Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service
On-Call Firefighter Strategy 2017-21

www.derbys-fire.gov.uk
Our Vision, Service Priorities and Values

OUR VISION
‘Making Derbyshire a safer place to live, work and visit’

OUR SERVICE PRIORITIES

PREVENTING fire and other emergencies by working with partners, communities and individuals to develop a risk based intelligence-led approach to preventing emergency situations

PROTECTING people, property and the environment by working with partners and other enforcement agencies to ensure a joined up approach and comply with statutory obligations

RESPONDING to fire & rescue emergencies when you need us, taking when necessary, calculated risks to save life, protect your property and the environment and rendering humanitarian services

NATIONAL CORE VALUES
The Authority has adopted the National Core Values, underpinned by its own Core Values.

Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service Core Values

OUR CORE VALUES
Leadership
We listen, develop and champion our people

Respect
We value the opinions of our people

Integrity
Our actions will always be well intended

Openness
We won’t hide anything and will share our experiences and knowledge

Teamwork
We will achieve more together

Ambition
We will always do the best we can
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1. Foreword

On-Call Firefighters provide essential emergency response cover across vast areas of rural Derbyshire and also in more densely populated locations. The effective combination of our Wholetime and On-Call responders is absolutely critical to ensure that the public of Derbyshire are protected, when fire and other emergencies occur.

Over recent years we have worked hard to improve the training, support and equipment provided to our On-Call staff to develop their capabilities so that they may respond effectively either alone, or alongside Wholetime colleagues to all incident types.

We have improved the level of audit and assurance undertaken across Wholetime and On-Call duty stations to ensure that the operational standards are aligned. We have introduced additional training and equipment such as positive pressure ventilation fans, replaced RTC equipment and reintroduced chemical protection equipment to achieve the best response capability across the service.

As the Chief Fire Officer I pay tribute to the dedication and commitment displayed by all of our operational staff, but in particular in this instance to our On-Call people. It is a huge commitment becoming an On-Call firefighter, the life style impact is felt not only by the firefighter but also but the rest of the family as social activities are curtailed to ensure fire cover. The commitment to development is substantial to achieve competence and maintain it. Additionally the relationship with the primary employer is vital in maintaining essential fire cover.

This strategy seeks to continue to improve the On-Call provisions across Derbyshire ensuring that the Service has dedicated workforce plan to increase availability and ensure the Service’s team ethos continues to underpin the relationships between Wholetime and On-Call staff. We recognise that whilst operationally procedures needed to be aligned, there is also a requirement to have more flexible and tailored management processes to support the recruitment, training and management of On-Call staff.

Terry McDermott
Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
2. Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to outline our approach towards recruitment and retention of our On-Call workforce and how we plan to ensure the On-Call system is suitable and robust enough to meet modern day demands and future challenges.

In line with our People Strategy we are committed to developing our people to ensure we have the agility and flexibility to deliver the best service possible with the resources available. We will continue to ensure that all of our On-Call workforce are safe, effective and efficient.

We are committed to the future success of the On-Call workforce. It is likely that there will be a greater emphasis on our On-Call workforce; how we recruit, train and develop them and how they work within their communities will all form part of the changing shape of our Service.

We will continue to deliver our embedded approach to inclusion and equality and meet our obligations under the Equality Act 2010. This strategy and its associated Implementation Action Plan, sets out the vision to be delivered over the next four years.
3. What is the On-Call System?

The On-Call system is a mode of staffing fire appliances to respond to emergency calls. The On-Call firefighters are members of the community who are paid to respond to emergencies. They are called to attend station by Fire Control via their alerters and then turn out to incidents in the same capacity as the Whole-Time workforce, in that they attend the same types of incidents and utilise the same kind of equipment, safe systems of work and procedures.

When the On-Call workforce make themselves available for emergency calls they must remain with a 5 minute turn-in radius of their station.

The On-Call firefighter respond to emergencies and help make Derbyshire safer by:

- **Saving life**
- **Protecting property**
- **Rendering humanitarian services**

Amongst their duties, On-Call firefighters carry out Safe & Well Visits, give safety advice and signpost members of the community to other organisations if they require extra assistance in their day to day lives.

They also carry out ‘Hazard Spotting’ visits to various properties in order to provide fire safety advice to business owners and are the ‘eyes and ears’ of the Service’s Protection department.

Further details on the role are available [here](#).
4. Where are we now?

From our Cultural Survey 2015 it can be seen that members of the On-Call workforce are highly engaged within the Service. The overall score of 88% can be seen as extremely positive. However, the On-Call workforce highlighted areas for improvement in ‘Recognition & reward’ and ‘Collaboration’.

The Retained Duty System (On-Call) 2014 National Survey cited key factors including employers lacking knowledge about On-Call system, entry requirements being too high & deficiency of engagement with local businesses as reasons for having difficulties in recruitment.

Our own internal review of the On-Call workforce found members of the workforce leaving due to the commitment required, feeling under-valued, family commitments, lack of job satisfaction and the benefits not being attractive enough.

The recent removal of the ‘modified role’ for On-Call employees and the introduction of new skill sets and working practice demonstrate the service’s commitment to the On-Call System. The newly introduced Watch Manager Conference’s exhibit the services dedication to improving communication and engagement with our On-Call workforce.

It is recognised that a number of opportunities exist in recruitment, reward and retention. It is also recognised that a number of challenges also exist in attaining the desired outcomes.
5. Where do we want to be?

The vision for the On-Call workforce is to provide the culture and support to ensure a skilled and robust workforce to meet today’s demands and future challenges.

We will ensure we recruit, maintain and support our On-Call workforce, providing them an environment that balances home and work commitments.

The Strategic Leadership Team has committed to raise appliance availability from the current figure of 75% to 82% by 2019. A move away from recruitment and the need for several On-Call phase 1 (initial) training courses each year, with a shift towards focusing on reward and recognition would signal growing success. A satisfied & engaged On-Call workforce will be less likely leave the organisation and will be more effective and efficient.

A culture of recognition and reward for high performance will be developed, with an emphasis on empowering individuals and ensuring they are responsible for their own performance. A positive organisational culture will facilitate a sense of security, engagement and workplace satisfaction which in turn will aide retention.
6. How will we get there?

In order to ensure we meet the future needs of our communities an implementation plan will be put in place. The 4 year implementation plan will be split into annual plans.

In order to succeed in our aspirations we will need greater emphasis on;

1. **Leading change and cultural transformation**
   Ensuring we have clarity of purpose and a culture of personal responsibility.

2. **Improved performance management**
   Ensuring we are clear about what our objectives are and that individuals must contribute to these.

3. **Enhanced employee engagement**
   Improving employee relations and communication across all levels of the service.

4. **Delivering differently**
   Introducing alternative methods of service delivery and ways of working.

These objectives will be underpinned by actions within the implementation action plan.