





Contents

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Annual Report 2021-22

Introdu	uction	3
Cheshi	re Fire and Rescue Service Core Values	4
	Being Inclusive	4
	Doing the Right Thing	6
	Acting with Compassion	8
0)	Making a Difference	10
Focus	on performance	12
Summ	ary of Accounts 2021-22	13
Fire Authority Members		14
Service Management Team		









Introduction

On behalf of Cheshire Fire Authority and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, we are pleased to introduce a new-look Annual Report for 2021-22.

This document is a review of just some of our work over the last 12 months and encompasses a wide range of activities; from our response to emergencies and our life-saving prevention and protection activity, as well as the help our staff provided in the community in the second half of the Covid pandemic and the support we provided to our fellow firefighters in Ukraine.

Central to how we operate are our Core Values, which set out the ways in which we aim to make our Service and the wider community a better, safer place in which to live, work and visit. We align everything we do to our Core Values, and you will be able to see this over the following pages of this Report, where we detail a range of highlights from the year that demonstrate each of the values. Towards the end of document, you can read about our performance, our finances and find information about members of the Fire Authority and the Service Management Team.

We are now in the third year of our 2020-24 Integrated Risk Management Plan, which sets out the actions we are taking to improve our service to the communities of Cheshire and address the key fire and rescue related risks that we face.

As we begin to develop our new Community Risk Management Plan for the years beyond 2024, we do so knowing that there is a significant amount of change on the horizon for fire and rescue services, and in wider society. Our new Plan, which will be subject to public consultation in the autumn of 2023, will take new and emerging risks into account and outline how we can continue to make Cheshire safer for all who live, work and travel within the county.



Councillor Bob Rudd Chairman, Cheshire Fire Authority



Mark Cashin Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive



Our Core Values are aligned with the principles set out in the National Fire Chiefs Council's Code of Ethics for fire and rescue services:

- putting communities first
- integrity
- · dignity and respect
- leadership
- equality, diversity and inclusion.

3

By making an impact in our

organisation and in our

communities in whatever

ways we can, for as many

people as we can.



Being inclusive

By acting with integrity, respect and without prejudice.

Meeting the diverse needs of our communities and staff

Safety Central embraces language programme

Our interactive lifeskills education centre, Safety Central, is now even more inclusive after staff embraced a language programme to help them communicate effectively with all visitors.

Makaton is the UK's leading language system for adults and children with learning or communication difficulties. The ever-growing number of people nationally who utilise the language programme now includes the team at Safety Central after they were given the opportunity to complete Makaton levels one to four courses during lockdown. There are also Makaton symbols, signage and video interpretation around the centre.

Centre Manager Hazel Crampton said: "Lots of the children and young people who



visit us use Makaton, as do a lot of the adults who support them. We strive to make the centre as inclusive as possible so that as many people as possible can learn about staying safe and well, regardless of their abilities."

she shows in support of gender equality and women's issues is inspirational

66 The commitment

Hannah is an **Exceptional Ally**

Station Manager Hannah Caulfield was presented with the Exceptional Allies Award by the Women in the Fire Service UK (WFS) network.

She was officially recognised for promoting gender equality and supporting colleagues to be the best they can be.

Hannah is valued for the work she does to make new staff feel supported and for the processes she has put in place to improve the job for female firefighters. Maternity and menopause policies and welfare facilities are just a few of the improvements Hannah has helped to bring about.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Alex Waller said: "Hannah demonstrates exceptional qualities. The commitment she shows in support of gender equality and women's issues is inspirational. She is a true role model within the Service to all her colleagues."

Hannah said: "There is fantastic support for all staff in our Service, with the core belief being that if people can completely be themselves at work it enables us to reach our full potential."



Gold AND Silver in Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

We are now the second most LGBT+ inclusive workplace in the UK according to Stonewall and its latest Top 100 employers list.

Chief Fire Officer Mark Cashin said: "By having a diverse workforce that is fully inclusive, we are better prepared to meet all the needs of everyone in our communities. Additionally, by actively promoting LGBT+ inclusion, our recruitment catchment is vastly broadened as we strive to inspire people from all backgrounds to consider us as an employer."

Stonewall's Gold award was given for our commitment and efforts to creating an inclusive work environment.



66 We strive to inspire people from all backgrounds to consider us as an employer



Fasting to appreciate and understand Ramadan

Firefighters from Wilmslow's Delta Watch fasted for a day to show support and solidarity to their Muslim colleague Usman Akhtar.

They were inspired by a community cohesion initiative led by One Voice Blackburn. It

called for non-Muslims to not eat anything for a day during Ramadan under #imnotamuslim butiwillfastforoneday.

Watch Manager Oliver Tremain said: "I'm so proud of my team for making a small sacrifice to show our support for Usman, while gaining a greater appreciation and understanding of Ramadan and what it means for Muslims all over the world."





Doing the right thing

By holding each other to account for ensuring high standards of professionalism in everything we do.

Acting ethically and with integrity in all that we do

Going green in Chester

Our first carbon neutral fire station opened its doors in Chester, 110 years after the very first fire station opened in the city.

Thought to be one of the first of its kind in the country the fire station has replaced the ageing 1970s building and boasts four bays and modern training facilities such as a new training tower, a breathing apparatus building and a road traffic collision training area.



The state-of-the-art building was officially opened by Cllr Bob Rudd, Cheshire Fire Authority's Chairman. Cllr Rudd said: "The technology and tools used by our crews has changed so much over time. It is essential that we continually progress to ensure that our firefighters are provided with the facilities they need and deserve, and have the best working environment we can give them.

"The station is yet another example of how Cheshire Fire Authority is investing in firefighting and helping to keep our communities safe."



The station is yet another example of how Cheshire Fire Authority is investing in firefighting and helping to keep our communities safe



Firefighter Colin Burgess

Queen's bravery commendations awarded

Two of our firefighters were honoured with a Queen's Commendation for Bravery, approved by the George Cross Committee.

Nigel Quarmby and Colin Burgess, along with their fellow crew members, were alerted to reports of a woman threatening to enter the River Mersey at Warrington. Despite the obvious risk to life, they entered the water using a line secured to the waterside in order to move closer to the woman.

Unfortunately, she had already been swept away by the current and the rescue line was not long enough. Firefighter Burgess used himself as the tether for Firefighter Quarmby to wade into the water to provide enough line to reach the casualty.



Firefighter Nigel Quarmby

They managed to pull the woman from the water and take her to safety through deep mud and poor visibility. Due to their quick thinking and determination her life was saved.

Chief Fire Officer Mark Cashin said: "We are extremely proud of Nigel and Colin's quick thinking and brave actions and that of their colleagues. They both showed courage and determination in the most difficult of circumstances and they accepted significant risks to their own safety to save someone's life."

Providing aid to Ukraine

Fire engines and a hydraulic platform were driven across Europe by firefighters who volunteered to deliver the vehicles and hundreds of pieces of surplus firefighting equipment, including hose reels, helmets and other equipment to the Polish State Fire Service, whose staff then transferred the consignment on to Ukraine.

The kit is being used to support firefighters, emergency services and volunteers who are battling together on the front line, often using old or worn equipment.

They have been dealing daily with fires and other emergencies to save lives, people and property since the war started.

The fire engine doors bore the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service logo with the words 'Supporting

We knew that this donation of equipment and vehicles was very much needed so we



Ukraine'. Inside the drivers' cabs were stickers which read: "In solidarity and support of the people of Ukraine, from Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service". We also made and saved to a USB pen drive a short video, narrated by a Ukrainian-speaking firefighter, demonstrating how to use the hydraulic platform.

Chief Fire Officer Mark Cashin said: "We knew that this donation of equipment and vehicles, no longer in operational use here, was very much needed so we were proud to be able to offer our support. Ukrainian firefighters are often under devastating attacks while doing their job protecting their communities in the most difficult of circumstances. Our thoughts are with them."





Acting with compassion

By being understanding and offering help to each other and to our communities with warmth, patience and kindness.

Commitment with kindness and understanding



Caring through Covid

Firefighters and staff of a frontline 999 service are used to dealing with emergencies but, for most of us, we have never experienced one as unparalleled as Covid-19 which continued to touch all our lives throughout 2021-22.

All our staff, whether operational, prevention, protection, support, cadets or volunteers, stepped up to learn new skills, work alongside partner agencies and support communities in any way they could. Some set aside their usual day jobs to take on entirely new roles and skills, with colleagues taking on additional work to ensure we continued to carry out our core role as a Service. Whatever their roles throughout the pandemic, they carried them out with commendable altruism, willingness and dedication.

In a real team effort staff and

volunteers worked tirelessly to keep people safe and protect them from harm during some of the most unprecedented times this country has seen for decades. Between them they gave more than 100,000 vaccinations, delivered blood, breast milk, thousands of prescriptions and school meals, education packs and laptops for home-schooled children, swabbed people and

fantastic to see how our staff have adapted our services to contribute to the national effort

provided transport for tests and vaccinations, managed mass deliveries of personal protective equipment, checked on vulnerable residents such as people with dementia, and delivering bulk foods to food banks

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Alex Waller said: "It has been fantastic to see how our staff have adapted our services to contribute to the national effort and help to protect the community and save lives. It is humbling to witness them stepping up to the many work-related challenges whilst also dealing with personal pressures and impacts on home life and family."





Spreading cheer

We packed fire engines with Christmas cheer to spread a little happiness to those who might not have had such a happy festive season.

In Macclesfield, firefighters supported Santa Claus in the run up to Christmas. For several weeks leading up to the big day, they urged the public to donate gifts for Macclesfield District General Hospital's Emergency Department and Children's wards. They were delighted to be able to deliver them to the hospital to ensure smiles all round for children who were not able to be at home on Christmas Day.

Knutsford Fire Station reserved a parking space for Santa's sleigh so children could call in to say hello to the big man in the red suit and his little helpers. Over in Runcorn, the on-call watch delivered hampers provided by Howdens Joiners to nominated members of the community. Meanwhile, Prevention colleagues spread some special cheer when they supported Age UK in delivering wellbeing packs to veterans in Halton as part of a Safe and Well Visit. Staff listened to stories from those who had served and said it was a truly humbling experience and an honour to meet the veterans.

Charlie's happy ending

Firefighters went the extra mile to rescue a helpless foal that had fallen down an embankment in Runcorn.

Charlie was stuck at the bottom of an embankment alongside a brook, tangled in nettles and in a bad way.

Firefighters and the Lymm animal rescue unit walked a considerable distance through challenging terrain in very warm weather to reach the stricken foal. They immediately got to work in carefully extricating her and encouraging her to her feet, although she was barely able to walk.

Heartbreakingly, Charlie was rejected by a horse believed to be her mother and there were serious concerns for her welfare as she was weak and unable to fend for herself.

Firefighter Ben Sanderson said: "She was clearly very young and needed our help - she was so young that she was barely able to walk. We weren't going to leave her on her own and Caren from the RSPCA, who had been assisting us, suggested calling a vet to meet us at the road so Charlie could immediately be assessed, saving vital time.

"So we took it in turns to carry Charlie across the difficult terrain, back to our fire engine where we cared for her as the vet arrived.

"We were getting quite attached to her, which made it all the more difficult when the RSPCA and the vet at the scene informed us that it didn't look good and she was going to have to be rushed away for specialist care."

A few days later, the RSPCA contacted the firefighters to let them know that, against all the odds, Charlie was doing well and that, had she not been rescued, she would almost certainly have died alone by the river. She has now been taken into care and is doing very well.





Making a difference

By making an impact in our organisation and in our communities in whatever ways we can, for as many people as we can.

Striving to be the best we can for the benefit of all

Effective, efficient and inclusive

England's independent fire and rescue service watchdog praised our work to keep communities safe from fire and to create a fair and inclusive workplace.

In its latest round of inspections Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) rated our Service as 'good' across all three of its inspection criteria. This means we are 'performing as expected' in the way we prevent and respond to emergencies, spend our money and look after our people.

Welcoming the report, Chief Fire Officer Mark Cashin said: "This is a comprehensive assessment that first and foremost reflects the hard work of all our firefighters and fire staff. The inspectors noted how our people engaged 'positively' and 'constructively' with them and that it was a 'pleasure' to revisit the Service.

Our grading of 'good' is testament to their commitment to providing the best possible service to everyone who lives and works in Cheshire.

"I am particularly pleased that HMICFRS has recognised how we have not only maintained core activities to a very high standard throughout the pandemic, but also continued to develop as an organisation and address the areas for improvement highlighted in the last inspection."

The report highlighted our Service's:

- "impressive investment to promote culture and values, and equality, diversity and inclusion" across the organisation
- "range of wellbeing support" for staff, including increased management visibility and the appointment of a mental health advisor

66 This is a comprehensive assessment that reflects the hard work of all our firefighters and fire staff

- "clear, risk-based approach to prevention activity" which includes Safe and Well visits that staff continued to make to vulnerable people during the pandemic. HMICFRS found we carried out three times the national average number of visits during 2019/20
- training for incident commanders, who "safely, assertively and effectively" manage incidents and feel empowered to use their professional judgement when making operational decisions
- work to protect the public through the enforcement of fire regulations by, for example, assessing risks in all Cheshire's high-rise buildings and campaigning for the installation of sprinklers. The report highlights that the Service undertook twice the national average number of fire safety audits in 2019/20
- "sound understanding of future financial challenges" based on "robust, realistic and prudent assumptions". Its services are provided at a lower than national average cost.





Royal opening

His Royal Highness The Earl of Wessex officially opened our new state-of-the-art training centre at Sadler Road, Winsford.

The Earl was greeted by Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority Cllr Bob Rudd and was given a guided tour of the multi-million pound facility.

Firefighters put their skills to into action and demonstrated how the training centre will be used to ensure they have the expertise and knowledge to keep residents safe for years to come.

The facilities have been designed to immerse firefighters in real-life operational situations making them better equipped and skilled to keep the communities of Cheshire safe.

The centre utilises innovative technology and real-life scenario sets, ranging from serious motorway collisions to dealing with building fires and chemical incidents.

As part of his visit, the Earl also met with a number of staff from our Service, Cheshire Constabulary and North West Ambulance Service to thank them for their dedication throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.



Technology to improve operational response

We have a new weapon in our armoury that is invaluable at challenging incidents and helps save lives.

The Scorpion High Reach Extending Turret (HRET) is built by Emergency One and is a fire engine that has the ability to deliver water and foam from height, crucial when dealing with building fires and fires in industrial yards.

Neil Griffiths, Head of Service Delivery said: "It's fantastic to see how technology is improving our operational response to fighting fires, especially as we face the challenges of modern methods of building construction.

"As well as performing like a regular fire engine, the addition of the Scorpion HRET to our fleet will provide other options for incident commanders to consider when dealing with challenging incidents.

"It is so important that we utilise the very best 21st century innovation to help protect our communities and keep our crews as safe as possible."

66 It is fantastic to see how technology is improving our operational response to fighting fires



Focus on Performance 2021-22

Our prevention agenda continues to have a positive impact on the number of residents who are killed or injured across our county.

Over the past decade accidental fires in the home have reduced by around 27%, with fire related injuries caused by accidental fires in the home reducing to an 11-year low. In 2020-21, 85% of households where dwelling fires occurred had a working smoke alarm. In addition, deliberate fires, which often occur outdoors, have also reduced by 67% since 2010-11.

The following infographic highlights some of the key trends relating to different aspects of our performance over recent years.

Community outcomes



We attended **2,379** fires in 2021-22. This is **more than 1,300** fewer fires compared with 2011-12.

We attended **313** accidental fires in the home. This is 30% lower compared with 2011-12.





168 (54%) of these fires started in the kitchen.



129 (40%) had a cooking related ignition source.



68 (22%) occurred in the homes of people of pensionable age who live alone.



12 injuries were recorded in accidental fires in the home. This is the lowest number recorded since 2011-12.

85% of households where fires occurred had a working smoke alarm fitted.





We attended **891** deliberate fires. This is **59%** fewer deliberately ignited fires compared with 2011-12.

The majority of these were smaller outdoor fires.

In 2021-22, the average response time to life risk incidents in Cheshire was 8 minutes 35 seconds.



Our target is no more than 10 minutes.

HMICFRS inspection



In 2021, we were inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. This inspection examined our effectiveness,

efficiency and how well we look after our people.



The extent to which we are **effective** at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks is **GOOD**



The extent to which we are **efficient** at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks is **GOOD**



The extent to which we look after our people is GOOD

Community outputs



Our advocates and firefighters carried out 11,268 Safe and Well visits to people most at risk of fire.

Our Protection Team and firefighters carried out ...

2,015 thematic inspections in non domestic premises



1,677 fire safety audits in non domestic premises

102% of their planned risk based inspection programme inspections

Staff and services



Sickness remained low, with an average of **6.71** days per person



All essential firefighting training was compeleted



Priority based budgeting continues to generate savings

Summary of accounts 2021-22

Cheshire Fire Authority is the public body which manages Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of local communities.

From April 2021 to March 2022 it was made up of 23 elected Members, with eight appointed by Cheshire West and Chester Council, eight by Cheshire East Council, three by Halton Borough Council and four by Warrington Borough Council. The political composition of the Authority during that time comprised eight Conservative members, 12 Labour members, two independent members and one Liberal Democrat.

The Authority is a separate legal body and has the power to set council tax and agree its own policies and procedures without needing the approval of these local councils. Its meetings are open to the public and are usually held at the Sadler Road Training Centre in Winsford. Full details are on the website – www.cheshirefire.gov.uk.

Its key duties include approving the annual budget; setting its council tax level and agreeing the numbers of staff and levels of equipment necessary to provide an effective service and approving the organisation's key policies, plans and strategies.

It is also responsible for ensuring its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is properly accounted for and how it aims for continuous improvement. To demonstrate this it produces an Annual Governance Statement to accompany the Statement of Accounts. From 2013-14 the Authority has included this as part of its annual Statement of Assurance.

Accounts

The Fire Authority's accounts show how it uses its resources to deliver a fire and rescue service across Cheshire. The summary accounts provide an overview of where the funds come from, how they are used and the financial position as at 31 March 2022. The 2021-22 Statement of Accounts include the Authority's 25 per cent share of the cost of running of North West Fire Control Limited.

Summary Revenue Account

The 2021-22 Fire Authority net revenue budget and expenditure was £46m. The Authority has a general reserve of £2m at 31 March 2022, which is just under five per cent of the budget, any underspends reported in the year for 2021-22 has been transferred to support capital expenditure.

The Authority also holds earmarked reserves to meet specific needs in line with its Reserves Strategy. The Authority is developing a range of options to ensure that it can operate efficiently and effectively and provide value for money.

Summary Balance Sheet

The Summary Balance Sheet shows the 2021-22 end of year position and the most obvious point to note is the net liability of £494m. In other words. assets of £129m, current liabilities of £7m but long term liabilities of £616m. Most of the liabilities relate to expected future pension costs of £604m, compared to £602m in 2020-21. All local authorities are required to recognise this liability in their balance sheet even though it is not an immediate call on their resources, but instead is paid out over the life of existing and future pensioners. At present, all deficits on the Firefighters Pension Scheme are funded by government through a specific top up grant.

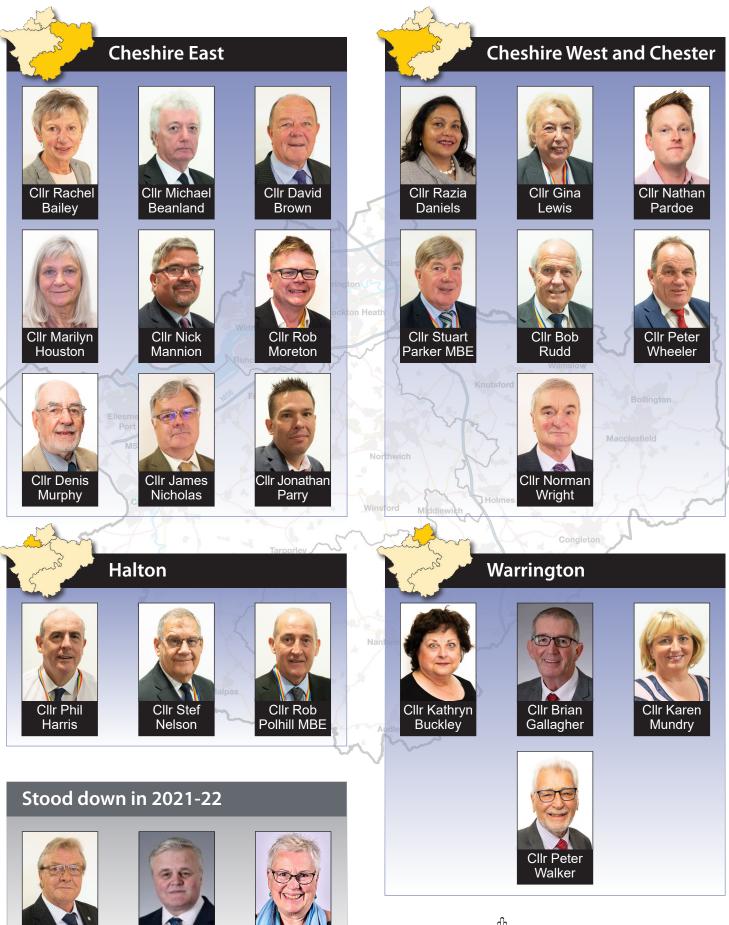
Summary Revenue Account 2021-22	£'000	£'000
Firefighting and Rescue Operations	30,938	
Protection and Prevention	4,058	
Premises, Fleet and other Corporate Support Costs	11,169	
Net Cost of Service		46,165
North West Fire Control - Cost of service		164
Other income, expenditure and adjustments		-1,846
Amount to be met by Govt Grant and Local Taxation		44,483
Revenue Support Grant and Local Taxation	-13,696	
Council Tax	-30,787	
Net General Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	-	
Balance on General Fund brought forward	-2,290	
Net movement on general reserves	1	
Balance on General Fund Carried Forward		- 2,289

Summary Balance Sheet 2021-22	£'000	£'000
Long Term Assets	103,724	
Current Assets	25,598	
Long Term Liabilities	-616,343	
Current Liabilities	-7,413	
Total Assets less Total Liabilities		-494,434
Financed by:		
Unusable reserves	518,446	
Earmarked Reserves	-21,723	
General Reserve	-2,289	
TOTAL NET WORTH		494,434

The audit of the Authority's accounts for the year ending 31-03-2022 will not be completed before the end of September 2022. A draft copy of the statement of accounts are available on our website at www.cheshirefire.gov.uk.

Paul Vaughan, Treasurer, 01606 868700

Cheshire Fire Authority Members 2022-23



CIIr Phill

Cllr Jill

Houlbrook

Cllr Mike

Biggin

Service Management Team

Mark Cashin, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive



Mark is the Head of Paid Services, responsible for leading and directing the strategic management of our Service. He is also responsible for ensuring our activities are carried out with maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

Alex Waller, Deputy Chief Fire Officer



Alex leads on strategic planning and delivery of functions including Prevention, Protection, Operational Policy and Assurance, HMICFRS liaison and Blue Light Collaboration. Alex deputises for the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive.

Paul Binyon, Assistant Chief Fire Officer



Paul is responsible for providing strategic leadership to shape and direct service provision and ensure the delivery of commitments in the IRMP. Paul deputises for the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer as necessary.

Andrew Leadbetter, Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer



Andrew provides guidance on matters of law, decision making, risk mitigation and governance to ensure that the Fire Authority operates within the law and in accordance with constitutional and/or statutory requirements.

Andrea Harvey, Director of Transformation



Andrea is responsible for people, workforce transformation and culture and manages the portfolios for corporate communications, equality, diversity and inclusion, and mental health and well-being. She is also the Service Pension Scheme Manager.

Paul Vaughan, Treasurer and Section 151 Officer



Paul has overall responsibility for ensuring the proper administration of the Fire Authority's financial affairs. He has statutory duties as part of the annual budget setting process and for the preparation and publication of annual financial statements.

Neil Griffiths, Head of Service Delivery



Neil has overall responsibility for front-line response. This includes the management of our 28 fire stations across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington.

Steve Barnes, Head of Operational Policy and Assurance



Steve is responsible for providing effective operational and incident command training to our firefighters. He is also responsible for fleet management and overseeing health and safety.

Lee Shears, Prevention and Protection



Lee is responsible for ensuring nonresidential premises comply with fire safety legislation (Protection) and for fire safety in the wider community and specifically within the home (Prevention).

Mark Shone, Head of Communications and Engagement



Mark is responsible for protecting and enhancing the reputation of the Service, ensuring that the community, employees and partners are engaged and informed about its work.

Neil McElroy, Temporary Head of Service Improvement



Neil leads all aspects of planning, performance and strategic change. He also has oversight of the Blue Light Collaboration, in addition to being the senior sponsor for the Service's environmental portfolio.





If you want to join a team that saves lives, protects lives and changes lives every day, we'd love to hear from you.

Follow us on social, or visit our website, for news and info about:

- on-call firefighter roles throughout Cheshire
- our next full-time firefighter recruitment in early 2023
- joining our award-winning prevention and protection teams
- rewarding non-uniformed roles in corporate services
- volunteering opportunities
- our cadet programme for 12 to 17-year-olds
- our Prince's Trust Team programme for 16 to 24-year-olds.





If you would like to work or volunteer for Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, please get in touch - recruitment@cheshirefire.gov.uk







www.cheshirefire.gov.uk