

Making it Happen

4 Service reform

Develop and support a diverse, healthy and highly professional workforce who are motivated and empowered to improve our services.

A fire and rescue service for tomorrow
(Staffordshire Commissioner)

We recognise that our people are our most valuable assets. The people who work and volunteer for us work hard to make sure we are delivering our services efficiently and in the most effective way. We currently have circa 626 firefighters (whole-time and on-call), over 200 support staff and 78 volunteers working in various roles around Staffordshire, all with one common goal; to ensure the people of Staffordshire are as safe as possible. We will ensure our people are equipped and trained to carry out their roles to the best of their ability and to encourage them to reach their full potential.

Our headquarters provides fantastic training facilities using the most real-life scenarios possible. We continue to develop the training and capabilities of firefighters to make sure that we can meet the changing demand caused by new and emerging risks. For example, we have developed and delivered a course dedicated to the incident command of complex

waste fires. We provide core prevention training to firefighters and new prevention staff through our accredited community safety module.

The service needs to continually improve, adapt and evolve to be able to thrive in a time of unprecedented change and financial challenge. Our people are at the heart of that. We encourage our people to explore new ways of working and embrace new technology.

We have a strong and enviable record in keeping our people and our communities safe. Over the life of our last Corporate Safety Plan (2017-2020) we made a number of significant changes and transformed the way in which our services are delivered across Staffordshire, to improve how efficient and effective we are and, to ensure our help is directed where it is needed most, such as:

- Where practical and cost effective, offering and providing shared facilities and response hubs for fire, police, ambulance, health, local authorities and free space for voluntary groups at our community fire stations
- Collaborating with Staffordshire Police to deliver shared services including supplies, logistics, occupational health and a joint transport and engineering facility. Our communications, estates, finance, human resources and procurement teams moved to the police in 2019 creating more shared functions

- The introduction of 11 new fire engines in 2019 equipped with new technology and state-of-the-art equipment helping to improve firefighter safety and the way we respond to incidents
- Developing our multi-agency schools and community safety education programmes with the introduction of our interactive Safe+Sound pods. These offer immersive sessions aimed at encouraging people to make informed and positive lifestyle choices helping to improve their health, safety and wellbeing
- Funding our Community Sprinkler Project, which aims to have sprinklers fitted in all mid to high-rise buildings in Staffordshire by 2026
- Delivering a range of programmes in partnership with the Prince's Trust to young people, many whom who have problems associated with a lack of confidence, stress, social isolation, mental issues, and alcohol/substance misuse
- Working with partners to transform our successful home fire risk checks into Safe and Well visits, which now focus on health and wellbeing, as well as fire safety. These visits help to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities and assist in reducing demand upon other public services

We have achieved all this in the context of reduced funding by remodelling our operational duty systems and crewing methods, reducing the amount of management positions in the organisation and re-designing our staffing models, allowing us to focus on valuable prevention and protection work.

We are confident that our positive approach to transformation and better understanding the needs of our communities places us in an excellent position to continue working in a way that best protects Staffordshire, its people and the environment.

Although our funding for the future is uncertain, we hope to continue to employ the right people who embody the ethos of the service. Our cultural message is at the heart of all we do. We strive to be inspirational role models who motivate each other and promote values of trust and integrity. Treating each other with respect and considering the wellbeing of others is key. Together, with our cultural message underpinning our activities, we aim to ensure Staffordshire is the safest place to be now and in the future.

We put health and wellbeing at the centre of everything we do. As part of our Wellbeing Strategy, we provide a number of ways in which our people can access further support should they need it. We adopt the 'safe person' concept for our operational crews who work in inherently hazardous dynamic environments to ensure their safety at all times.

We propose to continue to strengthen our culture of openness, trust and inclusivity. We will seek to ensure that the makeup of the service reflects the communities we serve.

We want our workforce to be more reflective of society at all levels in the organisation. Having a range of perspectives, cultures and experiences brings a greater understanding to our organisation, which contributes to decision making. We will take positive action to help encourage recruitment from underrepresented groups. We want to create an inclusive, welcoming environment for our employees, the communities we serve and our partners as we understand these are mutually beneficial relationships.

