



Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding

Statement of Assurance

2024/25



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Urdu

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Punjabi

جے تہانوں ایس لکھت دی سی ہو ر شکل یا زبان وچ لوڈا اے تے مہربانی کر کے ساڈے نال رابطہ کرو تاں جے اسی تہاڈی درخواست تے غور کر سکئے۔

Hungarian

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Arabic

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

Kurdish

ئەگەر پێویستت بە وەشانێکی ئەم بەلگەنامەیە هەیە بە فۆرمات یان زمانیکی جیاواز تەکایە پەیوەندیمان پێوە بکە بۆ ئەوەی بتوانین داواکارییەکەت ڕەمچاو بکەین.

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Malayalam

നിങ്ങൾക്ക് ഈ പ്രമാണത്തിന്റെ ഒരു പതിപ്പ് മറ്റൊരു രൂപത്തിലോ ഭാഷയിലോ ആവശ്യമാണെങ്കിൽ, ദയവായി ഞങ്ങളെ ബന്ധപ്പെടുക അതുവഴി നിങ്ങളുടെ ആവശ്യം ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് പരിഗണിക്കാൻ കഴിയും.

Ukranian

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0300 330 1000



WELCOME TO THE ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

As we reflect on the year from April 2024 to March 2025, it is clear that everyone at Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service has continued to deliver with professionalism, compassion and resilience - despite the unpredictable weather and growing demands on our teams.

This year marked a major milestone as we celebrated our 50th anniversary as a Fire and Rescue Service. Events like the Retired Network gathering reminded us of the strong foundations laid by those who came before us and how their legacy continues to shape the work we do today.

Fundraising: A Community Effort

Our community spirit shone through in our fundraising efforts, with teams and supporters across Staffordshire smashing our '£50k challenge' target and raising an incredible £54,280 for The Fire Fighters Charity. From bake sales to open days, every event helps support the wellbeing of firefighters and their families. Thank you - your efforts truly made a difference.

HMICFRS Inspection: A Proud Moment

One of the standout moments of the year was the outcome of the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection. Our Service was rated *Outstanding* for its response to major and multi-agency incidents - an achievement that highlights the unwavering commitment and expertise of our workforce.

The inspection also acknowledged significant progress across 11 key areas. Our collaborative work with the Civil Contingencies Unit and the NHS - the Falls Response and Home from Hospital services - was highlighted as *promising practice*. These results are a testament to the skill, dedication, and professionalism of our staff.

A New Chapter: From Safety Plan 2020-24 to CRMP Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-28

This year also marked the conclusion of our [Safety Plan 2020-24](#), which has guided our priorities and service delivery over the past four years and the successful transition to our new [CRMP 2025-28](#).

The CRMP builds on the successes of the Safety Plan and reflects the changing risks and needs of our communities. Informed by public consultation and data, it sets out how we will continue to prevent incidents, protect people and property and respond effectively to emergencies - while ensuring value for money and sustainability.

Looking Ahead

As we move into the next chapter of our journey, we remain focused on delivering a modern, efficient and community-focused service. Whether through our CRMP, our wellbeing initiatives, or our continued investment in people and places, we are committed to keeping Staffordshire safe.

Thank You

To all our staff and volunteers. Your dedication, compassion and professionalism continue to make a lasting impact across Staffordshire. Together, we can make Staffordshire even safer.

And thank you also for taking the time to read our Statement of Assurance. We hope it not only gives you a flavour of what we do, but also who we are - people committed to protecting and supporting our communities every day.



Rob Barber

Chief Fire Officer

GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE

What is a Statement of Assurance?

Each year we publish a Statement of Assurance to show how we are meeting our responsibilities under the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#). It is our way of being open and honest with our staff, partners and the public.

This year's statement covers the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and includes details about:

- How we manage our money and make decisions
- How we respond to emergencies and help reduce risks
- What progress we have made on our key priorities
- How we are preparing for future challenges

We also use this report to talk about wider issues that affect our work - like climate change, extreme weather, new technology and pressures on public services. It is all part of keeping you informed about how we are adapting and planning ahead.

This statement follows the latest guidance from the [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#) and the [Home Office](#) and includes links to key documents for anyone who wants to find out more.

Scope of Responsibility - Since 1 August 2018, the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime (the Commissioner) has been in charge of making sure both Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service work well for local communities.

The Commissioner is elected by the public and focuses on making sure these services are efficient, effective, and meet the needs of the people. While they do not manage daily operations, they do hold the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer responsible for delivering high-quality services. They also deal with complaints and conduct issues involving senior officers.

As the Fire and Rescue Authority, the Commissioner sets the overall direction for the Fire and Rescue Service through a strategic plan – [Fire and Rescue Plan](#) - approves budgets and works with councils, health services and other partners to help keep Staffordshire safe and improve wellbeing.

Continuous Improvement, Good Governance and Performance - The Commissioner ensures that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service is always working to improve, in line with national standards. This includes using public money wisely, delivering services efficiently and managing risks effectively.

To support this, strong governance systems are in place - such as regular performance reviews, financial oversight and public meetings - to make sure the Service remains transparent and accountable.

The Commissioner also plays a key role in monitoring how well we perform and ensure we continue to deliver high-quality services for local communities.

As part of ongoing improvements, we will be delivering our [Productivity and Efficiency Plan](#) for 2025/26, which focuses on:

- Making better use of staff, equipment and buildings
- Investing in new technology to support emergency services
- Reviewing financial plans to ensure long-term sustainability

These efforts help us do more for the people of Staffordshire while keeping costs under control.

How We Monitor Performance - We regularly check how well we are performing to make sure we are meeting our goals and serving our communities effectively.

Senior leaders use a Performance Management Framework to track progress using key performance indicators. These help us measure how we are doing in important areas like emergency response, fire prevention and protecting local communities.

Performance updates are shared with the Service Delivery Board, and the Commissioner's office reviews them through the Strategic Governance Board (SGB). The SGB meets every three months to check progress against our plans and to review financial reports, including how we are managing budgets, savings and efficiencies.

Independent Oversight - To make sure the Service remains open, honest and accountable, we have independent panels that provide extra checks and advice:

- The Ethics, Transparency, and Audit Panel (ETAP) reviews how we manage risks and make decisions.
- The Finance Panel supports ETAP by offering expert advice and closely examining financial matters.

Together, these panels act as our Audit Committee, helping to ensure we meet high standards of governance and public accountability.

Public Performance Meetings - Twice a year, the Commissioner holds open public meetings to review how we are performing. These meetings are transparent and give local people the chance to see how we are progressing against our priorities.

In 2024/25, the meetings focused on:

- Strengthening workplace culture and values
- Responding to inspection findings on how misconduct is handled
- Extending the [Safety Plan \(2020–2024\)](#), to allow time to develop the new [CRMP 2025–2028](#)
- Driving improvement and efficiency across the Service

These meetings help keep the public informed and involved in how their emergency services are run.



1. Chaired by the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office (SCO):

- Staffordshire Commissioner and Chief Officers 2:2: provide strategic leadership and oversight
- Strategic Governance Boards (Fire and Rescue / Collaboration): review performance, budgets and strategic priorities

2. Independent Scrutiny:

External bodies help ensure transparency and high standards:

- HMICFRS: national inspectorate reviewing effectiveness, efficiency and people
- Internal Audit and External Audit: check financial and operational integrity
- Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel: provide ethical oversight and public accountability

3. Service Governance (Attended by SCO):

- Service Management Board: oversees strategic service delivery
- Service Delivery Board: monitors operational performance and key indicators
- Workforce Planning Board: manages staffing, recruitment and workforce development

4. Directorate Meetings:

Response and Prevention and Protection boards: focuses on planning and delivering services.

5. Strategic Risk:

Identifies and manages risks that could affect service delivery and public safety



Recent Updates

The [Safety Plan 2020–2024](#) has been extended and transitioned into the [CRMP 2025–2028](#), effective from 1 January 2025.

Governance continues to focus on efficiency, transparency and cultural reform, in line with national recommendations.

OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE

We continue to meet all legal responsibilities and national standards, helping to keep communities safe and supporting firefighters in delivering a reliable and effective service.

We follow a wide range of laws and national policies that guide how fire and rescue services operate across England. These include:

[Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)

[Localism Act 2011](#)

[Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)

[Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)

[Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)

[Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#)

[Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order 2007](#)

By complying with these regulations, we ensure our services are safe, professional and accountable.

MUTUAL AID AND NATIONAL RESILIENCE

We work closely with neighbouring fire services through mutual aid agreements. These partnerships allow us to share resources and support each other during large, complex, or cross-border incidents and help ensure that Staffordshire - and the wider UK - can respond quickly and effectively when serious incidents occur.

We are also part of the national resilience programme, which provides access to specialist equipment and highly trained teams. This means we can help respond to major emergencies across the UK, including:

- Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive incidents
- Large-scale fires
- Terrorism
- Natural disasters and other major emergencies

Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity - We work with the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit to plan and train for major emergencies - such as floods, pandemics and terrorist incidents. This partnership ensures a well-coordinated response across all emergency services when it is needed most.

We also have strong business continuity plans in place. These are regularly reviewed and tested to make sure we can keep delivering essential services during disruptions - whether caused by extreme weather, cyber incidents or industrial action.

Annual Governance Statement 2024–2025 - The Commissioner receives all funding for fire and rescue services, including government grants. While the Commissioner sets the overall direction and ensures accountability, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Staffordshire Police operate independently.

FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY

Each year we publish an Annual Governance Statement alongside our [Statement of Accounts](#). These documents explain how we manage our finances, risks and internal controls. For 2024/25, this includes:

- How funding is allocated and spent
- How resources support the [CRMP](#)
- How we ensure value for money and long-term financial sustainability

The accompanying Narrative Statement provides a detailed look at our financial performance, including budget results, capital investments and efficiency improvements.

COMPLIANCE AND ASSURANCE

We are confident that we have met all legal and national standards throughout 2024/25. This includes compliance with:

- [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)
- [Localism Act 2011](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
- [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#)

A recent government review confirmed that all fire and rescue authorities in England, including Staffordshire, are meeting the expectations of the [National Framework](#) - demonstrating strong governance, financial control and operational readiness.

COMMITMENT TO GOOD GOVERNANCE

Our governance arrangements are designed to ensure that:

- Public funds are used efficiently and effectively
- Decisions are made transparently and ethically
- Risks are identified and managed proactively
- Our services meet both national standards and the needs of our local communities



"We remain dedicated to ongoing improvement and will continue to review and strengthen our governance practices in response to new challenges and opportunities. This ensures we stay effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of our communities."

Ben Adams Staffordshire Commissioner



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: OUR STRATEGIC PLANS

Every fire and rescue service in England must have a clear plan for identifying and managing risks in their communities. This is a key requirement of the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#) and the plan is known as the [Community Risk Management Plan \(CRMP\)](#).

Planning for What Matters Most: We work closely with our staff, partners and communities to understand local risks and shape our priorities around what matters most to the people we serve.

From Safety Plan to CRMP: Meeting Staffordshire's Needs - Since 2020, we have followed the [Safety Plan 2020-2024](#), which focused on protecting people, property and the environment. It guided our work in prevention, protection and emergency response - helping to keep our communities safe and resilient.

Although the [Safety Plan](#) was due to end in March 2024, it was extended to the end of the year to tie in with the Commissioner's term of office. This gave us time to:

- Maintain continuity in service delivery
- Engage with the public and partners
- Develop a new strategic plan that reflects local needs

In January 2025, we launched the new [Community Risk Management Plan 2025–2028](#). This plan sets out how we will identify and manage risks across Staffordshire, using the latest data, local insight and national guidance from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

This Statement of Assurance highlights how the Service continues to deliver safe, effective services through strong planning, robust governance and community-focused action.

The Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan - In 2024, the Commissioner introduced a new [Fire and Rescue Plan](#) that sets out clear priorities for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and ensures it continues to meet the needs of Staffordshire's communities - now and in the years ahead. The plan focuses on:

- Helping those most at risk to stay safe
- Protecting people, places and the environment
- Building public confidence in the fire and rescue service
- Preparing for the future with a flexible and responsive workforce

The plan also supports national priorities including:

- Improving workplace culture and values
- Strengthening collaboration with other services
- Delivering value for money

OUR PRIORITIES

Our Vision: Making Staffordshire the Safest Place to Be - Our new [CRMP 2025-2028](#) sets out our priorities based on a detailed assessment of risks across Staffordshire. Everything we do is guided by our vision of *'making Staffordshire the safest place to be.'*



At the heart of all we do is a strong commitment to delivering a first-class fire and rescue service for our communities. Our people are central to this mission - we are proud of our workforce and are dedicated to keeping it:

- Diverse and inclusive
- Skilled and well-trained
- Flexible and responsive
- Supported and valued

By focusing on what matters most to our communities and investing in our people, we are building a safer, stronger Staffordshire for everyone.



Core Code of Ethics - Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service follows the [Core Code of Ethics](#), which sets out five key principles to guide behaviour and promote a positive culture:

- Putting communities first
- Integrity
- Dignity and respect
- Leadership
- Equality, diversity and inclusion

Everyone working for or with our Service is expected to follow these principles, helping us serve the public with professionalism, fairness and accountability.

Our Commitment to Inclusion – We are proud to welcome people from all backgrounds. We know that every organisation faces challenges, but we are committed to creating a workplace where everyone feels respected and valued - no matter their differences, whether visible or not.

We have published a Statement of Intent to show how seriously we take equality, diversity and inclusion. It explains how we deal with inappropriate behaviour and encourages open, honest conversations within teams. We want all staff to feel confident speaking up if something does not feel right.

This statement supports our ongoing efforts to build a positive and inclusive culture and it is closely linked to the [Core Code of Ethics](#), that guides everything we do.

Our [CRMP 2025–2028](#), sets out three clear priorities that guide everything we do.

These reflect what matters most to our communities, our workforce and the environment.



Our People

Our Commitment to Our Workforce - We aim to build a workforce that is diverse, healthy and highly skilled. By supporting and empowering our people, we help them deliver the best possible service to our communities.



Our Communities

Keeping Communities Safe - Our goal is to reduce the risk of fire and other emergencies across Staffordshire. We do this through a balanced approach that includes prevention and protection activities and emergency response - helping to make our county a safer place to live, work and visit.



Our Environment

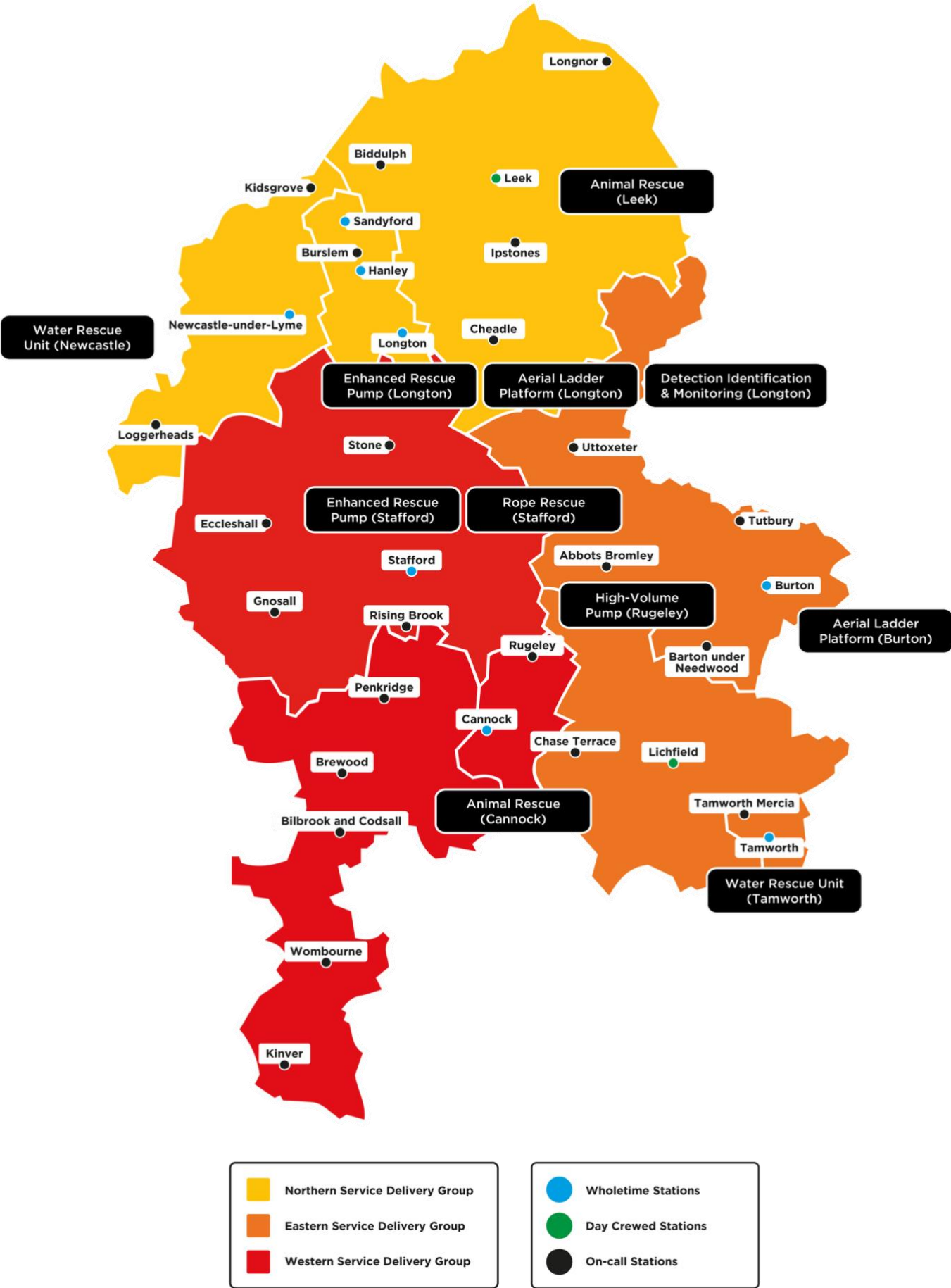
Protecting our Environment - We are working to reduce our carbon footprint and promote sustainability across Staffordshire. By improving how we work and ensuring buildings are safe, we are helping to create cleaner, healthier and more resilient communities.

What This Means For You - Together, the [CRMP](#) and the Commissioner's [Fire and Rescue Plan](#) guide everything we do - from prevention and protection activities, to emergency response and workforce development. They ensure we are:

- Focused on the risks that matter most
- Listening to our communities and partners
- Planning for the future with resilience and flexibility

Over 1,500 residents, staff and partners shared their views with us - and we listened. Your feedback helped shape these priorities and set a clear path for keeping Staffordshire safe in the years ahead.

YOUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



OUR PROGRESS



Our People

Supporting our People - We are committed to building a highly professional workforce that is diverse, healthy and motivated - and giving our teams support they need to thrive and succeed.

We do this by:

- providing the right training, tools and help to support future leaders
- encouraging honesty, kindness and respect across the Service
- promoting health, fitness and wellbeing at work.
- reaching out to our communities to help make our workforce more diverse

Equipping Our Firefighters - We are continuing to invest in the tools and technology our crews need to stay safe and respond effectively to emergencies. Our **Emergency Response Team** is committed to listening to feedback and ensuring crews have the best tools and training to serve safely and effectively.

Here is what is happening:

- **New Breathing Apparatus (BA):** We have invested £1.2 million in the latest BA equipment, with full rollout expected by September 2025.
- **BA Cleaning Machine:** A new machine at Headquarters helps keep breathing gear clean and safe.
- **Enhanced Rescue Vehicles:** Two new rescue pumps are now in service at Longton and Stafford, ready for complex incidents like building collapses and HGV crashes.
- **Battery-Powered Cutting Tools:** These new tools are being added to on-call vehicles, improving efficiency and reducing environmental impact.
- **Electric Response Vehicle:** In November 2024 we introduced our first fully electric response vehicle. It is now being tested by one of our Station Managers to see how it performs in real-life situations. This is a big step forward in our efforts to reduce emissions and support a cleaner, greener future - and it adds to our growing fleet of hybrid and electric vehicles.

Other Highlights:

- New helmets with built-in torches are now in use
- Safer equipment for working at height is being introduced
- Car entry kits and lighting are being rolled out to all stations
- More smoke curtains, which are made of fire-resistant material and help firefighters control the movement of smoke. They keep escape routes clearer and make it safer for firefighters to enter and manage a situation.
- New vehicles, including 4x4s and appliances, are on the way
- We are exploring the use of remote-controlled robots to support crews at complex incidents

Recruitment and Diversity – We have continued to grow our workforce, with more people joining than leaving since mid-2023. This positive trend reflects our ongoing efforts to strengthen both full-time and on-call staffing.

Highlights from the past year:

- During the year 16 new full-time firefighters completed their training and joined stations across the county.
- Four more full-time firefighters joined through a transfer-in route designed for our competent on-call staff, or competent wholetime Firefighters from other Services, and 1 more joined the Prevent & Protect team.
- Eight internal fulltime firefighter promotions were made, including Station, Watch and Crew Manager positions.
- Three on-call Crew Manager and One on-call Watch Manager promotions were made.

We are also listening to feedback from staff who leave the Service. Most say they move on for job security or to join another fire service. This feedback has helped us improve how we recruit and welcome new staff.

Recruitment Update: Our most recent wholetime firefighter recruitment campaign closed in October 2024 - and the response was fantastic. We received over 900 applications, with more than half progressing to the shortlisting stage. This strong interest highlights the growing appeal of a career in the fire and rescue service.

Safe and Fair Recruitment: Since July 2023, all fire and rescue staff are now eligible for standard DBS checks. We have updated our recruitment process to reflect this, helping keep our teams and communities safe.

Supporting a Diverse Workforce: We continue to collect voluntary diversity data during recruitment and onboarding. This helps us understand how well our workforce reflects the communities we serve and supports our ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone.

Looking Ahead:

- **HR Training Days:** Two sessions are planned for autumn 2025, focusing on managing absence effectively and making the most of return-to-work interviews.
- **On-Call Transfers:** We will offer on-call staff the opportunity to transfer into wholetime roles between major recruitment campaigns.
- **Exit Interviews:** We are working to improve engagement with exit interviews, helping us learn more about why people leave and how we can improve staff experience and retention.

‘Positive Action’ in Action: We are committed to building a workforce that truly reflects the diversity of Staffordshire. As part of this commitment we have hosted a series of **Positive Action Days** to support people from underrepresented backgrounds who are interested in joining the fire service.

What Happened: Three events were held at fire stations across the county. We invited individuals who had either shown interest or connected with us through community engagement. Attendees identified as belonging to a protected characteristic group and were welcomed into a supportive, inclusive environment to explore the role of a firefighter.

The sessions included, hands-on experience with firefighter job-related tests, open conversations about shift patterns, responsibilities, and what the role is really like and one-on-one time with fire service personnel for guidance and encouragement. The response was fantastic - participants shared overwhelmingly positive feedback, and 16 people were inspired to take the next step and apply to join the Service.

Looking Ahead: We are building on the success of these Positive Action Days. Using feedback from participants, we will continue to shape future events to ensure that everyone - regardless of background - feels welcomed, informed and supported in exploring a career with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - We are proud to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across our workforce and the communities we serve. By working closely with Staffordshire Police, we share ideas, celebrate lived experiences and support positive cultural change.

Key Highlights:

- We have launched staff networks to offer support, share experiences and help build a more diverse team.
- A joint Inclusivity Calendar with Staffordshire Police helps us celebrate important dates and raise awareness.
- Staff have been trained to carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs), which help us make sure our policies and projects are fair and inclusive.
- A new online system makes it easier for staff to submit and store EqIAs securely.

Supporting Neurodiversity:

- A Neurodiversity Steering Group has been set up with Staffordshire Police to support neurodivergent colleagues.
- A joint Neurodiversity Officer now works across both organisations, offering tailored advice and helping teams make reasonable adjustments.

Looking Ahead: We will continue to embed equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do - from recruitment and training, to how we engage with our communities. Plans include growing our staff networks, improving training and working with partners to make sure everyone feels respected and supported.

Creating a Positive Workplace Culture – We are committed to fostering a respectful and supportive working environment. Over the past year, we have taken meaningful steps to improve how we handle grievances, conduct cases and appeals - ensuring fairness, transparency and timely resolution for all involved.

What the Numbers Tell Us:

- 41 grievances were raised this year, with common themes including training, development and staff conduct
- Two were upheld, four not upheld and 12 partially upheld
- Six were withdrawn and 17 were resolved informally, showing our commitment to early and constructive resolution
- 44 formal complaints were received, including nine related to staff conduct (of these, two were upheld and two partially upheld).

Some grievances reflected shared concerns, particularly around promotions and internal procedures.

Steps We Have Taken:

1. We have reviewed and improved the promotion process, introducing clearer feedback mechanisms aligned with our new appraisal system.
2. A new case management approach is being trialed to reduce delays and improve how we handle grievances and conduct cases.

We have seen growing confidence among staff to raise concerns, reflecting increased trust in our internal processes and the [Core Code of Ethics](#).

Looking Ahead:

- People management training is being rolled out for new and aspiring managers, focusing on soft skills, behaviour management and early resolution. Refresher training is also planned for current managers.
- Policy updates are on the way to give managers and hearing officers clearer guidance and support, helping ensure consistency and fairness.
- A full-day session on managing behaviours and coaching performance will be added to the Supervisory Managers' Course, reinforcing our commitment to a positive and respectful workplace culture.

Looking After Our People - With the support of Occupational Health we offer a wide range of support to help staff stay healthy and well - both physically and mentally.

Support Includes:

- Health advice, sickness reviews and pre-employment checks
- Counselling for trauma, bereavement and mental health
- In-person and remote appointments through a triage system
- Help from occupational health doctors and physiotherapists
- Wellbeing events led by our dedicated wellbeing nurse

Pastoral Care and Community Support: Volunteer chaplains offer 24/7 confidential pastoral support for personal or work-related concerns. We also benefit from an active Retired Network and dedicated volunteers who help with events, training, charity work and maintaining our Memorial Garden.

Mental Health Support: We are committed to creating a workplace where mental health is openly supported.

Here is How We Help:

- **Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA):** Trained staff who offer a listening ear, spot signs of distress, and guide colleagues to further support.
- **TRiM Peer Support:** A confidential system to help staff cope after traumatic events, delivered by trained colleagues - not counsellors - who offer confidential support and practical advice. Originally developed by the UK Armed Forces, TRiM helps identify those who may need professional help, including support from Occupational Health or the Employee Assistance Programme.
- **Thrive App:** A wellbeing app offering private access to therapy, emotional support tools and mental health resources - anytime, anywhere. The app has been available to staff for a couple of years now. It helps reduce the stigma around mental health and offers confidential, professional support.

Our Pledge on Domestic Abuse: We believe domestic abuse is never acceptable. We are committed to supporting staff affected by abuse and making sure help is available when it is needed. We train dedicated champions to offer support with care and understanding and we promote programmes that help people build safer, healthier relationships.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing and Managing Absence - We continue to prioritise the health and wellbeing of our workforce. This year we have introduced and enhanced several initiatives to better manage sickness absence and provide compassionate, structured support to staff.

Key Developments:

- A new HR absence tracking system is now in place, with weekly case reviews led by the Head of Response to ensure absences are managed promptly and transparently.
- Our Fitness Advisor now attends all case reviews, helping ensure staff on modified duties receive the right support.
- Wellness Support Plans are being rolled out to help managers offer tailored support - especially for those facing mental health challenges.
- We have revised our capability process to better support staff with long-term health conditions, including clearer guidance on ill-health retirement and a dedicated Occupational Health contact.
- A Wellbeing Day to promote health and resilience across the workforce.

Working Together:

- Monthly case conferences now bring together HR, Occupational Health and our Fitness Advisor to take a collaborative and proactive approach to managing both short - and long-term absence.
- Managers have received training to improve the quality of Occupational Health referrals, helping ensure staff get the right support at the right time.
- We are reviewing key policies - including the Attendance Policy and the Performance and Capability Policy - to strengthen how we manage long-term sickness.

Trends Over the Last Three Years:

- Whole-time staff: Respiratory-related absences have dropped significantly, though there have been small increases in musculoskeletal, general illness and psychological sickness.
- On-call staff: Respiratory absences have also decreased, but musculoskeletal and psychological sickness have seen a rise.
- Non-operational staff: Respiratory absences are slightly down, while stomach/abdominal, neurological and psychological sickness have increased modestly.

Looking Ahead:

- Two HR training days are scheduled for autumn 2025, focusing on effective absence management and consistent use of return-to-work interviews.
- We are also developing a robust ill-health retirement process in collaboration with Occupational Health, to support staff when returning to work is no longer possible.

£50,000 FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE – MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

Celebrating 50 Years with Purpose: To mark 50 years since our organisation first came together we set ourselves a bold goal: raise £50,000 for The Fire Fighters Charity. Thanks to the incredible dedication of our staff, volunteers and supporters, we did not just meet the target - we surpassed it, raising an amazing £54,280!

A Year of Community Spirit: Over 12 months, people from across the Service came together to take part in more than 30 fundraising events. From open days and sponsored walks to community celebrations, every activity played a part in reaching our goal.

Milestone Moments: The fundraising journey was full of memorable highlights and steady progress.

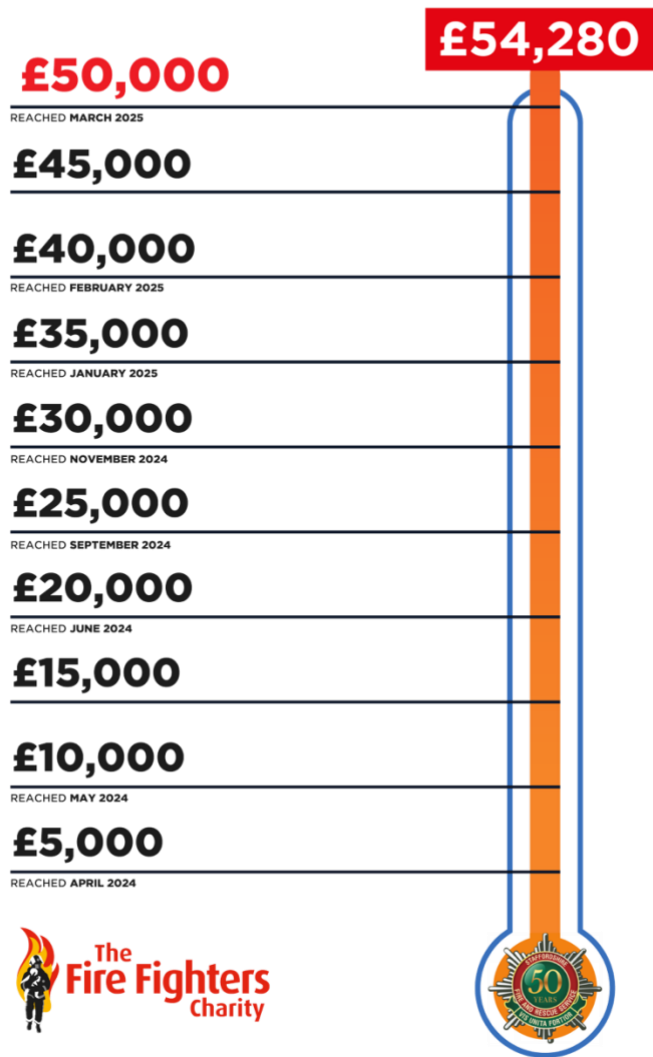
**A Message from the Chief Fire Officer,
Rob Barber:**

“Thank you to everyone who organised, participated in, or donated to our £50k challenge. Your hard work and generosity have made a real difference. Here’s to the next 50 years of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service!”

Supporting the Fire Family:

All funds raised will go directly to The Fire Fighters Charity, helping provide vital mental, physical and social wellbeing support to firefighters, staff, volunteers and their families.

FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE MISSION COMPLETED!





WELLBEING DAY 2025

A day of support, strength and self-care:

Held in January 2025 at the County Showground our Wellbeing Day brought together staff, speakers and support networks to focus on mental health, resilience and personal wellbeing. The agenda included:

Mental health in focus:

Andy's Man Club shared its powerful origin story and mission to provide a safe, non-judgemental space for men to talk. Their #MissionPossible challenge encourages everyone to tackle something they once thought impossible.

Support initiatives:

Support Cards were launched by one of our Watch Managers - small, discreet cards with crisis contact details, designed to be carried and shared when needed most.

Health, resilience and recovery:

ProHealth introduced the concept of neuroplasticity and how to 'neurosculpt' the brain to manage stress.

The Fire Fighters Charity delivered a talk on 'What's strong with you?', shifting the focus from weakness to inner strength.

A moving video on prostate cancer highlighted the importance of early testing and awareness.

REAL STORIES, REAL IMPACT

Rob the Barber, a guest speaker and recovering alcoholic, shared his journey through trauma, addiction, and recovery. His initiative, Clean Cut, offers haircuts and one-on-one conversations to help others open up in a safe, informal setting.

A Friendly Face - Nala the wellbeing dog was on hand throughout the day, offering comfort and cuddles to anyone in need of a moment of calm.

Key Takeaway - The day reinforced that mental health is everyone's responsibility. From peer support to professional help, we are committed to ensuring no-one faces challenges alone.

OUR PROGRESS



Our Communities

Keeping Communities Safe - We are working to reduce the risk of fires and other emergencies across Staffordshire. Through prevention and **protection** activities and emergency response, we aim to make our county a safer place to live, work and visit.

We do this by:

- Helping people understand the risks and how to stay safe
- Working with partners to identify those most at risk and share vital information
- Focusing our efforts where they will have the biggest impact
- Listening to our communities to shape and improve the services we provide

Keeping People Safe at Home - We are committed to preventing emergencies before they happen - especially for those most at risk in our communities.

Safe and Well Visits: Between April 2024 and March 2025, we carried out 15,398 Safe and Well visits across Staffordshire. These visits help people stay safe at home, with a focus on those most vulnerable to fire.

Referrals come through our partner networks and Contact Centre, ensuring we reach those who need us most. For individuals facing more complex challenges, we offer Extended Safe and Well visits. These provide tailored support for issues such as:

- Hoarding
- Mental health concerns
- Housing problems
- Mobility difficulties
- Substance misuse

By working closely with health, care and housing partners, we ensure that each visit addresses not just fire safety, but wider risks that affect wellbeing and independence.

Year in Review: We started the year strong, with more visits than the previous year. A mid-year dip - due to staff sickness and training - was followed by a rise in activity, surpassing figures from the same period in 2023/24 and 2022/23. Overall, we maintained a high level of service throughout the year.

What's New?

- New risk profiles introduced in February 2024 help us better identify and support high-risk households.
- Prevention teams have been restructured to improve efficiency and focus.
- Enhanced data tools allow us to better target areas most in need.
- Monthly targets have been set to support planning and performance.

Working Together: Partnerships play a vital role in reaching those who need us most. We work closely with:

- Professionals who visit vulnerable people - such as social workers, domiciliary care providers, occupational health therapists and police officers. We offer them “Olive Branch Training” which trains them to spot fire risks in the home. It raises awareness of fire safety and teaches attendees how to refer individuals for a Safe and Well Visit.
- The Fire and Health Partnership, which connects us with NHS and social care professionals to identify vulnerable residents and coordinate support, which is delivered by our specialist teams:
 - Home From Hospital Team helps recently discharged patients return safely to their homes, offering practical support such as heating checks, hazard removal and fire safety advice - helping reduce re-admissions and easing NHS pressures.
 - Falls Response Team attends non-injury falls, assisting individuals safely back to their feet, conducting wellbeing checks and helping prevent unnecessary ambulance callouts and hospital admissions.
- Local councils, housing associations and voluntary groups, who help us reach communities through targeted campaigns and shared data.
- Carer networks and safeguarding boards, which support our outreach to those caring for others, helping us tailor advice and interventions.

These collaborations allow us to deliver more effective, joined-up support to assist the most vulnerable.

Looking Ahead

- We are reviewing our post-incident and engagement policies to improve service delivery.
- A new data management system will streamline how we record and use prevention data.
- Our teams will continue raising awareness at community events and explore new technologies like telecare links.

Supporting Vulnerable Residents: Fire and Health Partnership Team - We continue to work closely with the NHS and local care providers to support vulnerable residents through two key services: Falls Response and Home From Hospital. These initiatives help people stay safe and independent at home, while easing pressure on emergency and health services.

Falls Response Team: Launched in December 2022, the Falls Team has responded to over 2,300 incidents, primarily assisting older adults who have fallen but do not require emergency medical care.

- In 2024/25, the team attended 939 calls, with 86 per cent requiring no further NHS support.
- With an average response time of under 37 minutes, the team provides fast, reassuring help.
- Most patients were safely assisted without injury, helping reduce demand on ambulances and hospitals.

“They arrived so quickly and were so reassuring. I didn’t need to go to hospital, and they even checked my heating and gave me advice.” — **John, 76, Stoke-on-Trent**

Home from Hospital Team: Since launching in December 2023, this team has supported over 2,600 hospital discharges, helping patients return home safely and comfortably.

The team completes six to seven jobs per day, including fitting key safes, moving furniture and property inspections. Only one readmission occurred within 24 hours, showing the strong impact this team is having.

Partnership Recognition and Impact: These services are delivered in partnership with:

- University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board

The Home From Hospital team were the first external partners to receive the Chief Executive Award from University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust - recognising their outstanding contribution to patient care.

An independent evaluation by the University of Chester is currently underway to assess long-term impact and inform future development.

Looking Ahead:

- Funding for the Home From Hospital team is secured until 31 March 2026.
- Funding for the Falls Team is confirmed until 31 December 2025, with plans to extend this to March 2026 to align both services.

We remain committed to growing these partnerships and exploring new ways to support residents through joined-up care.

Learning From Serious Incidents - We are committed to learning from every serious incident to help prevent future harm.

Fatal Fire Conferences: When an accidental fatal fire occurs, we hold dedicated Fatal Fire Conferences to review our involvement and share learning with key partners, including:

- Housing providers
- Health services
- Social Care teams

These sessions help identify opportunities for earlier intervention and improve how we work together to protect vulnerable residents.

Follow-Up and Monitoring: A review of serious incidents highlighted the need for a Safe and Well revisit process. In response, a new Extended Safe and Well Visit Risk Assessment has been developed to guide revisit timeframes:

- Very High Risk – revisit within 6 months
- High Risk – revisit within 12 months

This risk assessment will be reviewed in October 2025 to ensure it is working effectively and consistently in practice.



Educating Young People - We continue to deliver engaging safety education to children and young people across Staffordshire - helping build safer communities through learning.

Safe+Sound Programme: Educates children how to stay safe around fire, roads, water and other hazards through weekly online broadcast sessions and in-person events.

- Over 7,000 Year 5 pupils attended face-to-face events across Staffordshire in 2024/25.
- In-person sessions remain popular, though transport can be a barrier for some schools.
- Weekly online broadcasts continue to attract strong viewership, with a wide range of safety topics delivered by different partners.

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT - ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/25

Over the course of 36 weekly programmes, we reached 269,000 devices, averaging over 7,000 devices per week accessing our content. All sessions are available on demand at learnliveuk.com/safesound.

Operational Crew Involvement: A refreshed Education Delivery Plan was launched in September 2024, with updated crew packages and new grab bags provided to stations for consistent delivery.

Crews now support sessions for Key Stages 1, 3, 4 and after-school groups, based on local needs. Feedback from schools and crews has been overwhelmingly positive.

"My son came home from school full of fire safety tips - he even showed us how to test the smoke alarm!"
— Parent, Stafford

Working With Partners: We team up with a wide range of organisations to share safety messages with children. These include:

- Learn Live, who stream our Safe+Sound sessions
- Schools and education authorities, who support attendance and feedback
- Organisations and businesses such as Staffordshire Police, HSBC, Canal & River Trust, Network Rail, RNLI, DHL and many others who contribute to multi-agency sessions
- Community groups, helping us reach young people outside of school

Together, we are helping the next generation stay safe and informed.

Safeguarding: Protecting Vulnerable People – We play a vital role in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns across the county. Through operational incidents, Safe and Well visits, and community engagement, our staff help protect vulnerable individuals and connect them with the support they need.

Safeguarding Referrals: Between April 2024 and March 2025, we raised 121 safeguarding referrals. The most common concern was self-neglect, often linked to poor living conditions, hoarding or lack of access to basic essentials.

Training and Awareness: We continue to prioritise safeguarding training for all roles. Staff feedback shows that face-to-face training is especially effective - particularly for sensitive topics - helping teams feel confident and prepared to act when concerns arise.

Working in Partnership: Our Prevention Teams work closely with:

- Social care services
- Health professionals
- Housing providers
- Voluntary and community organisations

Together, we ensure individuals receive the right support at the right time. A new Safeguarding Dashboard is in development to improve how we track and manage cases, helping us respond more effectively.

This year's safeguarding activity reflects our ongoing commitment to protecting vulnerable people and supporting our staff to act with confidence and compassion.

Connecting with Communities – We continue to strengthen our presence across local communities - using events and outreach to promote fire safety and raise awareness of career opportunities within the Service.

Key Highlights:

- Recruitment for wholetime, on-call, and support roles is actively promoted at all community events, alongside essential fire safety messaging.
- A growing presence at events over the past two years has led to increased interest in joining the Service.
- Strong relationships have been built with diverse communities, including Sudanese, Eritrean, Afro-Caribbean and Asian groups, helping to build trust and broaden engagement.
- Plans are in place to provide recruitment materials directly to our firefighters, enabling more effective promotion during local events.

Looking Ahead

We will continue to build on these relationships and expand our outreach - ensuring that recruitment and safety messages reach all parts of the community.

By working closely with diverse groups and making resources more accessible to frontline teams, we aim to create a more inclusive and representative workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

OUR PROGRESS



Our Environment

Caring for Our Environment - We are committed to reducing our impact on the environment and helping build safer, healthier and more sustainable communities.

We do this by:

- Using greener practices and making better use of resources
- Working with partners to make buildings safer for everyone - including our firefighters
- Preparing for risks like flooding and wildfires and supporting efforts to tackle climate change

Environmental and Sustainability Update - We continue to deliver on our five-year [Environmental and Sustainability Strategy \(2022–2027\)](#), with a growing focus on long-term impact, carbon reduction and community engagement.

Fleet Innovation:

- **Electric Vans:** Three fully electric vans were introduced in February 2024 for the Estates Team. Feedback has been excellent, with strong performance even in challenging conditions.
- **Hybrid Response Cars:** Five petrol hybrids replaced older diesel vehicles in May 2024, helping reduce fuel use and CO₂ emissions.
- **Electric Response Vehicle:** Our first fully electric response car was commissioned in late 2024. Testing is underway to assess its range and reliability.

Infrastructure and Strategy:

- **EV Charging:** Charging points have been installed at multiple sites to support the transition to a low-emission fleet.
- **Waste and Recycling:** Improvements have been made at key locations to boost recycling and reduce waste.
- **Green Spaces:** Fire stations are beginning to incorporate green areas to support staff wellbeing and biodiversity.

Community and Biodiversity:

- **Planters and Pollinators:** HMP Oakwood Prison donated handcrafted wildflower planters to three stations, creating relaxing outdoor spaces for staff.
- **Beekeeping Initiative:** Two hives were introduced at Stafford Fire Station to support pollination and sensory wellbeing.

Solar Energy and Strategic Planning:

- **Solar Panels:** Investment in solar energy is being explored, with a projected four to five-year payback period.
- **Fleet Strategy:** Full electrification of heavy fleet vehicles is not yet cost-effective.

Looking Ahead:

- Vehicles: Upgrading the heavy fleet
- Buildings: Enhancing energy efficiency
- Measures: Monitoring progress and impact.
- Engagement: Staff are invited to join the Environmental Working Group to contribute ideas and help shape future initiatives.

Clean Concept: Protecting Our People - Last year we told you about the Clean Concept initiative, led by our Emergency Response Team and supported by the Fire Brigades Union and Unison, which aims to reduce firefighter exposure to harmful post-fire contaminants. The approach is simple but powerful: Clean – Contain – Control.

Phase One Achievements:

- “Shower within the hour” policy now embedded across all stations
- Decontamination wipes and cleaning kits issued to crews
- External Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) storage introduced to prevent contamination inside stations
- Soap dispensers and hose reel brushes added to appliances
- Post-incident cleaning guidance published and shared



What's Next? Phases Two and Three:

- New breathing apparatus (BA) sets with easier-to-clean designs
- Continued investment in Clean Cab appliances
- Red/Amber/Green zoning of stations to manage contamination risk
- Installation of a BA cleaning machine for deep cleans during servicing
- Planned collaboration with UCLAN and the FBU for further research

This initiative is helping to protect our workforce and embed safer practices into everyday operations.

Ongoing Protection Work: Keeping Our Communities safe - Throughout 2024/25, our Protection Teams have continued to deliver vital fire safety services across Staffordshire. This includes responding to consultations, conducting fire safety audits and inspecting non-domestic premises following incidents helping to ensure buildings are safe and sustainable - now and in the future.

What We Do: We carry out several key protection activities to help keep people safe in commercial and public buildings:

- Fire Safety Audits - In-depth checks to ensure buildings meet legal fire safety standards
- Licensing Consultations - Ensuring fire safety in venues like pubs and clubs before licences are issued
- Building Regulation Consultations – Contributing to these to ensure that fire safety is considered in new building designs and refurbishments
- Post-Fire Inspections - Investigating incidents to support recovery and prevent future fires



Risk-Based Inspection Programme (RBIP): Launched in February 2024, our updated RBIP helps us focus on buildings that pose the greatest risk. Each premises are given a risk rating - Very High, High, Medium, Low, or Very Low - to guide inspection frequency and approach. By March 2025, 92 per cent of the RBIP was completed, showing strong progress in proactive fire safety management.

Fire Safety (England) Regulations: We have fully implemented the regulations for tall residential buildings, receiving all required plans and reports. Our teams have responded to 109 faults in firefighting installations, with tailored action plans developed to ensure resident safety.

2024/25 Highlights:

- 511 Fire Safety Audits completed - almost double the previous year's figure, thanks to our new RBIP allowing teams to focus on higher-risk premises such as care homes, hotels, tall buildings and hospitals.
- 767 Building Regulation Consultations - up from 701 last year
- 645 Licensing Consultations - a significant decrease from 872, reflecting a shift in demand
- 122 Post-Fire Inspections - down from 166. These inspections help us understand the causes of fires and identify any follow-up actions needed.

Improvements and Developments:

- A new protection recording system implemented, improving how we track and manage activity.
- A Central Protection Team now handles Building Regulation Consultations, freeing up local teams for proactive work.
- Four new Protection Officers joined the team and are working toward their Level 4 Diploma in Fire Safety.
- Operational crews are now conducting compliance checks, supported by training funded through the Protection Uplift Grant.

Looking Ahead:

- A full review of our internal and external quality assurance processes is underway, with support from Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- We are continuing to focus on succession planning, further development of the RBIP and delivering against our annual service delivery plan.
- Additional Level 2 fire safety training courses are scheduled from January 2025 to further strengthen our teams' capabilities.

Fire Hydrants: Ready When Needed – We have significantly expanded our hydrant testing programme to ensure hydrants across the county are operational and ready to support emergency response.

Key Highlights:

- Since March 2024, 10 wholetime and four on-call stations have been actively testing hydrants, supported by three dedicated Hydrant Technicians.
- A new hydrant management system has been introduced to improve data tracking and reporting.
- Staffordshire has 18,436 adopted fire hydrants, with 38.9 per cent tested or inspected by March 2025.
- Over 7,100 hydrants have undergone statutory testing since January 2024, in line with the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)

Hydrants are tested based on risk categories, with inspection intervals ranging from 12 months in very high-risk areas to 84 months in low-risk rural locations. This ensures hydrants are maintained appropriately to support effective emergency response across all communities.

TRANSFORMING FOR THE FUTURE

We are committed to delivering a modern, efficient and sustainable service. Our Transformation Programme is helping us achieve this by improving how we work, where we work and the tools we use.

Phase One: Completed - The first phase is now complete, delivering £1.3 million in recurring savings. Key achievements include:

- A full review of our prevention and protection services
- Formal adoption of the on-call Three-person Crewing Model
- Progress on the Shared Estates Strategy, with police now permanently based at several fire stations

Progress is tracked through a live system monitored by senior leaders and the Commissioner's Strategic Governance Board.

Phase Two: Underway - With a further £1 million in savings needed by 2029, Phase Two focuses on efficiency, productivity and service delivery. Five workstreams are in progress or have been reviewed:

- Administration Review - Ensuring resources are used effectively across the Service
- Clean Concept Implementation - Work is ongoing to reduce firefighter exposure to contaminants, including investment in new appliances, breathing apparatus, and improved facilities.
- ICT Systems Optimisation - Improving digital tools and data management
- Environmental Review - Aligning with the Service's Environmental Strategy, this includes reviewing solar panel projects and exploring other sustainability opportunities.
- Community Sprinkler Project - Concluded in March 2025, delivering annual savings of £55,000, this long-term initiative installed sprinklers in 19 tall buildings.

Additional Efficiency Measures:

- Vacancy control and role reconfigurations have generated savings of £85,000.
- A capital programme review is expected to realise £200,000 in savings.
- Property disposals are projected to generate £600,000 in capital receipts.
- The Shared Estates Strategy continues to deliver cost-effective collaboration with Staffordshire Police.

Looking Ahead: We remain focused on delivering a transformation programme that balances financial responsibility with service excellence. Through strong governance, strategic planning and innovation, we are building a more resilient and future-ready organisation.

Estates and Infrastructure - We manage a diverse property portfolio of 35 buildings, including 21 Private Finance Initiative (PFI) fire stations and 14 residual sites. Our Estates Team, shared with Staffordshire Police, oversees both outsourced and in-house facilities management.

Recent Highlights:

- Refurbishments at Abbots Bromley and Stafford Fire Stations
- Upgrades to our Learning and Development and Joint Emergency Transport Services (JETs) facilities
- £0.7 million invested in 2024/25, with £1.7 million planned for 2025/26.

Looking ahead: Our Estates Team will continue to enhance facilities, support sustainability goals and expand collaboration with public sector partners - ensuring our infrastructure meets the evolving needs of both the Service and the communities we serve.

Digital Transformation - Throughout 2024/25, our ICT Team has made significant strides in modernising systems and improving our organisational resilience.

Recent Highlights:

- Migration to Microsoft 365, improved Wi-Fi, antivirus and multi-factor authentication
- Tablets and a new mobile devices homepage have improved access to operational data
- Stabilising and replacing Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) and improving network connectivity
- Email, file storage and collaboration tools have been moved to cloud-based platforms, improving efficiency and data compliance.

Looking Ahead: A joint project with West Midlands Fire Service is underway to upgrade our communication and dispatch systems - the Integrated Communication Control System (ICCS) and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD). Expected to launch in January 2026, the new system will offer:

- Enhanced Functionality: Customisable touchscreen hot-keys, automated incident notifications and improved messaging and playback tools will provide better user experience.
- User-Centric Design: Workshops and testing phases are ensuring the system is intuitive and efficient for control operators and operational staff.
- Integration: The system will link with MDTs and support national initiatives to improve reporting.

HIS MAJESTY’S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS)



We continue our journey of improvement through regular independent inspections carried out by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). These independent reviews help us understand what we are doing well and where we can do better - so we can serve you more effectively.

Fire and Rescue Service 2023-25 (Effectiveness, Efficiency and People) - HMICFRS’ assessment of how are doing - in our latest HMICFRS inspection report (published September 2024):

- We were rated *Outstanding* for how we respond to major incidents, thanks to strong teamwork and preparation across agencies.
- We received *Good* ratings in several important areas, including how we plan for risk, use our resources, respond to emergencies and support positive workplace culture.
- Some areas were rated *Adequate*, such as our fire prevention work, regulation of safety in buildings, inclusion and fairness in the workplace and leadership development.

What Was Highlighted as Promising Practice:

- Teaming up with the NHS to help people after a fall or hospital stay
- Strong planning and coordination with other organisations for major incidents

Areas for Improvement:

- Making fire prevention and protection even stronger
- Promoting fairness, diversity and leadership opportunities for all our staff

Our Promise to You: We are committed to continuous improvement. We have already acted on the recommendations and will keep working hard to earn your trust, deliver excellent service and help keep Staffordshire safe.

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

Our gradings from our latest HMICFRS inspection*

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

Reflections from the Commissioner

"I continue to monitor Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service's progress against improvement plans through my regular performance monitoring, robust governance meetings and improvement boards. I am pleased that the improvements I have seen have been recognised in the latest report by His Majesty's inspectorate."



"It is particularly encouraging that the Service has been graded Outstanding in its response to major and multi-agency incidents, and Good across the majority of other areas. These results reflect the dedication and professionalism of our firefighters and staff, and the clear direction set by the Chief Fire Officer and senior leadership team."

"While there are still areas for improvement, I'm reassured by the Service's commitment to continuous development and its proactive approach to addressing challenges. The progress made since the last inspection demonstrates strong leadership and a clear focus on delivering the best possible service to the people of Staffordshire."

Ben Adams

Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime

HMICFRS' Report on Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services - In March 2023, HMICFRS published a national report raising serious concerns about bullying, misogyny, discrimination and how misconduct is handled in some fire and rescue services. The report made 35 recommendations to improve workplace culture, of these 19 were directed at Chief Fire Officers. We have completed a full self-assessment and taken action to address all 19 recommendations.

Improvements include:

- Stronger training on equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Clearer processes for reporting inappropriate behaviour
- Better whistleblowing and grievance procedures
- Fairer recruitment and promotion practices

We remain committed to creating a workplace where everyone feels safe, respected and included.

Standards of Behaviour: The Handling of Misconduct in Fire and Rescue Services - Following national concerns about unacceptable behaviour - such as bullying and misogyny - the Home Secretary commissioned an inspection into how fire and rescue services handle misconduct.

We were one of 10 services selected for this review, which took place in late 2023. Inspectors looked at how misconduct is identified, investigated and managed and how confident staff feel in these processes. The inspection involved interviews, focus groups and file reviews.

No specific concerns were raised about Staffordshire, and the findings aim to support improvements across all services. The full report was published in August 2024 and is available on the HMICFRS website.

State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2023 - In his latest report (May 2024), His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services, Andy Cooke, recognised some progress across fire services - but stressed that urgent reform is still needed.

Key points include:

- Slow progress on reform: Improvements are happening, but too slowly.
- Operational independence: New laws may give Chief Fire Officers more control over local decisions.
- Pay and conditions: A review is underway to modernise the pay system.
- Culture and values: Issues like bullying and discrimination still exist in some services.
- Leadership: Strong leadership is essential, but not consistent across all services.
- Diversity: More work is needed to improve representation and inclusion.
- Accountability: Services may soon be required to publish responses to inspection reports.
- Looking ahead: A proposed College of Fire and Rescue could help standardise training and support leadership development.

Tracking Our Progress: We regularly publish updates on how we are addressing areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS, including the actions we are taking and our progress against their recommendations. You can read the latest update on our website www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk. All national inspection reports are also available on the HMICFRS website www.hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk

Grenfell Tower Inquiry - The Phase Two Report of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry was published in September 2024, examining the causes of the 2017 fire and how the building came to be in such a hazardous condition. The report made 58 recommendations across sectors including construction, regulation and emergency services.

Learning and Action: We have adopted 18 recommendations relevant to fire and rescue services. Of these, 14 have already been completed, leading to improvements in key areas such as:

- Access and lift procedures for high-rise buildings
- Fire control training and communications
- Incident command and radio use
- Firefighter training and operational debriefing
- Water supply coordination and emergency planning

These changes are helping to strengthen our operational readiness and ensure lessons from Grenfell are embedded into everyday practice.

Read the full report: [Grenfell Tower Inquiry – Phase Two](#)



OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

Responding to Emergencies

Incidents Attended: Between April 2024 and March 2025, we responded to 8,825 incidents, very slightly down on the same period for the previous year (8,873). Key trends included:

- Accidental Dwelling Fires: up by 5.05 per cent
- Secondary Fires (smaller outdoor fires): up 9.54 per cent
- Road Traffic Collisions: down by 11.28 per cent

Service Availability: We aim to have fire engines ready to respond at all times. In 2024/25:

- Overall availability was 66.09 per cent, slightly up on the previous year (64.7 per cent).
- Wholtime stations (crewed 24/7) had excellent availability at 98.85 per cent.
- On-call stations (part-time crews) had 55.84 per cent availability, slightly up on last year (54.13 per cent).
- The main challenge remains ensuring enough trained on-call firefighters are available, especially in rural areas.

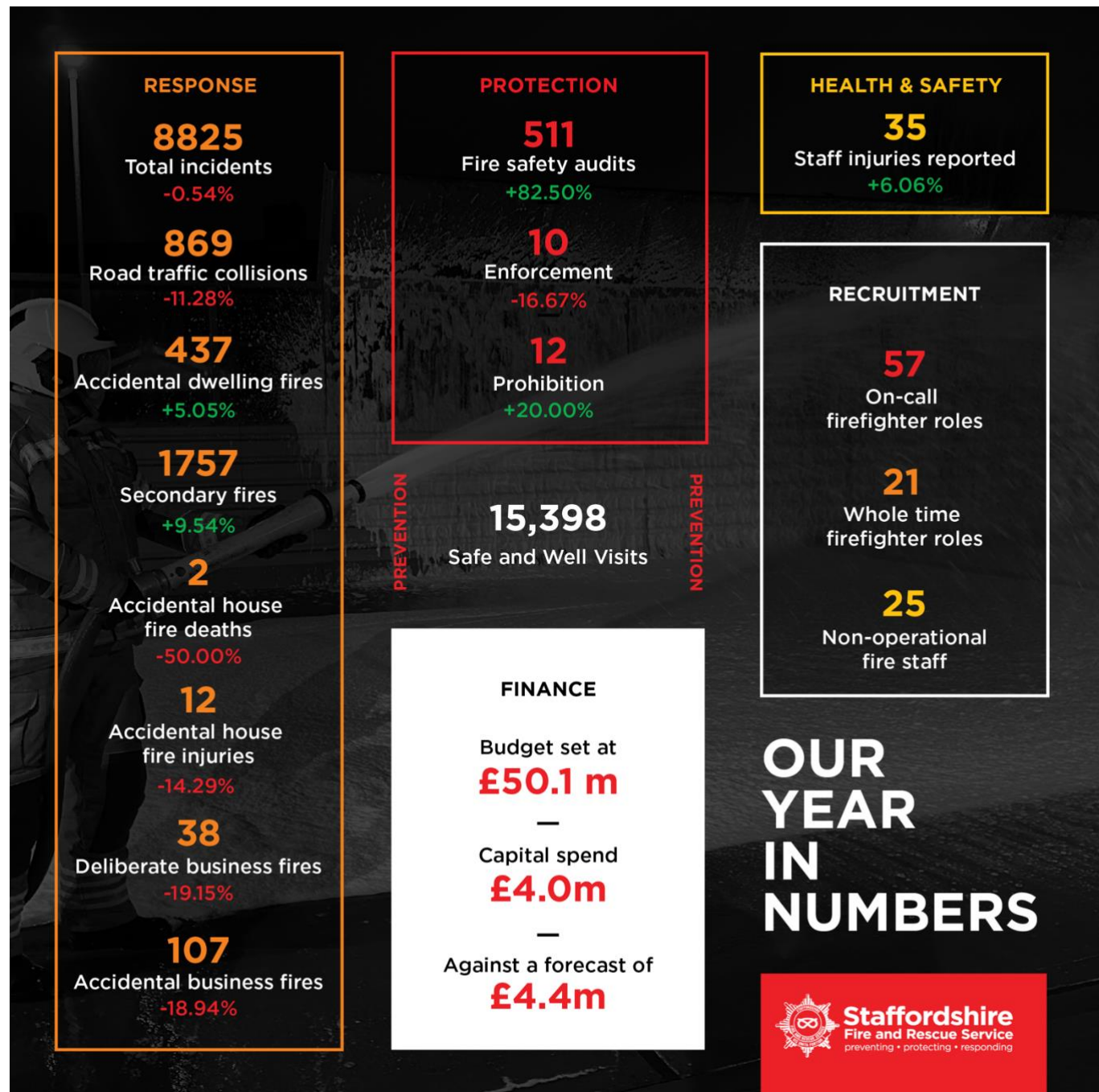
Response Times: We measure how quickly we reach emergencies:

- Average response time: 9 minutes 33 seconds, similar to previous years.
- Response standard: We aim to reach 80 per cent of incidents within target times based on risk level. This year, we achieved this 80.5 per cent of the time, consistent with the same period last year.

Some delays were linked to increased incidents at prisons and in rural areas with limited access.

Looking Ahead: We continue to monitor and improve our response performance. While we have seen increased demand, especially for outdoor fires and false alarms, our crews remain committed to reaching people quickly and safely. We are also working to improve on-call availability and reduce delays in harder-to-reach areas.

The infographic below highlights our performance over the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, offering our communities a quick and easy overview of our key achievements.



Understanding Fire Statistics:

The Home Office publishes detailed data on fire and rescue incidents across England. These statistics cover everything from fire causes and response times to fatalities, casualties and non-fire emergencies.

You can explore the full collection here: [Home Office Fire Statistics](#)

How We Contribute: Our Performance and Assurance Team plays a key role in this national effort. Each year, the team prepares an official data return to the [Home Office](#), using information from our online Incident Recording System.

This helps ensure that Staffordshire's performance is accurately reflected in national reports - and supports continuous improvement across the fire sector.

EMERGING RISKS AND CHALLENGES

As Staffordshire continues to grow and change, so do the risks faced by our communities and our fire and rescue service. We are constantly adapting to new and emerging threats to keep people safe and ensure our firefighters are prepared. Some key emerging risks and challenges are listed below.

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) - As part of the UK's transition to sustainable energy, large-scale BESS sites are becoming more common. These systems, used to store electricity, can pose serious fire and explosion risks. They require specialist firefighting techniques and careful coordination with manufacturers and environmental agencies to manage them safely.

We are working closely with local authorities and site operators and we are actively involved in the planning and risk assessment of BESS sites, ensuring emergency access, fire prevention measures and robust emergency response plans are in place. This proactive approach helps protect both local communities and firefighters by identifying and managing site-specific risks from the outset.

Cost of Living Pressures - Rising living costs are increasing fire risks in the home, especially in areas of multiple-deprivation. People may turn to unsafe heating or cooking methods, or be unable to afford smoke alarms. We are targeting support to those most at risk.

Cyber Security - As we rely more on digital systems, we face growing threats from cyber-attacks. These could disrupt emergency responses or compromise sensitive data. We are investing in training and technology to stay protected.

Electric Vehicles and Alternative Fuels - The rise in electric vehicles and e-bikes brings new challenges, especially due to the risks from lithium-ion batteries. Our crews are being trained to safely manage these incidents and stay up to date with evolving technology.

Major Infrastructure Projects - New road and rail developments require us to plan for complex emergencies, such as tunnel fires or large-scale accidents. We are working closely with partners to ensure we are prepared.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) - Found in some older buildings, RAAC can collapse without warning, especially during fires. We are working with national bodies to identify and plan for these risks.

Climate Change - More frequent wildfires and flooding are stretching our resources. We are investing in training, equipment and partnerships to respond effectively and protect our communities.

Health Emergencies - The COVID-19 pandemic showed how vital our role is in supporting public health.

We continue to work with health partners to prepare for future emergencies.

Terrorism - We are part of national efforts to prepare for and respond to terrorist incidents. Our teams are trained to work alongside police and other agencies to keep people safe.

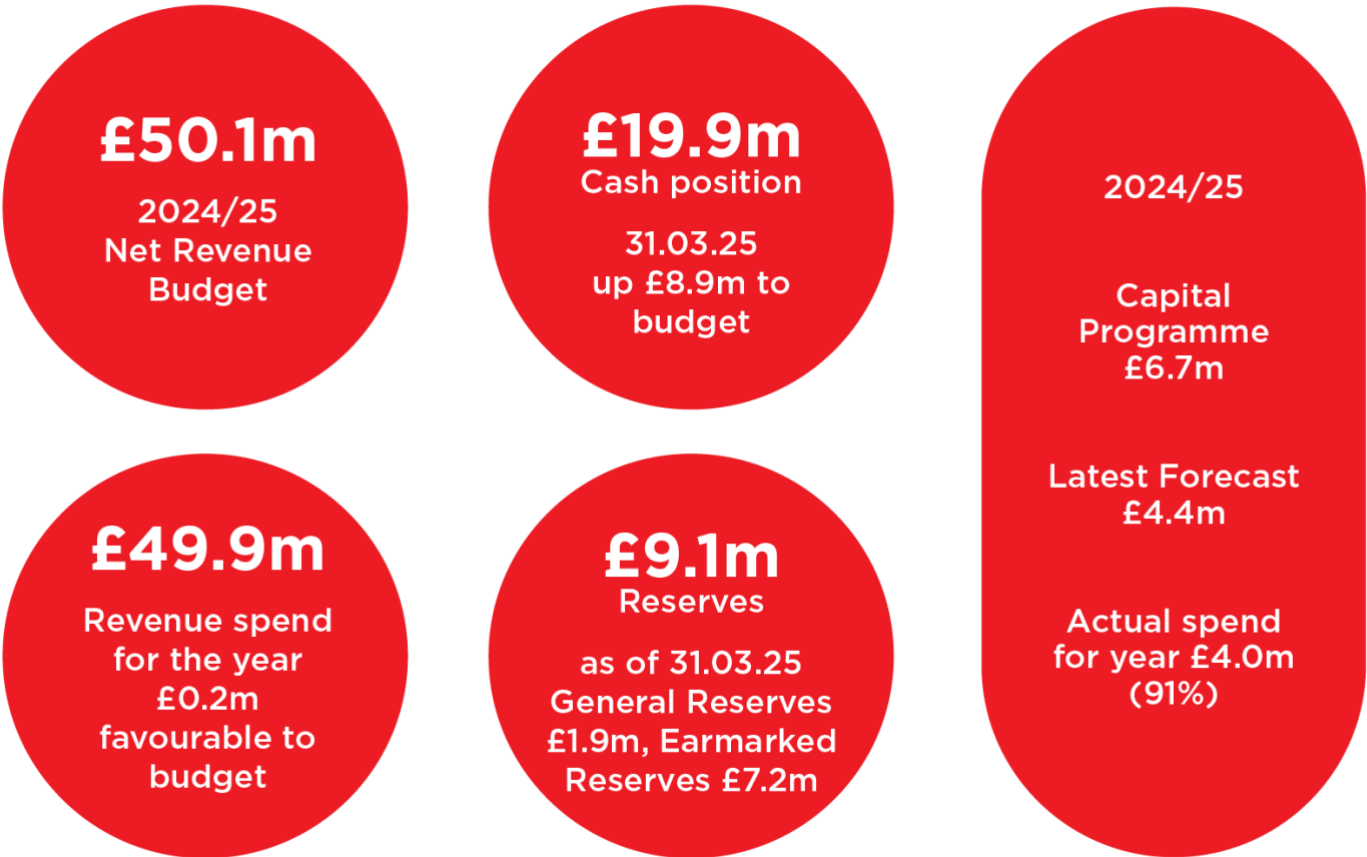
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

We continue to manage our finances responsibly, ensuring public funds are used effectively to protect communities and support frontline services.

Budget and Spending – We operated within our approved £50.1 million revenue budget, ending the year slightly under budget at £49.9 million. This allowed for a contribution to capital financing and helped maintain financial stability, despite rising costs and increased demand.

Council Tax - The Band D council tax was set at £86.77, a modest increase of 2.99 per cent (£2.52), in line with national limits. This supported the continued delivery of essential services and investment in future improvements.

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service Finance Update



Capital Investment - A total of £4.0 million was invested in capital projects, representing 91 per cent of the planned spend. Key investments included:

- Two new aerial ladder platforms (ALPs) and two enhanced rescue pumps (ERPs) vehicles to improve emergency response
- £1 million in operational equipment, including hydraulic cutting tools and breathing apparatus
- Refurbishments at Stafford Fire Station and Fire Headquarters training facilities
- Technology upgrades, such as new mobile data terminals, digital vehicle checks and improved connectivity for crews
- Sustainability initiatives, including electric vehicle charging points and trials of electric vehicles

Fleet and Estates - We allocated £2.1 million to maintain a modern and reliable fleet. Co-location projects with Staffordshire Police progressed at several stations, including Hanley, Tamworth, Chase Terrace, Penkridge, Kinver, Stone and Uttoxeter - enhancing collaboration and reducing costs.

Income and Savings -

- Interest income reached £1.1 million, exceeding expectations by £585,000, due to higher cash balances from pension grant funding.
- The year-end cash balance stood at £19.9 million, £8.9 million above forecast.
- Energy savings and a switch to a new liability insurer contributed to a favourable financial position.

Legal Settlement - The Service received £0.5 million from a national legal settlement with Motorola, following a Competition Appeal Tribunal ruling on Airwave charges.

Staffing and Efficiency -

- Pay costs totalled £33.6 million, closely aligned with the budget
- Recruitment continued across firefighter and support roles
- Shared services with Staffordshire Police and a focus on productivity helped deliver more with existing resources
- No ill-health retirement payments were made this year

Reserves and Borrowing - Reserves remained stable, providing a financial cushion for future challenges. Borrowing levels were kept prudent to ensure long-term investments remain affordable.

Looking Ahead: The Service is preparing for future financial pressures, including inflation and reduced funding from 2025/26. Financial Challenge workshops were held in Spring 2025 to engage staff in identifying £1 million in savings needed by 2029.

The new [Community Risk Management Plan](#) and the Commissioner's [Fire and Rescue Plan](#) will guide how resources are used to meet the evolving needs of Staffordshire's communities.

Understanding the Annual Statement of Accounts - The Annual Statement of Accounts gives a clear and transparent overview of how we manage our finances over the year. It follows national standards set by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), ensuring consistency and accountability.

What's Inside?

- *Statement of Responsibilities* - Explains the roles of the Authority and Treasurer in managing public funds
- *Annual Governance Statement* - Assesses how well the Service is governed and identifies areas for improvement
- *Statement of Accounting Policies* - Outlines how financial transactions are recorded and reported
- *Comprehensive Income & Spending Statement* - Shows where money came from and how it was spent during 2024/25
- *Movement in Reserves Statement* - Tracks changes in reserve funds and how they support future spending
- *Balance Sheet* - Provides a snapshot of the Service's financial position as of 31 March 2025
- *Cash Flow Report* - Details how cash moved in and out of the Service throughout the year

For more detailed financial information, the full Annual Statement of Accounts 2024/25 is available on our website www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk. Printed copies can be requested by contacting our finance team on **0300 330 1000**.

CAREERS AND RECRUITMENT: JOIN OUR TEAM

We offer a wide range of exciting and rewarding career opportunities - whether you are on the frontline or supporting behind the scenes.

Firefighters - Our firefighters respond to emergencies including fires, road traffic collisions and rescues. They also work closely with communities to prevent incidents and promote safety.

On-Call Firefighters - On-call firefighters are paid, part-time professionals who respond to emergencies from home or work. It is a flexible way to serve your community while maintaining your main job.



Alerter goes off

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



Go to fire station

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



Respond to emergency

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

Non-operational fire staff - Not all heroes wear fire kit. Our fire staff play a vital role in areas such as:

- Contact Centre
- Learning and Development
- Risk Planning
- ICT
- Strategy and Intelligence
- Prevention and Protection
- Business Support
- Fire and Health Partnerships
- Risk Management
- Business Continuity

We also share key services like human resources, corporate communications, finance and estates with Staffordshire Police, strengthening collaboration and efficiency.

Be Part of Something Bigger - Whether you are drawn to the action or want to support from behind the scenes, there is a place for you at Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Explore current opportunities at: www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/careers



Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding

We Want to Hear From You

Your feedback matters. If you have any thoughts, ideas, or suggestions about our Statement of Assurance, **we would love to hear from you.**

Drop us an email at **consultation@staffordshirefire.gov.uk**
Or visit us online at **www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/contact-us**

While you are there, explore more about what we do - from fire safety advice to community initiatives. There is plenty more to discover on our website.

Contact

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Stone
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ST15 0BS



www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk