

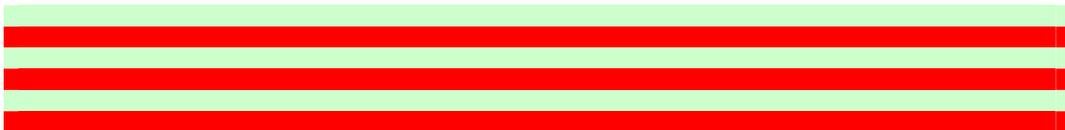


**NORTH WALES
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**COMBINED IMPROVEMENT AND RISK
REDUCTION PLAN**

2010-11 to 2012-13

(Revised October 2012)



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SECTION 1

Introduction

The Purpose of this Document

This document has been compiled for three different purposes:

- a) it provides information about North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and the context within which they operate.
- b) it records the highest priorities for the Authority, and traces progress towards achieving specific goals.
- c) it is a useful reference document that retains a historical record of performance spanning three financial years.

It has been compiled in accordance with specific duties arising from two sources:

1. the new Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 which requires the Authority to publish annual **Improvement Plans**;
2. the Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales 2008-11, which requires the Authority to publish annual **Risk Reduction Plans**.

This publication presents within a single document an account of the Authority's activities and performance in 2010-11, a description of the arrangements it has in place for 2011-12, and a description of its proposals for 2011-13.

Introduction

The Timing of this Document

The stipulated publication date for this document - before 31 October 2011 - is important. Whereas other Welsh Improvement Authorities publish their Part 1 Improvement Plans soon after the beginning of April, Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities publish theirs soon after the end of September.

The Part 1 Improvement Plans published in April by Local Authorities and National Parks Authorities relate to a current financial year, but those published in October by Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities relate to a forthcoming financial year. The latter will therefore always be subject to being able to secure the necessary financial resources before the start of the next financial year.

The reason for this difference is that for several years Fire and Rescue Authorities had been publishing their Risk Reduction Plans by the 31 October preceding the financial year to which they related, so it seemed appropriate for the Welsh Assembly Government to align the production of Improvement Plans to this same timetable.

By combining the Improvement Planning and Risk Reduction Planning processes, fire and rescue authorities are able to undertake a single consultation process and publish a single publication before the end of October each year.

Effects of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009

After a decade of Best Value legislation, the new Measure introduced “Welsh Improvement Authorities” operating according to two inter-related principles of public management – short term improvements and longer term community plans.

Guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government developed the thinking behind the 2006 Wales Programme for Improvement (WPI-FRA) to a wider definition of improvement included in the new Measure that goes beyond the previous limited definition of ‘efficiency, effectiveness and economy’.

Rather than focus on quantifiable gains in service output the definition of improvement now extends to anything that enhances the quality of life for local citizens and communities.

Fire and Rescue Authorities are accordingly expected to determine their own locally-tailored improvement priorities, and to address them either alone or in conjunction with other organisations.

Introduction

Fire and Rescue Authorities, as Welsh Improvement Authorities, have been issued with their own specific guidance relating to Part 1 of the Measure concerned with improvement.

Their operations will be subject to an Improvement Assessment by the Auditor General for Wales (operating through the Wales Audit Office) that is undertaken through a forward-looking Corporate Assessment and a retrospective Performance Assessment in each financial year.

The timetable for implementing the new Measure is shown in Section 5 of this document.

Improving and Reducing Risk – the New Combined Approach

The Welsh Assembly Government's guidance on the Wales Programme for Improvement for fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) recognises that reducing risk to communities is the cornerstone of FRAs' improvement agendas, and therefore supports the development of a new combined approach to improving services and reducing risk.

A copy of the guidance document is available from the Welsh Government's website <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/safety/publications/?lang=en>.

**Our mission is to make North Wales
a safer place to live, work and visit.**

Making Improvements and Reducing Risk

The **Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009** came into effect from April 2010. It requires Welsh Improvement Authorities (county councils, national parks authorities and fire and rescue authorities) to set improvement objectives and make arrangements to achieve them.

Improvement objectives can be anything that can be shown to improve what the Welsh Improvement Authority does (its 'functions') in terms of at least one out of seven aspects of improvement, namely:

1. strategic effectiveness;
2. service quality;
3. service availability;
4. fairness;
5. sustainability;
6. efficiency; and
7. innovation.

The **Fire and Rescue National Framework 2008-11** requires Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities to establish Risk Reduction Plans aimed at:

1. reducing the number of fires and other emergency incidents;
2. reducing the loss of life in fires and other emergency incidents;
3. reducing the number and severity of injuries in fires and other emergency incidents;
4. reducing the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents;
5. safeguarding the environment and heritage, both built and natural;
6. providing services that are Value for Money;
7. integrating the activities of the Fire and Rescue Authority within the wider social justice agenda; and
8. addressing the equality and diversity proposals set out in the Framework.

[Note – in September 2010 the Welsh Government decided to defer production of a proposed third Fire and Rescue National Framework until 2011, leaving the (second) 2008-11 Framework in place, and to consult informally on a proposal to revise that Framework by extending it to 31 March 2012 (unless it is replaced earlier).]

Continuously Striving for Improvement

The role of the Fire and Rescue Authority is defined in a range of laws and regulations but the Authority has always sought to improve and enhance the services it provides and to do more than simply meet minimum requirements.

North Wales Fire and Rescue is committed to enhancing people's lives in a number of different ways. These include playing a part in making sure that:

- citizens, workers and visitors are protected so that they can live long and healthy lives;
- whole communities are protected so that people can lead fulfilled lives;
- the area's culture, heritage and language are protected so that people can lead enriched lives;
- cities, towns and villages are protected so that they can be economically and socially vibrant places for people to live, work and visit;
- the countryside and coastlines are protected so that they can continue to provide natural habitats and be rewarding places for people to live, work and visit;
- individual homes are protected, so that people have access to good, safe, housing;
- public buildings are protected so that people can feel safe when they conduct business there;
- workplaces are protected so that people can feel safe when they work there;
- transport networks are protected so that people and goods can pass between places freely and safely;
- the environment and the world's resources are protected so that we leave the world a better place.

Furthermore, North Wales Fire and Rescue is fully committed to ensuring that:

- it does not waste the money and other resources entrusted to it;
- it supports its employees to achieve their full potential and share their knowledge and skills with others.

Arrangements to secure continuous improvement

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has made specific arrangements to support the achievement of its improvement and risk reduction strategies.

The Authority itself is organised in such a way that its 28 elected members can maintain a proper involvement in strategic planning, in decision-making and in monitoring the service's levels of performance. The full Authority meets regularly, at least four times per year, with more frequent meetings of the Executive Panel between times. It has an Audit Committee and a separate Standards Committee that meet to consider specific issues. The Authority's correct functioning is further supported by its Clerk and Treasurer. Meetings are open to the public, and records of the Authority's transactions are available from the Authority's website.

The Service is led and managed by the Chief Fire Officer supported by the principal officer team, the senior management team, specialist advisers, and a defined organisational structure.

The Service's structure is aligned to the six North Wales local authority areas, and works in partnership through specific collaborative arrangements with a wide range of organisations including other emergency services, members of the local resilience forum, health, education and voluntary sectors, specific agencies and commissions and local service boards. Where appropriate, formal agreements are entered into for the sharing of data.

Progress against specific departmental and project plans, annual service plans and detailed budget plans is monitored and reported regularly throughout the year, with in-year adjustments to plans being agreed where necessary.

Separate assurance processes are provided through internal and external audits, including financial audits.

A programme of Operational Assurance involving self-assessment against a centrally provided framework followed by peer assessment from the other two Welsh fire and rescue services is observed by the Wales Audit Office and the Welsh Government and co-ordinated through the Fire and Rescue Adviser's office. Further details are given in Section 5 of this document.

Collaboration with other fire and rescue services supports a range of improvement activities, pooling expertise and sharing resources (e.g. joint procurement of equipment, joint recruitment of wholetime firefighters) where appropriate, at both UK and Wales levels.

General Statement

The Local Government Measure 2009 introduced a general duty for Welsh Improvement Authorities to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions.

Whilst there could never be an absolute duty to improve, there is an expectation that authorities will make suitable arrangements to improve and set themselves realistic, relevant and sufficiently ambitious objectives.

Authorities are required to make a general statement outlining the nature of their intentions for discharging the general duty to improve.

In accordance with this legislation, North Wales Fire and Rescue develops and publishes an annual improvement and risk reduction plan upon which it has consulted. This plan is published by 31 October in the year prior to the year to which it relates, and itemises the improvement objectives and associated measures of success for the forthcoming year.

Once agreement has been reached about the level of funding that the authority will have available (by mid February prior to the start of the financial year), budgets are allocated to specific purposes. This includes revenue spending and the roll-out of the capital programme.

Departmental plans showing how the high level objectives will be achieved (with associated quantitative targets where appropriate) are developed by the end of March.

Central monitoring by senior management of spending and the completion of planned objectives takes place at quarterly meetings through the year, so that any in-year adjustments can be made if necessary. Progress reports are provided to the Authority throughout the year. External assessment of progress is provided by Wales Audit Office.

An end of year summary of the achievement of objectives is provided through the following year's Improvement Plan and Treasurer's Report.

The Authority's Core Duties

The principal duties of the Fire and Rescue Authority, as defined in the **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004**, are:

1. To promote fire safety through the provision of information, publicity and encouragement to prevent fires and deaths and injuries by fire;
2. To give advice, on request, about how to prevent fires and restrict their spread in buildings and other property, and on means of escape in the event of fire;
3. To make provision for protecting life and property in the event of fires;
4. To make provision for rescuing and protecting people from serious harm in the event of road traffic accidents;
5. To respond to other emergencies or eventualities as required to protect people, property, or the environment.

The Authority's Corporate Aims

This set of five corporate aims was adopted by the Authority in 2001. It summarises every aspect of what North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority seeks to achieve through the day-to-day operations of the Service.

1. To prevent accidental and malicious fires.
2. To protect people from being killed or injured by fire and other hazards.
3. To protect the community, businesses and the environment from being harmed by fire and other hazards.
4. To find ways to improve in order to meet the expectations of the community.
5. To operate as effectively and efficiently as we can, making the best use of the resources we have available.

The Service's Core Values

The Fire and Rescue Service's core values summarise the principles by which it operates and the personal values that staff are encouraged to adopt and demonstrate.

These core values are:

Service to the community

Valuing service to the community by:

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve
- Striving for excellence in all we do

People

Valuing all our employees by practising and promoting:

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- Personal development
- Co-operative and inclusive working

Diversity

Valuing diversity in the Service and the community by:

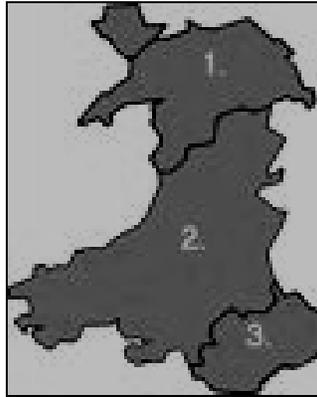
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Providing various solutions for different needs and expectations
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment with progression within the Service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

Improvement

Valuing improvement at all levels of the Service by accepting responsibility for our performance by:

- Being open-minded
- Considering criticism thoughtfully
- Learning from our experience
- Consulting others

Responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services



North Wales **Fire and Rescue Authority** is one of just three fire and rescue authorities in Wales. Its role is:

- To perform all the duties and responsibilities of a Fire Authority in accordance with appropriate legislation and regulations, in particular the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) Order 2005 - which came into force on 1 October 2006, and the 1995 Combination Scheme.
- To agree the annual service plans, the revenue and capital budgets and the contribution for the constituent councils.
- To monitor the revenue and capital budgets and deal with any significant variations, including decisions on any supplementary contributions.

The Authority was established in April 1996, and comprises 28 councillors from the six unitary authorities of North Wales: Anglesey County Council (3); Conwy County Borough Council (5); Denbighshire County Council (4); Flintshire County Council (6); Gwynedd Council (5); Wrexham County Borough Council (5). The number of representatives from each constituent authority is determined on a population basis.

North Wales **Fire and Rescue Service** is headed by the Chief Fire Officer, who has overall corporate management and operational responsibility for the Service. He also provides professional advice to the Authority.

Governmental responsibility for fire and rescue services and the promotion of fire safety in Wales lies with the **Welsh Government**. Ministerial responsibility for fire and rescue services including community fire safety falls to the Minister for Local Government and Communities. The Fire and Rescue Services Branch of the Community Safety Division of the Welsh Government is based at Rhydycar, Merthyr Tydfil.

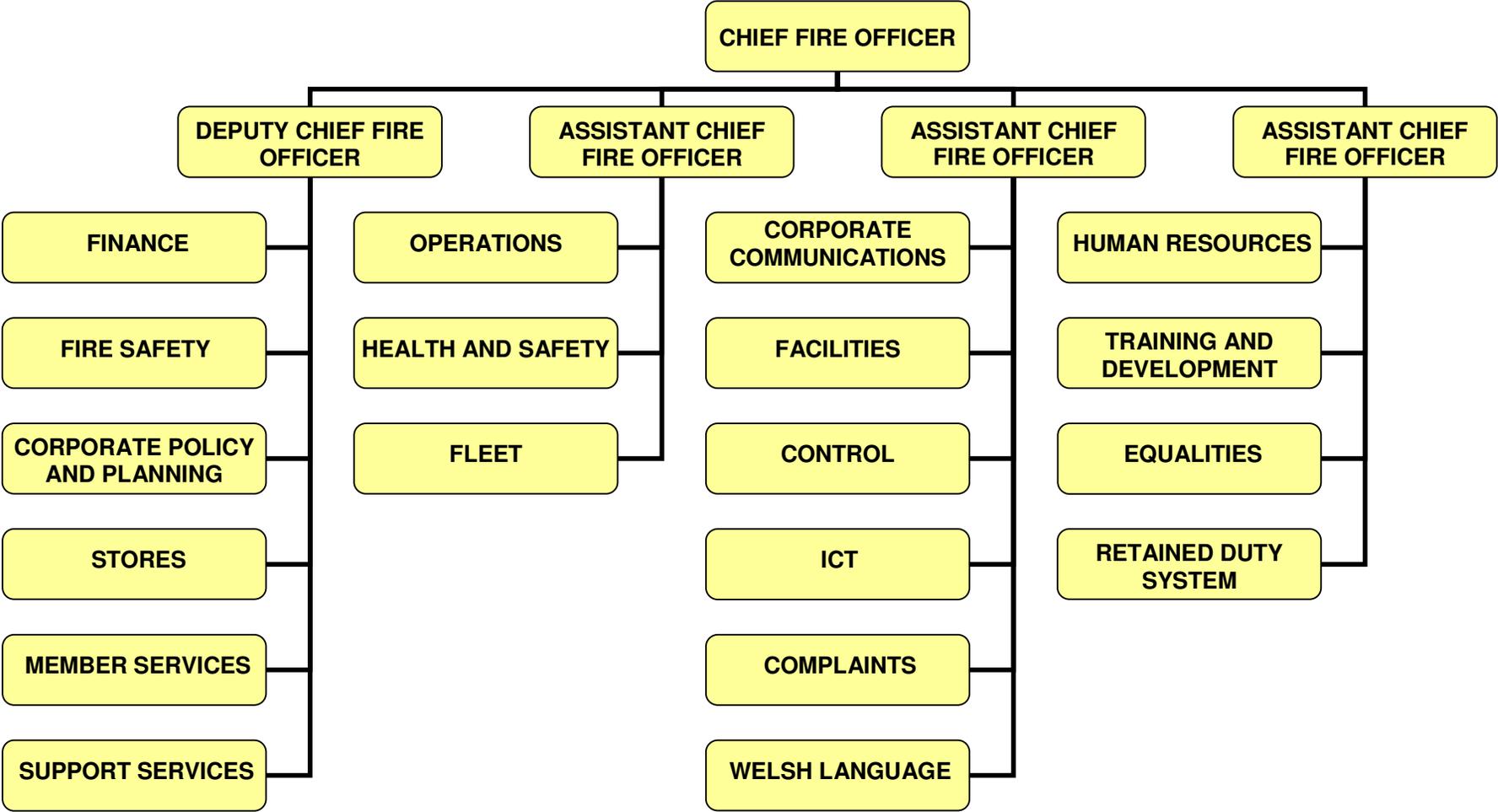
The Welsh Government's vision is that fire and rescue authorities in Wales should:

- Strive to make communities safer but in doing so be at the heart of the communities they serve, having a transparent decision-making process which involves the communities.
- Work seamlessly with each other, other emergency services, other partners and the community, delivering cohesive services that maximise not only FRAs resources but also those of partner organisations.
- Recognise the impact they can have on the environment (natural and built) and society's social fabric – contributing to meeting Assembly Government sustainability objectives through operational activities, preventative action and by examining the impact of their own organisation.
- Recognise the diversity within their communities, ensure that their staff reflect the diversity in the community and be able to reach their full potential ensuring equality of opportunity for all in delivering services to the public.

(Fire and Rescue National Framework 2008-2011)

The Fire and Rescue Service contributes to the achievement of this vision in numerous ways including through active participation in Community Safety Partnerships, working with partners to reduce the incidence of crime and substance misuse.

The Service's Management Structure



The Service's Workforce Structure

	All posts	Centralised and county-based functions†	Staff training and development	Legislative Fire Safety	Community Fire Safety	Fire Stations	RDS posts on fire stations as 24 hour units of cover	Control
Principal Officer	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Area Manager	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	1
Group Manager	12	9	1	1	1	0	0	0
Station Manager	34	11	3‡	16	1	0	0	3
Watch Manager	101	4	9	11	2	22	44	9
Crew Manager	141	0	0	0	3	48	90	0
Firefighter	567	0	0	0	0	130	422	15
Support Staff	142.53	88.03	10	7	30.5	7	0	0
Externally funded*	11	2	0	0	9	0	0	0
Totals	1017.53	122.03	23	35	46.5	207	556	28

RDS = Retained Duty System

‡ = non-operational uniformed posts

The table shows the number of posts funded by the Authority (not individual people employed) **as at 31st March 2011**. Not all posts are full-time posts. Temporary posts set up for special short-term projects have not been included.

*Externally funded = non-permanent posts created through separate or shared funding sources e.g. from the Welsh Assembly Government.

†Central and county-based functions include (alphabetically):

- Administration and Secretarial Services
- Authority Member Services
- Business Continuity Management
- Catering
- Corporate Communications
- Corporate Planning
- Equalities
- Estate Management
- Finance and Payroll
- Fleet Management and Maintenance
- Health and Safety
- Human Resources
- Information & Communications Technology (ICT)
- Information Legislation
- Reception and Switchboard
- Recording Operational Incidents (IRS)
- Local Resilience
- National Resilience
- Operational Support
- Performance Data Analysis
- Strategic and Departmental Management
- Supplies and Stores
- Translation Services

FACTS AND FIGURES

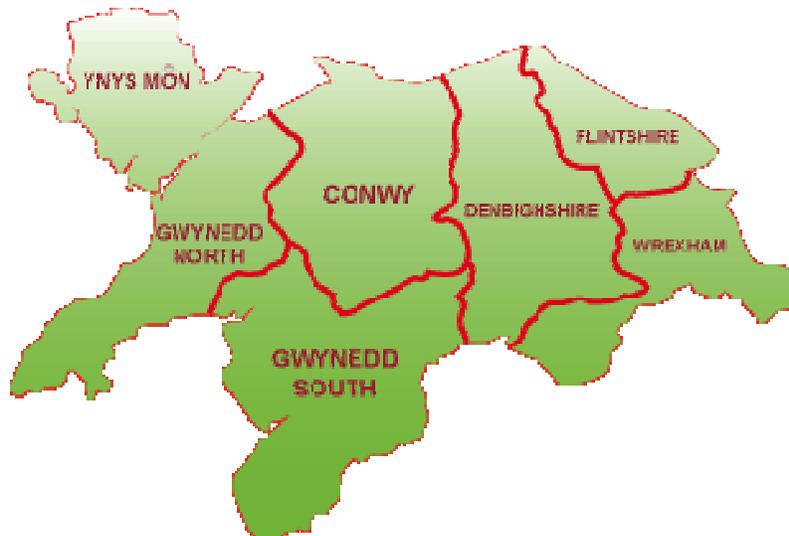
General

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service operates across the six unitary authority areas of North Wales, helping to protect a population of around 678,750 people¹, 306,805 domestic properties² and 27,419 non-domestic properties³. Additionally, it protects visitors, transport network users, the natural environment and public, business and other infrastructures.

It supports other fire and rescue services in the UK when required and remains continually prepared to protect in the event of large scale disasters.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is one of over 30 fire and rescue services located around the coastline of the UK. It became one of the 15 fire and rescue services that work with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to form the UK Maritime Incident Response Group (MIRG). This was launched in April 2006 for the purpose of providing a co-ordinated response to incidents involving fire, chemical hazards and industrial accidents at sea.

Following a risk assessment, the UK Government announced in September 2011 that central funding for the MIRG arrangement would cease and it would end on 14 December 2011.



Map showing the seven county areas of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

¹ ONS Mid Year Estimate 2009 www.statswales.wales.gov.uk
Table 016889 Mid-Year Population Estimates (2001 onwards)

² Council Tax Dwelling Return (CT1) www.statswales.wales.gov.uk
Table 000330 Council tax dwellings by Local Authority (2011-12)

³ National Non-Domestic Rates (NDR1) www.statswales.wales.gov.uk
Table 001546 Non domestic rates estimates by authority (NDR)

Financial Information

In 2010-11, contributions totalling £32,093,400 were applied to fund revenue expenditure from the six Local Authorities in North Wales – an increase of 2.5% from the previous year.

In December 2010 the Fire and Rescue Authority agreed to apply a 2.5% reduction to the budget each year for the next three years in order to emulate the financial constraints being placed upon its constituent authorities in the current economic climate. These reductions over the 3 year period will produce an overall saving in the budget of £2.4 million.

Under normal arrangements, the amounts to be contributed for 2012-13 will be determined by the Fire and Rescue Authority before mid February 2012.

Authority	2010/11 contribution (+2.5%)	Mid year population estimate 2008	Mid year population estimate 2009	2011/12 contribution
Conwy County Borough Council	£5,280,536	111,395	111,353	5,240,568
Anglesey County Council	£3,253,187	68,799	68,768	3,236,545
Gwynedd Council	£5,572,851	118,590	118,767	5,588,685
Denbighshire County Council	£4,601,610	96,737	96,732	4,549,039
Flintshire County Council	£7,119,294	149,731	149,923	7,051,716
Wrexham County Borough Council	£6,265,922	132,719	133,207	6,266,101
Total	£32,093,400	677,971	678,750	£31,932,654

The net operating costs in 2010-11 amounted to £31,870,461.

As the actual expenditure in 2010-11 was lower than expected the Authority was able to set aside £223,000 into a general reserve which will provide some assurance that there are funds available to assist in future years and will mean that the authority can draw on these funds rather than having to request supplementary levies.

During 2010-11, overspends against some budget lines (e.g. transport costs and professional fees on aborted capital projects) were offset by underspends against others (e.g. debt financing and IT and Communications) .

The Authority received a number of revenue grants from the Welsh Government during the year to promote various schemes within North Wales. The total value of grants received was £1,776,841. Some of the larger grants received were for the following projects:

Phoenix	£171,672
Interventions	£486,694
Arson Reduction	£275,767
New Dimensions	£292,706
Firelink	£55,977
Resilience	£133,786

This is the second year that Fire and Rescue Authorities have been able to hold reserves following the recent introduction of legislation. Money has therefore been set aside in a General Reserve. The balance in the reserve at 31 March 2011 was £641,451.

Cost Comparison

Identifying suitable comparator fire and rescue authorities is complex. Using information compiled by CIPFA⁴, the table below illustrates the variety of aspects that could be used for this purpose.

- Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service is similar to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service in many respects, but has fewer fire stations and employs less staff. It spends slightly less than North Wales.
- Although Wiltshire has a similar population, it is more compact, has fewer fire stations and has significantly fewer non-domestic properties in its area. It spends less than North Wales.
- Suffolk has similar numbers of domestic and non-domestic premises as North Wales, but these are located within a much smaller area. It has fewer fire stations, employs less people, and has a lower expenditure.

	(1)	(2)	(24)	(75)	(7)	(8)	2010-11 Actuals			2010-11 Estimates		
							(10)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(16)	(17)
Authority	Population	Area (hect)	Stations	Total Staff	Dom	Non-dom	Gross Expenditure £000	Net Expenditure £000	Capital Charges, £000	Gross Expenditure £000	Net Expenditure £000	Capital Charges, £000
North Wales	680,800	617,248	44	955	305,583	27,419	26,652	26,157	1,150	32,625	31,997	1,367
Lincolnshire	697,900	592,062	38	722	307,144	24,630	28,766	26,395	1,394	27,634	25,427	868
Wiltshire	654,900	348,543	24	629	275,645	19,111	24,170	23,237	1,656	23,858	23,207	1,845
Suffolk	714,000	380,172	35	753	309,045	27,328	24,542	21,628	1,047	24,237	23,913	1,047
Shropshire	454,100	348,762	26	609	193,893	15,704	17,446	16,965	5m348	18,377	18,233	1,011
Cheshire	1,005,800	234,276	24	936	441,208	32,221	36,625	34,562	1,985	37,724	36,741	2,365
Merseyside	1,350,600	64,489	26	1,443	603,255	36,629	68,534	63,242	9,334	71,831	68,736	5,311
MWW Wales	875,000	1,179,569	58	1,368	394,005	33,813	39,947	36,559	1,391	39,909	38,784	1,391
South Wales	1,445,500	281,031	50	1,641	621,059	42,689	68,248	67,897	2,810	68,972	68,724	3,517

North Wales Fire and Rescue's closest neighbours in England are Shropshire, Cheshire and Merseyside. The other two Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales are Mid & West Wales FRA and South Wales FRA. Their details are shown here for information.

⁴ Fire and Rescue Service Statistics 2010, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, April 2011.

Objective Analysis Comparison – Per 1,000 Population

Using the same fire and rescue services to illustrate differences, what the table below shows is the extra emphasis placed on community safety in North Wales, and the comparatively low cost of its corporate and democratic core costs.

Authority	Community safety	Firefighting and rescue operations	Corporate and democratic core costs	Total service expenditure
	£ per 1,000 population	£ per 1,000 population	£ per 1,000 population	£ per 1,000 population
	(118)	(119)	(121)	(123)
North Wales	8,170	30,834	315	40,228
Lincolnshire	2,672	37,146	-	39,818
Wiltshire	4,723	32,352	936	38,010
Suffolk	2,310	29,282	165	31,756
Shropshire	5,712	41,996	1191	49,137
Cheshire	4,526	31,055	656	36,336
Merseyside	5,435	39,620	767	45,876
MWW Wales	5,270	36,595	557	43,371
South Wales	5,014	43,394	109	48,915

Subjective Analysis Comparison – Staff Numbers and £s per 1,000 Population

The table below compares the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff employed in each category as at 31 March 2010, and the total paybill for staff per 1,000 population in 2009-10. Staff in the 'other staff' column are shown as two numbers – the first relates to community fire safety staff, and the second to other non-operational staff. Compared to the English fire and rescue comparators, North Wales's staffing costs are higher per 1,000 population, but this is not the case (allowing for adjustments) when compared to the other Welsh FRAs.

The relatively higher number of staff employed in North Wales is reflected in the overall expenditure on staff per 1,000 population.

Authority	Wholetime firefighters		Part time firefighters		Control Room Staff		Other Staff		Total Employees	
	FTE March 2010	£ per 1,000 population	FTE March 2010	£ per 1,000 population	FTE March 2010	£ per 1,000 population	FTE March 2010	£ per 1,000 population	FTE March 2010	£ per 1,000 population
	(66)	(85)	(71)	(91)	(72)	(97)	(73)+(74)	(103)	(75)	(106)
North Wales	294	19,822	490	7,288	29	1,690	30+112	5,259	955	34,744
Lincolnshire	226	14,314	429	6,656	27	1,171	25+65	3,757	772	28,351
Wiltshire	224	15,809	283	5,984	23	1,628	2+97	5,044	629	29,777
Suffolk	249	18,062	408	5,585	23	1,347	7+66	3,595	753	29,021
Shropshire	214	14,314	298	6,457	19	1,711	11+67	4,356	609	30,040
Cheshire	524	20,184	144	1,669	25	880	71+173	4,509	936	28,177
Merseyside	923	29,676	67	747	44	1,203	115+295	9,280	1443	42,112
MWW Wales	449	19,149*	725	7,240	31	1,582**	16+147	5,454	1368	34,519
South Wales	918	27,489	402	4,929	56	1,467	14+251	5,669	1641	40,879

*Includes other pay cost of (£5,120) per 1,000 population.

** Includes other pay cost of (£55) per 1,000 population.

Analysis of Outcomes

The complexity of analysing the outcomes being achieved is illustrated in the table below. The number of fires and false alarms has fallen in most of the FRAs, but reported casualty figures are varied. Further analysis of North Wales's casualty results will be undertaken during 2011-12.

For consistency, all the figures in the table below are as published by the UK Government in Fire Statistics Monitor April 2010 – March 2011, where 2009/10 figures are revised and 2010/11 figures are provisional -

(<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/xls/19302411.xls>).

Authority	Fires		False alarms		ADFs		Deaths from ADFs		Injuries from ADFs	
	Table 3a		Table 3d(i)		Table 4a		Table 4b		Table 4d	
	2009/10	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11
North Wales	3,384	3,299	3,726	3,689	478	469	6	10	45	54
Lincolnshire	2,874	2,701	2,773	2,701	393	381	2	2	17	21
Wiltshire	1,993	1,981	3,070	2,900	327	360	2	1	29	20
Suffolk	2,732	2,527	2,994	3,077	339	355	-	4	14	28
Shropshire	2,089	1,967	1,612	1,656	265	243	0	1	14	15
Cheshire	4,415	4,194	4,636	4,656	474	465	2	1	24	34
Merseyside	12,024	10,914	8,360	7,837	1309	1199	9	6	117	137
MWW Wales	5,078	5,570	5,255	4,940	584	593	7	6	45	40
South Wales	10,690	11,473	7,920	8,289	802	712	2	2	57	84

ADF = Accidental Dwelling Fire.

Assets

Buildings

In North Wales there are 44 fire stations, 3 of which (in Wrexham, Queensferry and Rhyl) stay open around the clock; 5 of which are permanently staffed between 12:00 midday and 10:00 p.m. and operate as retained fire stations outside those hours; and 36 of which operate wholly as retained fire stations. The first purpose-built community fire station in North Wales was officially opened in Rhyl in October 2008.

Since 2005, the main headquarters function has been run from premises on the St Asaph Business Park, with a few central functions (including the Training and Development Centre) located in Rhyl and Conwy. There is a county safety office in each county council area, and additional training facilities at several locations throughout North Wales.

The fleet maintenance workshops and stores are located in Llandudno Junction.

The main Control function moved from Rhyl to the Joint Communications Centre on St Asaph Business Park in 2008, but with the Rhyl control retained as a secondary fallback control room.

Vehicles

The Service also manages a fleet of operational and support vehicles to respond in a range of emergency and non-emergency situations (figures as at 31st March 2011):

- 54 operational fire and rescue appliances
- 4 aerial appliances
- 9 reserve appliances
- 3 training appliances
- 144 non-operational fleet vehicles (cars and vans)
- 2 incident response units
- 1 incident command unit
- 26 other operational special appliances (prime movers)
- 4 other special fire and rescue appliances

Capital Expenditure in 2010-11

Under the prudential Code the Authority can finance its capital programme in accordance with whichever method is most cost effective. In 2010-11 its capital programme was financed mainly through loans from the Public Works Loan Board and other Local Authorities (£6,033,000), grants (£251,000) and capital receipts (£38,526).

The Authority was awarded grant funding from the Welsh Government of £251,000, which was used to upgrade and improve training facilities at a number of properties and contributed towards IT equipment to be used on specific schemes.

During 2010-11 the Authority spent £6,322,000 on capital projects :

PREMISES including minor building works, planned maintenance, compliance work, remodelling of fire stations and land purchase.	£1,880,000
TRANSPORT including water tenders, light vehicles, power boats, other vehicles and upgrades.	£3,112,000
SUPPLIES including personal protective equipment uniforms, information technology and other equipment.	£1,329,000

Expenditure on the capital programme in 2010-11 was lower than forecast due to delays on build schedules. These schemes will be rolled over to 2011-12.

Employees

On 31st March 2011, a total of 1,058 individual people were employed by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service – 266 men and 19 women as wholetime firefighters/operational managers, 560 men and 26 women as retained firefighters, 4 men and 29 women as control staff, and 63 men and 91 women in a range of specialist support roles⁵.

Staff profiles on the next page give more detail of a workforce that is becoming increasingly diverse.

Employee costs of £23,842,694 were incurred during 2010-11, which includes pay, formal training and pensions.

⁵ Information supplied in 2010-11 Annual Operational Returns HRFW10-17
Further information at all-Wales level is available in Welsh Government statistical bulletin SDR 185/2011 Fire and Rescue Service Operational Statistics for Wales, 2010-11, issued 13 October 2011 - <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2011/111013sdr1852011en.pdf>.

WORKFORCE PROFILES AS AT 31ST MARCH 2011

Age Profile

Part of the modernisation of the fire and rescue service nationally is concerned with creating a workforce that reflects the local communities it serves. By doing so, the service will be better placed to engage with – and therefore to protect - those communities.

The Authority is committed to fairness and equality, and promotes actions that will help to achieve a more diverse workforce.

At the end of March 2011, the majority - 78% - of the workforce were between 25 and 49 years of age.

Age as at 31 March 2010	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-54	55-59	60+	All
Retained Operational	67	173	291	34	18	3	586
Wholetime Operational	1	53	185	35	11	0	285
Support	5	33	63	22	19	12	154
Control	2	7	21	2	1	0	33
All staff	75	266	560	93	49	15	1058
As a percentage	7%	25%	53%	9%	5%	1%	

Gender

Of the 1,058 people employed at the end of March 2011, 893 (84%) were men, and 165 (16%) were women. 19 women were employed as wholetime firefighters, and 26 as retained firefighters.

The Authority continues to strive to achieve a better gender balance in the Service – particularly in the operational sector of the Service that is still predominantly male. It does this through positive action campaigns when vacancies arise and through more general messages that challenge stereotyping and show that a career in the fire and rescue service is attractive to both women and men. In the most recent wholetime recruitment campaign, almost 12% of the applications came from women.

Race

Of the 1,058 people employed, just over 98% classified their racial origin as white. The Authority is committed to achieving a workforce that reflects the ethnic profile of North Wales, recognising the positive impact that a diverse workforce can have in improving safety.

0.6% of staff classed themselves as coming from a minority ethnic background, which is slightly lower than the 1%⁶ of people from minority ethnic backgrounds aged between 18 and 64 years who live in North Wales.

Language

The Service recognises the importance of the Welsh language for day to day communication. Policies, plans and performance indicators are set out in the Authority's revised Welsh Language Scheme (2010 – 2013) and are reflected in departmental plans. This revised Scheme received the approval of the Welsh Language Board under Section 16 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 on 21st January, 2010. It builds on the Service's first two schemes published in 1999 and 2006.

To this end, the Service has adopted a Linguistic Skills Strategy aimed at realising the Authority's vision of delivering services at all times in the language choice of the public. A series of Welsh language awareness-raising sessions has been provided for all staff and support is available for those wishing to learn the language.

The Service uses the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) levels to determine the language ability of its staff. Since January 2009 all new members of staff have been required to have at least basic (ALTE Level 1) Welsh language courtesy skills on joining the Service.

Since January 2010 all new employees have been required to reach at least ALTE Level 2 on joining the Service (using a provided Level 2 training course if necessary); and any existing members of staff who seek promotion are also required to have reached this same level.

An analysis of the Service's Welsh Speaking skills as at May 2011 showed that over half of staff posts were filled by staff with bilingual skills to the designated standard for the post. This presents an encouraging starting point for the future linguistic skills development of the entire workforce.

Disability

As at 31st March 2011, 13 operational firefighters (1.5%) categorised themselves as having a disability, as did 8 members of control and support staff (4.3%). This totals

⁶ Source ONS Census table S101.

2%, compared with the 17.6%⁷ of people aged between 18 and 64 years in North Wales who fall into the same category.

Although the fire and rescue service has traditionally excluded people with disabilities, recent experience nationally has shown that disability need not necessarily be a barrier to a successful career in the service.

Recruitment and employment policies are now in place to ensure that disability does not of itself disqualify people from employment in the fire and rescue service.

Training and Development

6,749 days/shifts were spent by staff undergoing training and development activities in 2010-11, which reflects the Authority's ongoing commitment to provide opportunities for staff development, recognising the importance of a highly skilled and highly motivated workforce.

⁷ Source ONS Census table S16.

SECTION 2

PAST YEAR 2010-11

The Authority published a full Risk Reduction Plan in October 2006 for 2007-08 and beyond. The annual action plan for 2009-10 included four proposals, one of which was later put aside following the 12-week consultation in Summer 2008.

In order to progress the Service's two key objectives of increasing community safety and enhancing operational excellence, the Authority decided to continue with work in 2010-11 on the three risk-reducing initiatives that had already been started in 2009-10.

These related to

1. Reviewing the way the Service provides supervisory cover by middle and senior managers at emergency incidents with the aim of providing resources for an operational assurance team and community safety work.
2. Discontinuing twelve posts dedicated to Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs), transferring the work to fire crews and reallocating resources to prevention work.
3. Establishing a small working group to undertake a review into Risk across North Wales to ascertain whether the standards of fire cover are appropriate for the risk within the community and to examine whether the best resources are in the best place to respond to those risks.

Last year's Improvement/Risk Reduction Plan listed forty things that the Service would be paying particular attention to during 2010-11.

PAST YEAR 2010-11

2010-11 FOCUS AREA - PROTECTION AND PREVENTION

The fire and rescue authority's primary role is to help protect North Wales from being harmed by fire and other hazards. This contributes to achieving safe, economically sound communities and to improving the quality and length of people's lives.

The Service's work in this area focussed on two specific strands:

1. To reduce the number of accidental and deliberate fires and associated deaths and injuries by providing timely and targeted support and advice (including through social networking and mobile phone messaging) in conjunction with other public sector organisations, voluntary agencies and Atal Tân as appropriate.

2. To support other agencies in reducing the number of road traffic collisions and associated deaths and injuries.

For the most part, the Service had a successful year, working effectively to reduce the impact of particular vulnerabilities that it identified as making some people more likely to fall victim to accidental fires. Operational crews and specialist staff such as home support workers and educationalists took the prevention message out to the community, to individuals, schools, workplaces and special events. Centrally, formal agreements were signed, partnerships were entered into and contact was made through the media, publications and social networking. Collaboration played an important part, both locally and nationally, leading to a more joined-up approach to identifying and reducing particular risks. The Strategy for Children and Young People, for example, was launched in December 2010 as a collaboration between the Welsh Government, the Youth Justice Board and the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Arson Reduction Team, too, worked locally with North Wales Police and in several communities where crime and antisocial behaviour including deliberate fire setting had been identified as particularly problematic. The outcomes are reported on pages 44 to 61.

The Service was also busy helping to improve road safety in the area through its work with school pupils and older students, giving Impact Road Show displays and participating in multi-agency road safety days, supporting the Motor Education Scheme aimed at changing driving behaviour and the Pass Plus Cymru scheme, and advising parents on correct fitting of child seats in vehicles.

The 2010 Operational Assurance process looked specifically at community risk management and community safety – the peer assessment team's opinions are reported on page 76.

PAST YEAR 2010-11

2010-11 FOCUS AREA - OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The Service constantly strives to improve its emergency response by reviewing and updating the way it operates and the equipment it uses.

Work in this focus area covered a variety of projects and initiatives:

3. To progress with the planned introduction of new national radio communications and information systems.

4. To progress with plans for improving urban search and rescue (USAR), rope rescue, water rescue and large animal rescue capability.

5. To introduce six new fire appliances, a new Incident Command Unit and progress with the review into the number and location of light portable pumps

6. To provide new operational workwear (personal protective equipment) to an all-Wales specification

7. To build on existing measures to monitor operational performance by fire crews before, during and after incidents

8. To focus on improving the effectiveness of cover provided through the Retained Duty System.

9. To continue to improve fire control room functions through collaboration with police and ambulance control room functions.

10. To continue to enhance the Authority's buildings by delivering the planned programmes of capital projects, maintenance and minor works

The Service made excellent progress against these proposed actions.

The planned introduction of the new national radio and communications system was completed successfully. Overviews of the Firelink project are available from <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/fire/pdf/firelinkupdate.pdf> and <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/safety/fire/firelink/?lang=en>. This provides a resilient radio voice and data system to enable the Fire and Rescue Services and the other blue-light services to communicate with each other, not only locally but also across borders into England and Scotland.

The improved capability for specific types of incidents was achieved, and the six new fire appliances introduced. The review of light portable pumps was also completed, and the Incident Command Unit is being built.

2010-11 FOCUS AREA - OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (continued)

New operational workwear (personal protective equipment) was provided for operational firefighters through a successful collaborative procurement across all three Welsh fire and rescue services. The collaboration meant that project costs, human resource, knowledge and expertise were all shared.

A formal process of monitoring and assessing the operational performance of fire crews was introduced, and a more clearly defined focus placed on performance standards.

The Service also embarked on a complex project aimed at identifying the obstacles affecting cover provided through the Retained Duty System and developing ways of overcoming those obstacles.

Collaboration between the three emergency service control room functions continued, with a highly successful co-location of police and fire control at the Joint Communications Centre on St Asaph Business Park since 2008.

A programme of capital projects, maintenance and minor works was rolled out at the Service's premises across North Wales. However, expenditure on the capital programme was less than forecast due to delays with a project to replace Wrexham fire station. The Authority was awarded grant funding from the Welsh Government of £215,000 which was used to upgrade and improve training facilities at several locations.

PAST YEAR 2010-11

2010-11 FOCUS AREA - RESILIENCE

The Fire and Rescue Service's resilience to potentially disruptive events both locally and nationally is constantly reviewed and strengthened.

There were four specific actions planned in this area:

11. To continue with the all-Wales resilience project between fire control rooms in Wales, including making improvements to data, policies and procedures, and electronic hardware and software

12. To continue with the rollout of the replacement wide area network and mobile data solution (both part of a national project).

13. To continue to enhance information and communications technology (ICT) systems

14. To continue to review and exercise Business Continuity Management and enhance the Service's capability to deal with large-scale incidents.

The all-Wales resilience project was completed, enabling the three Welsh fire and rescue services to operate a seamless system of mutual support. In the unlikely event of a serious system failure at any of the fire and rescue service control rooms, or if there are unusually higher volumes of incoming 999 calls, these calls can now be automatically diverted to one of the other two Welsh control rooms to process.

Mobile data terminals were fitted in the Service's vehicles as part of the national Firelink project, supporting any co-ordinated response to large scale emergencies, and generally increasing security as members of the public can no longer listen in to messages. An additional benefit from the introduction of this technology was that it enables the Service to send the closest available appliance to incidents, potentially cutting attendance times.

A restructure from April 2011 assigned responsibility internally for Business Continuity Management, adding impetus to reviewing and exercising contingency plans to ensure that all departments have considered and planned for situations that might threaten their continued smooth operation.

PAST YEAR 2010-11

2010-11 FOCUS AREA - EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The fire and rescue service nationally is still predominantly white and male, but is committed to achieving a more diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of the people it serves, and to ensuring that the services it delivers meets with the needs and expectations of the full diversity of people in the community.

There were two specific focus areas for 2010-11:

15. To progress with the development of a Single Equalities Scheme reflecting the requirements of the new Equality Act.

16. To provide training and development in particular aspects of diversity issues for authority members, senior managers and heads of department

The new Equality Act 2010 received royal assent in April 2010 and related duties for the public sector in Wales came into force a year later. Listed bodies (which includes the Fire and Rescue Authorities) now have until April 2012 to publish their equality objectives and Strategic Equality Plans.

Decision-makers, when considering the provision of services, are required to give due regard to the desirability of reducing socio-economic inequalities, eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct based on nine defined protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

PAST YEAR 2010-11

2010-11 FOCUS AREA - LANGUAGE AND HERITAGE

The Authority is committed to the principle that by valuing the language and heritage of Wales it can contribute not only to people's sense of wellbeing, but also to their safety.

Language –

Whether in emergency situations or in normal business situations, people appreciate being able to communicate with us in their language of choice. Furthermore, as the number of Welsh speakers rises it becomes increasingly evident that offering a language choice is simply good practice, not a concession. We are committed to delivering a Service that is of the same high standard and quality in both Welsh and English.

In 2009, North Wales Fire and Rescue revised its Welsh Language Scheme and extended its plans to 2010-13. Several of the planned actions relate to cultivating a Service that is fully in tune with our Welsh public. The Scheme is available from the publication section of the Service's website – www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk.

Heritage –

North Wales enjoys a wonderfully rich heritage, parts of which would be impossible to recreate if they were to be lost through fire or flood. For example, historic and architecturally important buildings and other structures; wildlife, marine and nature reserves; geologically important sites; historical gardens, plants and designed landscapes; libraries, galleries and special collections; sites of special scientific importance and sites of community importance are all important. As well as enhancing people's quality of life, many livelihoods and communities are also reliant on the continuing existence of these sites.

17. To monitor the completion of actions associated with the revised Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13

Particular focus areas in this year include on:

- recruitment processes;
- introducing a new process for recording the number of emergency calls handled in the Control room in Welsh and English; and
- raising awareness of the Scheme amongst external contractors brought in by the Facilities Management department to undertake work, and ensuring that formal signage procured through this department is bilingual

Significant progress was made in 2010-11 against the proposals in the 2010-13 Welsh Language Scheme. There is a requirement for all new members of staff and those successful in promotion to learn basic conversational Welsh to Level 2 standard and this has also continued to be promoted amongst existing staff during 2010-11. A total of 59 staff attained success in Level 1 Welsh, 103 in Level 2 Welsh and 8 in Level 3 Welsh during 2010-11.

In January 2010 a new set of Welsh Language performance indicators was agreed for the Service and data relating to Welsh language skills and learning is now being collated and

recorded in the HR database.

May 2011 was the first time that this data had been available to provide an up-to-date snapshot of skills for 2010-11 and it will provide a valuable tool for monitoring progress and targeting areas of improvement in future.

PAST YEAR 2010-11

2010-11 FOCUS AREA - SUSTAINABILITY

North Wales Fire and Rescue has always sought to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible and to make the best use of the resources it has at its disposal. Furthermore, the Authority recognises the valuable contribution the fire and rescue service makes to improving people's quality of life.

Through our Sustainable Development Plan we aim to ensure that we contribute to a better, safer and greener Wales. We recognise that not only do we owe it to the local people who pay for services today, but also to future generations of North Wales residents that as far as possible we:

- minimise waste in our own operations; and
- prevent and control fires and other potentially environmentally damaging incidents.

Reducing the number of fires helps to reduce carbon emissions and air, water and land pollution. It can also help to protect important natural habitats.

Reducing the number of false alarms helps to cut the number of journeys made by fire engines and other vehicles, which can contribute to a reduction in overall fuel consumption.

18. To improve the recognition of false alarm calls, thereby reducing unnecessary and wasteful journeys when there is no emergency.

19. To pay particular attention to reducing the number of fires overall, and specifically to outdoor fires that cause damage to the countryside

20. To improve systems for monitoring fuel consumption and vehicle tracking from the perspective of improving environmental management and energy conservation where possible.

The Control function provides the first point of contact for the vast majority of callers. Control operators are trained to challenge calls they suspect to be false, and to respond accordingly. Their skills are formally and systematically audited to ensure that high skills standards are maintained. Electronic means are also used to identify the source of such calls.

The service attended 3,750 false alarms of fire during 2010-11 – 1% fewer than in the previous year. However, in the specific sub-set of malicious false alarms attended, there was a 16% reduction, from 140 to 118, which is an excellent result.

The total number of fires attended also fell by 2% to 3,297 in 2010-11. Within that total, however, there was a 23% increase in grassland, woodland and crop fires from 675 to 829. Of those 829, 96% were classed as smaller, 'secondary' fires which means they were attended by fewer than five fire engines and involved no injuries. 58% were deemed to

have been started deliberately. More detailed analysis is available from www.statswales.wales.gov.uk Table 032981.

Good progress has been made to introduce ways of monitoring fuel consumption and vehicle tracking. Additional technology has enabled much closer monitoring of fleet usage by the fleet department, and opportunities have been taken to cut mileage, identify lower forecourt fuel prices, and increase fuel economy by installing speed limiters.

PAST YEAR 2010-11

2010-11 FOCUS AREA - LEGAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE

As a public sector organisation, the Authority seeks to engage in the political arena in order to maximise its effectiveness. Changes in legislation affecting how the fire and rescue authority is directed and managed are also an important part of this effective management.

21. To continue to maintain effective relationships with political stakeholders after the 2010 general election

22. To adapt to the new processes and timetable associated with the introduction of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009

Both these planned actions have been achieved.

PAST YEAR 2010-11

2010-11 FOCUS AREA - INFORMATION

The service relies heavily on timely, relevant and sufficient information on which to base decisions, drive improvement and measure its own performance.

23. To continue to increase the availability of timely and relevant performance-related information (including through the national Ffynnon system); and upgrade the service intranet

24. To contribute to a collaborative development of an all-Wales Incident Recording System (IRS) that is specifically tailored to the needs of Wales

25. To continue to respond to issues highlighted in the staff survey of views on corporate communications including developing a system of team briefings

26. To continue to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the budget consultation process; annual service, county and station planning; recording and reporting staff and workforce information; recording and reporting fleet information; operational intelligence and fire safety records management; overtime expenditure and efficiencies.

Some progress has been made in relation to the provision of information, although budgetary pressures have curtailed progress in some areas (e.g. upgrading the service intranet).

Use of the national Ffynnon system has not yet been rolled out (although the Service has continued to be engaged with the Ffynnon programme). Welsh Government funding of this is due to cease in December 2012.

A technical feasibility study is planned as regards adopting a server-based Wales version of the online UK Incident Recording System (IRS) for capturing and reporting information about incidents attended. In the meantime, the Service continues to use the free-to-use UK system.

PAST YEAR 2010-11

2010-11 FOCUS AREA - TECHNOLOGY

As with all organisations, the fire and rescue service relies heavily on information and communication technology to support both its operational and corporate effectiveness.

27. To continue to introduce and upgrade information and communications technology (ICT) systems and capacity to support efficient, effective and safe working. These include audio-visual installations, alerters and fireground radios, computers and printers, control room systems, incident information systems; and financial accounting systems.

These planned actions form part of an ongoing programme of upgrading within financial constraints. Refer also to the report of Wales Audit Office's themed review of the use of Information Technology on page 78.

PAST YEAR 2010-11

2010-11 FOCUS AREA - EXCELLENT, FAIR WORKFORCE ARRANGEMENTS

As a large employer with a diverse workforce, North Wales Fire and Rescue is constantly finding ways of maintaining a skilled and motivated workforce, available when required, to effectively provide and support the delivery of fire and rescue services.

28. To complete changes following the review of staffing in the control room

29. To complete an equal pay audit

30. To compile a Single Equalities Scheme.

31. To agree a Service Level Agreement with an employment law firm.

32. To agree a Service Level Agreement or appoint an internal investigating officer.

33. To continue to progress the Officer Review.

34. To extend the range of Retained Duty System (RDS) contracts to include 25% and 50% contracts for the purpose of ensuring 100% availability of RDS appliances

35. To develop a personal qualities and attributes profile of the Service from existing records.

36. To review personal development records and embed revised National Occupational Standards for firefighters.

37. To establish quality assurance systems for learning and development instructional staff.

38. To review the provision of driving instruction for drivers of emergency vehicles.

39. To consolidate the supervisory manager skills development programme.

40. To provide information to Local Government Pension Scheme employees about the options available to increase pensions benefits, including effective measures to save for retirement.

Progress has been made against the majority of these planned actions, although some (notably action 32) have been shelved because of financial constraints and some are still intended but within a longer time scale.

The planned Officer Review was translated into a new Management Restructure from 1st April 2011. The new structure was shaped by smaller functional reviews undertaken during the 2010-11 year, and followed detailed negotiations with staff and representative bodies. The new structure will ultimately achieve savings of around £450,000 per year whilst also improving some important areas of service delivery.

PAST YEAR 2010-11

OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE - EMERGENCY INCIDENTS ATTENDED

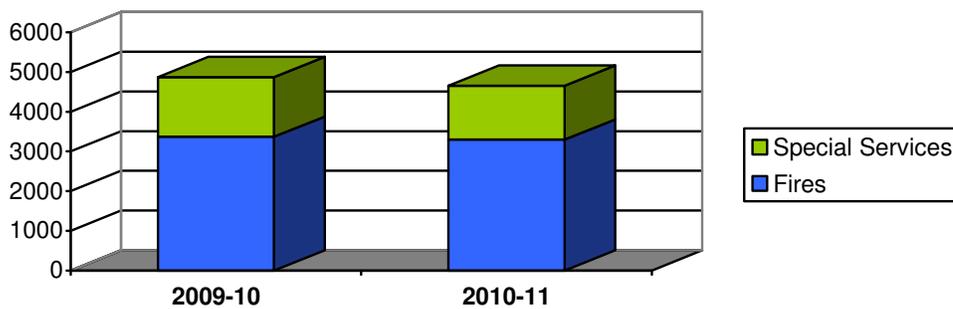
999 CALLS HANDLED

The first point of contact with the Service in emergencies is usually with the control room. A total of 17,611 calls associated with emergency incidents were handled by control staff in 2010-11, which is 2.3% more than in the previous year⁸.

FIRES AND SPECIAL SERVICE INCIDENTS ATTENDED

During the year, fire crews and operational managers attended a total of 3,297 fires and 1,360 non-fire special service incidents (including 617 road traffic collisions). This was 73 fewer fires and 142 fewer special service incidents than in the previous year.

Total fires and special service incidents attended



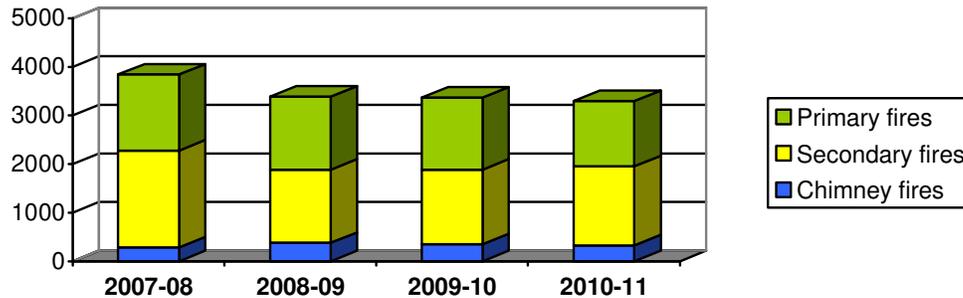
The 48.57 fires per 10,000 population in North Wales compares very favourably with the 68.89 per 10,000 population across Wales as a whole.

⁸ Information supplied in 2010-11 Annual Returns OPSW6 – 17,215.

OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE - FIRES ATTENDED

	Primary Fires	Secondary Fires	Chimney Fires	Total Fires
2009-10	1,485	1,538	347	3,370
Per 10,000 population	21.90	22.69	5.12	49.71
2010-11	1,346	1,626	325	3,297
Per 10,000 population	19.83	23.96	4.79	48.57
Change	-9.4%	+5.7%	-6.3%	-2.2%

All fires



In 2006-07, the Service attended **68.33** fires per 10,000 population. Sustained improvement, based on a focussed strategy of increasing community fire safety throughout North Wales, has seen that number fall every year to **56.90** in 2007-08, **49.95** in 2008-09, **49.71** in 2009-10 and **48.57** in 2010-11. This also compares very well with the 2010-11 average for the whole of Wales which stood at 68.89 fires per 10,000 population⁹.

A reduction in primary fires is one of the best measures of increased safety, and is therefore at the forefront of reducing risk. The success of the Service's twin approaches of educating people to avoid accidental fires and taking action to prevent acts of deliberate fire setting is well reflected in this indicator.

A sharp increase in the number of chimney fires in 2008-09 (up from 280 in the previous year to 376) was reversed in 2009-10 (down to 347) and reduced further in 2010-11 (down to 325).

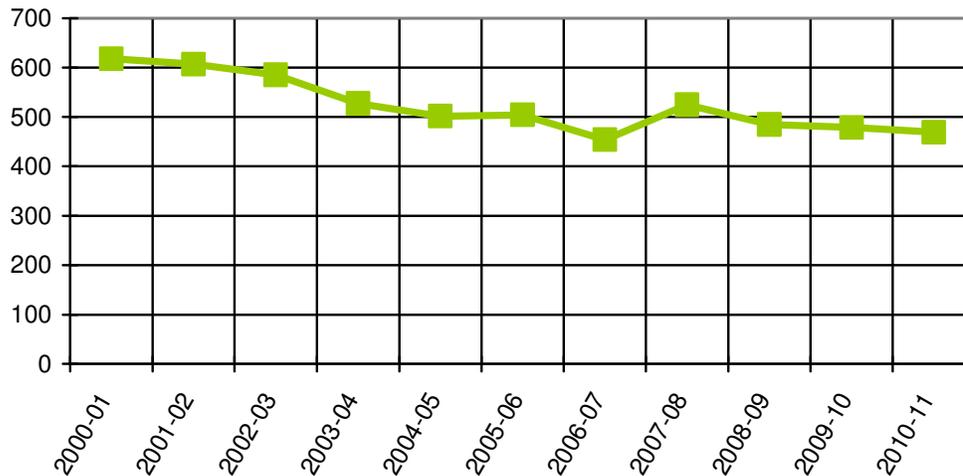
⁹ Welsh Government Statistical Bulletin SDR 186/2011 data (published 13 October 2011) reports 20,661 fires and ONS mid-year population estimate 2009 (StatsWales Table 016889) reports a Welsh population of 2,999,319 people.

The number of chimney fires is unsurprisingly associated with the weather, so a reduction in this category of fires reflects both the temperature and the timely messages issued by the Service reminding homeowners to have their chimneys swept by reputable chimney sweeps.

OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE - DWELLING FIRES

Fires in the home have been shown to be the ones where people are most likely to be killed or injured, and therefore reducing these is a primary objective for the Authority.

Accidental dwelling fires



There are around 300,000 dwellings in North Wales. In 2010-11, 469 of those were damaged by accidental fires that necessitated the attendance of at least one fire engine. Reducing the number of accidental dwelling fires is one of North Wales Fire and Rescue's key aims, and it is pleasing to see the significant reduction achieved over the past decade.

A high proportion (annually between 90% and 95%) of these fires are extinguished before they spread outside the room in which they started.

These outcomes are associated with the Service's Community Fire Safety strategy, and people taking heed of advice about preventing and containing fires in their homes, ensuring that they have early warning of a fire if one does start, and knowing how to react to secure their own safe escape from any room in their home.

The Service's strategy for increasing its ability to direct its prevention work at the most vulnerable members of our communities includes training staff from other caring agencies to conduct Home Fire Safety Checks during the course of their everyday contact with these people. Referrals and information sharing are also used as a way of removing organisational barriers to keeping people safe. The Service has secured information sharing protocols, memorandums of understanding and service level agreements with a range of organisations including:

- All 6 unitary authorities in North Wales
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- North Wales Police

- Wales Ambulance (North Wales Region)
- North Wales Housing
- Pennaf Housing Group
- North Wales Housing Association
- Cartrefi Conwy
- All 6 Care and Repair agencies in North Wales
- The Red Cross
- Age Concern North East Wales.

As part of the 2010-11 audit plan, an Internal Audit was undertaken of the Service's partnership working with other agencies and organisations. The audit concluded that partnership working was embedded in the Service and was pivotal to the successful progress of community safety activity but also noted that although adequate there was room to improve as regards the partnership governance arrangements.

As well as implementing the recommended improvements, the Service is also working towards compliance with the Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) <http://www.waspi.org/> - an information sharing framework for Wales and part of the Welsh Government's Sharing Personal Information programme.

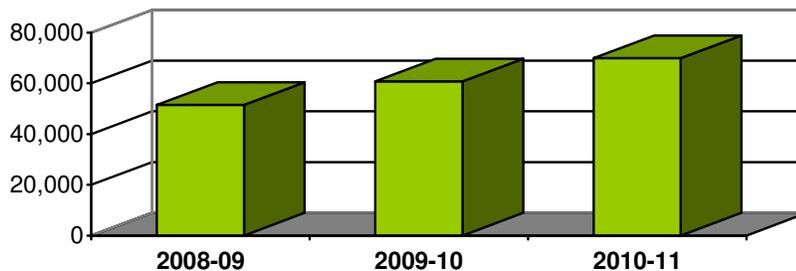
The Service's success in targeting relatively higher risk homes is reflected in the fact that of the 469 accidental dwelling fires in 2010-11, 134 had received at least one Home Fire Safety Check during the preceding two years.

In addition to the annual target of delivering 30,000 free Home Fire Safety Checks, the Authority has a complementary target that would see 25% of the total delivered having been as a result of a referral from a partner agency.

OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE - COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY ACTIVITIES

During 2010-11 the Service attended 396 special events, taking the fire safety message to an estimated audience of 52,905 people. A further 827 organised talks were given to groups totalling 17,007 people. This represents an increase of 9,155 people reached and 510 hours spent on these activities when compared against the previous year.

Total audiences reached at Community Fire Safety Events and Talks



Following a peak in the number of fire deaths in North Wales in 2006, the Service embarked on a highly challenging programme of substantially increased Community Fire Safety activity, which included setting an initial target to deliver 30,000 free Home Fire Safety Checks to residents per year.

During 2010-11, the Service exceeded its own annual target for these checks, spending 47,532 staff hours during the year delivering a total of 36,905 free Home Fire Safety Checks.

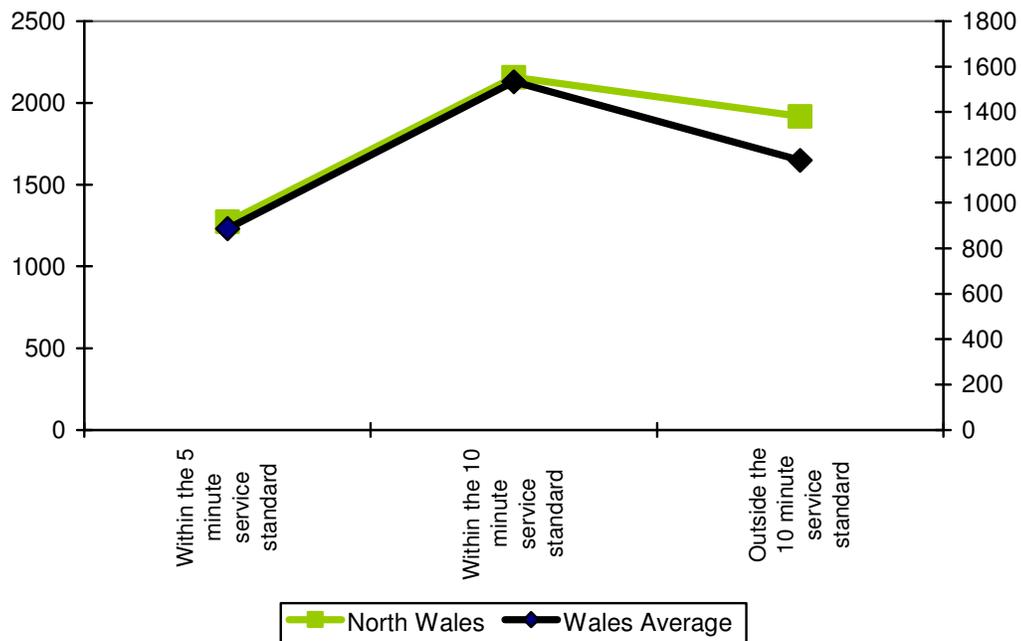
North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's strategy is based around an understanding of identified contributory factors that tend to make some people more likely than others to have a fire in their home. A detailed analysis conducted by a specially convened Chief Fire Officer's Task Group in 2007 led to the conclusion that the way forward was to target vulnerable individuals rather than rely on computer-generated risk maps such as those produced from risk modelling software provided by the UK Government in 2004 (Fire Service Emergency Cover, known as FSEC).

Even though a different approach has been adopted in North Wales, however, it remains consistent with the rest of Wales in terms of Home Fire Safety Check coverage in the area, and slightly better in relation to their delivery in remoter areas.

Taking those dwellings in areas categorised by FSEC as being 'above average risk' and the same dwellings as reflected through the Welsh Government's service standard 5 minute and 10 minute categories, and overlaying the number of Home Fire Safety Checks delivered there by the Service in 2009-10, North Wales was seen to be in line

with the Welsh average, and better in relation to more remote premises situated outside the 10 minute service standard.

Homes within the FSEC 'Above Average' risk category that received a Home Fire Safety Check in 2009-10



A more detailed description of service standards for attendance at incidents is provided at page 66.

OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE - WELL- INFORMED AND EQUIPPED PEOPLE

Although one fire per 600 dwellings in North Wales may not initially seem high, national statistics over several years have shown that fires in the home are the deadliest, accounting for the highest number of fire deaths. They are also the most preventable if residents follow guidance that should by now be becoming familiar.

Hard-hitting messages have been issued by the Service over many years about (amongst others) the dangers of:

- using a chip pan
- leaving cooking unattended
- cooking when under the influence of drink or drugs
- not switching off electrical appliances after use
- carelessly positioning lit candles
- smoking in bed
- carelessly disposing of cigarette ends
- playing with matches
- failing to use a fire guard in front of open fires
- not ensuring that chimneys are swept regularly
- not maintaining safe electrical wiring and overloading sockets
- placing clothes to air near heaters and open fires

This free advice and Home Fire Safety Check includes the free supply and fitting of smoke detectors in people's homes, and can include other specialist equipment to help keep them safe. Fire and Rescue Service staff help residents to consider their escape plans in the event of a fire, which is especially important if residents are very young, frail, or disabled.

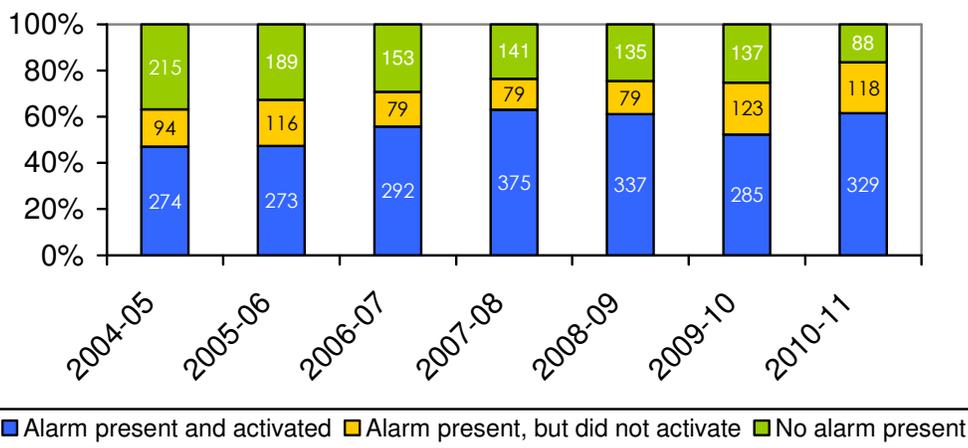
Advice is also given on good night-time routines of checking that doors are shut properly, electrical appliances have been switched off, candles and cigarettes safely extinguished, open fires have been made safe, and so forth.

OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE - SMOKE ALARM OWNERSHIP

The most recent Living in Wales Survey showed that the majority of homes in Wales had at least one smoke alarm fitted, and that the number without one had fallen to around 10% of the total in 2008 from around 14% four years earlier. The ultimate aim is to ensure that every home has at least one working smoke detector installed.

Although it is impossible to know precisely how many homes in North Wales have a working smoke detector installed, a proxy indicator relates to the number of domestic fires attended where a smoke alarm activated.

Smoke Alarms in Dwelling Fires - Actuals

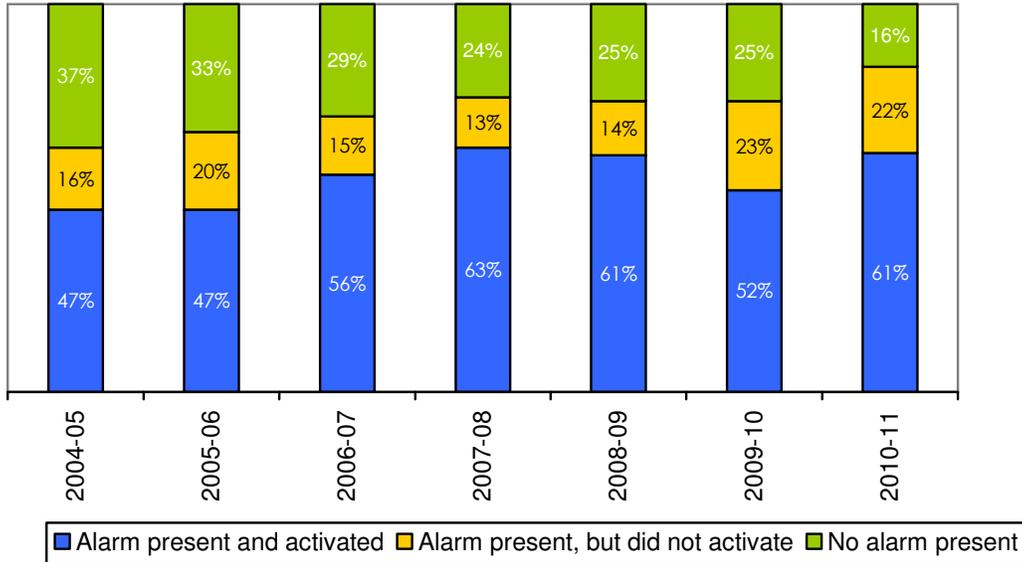


Over recent years, there has been a steady reduction in the number of dwelling fires attended by North Wales Fire and Rescue where there was no smoke alarm fitted in the premises. In 2009-10 there was an unexpected change in the established pattern of improvement, which was thought to be attributable either to the introduction of the new UK-wide incident recording system that was introduced in April 2009, or alternatively that the Service was attending more fires in the homes of people who were proving harder to reach in terms of influencing their behaviour through the many safety messages and the offer of free advice and equipment.

Although the percentage of dwelling fires attended in North Wales during 2009-10 where there was no smoke alarm fitted (25%) was actually relatively low when compared with the percentage across the whole of Wales (41%), it was important to monitor the situation to make sure that performance was not starting to deteriorate. We are pleased to report that performance was much improved throughout 2010-11, and year-end results showed a lower percentage than ever of dwelling fires where

there was no smoke alarm fitted. The 16% in this category in North Wales compares extremely well against the all-Wales average of 38%¹⁰.

Smoke Alarms in Dwelling Fires - Percentages

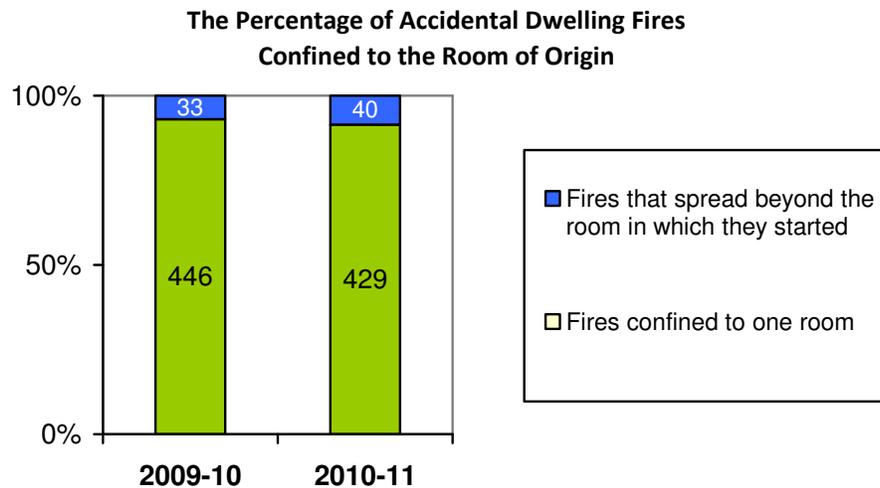


The category of ‘alarm present, but did not activate’ is made up of a range of sub-categories including defective or missing batteries, faults and detectors removed. Analysis shows that the main reason, however, is that by confining the fire there has not been an opportunity for it or smoke from it to spread to the detector to trigger the alarm.

¹⁰ Welsh Government Statistical Bulletin SDR 186/2011 data (published 13 October 2011) and Stats Wales Table O26394.

OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE - SAFER PEOPLE

In the majority of cases (91% in 2010-11), accidental dwelling fires are confined to one room. A dwelling may be located some distance from the nearest fire station, so particular care needs to be taken to ensure that any fire is detected early and that internal doors are kept shut to help stop the smoke and fire from spreading. These simple measures can make all the difference to outcomes for people and property during the time before the fire and rescue service arrives.



Knowing what to do and thinking through an escape plan before an emergency happens helps people in dwellings react correctly if the smoke alarm does go off so they can get themselves out safely without having to wait for a fire engine to arrive.

OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE - HEALTHIER PEOPLE FOR LONGER

The Authority's aim is to see a time when every dwelling is fitted with a properly fitted, working smoke alarm. However, alongside the strategy of providing as many households as possible with free smoke detectors and free advice we want to focus our efforts on the most vulnerable members of society who are least able to look after themselves. Through collaboration with other caring agencies in North Wales and making use of reliable sources of information we aim to keep the number of instances where people are killed or injured by fire at the lowest level possible.

Back in 2003, the then Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration declared that it was the Assembly Government's target to reduce deaths in fires in Wales by between 30% and 50% in the following five years. Since then, the Assembly has clarified that the baseline figures to be used to assess the progress of Fire and Rescue Authorities against this ambitious target would be those for the calendar year 2004 when there were 26 fire deaths in Wales (21 as a result of accidental fires and 5 as a result of deliberate fires).

Although fire deaths happen comparatively infrequently in North Wales, they are nevertheless tragic occurrences that the Authority is determined to do its utmost to reduce even further. The sad truth is that by the time the Service has received a call for assistance in most cases it is already too late to save anyone in the fire. On occasion we do not receive the call until after the fire has burned itself out. Prevention is therefore at the forefront of the Authority's strategy for reducing the number of people killed or injured by fire.

OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE - HEALTHIER PEOPLE FOR LONGER

In 2009-10, fire killed less than one person and injured fewer than nine people per 100,000 population in Wales.

In North Wales in 2010-11, no fire deaths were recorded as a result of fires in non-domestic premises, but 10 people lost their lives in fires in domestic premises. Some fires claimed more than one life. In many cases such tragic outcomes cannot be predicted, but research has shown that fire deaths are often associated with particular vulnerabilities, which is why the Service continues to focus on working with voluntary and caring agencies to identify people who are most at risk in order to target all safety advice and support to greatest effect.

	Fire deaths from accidental fires	Fire deaths from deliberate fires	All fire deaths
2009-10	6	2	8
Per 100,000 population	0.88	0.29	1.17
2010-11	10	0	10
Per 100,000 population	1.47	0	1.47

During 2010-11, 97 people were recorded as having sustained an injury at a fire. This includes cuts and bruises as well as burns and scalds. 86 of those injuries were sustained at accidental fires, of which 53 were at accidental dwelling fires.

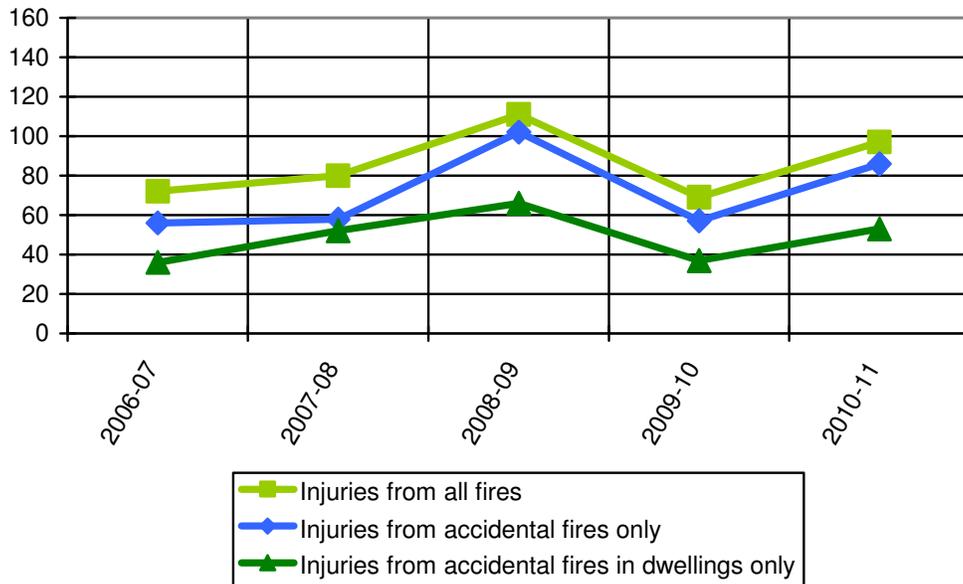
	Fire injuries from accidental fires	Fire injuries from deliberate fires	All fire injuries
2009-10	57	12	69
Per 100,000 population	8.41	1.76	10.17
2010-11	86	11	97
Per 100,000 population	12.67	1.62	14.29

Compared to 2009-10, and despite the general reduction in fires, the number of fire injuries rose significantly in 2010-11 (from 69 to 97). Ten more people were injured

in accidental dwelling fires than in 2009-10 and five more people were injured in deliberate dwelling fires than in 2009-10.

This inconsistency between the excellent results being achieved in reducing fires and the persistence of fire injuries – albeit in the categories of slight injuries – is now the focus of detailed analysis.

Injuries from fire



Although pleased at the reduction when compared to 2008-09, changes in the recording of slight injuries in the new national Incident Recording System that was introduced into the Service from April 2009 may account for some differences between years.

This potential discontinuity in fire injury statistics across the UK that has arisen from the switchover from the largely paper-based Fire Data Report (FDR) system to the new Incident Recording System that has been noted by the central government department responsible for producing UK fire statistics¹¹.

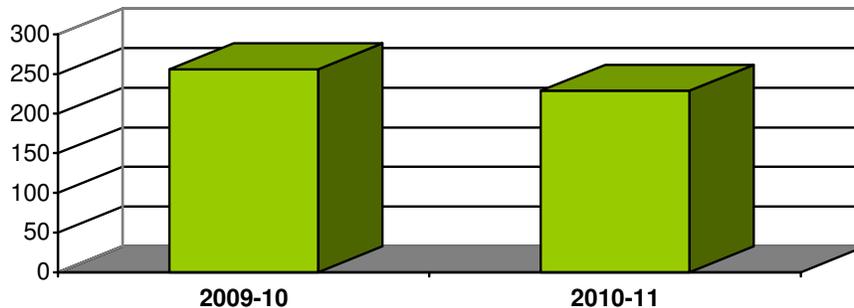
¹¹ Fire Statistics Monitor April 2009-March 2010 Issue No. 03/10 20 August 2010 page 21. Crown copyright. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/monitorq1q420091>

FIRES IN NON-DOMESTIC PREMISES

There are around 27,000 non-domestic premises in North Wales, most of which are subject to legislation designed to ensure the safety of the people inside them. These buildings include, for example, hospitals, care homes, houses converted into flats, public buildings, schools, shops, licensed premises, offices, factories, hostels and hotels.

In 2010-11, 229 non-domestic premises suffered a fire that required an attendance by the Fire and Rescue Service. That equates to around 8.35 fires per 1,000 such premises, compared to 9.83 per 1,000 non-domestic premises in Wales as a whole.

Fires in non-domestic premises



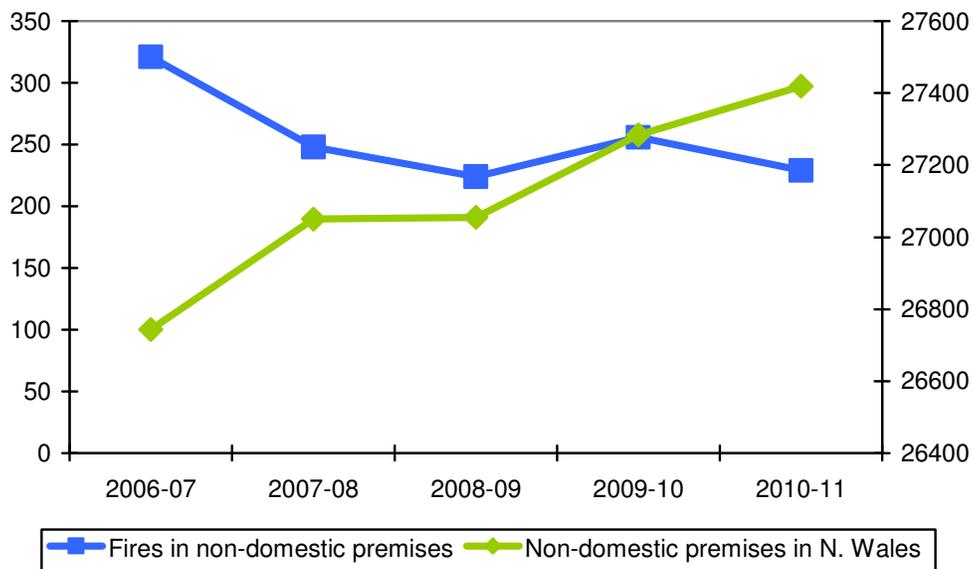
In October 2006, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into force. The introduction of this order changed the role of the Fire and Rescue Authority to one of enforcement rather than of certification, so the focus for the Service has changed more recently to prioritising known premises to undergo a formal audit of their fire safety arrangements.

FIRE SAFETY AUDITS OF PREMISES

A total of 723 fire safety audits were carried out during the year, including 237 in hotels and hostels, 160 in care homes, 88 in factories, offices and other workplaces, 75 in licensed premises, 40 in shops, 22 in schools and further education premises, and 32 in houses of multiple occupation, those converted into flats and purpose-built flats of 4 storeys or higher. 21 Enforcement Notices and 5 Prohibition Notices were served during the year.

The service responded to 482 statutory and non-statutory consultations by other agencies (e.g. building regulations, care standards and licensing) which accounted for 1,044 hours of work during the year¹².

Since the introduction of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the number of non-domestic premises in North Wales has increased by 2.5% from 26,743 to 27,419. In that same period, however, the number of fires attended in those buildings actually fell by 28.7% from 321 to 229, suggesting that the new arrangements under the Order are being effective.



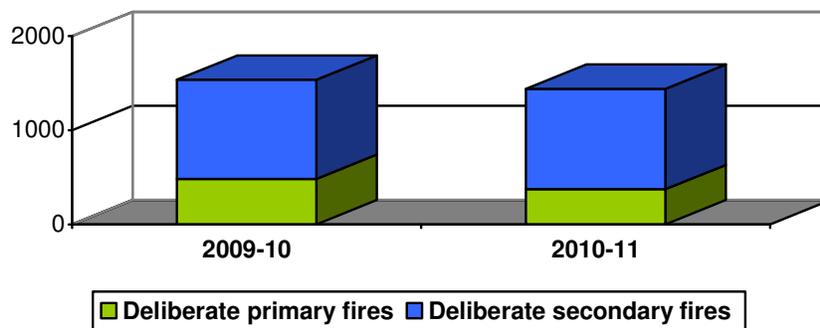
¹² Information supplied in 2010-11 FSW Annual Operational Returns.

DELIBERATE FIRES

Deliberate fires create significant risk not only to lives but also to the quality of those lives, the economic vibrancy of an area, its schools, its sense of community, its cherished historical and heritage sites, and the environmental and natural landscapes.

People have a range of motives for deliberately starting fires including to conceal evidence of criminality or to defraud insurers or to deliberately cause harm to themselves or other people. As such, it makes sense for the Fire and Rescue Service and the Police to work together to reduce the incidence of deliberate fires, whatever the motive behind them.

Deliberate fires



The number of deliberate fires fell again in 2010-11 compared to the previous year (from 1,536 to 1,438). Although a significant reduction was achieved in the primary fires category there was still a small increase in the secondary fires category.

That said, the 1,065 deliberate secondary fires in 2010-11 was nevertheless a great improvement on the 1,314 in 2007-08 and the 1,711 in 2006-07. This indicates that the collaboration between North Wales Police and North Wales Fire and Rescue is being effective and compares very well with the all-Wales incidence rate of 8.26 deliberate primary and 39.36 deliberate secondary fires per 10,000 population¹³.

	Deliberate primary fires	Deliberate secondary fires	All deliberate fires
2009-10	482	1054	1536
Per 10,000 population	7.11	15.55	22.66
2010-11	373	1065	1438
Per 10,000 population	5.50	15.69	21.19

¹³ Welsh Government Statistical Bulletin SDR 186/2011 Fire and Rescue Service Performance 2010-11 data (published 13 October 2011) and Stats Wales Table 026394.

SPECIAL SERVICE INCIDENTS

Apart from attending fires, the fire and rescue service attends a wide range of non-fire incidents, termed 'special service incidents'. In 2010-11 the service attended 621 road traffic incidents, 76 (12.3%) of which involved freeing trapped people. This compares with 767 road traffic incidents in the previous year, 90 (11.7%) of which involved an extrication.

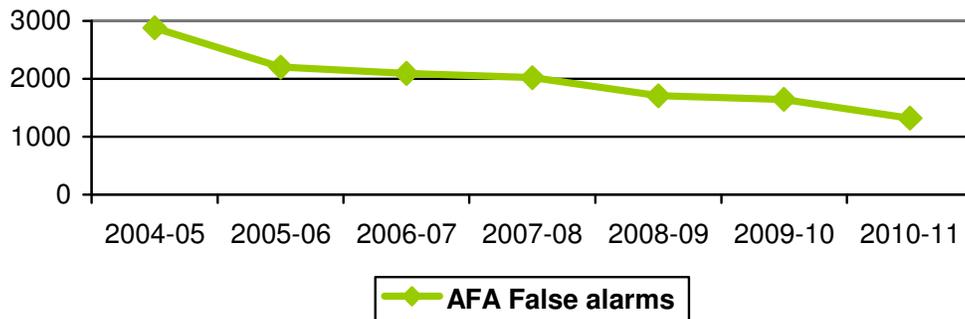
A further 738 special service incidents were attended in 2010-11, including to deal with spills and leaks (68), to remove/provide water (27), to rescue animals (44), to release lifts (55) and to help gain entry (52), to get people to safety (79) and to provide assistance to Police and Ambulance services (60). The total was almost identical to the previous year's total (735).

FALSE ALARMS

The Authority endorses the installation of Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) in non-domestic properties as a way of warning everyone on the premises that a fire has broken out. However, when these alarms are either incorrectly installed or poorly maintained, or when systems aren't managed properly, they are prone to generate false alarms which presents additional risk if people start to ignore what should be a signal for them to evacuate the building.

Furthermore, if a fire engine is sent to premises when there is no emergency, it is both wasteful and it means that another fire engine may have to be brought from further afield to deal with any real emergency incident.

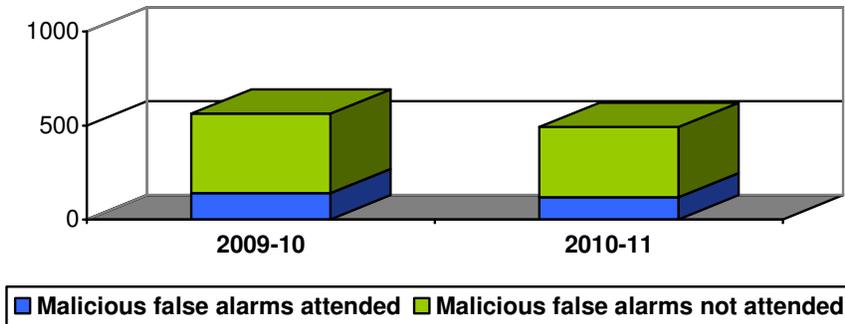
False alarms from AFA systems in non-domestic premises



The reduction is certainly encouraging, but the 1,322 such incidents in 2010-11 still equates to between three and four of these false calls per day. Furthermore, a mid-year change brought about by a UK-wide review of how false alarms were recorded had the effect of artificially reducing the number in the 'AFA false alarms' category by transferring them to the 'false alarm with good intent' category. We will continue to monitor the situation and bear in mind that comparisons in 2011-12 will be affected. The Service will also be continuing to work with premises managers to reduce the overall number, but targeting those whose systems send out multiple false alarms.

FALSE ALARMS

Malicious false alarms



Every year the Service receives a number of malicious calls made with the intention of getting a response although there is no emergency situation. As well as being illegal, this sort of behaviour has the potential to increase the level of risk by tying up resources unnecessarily, and is also a pointless drain on the Authority's finances. For these reasons, the Service does its utmost to recognise these false calls as being malicious before committing any resources to them. Wherever possible, the Service also takes action against people who deliberately make these false calls.

2010-11 saw the number of malicious false alarms coming in to the Control Centre fall again by almost 13% as people get to understand that their attempt to falsely call out a fire appliance when there is no emergency is unlikely to succeed. Of the 491 malicious false alarms received, over three-quarters (373, or 76%) were successfully challenged by the Control operator. When compared to a decade before¹⁴, in 2001-02, the number of malicious false alarms has more than halved (from 1,158), and the percentage attended has fallen from 41% to less than 25%.

¹⁴ North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Best Value Performance Plan 2003-04.

RESPONDING QUICKLY TO 999 CALLS

Being able to respond quickly when a 999 call is received is a touchstone of the fire and rescue service, and an issue that is taken very seriously. A recent review of response times in English fire and rescue services conducted by the UK Government¹⁵ sought to explain why attendance times have been increasing nationally since 1999. Their analysis showed that the single most important effect was from increased traffic levels. Other suggestions such as health and safety considerations, the increase in Community Fire Safety work by crews and the removal of national standards of fire cover were not borne out in the evidence.

Our decision to relocate the primary Control room to a purpose built facility with North Wales Police was partly taken to improve co-ordination of response to calls for assistance. We have also entered into an arrangement with the Welsh Ambulance Service so that we get to know about road traffic collisions sooner, allowing us to make an informed decision about whether to send a fire crew immediately. What used to happen was that other emergency services would arrive first and only then would someone make an assessment of whether the fire and rescue service was needed, which meant that work to release people trapped in their vehicle did not start until later.

Other recent work to improve the turnout and attendance times of fire stations includes the use of new technology to assist with selecting the closest fire engine or other vehicle to attend, changing the shift start and finish times at day crewed stations, and continuously updating mobilising, communications and information systems in the Control room.

North Wales has 44 fire stations, 36 of which are crewed entirely by firefighting staff who work on a Retained Duty System whereby they respond to an alerter from wherever they might be in the vicinity of the station. The speed of attendance therefore takes this into account, and the availability of sufficient Retained Duty System firefighters is a key factor in maintaining full coverage of North Wales. Following an internal process review in 2010 of the arrangements for recruiting Retained Duty System firefighters, processes have been streamlined and improved. This includes the introduction of a new post of 'Availability Manager' as part of the recent management restructure.

Good fleet management and high quality regular servicing of vehicles also play their part, including the careful scheduling of maintenance checks – on the fire station itself, if possible - to shorten the period during which vehicles are unavailable.

On the rare occasions when delays in attending occur, these are thoroughly investigated so that lessons may be learned to improve overall performance.

¹⁵ Communities and Local Government Review of Fire and Rescue Service response times - Fire Research Series 1/2009 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/frsresponsetimes>

SERVICE STANDARDS FOR ATTENDANCE AT INCIDENTS

National 'Standards of Fire Cover' developed during the 1930s were discontinued in 2004 in favour of locally determined Integrated Risk Management Plans tailored to suit the local area. In North Wales the Authority recognised how unsatisfactory – and deceptive – the old UK standards had been¹⁶, particularly as they did not apply to large areas of North Wales because they were categorised as 'remote rural'.

North Wales Fire Authority took a more pragmatic approach. Recognising that all emergency incidents were being attended in an average time of under nine minutes, the Authority made a commitment in 2004 not to let that high standard deteriorate, and proceeded to introduce a range of improvements that enhanced the Service's response still further. For example, since that time, the Service has:

- introduced new mobilising software so that the nearest most appropriate resource can be identified and sent to the emergency incident;
- reviewed the 'pre-determined attendances' to make sure that the resources routinely sent to specific types of incidents and locations are the most appropriate;
- improved its knowledge of the quickest routes to remote and isolated households;
- equipped all front line fire engines with additional equipment so that they do not have to wait for another vehicle to bring it to the incident;
- relocated the Control Room to shared accommodation with North Wales Police Control Room and made arrangements to be notified of road traffic collisions by Wales Ambulance Control Room so that an early response can be made;
- introduced Mobile Data Terminals into fire appliances as part of a national initiative;
- continued to invest in the fleet of emergency vehicles and the technology used for alerting and mobilising crews.

Furthermore, the Service increased its prevention activity enormously – from an average of around 3,000 Home Fire Safety Checks per year up to 2004-05 to over 30,000 per year – and focussed especially on certain aspects such as providing advice to people living in remote rural areas, reducing the incidence of arson and helping to improve road safety.

In 2006 the Welsh Assembly Government indicated that it would be introducing a new service standard for Wales. It committed to ensuring that 80% of homes (when measured across the whole of Wales) would be close enough to a fire station to enable a fire engine to arrive within 10 minutes. Dwellings located inside these catchment areas were said to fall 'within the 10 minute service standard'.

¹⁶ The Authority's 2004-05 IRMP: 'Risk 4 - Standards of Fire Cover are Deceptive' illustrated this by the example that according to the old UK standards, a small fire in an empty shop in a large city would get two fire engines within five minutes and a third within eight minutes. By contrast, a fire at night in a family home in a rural village would get only one fire engine within twenty minutes.

Allowance was made in the 10 minutes for Retained crews to respond to their fire station and get changed into their firefighting kit before setting out. The distance from a fire station was therefore necessarily going to be fairly short.

An Assembly Government 5 minute standard also applied in some particularly densely populated high risk areas of Wales. Although they had been identified through computer risk modelling as being prone to higher casualty rates, these areas were not necessarily located within 5 minutes of a fire station.

A programme of additional prevention activity was to be applied in areas that lay further away from fire stations.

Some two years later, in February 2008, details of an accepted interpretation and measurement of this complex Standard were issued¹⁷.

However, experience of measuring performance against this Service Standard revealed some significant shortcomings, and a review was commenced in 2009. An alternative approach was developed, with a view to replacing the 2006 Standard from April 2011. After a public consultation between November 2010 and January 2011, the Welsh Government issued a circular in July 2011¹⁸ confirming that there would be no requirement to report performance against the 2006 Service Standard in 2010-11.

The Service will continue to invest time and resources to enhance and improve its response to incidents. Also, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority will be developing a local attendance standard during 2011-12 that is appropriate for the North Wales area now, subject to any alternative proposal being brought into effect by the Welsh Government.

¹⁷ Order 2008 No. 450 (W.40) issued February 2008

¹⁸ W-FRSC(2011)19 issued 21 July 2011

Sickness absence

In April 2008 the Service achieved the gold award in the Corporate Standard for Health at Work in recognition of its achievements in workplace health and wellbeing. This was validated for a further three years in April 2011.

The Service is now working towards the platinum award, reflecting the Authority's commitment to supporting staff health and wellbeing.

In 2010-11, the number of days or shifts lost to sickness absence by staff totalled 3,259, equating to 7.1 days or shifts lost per full time equivalent employee (excluding staff on the Retained Duty System).

Compared with the 4,023 days or shifts lost to sickness absence in the previous year (8.8 per FTE employee) this constitutes a significant reduction, made all the better by the fact that improvement was seen in all staff categories – operational, control and support.

This also compares very favourably with the sickness absence rates in Welsh local authorities that averaged 10.34 days lost per person in 2010-11.¹⁹

All members of staff who are absent due to illness are subject to the Service's attendance management policy that seeks to balance supportive assistance with fair and clear management action.

Ill-health retirements

The fire and rescue service takes health and safety very seriously, not only for fire crews attending potentially dangerous emergency incidents but also our lone workers, mechanics, cooks, drivers, maintenance technicians – in fact, all our employees.

As far as possible we accommodate long-term serious illness and disability, and make suitable adjustments so that people can continue to be employed with us. From time to time, however, retirement on the grounds of ill-health is the only realistic option.

In 2010-11, there were 11 retirements from the Service due to ill-health. This represents 1% of the total workforce. Five were not service-related, and six cases were still undecided at the end of the reporting year.

¹⁹ Local Authority Performance bulletin 2010-11 issued by the Data Unit Wales 29 September 2011.
<http://www.dataunitwales.gov.uk/Publication.asp?id=SX7E49-A7800480>

Staff injuries

In March 2010 the Health and Safety Executive published a statement that was intended to clarify how the Fire and Rescue Service should comply with health and safety at work duties within their operational work. Entitled ***Striking the Balance***, this statement listed the particular challenges for Fire and Rescue Authorities as employers. It noted that:

The application of health and safety law is challenging for Fire and Rescue employers in relation to some of their operational activities because:

- they have to send firefighters into dangerous situations in order to save lives when anyone else would be seeking to get away from the danger;
- there is often an unrealistic public expectation that firefighters will put themselves at risk even when such risks outweigh any potential benefits to be gained;
- many incidents firefighters face can develop at speed, some can develop in unexpected ways – and firefighters may, from time to time, be confronted with situations outside their experience;
- they have to prepare individual employees to be able to make decisions in dangerous, fast-moving, emotionally charged and pressurised situations, even when there may sometimes be incomplete or inaccurate information about the incident;
- they have to respond to dangerous situations which are not of their own making - this is different to most other sectors where it is the employer's own business that creates the hazards; and
- they may not be able to control or mitigate some aspects of the working environment.

The Service does not limit its health and safety management to operational incidents, of course, and all near misses, accidents and injuries are taken just as seriously whether they occur (for example) in an office, a kitchen, a training environment or out in the community.

In 2010-11, 263 normal duty days were lost because of injuries sustained by 18 people during operational incidents. Although any injury is a matter of concern, this is a significant improvement compared to the previous year, with the number of days lost having been reduced by two-thirds and the number of staff injured at operational incidents having been halved.

A further 38 normal duty days were lost because of injuries sustained by 20 people during routine activities. This also represents a huge improvement on the previous year when 243 normal duty days were lost by 32 people injured during routine activities.

As regards injuries during training for operational incidents, the number of people injured was successfully reduced from 29 to 15, but the number of normal duty days lost was significantly higher (556 compared with 285) because two of those injuries resulted in nearly 500 duty days lost.

Compared with 7 in the previous year, none of the injuries sustained by staff in 2010-11 was reportable as a major injury during the year under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). None was fatal.

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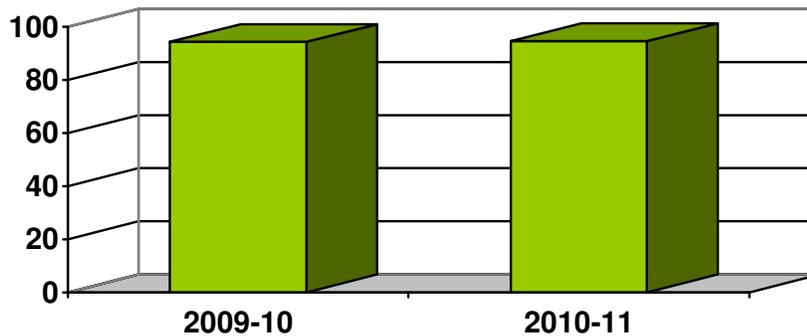
AN EFFICIENT ORGANISATION THAT IS GOOD TO DO BUSINESS WITH

The Authority aims to be a good organisation to do business with, and one aspect of that concerns how quickly it settles its bills with companies that provide commercial goods and services.

In 2010-11 the Service processed 10,055 invoices that fell into this category – 380 less than in 2009-10.

9,513 (94.6%) were paid within 30 days of receipt of the invoice, which compares well with the average of 91% paid within 30 days by all three Welsh fire and rescue authorities²⁰.

**The Percentage of Undisputed Invoices
Paid Within 30 Days**



²⁰ Welsh Government Statistical Bulletin Fire and Rescue Service Performance 2010-11 SDR 186/2011 published 13th October 2011

AMENDMENTS TO PREVIOUSLY REPORTED 2009-10 FIGURES

There are **no changes** to report to the 2009-10 figures that were reported in the 2009-2012 Combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan published by the Authority in October 2010.

Reference	Definition	Published results	Post-audit results

A full breakdown of all the figures is provided in Section 6.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PEOPLE'S LIVES IN VARIOUS WAYS

Success in tackling operational emergencies, often under difficult and dangerous conditions, was once again evident throughout the year. However, in addition to this, the service was also participating in a very wide range of initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of people, reducing risk and improving the service generally.

News items are issued throughout the year, and are made available on the Service's website. The following is a selection from the year, showing the wide variety of activities that the service became involved in.

April 2010 – Staff from North Wales Fire and Rescue Service joined up with North Wales Police and health and social care agencies for a week visiting rural villages across Meirionnydd in the community safety bus to provide specialist advice to older residents in hard to reach areas.

Service staff also attended Yale College in Wrexham with North Wales Police, Welsh Ambulance Service and Wrexham County Borough Council staff to provide an all-day safety event for the college students.

May 2010 – The Arson Reduction Team worked with the Halkyn Mountain Ranger to help drive down the number of deliberate fires in the Brynford and Pentre Halkyn areas of Flintshire.

June 2010 – Welsh Fire and Rescue Services launched a language choice campaign for fire safety. All three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales joined together to promote a bilingual service to help keep people safe from fire in their homes.

July 2010 – Welsh firefighters unveiled the new personal protective equipment (PPE), which is considered one of the world's most advanced fire-fighting suits.

A weekend of road safety events was held in Llandudno. The 'Motorist Education Event' was part of the North Wales Police summer campaign aimed at promoting good partnership working.

August 2010 – Youngsters from Denbighshire were given the opportunity to spend five days as firefighters

Six skips were filled with rubbish from a council estate during an environmental clean-up day. Nearly four tonnes of waste and rubbish were cleared from Morfa'r Garreg in Pwllheli. The day was organised by Gwynedd Council, Communities First, Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd and Keep Wales Tidy. The North Wales Fire Service also conducted over 30 home fire safety checks during the day.

September 2010 – A fire started deliberately saw over 2,000 bales of hay destroyed as well as a barn. Firefighters took eight hours to extinguish the fire in the Holywell area.

Ten fire engines tackle a fire at a Flintshire recycling plant. Crews worked with the Environmental Agency and Environmental Health Department at the scene, and advised local residents to keep doors and windows closed. No injuries occurred.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PEOPLE'S LIVES IN VARIOUS WAYS

October 2010 – The Social Justice and Local Government minister, Carl Sargeant AM officially opened the newly refurbished fire station at Llangefni.

A road safety event was held at Rhyl Community College. Presentations were made to students aged between 16 and 18 years of age by North Wales Fire and Rescue, North Wales Police, the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust, and Bikesafe

November 2010 – The Service joined up with North Wales Police in 'Be A Nice Guy!' and 'Operation BANG!' initiatives aimed at helping to reduce incidents and anti-social behaviour during the Halloween and Bonfire Night period.

A new £45m communications system was launched for fire and rescue services across Wales.

North Wales Fire and Rescue staff warned of the dangers of increasingly popular 'Chinese Lanterns'.

December 2010 - Staff from North Wales Fire and Rescue gave a talk promoting fire safety at an event organised by CAIS (the drug and alcohol agency), in Morfa Hall, Rhyl. CAIS routinely offer all their clients the option of a Home Fire Safety Check.

A new initiative was launched to keep students at Bangor university safe over the festive holidays. Entitled 'Drunk Cook, Won't Cook'. This message was printed bilingually on beer mats and posters throughout the campus.

January 2011 – North Wales Fire and Rescue used FACEBOOK to educate students about the dangers of fire, as well as attending the 'Serendipity' event held at Bangor university to help raise awareness.

February 2011 – Rhyl Community Fire Station celebrated its 35,000th visitor to the station since opening its doors to the community in September 2008.

March 2011 – An emergency flooding exercise 'Gwyniad' brought together all three Welsh fire and rescue services, North Wales Police, the RNLI, the RAF search and Rescue, the Environment Agency Wales, Gwynedd Council, the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and North Wales Mountain Rescue Association at Bala lake.

WORKING WITH OTHERS – A YEAR OF COLLABORATION

The current drive to achieve more across the Welsh public sector by working collaboratively is one that North Wales Fire and Rescue has been working hard to achieve, and is taking the lead in several aspects of joint working. The following gives just a few examples of the type of initiatives that the Service is involved in:

- Training and equipping staff in partner organisations e.g. Care and Repair (Gofal a Thrwsio), North Wales Housing Association, Pennaf Housing, Tai Clwyd to deliver Home Fire Safety Checks to the people they come into contact with.
- Educating all drivers – and especially young drivers - through Impact Roadshows run with North Wales Police, Wales Ambulance and county council road safety officers.
- Visiting schools to provide fire safety information as part of Key Stages 1 to 4 curricula.
- Conducting multi-agency inspections to ensure that all aspects of safety (including fire safety) in licensed premises are satisfactory.
- Collaborating with other local agencies (including utilities companies) to prepare for any future large scale emergencies that could arise.
- Collaborating in a joint on-call press officer service with North Wales Police as a sustainable way of providing out-of-hours assistance to the media.
- Working with Llysfasi College and North Wales Police to develop and assess Welsh language skills amongst staff.
- Collaborating with other fire and rescue services on training, procurement, recruitment, control arrangements, providing mutual support in cross-border incidents.
- Conducting exercises with a range of other response organisations to ensure successful joint working at incidents e.g. Dublin Fire Brigade, RAF, Mountain Rescue teams, trauma care nurses, A55 tunnels, Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

North Wales Fire and Rescue is committed to continuously reviewing the effectiveness of all its collaborative work and partnership arrangements, and to increasing the number of productive partnerships that it enters into.

EXTERNAL OPINIONS ABOUT NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE

1. Peer Assessment of Operational Assurance of Service Delivery

As part of the Operational Assurance process (further details are included in Section 5 of this document), a team of peer assessors spent several days looking through the Service's self-assessment, interviewing staff, Authority members and partners. This culminated in a report on the Authority's self-assessment against two lines of enquiry – Community Risk Management and Community Safety.

The peer assessment team confirmed that North Wales Fire and Rescue was indeed identifying and prioritising the risks faced by the community. It noted:

- the innovative approach developed in North Wales for understanding and targeting those whose risk profile put them at increased risk. The team was pleased, too, that the Service was continuing to increase its understanding of the diversity of people living in North Wales;
- the high priority given to the delivery of Home Fire Safety Checks, and the service's understanding of the contributory factors that make them more vulnerable to fire;
- the extensive engagement with partners in the development of the Risk Reduction Plan. This was as a result of general feedback and engagement with partners throughout the year rather than being specific to the Risk Reduction Planning process;
- that the Authority recognised that it could do more to develop its review and learning processes and to move further towards a more outcome-based approach.

The peer assessment team also confirmed that North Wales Fire and Rescue had effective arrangements in place for delivering Community Safety in line with the identified risks and priorities. It noted:

- the clear links between the objectives in its Risk Reduction Plan and the objectives of its Community Safety Strategy
- the clear evidence of an embedded culture of collaborative working to support successful progress of Community Safety activity
- the proactive and progressive approach to partnership working
- the significant work to deliver high numbers of Home Fire Safety Checks, targeted appropriately. The team considered that the approach to risk and delivering Home Fire Safety Checks was well embedded in the running of the Service
- the potential to increase the measuring and evaluation of Community Safety activity to more consistently support the sharing of good practice and ongoing improvement
- the potential to increase the robustness of its monitoring of high risk referrals information recorded in its Records Management System.

2. The Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office

In August 2010, the Wales Audit Office produced a **Preliminary Corporate Assessment Report** on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales about how North Wales Fire and Rescue is organised and managed.

The overall conclusion of that report was that “stable leadership and improvements to corporate governance [were] likely to support improvement in the future”. The key messages of the report were that the Authority was generally well run in terms of leadership, governance, policy development and resource and people management. It found also that the Authority was working well with others in partnership. Some weaknesses in performance management were noted, but these had already been recognised and steps taken to improve the robustness of management information systems. In all, there were four areas that the audit thought the Authority might wish to consider.

This preliminary assessment report was followed In January 2011 by an **Annual Improvement Report** that focussed on the Authority’s management, self-awareness, service and delivery. This report added two further areas for consideration, and gave a generally positive account of the Authority.

These reports are available from http://www.wao.gov.uk/fireauthorities_745.asp.

The Appointed Auditor did not identify any need for a statutory inspection under section 10A of the Local Government Act 1999 and recommended that the Welsh Ministers should not at that time give any direction under section 15 of the Act.

Progress against the proposed actions is monitored by Wales Audit Office, with arrangements made to provide regular public reports.

3. Wales Audit Office Themed Studies

In 2010, the Wales Audit Office identified through its Improvement Assessment work that many authorities were grappling with ensuring that technology and information were used effectively to support service transformation and achieve efficiency savings. As a result, reviews of technology and information management were undertaken in authorities during 2011.

Technology

This review sought to answer the question: 'Are the Authority's arrangements for developing, using and supporting technology likely to support continuous improvement?'

The review concluded that the Authority's arrangements for developing, using and supporting technology were likely to support continuous improvement. ::

Information Management

This review sought to answer the question: 'Is the Authority's approach to information management positively supporting improvement?'

The review concluded that the Authority's approach to information management was supporting improvement and that it was generally aware of the issues it needs to address. However, the feedback also suggested that there might be room to improve governance arrangements.

Feedback

The feedback received from Wales Audit Office proposed some specific areas for improvement, which will now be considered by the Authority for development into costed action plans.

SECTION 3

CURRENT YEAR 2011-12

2010 CONSULTATION FOR RISK REDUCTION PLAN 2011-12 AND BEYOND

Over the summer 2010 the Authority consulted on draft objectives for 2011-12 and beyond. The consultation was concerned with two aspects of improvement.

The **first aspect** related to the general duty to improve and asked people whether they thought the Authority was right to feel confident that it was going to be able to improve. The consultation described:

- the Authority's involvement in partnerships and collaboration, self-assessments and reviews, internal audits, peer assessment and external audit and inspection;
- the Authority's formal planning and reporting procedures, monitoring arrangements, reporting arrangements and sources of professional advice;
- the Authority's arrangements for member development and codes of conduct, committee structures to drive improvement, policies and procedures to deal with failures (e.g. for handling complaints).

The **second aspect** related to seven specific improvement objectives, three of which were identified through the Risk Reduction Planning process.

Once the Authority had approved a draft Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan 2009-12 and consultation document, the draft plan was placed on the Authority's website for reference as a 'work in progress' pending audit, the availability of comparative data, etc. In accordance with issued guidance, a period of 12 weeks was allowed for consultation and responses were received up to and including the closing date of 10 September 2010.

3,500 bilingual paper copies of the consultation document 'Tell us What you Think' were printed and distributed, and e-mails were sent informing people that the document was also available electronically on the Authority's website.

A wide range of individuals and organisations were contacted including: Town and Community Councils, county councillors, MPs, AMs and MEPs, housing associations, voluntary sector organisations, other fire and rescue authorities, insurance companies and brokers, selected employers of Retained firefighters and a range of organisations who might have an interest in this year's specific topics.

A copy was sent to every member of the Authority and member of staff.

Copies of the document were sent to libraries throughout North Wales, and distributed at local agricultural shows held over the summer. A press release was issued by the Corporate Communications department, and a letter from the Chair was sent with each mailed consultation document to explain the process and to encourage participation.

2010 CONSULTATION FOR RISK REDUCTION PLAN 2011-12 AND BEYOND

The consultation document and the draft plan were made available on the Authority's website which has a 'read speaker' facility for people who have difficulty reading. Information was also made available through the Service's Facebook site.

Responses were accepted via the provided questionnaire, by letter and e-mail, and electronically via the link provided on the Authority's website.

22 written responses were received before the closing date, and one after. All were analysed and a summary of the contents was considered by the Authority's Executive Panel on 20 September 2010.

The majority of responses received supported the proposed improvement objectives and the arrangements the Authority proposes to put in place to secure continuous improvement.

Some responses sought additional clarification and explanation on the proposals, while others offered suggestions for additional or alternative measures.

None directly disagreed with what the Authority was proposing, although some expressed views about relative priorities if finances were squeezed.

NEW SERVICE OBJECTIVES FOR 2011-12 AND BEYOND

In accordance with expected deadlines, the Authority published its Combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan for 2011-12 in October 2010.

Faced with a need to reduce the budget, the Authority took the decision at its meeting in December 2010 to freeze the revenue budget at £32million over the next three years which would in reality mean cash savings of £2.45million - a reduction of 7.5% - to be evenly spread over the three years. This would mean a reduction in the budget of £800,000 each year in 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14.

Three new service objectives (A, B and C) were therefore introduced for the year with the aim of maintaining or improving levels of service to the public, but without increasing the budget.

SERVICE PLANS

To make sure that the objectives are achieved as planned in 2011-12, aspects have been allocated (with budgets, where relevant) to departmental service plans. These plans are centrally monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure that both the actions and the planned spending for the year are on course.

LOCAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND INDICATORS

The following pages present the Authority's objectives for 2011-12, and a summary explanation of the reason why each one was adopted, the expected outcomes, what the Service is doing to achieve the objectives, and the measures and performance indicators against which the Authority's success will be measured.

Improvement Objective 1**(Strategic Effectiveness)**

Objective	To help to keep people and communities safe by preventing deaths and injuries from accidental fires in living accommodation.
Reason	Community fire safety is a high profile priority for North Wales Fire and Rescue. Although actual numbers of dwelling fire deaths and injuries in the area are low, the impact of each one is very high. Good progress has been made over the past decade in reducing the incidence of accidental dwelling fires, but a similar reduction in the rate of deaths and injuries is proving to be more difficult to achieve. By comparison with other areas, the incidence rate is still higher than it could be.
Expected outcome	People expect to be safe in their homes. With the right support and advice, people can protect themselves from accidental fires, both by preventing a fire from starting in the first instance, and by knowing how to react quickly and correctly if one does occur. Where that has failed, people should have confidence that the fire and rescue service will respond quickly and effectively to rescue them and limit the damage to their property
Planned actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delivery of Community Safety/Risk Reduction Strategy that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Community Safety Advice • Targeted and tailored delivery of Home Fire Safety Checks • Provision of free equipment according to assessed need. 2. Peer assessment of the Community Safety Strategy. 3. Continuous monitoring of incidence of dwelling fires. 4. Involvement of partner organisations in learning lessons from dwelling fires to reduce likelihood of recurrence. 5. Use of information to predict and prevent dwelling fires. 6. Development of local attendance standard to support fast and accurate response to dwelling fires. 7. Improving availability of RDS fire stations through more efficient management of recruitment processes.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in deaths and injuries from accidental dwelling fires • Increase in % of people who escaped unharmed and unaided from accidental dwelling fires • Increase in % of accidental dwelling fires confined to one room • Reduction in % of dwelling fires where no smoke alarm was present • Increase in % of Home Fire Safety Checks that were undertaken following a referral from a partner organisation • Completion of a peer assessment of the Community Safety Strategy • Reduction in non-availability of RDS stations because of insufficient crewing level • Development of, and baseline measurement against, local attendance standard.

Improvement Objective 2**(Service Quality)**

Objective	To help minimise the risk of fires starting accidentally in non-domestic properties, so that normal activities can continue and the lives of people visiting and working there are not put at risk.
Reason	The introduction of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 transferred responsibility for fire safety in relevant buildings to managers of those premises. This meant that the fire and rescue service changed from a certificating body to an enforcing authority. Combined with an anticipated period of economic constraint, there is a potential for fires to increase in both occupied and unoccupied non-domestic properties.
Expected outcome	People expect to be safe in any non-domestic premises such as public buildings, workplaces, hotels, shops and sports venues. Communities also need to feel confident that fire will not damage their local schools, hospitals, businesses, cultural or leisure facilities, or cause hazardous substances to be released into the atmosphere.
Planned actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Continued development of targeted programme of inspections of fire safety arrangements in non-domestic properties using local intelligence and information held on Records Management System.2. Fast and accurate response to fires in non-domestic premises by fire crews equipped with information on mobile data terminals linked to centrally held hazard records and other intelligence.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction in the number of fires in non-domestic premises.• Increase in the number of operational intelligence cards completed.• Increase in the number of risk visits to high risk premises.

Improvement Objective 3**(Service Quality)**

Objective	To help to minimise the danger and damage caused by non-fire emergencies, such as flooding, road traffic collisions, and chemical incidents.
Reason	The fire and rescue service responds to a wide range of non-fire incidents with a high degree of technical expertise and specialist equipment. Flooding and other weather-related incidents are particularly common in the winter months, and road traffic collisions are more common than fires throughout the year. The potential for chemical incidents is present in buildings and when in transit.
Expected outcome	A safer environment, where the degree of structural damage and the incidence of harm to people are minimised by a highly-skilled and well-equipped rescue service.
Planned actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Continued interagency working (e.g. with the Environment Agency) and active participation in the Local Resilience Forum.2. Continued participation in schemes designed to increase road safety, such as Pass Plus Wales, the Motor Education Scheme and Impact Roadshows.3. Development of a method of profiling RTC incidents in North Wales to support and enhance the strategy for mitigating their effects.4. Development of, and baseline measurement against, local performance indicators to support improvement in this area.5. Continued increase in accurate records of hazardous materials held on premises.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local performance indicators developed and introduced that support demonstrable improvement in effectiveness in responding to non-fire emergency incidents.

Improvement Objective 4	(Strategic effectiveness)
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Objective	To help to tackle problems of deliberate fire-setting so that people, communities, businesses, the environment and the area's heritage are not put at risk.
Reason	<p>People start fires deliberately for a range of reasons. Some are linked to criminality and patterns of anti-social behaviour - so-called 'signal crimes' that if left unchecked can develop into more serious incidents and crimes. Others are linked to psychological and/or behavioural conditions leading to suicide or pyromania.</p> <p>Increases in deliberate fire setting have been linked to times of recession and economic downturn, and a reduction in public sector budgets can also mean less money being spent on specific safety measures such as installing CCTV cameras in troublesome areas. The cost of repairing the damage caused by deliberate fires in public buildings (e.g. schools) and public spaces (e.g. parks) stretches budgets even further.</p>
Expected outcome	No increase in deliberate fires.
Planned actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaboration with North Wales Police and other public and voluntary agencies to prevent arson and acts of vandalism by fire. 2. Working closely with particular groups and individuals (e.g. through the Phoenix and FACE schemes) to influence behaviour away from deliberate fire-setting.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in the number of deliberate fires attended. • The number of people completing Phoenix courses • Local performance indicators developed and introduced that demonstrate and promote improvement in the effectiveness of Phoenix courses and FACE schemes to influence behaviour away from deliberate fire-setting.

Improvement Objective 5 (Risk Reduction Plan)	(Sustainability)
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Objective	To focus on improving the sustainable development of the Authority by finding the right balance between the environmental, economic and social impact of providing a fire and rescue service.
Reason	North Wales Fire and Rescue has already completed a great deal of environmental and energy conservation work, primarily around reducing its carbon footprint through the management of its buildings and vehicles and fuel, energy and water consumption. However, there is more to do, including the roll-out of a sustainable development plan.
Expected outcome	A better, safer and greener North Wales through continuous sustainable development management.
Planned actions	Roll-out of Sustainable Development Action Plan.
Measures of success	Monitoring is undertaken against all aspects of the Sustainable Development Action Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the Service’s energy and fuel consumption • Reduction in the Service’s greenhouse gas emissions (the Service’s own carbon footprint) • Reduction in water consumption • Reduction in the amount of the Service’s waste that is sent to landfill • Increase in biodiversity value of North Wales Fire and Rescue’s estate • Carbon reduction as a result of reducing fires in North Wales

Improvement Objective 6 (Risk Reduction Plan)	(Fairness)
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Objective	To become better at identifying and engaging with people who could find themselves socially and/or economically disadvantaged, so that we can enhance their sense of wellbeing and reduce the level of risk to their personal safety.
Reason	<p>North Wales Fire and Rescue devotes a great deal of time and energy to engaging with minority groups and reaching out to people who are at greater risk because of personal circumstances or state of health.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employing a Third Sector Co-ordinator to help develop service level agreements with representatives of a range of minority groups; ▪ Delivering home fire safety checks tailored to particular needs (e.g. for disabled and frail elderly people); ▪ Conducting week-long courses for prisoners from Altcourse Prison, Merseyside; ▪ Conducting a wide range of youth and schools programmes; ▪ Working with young drivers to help promote greater awareness of road safety. <p>However, the Service does not currently have a co-ordinated method for profiling its communities in order to target community safety activity to best effect.</p>
Expected outcome	Better targeting of prevention advice, based on a sound understanding of particular communities.
Planned actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drawing together a range of population-based information from reliable sources to support efficient and effective targeting of safety advice. 2. Development of a Single Equality Scheme that helps to protect people from being disadvantaged unfairly on account of their age, disability, gender, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a process to draw together relevant information about specific parts of the Service area. • The development and adoption of a Single Equality Scheme.

Improvement Objective 7 (Risk Reduction Plan)	(Service Availability)
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Objective	To ensure that the Service's Business Continuity Planning and Management arrangements are as comprehensive and secure as they can be.
Reason	<p>The public expects the fire and rescue service to be available at all times, and it is hard to envisage a time when it would not be. However, emergency services are not immune from, for example, mass absences due to pandemic flu or from failures in supply chains for essential goods and services. Unlike in the past, the armed forces would not be made available to provide fire cover during a national strike.</p> <p>North Wales Fire and Rescue's comprehensive business continuity management policy is in place, and staff know what is required of them. However, testing and updating business continuity plans needs to be improved.</p>
Expected outcome	A greater degree of assurance that all aspects of the fire and rescue service's operations and the arrangements that support those operations, will not be disrupted by an unanticipated event.
Planned actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reappraisal of Business Continuity Planning resources and responsibilities to promote renewed emphasis on progressing with existing plans and continuously developing new ones; 2. Giving equal importance to corporate and operational business continuity management to ensure that no area has been overlooked and that recovery plans are robust.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined and allocated responsibility for Business Continuity Management within the Service. • Development and roll-out of a testing and exercising regime to check the validity of existing plans.

Improvement Objective A (Resources Strategy)	(Sustainability)
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Objective	To change aspects of the organisation's structure and ways of operating.
Reason	To reduce the level of risk facing the Service by reducing - in a planned way - the cost of providing services whilst simultaneously improving many of them.
Expected outcome	Being able to maintain or improve levels of service to the public, but with a reduced budget.
Planned actions	By: A.1 Implementing the officer review. A.2 Introducing new ways of delivering the legislative fire safety function. A.3 Investigating the feasibility of using a reserve pool of WDS personnel to cover RDS stations. A.4 Reviewing the support staff function. A.5 Developing a Job Design and Evaluation protocol.
Measures of success	Completion of planned actions and spending within budget.

Improvement Objective B (Resources Strategy)	(Efficiency)
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Objective	To review and improve internal business processes.
Reason	To identify and reduce bureaucracy and administrative burden whilst simultaneously increasing internal capacity and improving output.
Expected outcome	Being able to maintain or improve levels of service to the public, but with a reduced budget.
Planned actions	By: B.1 Reviewing the efficiency of a range of business systems and tying that in with a robust case-by-case assessment of posts to ensure that they continue to be aligned to service requirements. B.2 Re-designing the operational support and development function. B.3 Re-designing the training, development and learning function.
Measures of success	Completion of planned actions and spending within budget.

Improvement Objective C (Resources Strategy)	(Sustainability)
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Objective	To plan and prepare for the 2012-13 budget reduction
Reason	To meet the Authority's agreed budget plan for cash savings of 7.5% (£2.45 million) in the three years between April 2011 and March 2014.
Expected outcome	Being able to maintain or improve levels of service to the public, but with a reduced budget.
Planned actions	Agreeing a plan to reduce staff costs by around £1,000,000 (e.g. self rostering/station closures/pump removal/other option).
Measures of success	Completion of planned actions and spending within budget.

SECTION 4

FORTHCOMING YEAR 2012-13

2011 CONSULTATION

The 2011 public consultation on the draft objectives for 2012-13 ran between 18 July 2011 and 9 September 2011.

The Authority took the decision that given the relatively few changes being proposed, and bearing in mind the cost and environmental aspects of publication, it would replace the usual colourful multi-page consultation document with a simple three-fold sheet summarising the objectives and giving other general information.

2,000 paper copies were distributed, at a total cost of around £550. E-mails were sent to known contacts informing them of the consultation and the availability of information on the Authority's website.

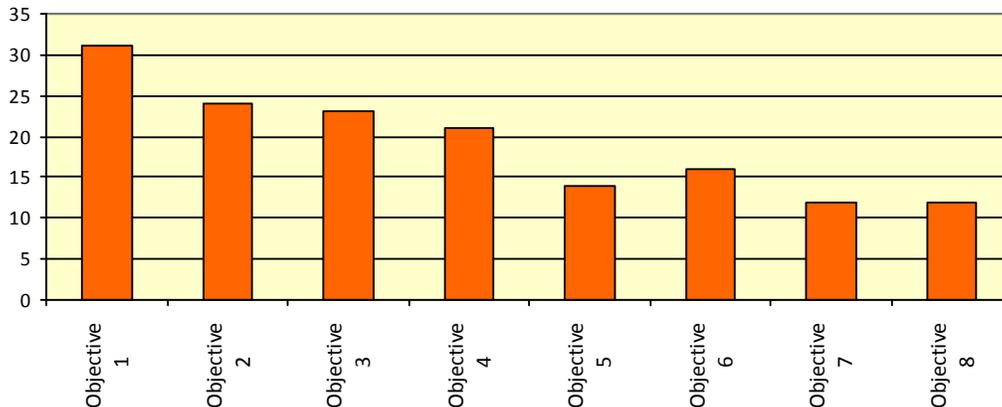
56 responses were received from residents of all six unitary authority areas of North Wales and from visitors to the area resident in other parts of Wales. Of the total responses, 52% came from North Wales residents, 14% gave no address and 34% came from visitors to the area. One response was received on behalf of an organisation.

2011 CONSULTATION

Eight draft objectives for 2012-13 were listed, and people were asked three questions. The draft objectives consulted upon were:

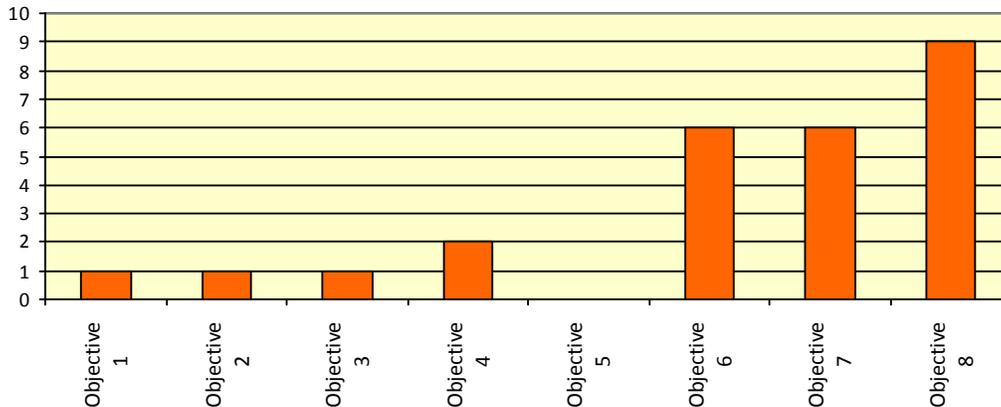
1	To help to keep people and communities safe by preventing deaths and injuries from accidental fires in living accommodation.
2	To help minimise the risk of fires starting accidentally in non-domestic properties, so that normal activities can continue and the lives of people visiting and working there are not put at risk.
3	To help to minimise the danger and damage caused by non-fire emergencies, such as flooding, road traffic collisions, and chemical incidents.
4	To help to tackle problems of deliberate fire setting so that people, communities, businesses, the environment and the area's heritage are not put at risk.
5	To focus on improving the sustainable development of the Authority by finding the right balance between the environmental, economic and social impact of providing a fire and rescue service.
6	To become better at identifying and engaging with people who could find themselves socially and/or economically disadvantaged, so that we can enhance their sense of wellbeing and reduce the level of risk to their personal safety.
7	To ensure that the Service's Business Continuity Planning and Management arrangements are as comprehensive and secure as they can be.
8	To find ways of reducing the overall cost of running the Service each year in order to operate with an annual budget of £32 million until 2013/14.

In response to a question about support for specific objectives, the first four objectives received the most support, but the whole set received support from at least 20% of the respondents.



2011 CONSULTATION

In response to a question about whether there were any objectives that the Authority should not be pursuing, 22 said they were not against any of the objectives and a further 17 made no specific comment. Of the 16 that registered a lack of support for one or more objectives, 9 people singled out objective 8 as one they did not support.



In response to a question about whether there were any other improvements that the Authority should be focussing on instead of those being consulted upon, 22 made one or more suggestions:

- 5 suggested charging for unnecessary callouts and attending road traffic collisions.
- 4 supported continuing/extending prevention and education work and a further 2 specifically mentioned vulnerable groups.
- 4 suggested ways of reducing costs.
- 3 wanted to protect local fire stations or to keep fire cover the same as it is now.
- 2 wished to see more emphasis on core responsibilities and training.
- 1 (not an employee) supported better pay for firefighters.
- 1 emphasised the need to prepare for the potentially wide-ranging impact of climate change.
- 1 suggested the importance of ensuring that there is a hydrant near every farm.

IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR 2012-13

Having considered the consultation responses at a meeting of the Executive Panel in September 2011, the Authority decided to continue to work in 2012-13 towards the eight objectives as drafted (see page 92).

DRAWING UP PLANS FOR 2012-13

As in previous years, detailed internal plans to deliver the eight objectives - linked to budgets where relevant - will be drawn up in time for the start of the 2012-13 financial year. These plans will be centrally monitored by senior managers on a regular basis to ensure that both the actions and the planned spending for the year are on course.

As outlined on page 81, the Authority is having to find ways to reduce its running costs by around £800,000 every year in 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 in order to meet unavoidable cost increases during a three-year budget freeze.

The amount to be saved has already been taken out of the base budget in 2011-12, and a further £800,000 will be taken out of the base budget in 2012-13 and a third £800,000 in 2013-14, giving a total reduction of £2.4million.

Savings in 2011-12 (Year 1) are being achieved through a reduction in discretionary spend, community safety activity, support staff costs and an officer cover restructure that resulted in a reduction of eight operational manager posts (20% of the total).

It is anticipated that up to £300,000 less will be spent in both Year 2 and Year 3 on community safety activity and non-statutory duties, and that savings will be achieved from support staff posts and anticipated retirements.

However the vast majority - over £1million - will inevitably have to be found over the next two years from changes to fire cover. This is because 75% of the revenue budget is spent on employee costs, and of that figure costs associated with operational staff makes up 79% of the total.

The Authority set up a Working Group to consider the various options for making the cost savings. One of its main aims was to bring forward recommendations to the Executive Panel for making the necessary savings but without impacting on the level of services provided to the public if at all possible. From a range of possible options this group selected five to undergo detailed examination in order to fully understand the challenges associated with them.

These options are detailed on the next pages, together with the main advantages and challenges associated with each one.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SHIFT SYSTEMS

Wholetime Shift System

Wrexham, Queensferry and Rhyl fire stations operate around the clock as the only three ‘Wholetime Shift’ stations in North Wales.

The fire crews that are based there are organised into four ‘watches’, or teams, working a set shift pattern of day and night hours. This pattern is known as the ‘2:2:4’ because it entails working 2 day shifts of 9 hours followed by 2 night shifts of 15 hours followed by four days and nights off. This averages around 91.5 day shifts (824 hours) and 91.5 night shifts (1,373 hours) per year, or 42 hours per week. Crews are provided with sleeping accommodation at these stations for use during the night shifts. Crew members are paid an annual salary based on levels of responsibility, and pay is not dependent on the number of incidents they attend.

Because of the need to maintain cover at all times, the four ‘watches’ (green, red, white and blue) rotate in the standard ‘2 days-2 nights-4 off’ pattern:

Day	Green	Green	Red	Red	White	White	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Red	Red	White	White	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Red
Night	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Red	Red	White	White	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Red	Red	White	White	Blue	Blue	Green

Day Crewing System

Holyhead, Bangor, Caernarfon, Llandudno and Colwyn Bay fire stations operate slightly differently as the only five ‘Day Crewed’ stations in North Wales.

The fire crews that are based there are organised into just two ‘watches’, or teams, working a set shift pattern of day hours and providing cover from home overnight. This pattern is known as ‘day crewing’ because it entails working 4 day shifts of 12 hours (the first 2 hours of which are worked from home) and 4 night shifts of 12 hours ‘on standby’ from home, followed by 4 days and nights off, averaging 42 hours per week. In a year, this totals around 183 day shifts and 183 periods designated as being ‘on standby’ from home overnight. Crews are not provided with sleeping accommodation at these stations, and have to remain within close proximity to the station during their standby hours in order to respond to an alerter signal within minutes. Crew members are paid an annual salary for the daytime commitment based on levels of responsibility so the daytime commitment pay is not dependent on the number of incidents attended. There are additional allowances and retainer fees associated with this system, and incidents attended overnight attract additional pay.

Because of the need to maintain cover, the two ‘watches’ (red and blue) rotate in a standard ‘4 on, 4 off’ pattern:

Day	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red
Night	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red

Retained Duty System

All 44 fire stations in North Wales have at least one fire engine crewed by staff who work the Retained Duty System. In eight of those stations the Retained Duty System staff work alongside wholetime shift or day crewing staff, but the remaining 36 are wholly 'retained'. These wholly retained fire stations are located in: Aberdyfi, Abergele, Abersoch, Amlwch, Bala, Barmouth, Beaumaris, Benllech, Betws y Coed, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Buckley, Cerrigydrudion, Chirk, Conwy, Corwen, Denbigh, Dolgellau, Flint, Harlech, Holywell, Johnstown, Llanberis, Llanfairfechan, Llangefni, Llangollen, Llanrwst, Menai Bridge, Mold, Nefyn, Porthmadog, Prestatyn, Pwllheli, Rhosneigr, Ruthin, St Asaph and Tywyn.

The fire crews that are based there do not work in a set shift pattern and are not organised into 'watches', but they are expected to attend a drill night once a week and to provide cover at specified times day and night.

The number of hours that each crew member commits to can vary, and it is left to local management to determine what would be an acceptable minimum, and to try to ensure that there are enough people available to make up a crew at any time of day or night.

A full commitment for an individual is counted as 120 hours (5 X 24) per week, but there is flexibility to commit to less than the full 120 hours. The people who work this system usually have primary employment elsewhere, or are self-employed. They have to remain within very close proximity to the fire station during their agreed 'on standby' hours in order to respond to an alerter signal within minutes.

The 'ridership factor' calculation

For a number of years UK fire and rescue services relied on a 'ridership factor' calculation to check that they were employing sufficient crew members to ensure the continual availability of their wholetime fire appliances.

The ridership factor calculated the number of shifts out of a typical 182.5 shifts per year (on the 2:2:4 shift and day crewing systems described above) that crew members had actually spent crewing a fire engine – i.e. after deducting their absences through holidays and other leave, sickness, time off in lieu or other reasons, and time away undertaking training.

The theoretical total (182.5) was then divided by the actual total to give a ridership factor figure.

The ridership factor figure was used as a multiplier to check how many staff would be needed per post, based on the previous year's absences and shift pattern.

Example:

A fire appliance is crewed at all times by five people. Fire and Rescue Service 'A' uses a four-watch 2:2:4 system, which means that it has twenty posts to fill.

However, employing twenty people would make no allowance for any of those people taking a holiday, or going on a training course, or taking time off because they were unwell.

Based on 52 shifts lost per person previously, Fire and Rescue Service 'A' decides to employ 1.4 people for every post, so instead of twenty people it employs twenty-eight to give some flexibility.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority selected Option 1 as its favoured option because it allows the necessary level of savings to be made, but with the least impact on the service delivered and plenty of opportunity to tailor the eventual detail.

Option 1 – Change the rostering arrangements for wholetime fire crews.

There are alternatives to the existing watch systems. Some UK fire and rescue services, for example, use a different number of watches or have adopted a system of 'self rostering' where staff are contracted to work a set number of hours per year but can choose which hours to suit so long as there are sufficient on duty at all times. Three members of the Service had recently visited 20 different fire and rescue services across the UK to research the different rostering changes implemented in other regions, to find out what had worked well and what had not, and how best to introduce the changes

In support of this option:

- Depending on the version eventually chosen, it would be possible to run the same number of fire engines with the same number of wholetime crew on board, but with between 22 and 36 fewer posts to fund, which would reduce the Authority's annual salary bill by between £850,000 and £1,050,000.
- Because the changes would affect only staff rostering arrangements, the public would not notice the 4% reduction in the number of operational staff and would not get a reduced level of service.

Risks and challenges associated with this option:

- Reducing posts on this scale and within a short timeframe would be unlikely to be accommodated through natural wastage, so could result in some staff redundancies.
- There could be some opposition to the changes from representative bodies, which might result in industrial action being taken.
- Fire crews on wholetime stations have become accustomed to working in accordance with allocated working patterns –changes would need to be carefully introduced.
- With a reduced workforce there would be a reduced capacity to cover long term absences and protracted incidents.
- Depending on the version implemented there could be a need for considerable capital expenditure.

Option 2 – Remove one of the two wholetime-crewed-fire engines from Wrexham fire station**Fire Engines in North Wales**

Fire engines are located at fire stations throughout North Wales, ready to respond to calls for assistance. When a call is received, control operators determine what type of fire appliance is required, how many should be sent initially (according to the type of incident), and which one(s) would be the nearest available. Complex computer software and electronic mapping systems are used as part of this process.

There are 44 fire stations in North Wales housing 54 fire engines.

- Each of the 36 retained fire stations has one fire engine crewed by Retained Duty System staff, with the exception of Pwllheli which has two (total 37).
- Each of the 8 wholetime fire stations has one fire engine crewed by Retained Duty System staff, plus one fire engine that is crewed by Wholetime Duty System staff, with the exception of Wrexham which has two (total 17).

In support of this option:

- The number of emergency incidents has reduced in Wrexham over the years, and compared with other areas of the UK with similar risk profiles, there is potential overprovision in Wrexham.
- Removing one wholetime fire engine but leaving Wrexham fire station with one wholetime and one retained fire engine could reduce the Authority's annual salary bill by around £874,000.
- The Authority has been planning changes to the Wrexham fire station for some time – this option would mean needing to house one less fire engine.

Risks and challenges associated with this option:

- This option would result in a reduction of 24 wholetime operational posts, but reducing posts on this scale and within a short timeframe would be unlikely to be accommodated through natural wastage, so could result in some staff redundancies
- There could be some opposition to the changes from representative bodies, which might result in industrial action being taken.
- There could be some difficulty and delay in mobilising special appliances currently based at this station, with a qualified crew.

Option 3 – Remove the eight Retained fire engines from the eight wholetime fire stations

All eight wholetime shift/day crewed fire stations in North Wales have one or two fire engines based there that are crewed by wholetime crews, but alongside the wholetime fire engines there are eight other fire engines that are crewed by retained crews.

In support of this option:

- Removing the retained fire engine but leaving the wholetime fire engines at the eight Wholetime fire stations would reduce the Authority's annual salary bill by around £664,000 and mean additional savings of around £177,000 from appliance costs.

Risks and challenges associated with this option:

- Removing these eight fire engines could result in the loss of up to 111 Retained Duty System posts, and redundancy costs in the first year could reach £338,000.
- There could be some opposition to the changes from representative bodies, which might result in industrial action being taken.
- The service's ability to deal with situations involving significant numbers of simultaneous incidents would be affected.
- The time taken for supporting appliances to arrive at incidents would be longer if the second appliance had to come from a neighbouring station further away.
- Increased demand would be transferred to neighbouring stations which might create issues with the primary employers of retained duty crew members at those stations.

Option 4 – Change the crewing arrangements at the fire stations in Rhyl and Queensferry from wholetime shift to the same model of day crewing as in Holyhead, Caernarfon, Bangor, Llandudno and Colwyn Bay

Please refer to the background information on pages 96 and 97 for an explanation of the wholetime shift and day crewing systems. This option would see Rhyl and Queensferry fire stations transfer to the day crewing system described, leaving Wrexham fire station as the only remaining wholetime shift 2:2:4 fire station in North Wales.

In support of this option:

- A change from the four watch 2:2:4 shift system to the two-watch day crewing system as currently operates in five other fire stations in North Wales would reduce the Authority’s annual salary bill by around £1,030,000.
- This option would avoid station closures and there would be no reduction in the current number of fire engines at Rhyl and Queensferry.

Risks and challenges associated with this option:

- This option would result in a reduction of 32 wholetime operational posts, but reducing posts on this scale and within a short timeframe would be unlikely to be accommodated through natural wastage, so could result in some staff redundancies.
- Statutory redundancy payouts of £384,000 could be needed in the first year.
- There could be some opposition to the changes from representative bodies, which might result in industrial action being taken.
- The day crewing system requires staff to respond to an alerter during the standby hours overnight but a number of staff who currently work at Rhyl and Queensferry fire stations do not live within the vicinity of the station.
- Response times for initial calls to incidents would be longer during the overnight standby hours than currently.

Option 5 – Close eight retained duty fire stations on a risk assessed basis

Please refer to the list of retained duty stations on page 97. This option would see a risk assessment being undertaken to determine which eight of the wholly retained stations would be selected for closure. The details of the assessment would have to be agreed, but might typically include strategic location (local risks, road networks, hospitals, etc.), proximity to another fire station, current level of availability and current level of demand.

In support of this option:

- This option could be carefully targeted according to assessed risks.
- It would reduce the Authority's annual salary bill and remove the maintenance costs of 8 fire stations and the maintenance and replacement costs of 8 fire appliances.
- The sale of the sites would raise some capital.

Risks and challenges associated with this option:

- Public concern around risk would be likely to provoke high profile local opposition to the closure of local fire stations.
- This would impact on all the unitary authority areas in North Wales, but might have a disproportionate effect in rural areas and on the rural economy.
- Increased demand would be transferred to neighbouring stations which might create issues with the primary employers of retained duty crew members at those stations.
- This could result in the loss of up to 96 posts with associated redundancy costs in the first year of £300,000.
- A reduction of this number of posts and appliances would reduce the ability of the service to deal with a significant number of simultaneous incidents.

RE-STATED IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR 2012-13

At the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Executive Panel meeting on the 16th July 2012, it was agreed that the 2012-13 Improvement Objectives be re-stated, effectively reducing the original eight down to two.

The 2 Improvement Objectives to remain are:

Objective 1: To help keep people and communities safe by preventing deaths and injuries from accidental fires in living accommodation.

Key Indicators of Successful Delivery:

- A reduction in the number of deaths and injuries arising from accidental dwelling fires.
- An increase in the percentage of people who escaped unharmed and unaided from accidental dwelling fires.
- A reduction in the percentage of dwelling fires where no smoke alarm was present.
- An increase in the percentage of Home Fire Safety Checks that were undertaken following a referral from a partner organisation.
- A reduction in the non-availability of RDS stations because of insufficient crewing level.
- The development of, and a baseline measurement against, a local attendance standard.

Objective 2: To find ways of reducing the overall cost of running the Service each year in order to operate within the annual budget of £32 million until 2013-14.

The existing objectives will not be lost, but instead be incorporated within departmental action plans, to be achieved as planned, thereby meeting the Authority's general duty to improve.

A copy of the minutes for this meeting can be found on our web site:

http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/media/154157/exec_panel_160712.pdf

SECTION 5

OTHER INFORMATION

CONTACT DETAILS

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LL17 0JJ

Telephone: 01745 535250

Website: www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004** came into effect in October 2004, replacing the previous Fire and Rescue Services Act 1947 in England and Wales. It clarifies the duties and powers of Fire and Rescue Authorities to:
 - Promote fire safety
 - Fight fires
 - Protect people and property from fires
 - Rescue people from road traffic accidents
 - Respond to other specified risks, such as chemical incidents
 - Respond to large scale emergencies such as terrorist attacks
- The **National Framework 2008-11** was issued by the Welsh Assembly Government under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. It sets out the Assembly's vision and priorities for the three Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales and what is expected of them during the lifespan of the framework. This Framework will remain in place until 31 March 2012 (unless it is replaced earlier).
- **The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009** came into effect from 1st April 2010. It created a statutory regime that integrates shorter term local service improvement and long term community planning. Specific guidance relating to the improvement element (Part 1) for fire and rescue services was issued by the Assembly in May 2010.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The **Fire and Rescue Authorities (Improvement Plans) (Wales) Order 2010** came into force on April 1st 2010. It requires fire and rescue authorities to publish their improvement plan as soon as reasonably practicable after 30 September of the year prior to the financial year to which the improvement plan relates.
- The **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** came into effect in October 2006, replacing over 70 pieces of fire safety law. It applies to all non-domestic premises in England and Wales, including the communal parts of blocks of flats and houses in multiple occupation. It abolished the requirement for businesses to have fire certificates and put the onus on the person responsible for the premises to address fire safety in those premises.
- The **Equality Act 2010** replaced over 100 pieces of equality law. The General Duty and specific duties for the public sector in Wales came into force in April 2011. Listed bodies (including Fire and Rescue Authorities) have until April 2012 to publish equality objectives and Strategic Equality Plans.
- The **Civil Contingencies Act 2004** received royal assent in October 2004. It provides a single framework for civil protection to large scale emergencies that threaten serious damage to human welfare, the environment or to security. Fire and Rescue Services are 'Category 1' responders under this act.
- **Welsh Government Fire Branch**
The responsibility for providing fire and rescue services and promoting fire safety in Wales was devolved to the National Assembly for Wales on 10 November 2004. The Community Safety division of the Welsh Assembly Government is based at Rhydycar, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1UZ.
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/safety/?lang=en>
- **The Fire and Rescue Adviser**
The postholder is accountable to the Director of Communities and Social Justice, and advises Welsh Ministers on fire and rescue matters.
- **Wales Audit Office**
The Wales Audit Office publishes reports on behalf of the Auditor General who is required to assess the likelihood that the Authority will continue to improve and whether the Authority is discharging its duties and acting in accordance with relevant issued guidance. Auditors also work with fire authorities across Wales to deliver a programme of financial and value-for-money audits.
<http://www.wao.gov.uk/>
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INTERVENTION IN THE EVENT OF FAILURE OR POTENTIAL FAILURE TO COMPLY

The Welsh Government has powers of intervention:

- under section 22 of the **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004** if it considers that a Fire and Rescue Authority is failing, or is likely to fail, to act in accordance with the National Framework. In such cases, section 23 - Intervention Protocol would apply.
- under section 29 of the **Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009** if it considers that a Fire and Rescue Authority is failing, or is at risk of failing, to comply with the Measure. However, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, Welsh Ministers may only intervene after they have offered voluntary support to the Authority under section 28 of the Measure.

FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY TIMETABLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) MEASURE 2009

The incremental application of the new Measure takes effect over a number of months as fire and rescue authorities follow the associated annual processes.

Two Orders were introduced:

- The Fire and Rescue Authorities (Improvement Plans) (Wales) Order 2010 (No.481) was introduced in April 2010 to enable the publication of fire and rescue authorities’ improvement plans in October each year.
- The Fire and Rescue Authorities (Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2011 (No. 558) came into force on 1 April 2011, specifying performance indicators by which performance could be measured.

Although the Measure first came into effect from April 2010, it will take until 2013 to come fully into effect:

October 2009	Authorities published their Improvement Plan and forward-looking Risk Reduction Plan (RRP) for 2010-11 under previous arrangements.
April 2010	Wales Audit Office (WAO) undertook its first forward looking Preliminary Corporate Assessment. In the absence of improvement objectives published under the new Measure, WAO referred to the Authority’s Risk Reduction Plan objectives that were published in October 2009.
October 2010	<p>Authorities published their first Improvement/Risk Reduction Plans under the Measure.</p> <p>The backward look at performance was based on reporting on performance against Improvement/Risk Reduction Plans from October 2008 which covered 2009-10 (not published under the Measure).</p> <p>The forward plan included improvement objectives as set out in the Measure for the year 2011-12.</p>
November 2010 (delayed until January 2011)	WAO’s assessment of performance looked at Performance Indicators (PIs) that were statutory under the Local Government Act 1999 for 2009-10 and performance for 2009-10 based on the October 2008 Risk Reduction Plan (not published under the Measure). The first Annual Improvement Report was issued by WAO in January 2011.

October 2011	Authorities publish Improvement/Risk Reduction Plans covering performance in 2010-11 based on the Risk Reduction Plan published in October 2009 (not published under the Measure). They also include Performance Indicators developed but not statutory by Order for 2010-11**. Plans include improvement objectives for 2012-13.
January 2012	WAO's assessment of performance will include an assessment of non statutory PIs for 2010-11 and improvement objectives for 2010-11 (not published under the Measure).
2012	WAO's forward looking Corporate Assessment will use Improvement/Risk Reduction Plan 2012-13 objectives under the Measure.
October 2012	Authorities publish Improvement/Risk Reduction Plans covering performance in 2011-12 based on their Improvement/Risk Reduction Plan published in October 2010 under the Measure. They will include statutory PIs for 2011-12. Plans will include improvement objectives for 2013-14 ^{oo} .
January 2013	WAO's assessment of performance will include an assessment of statutory PIs for 2011-12 and improvement objectives for 2011-12 under the Measure.
2013	WAO's forward looking Corporate Assessment will use Improvement/Risk Reduction Plan 2013-14 objectives under the Measure.

**Two Circulars issued by the Welsh Government confirmed the situation as regards 2010-11 Performance Indicators:

- W-FRSC (2010)10 Performance Indicators 2010-11 – Interim Arrangements was issued in July 2010, setting out the performance indicators (PIs) for Fire and Rescue Authorities that applied for 2010-11. Advice on reporting performance against the 2006 Service Standard to Fires in the Home to be issued separately in due course.
- W-FRSC(2011)19 FRA Performance Indicators 2010-11 – Additional Information was issued in July 2011, confirming that FRAs would not be required to report performance against the Service Standard for the period 2010-11.

^{oo}The Welsh Government consultation WG13412 proposed to change the annual deadline for publishing Fire and Rescue Improvement Plans from October 31 to 'as soon as practicable after 31 December'. If adopted, Improvement Objectives for 2013-14 would be published early in 2013 instead of in October 2012.

OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE OF SERVICE DELIVERY

The Welsh Assembly Government introduced new arrangements for the assessment of Fire and Rescue Authorities operational performance in November 2006. The assessment process, which feeds into the Wales Programme for Improvement, involves Authorities completing a self assessment against a provided framework, followed by peer assessment by teams from the other two fire and rescue services in Wales reporting on the accuracy of this self assessment.

Year 1 (2006) – A full assessment using a toolkit derived from the English toolkit.

Year 2 (2007) – An assessment of the specific topic of preparedness for major disruptive emergencies, with a focus on flooding events.

Year 3 (2008) – An assessment based on progress made against issues identified in the previous two years' assessments.

Year 4 (2009) – A full self-assessment against seven Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) relating to Community Risk Management, Prevention, Protection, Response, Health and Safety, Training and Development, and Call management and Incident Support. Peer-assessment focused on two KLOEs of Health and Safety and Training and Development.

Year 5 (2010) – An assessment of the two specific KLOEs relating to Community Risk Management and Community Safety.

Year 6 (2011) - An assessment of the two specific KLOEs relating to Call Handling and Incident Support and Response.

SECTION 6

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Summary of performance figures :

Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
NATIONAL STRATEGIC INDICATORS				
RRC/S/001i N Total number of fires	3,844 ²¹	3,389	3,370	3,297
RRC/S/001i D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 10,000 population	54.83	49.99	49.71	48.57
RRC/S/001ii N Total number of all primary fires	1,564	1,504	1,485	1,346
RRC/S/001ii D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 10,000 population	23.15	22.18	21.90	19.83
RRC/S/001iii N Total number of accidental fires in dwellings	525	485	479	469
RRC/S/001iii D Total number of dwellings in FRA area	301,063	303,377	304,412	305,583
per 10,000 dwellings	17.47	15.99	15.74	15.35
RRC/S/001iv N Total number of all deliberate fires	1,840	1,545	1,536	1,438
RRC/S/001iv D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 10,000 population	27.24	22.79	22.66	21.19
RRC/S/002i N Total number of fire deaths	10	4	8	10
RRC/S/002i D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	1.48	0.58	1.17	1.47

²¹ Previously published as 3,704.

Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
RRC/S/002ii N Total number of accidental fire deaths	8	4	6	10
RRC/S/002ii D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	1.18	0.58	0.88	1.47
RRC/S/002iii N Total number of deaths caused by fires started deliberately	2	0	2	0
RRC/S/002iii D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	0.30	0.00	0.29	0.00
RRC/S/002iv N Total number of fire injuries (excluding precautionary checks)	80	111	69	97
RRC/S/002iv D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	11.84	16.37	10.17	14.29
RRC/S/002v N Total number of injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from fires started accidentally	58	103	57	86
RRC/S/002v D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	8.59	15.19	8.41	12.67
RRC/S/002vi N Injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from fires started deliberately	22	8	12	11
RRC/S/002vi D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	3.26	1.17	1.76	1.62
RRC/S/003 N Number of fires in non-domestic premises	248	224	256	229
RRC/S/003 D Number of non-domestic premises in FRA area	27,050	27,055	27,284	27,419
per 1,000 population	9.17	8.28	9.38	8.35
RRC/S/004i Number of homes in above and well above average risk category (as determined by FSEC) and have received within the reporting year a HFSC and are within the 5 minute service standard.	-	-	1273	-
RRC/S/004ii Number of homes in above and well above average risk category (as determined by FSEC) and have received within the reporting year a HFSC and are within the 10 minute service standard.	-	-	2157	-

Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
RRC/S/004iii Number of homes in above and well above average risk category (as determined by FSEC) and have received within the reporting year a HFSC and are outside the 10 minute service standard.	-	-	1917	-
RRC/S/004iv Number of fires homes in which a HFSC and/or associated risk reduction activity had taken place within two years before the fire.	-	71	129	134
EFR/S/001 N Total number of incidents within criteria attended within 10 minutes	421	391	354	
EFR/S/001 D Total number of incidents within criteria	466	445	440	
Percentage attended within 10 minutes	90.34%	87.87%	80.45%	-
EFR/S/002 N Total number of incidents within criteria attended within 5 minutes	44	31	37	
EFR/S/002 D Total number of incidents within criteria	89	115	151	
Percentage attended within 5 minutes	49.44%	26.96%	24.50%	-
CORE INDICATORS				
RRC/C/001i N Deaths caused by fires started accidentally in dwellings	7	4	6	10
RRC/C/001i D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	1.04	0.59	0.88	1.47
RRC/C/001ii1 N Deaths caused by fires started deliberately in dwellings	1	0	2	0
RRC/C/001ii D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	0.15	0.00	0.29	0.00
RRC/C/001iii N Deaths caused by fires started accidentally in non-domestic premises	0	0	0	0
RRC/C/001iii D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
RRC/C/001iv N Deaths caused by fires started deliberately in non-domestic premises	0	0	0	0
RRC/C/001iv D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
RRC/C/001v N Injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from fires started accidentally in dwellings	53	66	43	53
RRC/C/001v D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	7.70	9.73	6.34	7.81
RRC/C/001vi N Injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from fires started deliberately in dwellings	17	4	4	9
RRC/C/001vi D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	2.52	0.59	0.59	1.33
RRC/C/001vii N Injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from fires started accidentally in non-domestic premises	2	7	7	14
RRC/C/001vii D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	0.30	1.03	1.03	2.06
RRC/C/001viii N Injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from fires started deliberately in non-domestic premises	2	0	3	1
RRC/C/001viii D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 100,000 population	0.30	0.00	0.44	0.15
RRC/C/002i N Total number of malicious false alarms received	652	565	563	491
RRC/C/002i D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 1,000 population	0.97	0.83	0.83	0.72
RRC/C/002ii N Total number of malicious false alarms not attended	498	399	423	373
RRC/C/002ii D Total number of malicious false alarms received	652	565	563	491
% of the total that were not attended	76.38%	70.62%	75.13%	75.97%
RRC/C/002iii N Total number of malicious false alarms	154	166	140	118
RRC/C/002iii D Total number of malicious false alarms received	652	565	563	491
% of the total that were not attended	23.62%	29.38%	24.87%	24.03%

Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
RRC/C/003 N Total number of false alarms caused by automatic fire detection and alarm systems in non-domestic premises	2,020	1,707	1,646	1322
RRC/C/003 D Number of non-domestic premises within FRA area	27,050	27,055	27,284	27419
per 1,000 non-domestic premises	74.68	63.09	60.33	48.21
RRC/C/004i N Number of deliberate primary fires	526	540	482	373
RRC/C/004i D Population of FRA area	675563	677,971	677971	678,750
per 10,000 population	7.80	7.96	7.11	5.50
RRCC/004ii N Number of deliberate secondary fires	1,314	1,005	1,054	1,065
RRC/C/004ii D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677971	678,750
per 10,000 population	19.44	14.82	15.55	15.69
RRC/C/005i N Dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm and/or other fire detection equipment had actuated	375	337	285	329
RRC/C/005i D Total number of dwelling fires attended	595	551	545	535
% where alarm actuated	63.03%	61.16%	52.29%	61.50%
RRC/C/005ii N Dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm and/or other fire detection equipment was fitted but did not actuate	79	79	123	118
RRC/C/005ii D Total number of dwelling fires attended	595	551	545	535
% where alarm fitted but did not actuate	13.28%	14.34%	22.57%	22.06
RRC/C/005iii N Dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm and/or other fire detection equipment was not fitted	141	135	137	88
RRC/C/005iii D Total number of dwelling fires attended	595	551	545	535
% where no alarm fitted	23.70%	24.50%	25.14%	16.45%

Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
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OTHERS

CHR/ C/001i N The number of individual operational staff working the wholetime and Retained Duty Systems who categorise themselves as having a disability	16	14	15	13
CHR/ C/001i D The total number of individual operational staff working the wholetime and Retained Duty System	896	869	850	871
% with a disability	1.79%	1.61%	1.76%	1.50%
CHR/ C/001ii N The number of individual control and non-operational staff who categorise themselves as having a disability	8	8	9	8
CHR/ C/001ii D The total number of individual control and non-operational staff	167	174	184	187
% with a disability	4.79%	4.60%	4.89%	4.30%
CHR/ C/001iii N The total number of people aged between 18 and 64 years who categorise themselves as having a disability in the FRA area	68,848	68,848	68,848	68,848
CHR/ C/001iii D The total number of people aged 18 - 64 years in the FRA area	391,153	391,153	391,153	391,153
% with a disability	17.60%	17.60%	17.60%	17.60%
CHR/ C/002i N The number of individual members of staff who categorise themselves as belonging to a minority ethnic group	9	10	8	6
CHR/ C/002i D The total number of individual members of staff	1,063	1,043	1,034	1,058
% minority ethnic	0.85%	0.96%	0.77%	0.60%
CHR/ C/002ii N The total number of ethnic minority persons aged between 18 and 64 years in the FRA area	3,930	3,930	3,930	3,930
CHR/ C/002ii D The total number of people aged 18 - 64 years in the FRA area	394,760	394,760	394,760	394,760
% minority ethnic	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%

Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
CHR/ C/003 N The total number of individual women firefighters employed	32	33	37	45
CHR/ C/003 D The number of individual firefighters employed	896	869	850	871
% women	3.57%	3.80%	4.35%	5.20%
CHR/ C/004i N The total number of FTE working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by all staff (excluding RDS staff)	3,594	3,755	4,023	3,259
CHR/ C/004i D The average number of all staff (excluding RDS) as FTE	441.7	450.00	458.55	459.00
days/shifts lost per person	8.14	8.34	8.77	7.10
CHR/ C/004ii N The total number of FTE working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by wholetime uniformed staff	2,310	2,520	2,241	1,963
CHR/ C/004ii D The average number of wholetime uniformed staff as FTE	299	298	295	290
days/shifts lost per person	7.73	8.46	7.60	6.80
CHR/ C/004iii N The total number of FTE working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by control staff	149	145	444	227
CHR/ C/004iii D The average number of control staff as FTE	30.82	30.82	30.22	28.57
days/shifts lost per person	4.83	4.70	14.69	7.90
CHR/ C/004iv N The total number of FTE working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by non-operational staff	1,135	1,090	1,338	1,069
CHR/ C/004iv D The average number of non-operational staff as FTE	111.8	121.16	133.33	141
days/shifts lost per person	10.15	9.00	10.04	7.60
CHR/ C/005i N Total number of ill health retirements	4	3	6	11
CHR/ C/005i D Average number of total FRS employees	1,050.5	1,053	1,038.50	1,046
as % of total workforce	0.38%	0.28%	0.58%	1.10%
CHR/ C/005ii N Number of wholetime operational ill health retirements	0	1	0	4
CHR/ C/005ii D Average number of wholetime operational personnel	299	298	295	289.5
as % of total WDS workforce	0.00%	0.34%	0.00%	1.40%

Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
CHR/ C/005iii N Number of RDS ill health retirements	3	2	6	6
CHR/ C/005iii D Average number of RDS personnel	587	584.5	564.5	571.0
as % of total RDS workforce	0.51%	0.34%	1.06%	1.05%
CHR/ C/005iv N Number of control personnel ill health retirements	0	0	0	0
CHR/ C/005iv D Average number of control personnel	32.5	33	33.5	33
as % of total Control workforce	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
CHR/ C/005v N Number of non-operational personnel ill health retirements	1	0	0	1
CHR/ C/005v D Average number of non-operational personnel	132	137.5	145.5	152.5
as % of total non-ops workforce	0.76%	0.00%	0.00%	0.70%
CFH/ C/001 N The number of undisputed invoices which were paid within 30 days	8,748	9,310	9,841	9,513
CFH/ C/001 D The number of undisputed invoices which were paid during the year	9,649	10,098	10,435	10,055
% paid within 30 days	90.66%	92.20%	94.31%	94.60%
LOCAL				
Local N Total number of secondary fires attended	2,000	1,509	1,538	1,623
Local D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 10,000 population		22.26	22.69	23.94
Local N Total number of malicious false alarms attended	154	166	140	118
Local D Population of FRA area	675,563	677,971	677,971	678,750
per 1,000 population	0.23	0.25	0.21	0.17
Local The total number of Home Fire Safety Checks delivered	26,504	31,180	32,802	36,905
Local The percentage of accidental dwelling fires confined to the room of origin	93%	92%	93%	91%

CONSULTATIONS

	Consultation	Publication	For year
Full Risk Reduction Plan	Summer 2006	October 2006	2007-08 onwards
Annual Action Plan	Summer 2007	October 2007	2008-09
Annual Action Plan	Summer 2008	October 2008	2009-10
Annual Action Plan	Summer 2008	October 2009	2010-11
Full Risk Reduction Plan (principles)	Summer 2009		
Full Risk Reduction and Improvement Plan (detailed)	Summer 2010	October 2010	2011-12
Annual Action Plan	Summer 2011	October 2011	2012-13

HOW ANYONE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO FUTURE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES

Sections 5 and 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 require the Authority to consult widely before coming to final decisions about improvement.

The Assembly Government recommends that Authorities should consult citizens, local businesses, community planning partners, other fire and rescue authorities, and other current or potential partners.

The Authority conducts a public consultation each summer when it publicises its proposed improvement and risk reduction objectives for the following year and invites comments from anyone with an interest in what the Authority does. All comments received are taken into account before finalising the following year's plans.

Anyone wishing to contribute new ideas about future improvement objectives should write to the Corporate Planning Manager at the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Ffordd Salesbury, St. Asaph Business Park, St. Asaph, Denbighshire LL17 0JJ.