5	129.4	(2.1)	135.8	6.4	126.4	3.0
Secondments / Funded Posts	14.8	15.8	1.0	16.8	1.0	19.8	(4.0)
TOTAL HEADCOUNT	748.4	749.4	1.0	838.6	89.2	736.0	13.3

This report shows headcount as FTE's (Full Time Equivalents)

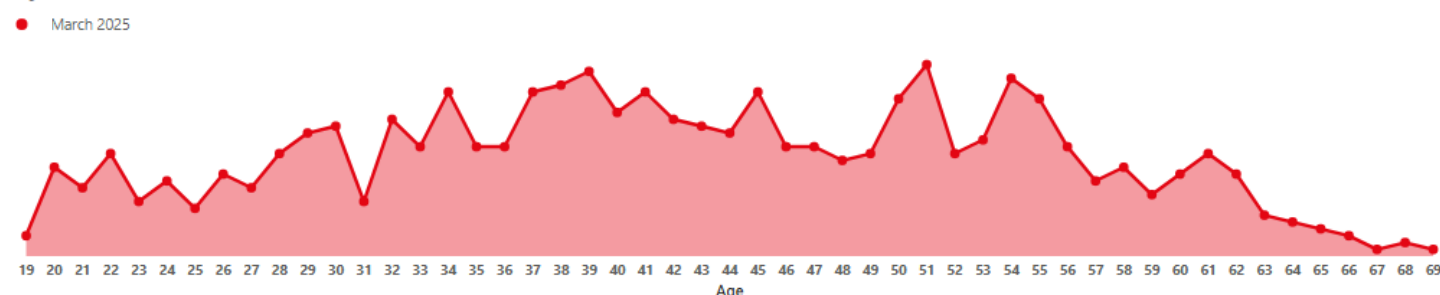


6.2 Workforce Diversity

The chart below displays the workforce diversity position 2023, 2024 and 2025 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

Age Distribution



Ethnicity	2023	2024	2025	Gender	2023	2024	2025	Religion	2023	2024	2025
Any Other White Background	2.11%	2.37%	3.09%	Not Stated	0.11%	0.31%	5.28%	Agnostic	0.89%	1.03%	0.90%
Asian British	0.44%	0.72%	0.39%	Male	80.80%	81.17%	76.93%	Atheist	0.89%	1.03%	1.03%
Black African	0.22%	0.31%	0.13%	Female	19.09%	18.52%	17.78%	Bahai		0.10%	
Black British	0.11%	0.10%	0.13%	Sexuality				Buddhist	0.55%	0.41%	0.51%
Black Caribbean	0.22%	0.21%	0.13%	Bisexual	0.11%	0.21%	0.56%	Christian	29.63%	30.25%	32.05%
Indian	0.22%	0.41%	0.39%	Gay Man	0.33%	0.31%	0.94%	Jedi Knight	0.55%	0.41%	1.03%
Not Stated	0.22%	0.72%	3.09%	Gay Woman/Lesbian	0.55%	1.44%	1.31%	Jewish	0.33%	0.51%	0.13%
Other Ethnic Group	0.11%			Heterosexual/Straight	60.27%	55.86%	77.67%	Muslim	0.44%	0.51%	0.64%
Other Mixed Background	0.22%	0.31%	0.26%	Not Stated	38.73%	42.18%	19.51%	None	25.97%	28.19%	30.76%
Pakistani	0.67%	0.62%	0.64%	Disability				Not Stated	38.07%	34.36%	30.12%
White & Asian	0.11%	0.10%	0.13%	No	91.79%	91.26%	85.82%	Other	1.78%	1.85%	2.06%
White & Black African	0.11%	0.10%	0.13%	Not Stated	6.55%	7.00%	10.95%	Rastafarian	0.11%		
White & Black Caribbean	1.00%	1.03%	0.77%	Yes	1.66%	1.75%	3.22%	Sikh	0.67%	1.23%	0.64%
White British	93.67%	92.70%	90.34%					Spiritualist	0.11%	0.10%	0.13%
White Irish	0.55%	0.31%	0.39%								

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Staffordshire Fire ED&I team collaborates with Staffordshire Police to share best practises, work together for the communities of Staffordshire, offer lived experience and help drive the culture change. This has also led to the creation and promotion of our internal staff networks who can give guidance, experience, and help develop and recruit a diverse workforce. One way in which we are doing this is through the Joint Inclusivity calendar.

The service has trained colleagues in Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). This is a type of internal risk assessment previously referred to as a 'People Impact Assessment', 'Equality & Human Rights Assessment', 'EIAs' or an 'Equality Analysis'.

Its overall aim is to identify risk of inequality, discrimination or disadvantage within service activities (or proposed activities) by assessing the likely impact our policies, procedures, projects or functions might have on the different groups of people we both serve and employ. This includes residents, community groups, employees and other members of the public who may be affected by our activities. Working with colleagues in IT, we have designed an online EqIA submission system where staff complete EqIA's for the EDI Teams approval. This way, we have an online trail of the document, and once it is signed off, it is stored securely ready for Boards or any future audits.

The Neurodiversity Steering Group has been developed in conjunction with Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service. This is to help both services work better together for our Neurodivergent colleagues, share best practice and lived experience the work force.

We also now have a joint Police and Fire Neurodiversity Officer who supports both line managers and colleagues to look at the support we give to colleagues around Neurodiversity and reasonable adjustments.

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 2 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.

Positive Action

We completed 3 'Positive Action Days' which individuals from underrepresented groups were invited to attend a range of stations across the county. These individuals had already been known to the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue service, either through contacts from the Positive Action officer or who had submitted an 'expression of interest' form on the website.

They had self-declared themselves to be from a protected group and therefore offered the opportunity to attend one of the sessions. These sessions included being introduced to the environment in general which allowed for practical hands-on participation with job-related tests they would have to complete in order to be successful in the application process.

With support of Fire Service personnel throughout the day, this also allowed for general discussions around the job itself, shift patterns, leave, day-to-day duties and other relevant aspects of working for the Fire Service. This gave individuals the chance to ask questions around specific issues or concerns they had. The sessions were well attended and feedback obtained from each event shows the sessions were positively received and the information helpful, a total of 16 applied from the positive action days.

Fitness Testing

The service is part of a partnership programme around 'careers in the fire service' where various presentations and workshops are set up at various fire stations across the county and schools attend with groups of children, ages approx. 14/15 and a mix of male and female attendees. The workshops are focused around the roles and responsibility of different roles within the fire service, both operational and support. A part of this programme focuses on the fitness standards required to progress through the recruitment process and also the annual testing required in order to prove maintenance of fitness standard when in role.

In this reporting period, plans and scheduling took place for a female focused conference to be held at HQ. The purpose of the event is to outline the recruitment process from beginning to end, offering examples and demonstrations of the process elements and also giving an opportunity to look at and take part in the job related physical tests. Having a chance to see the process, get hands-on with the equipment and have the ability to ask questions will be beneficial in breaking down some of the barriers and lack of confidence that currently exists for a lot of females regarding applying for the fire service, especially operational roles. This event is scheduled for late October 2025.

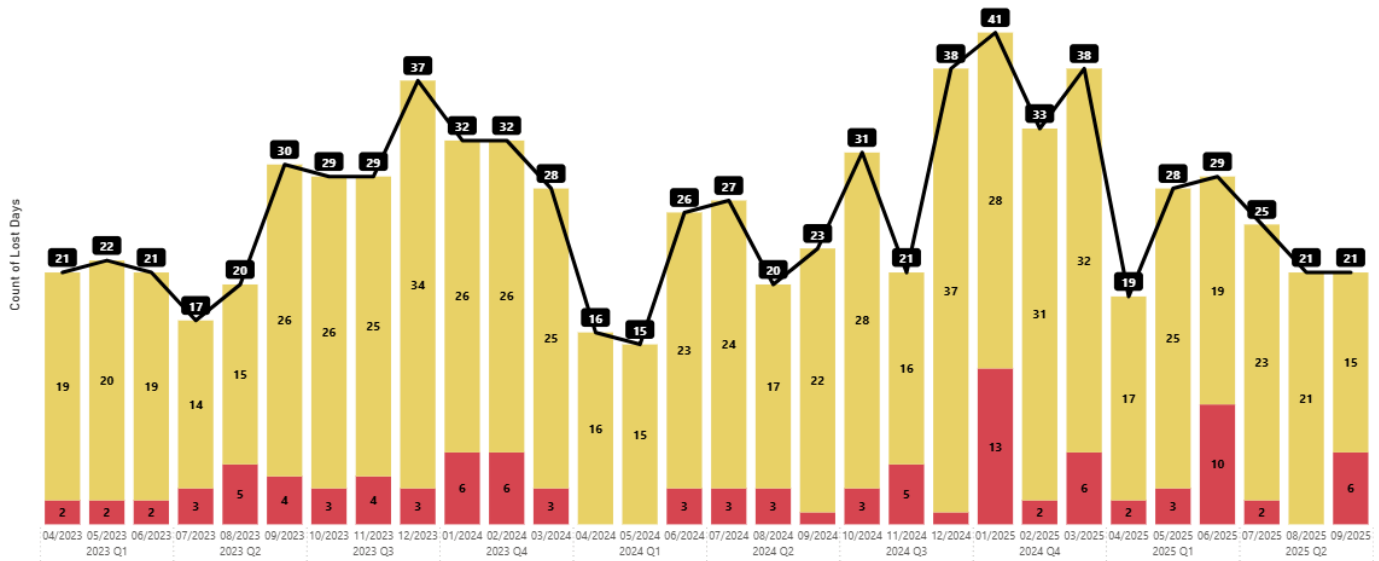


6.3 Workforce Sickness

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.

We have seen a steady decline for all sickness types over the last 3 quarters.

In quarter 1 and quarter 2 of 2025/26, there was a total of **120 days** lost due to short term sickness and **23 days** lost to long term sickness. The top 3 causes for absence being; Musculoskeletal conditions (**36 days**), Stomach/Abdominal Conditions (**25 days**) and Psychological (**20 days**).

In comparison to the same time period in the previous year, a total of **117 days** were lost to short term sickness displaying a slight increase. And a total of **10 days** were lost due to long term sickness, displaying an increase. with Musculoskeletal conditions remaining as the main cause.

All Sickness Type Wholetime

Type	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2
Sick: Respiratory	14	22	41	31	11	15	22	27	8	8
Sick: Musculoskeletal	18	15	12	21	24	17	21	25	20	16
Sick: Stomach/Abdominal Conditions	14	9	22	9	9	13	18	21	16	9
Sick: Disease/General	3	7	5	10	2	6	12	14	4	5
Sick: Psychological	2	6	4	9	1	7	4	9	9	11
Sick: Surgery/Screening	3	4	5	3	3	2	6	4	5	4
Sick: Skin	1	2	1	2	2	4	2		5	6
Sick: Facial/Eyes/Ears/Dental	2		3	3	2	1	1	1	2	6
Sick: Neurological	3			2	1	3	3	4	1	1
Sick: Blood/Immune System	1		1					5	1	
Sick: Cardio Vascular	1		1	2	1				2	1
Sick: Genital/Gynaecological/Urological		1				2	1	2	2	
Sick: Circulatory/Metabolic		1			1				1	
Sick: Pregnancy Related	2									
Total	64	67	95	92	57	70	90	112	76	67

Long Term Sickness Type Wholetime

Type	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2
Sick: Musculoskeletal	6	4	4	5	3	2	3	8	5	3
Sick: Psychological		4	2	5		4	2	6	5	2
Sick: Surgery/Screening		2	1	1			3	2	4	1
Sick: Blood/Immune System			1					4		
Sick: Respiratory			1	1		1		1		
Sick: Disease/General		1		1			1			
Sick: Cardio Vascular				1					1	
Sick: Stomach/Abdominal Conditions			1							1
Sick: Circulatory/Metabolic		1								
Sick: Facial/Eyes/Ears/Dental				1						
Sick: Neurological										1
Total	6	12	10	15	3	7	9	21	15	8

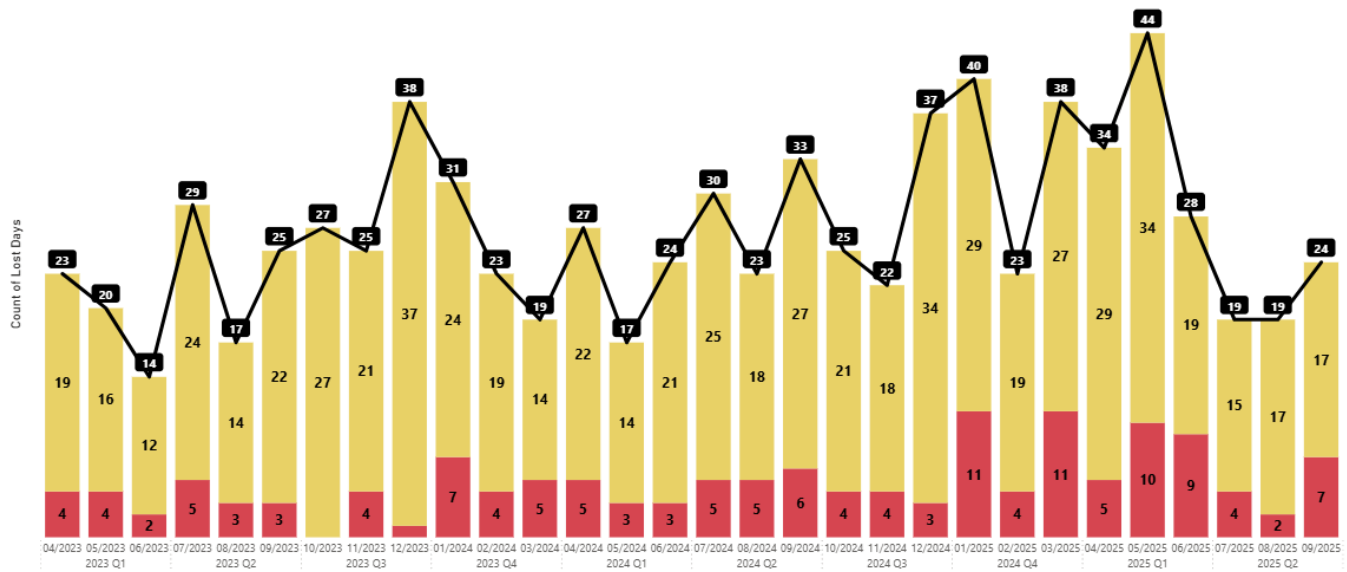
For Wholetime staff over the same period (Q1 & Q2) in the last three years the following is noted for the top 5 contributory factors:

- A small increase in days lost to Musculoskeletal sickness
- A small increase in days lost to Stomach/Abdominal sickness
- A significant increase in days lost to psychological sickness
- A significant reduction in days lost to Respiratory sickness
- A small decrease in days lost to Disease/General

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.

We have seen a significant decline for all sickness types from the last quarter.

In quarter 1 and quarter 2 of 2025/26, there was a total of **131 days** lost due to short term sickness and **37 days** lost to long term sickness. The top 3 causes for absence being; Musculoskeletal conditions (**51 days**), Stomach/Abdominal Conditions (**31 days**) and Respiratory (**17 days**).

In comparison to the same time period in the previous year, a total of **148 days** were lost to short term sickness displaying a decrease. And a total of **37 days** were lost due to long term sickness, remaining the same. With Musculoskeletal conditions remaining as the main cause.

All Sickness Type On Call

Type	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2
Sick: Musculoskeletal	14	15	12	15	22	16	22	29	35	16
Sick: Respiratory	12	15	34	21	12	12	24	18	8	9
Sick: Stomach/Abdominal Conditions	14	12	13	9	16	19	12	16	21	10
Sick: Disease/General	3	8	10	5	4	6	7	12	9	6
Sick: Psychological	2	6	7	8	3	13	4	9	7	9
Sick: Surgery/Screening	4	5	4	6	4	4	4	3	8	3
Sick: Facial,Eyes,Ears,Dental	2	5	5	4	4	3	3	2		3
Sick: Skin	1	1			1	6	5	1	6	5
Sick: Neurological	2	2	1	1		3	2	2	3	
Sick: Blood/Immune System	1		1	2		2	1	4	2	1
Sick: Cardio Vascular	1		2	2	1			3	4	
Sick: Genital/Gynaecological/Urological	1	1				2		2	3	
Sick: Pregnancy Related										
Total	57	70	90	73	67	86	84	101	106	62

Long Term Sickness Type On Call

Type	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2
Sick: Musculoskeletal	5	3	1	8	7	3	5	5	11	3
Sick: Psychological	1	4	2	5	2	8	4	6	4	5
Sick: Surgery/Screening	3	1	1	2	1	1		3	3	2
Sick: Stomach/Abdominal Conditions		1				3	1	2		2
Sick: Cardio Vascular				1	1			2	2	
Sick: Respiratory			1				1	4		
Sick: Blood/Immune System								4		
Sick: Disease/General									2	1
Sick: Neurological	1	1				1				
Sick: Skin									2	
Total	10	10	5	16	11	16	11	26	24	13

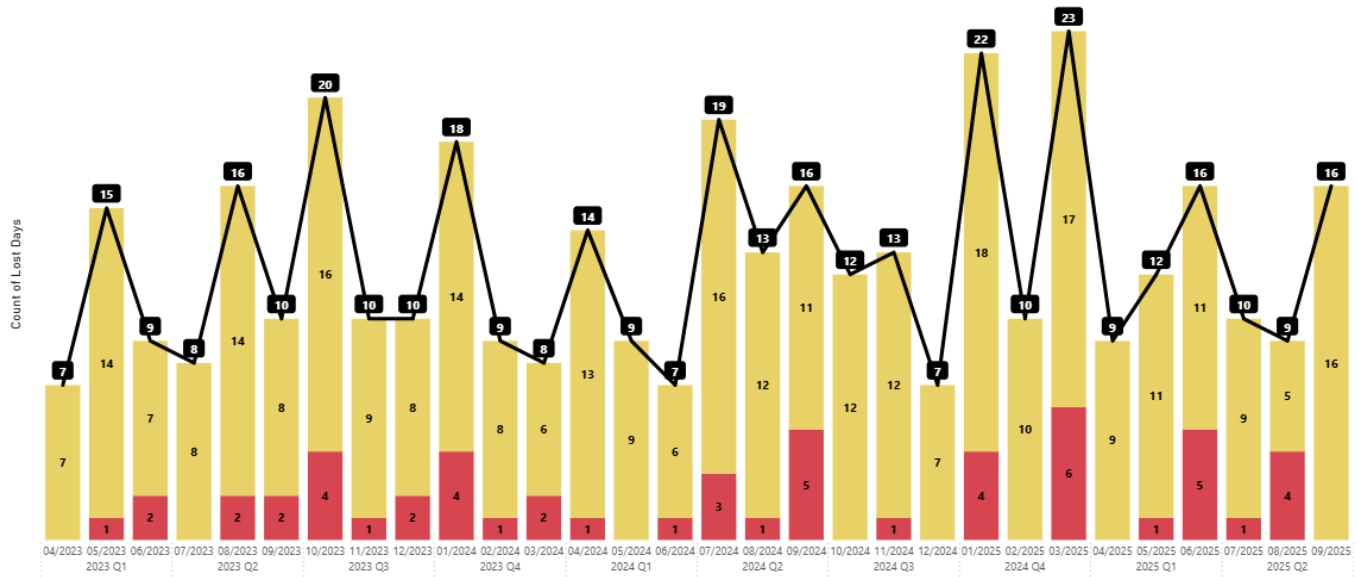
For On Call staff over the same period in the last three years the following is noted for the top 5 contributory factors:

- A significant increase in days lost to Musculoskeletal sickness
- A small increase in days lost to Stomach/Abdominal sickness
- A significant reduction in days lost to Respiratory sickness
- A significant increase in days lost to Psychological Sickness
- A small increase in days lost to Disease/General

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

Lost Days Due to Sickness: Support

Long Term ■ Yes ■ No ● Count of Lost Days



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

We have seen a steady decline for all sickness types over the last 3 quarters.

In quarter 1 and quarter 2 of 2025/26, there was a total of **30 days** lost due to short term sickness and **6 days** lost to long term sickness. The top 3 causes for absence being; Respiratory (**16 days**), Stomach/Abdominal Conditions (**13 days**) and Psychological (**11 days**).

In comparison to the same time period in the previous year, a total of **67 days** were lost to short term sickness displaying a decrease. And a total of **11 days** were lost due to long term sickness, remaining the same. With Respiratory conditions remaining as the main cause.

All Sickness Type Support

Type	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2
Sick: Respiratory	8	14	18	11	12	15	16	14	6	10
Sick: Stomach/Abdominal Conditions	5	4	4	5	5	8	3	8	6	7
Sick: Psychological	6	4	4	4	5	10	2	7	7	4
Sick: Neurological	2	5	3	2	5	3	3	5	3	2
Sick: Disease/General	3	1	2	6	1	1	6	5	2	2
Sick: Musculoskeletal	2	4	1	1	1	4	1	4	2	5
Sick: Surgery/Screening		2	2	2	1	1	1	4	4	1
Sick: Cardio Vascular	1		1		1			1	2	1
Sick: Blood/Immune System		1	1	2			1			1
Sick: Skin			1			1	1			1
Total	27	31	37	33	30	43	29	49	35	34

Long Term Sickness Type Support

Type	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2
Sick: Psychological	3		3	4		6		6	4	2
Sick: Surgery/Screening			2	1		1	1	2		1
Sick: Neurological		1		1		2				1
Sick: Respiratory			1		1			2		
Sick: Musculoskeletal		1		1	1					
Sick: Cardio Vascular									2	
Sick: Blood/Immune System										1
Sick: Skin			1							
Sick: Stomach/Abdominal Conditions		1								
Total	3	3	7	7	2	9	1	10	6	5

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

- A significant reduction in days lost to Respiratory sickness
- A small increase in days lost to Stomach/Abdominal sickness
- A slight increase in days lost to Psychological Sickness
- A small increase in days lost to Disease/General
- A small increase in days lost to Musculoskeletal sickness

Notable Actions

Long- and short-term absence continues to receive significant focus from HR, management Occupational Health and the Service Fitness Advisor. The monthly case conference is providing a forum for all stakeholders to discuss to agree a proactive direction in order to effectively manage absence and those on modified duties.

Occupational health have listened to feedback provided and have introduced clinical duty time, in order to triage Occupational Health Referral Forms (OHARFs) to establish if an appointment is needed or advice can be provided to the appropriate supervisor, therefore reducing time and speeding up the return-to-work process.

The Fitness Advisor continue to focus on Musculoskeletal (MSK) Functional Assessments, as these remain a significant area of concern based on current reasons for absence across both On Call and Whole-Time members of staff. Modified duties are closely managed by Line Managers in collaboration, with the Fitness Advisor and HR. This ensures progress is made within a reasonable timeframe and supports informed decision-making regarding the most appropriate course of action, whether that be a phased return to work, ill-health retirement or redeployment.

Total Health Tuesdays continue to serve as a valuable drop-in service, bringing together key professionals including the Wellbeing Nurse, Fitness Advisor, and Physiotherapist to offer support around health and wellbeing. The initiative provides a safe and welcoming space for wellbeing conversations, expert guidance, and access to tailored advice. The Physiotherapist also shares information on self-referral pathways for further support, helping to reduce waiting times and encouraging individuals to take proactive ownership of their health and recovery.

In addition, the team offers signposting to relevant services, advice on how the Service can provide support, this facilitates referrals to external providers such as NHS Everyone Health. Employees also have the opportunity to access health checks, including cholesterol screening.

Where concerns are raised that may require further attention, the situation will be appropriately triaged to ensure individuals receive the right support in a timely and effective manner.

The Wellbeing section on the Service Intranet has been enhanced to offer a wider range of support resources for managing poor mental health. This includes tools for self-management as well as guidance and support for managers assisting team members experiencing mental health challenges.

The HR department have now successfully delivered two HR Training Days, intended to provide focus on developing 'soft skills' to support early-stage intervention to more effectively manage absence. To support the delivery of this message, we shared data highlighting how the current policy has been applied, demonstrating a clear need for greater focus and consistency. These sessions were well-received and aimed at empowering managers to take a proactive and supportive approach.

Building on this, we followed up with a presentation and collaborative discussion with Station Managers at the Ops Forum. This engagement provided valuable feedback and insights, helping to shape improvements in the absence management process and policies and enhance overall service-wide engagement.

Encouragingly, there appears to be a collective shift in mindset, with a growing enthusiasm for shaping future practices and policies in this area. It will be interesting to monitor how this renewed approach influences absence figures over the coming months.

Future Activity

Service policies related to absence management will be updated and simplified, incorporating feedback from key stakeholders and the HR Team. Revising the policy will support more effective management of both short-term and long-term absences. Coupled with ongoing training and consistent reinforcement of line managers' responsibilities, these changes will help drive meaningful improvements in absence handling across the organisation.

The Occupational Health Team intends to adopt a triage approach for psychological absences, therefore introducing an early intervention call system. These calls will help determine the most appropriate support for each employee at an early stage.

Ongoing training will be provided, with Human Resource Officers working closely with managers to ensure Occupational Health Assessment Referral Forms (OHARFs) are completed accurately and include all relevant information.

To support this, the Service intranet will feature guidance on completing an OHARF, including examples and explanations of its purpose. This will help illustrate best practices, addressing a recurring issue where submitted forms have lacked sufficient detail.

7.0 Finance Performance Update

This report provides an overview of the financial position of the Authority for the first half of 2025/26. It includes a summary of progress in key financial areas, offering insights into the financial performance and position of the Authority during the year. The report has been updated for the half year to include the latest forecast for the year.

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 30 September 2025 was **£26.2m** with the headline revenue position remaining on track for the year despite a forecast overspend on pay, which is estimated to close **c.£0.4m (1.3%)** above budget. This pay overspend has been driven by the significant increase in operational demand experienced during the first six months of the year with the total number of operational incidents attended during this six-month period, up **22%** on last year. Operational activity in September has reduced back to more normal levels with secondary fires attended down to **133 from 414 incidents** in August as the weather conditions become increasingly more unsettled following the warm and dry summer period. The year-end pay forecast has been updated and reflects this reducing trend continuing for the second half of 2025/26.

Total non-pay costs are slightly favourable to budget with no significant pressure on the annual budget forecast, but this will be monitored through the winter period. Income is favourable with Interest Receivable achieving a better return than budget. Interest rates, as predicted were reduced to **4%** by the Bank of England in August and held at **4% in September** as interest rates remained at the lowest levels for 2 years. One further rate cut in year is still expected which could see some of the benefit accrued year to date reducing.

The capital programme forecast for 2025/26 at **£6.0m** reflects the latest position for a number of projects and is showing a **£0.9m** reduction from the approved budget of **£6.9m**. The capital programme for Estates now reflects the latest programme with some projects moving into 2026/27 due to availability of resources. The capital programme spend commitment as at 30 September 2025 was **£2.9m, 48%** of forecast and is on track.

The Authority are on track as at the 30 September to fully deliver the **£0.4m** of transformation savings budgeted in year, which is part of the overall requirement to deliver **£1m** of savings by 2029. All transformation workstreams are reported through the Transformation Board and Strategic Governance Board.

The closing cash balance as at 30 September 2025 was **£23.1m** and showing a shortfall of **£1.2m** when compared with the original cash flow budget. The Authority took the opportunity to repay a **£1m** Lender Option Borrower option loan (LOBO) following notification of an increase in interest rate.

The balance of the General Reserve remains unchanged at **£1.9m**. Earmarked reserves are forecast to reduce by **£1.2m** in year which is **£0.1m favourable** to the approved budget set following the challenging financial settlement received by the Authority for 2025/26.

The outlook for 26/27 remains very uncertain as the Authority waits for the response from the Government following the Fair Funding Review consultation. This could see Settlement Funding reduce by **£3.5m** over the next three-year Comprehensive Spending review period. The Local Government Finance Settlement is expected in December following the Autumn Budget Statement by the Chancellor on 26 November 2025.