

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Public Performance Meeting

November 2024

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 Thematic Inspection: Handling of misconduct

HMICFRS published its thematic report '*Standards of behaviour - The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services*' on the 1st of August 2024.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service were one of **10** fire and rescue services to take part in this thematic inspection back in November last year, which focused on misconduct and improving values and culture in across the sector nationally.

In this report, HMICFRS said that most fire and rescue services have taken steps to improve standards of behaviour and root out misconduct. But the inspectorate found there are still areas to address and has called for further improvements to make sure misconduct is handled effectively.

Across the 10 services inspected, the inspectors found:

- *Occurrences of unacceptable behaviours including sexist, racist and homophobic language.*
- *There is a widespread lack of confidence in misconduct processes which prevents staff from speaking out*
- *Supervisors and managers are not sufficiently trained to manage staff performance, poor behaviour and welfare issues.*
- *Staff that manage and investigate misconduct need the right training to ensure consistency.*
- *Services need to learn from their misconduct cases to focus on early intervention and obtaining positive results.*

HMICFRS have provided **15** recommendations for all fire and rescue services.

These are national recommendations for the fire sector and are not specific to the findings within Staffordshire.

This report is publicly available here:

<https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publications/standards-of-behaviour-handling-misconduct-in-frs/>

We are managing these national recommendations through the use of an online tracker, and these are monitored via our internal governance arrangements and reported upon regularly.

Progress has been made on these recommendations; with **4** areas considered to now be addressed. These actions will be taken via internal governance arrangements for sign off and ratification. scrutiny will remain ongoing to ensure that improvements are embedded.

1.2 HMICFRS Service Inspection: 2023-25 Effectiveness, efficiency and people

In March 2023, HMICFRS started Round 3 of fire and rescue service inspections. Since 2018, every service has been inspected at least twice meaning there is now a benchmark against which progress can be monitored.

Staffordshire's Round 3 inspection started Monday, 26th February 2024 through to week commencing 6th May. The inspection followed a format set by HMICFRS, and the schedule ensures that evidence gathered is tested and information triangulated where necessary throughout the process.

The Inspectors also ran a series of focus groups so that they can speak to broad range of staff across the organisation and not just those involved in the interviews or exercises to get a more comprehensive understanding of the Service

HMICFRS now assesses each service against the 'characteristics of good' and gives each service graded judgments against **11 diagnostic elements**.

The grading system in Round 3 has moved to a 5-tier grading system with an additional grade of 'adequate' added to the assessment.

This brings fire in line with the way police forces are graded and better serves the aims of promoting improvements in fire and rescue and to highlight where a Service is doing well and where it needs to improve.

The full inspection report was published on Wednesday the 18th of September.

This report is publicly available here:

<https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publications/frs-assessment-2023-25-staffordshire/>

In Round 3, HMICFRS has assessed the Service's progress since our last inspection and makes comment on this within the report against the 11 individual areas of review.

11 Areas of Review:

- *Responding to major and multi-agency incidents.*
- *Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies*
- *Responding to fires and other emergencies*
- *Making best use of Resources*
- *Making the FRS affordable now and in the future*
- *Promoting the right values and culture*
- *Getting the right people with the right skills*
- *Preventing fires and other risks*
- *Protecting the public through fire regulation*
- *Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity*
- *Managing performance and developing leaders*

The results of this inspection are very positive, identifying that Staffordshire has achieved **4 adequate gradings, 6 good gradings, and 1 outstanding grading.**

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	Preventing fires and other risks		
	Responding to fires and other emergencies	Protecting the public through fire regulation		
	Making best use of resources	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity		
	Making the FRS affordable now and in the future	Managing performance and developing leaders		
	Promoting the right values and culture			
	Getting the right people with the right skills			

1.3 Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase Two Report

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 this report that are aimed at Fire and Rescue Services.

These recommendations are currently being worked through and progress is monitored via an online tracker, with progress reported via our internal governance arrangements and regular updates provided.

This report is publicly available here:

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

1.4 50th Anniversary of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

2024 marks the **50th Anniversary of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service** in its current form, and as such we have held a number of events throughout the year to commemorate and celebrate our half-century.

Retired Staffordshire Firefighters Event

On Tuesday 9th April, members of the Retired Fire Fighters Network gathered at fire headquarters to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The event was opened by Lord Lieutenant Mr Ian Dudson and Chief Fire Officer Rob Barber, and after a few words from each of them, the audience were invited to pose questions to the Principal Officer Team. This was then followed by talks from local historian Ben Cunliffe, Chris Craddock from the Emergency Response Team (ERT) and Lisa Courtney from The Fire Fighters Charity.

As old friends reconnected and swapped stories of days gone by, there was a sense of pride in the room. Anecdotes shared painted a picture of the resilience, teamwork and dedication that each individual has given to the Service over the years.

The event held was not only a chance to reminisce but also an opportunity to see the latest advancements in firefighting technology. This includes state-of-the art cutting equipment, thermal imaging cameras, drones and the newest appliances and personal protection equipment.

In addition to witnessing the latest gadgets, the former firefighters had the opportunity to observe new recruits in training.

Fundraising

Over the course of the year, there have been a number of fundraising and community engagement events involving operational crews, support staff, and also some superb individual efforts to support the Firefighters Charity.

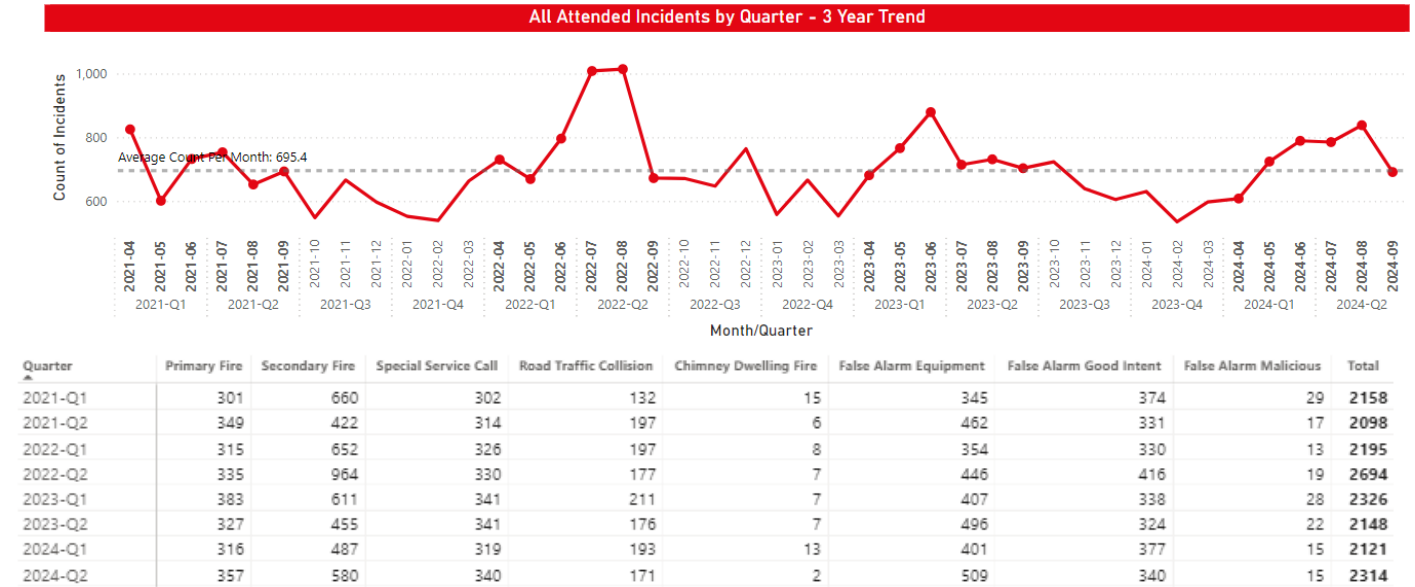
The total raised has exceeded **£28,000** between April and September 2024 with further events already planned in for the remainder of the year to meet the **£50,000** goal set out for 2024.

Date	Fundraising Activity
April 2024	Newcastle Car Wash
	Lichfield Car Wash
	Rugeley Open Day
	Manchester Marathon – Glynn Luznyj
	Codsall Car Wash
May 2024	Cannock Car Wash
June 2024	Leek Car Wash
	Lichfield Open Day
	Lake District Ultra Challenge - Steve Pickering
	Rugby Tournament - Andy Topham
	Montane Spine Summer South Challenger - Alex Salt
July 2024	50 th Anniversary Walk
August 2024	Burton Car Wash
	Burton 'Fire Fun Friday' for Children
	Uttoxeter 'Brew with the Crew'
	Cannock Car Wash
	Chasewater Community Event
September 2024	Newcastle Open Day
	World Firefighter Games - Richard Mortimer

2.0 Providing a Flexible & Responsive Service

2.1 Incidents Attended

Figure 1: Yearly Comparison of Total Incidents Attended April to September with breakdown of incident type

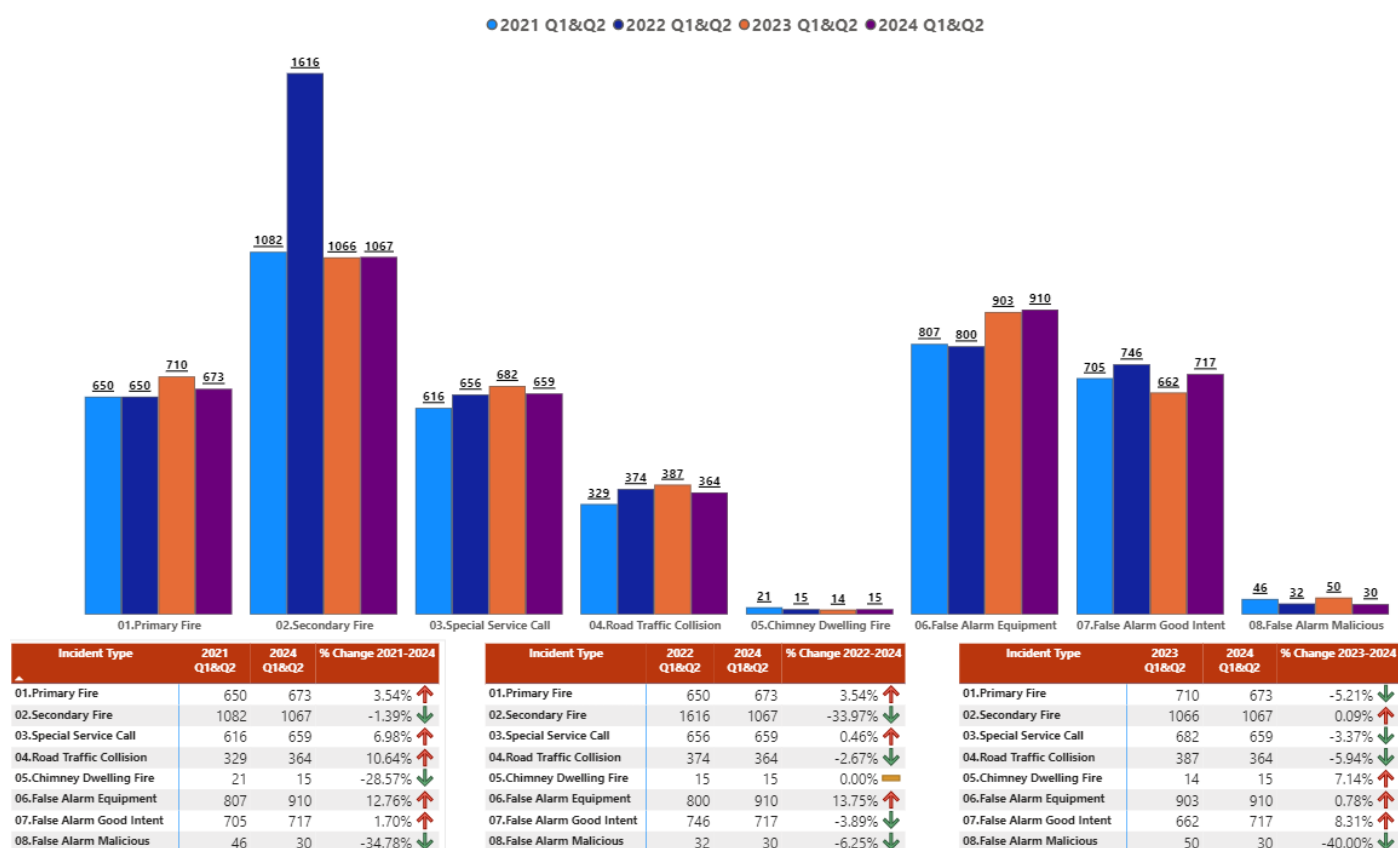


Primary fires are potentially more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property and meet at least one of the following conditions:

- 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**Emerging Demand**

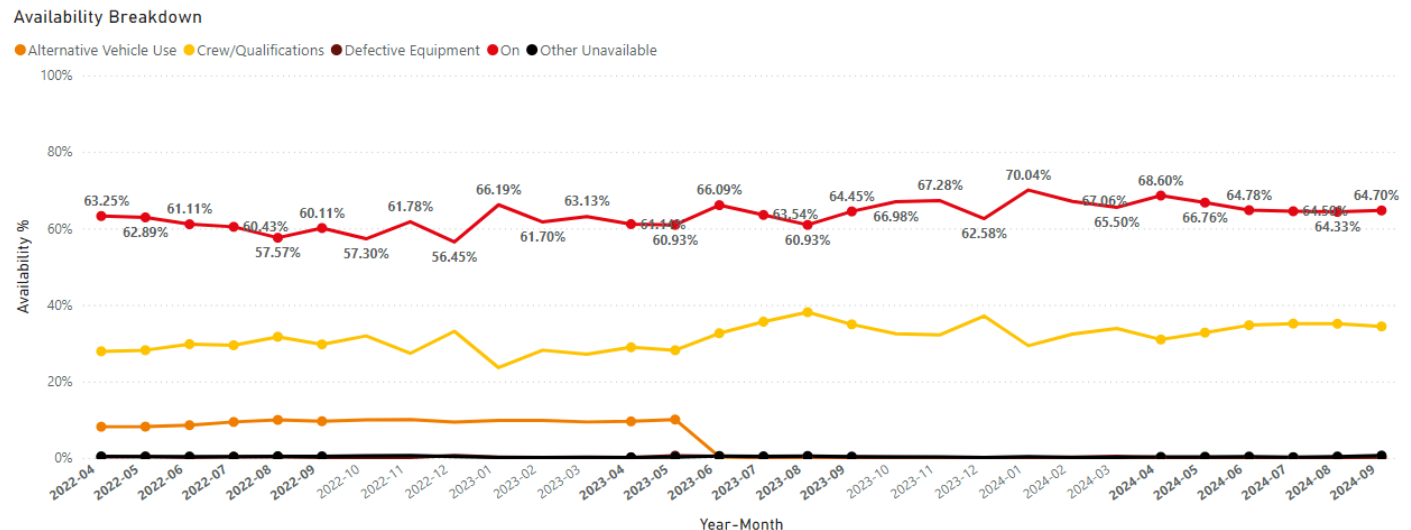
- Between April and September 2024 **4,435** incidents were attended by the Service in total. This is a small reduction of **-0.87%** from the **4,474** incidents attended in the same period within the previous year and displays that demand for Service overall has not changed significantly.
- There has been a small reduction in Primary Fires (**-5.21%**) and Special Service Calls (**-3.37%**) attended by the Service in comparison to the same period in 2023.
- Attendance at Road Traffic incidents has also decreased by (**-5.94%**) as well as attendance at false alarm malicious calls. (**-40%**)
- A negligible increase is noted for attendance at Secondary Fires in comparison to the same period in 2023. (**0.09%**)
- In comparison to 2022, there is a large reduction in Secondary fires. (**-33.97%**) This was due to the large number of wildfire incidents that occurred in Q2 of 2022.
- In comparison to 2021, There is an increase in Primary fires (**3.54%**), Special Service Calls (**6.98%**), Road Traffic Collisions (**10.64%**) and False Alarm Equipment attendance (**12.76%**) 2021 itself was a year that observed national lockdowns over the course of the first quarter.

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

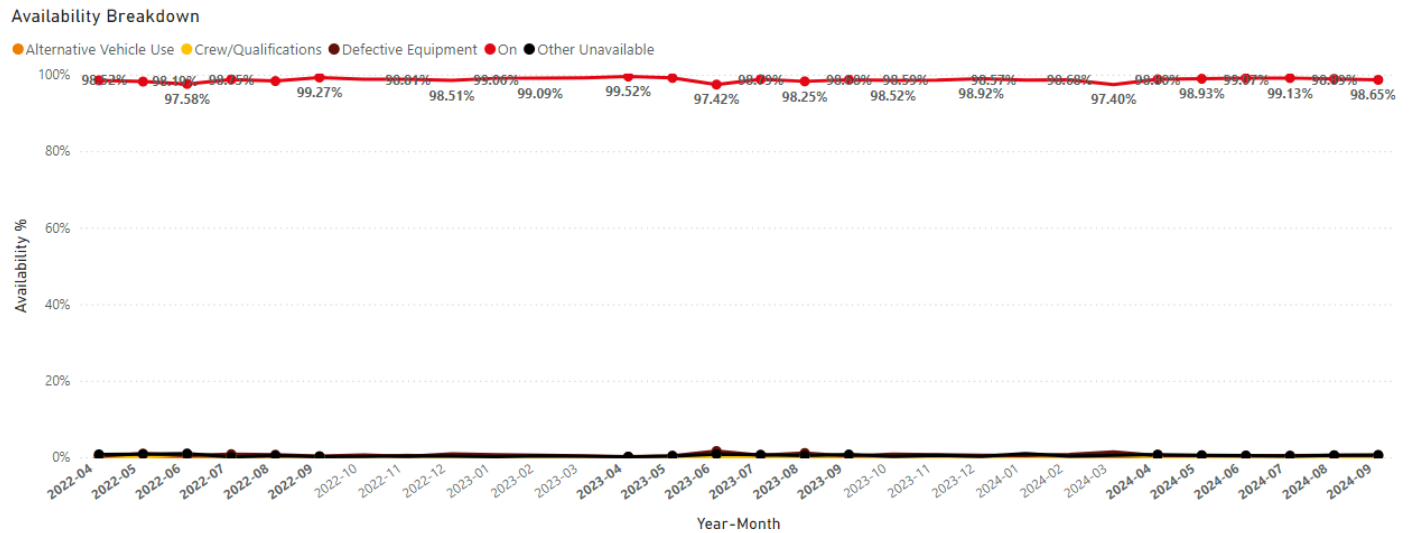


Between April and September 2024, the total average Service availability is recorded as **65.62%**.

In the same period in 2023 this was recorded as **62.84%** and between April to September 2022 this was recorded as **60.89%**.

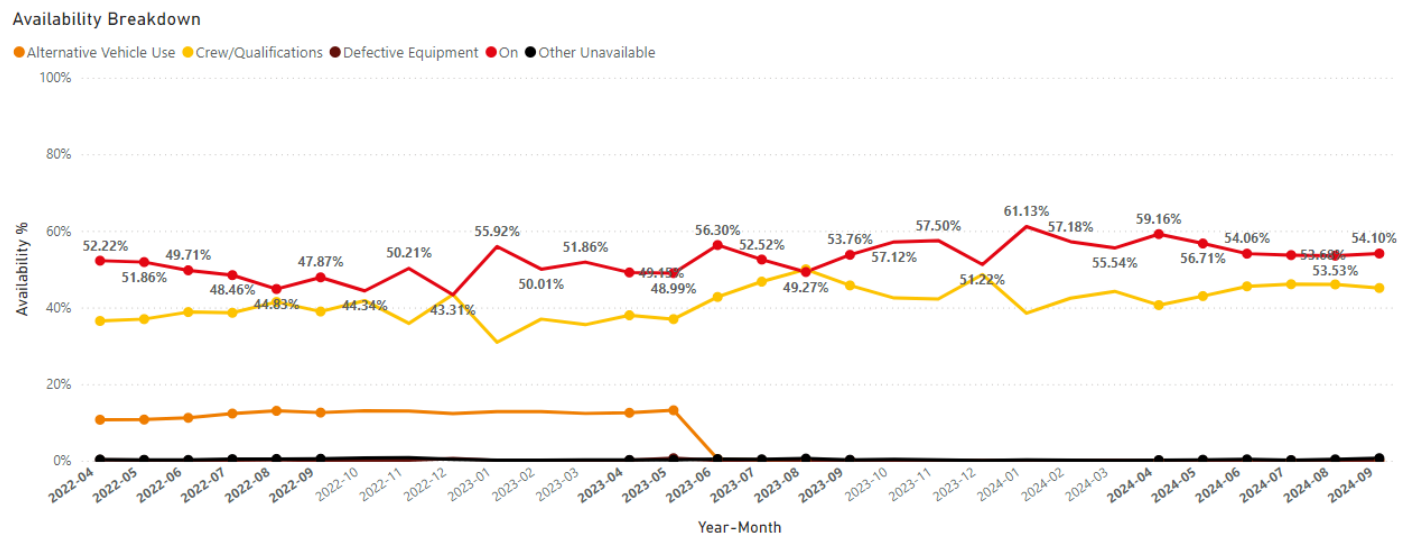
There are many factors that can affect the ability for a Fire Service to respond to incidents. A breakdown of appliances at Whole Time and On Call stations is provided below.

Figure 4: Three-year trend of Total Wholetime Availability



Between April and September 2024, the total Whole Time Service availability is recorded as **98.91%**. In the same period in 2023 this was recorded as **98.63%** and between April – September 2022 this was recorded as **98.44%**.

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



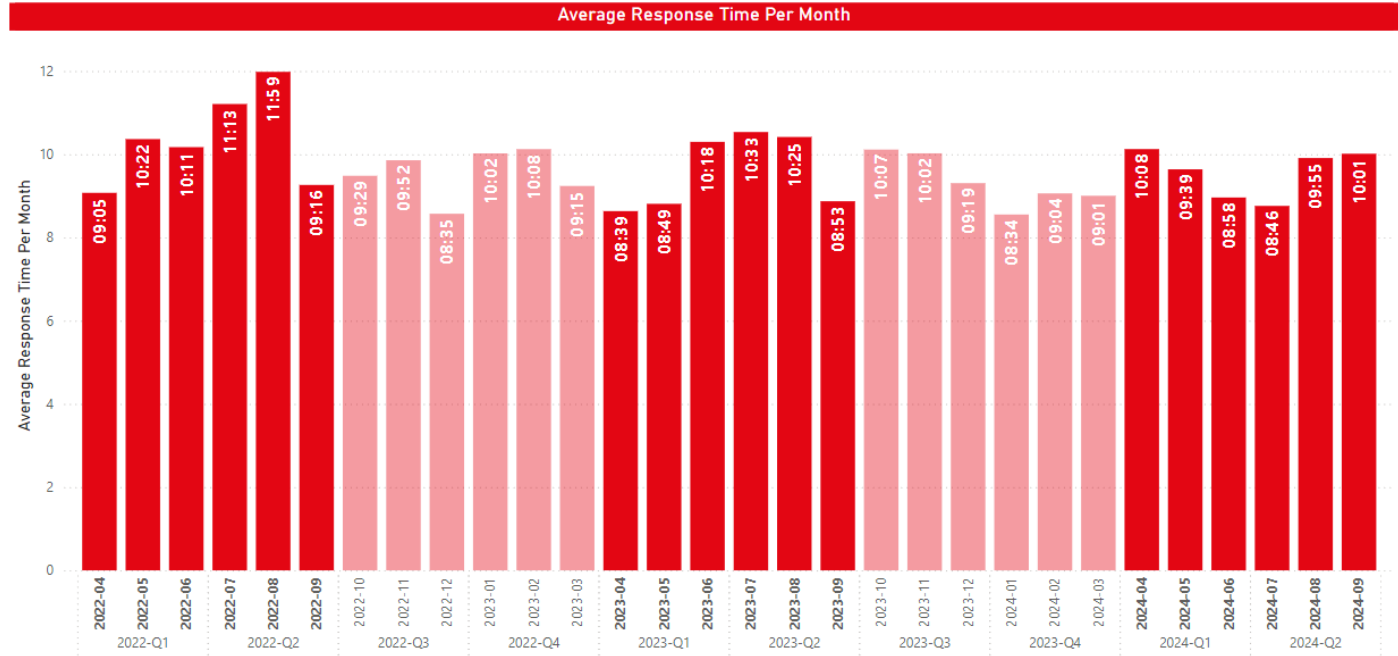
Between April and September 2024, the total On Call availability is recorded as **55.20%**. In the same period in 2023 this was recorded as **51.66%** and between April - September 2023 this was recorded as **49.15%**.

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 factor affecting the Total Service Availability.

2.3 Service Response Times and Standards

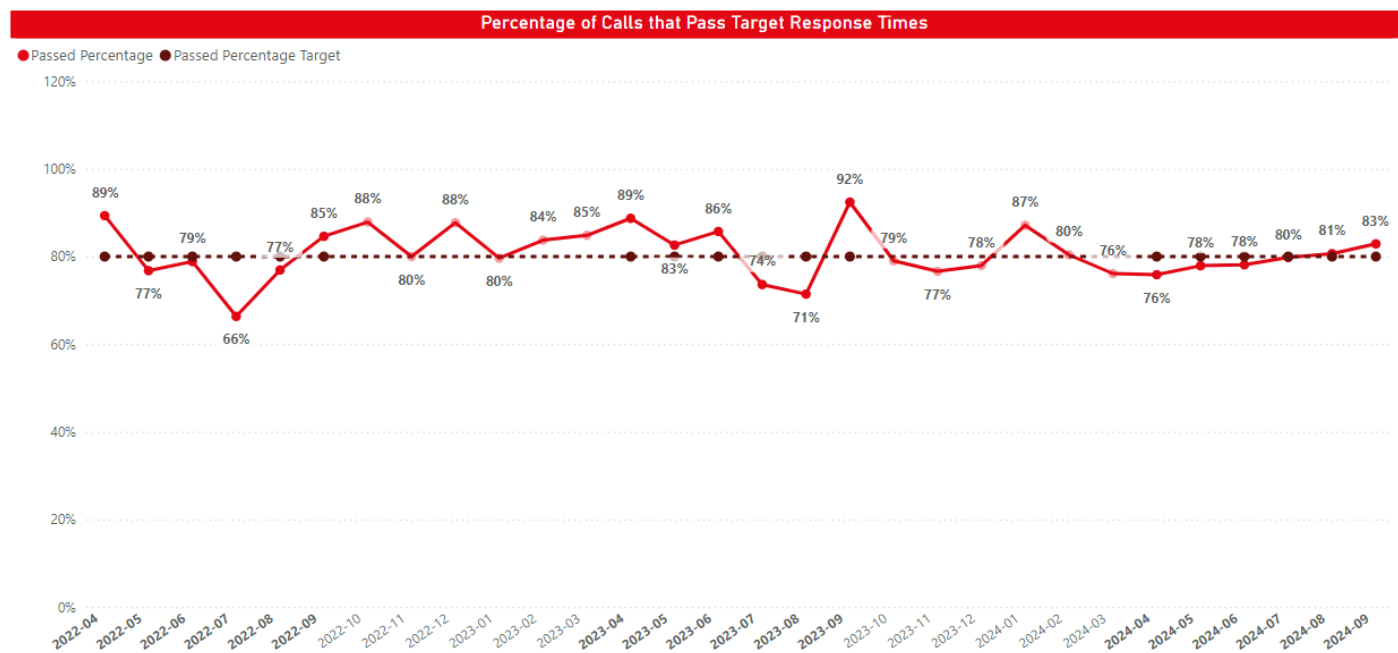
Service response times are measured monthly and are based upon the time taken for the first fire appliance attend an incident from the point of mobilisation by Fire Control. The Total Average response time is below, which is calculated from all fire appliances at Whole Time, On Call, and Day Crewed Fire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

Figure 6: Three Year trend of Average Service Response Time



Between April and September 2024, the average Service response time is recorded as **9 minutes 34 seconds**. In the same period in 2023 this was recorded as **9 minutes 36 seconds** and between April - September 2022 this was recorded as **10 minutes 21 seconds**.

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

Between April and September 2024, the overall pass rate has been **79.33%**.

In the same period in 2023 this was recorded as **82.50%** and between April - September 2022 this was recorded as **78.83%**

Overall, our 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 we are meeting our **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 difficult 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.

The period of June to August 2022 was noted as a time of **SPATE conditions nationally**, with fire services receiving high levels of demand for attendance at secondary outdoor fires in particular during the period.

3.0 Protecting People and Places

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**

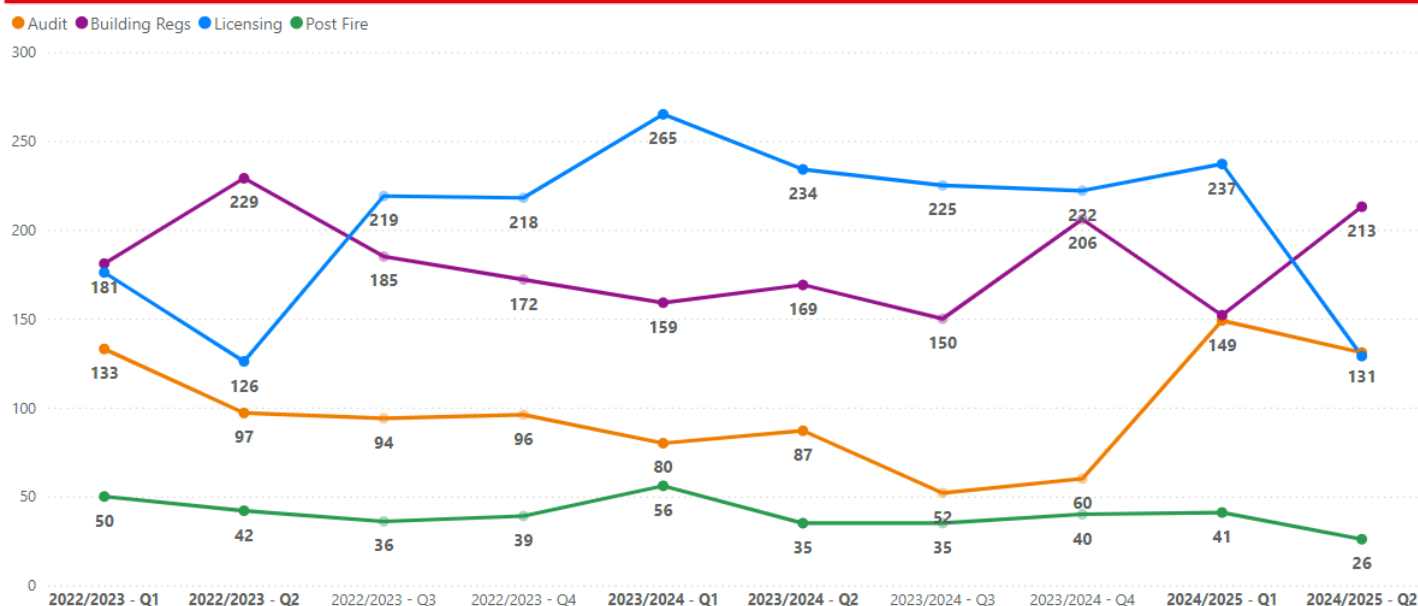
Under the Licensing Act 2003 and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the licensing authority is required to consult and give Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service the opportunity to make representation with regards to public safety (fire safety), before issuing the licence.

- **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: Three-year trend of Protection Activity**Protection Activity****Between April and September 2024:**

280 Fire Safety Audits were carried out, which is an increase from the **167** completed within the same period in 2023.

Of those premises audited, Care Homes, Hotels, Tall Buildings and Hospitals make up the majority of those visited.

363 Building Regulation Consultations were completed, which is an increase from the **328** completed within the same period in 2023.

368 Licensing Consultations were completed, which is a decrease from the **499** completed within the same period in 2023.

67 Post Fire Inspections were completed, which is a decrease from the **91** completed within the same period in 2023.

Fire Safety Audits

The number of Fire Safety Audits completed has increased significantly through the period of April to September 2024. 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 new structure was also implemented in the period which allows Delivery Group Protection Teams a greater focus on the completion of Fire Safety Audits.

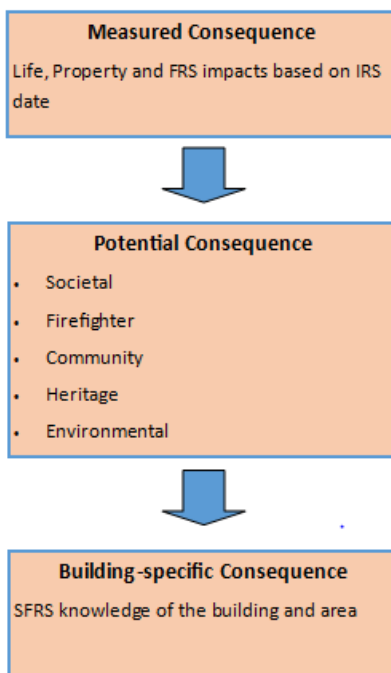
Risk Based Inspection Programme

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service has recently updated the methodology for defining risk in non-domestic premises. The updated Risk Based Inspection Programme was launched on February 14th, 2024, and is the primary method in which the Service prioritises risk for those premises covered by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This has had an impact on the premises proactively chosen for a fire safety audits by Protection Teams.

The logic

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 we are likely to come across.

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, should there be a Grade 1 listed Care Home, this score could be adjusted which would have an impact on the overall risk category.

Fire Safety (England) Regulations

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 **73** 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.

3.2 Community Sprinkler Project

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

In 2017, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service identified 42 blocks of flats over 5 storeys within the county that would benefit from sprinkler systems being fitted. It was the aim of the Service to get these systems in place within a 10-year period. By September of this year work on 19 of those buildings has been completed.

Stoke on Trent City Council are continuing their commitment to the programme of retrofitting sprinklers in all their remaining high-rise blocks of flats, with 2 installations having completed the tender process and are due to proceed to build in the near future.

They also have a new build programme in place which is integrating sprinklers into new 3 storey developments such as Rialto, Beardsmore and Sutherland Courts, providing a level of fire safety over and above that provided by developments adhering to the minimum legal requirements.

However, like many housing providers, they are re-assessing their housing stock and, in particular, the provision of high-rise buildings that are soon to require either substantial refurbishment or demolition.

After a period of consultation, they are now moving forward with a demolition programme for **7** of their high-rise buildings and the re-provision of non-high-rise housing. This will reduce the outstanding number of high-rise buildings requiring retrofit sprinklers to **16**.

Financial constraints continue to limit the opportunities to expand the participation of other housing providers, and the most enthusiastic have already participated and gained the advantages that sprinklers bring. However, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service will continue to explore the opportunities for working with housing providers to improve the fire safety of their tenants.

Using our fire engineer, we are also exploring the possibility of working with a provider of more specialised care who experiences greater fire safety challenges, but which also lies outside the original remit of the project. However, the returns in terms of risk mitigation would be substantial for some of the more vulnerable members of our society. This project is nearing the end of the tender process and should be moving to installation in the New Year.

3.3 Fire Hydrants

Operational crews regularly test hydrants and record this testing. This testing ensures, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the hydrants are fit for purpose when they are needed for operational use. It also provides Operational Staff with an opportunity to get to 'know their patch' – a useful resource to draw upon during the dynamic phase of an incident.

Testing is recorded on an ICT system provided by a company called 3TC. This was recently introduced and represents a significant investment for the service, reflecting the value that hydrant testing is given within Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

All Wholtime watches, and a number of On Call watches, have received training on the use of 3TC since the last Public Performance Report and the system is now embedded as 'Business as Usual' on those watches.

Over **6,000** hydrants have been tested by operational staff in the last 12 months. This provides significant assurance to local stations, and the wider service, that they will be able to secure a water supply when needed.

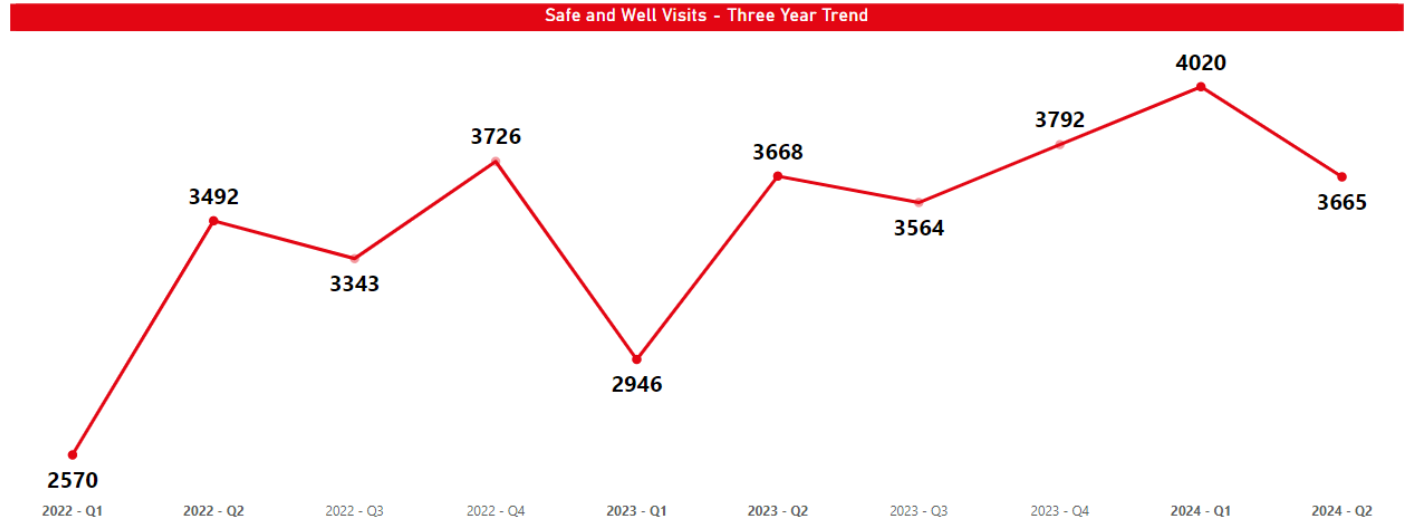
Figure 9: Hydrant Risk Categories and Inspection Schedule

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 Helping people most at risk from Fire

4.1 Safe and Well Visits

Figure 9: Three-year trend of Safe and Well Visits



7,685 Safe and Well visits have been completed between April and September 2024.

During this period, there has been an increase in the number of Safe and Well visits completed by the Service in comparison to the same period in 2023 (**6,614**) and in 2022 (**6,062**)

In Q1 of 2023, there was a trial of a new Prevention recording system whereby a proportion of prevent activity recording was competed elsewhere.

On 1st April 2024, the Service implemented targets for Safe and Well visits, to drive performance and aid planning, in relation to executing the reduction of risk in domestic premises. Targets represent something for teams to aim for and aspire to achieve for the benefit of the community we serve. These are reviewed at periodic intervals.

Operational crews work off pre-populated lists that are based on the NFCC risk methodology for domestic dwellings, that were implemented in March 2024. This methodology takes data into consideration , such as levels of deprivation, low energy ratings, low council banding, health, employment and the number of dependent children in the household, which together can indicate the likelihood of a fire occurring, allowing us to identify our vulnerable members of the community. The intention is for these lists to be worked through, starting with those deemed to be at 'very high' risk, utilising a 'direct engagement' approach, calling at the property with no pre planned appointment.

The Service also continues to deliver Olive Branch training for partners, which is aimed at people who visit vulnerable members of communities in their own homes within Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. The training helps 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 Contact Centre continue to manage our Safe and Well booking procedures. The Falls Response and Home from Hospital teams also continue to carrying out Safe and Well visits alongside their duties.

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.

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

Falls Response

The falls response service went live on **7th December 2022** and has provided live service every day since.

The team are based at Lichfield Fire Station and ensure 2 personnel are on duty every day from 0800 – 1900 to respond to falls calls. The team are mobilised by the 'Integrated Care Coordination (ICC), which is now operated by MPFT. The ICC picks suitable calls from the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) 'Stack' and triages them. If the call is classed as a 'green (Non Injury) call', they will dispatch a suitable Falls Response Team, one of which is provided by SFRS. The team will respond as directed by the ICC, using specialist lifting equipment to assist patients back to their feet.

The below data is up to 30th September 2024.

- There have been **1674** mobilisations, which averages **2.52 call per day**, however more recent months have been running at over 3 calls per day.
- The team tend to be busier Mon – Fri in the mornings.
- As expected, the majority of patients are elderly with **94% being over 60**, which is a risk factor associated with fire and enables us to carry out a Safe and Well assessment.
- As mentioned above the team responds to the whole county of Staffordshire and has an average attendance time of under **38 mins**.
- Each job takes an average of **66** 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:

84% of the time the patient is picked up and has no injuries

6% of the time the patient has been picked up or managed to get up prior to our arrival

8% of the time the patient is picked up but requires a referral back to ICC for further attention.

- SFRS have completed **857** Safe and Well assessments as a result of these mobilisations.
- An evaluation of the service has been completed by **Chester University**.



Home from Hospital (HfH)

The Home from Hospital service 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 team are based at Newcastle Fire Station and ensure 2 personnel are on duty every day from 0800 – 1900 to respond to calls. The team are mobilised by the 'Integrated Discharge Hub' (IDH) at the Royal Stoke Hospital. The IDH identifies suitable patients, who would benefit from our service. Primarily the team are utilised to take patients home and settle them in once discharged from hospital, but since July the team have also been undertaking other tasks, such as fitting key safes, property inspections and furniture moves.

The team will respond as directed by the IDH, collecting patients from the Royal Stoke and taking them home individually and settling them in. The process is designed to minimise the chance of a readmission and includes things such as:

- Seating the patient appropriately and comfortably, ensuring access to toilet.
- Basic security check
- Provision of refreshments
- Check of lighting, heating, water etc
- Ensure access to a phone and necessary charging facilities
- Safe and Well check incl. fitting of smoke alarms
- Testing of lifeline systems present
- Removal of obstacles/trip hazards

There are a few key benefits:

- Our 'discharge and settle in Service' (DSI) can reduce the chance of a readmission within 24 hours in certain circumstances.
- Our service can expedite some discharges that would not be possible in the same timescales otherwise.
- Our service can better get the patient to their home address in time to coincide with ongoing care arrangements when compared to traditional patient transport services.

The below data is up to 30th September 2024.

- There have been **1381** mobilisations since the Service went live, with **1283** of those being for the Discharge and Settle in Service (DSI). The average is **4.25 discharges per day**.
- As expected, the majority of patients are elderly with **95% being over 60**, which is a risk factor associated with fire and enables us to carry out a Safe and Well assessment.
- On average each DSI job takes **74** minutes to complete.
- Over **98%** of the time the DSI is conducted with no issues. On **1%** of occasions there may be some minor issues. Only on 2 occasions has the patient had to be returned to the hospital.
- To date there has only been **1** readmission within 24 hours.
- Since taking on new responsibilities in July 24 the team has also completed the following:
 - Fitted **89** key safes
 - Completed **24** moving furniture jobs
 - Completed **2** property inspections
- With all activities combined the team is now completing over **6 jobs per day**.
- An evaluation of the service by **Chester University** is due to commence shortly.



4.3 Education Update

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

A new weekly online programme is available every week for Key Stage 2 children, which is broadcast live at 10am on a Wednesday (term time only) and is then available on demand.

Devices viewing between April and September 2024

Dates	Staffordshire	Nationally (not including Staffs)	Total including On Demand Views
April to July 2024 (Academic Year 23/24)	82204	86485	218219
September 24 (Academic Year 24/25)	20113	25194	45307
Total	102,317	111,679	263,526

Between April and July 24 (Academic Year 23/24), we delivered the following Safe+Sound events for Year 5 children in mainstream schools

Delivery Location (FS – Fire Station)	Dates	Number of children attending	% of schools in the area that attended
Cannock FS	Mon 15th to Fri 26th April 2024	482	52%
Newcastle FS	Wed 8 May - Fri 17th May 24	594	49%
Chase Terrace FS	Tue 21st - Thurs 23rd May 24	371	91%

In September 24 (Academic Year 24/25), we delivered the following live events to Year 5 children in mainstream schools

Delivery Location (FS – Fire Station)	Dates	Number of children attending	% of schools in the area that attended
Stone FS	Wednesday 11 th to Friday 13 th September 2024	346	71
Lichfield FS	Wednesday 18 th to Wednesday 25 th September 2024	415	69

Workshops have included:

- Fire Safety in the Pod – Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Rail Safety – Network Rail
- Smart Money – HSBC Bank
- Water Safety – Canal & River Trust and the RNLI
- Being a good citizen – Staffordshire Police



Volunteers

We currently have **34** volunteers Service wide.

The following shows hours volunteered in August and September 2024:

Delivery Group	Hours Volunteered	Examples of Activities
East	85.25	Chaplaincy, Bikers Breakfast, Safe+Sound, Supporting Crews with After School Groups
West	64.5	Chaplaincy, Bikers Breakfast, Safe+Sound, Supporting Crews with After School Groups
North	237	Chaplaincy, Memorial Garden, Safe+Sound, Firefighters Charity Event
TOTAL	386.75	

Education Delivery Plan

The Education Delivery Plan (EDP) first went live in Sept 2023.

This is designed to offer a consistent approach to schools' education across the County, the aim being that all Operational Watches would deliver the same packages, and all Key Stages would have some opportunity to engage with the Fire Service.

Stations have been issued with an Education Delivery Work Plan containing details of identified schools and colleges they are required to deliver to over the 24/25 and 25/26 academic years.

In the academic year 2023/2024:

- **12,859** children received educational input from Ops crews
- **226** educational visits delivered by crews

Operational watches do not have the capacity to visit every school in the County, therefore the EDP includes signposting to other resources designed to offer alternative Safety information, advice and guidance for schools.

This includes:

- **Safe+Sound** – a visit to a local Fire Station is offered to all mainstream schools across the County (this is our Universal Offer to schools)
- **Safe+Sound weekly programme** – for all Key Stage 2 children.
- **Safe+Sound Special programmes.** Additional programmes have been developed including a Key Stage 1 Special, Key Stage 3 Special, Key Stage 4 Special and a Water safety programme.
- **StayWise** provides teacher resources for all Key Stages from all Emergency Services across the Country.
- **Welephant** is SFRS Club for 4-8-year-olds.



5.0 A Fire & Rescue Service for Tomorrow

5.1 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.”*

Phase one of the transformation work has been logged and monitored by the Service on an electronic live tracker utilising a programme called SharePoint. The tracker has been scrutinised by the Service’s Management Board and the Commissioner’s Strategic Governance Board with **16** out of the **19** themes completed to date.

This update is focused upon the three remaining topics to be completed which are:

- The mobilising of three-person crew of On Call Staff
- The Prevention, Protection and Partnerships review
- Shared Estates

In addition, the report also updates on phase two of the services’ transformation – the terms of reference were shared with March’s SMB and the work continues to be developed through the Transformation Board.

Phase one of Service Transformation

The mobilising of three-person crew of On Call Staff

The three-person crewing trial has been piloted within the service since the 1st of June 2023. On 5th December 2023 at Service Delivery Board there was a discussion on the report of the trial which contained the data, feedback and options in relation to the next steps for the trial.

Agreement was reached to extend the trial for a further 12 months taking it until **December 2024**.

As of 16th September 2024, three-person crews’ performance is as follows:

- **587** emergency incidents have been attended.
- There has been one occasion where a three-person crew attended a persons reported house fire in Lichfield on 31st August: The decision to send a crew of three to this incident was made by a Station Manager and fire control based on the information fire control had received and gathered and due to the time lag of next nearest appliance. The crew made an effective door entry and rescued a casualty from smoke logging due to a fire from cooking.
- An investigation is taking place into the event which may form a case study.
- An average **increase of 11% in On Call appliance availability** which is variable across each On Call team.
- On average a Three-person crew which arrives first at the scene is **9 minutes 45 seconds quicker** than the next fully crewed appliance.
- **Increased headcount of 23 On Call firefighters in year**
- From 1st July, a policy amendment has extended the types of incidents that three-person crews can attend (as part of a multi pump attendance) to include motorway and prison incidents, following feedback from On Call crews and further internal consultation.

The Prevention, Protection and Partnerships review

The work has now been completed with new structures and roles in place for Prevention and Protection teams. The savings from this review will likely total circa **£250,000** per annum.

Shared Estates

Recent work continues with the achievement of creating shared police posts at Kinver and Penkridge Fire stations following the same arrangement being implemented at Chase Terrace. Plans for shared stations are advancing for Stone, Uttoxeter and Kidsgrove through the SCG Collaboration Board.

Phase Two of Service Transformation

The next stages of transformation are very much focussed on efficiency and productivity driving improvements for the public and the workforce. The Transformation Board is meeting on a quarterly basis but can adjust its work to suit the demand and progress of each topic. Whilst some work remains on the original transformation themes captured in the service's online tracker. There are some new topics which are about to be brought into this sphere of work. The terms of reference set out the detail of the next phases of transformation.

As part of the next phase of service transformation, five areas of internal work have been identified and agreed through the Transformation Board in April and June 2024.

The internal workstreams are also complimentary to an externally supported workstream that is also being governed through the Transformation Board. All aspects of decision making will go through the Service Delivery Board and possibly other governance boards as appropriate. Progress on each theme will be reported at the Transformation Board meetings on a quarterly basis.

Phase Two Internal Themes

1. ***To complete an Administration review of the service to look at efficiency and the balanced use of administrative posts across the service.***
2. ***To continue to progress the clean concept work – reducing the risk of contaminants to our firefighters.***
3. ***To maximise the benefits and service efficiencies for the use of IT systems, software and devices.***
4. ***To review our environmental and sustainability work against the service's strategy.***
5. ***To review the community sprinkler project.***

A phase 2 tracker has been completed on SharePoint and will be updated as the work streams progress.

5.2 Enhanced Rescue Pumps (ERPs)

SFRS has embarked on a journey to provide Enhanced Rescue Pump's (ERPs) to two stations within the county. These vehicles combine a standard fire appliance with a rescue tender allowing this single vehicle to provide specialist equipment to multiple incident types. These new vehicles will be based at Longton and Stafford and contain ultra-modern equipment allowing crews to deal with the challenges and complexities certain incidents create.

SFRS are providing training to crews allowing them to use this new equipment to its full potential with the aim of making Staffordshire and its people as safe as possible.

These vehicles continue our journey toward 'Clean Cab' principles with the aim of reducing firefighters exposure to post fire contaminants. SFRS has also made every effort to integrate modern technologies including an integrated rear mounted tablet, giving both officer and charge and firefighters information at their fingertips when required.

We anticipate these vehicles will go live **January 2025** once all commissioning and training is complete.

5.3 Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs)

SFRS have taken delivery of two new Aerial Ladder Platforms. Stationed at Longton and Burton Fire Stations these vehicles have been used on a number of incidents including significant incidents at Yates Wine Lodge, Hanley (March) and 'SuperSmart', Cannock (May). This is a circa **£1.3 million investment** in our fleet and equipment which will deliver both improved functionality and fire fighter safety.

Functionality

The new ALPs were built by Angloco on a Scania L-Series chassis and cab, with a 'Bronto' 32m hydraulic boom. Benefiting from new hydraulic technology they have greater outreach capability than the vehicles replaced and come with an upgraded cage which now allows five persons/500kg as opposed to the three person/325kg cage capacity previously. Space within the cage has also increased significantly, meaning the vehicles are much more capable for rescues and can now accommodate wheelchair users and large persons using newly provided stretchers and support brackets.

Fire Fighter Safety

Both vehicles are fitted with a handheld portable remote-control enabling operators to position the vehicle appropriately then operate from a safe distance. The controls are able to perform every function that an operator could do from the cage and turret. This was of particular use at the incident at 'Supersmart', Cannock. Operators were at risk of being exposed to the smoke from the incident, which was swirling due to weather conditions at the time, so controlled the turret remotely to reduce this risk.

Within the build the Service have considered post fire contamination and the Clean Concept. The ALPs have a dedicated kit locker at the rear of the vehicle, away from the cab and any internal area, for fire kit and PPE to minimise crew exposure to post fire contaminants.

Angloco trained **12** of our staff to instructor level. These instructors delivered conversion training to competent ALP operators, training to L&D driver training and also instruct on acquisition courses for new operators.



5.4 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.

One contract consists of **10** buildings, whilst the other PFI contract is made up of **11** buildings. The remaining **14** residual buildings are maintained by an in-house facilities management team within the Estates Team.

Following on from the successful refurbishment of Abbots Bromley Fire Station, the Estates Team are undertaking design work and feasibility studies to refurbish Brewood Fire Station.

In addition, following a review of the joint estate in Stafford by the Commissioner's office, a first phase of investment to refurbish the Stafford Fire station at Hydrant Way was undertaken and successfully completed.

Phase 2 of the works are due to commence shortly, which will further improve the facilities at site for the staff and fire crews. Improvements to the learning and development facilities at Pirehill, and the JETs site at Trentham Lakes are also under development, with a view to implementing the works in the next 12 months.

Last financial year saw the Estates Team deliver circa **£0.7m** worth of investment to many fire residual sites across various project streams, this financial year (24/25) the team are aiming on delivering circa **£1.4m** worth of investment within the Fire Residual Estate.

Staffordshire Fire Service and the Estates team are committed to further reducing their carbon footprint in particular within the building portfolio. In addition to the **6** Electric Vehicle charging points already installed earlier on in the year there have been an additional **6** electric vehicle charging points installed at Pirehill meaning there are **12** charging points now available.

A wider review is being undertaken to explore options around Electric Vehicle charging points being provided at other sites. Currently **3** out of the **4** vans used by the Estates team are Electric vans. Furthermore, the Estates team is exploring opportunities to match its own capital resources with government funding to implement solar panels at a number of locations, thereby reducing its energy costs moving forward.

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.

2024/25 saw schemes agreed for Uttoxeter, Kidsgrove and Stone Fire stations which are now in the process of implementation.

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

6.0 Emerging Issues

6.1 Lithium Ion Batteries

The use of lithium-ion batteries in society is increasing at an accelerated pace presenting new challenges and risks to firefighters. In 2022 Operational Assurance (OA) published the first update on lithium-ion batteries highlighting the dangers of this emerging risk. Since then, UK fire services have been encountering these batteries at incidents more often and we now have a better understanding of the risks involved.

Lithium-ion batteries can now be found in almost all everyday items such as toothbrushes, power tools, mobile phones and laptops. They are also being used in power storage systems such as Domestic Energy Storage Systems, Battery Energy Storage Systems and in transportation in the form of Electric Vehicles including plant machinery.

Some specific risks of Lithium Ion batteries:

- **Thermal Runaway** - Thermal runaway is a phenomenon in which a lithium-ion cell enters an uncontrollable, self-heating state. Once the failure of one cell has occurred, the heat generated can cause the next cell to react and this chain reaction can continue until the whole battery pack is involved in fire.
- **Toxic Vapour Cloud** – During Thermal Runaway a white vapour cloud is emitted, which can be mistaken for steam. This cloud is highly toxic and contains chemical such as Hydrogen Cyanide, Carbon Dioxide, Hydrogen Chloride, Nitrogen Oxide, Sulphur Dioxide, Hydrofluoric acid and Hydrocarbons.
- **Fire and Vapour gas Explosion** – The vented vapour cloud is also highly flammable, in some cases these will ignite quickly and produce a 'jet like' flame, in other cases this is contained and can result in a vapour gas explosion which increases risk to Firefighters working in a confined space.

As of February 2023, the total amount of Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) and Plug in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs) on UK roads totalled almost **1.2 million** and is increasing each year. This means that the likelihood of any vehicle related incident (RTC or Car Fire) involving an EV with a lithium-ion battery has also increased.

The Service is currently trialling the use of an **electric vehicle containment unit** for use in EV vehicle fires. This has been used by the Service on several occasions.

The EVCU is a vehicle demountable container designed for EV PHEV hybrid etc. vehicles that are at risk of Fire and Thermal Runaway of batteries. It is designed to be loaded with a vehicle to contain and cool using a recycling water spray system. The EVCU features a built-in water supply that recirculates water for continual cooling and fire suppression even during transit. An EV that has caught fire can be loaded into the EVCU then transported and safely stored until the danger of re-ignition is past.

Although fires involving lithium-ion batteries within vehicles are a risk, operational learning from across the UK shows that these are not where the majority of Lithium ion battery fires are occurring. It is fires in caused by e-scooters, e- bikes, laptops etc. that are increasingly common and have been the cause of substantial dwelling fires over the past few years, including several fire fatalities.

With lithium-ion battery fires becoming increasingly common within households, SFRS have updated the advice for members of the public on the SFRS website. Crews have been asked to familiarise themselves with this prevention advice and ensure that this is passed on when completing Home Fire Safety Visit's (HFSVs) and engaging with the public. Particular attention to the charging of small lithium-ion battery devices within properties is an area that has been identified in order to heighten awareness.

6.2 'Hidden' batteries in Domestic Waste and Disposal

As the number of lithium-ion batteries used by the public increases, the risk of incorrect disposal also becomes more likely. In the UK over **700** fires in waste collection lorries and waste sites have been directly linked to incorrect disposal of lithium-ion batteries in household devices such as vapes and electric toothbrushes.

On 4th August 2024 a fire took hold at Walleys Quarry landfill in Newcastle-under-Lyme which was suspected to have been caused accidentally as a result of a battery fire. This was a large scale incident which required 6 appliances, a water carrier and a high volume pump to be in attendance. The final fire appliance left the scene 2 days later.

An article which was published by Material Focus in 2022 has also suggested that:

- **45%** of householders are unaware of the fire risk if they don't safely dispose of batteries hidden inside electrical devices.
- Battery fires can endanger the public and waste truck operators by causing fires on streets, and waste centres across the UK and costing local councils millions of pounds.
- There are three and half times more fires caused by batteries in the waste stream than previously reported, highlighting the significance of the issue.
- **90%** of local authorities say that fires caused by batteries are an increasing problem.
- Lithium-ion batteries are responsible for around **48%** of all waste fires occurring in the UK each year according to the Environmental Services Association costing some **£158 million** annually to waste operators, fire services and the environment.

The full article is available publicly here:

<https://www.materialfocus.org.uk/press-releases/over-700-fires-in-bin-lorries-and-recycling-centres-are-caused-by-batteries-many-of-which-are-hidden-inside-electricals/>

A report conducted by insurance company Aviva makes reference to internal data for fires claims with the word battery, batteries, charging, recharge, rechargeable, charged, and charged. This compares data from Jan 2022-Dec 2022 with Jan 2023 – Dec 2023 and the following is noted:

There is a lack of awareness of the devices which contain lithium-ion batteries, with just over a third of adults (37%) correctly identifying mobile phones as having them, alongside laptops (33%), tablets (22%) and vapes (22%). Awareness was also low for items like power tools (23%), smart home devices like doorbells (20%) and electric toothbrushes (17%).

There are also emerging challenges in the responsible recycling of used battery products.

Lithium-ion batteries are composed of metals including lithium, manganese, cobalt, and nickel. Once a battery reaches the end of its useful life, the battery pack can be collected, dismantled, and shredded. The shredded material is then processed to produce so-called "black mass", which consists of high amounts of lithium, manganese, cobalt, and nickel metals. These materials can then be extracted and re-used in new battery production.

6.3 Lithium Ion Batteries: Non-approved and Counterfeit Products

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service launched the '**Buy Safe. Charge Safe**' campaign last Christmas in order to raise awareness and provide information to the public on the risks associated with purchasing counterfeit and non-approved products containing Lithium-Ion batteries.

Advice was provided on purchasing items such as e-bikes and e-scooters from reputable retailers and ensuring that these products comply with British or European Standards to reduce the risk of fire.

This campaign is also set to run again this year at a similar time.

Within the UK eBay has recently announced a ban on the private sale of e-bikes and e-bike batteries from 31st October 2024 due to fire safety concerns. Only 'eligible business sellers' will be able to list these products. This is supported by the Fire Protection Association (FPA) and this action follows growing concerns around e-bike battery fires in the UK raised by Fire and Rescue Services, The National Fire Chiefs Council, and other organisations such as Electrical Safety First.

Battery chargers for Lithium Ion devices are also a cause for concern, with around **1.8 million** phone chargers being bought online in the UK each year.

Approved manufacturer devices can be seen as expensive, resulting in a growing market for non-approved or 'third party' products that are easily available online and are usually more affordable than those sold directly by the manufacturer.

This can also mean the use of poor quality components within manufacturing and the removal of internal safety features such as fuses is more likely.

A genuine approved charger for a mobile phone manufacturer is likely to contain over **60** individual components, while a counterfeit charger can contain just **25** components.

Unsafe devices are often made outside the country of origin for as little as a few pence in some cases and are not subject to British and European safety standards, meaning an increased likelihood of causing serious electric shock, injury, or fire when used.

7.0 HR Performance Update

7.1 Recruitment Activity and Headcount

The following information is taken from applicants applying for positions within the service:
Between April 2024 and September 2024, the following activity has taken place:

- 26 Support roles have been filled
- 16 Operational roles have been filled
- 9 Individuals are currently at Pre-Employment/Offer stage
- 4 Roles are currently out for advertisement
- 13 Firefighters commenced within On Call on the 20-week training plan

Figure 10: FTE Headcount Report 30th September 2024

	Last Month At 31 August 2024	This Month At 30 September 2024	Actual Movement in Period	Budget 2024-25	Budget Variance 2024-25	Last year At 30 September 2023	Actual Movement last 12 Months
Management Team	14.0	14.0		12.0	(2.0)	14.0	
Station Managers	22.0	22.0		22.0		22.0	
Watch Managers	59.0	59.0		63.0	4.0	61.0	(2.0)
Crew Managers	50.0	48.0	(2.0)	47.0	(1.0)	48.0	
Wholetime FF	156.5	155.5	(1.0)	156.0	0.5	150.0	5.5
Wholetime FF - Casual Contracts	8.0	6.0	(2.0)		(6.0)	11.0	(5.0)
	309.5	304.5	(5.0)	300.0	(4.5)	306.0	(1.5)
On-Call FF	284.4	285.3	0.9	387.0	101.7	262.5	22.8
Support Staff	126.2	126.4	0.2	131.6	5.2	123.6	2.8
Secondments / Funded Posts	19.8	19.8		13.8	(6.0)	13.6	6.2
TOTAL HEADCOUNT	740.0	736.0	(3.9)	832.4	96.4	705.6	30.4

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

Whilst the budget position for On Call shows a **101.7 variance to budget**, this is offset by a vacancy factor included within the budget. The recruitment programme for On Call fire fighters continues which is having a positive impact with **22.8 FTE increase** in the last 12 months.

There continues to be a number of support staff vacancies within the Service as shown at **5.2 FTE**, The additional two post in the Management Team are due to cover for long term sickness and JETS interim structure.

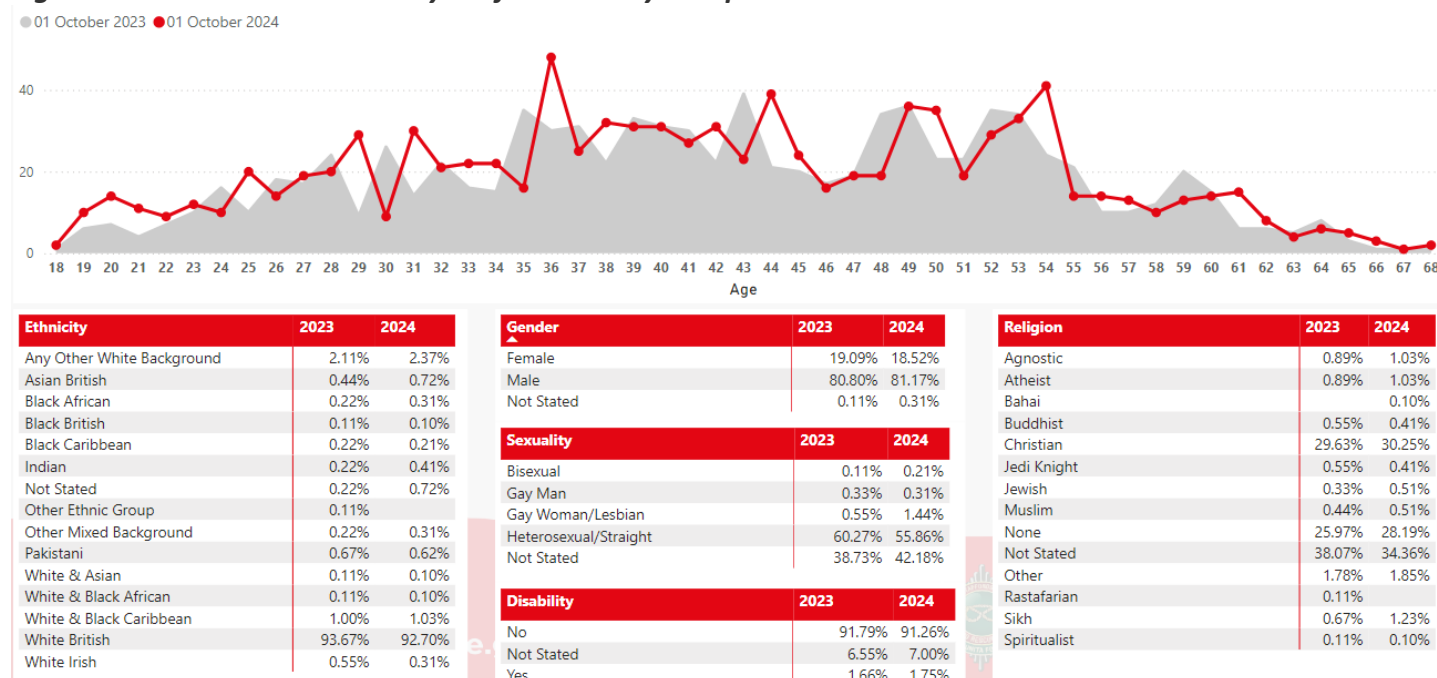
The total number of Operational Staff remains broadly in line with the approved establishment numbers. The agreed establishment of wholetime firefighters providing the front line response is **232 FTE**.

The Wholetime crewing numbers, future planning and resilience are discussed at the Workforce Planning Board which is chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

7.2 Workforce Diversity

The chart below displays the workforce diversity position in October 2023 and October 2024 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 11: Total Service Diversity Profile % Yearly Comparison



Positive Action

The Positive Action for the 2024 Whole-time Firefighter recruitment campaign has now closed and we are yet to receive the full breakdown of characteristics of applicants and will report these, as well as the attrition rates, at all stages of the process.

We have started a new process this year on our whole-time process where we created a bespoke awareness and taster events for our underrepresented groups, this was managed by an EOI where we reached out the diverse communities of Staffordshire to help shape our applicants. Automatic rejections are mainly for no driving licence or just a provisional licence.

Completed applications so far 569 (Friday 27/9/24) applications close 30th September

Shortlisting	569 (56.1%)	569
Fire and Rescue Eligibility form started, but not submitted	188 (18.5%)	188
Main Application Started, Not Submitted	185 (18.2%)	185
Minimum Eligibility - Auto Reject	63 (6.2%)	63
Application Withdrawn	5 (0.5%)	5
Duplicate Check - Potential	3 (0.3%)	3
Application Started, Not Submitted	1 (0.1%)	

Diversity Breakdown of Recruitment Process

14% Female

8% Ethnicity other than White British

13% LGBT+

7% Disability

Fitness Testing

We completed **3** 'Positive Action Days' which involved inviting individuals along to a range of stations in the county. These individuals had already been known to the Staffordshire, either through contacts from the Positive Action lead or they had submitted an 'expression of interest' form on the website.

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

With the 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 issues. This gave the individuals the chance to ask about specific issues that they were concerned about. These sessions were well attended and from feedback that was requested after each event, it was positively received and proved to be useful for them, a total of **16** applied from the positive action days.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Teams

The ED&I team has been merged with Staffordshire Police to create a greater team who can share best practises, work together for the communities of Staffordshire, offer lived experience and help drive the culture change. This has also led into the creation and promotion of our internal staff networks who can give guidance, experience, and help develop and recruit a diverse workforce.

The service has trained colleagues in Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), this is a type of internal risk assessment. You may have heard them being 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 your activities.

We need to ensure we create accurate and thorough EqIA's, as these are public documents which will be published externally.

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 help with lived experience to the work force. We have already made some strides into changes such as course awareness and joining instruction, giving people a 2-week window to highlight any needs to requirement to help them complete the course, this is not just for our neurodivergent colleagues but anyone who needs a reasonable adjustment.

Community engagement, to support the recent Whole time and On Call we have been to community events at Ukrainian group in Leek Sikh temple in Hanley, Cobridge Multi cultural centre and more to help build a safer and more diverse fire and rescue service.



7.3 Workforce Sickness

Figure 12: Total Number of Service Open Short Term and Long Term Sickness Cases

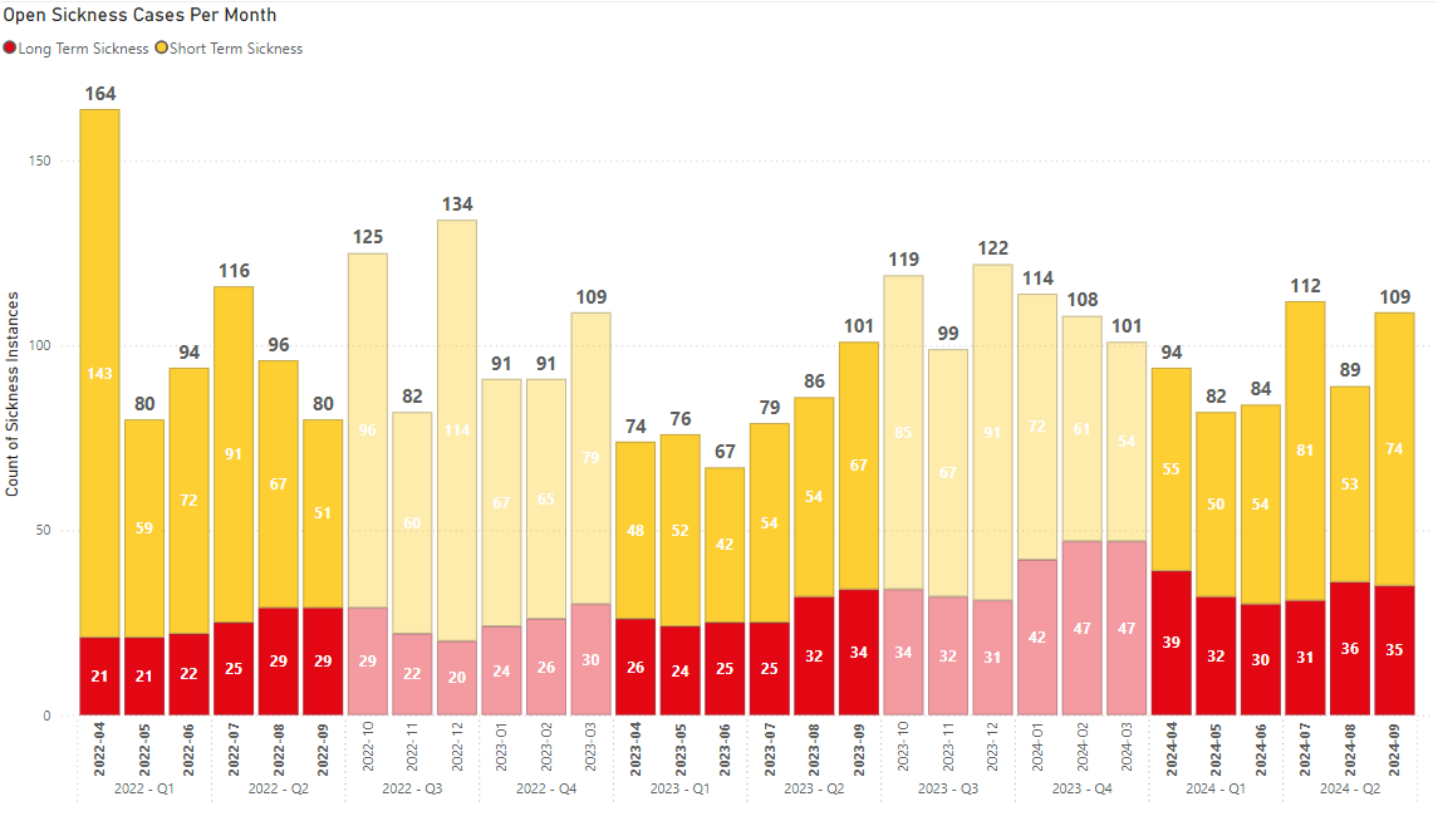


Figure 13: Total Number of Whole Time Open Short Term and Long Term Sickness Cases

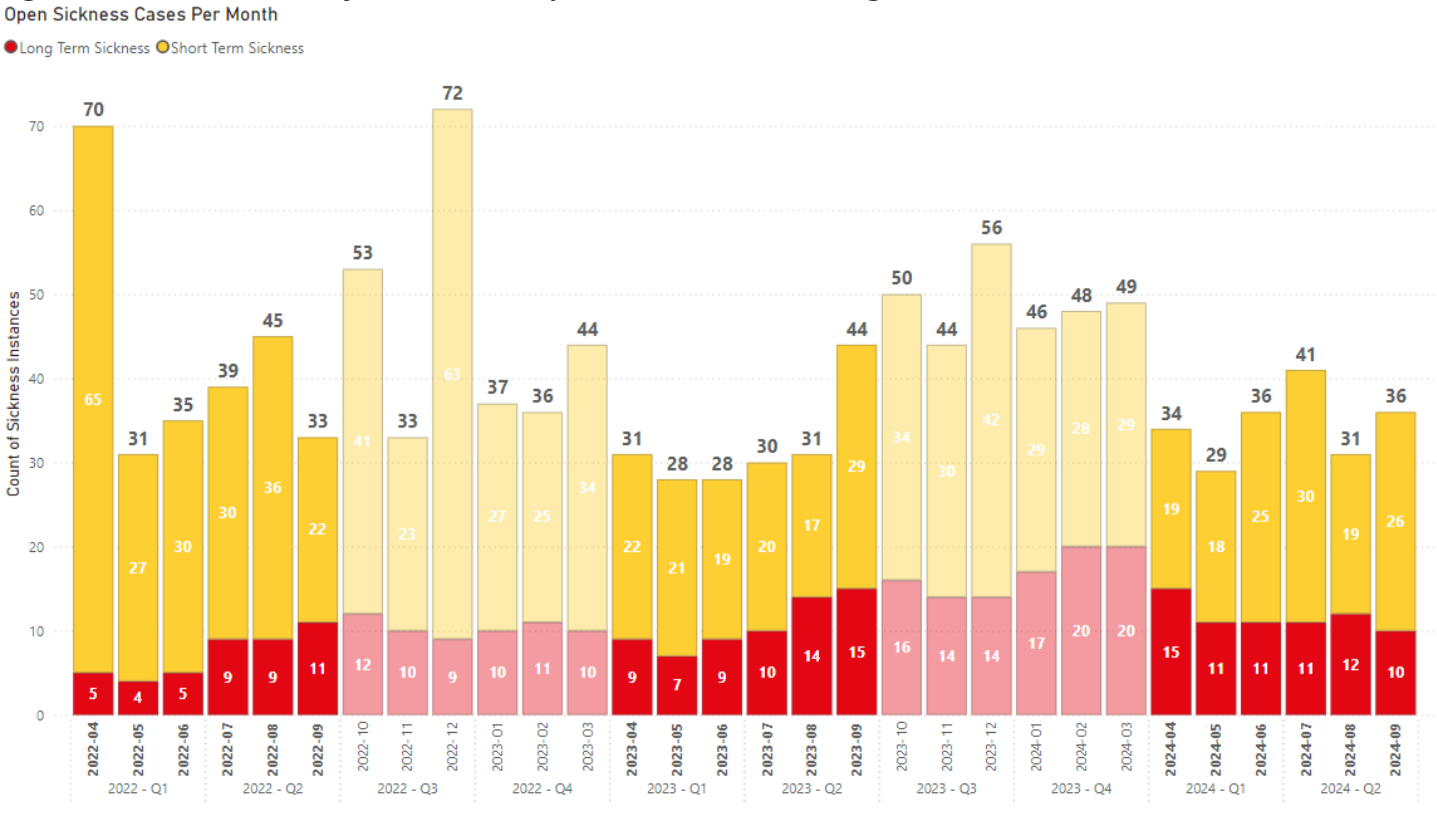


Figure 14: Total Number of On Call Open Short Term and Long Term Sickness Cases

Open Sickness Cases Per Month

● Long Term Sickness ● Short Term Sickness

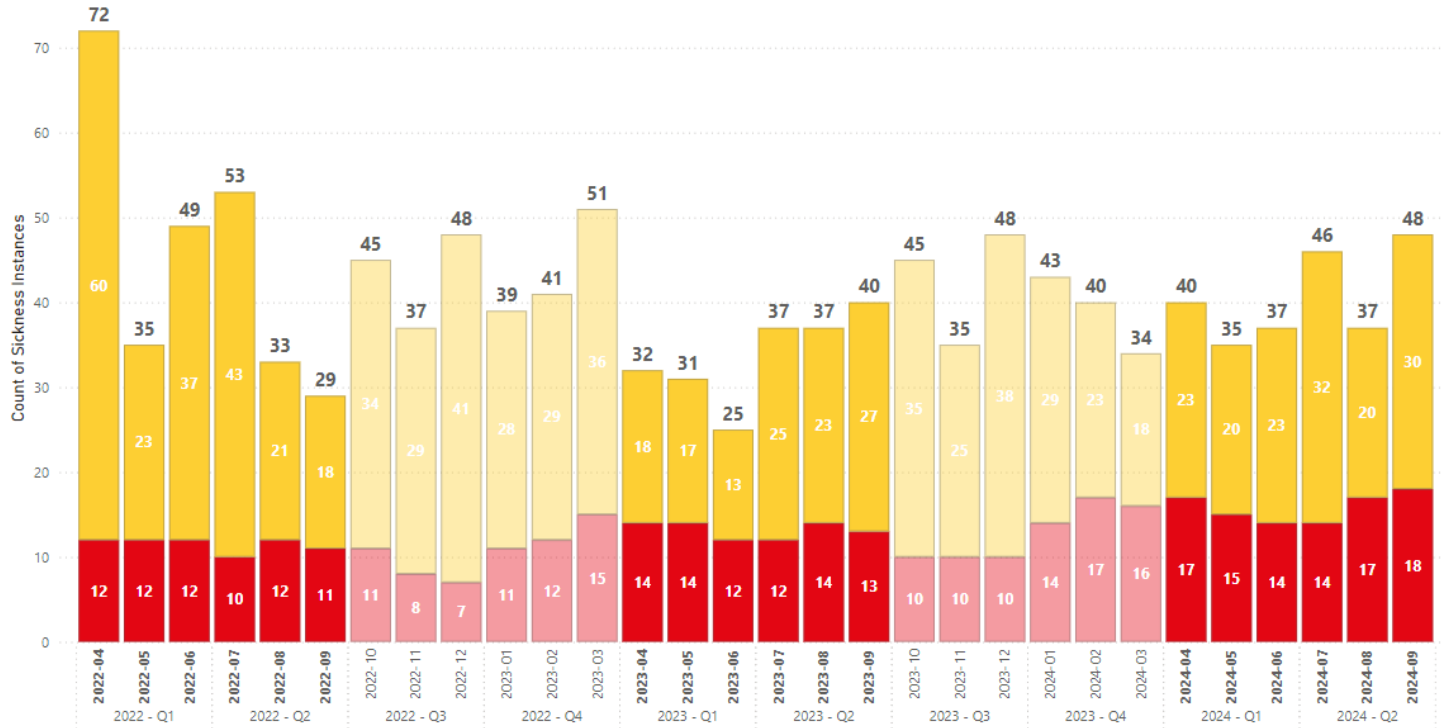
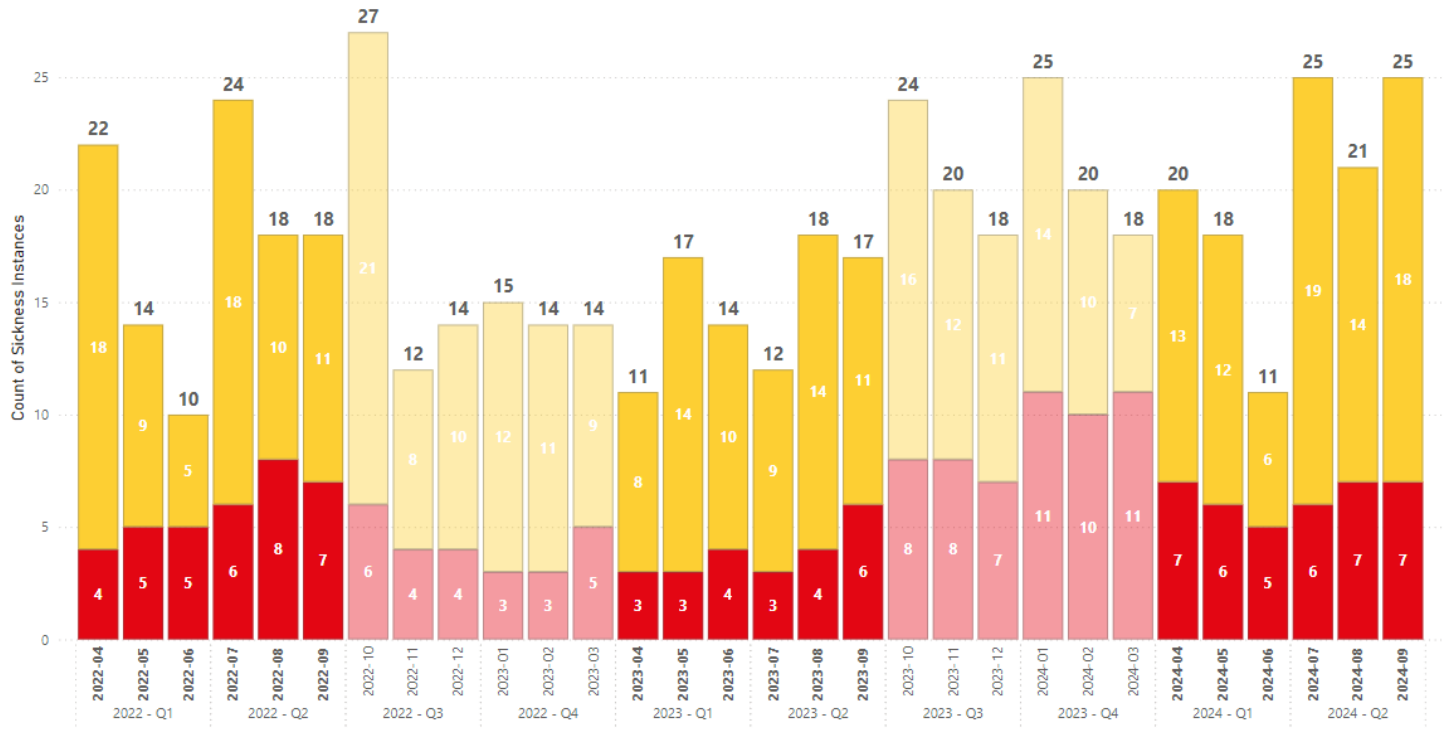


Figure 15: Total Number of Support Staff Open Short Term and Long Term Sickness Cases

Open Sickness Cases Per Month

● Long Term Sickness ● Short Term Sickness



Total Service Sickness

Workforce sickness is determined on a cumulative basis and is calculated on the number of Open short term and long Term sickness cases that remain open in each monthly period.

As at the end of September 2024, there were a total of **74** Short Term Sickness periods and **35** Long Term Sickness cases that remained open across all staff.

In comparison to the same period in 2023, there were a total of **67** Short Term Sickness periods and **34** Long Term Sickness cases that remained open across all staff.

In comparison to the same period in 2022, there were a total of **51** Short Term sickness cases and **29** Long Term Sickness cases that remained open across all staff.

Comparison to the previous six month period (October 2023-March 2024)

- Between April 2024 and September 2024 Sickness Absence has reduced overall from the previous six-month period.
- Mental Health absences have become the main cause for Days lost with Wholetime accounting for **14.95%** lost days/shifts across Wholetime employees within the Service.
- Surgery absences have also become the leading cause for days lost for On Call firefighters, accounting for **9.72%** lost days/shifts across On Call employees within the Service.
- Mental Health absences continue to be the leading cause for Days lost with Support accounting for **36.13%** lost days/shifts across support employees within the Service.

Areas where sickness days lost have decreased for Wholetime Firefighters from the previous 6 months are:

- Eye Conditions (**100% decrease**)
- Lower Limb - Strain/Sprain (**60.7% decrease**)
- Neck Condition (**61.6% decrease**)
- Shoulder Condition (**93.4% decrease**)

Areas where sickness days lost have increased for Wholetime Firefighters from the previous 6 months are:

- Virus/Fever/High Temperature (**440% decrease**)
- Knee Condition (**303% decrease**)
- Chest Infection (**154% decrease**)
- Corona Virus - Confirmed (**105% decrease**)

Areas where sickness days lost have decreased for On Call Firefighters from the previous 6 months are:

- Upper Limb – Fracture (**98.1% decrease**)
- Back Condition (**51.9% decrease**)
- Upper Limb Condition (**100% decrease**)

Areas where sickness days lost have increased for On Call Firefighters from the previous 6 months are:

- Colitis **(458% increase)**
- Stomach-ache/Abdominal Pains **(214% increase)**
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome **(150% increase)**
- Dental Conditions **(150% increase)**

Areas where sickness days lost have decreased for support staff from the previous 6 months are:

- 'Other' Musculoskeletal **(100% decrease)**
- Post Traumatic Stress **(100% decrease)**
- Head Injury **(100% decrease)**
- Work Related Stress **(45.1% decrease)**

Areas where sickness days lost have increased for support staff from the previous 6 months are:

- 'Other' Respiratory Disorder **(3033% increase)**
- Corona Virus **(1267% increase)**
- Anxiety/Stress **(99% increase)**

Total Areas of decrease to highlight from previous 6-month period:

- Days lost for Upper Limb – Fracture **has reduced by 98.5%**
- Days lost for Other Musculoskeletal **has reduced by 92.3%**
- Days lost for Other Stomach Disorder **has reduced by 95.8%**

Total Areas of Increase to highlight from previous 6-month period:

- Days lost for Other Respiratory Disorder **increased from 3 days lost to 99 days lost**
- Days lost for Other Neurological **increased from 7 days lost to 53 days lost**
- Days lost for Skin Wound/Injury/Infection **increased from 20 days lost to 100 days lost**

8.0 Finance Performance Update

This Finance update reviews the financial status of the Authority for the first half of the financial year 2024/25, covering the period up to the end of September 2024. It includes a summary of progress in key financial areas, offering insights into the financial performance and position of the Authority during this timeframe.

The revenue budget for the year 2024/25 was approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner at **£50.1m** in February 2024 which included a Band D council tax of **£86.77**, an increase of **2.99%** for the year (**£2.52**) in line with the Council Tax referendum limit of **3%**.

Overall, the financial position for Revenue spend is “on track” year to date, demonstrating good progress with a total revenue spend as of 30 September of **£24.9m**, in line with the phased budget. The first draft of the annual forecast has also been completed which includes any known material variances at this time. The annual forecast shows a small saving to budget of **£0.1m** for the year. The annual forecast will be reviewed in detail and refined as part of the 2025/26 budget setting exercise which will include detailed consultation with all budget holders.

Total Pay spend as of 30 September was **£16.7m** and included additional costs incurred within wholetime that has been partly mitigated by savings support staff. For wholetime, the majority of the additional costs were attributed to the pay for new recruits, which was initially budgeted to be completed by March 2024, and not included in the 2024/25 budget. Crewing deficiency costs have started to reduce but remain higher than budgeted for the year, but importantly now reduced down to 8 casual contracts. On call pay was worse than budget in September due to higher operational activity in addition to holiday and bank holiday pay payments (August).

Total non-pay and income is slightly better than budget after six months. Interest receivable remains favourable, with additional interest receivable following the Firefighter Pension Top-up grant (budgeted) and the pension remedy grants (not budgeted due to late notification), both received in July 2024. Consequently, the cash balance at the end of the month was **£29.3m**, £8.2m higher than the original budget set in February. The addition remedy grant funding has been provided for the remedy costs for both the Sargeant/McCloud pension remedy and also the Matthews second options exercise.

The capital programme spend for the year was approved at **£5.7m**, with a spend of **£1m** being carried over from last year, resulting in a Capital Programme for the year of **£6.7m**. As of 30 September 2024, **£2.6m** of capital spend has been committed of which **£1.5m** was for vehicles. The refurbishment work for Brewood Fire Station is now subject to further review following significant cost escalation, this will inevitably result in a further project delay into 2025/26. The new Capital Framework is now in place for 2024/25, and the capital tracker document has now been completed with all projects agreed for 2024/25 following the new governance process and achieving full approval. The capital expenditure forecast has now been reduced to **£4.8m**.

The balance on useable earmarked reserves as of 31 March 2024 closed at **£7m**, the general reserve remained unchanged at **£1.9m**. The total borrowing from long term loans remains unchanged at **£16.7m**.