

Community Newsletter

Newcastle-under-Lyme



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 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.

*It's my job to be
always
ready.*

Maria Cole - Full-time student, on-call Firefighter



**Join us as an on-call firefighter,
we're recruiting now.**

Free Olive Branch training



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.

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."

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.

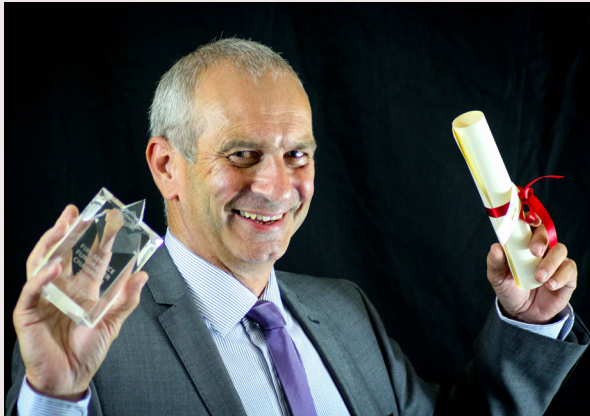
"I'd like to thank all of our firefighters and staff for their hard work and continued commitment and professionalism, we will continue to work hard to make improvements on how we serve the communities of Staffordshire."

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.

Staffordshire's longest serving firefighter retires



Staffordshire's longest serving firefighter has hung up his boots after half a century, spending the final years of his career based at Newcastle Community Fire Station.

Sixty-six-year-old Kelvin Chell recently retired after completing an incredible 50-year career with the Service. His retirement was also celebrated with him winning the 2022 Your Heroes 'Uniformed Hero' award for his exceptional service to local communities.

Kelvin has championed for countless charities throughout his career, raising over half-a-million pounds for causes like Air Ambulance, Royal British Legion, Dougie Mac Hospice, Donna Louise, MACCAS project (mental health in the young), the Royal Stoke University Hospital cancer ward, Cardiac Risk in the Young and various others – all whilst fulfilling his operational duties in the fire service.

In September 1972, Kelvin joined the Service as a junior firefighter straight after leaving school.

He said: "I've attended incidents of all types during my career – ranging from road traffic collisions as part of a rescue tender crew in Newcastle to several pot bank fires in the north of the region.

"These incidents have involved challenging and tactical rescues which have ultimately saved lives."

Chief Fire Officer Rob Barber said: "Kelvin has been an inspiration to so many within our Service.

"I have worked alongside him and I know how diligent and hardworking he is. He has maintained the highest standards throughout his incredible 50-year career and I am going to miss him greatly, as many of his colleagues will too."

Prior to his final day, Kelvin operated from Newcastle Community Fire Station as a fire safety inspecting officer – enforcing the regulations of various workplaces and public premises in North Staffordshire.

Kelvin added: "I'm going to retire with half-a-century of fantastic memories. My career was everything I wanted it to be back in 1972 and it's something I will always cherish leading into my next chapter."

Introducing new lead fire officer



Group Manager Dave Steele has taken on the leading fire officer role for the Northern Service Delivery Group, which covers Stoke-on-Trent, the Moorlands and Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Dave, who lives locally, joined Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service in 1995 and has served at numerous stations around the county. He has also been involved in developing the service through fire service support departments including Central Risk Reduction, Business Transformation and Collaboration and working alongside police colleagues in our Joint Emergency Transport Services department.

On the new role Dave said: "The north of the county is my home so I'm pleased to be serving the area in which I live. I am well aware of the hard work and commitment that is shown by colleagues on a daily basis when delivering service to our communities.

"Now that we are out of the pandemic we are keen to engage more with our communities and we are determined to visit the homes of all of our oldest and most vulnerable residents to ensure they are as safe as possible from fire.

"Another priority is the recruitment of on-call firefighters who serve some of our busiest stations, as well as providing a service to our rural communities. I'm keen for us to attract people who have perhaps never considered a role as an on-call firefighter before. It's a rewarding job and is a great way to supplement your income as well as learn additional skills."

Dave who is based at Hanley Fire and Police Station can be contacted by:

Email: david.steele@staffordshirefire.gov.uk

Tel: 01785 898775

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



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

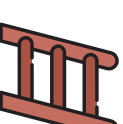
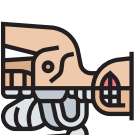
13 struck by object

2 fall from height

4 musculoskeletal

2 entrapment

2 other



Protection

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

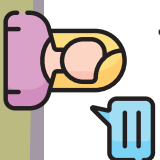
400 telephone fire safety audits

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



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.