

# Community Newsletter

South Staffordshire



Summer Edition 2024



## Chief Fire Officer, Rob Barber welcome

Welcome to our latest newsletter, we start this edition celebrating our 50-year anniversary. This is a significant milestone and I'd like to take the opportunity to thank former and current members of staff, as well as members of the community and our partners, who have contributed to making our service what it is today.

You may recall in the last edition that we highlighted the fantastic work of our falls team that are sent to non-injury falls to relieve pressure on the ambulance service. We have now started a second scheme called "Home from Hospital" which involves us transporting newly discharged patients back to their homes and ensuring they are settled back in safely and comfortably. There is more on this on page 2.

We're excited to announce that we'll be opening up recruitment for full time firefighters in Autumn. Ahead of then we're keen to engage with those groups that are currently under-represented in our workforce – namely females, ethnic minorities and those who identify as LGBTQIA+ to help overcome any barriers they may have in considering firefighting as a career. If you are interested follow the QR code on page 3.

This year will see us deliver our biggest consultation exercise to date, as we prepare for our next four-year Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). Early in the summer we're hoping to seek views from people at our community events before our more formal consultation starts in late summer. We are here to serve you, so giving us your views is crucial to ensure we deliver the best possible service.

Finally with the Euros just around the corner we've some safety tips to ensure you don't fall foul when it comes to celebrating!

## Celebrating 50 years of us

We are celebrating 50 years since our organisation first formed into Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service. The service was formed on 1 April, 1974, following the Local Government Act 1972; bringing together Stoke-on-Trent Fire Brigade, Burton-on-Trent Fire Brigade and Staffordshire Fire Brigade into a single organisation.

We will be celebrating with a series of events, sharing of memories and a challenge to raise £50,000 for The Fire Fighters Charity over the next 12 months.

Chief Fire Officer, Rob Barber, said: "This is a very special landmark year for the service as we look back over five decades and look forward to the next 50 years. We want to celebrate this milestone anniversary with our staff, former staff and the communities we so proudly serve.

"During that time the service has changed massively; in 1974 we predominantly just fought fires. Fast forward 50 years and we're an organisation that is supporting the NHS with various schemes, we're improving the employment prospects for young people with our Princes Trust courses and we're sitting at the heart of the communities we serve.

"We're also a different organisation now; in 1974 we had no female firefighters, whereas now we have women in our most senior roles and my predecessor was the first operational female Chief Fire Officer in the country. There is still more work to do but thankfully we are past the days when people were shocked to see a female firefighter.

"I've set a challenge for us to collectively raise £50,000 for The Fire Fighters Charity, as they have provided so much support to our staff over the years. We'll be promoting various fundraising challenges and so any donations to help us reach our goal will be welcome."



## Helping people home from hospital

We've launched a new initiative to help newly discharged patients and to help alleviate pressures on the NHS.

Following last year's launch of our falls response service, which earned us two national awards, we have introduced a new local scheme called Home From Hospital.

It sees patients from Royal Stoke University Hospital being collected by Fire and Health Partnership Technicians and taken to their homes when they are discharged.

Once they are home, they are then provided with the following services:

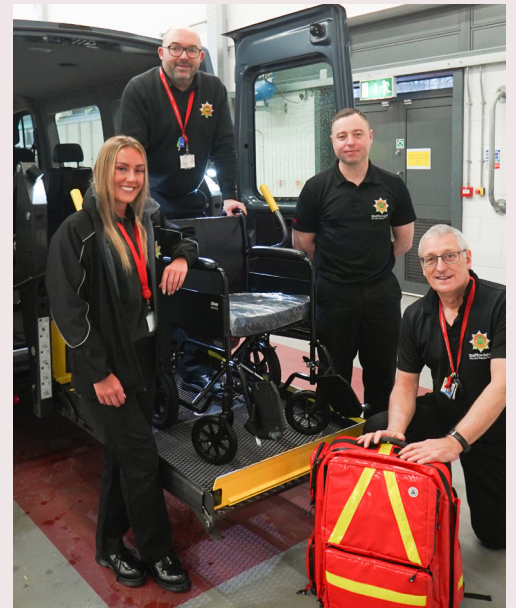
- Seating the patient appropriately and comfortably, ensuring they have toilet access
- Checking their lighting, heating and water
- Testing the Lifeline alarm system, if they have one
- Conducting basic security checks
- Ensuring they have access to a phone and necessary charging facilities
- Removing obstacles and other trip hazards
- Providing refreshments
- Checking for trip hazards and minimising risk
- Safe and Well checks, including the fitting of smoke detectors.

We have already supported over 550 patients through the service.

Ian Read, Head of Prevent, Protect and Partnerships at Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, said: "Serving our communities, and especially the most vulnerable, remains a priority for us.

"Our hope is that this will provide a welcome supplement to the valuable existing discharge services. With the additional capacity and 'settling in' element that we are offering, we are ensuring that all patients will get the appropriate care.

"I think it's the personal touch makes all the difference. Treating people with dignity, respect and humanity has always been at the forefront of everything that we do, and we expect that to only strengthen through the scheme."



## Summer safety campaign launches ahead of EURO 2024



We're working together with our colleagues at Staffordshire Police to launch a summer safety campaign ahead of the kick-off for Euro 2024.

Whether you're celebrating the goals going in or just enjoying the summer weather, we're expecting more people to be cooking outside, socialising in big groups and drinking alcohol - which brings some challenges to local emergency services in a time of increased demand.

More barbecues and open fires, paired with increased alcohol intake and distractions with the football, can easily lead to wildfires, serious injury and an excessive amount of calls into local firefighters and police officers.

We want people to enjoy the summer responsibly and help us to limit the chances of accidents happening in Staffordshire.

Prevention and Safeguarding Lead, Carmel Warren said; "The Euros bring with them a great atmosphere with the country coming together but we don't want anyone to fall foul whilst celebrating. We really don't want to be gate-crashing any BBQs where the fire has spread to the rest of the garden and we certainly don't want to be cutting people free from vehicles as a result of accidents caused by drink driving.

"Enjoy yourself but please take some simple measures to ensure the safety of yourself and others. Ensure BBQs are positioned away from fences and trees, if you've been drinking alcohol make sure someone else does the cooking, or get a takeaway, and have a designated driver/taxi booked to get you home."

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## Amber encourages more women to consider a career as a firefighter



Later this year, we'll be opening up recruitment for full time firefighters in Staffordshire. Last year, over 800 people applied for just 16 roles. Amongst them was 18-year-old Amber Hill who was successful in her application and is currently completing her training.

Amber left college and was working at Costa Coffee when she saw that we were recruiting. She wants to inspire more women to consider a career in the fire service and said that her decision to join was born from her desire to 'do something important' in the local community.

She said: "I'm so glad I made the decision to apply. I'm learning lots on the practical and theory side in my training and been really encouraged by everyone since I started.

"You need to be relatable and kind in this role. Lots of what we do is centred around prevention, and if you're fitting a smoke alarm in someone's home and speaking to them about fire safety, you need to develop these social skills and use them on a daily basis to get the most out of it."

Positive Action Co-ordinator Lianne Petts said: "Amber attended one of our first positive action sessions last summer and you could already see her potential then. I'm really proud of the hard work and determination she has shown enabling her to join us and look forward to seeing her flourish throughout her career.

"It's really important for our workforce to be representative of the communities we serve. We're keen to encourage more applications from those groups who are currently under represented in our workforce. These are females, ethnic minorities and those who identify as LGBTQIA+."

A number of sessions will be run over the summer aimed at underrepresented groups to give them an insight into the role. Find out more by scanning the qr code or following this link [staffordshirefire.gov.uk/careers/future-firefighter](https://staffordshirefire.gov.uk/careers/future-firefighter)



## Help shape the future of your fire service

This year we will be embarking on our biggest community consultation to date as we plan our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The CRMP (previously called our Safety Plan) is a document that sets out our priorities for the next four years. In the early part of summer we'll be using the many community events we're attending to encourage people to give us their views on what is important to them. These views will help inform a draft version of the document which we will formally consult on from late summer, before launching a finalised plan in the New Year.

CRMP Manager, Mandy Eeles said: "We'd really love to get feedback from people to help inform our plans. We'll be at a number of events over the summer, from our own open days to Pride events, summer fayres and the annual county show. The feedback we gather will help shape our plans to ensure we service our communities needs as effectively as we can."

Follow our social channels to see what events we are attending and to find out when we launch our formal consultation.



## Performance information

This section provides the data in relation to our performance for the last six months in the local authority area.

All Attended Incidents	Oct 24	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Total
South Staffordshire	48	66	58	55	45	55	327

These figures detail the total number of incidents firefighters attended, these incidents can vary but typically include business fires, house fires, outdoor fires, road traffic collisions and animal rescues.

Accidental Dwelling Fires	Oct 24	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Total
South Staffordshire	3	2	3	1	1	4	14

These figures detail the number of accidental house fires firefighters attended. The most common cause of these incidents is cooking, however other common causes are electrical fires and cigarettes not fully put out.

Road Traffic Collisions	Oct 24	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Total
South Staffordshire	5	13	15	9	10	11	63

These figures detail the number of road traffic collisions firefighters attended. Firefighters don't attend all road traffic collisions however of the ones they do they are either required to make the vehicles safe or at the most serious collisions they often have to cut casualties free from their vehicles using specialist cutting equipment.

Safe and Well Visits	Oct 24	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Total
South Staffordshire	54	50	31	49	31	33	248

These figures detail the number of safe and well visits. A safe and well visit involves a member of staff going into the homes of the most vulnerable to talk to them about fire safety and put measures in place, such as smoke alarms, to improve their safety.

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**In an emergency always dial 999.**

General enquires: **0300 330 1000** (freephone)

Safe and Well: **0800 0241 999**

For people who are deaf or hard of hearing text: **07528 983 101**