

Community Newsletter

Stafford Borough



Winter Edition 2022



Chief fire officer, Rob Barber welcome

I'm delighted to introduce the second of our community newsletters which are designed to give you an insight into what we are up to, throughout the county, but also more locally in your area.

We recognise that times are difficult with the cost of living crisis, which is why we have our launched our "Be Warm. Be Safe" campaign to give you tips on how to heat your home safely this winter. We are also opening a number of stations as warm spaces so that people can come along for a warm, a cuppa and a chat.

Each of our delivery areas have welcomed new lead fire officers, you'll get an introduction to your local one on page three of this edition.

Finally we have recently produced our annual performance report. It's really important for us that our communities know how we are performing and what we are delivering for you, so there is a piece on page two detailing this and an infographic that summarises it all on the back page.

During 2023 we'll be engaging with a wide range of stakeholders and community members as we start to develop our next Community Risk Management Plan which is due to be published in April 2024. Further details will be communicated however I wanted to provide the opportunity for you to consider how you can be involved in this process.

Don't make cuts when it comes to fire safety this winter

"Don't make cuts when it comes to fire safety this winter" is the stark warning from your fire and rescue service.

An increase in accidental house fires is expected as people potentially make changes to the way they heat their homes and use energy this winter. A campaign has been launched "Be Warm. Be Safe" in an attempt to raise awareness and limit the impact the cost of living crisis could have on the number of fires.

The service is teaming up with partner organisations, opening some of its fire stations as warm spaces and distributing posters and leaflets to locations across the county to raise awareness of the campaign, highlighting the simple steps people can do to ensure they, and those they care for, are as safe as possible from fire in their homes.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Michelle Hickmott said:

"We are dealing with the unknown this winter but our prediction is we may see a rise in accidental house fires, which increases the likelihood of more injuries and sadly the potential for more deaths. It is deeply concerning, which is why we are going to be doing everything we can to encourage people to think carefully about their fire safety, and launching our campaign "Be warm. Be safe."

"Generally, the causes of accidental fires haven't changed over the years but this year could be different. As people look to more innovative and different ways to use energy and heat their homes we are expecting to see new trends emerge. We are already hearing stories of people opening up fire places and attempting to fit their own log burners, which if not using a professional, may mean that toxic gases are being released. Variable use tariffs encouraging people to use electricity outside of peak hours could see people using washers and dryers overnight, which isn't advisable as there is less time to respond to a fire if you are asleep when one occurs.

More information on the campaign "Be. Warm. Be Safe" campaign is available on the website www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk. Information is also available as to whether you or someone you know can qualify for a free Safe and Well Visit. The visit involves a firefighter or technician visiting your home to identify fire safety hazards and provide equipment or advice to reduce the likelihood of a fire occurring. Alternatively, you can call freephone **0800 0241 999** to see if you are eligible for a visit.

WARMSPACE.

We're opening our fire stations to provide our community with a warm space during the colder months. Pop in to enjoy companionship, conversation, activities and hot drinks.

**For more information visit:
staffordshirefire.gov.uk**



Free Olive Branch training



Carmel Warren, Partnership and Intervention Manager said: "The new delivery methods allow us to effectively reach a larger number of professionals who are capable of potentially saving a life.

"The training is now readily available at the learner's convenience and allows them to give basic fire safety advice as well as how to make a referral for vulnerable people in need of a Safe and Well visit.

"By distributing this knowledge and ensuring referral pathways are readily available, we are able to ensure all members of the community are well protected against fire."

Professionals who go into people's houses as part of their work are being encouraged to complete our free online 'Olive Branch' training course.

The training is aimed at giving professionals the awareness to identify potential fire hazards within the homes of vulnerable people and make the necessary referrals into the Service's Contact Centre to request a Safe and Well visit.

The initiative was launched in 2007 following the death of an elderly lady: Olive Simcock, who sadly passed away following a house fire in her South Staffordshire home.

Olive's lifestyle meant she was at high risk of being a victim of fire for several years, but she was never referred to the fire and rescue service and, therefore, didn't receive the appropriate prevention measures.

Hundreds of people have received face to face training over the past 15 years but a digital version of the course is now available online. The course, which only takes approximately 30 minutes to complete, can be accessed on the Learn Live platform, learnliveuk.com/olive-branch. Once on the platform individuals can register for an account, complete the training and then receive certification.

Report highlights work of the fire service in the community

According to the latest performance report the fire service here in Staffordshire attended just over 8,400 incidents in the last year, with 726 of those incidents being road traffic collisions.

Firefighters attended over 1,600 outdoor fires during 2021 to 2022, a nine per cent decrease compared to the previous year.

The report, titled the Statement of Assurance, for the period April 2021 to March 2022, also highlights prevention work carried out in the local community and how the service supported local communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Within the community, the service completed over 3,500 Safe and Well Visits during 2021/2022, which included fitting smoke and heat detectors as well as offering individuals advice on fire safety. These were carried out in the homes of the most vulnerable including the elderly and less mobile who may find it harder to escape should a fire occur in their homes.

Other highlights of the report include the service's delivery of The Prince's Trust programme, which supported over 100 young people, and the introduction of a new Environmental and Sustainability Strategy.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Michelle Hickmott, said: "I am pleased that the report highlights all the work we have carried out and continue to do within our communities to help individuals reduce their risk from fire, whether that is in the home, at work or in public spaces.

"The report shows how much has been done and what we have yet to do to make sure we are best serving the people of Staffordshire including our young people, elderly and most vulnerable.

"I'd like to thank all of our firefighters and staff for their hard work and continued commitment and professionalism, we will continue to work hard to make improvements on how we serve the communities of Staffordshire."

Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime, Ben Adams said: "A key priority in my Fire & Rescue Plan is having a modern, flexible service, able to prepare for and respond to emerging challenges.

"This report shows the scale and variety of that work, whether that's responding to incidents, providing opportunities for young people across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent or carrying out prevention work to keep the most vulnerable in our communities safe."

An infographic of the report statistics can be found overleaf, the full report is on the website, staffordshirefire.gov.uk.

Hospice donates goods to help firefighter training



Katharine House Hospice has donated unsold furniture and household items to assist firefighters with their incident training. Representatives from the hospice visited Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service's headquarters in Pirehill to donate a number of unsold items - including sofas, lampshades, tables, chairs, mattresses and kitchen appliances.

The items will be assembled inside the Service's smokehouse training facility - helping to replicate the inside of a residential flat during a serious house fire.

During training, the facility is filled with synthetic smoke to replicate the disorientating effects of a house fire. Firefighters are then trained to search effectively without becoming lost and disoriented.

The furniture they come across is invaluable in training to enhance their landmarking skills - a technique used to ensure crews can effectively pinpoint areas within the building and plan escape routes.

Learning and Development Trainer Phil Mulligan said: "These household items are vital for us to accurately replicate real-world scenarios in our training.

"In poor visibility, our firefighters will join together and search the property for the source of fire and for any people who need help.

"They are trained to landmark particular objects and areas which can then be used as reference points. Having these items means that our firefighters can develop their searching skills in a realistic training environment.

"We'd like to thank Katharine House for their continued support in keeping our communities safe."

Mary Worsdale, of Katharine House Hospice, said: "Contributing furniture and household items for firefighter training scenarios is a fantastic use of unsold items from our stores.

"We are extremely pleased to be working with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, and supporting their training and community safety initiatives."

Introducing new lead fire officer



Group Manager James Green has taken on the role of lead officer for the Western Service Delivery Group, which covers Stafford Borough, South Staffordshire and Cannock Chase District.

James, who joined Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service in 2005 has led on a number of key projects including the implementation of National Operational Guidance within the service. More recently, James has worked within the services Learning and Development department with responsibility for Operational Assurance and Incident Command.

In recent years he has also led the Service's 12-strong team of Hazardous Materials Advisers, who respond to incidents involving chemical, biological and radiological substances both within the county and in support of other fire and rescue services within the region.

On the new role James said: "Having previously worked as a Station Manager in the area, I am well aware of the hard work and commitment that is shown by colleagues on a daily basis. With this as my starting point, my job is to ensure that we provide the very best example of a modern fire and rescue service to the communities of Stafford, Cannock Chase and South Staffs."

"As a predominately rural area, on-call firefighters play a key part in everything that we do and I am keen to work with colleagues and members of the local community to address some of the challenges that we have traditionally faced with regards to the recruitment of on-call staff."

James, who is based at Stafford Fire Station can be contacted using the details below:

Email: James.Green@Staffordshirefire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01785 898754

Response



8404 total incidents	↓ UP 4% from last year
726 road traffic collisions	↓ UP 33% from last year
440 accidental house fires	↓ DOWN 15% from last year
1635 small outdoor fires	↓ DOWN 9% from last year
3 accidental house fire deaths	NO CHANGE from last year
25 accidental house fire injuries	↓ UP 25% from last year
155 accidental business fires	↓ UP 27% from last year
48 deliberate business fires	↓ UP 37% from last year



Protection

6 Enforcement Notices and **7** Prohibition Notices issued

400 telephone fire safety audits

730 full fire safety audits were carried out on those premises deemed most at risk



Health and Safety

Injuries up to **37**, in comparison to **26** the previous year.

Breakdown:

7 struck against object

4 manual handling

4 slip, trip or fall

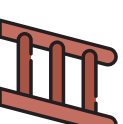
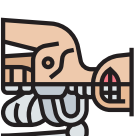
13 struck by object

2 fall from height

4 musculoskeletal

2 entrapment

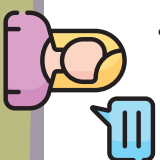
2 other



Prevention

3,583 Safe and Well visits *

↓ **DOWN 13.6%**
from last year



Human Resources

Recruited:

23 on-call firefighters

18 wholetime firefighters

20 support staff



Finance

Budget set at **£42m**,
Capital spend **£0.4m**.



* Due to Covid-19 restrictions only high priority Safe and Well visits were carried out.