

Community Newsletter



Stoke-on-Trent

Summer Edition 2022



Chief Fire Officer, Rob Barber welcome

I'm delighted to introduce the first of these 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. When I took on the role of Chief Fire Officer in October one of my priorities was to engage with you, our communities, more often. Now that life is getting back to some normality I can now follow up on this and the community newsletter is just one way of supporting that priority.

Highlights in the newsletter for me are the promotion of our ever-popular Family Day, which I hope to meet some of you at this September. Our on-call recruitment drive, for which I cannot stress enough the importance of needing people who live within around five minutes of a recruiting station to consider. The role is paid, flexible and rewarding and you will be providing emergency fire cover for the area in which you live. Finally the graphs which chart number of incidents and safe and well visits, which will also now be increasing as we come out of restrictions. Performance is another of my priorities and I think it's as important for you to know how we are doing as it is for our staff to know.

We hope you find the newsletter interesting and we'd welcome your feedback to shape future editions. Please send any comments to campaigns.engagement@staffordshire.police.uk

Saturday 10 September 2022



Fire Service HQ, ST15 OBS

Living Alone campaign launches

People who live alone are the focus of our latest campaign after statistics revealed that they sadly nearly four times more likely to die or be seriously injured in a fire.

In Staffordshire in the past five years alone there have been 741 accidental house fires in properties where the occupier lived alone and was aged 45 plus. Sadly 13 of these fires proved fatal.

Following a kitchen safety campaign earlier this year, this next phase is focusing on having working smoke alarms, testing them, having an escape plan and knowing what to do in the event of a fire.

Head of Prevention Mark Walchester said: "Sadly the facts speak for themselves – people who live alone are more likely to be victims of fire. It's important that those who live alone, or those who look out for someone who lives alone, take note of this message and act on it. There are some really simple actions you can do to reduce the likelihood of a fire occurring and to evacuate safely should one occur.

"The easiest and most effective thing you can do is ensure you have working smoke alarms. The second thing to do is have an escape plan so you know how you would get out of your home if a fire occurred and your normal exit route was blocked. And finally know what to do if there is a fire – get out, stay out and call 999, never attempt to tackle a fire."

To check your risk or that of someone you know visit our website www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk and click on the Living Alone link.





New Assistant Chief Fire Officer joins Staffordshire ranks



We have welcomed a new Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) to our ranks following an intensive recruitment process.

Michelle Hickmott, formerly of the London Fire Brigade, started her new role as AFCO last month, where she was welcomed by Chief Fire Officer Rob Barber.

Michelle, who has more than a decade of fire service experience, having served in Warwickshire, London and at The Fire Service College, said she is looking forward to getting to know the communities of Staffordshire and understanding the challenges and opportunities ahead. She said: "I'm so proud to be part of this fantastic fire service and am looking forward to understanding what Staffordshire is all about so I can best serve its people.

"On taking the role it was important to me that I moved my home to Staffordshire so I can be part of the communities we serve on a daily basis, along with sampling an oatcake or two!"

"I've been here for less than a month and I have already experienced the fantastic ethos, culture and commitment of the service across the board, both operationally and strategically."

New firefighter recruits welcomed

A team of new recruits are currently training to become firefighters. Seven individuals have joined and are taking part in the National Firefighter Apprenticeship Programme.

Their training programme includes sessions on hose and ladder use, breathing apparatus, hazardous materials, swift water rescue, working at heights, prevention and protection, road traffic collisions and trauma care. Upon completion of their training later this summer, a special presentation ceremony will be held, before the firefighters are posted to a station in the county.

The cohort bring a vast range of experience between them with previous job roles including an RAF Regiment Gunner, a gardener, a JCB engineer and a military police officer.

Station Manager Lee Chevin, from the service's Learning and Development team, said: "We are delighted to welcome these new recruits to Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service. The course is well underway and they are making great progress so far.

"From responding to emergencies to early intervention and educating communities; they will go on to help make a safer Staffordshire."

Staffordshire's own Lionesses competing in tournament

Our own Lionesses are poised to square off against other servicewomen in a five-a-side football competition later this year.

Proposals have been put forward to hold an annual tournament, composed of 15 services across the UK, which could potentially land some talented players an opportunity on the international stage.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Michelle Hickmott, is set to lead the line in the tournament, having previously played for England nationally.

She said: "The service has two former England full-backs in its ranks in myself and Rachel Unitt. She is super talented, she's such a fantastic player.

"Hopefully, with the other players in the squad, we can achieve great results together!"

Trainer Claire Lester, who is championing the cause, said: "I have been involved in football my whole life as a player, coach and manager but on joining the service this came to a stop.

"I believe this is an exciting opportunity, not only to represent Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service but to also promote the talented women we have in our ranks."



Rachel Unitt



Become an on-call firefighter in your local area

We are currently recruiting for on call firefighters in Burslem, Hanley & Longton.

On-call firefighters are paid and provide an emergency response in their local area, they need to respond to a pager and get to their nearest station within five minutes of being alerted.

A range of shifts are available with many people choosing to be an on-call firefighter to either supplement their existing income or because they just want to serve and protect their local community. Many have existing jobs and work their shifts around their other employment or some have flexible jobs where they work from home or their employer allows them to be released from work to attend emergency incidents.

As well as responding to emergencies, on-call firefighters can also get involved in community fire safety initiatives in their local area.

Head of Emergency Response Dez Stoddart said: "For those people who have never considered being a firefighter before, consider it. It's such a rewarding role and on-call firefighters play a really important part in their local community. If you have any reservations or something that is stopping you from looking into it more just have a chat with us about it and we can give you all the information you need to make an informed decision. We can also provide advice about the best ways to train for those concerned about the physical test you need to complete when applying.

"We have people from a real range of background who are on call firefighters – carers, full time mums, bakers and accountants to name a few!"

If you think you too could be always ready to respond to an emergency and help your local community, visit our website to apply: www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/careers/on-call-firefighters

You can also contact the local on-call support officer for these areas: Burslem, Hanley & Longton.

Local lady backs Living Alone campaign

A local lady has backed our campaign, targeted at people who live alone, after a co-incidental series of events made her realise she was at risk.

Carol Simpson lived in a flat on Trentham Road in Blurton, Stoke-on-Trent until a fatal fire in a neighbouring flat in April left her home uninhabitable. She moved in with her partner and is now waiting for work to be completed to allow her to return.

Last month Carol attended her local walking group which the fire service had arranged to visit to ask for feedback from the attendees about the posters and leaflets they were planning to use for their campaign promoting home fire safety.

One of these posters was about having working smoke alarms and Carol went back to her partner's home following the session with a clear action to test his alarms. She was shocked to find that the one alarm he had, had no battery in and so rang the fire service to find out if they were eligible for a safe and well visit. They came out the same day and a member of the team had carried out a visit and fitted three smoke alarms in the property.

Carol said: "I can't thank the fire service enough, firstly for involving us in their campaign before it even launched, if they hadn't I just wouldn't have thought to have checked. I've had so much to deal with since having to move out, I just wrongly presumed my partner would have working smoke alarms. Secondly the service we received when we realised he had no alarms, they quickly came out to visit us and were so helpful. This campaign has really raised awareness of fire safety for both of us, bearing in mind that ordinarily we do live alone. I've since mentioned it to some friends who also had no working smoke alarms fitted. I'll definitely be making sure my smoke alarms are working when I am in a position to move back into my flat."





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-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Total
Stoke-on-Trent	155	212	182	183	173	240	1145

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 House Fires	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Total
Stoke-on-Trent	6	15	14	17	8	11	71

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-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Total
Stoke-on-Trent	12	10	10	9	11	14	66

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-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Total
Stoke-on-Trent	152	199	144	150	171	171	987

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.

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

