



***NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY  
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2021/22  
Published Autumn 2022***



## **NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

### **MAKING NORTH WALES A SAFER PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT**

Welcome to North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's progress and self-assessment report for 2021/22. In March 2021, the Authority published its Improvement and Well-being Plan for 2021/22, which confirmed its long-term objectives and explained its plans in order to achieve these objectives.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to have an impact on the Authority in 2021/22, challenging the resilience of the workforce and the traditional delivery of community-based services. The emergence of a further variant and the imposition of new nationwide restrictions resulted in various aspects of recovery being delayed. COVID-19 has however provided the Authority with the opportunity to reflect upon its future course, with a fresh perspective of progress towards meeting its long-term well-being objectives.

With lockdown restrictions continuing during 2021/22, the pandemic has understandably affected progress against our objectives not only during the previous year, but also during 2021/22 as the Authority and the Service prepared and implemented new methods of working.

These new methods of working included enhancements in our information and communications technology, and more agile working practices for staff enabled progress despite the continued lockdowns across Wales during the year. As the lockdown restrictions eventually began to ease in a move towards a Coronavirus-Stable scenario nationally further challenges presented themselves, as well as further opportunities which were accepted as they became available.

Despite challenging circumstances because of the pandemic, good progress was made in completing planned actions, thereby demonstrating progress against the seven long term Improvement and Well-being Objectives. The section entitled 'Progress against Improvement and Well-being Objectives' details evidence in support of the achievement of these actions.

It is intended that this year's account is interesting and informative. More emphasis was placed in last year's report on including examples of collaboration and how the Service compares with others and this year's report shows a continuation of this area of focus. As always, feedback is welcome on how improvements on reporting could be made in the future.

Comments or suggestions for improvement can be made using the contact details available on the final page.

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## LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING

The Authority considers public accountability and transparency to be of vital importance in all aspects of its relationships with local communities, partners and organisations and welcomes the opportunity to publish performance information.

Each year the Authority is required to publish an assessment of its performance in accordance with the legislation below:

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Its aim is to make public bodies think more about the long-term aims, work better with people, communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach<sup>1</sup>. The Act requires the Authority to set and publish well-being objectives. These long-term objectives are improvements that the Authority wants to help bring about in North Wales, that will contribute to improving local well-being and to moving Wales closer to achieving its well-being goals.



Having identified these long-term objectives, the Authority has a duty to take all reasonable steps to pursue them in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle and the five ways of working, and to publish a progress report after the end of each financial year.

Five ways of working;



Balancing short term needs with long term needs



Preventing problems from occurring or getting worse



Taking an integrated approach, balancing social, economic and environmental needs



Remembering the rich diversity of people in North Wales and encouraging them to get involved in decisions that affect them



Collaborative working to meet the well-being objectives.

<sup>1</sup> Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Essentials <https://futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf>

Fire and rescue authorities in Wales are also classed as ‘Welsh Improvement Authorities’ and are subject to the requirements of the Local Government Measure 2009. They therefore must follow an annual process of setting and achieving local improvement objectives.

In addition to the duties placed on individual public bodies, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also requires each local authority area to form a Public Services Board (PSB).

With the area covered by North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, four Public Services Boards have been established:

- Anglesey and Gwynedd
- Conwy and Denbighshire
- Flintshire
- Wrexham.

Each Public Services Board published a ‘Well-being Plan’ to identify its priorities and how it is working to achieve those priorities in its areas.

### **The Equality Act 2010**



The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector equality duty that requires public sector bodies, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Equality Act 2010

### **Welsh Language Standards 2016**

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued fire and rescue authorities with their Compliance Notices on 30 September 2016. This document lists which of the Welsh Language Standards (as listed in full in the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No.5); 2016) an organisation must comply with, along with any exemptions and their implementation dates.



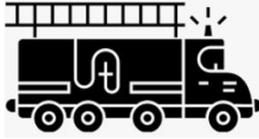
## ABOUT NORTH WALES

Knowing about North Wales today helps the Authority plan to make positive changes for the future:

<b>Population:</b>			
	<p>NORTH WALES <b>703,361</b></p> <p>WALES <b>3,169,586</b></p> <p>0 2,000,000 4,000,000</p>	<p><b>22.2%</b></p> <p>of Wales</p>	<p>Source: <a href="#">Welsh Government</a></p>
<b>Area KM<sup>2</sup>:</b>			
	<p>NORTH WALES <b>6,153</b></p> <p>WALES <b>20,736</b></p> <p>0 5,000 10,000 15,000 20,000 25,000</p>	<p><b>29.7%</b></p> <p>of Wales</p>	<p>Source: <a href="#">Welsh Government</a></p>
<b>Population Density:</b>			
	<p>NORTH WALES <b>114</b></p> <p>WALES <b>153</b></p> <p>0 50 100 150</p>	<p><b>114</b></p> <p>The Welsh average is 153</p>	<p>Source: <a href="#">Welsh Government</a></p>
<b>Dwellings:</b>			
	<p>NORTH WALES <b>329,382</b></p> <p>WALES <b>1,454,608</b></p> <p>0 500,000 1,000,000 1,500,000 2,000,000</p>	<p><b>22.6%</b></p> <p>of Wales</p>	<p>Source: <a href="#">Welsh Government</a></p>
<b>Non-Domestic Properties:</b>			
	<p>NORTH WALES <b>32,946</b></p> <p>WALES <b>124,366</b></p> <p>0 40,000 80,000 120,000</p>	<p><b>26.5%</b></p> <p>of Wales</p>	<p>Source: <a href="#">Welsh Government</a></p>
<b>Road Length KM:</b>			
	<p>NORTH WALES <b>9,852</b></p> <p>WALES <b>35,019</b></p> <p>0 10,000 20,000 30,000 40,000</p>	<p><b>28.1%</b></p> <p>of Wales</p>	<p>Source: <a href="#">Welsh Government</a></p>
<b>Agricultural Area KM<sup>2</sup>:</b>			
	<p>NORTH WALES <b>496,191</b></p> <p>WALES <b>1,594,887</b></p> <p>0 500,000 1,000,000 1,500,000 2,000,000</p>	<p><b>31.1%</b></p> <p>of Wales</p>	<p>Source: <a href="#">Welsh Government</a></p>
<b>Welsh Speakers:</b>			
	<p>NORTH WALES <b>280,700</b></p> <p>WALES <b>883,300</b></p> <p>0 500,000 1,000,000</p>	<p><b>31.8%</b></p> <p>of Wales</p>	<p>Source: <a href="#">Welsh Government</a></p>

# ABOUT NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Below is a snapshot of the Authority’s resources and activity levels during 2021/22.

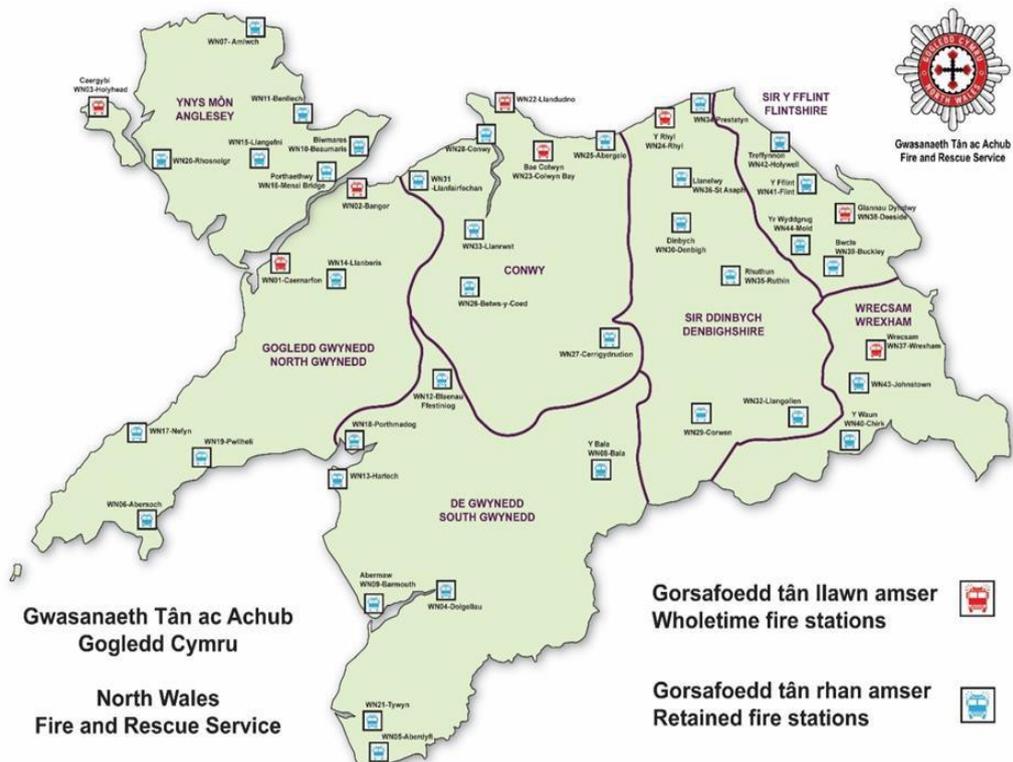
Fire Stations	Fire Engines	999 Calls Handled	Fire Service Staff
			
44	54	12,470	873
Emergency Incidents Attended	Fires	False Alarms	Non-Fire Emergencies
			
5,354	1,879	2,517	958

## Fire Stations

The Service operates from 44 fire stations across the service area.

Whole-time Fire Stations - There are three fire stations that remain open around the clock. Five fire stations are crewed between midday and 10:00pm, and operate as on-call stations outside those hours.

Retained/on-call Fire Stations – There are 36 fire stations that operate an on-call system. The deployment of fire appliances and crews to emergency incidents is managed centrally by control room staff, who are based in St Asaph.

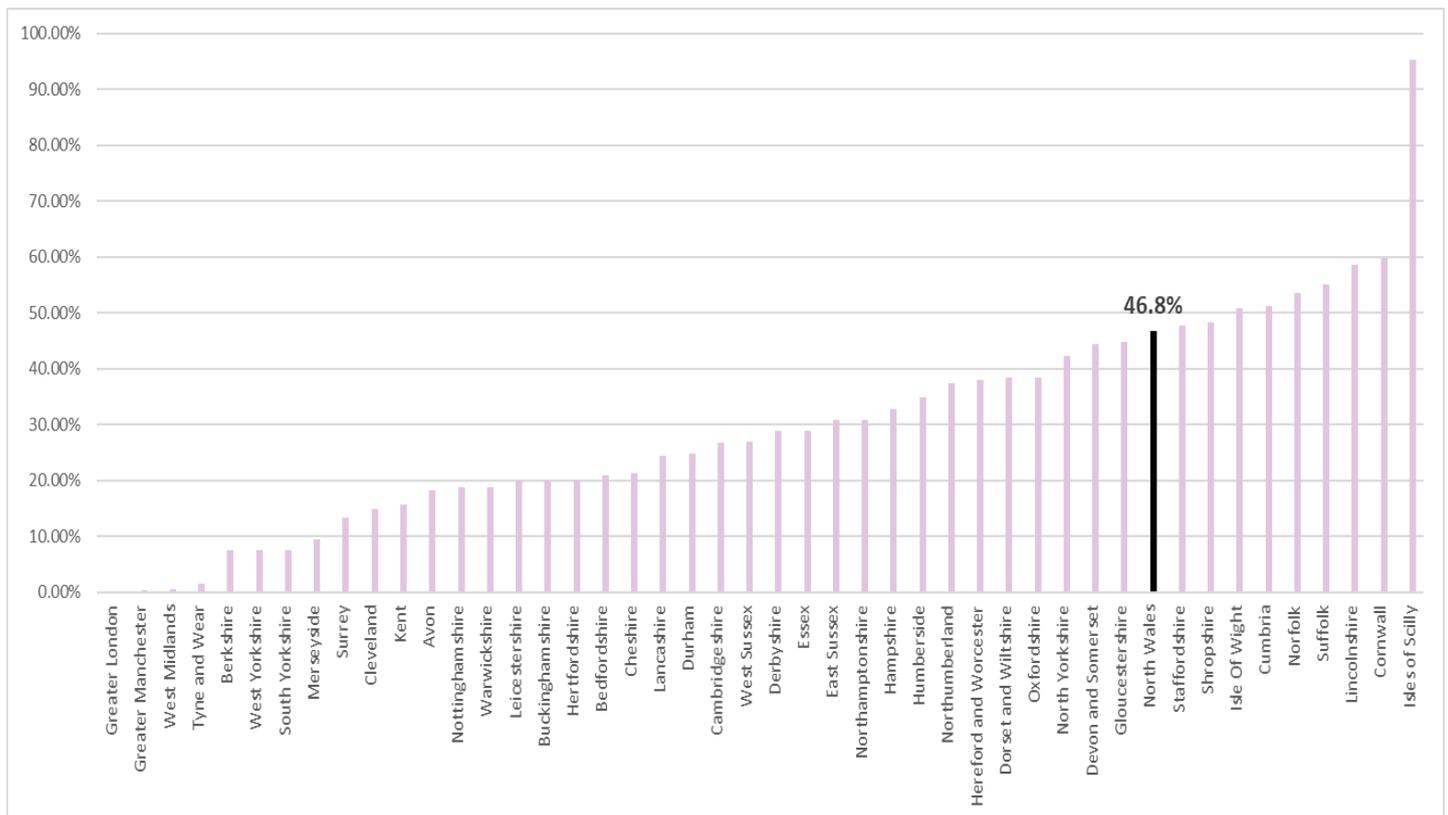


## Staffing

As at 31 March 2022	Full time equivalent strength	Headcount of individual staff
Wholetime Operational (WDS)	278.00	278
Retained Operational (RDS/on-call)	352.50	429
Support and Prevention	129.65	136
Control	29.25	30
<b>Totals</b>	<b>789.40</b>	<b>873</b>

Nearly half of the personnel employed by the Authority are categorised as on-call firefighters; this is amongst the highest proportion when compared with fire and rescue authorities in England.

**Graph showing the total number of on-call firefighters (by strength) as a percentage of the total workforce, by fire and rescue authorities in England and North Wales.**

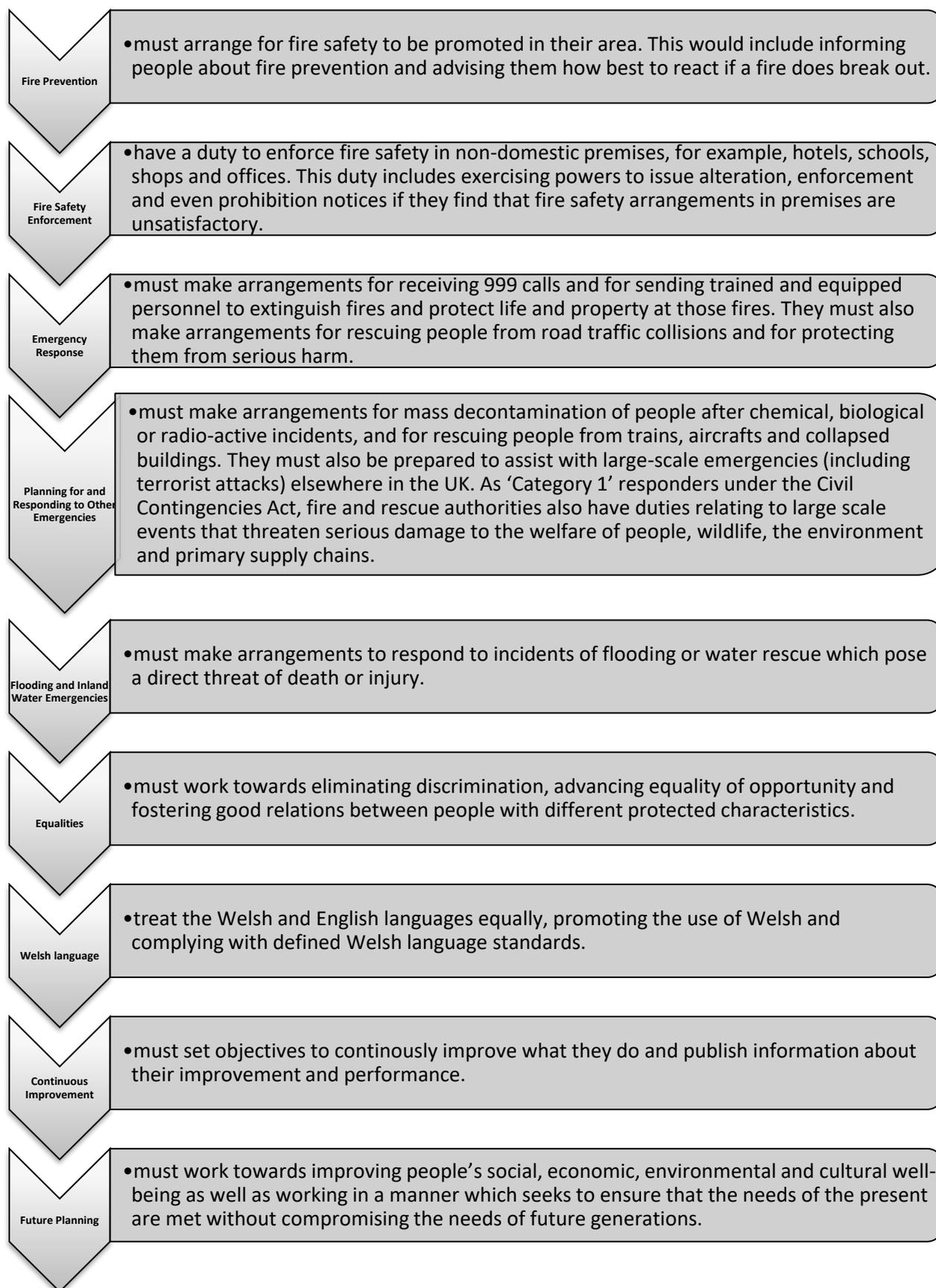


\*Awaiting on updated information for English FRS staffing to be released from the Home Office.

Source: [Fire statistics data tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-data-tables)

# WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

## Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales:

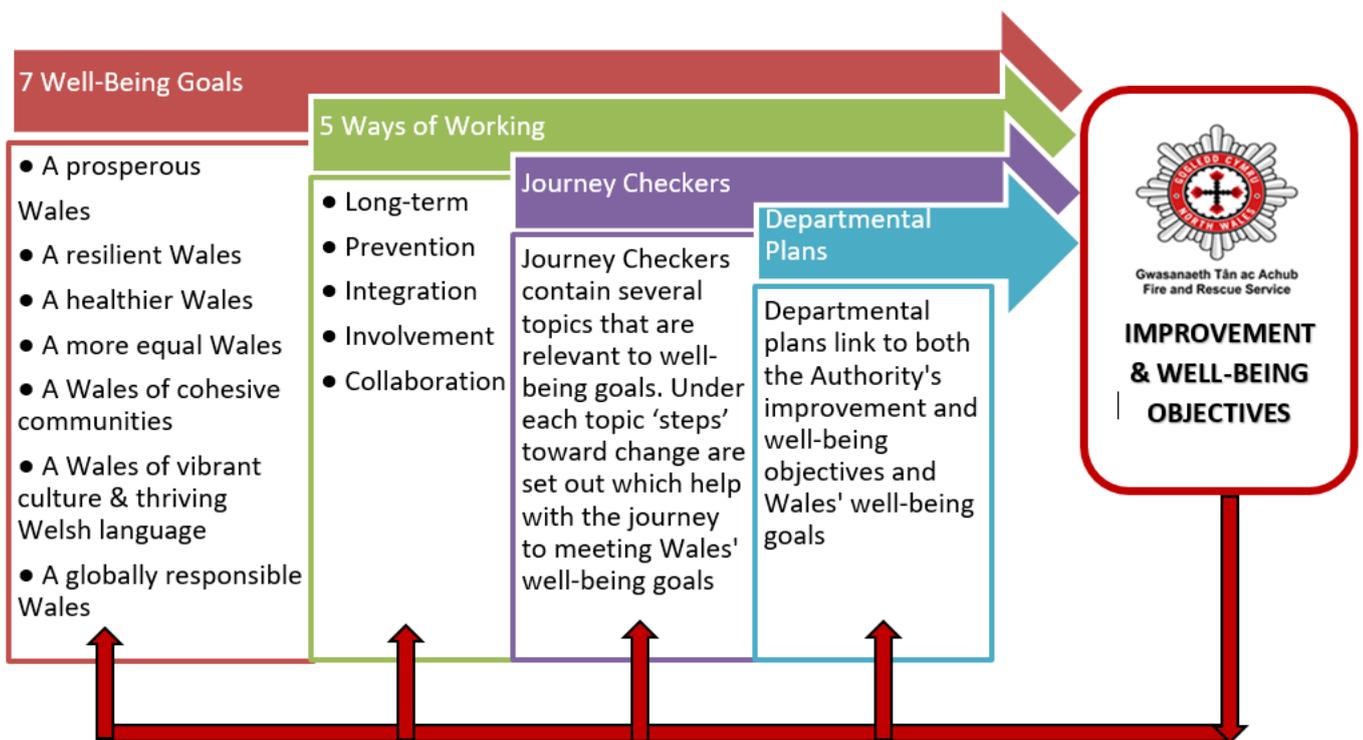


## PROGRESS AGAINST IMPROVEMENT AND WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES

This section describes the progress the Authority made towards meeting its long-term improvement and well-being objectives during 2021/22. The Authority is required to publish this assessment of its own performance for 2021/22 and the statutory performance indicators for the same year by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

In 2018/19 the Authority increased the number of objectives that it was pursuing to better comply with section 3(2) (a) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, which states that a public body must set and publish objectives “...that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals”.

Using a variety of resources on the Commissioner’s [website](#) such as ‘journey checkers’, a new set of objectives were developed in accordance with the sustainable development that helped identify opportunities for the Authority to improve its contribution to Wales’ well-being goals.



Throughout this self-assessment comparisons have been made with the other two Welsh Fire and Rescue Services, along with English Fire and Rescue Services with similar geography, demography, and population size, such as Cumbria, North Yorkshire, Hereford and Worcester, Devon and Somerset, and Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Services. Where possible, comparisons are also made with other public bodies in the region, such as Natural Resources Wales. Comparative data was not available for the year 2021/22, at the time of producing this report and therefore 2020/21 data was used.

## Objective 1: To work towards making improvements to the health, safety and well-being of people in North Wales



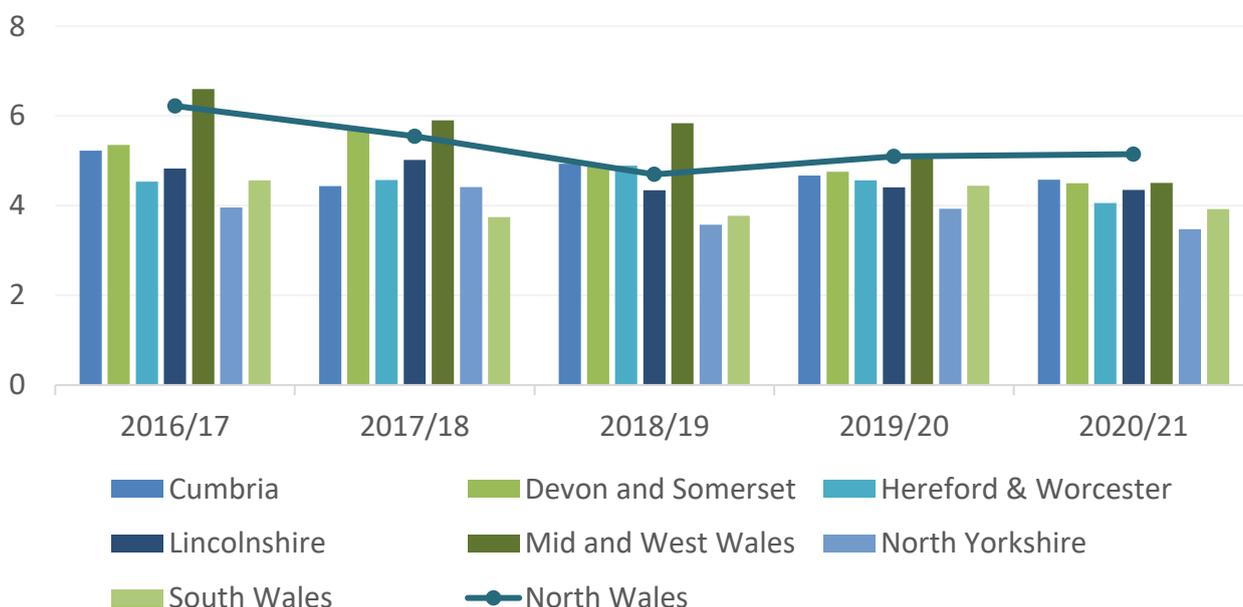
A range of factors can place people at an increased risk of accidental fires in the home. For example, their age (young children and older adults), having a disability or a limiting medical condition, being alone at the time of the fire and being affected by alcohol and/or drugs.

Individuals and communities who know how to prevent fires and stay safe when they do occur will not only be safer and healthier, but economically, socially and culturally more resilient. The polluting effect of fires contributes to a less healthy environment, which in turn deters people from outdoor activities and can negatively impact on physical and mental well-being. Throughout 2021/22 the Authority continued to focus its efforts on helping people stay safe whether at home, in work, on the roads or out in the community.

### Action: support people to prevent accidental dwelling fires and stay safe if they do occur

The Service attended a total of 399 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) in 2021/22, at which 34 people sustained slight injuries, five people sustained serious injuries, and five people lost their lives. The majority of ADFs were caused by cooking, where people had become distracted and left items unattended. These contributing factors have been the areas of focus for Service campaigns and communications utilising social media, partnership engagement and 'hot spotting' close to where a fire occurred.

Accidental Fires in dwellings per 10,000 population



The graph above highlights the comparative five-year trend observed from 2016/17 to 2020/21 between the five similar English Fire and Rescue Services and the other two Welsh Fire and Rescue Services. It shows that there were approximately 5 ADFs attended per 10,000 population in 2020/21 which represents a slight decrease from the 6 per 10,000 in 2016/17. Whilst the number of ADFs per 10,000 population in North Wales reduced overall since 2016/17, 2019/20 saw a slight increase. When compared nationally, the number of ADFs per 10,000 population in 2020/21 in North Wales rose to slightly higher than in South Wales, and became more in line with Mid and West Wales.

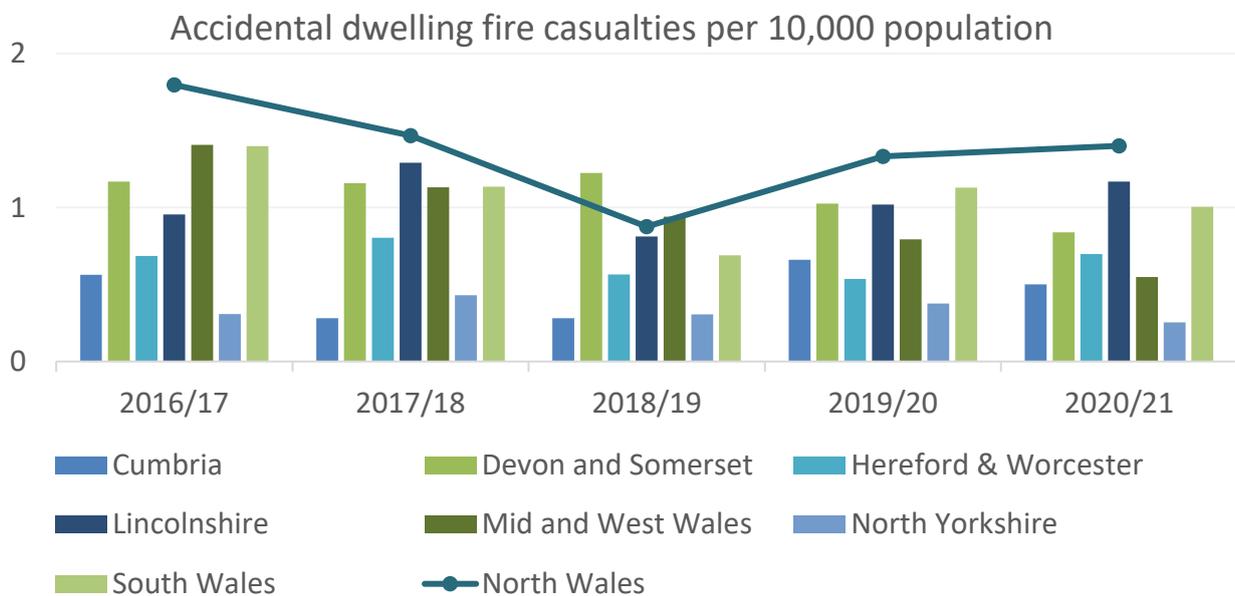


The May 2021 'You can save a life' campaign urged community members to look after vulnerable family, friends and neighbours.

As part of the launch of the campaign, the Service released photos of the damage caused by a dwelling fire which can be seen to the left, which is thought to have been started by a cigarette. Smoke alarms in the property were linked to an alarm system, which notified our control room of the fire.

Further videos from staff and posts featuring these messages were posted on the Fire Service social media pages over the following weeks.

The graph below illustrates the overall reduction in casualties at ADFs over the five years, 2016/17 to 2020/21. However, between 2018/19 and 2019/20 there was an increase in ADF casualties per 10,000 of the population, and this was observed to continue into 2020/21. The Service is working to understand and improve preventative action where necessary.



**Action: delivering 20,000 safe and well checks in either English or Welsh with at least 25% of those being delivered to households referred to the Service by another agency**

The Service continued offering free Safe and Well Checks (SAWCs) to residents across North Wales. The checks are undertaken by fully trained staff and involve the provision and installation of smoke detectors (or ensuring those already installed are in working order), advice on making homes safe from fire, assistance preparing an escape plan in the event of fire, and assessment of whether someone is of high risk and could benefit from specialist safety equipment.

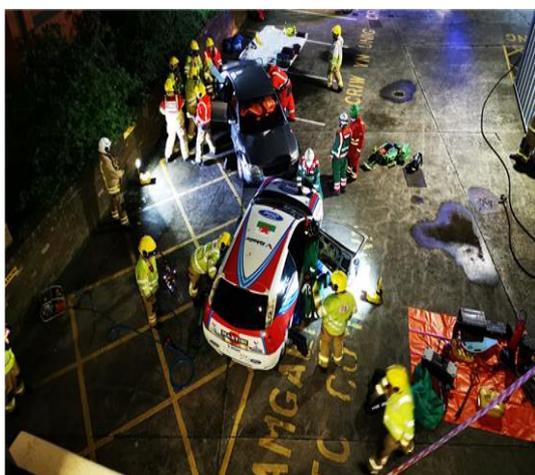
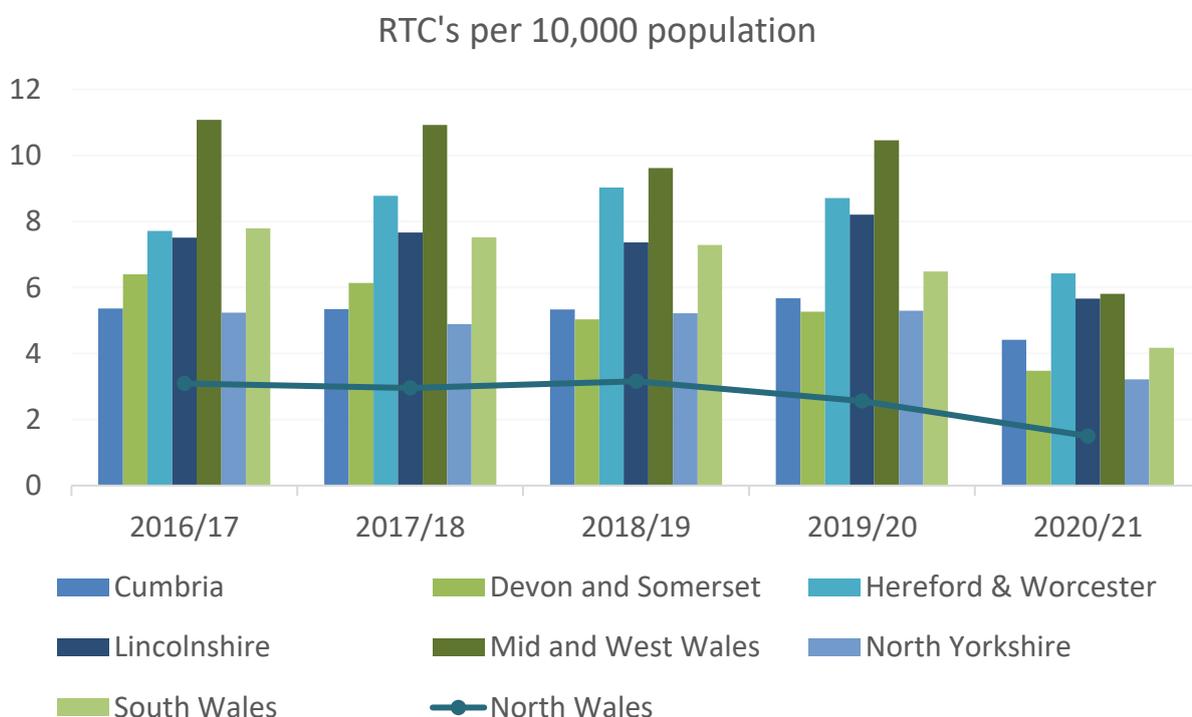
As part of its commitment to working towards a healthier Wales, the Service focused on delivering timely SAWCs during 2021/22. The Authority consistently had a target of 20,000 SAWCs per year with 5,000 of those coming from agency referrals.

A total of 14,062, SAWCs were delivered in 2021/22 with 4,896 coming from agency referrals. Of these, 12,159 were delivered in English with 1,680 delivered in Welsh.

**Action: support other agencies in reducing the number of road traffic collisions and associated deaths and injuries**

Fire and Rescue Services are responsible for rescuing people in the event of road traffic collisions (RTCs). The graph below shows that North Wales attended a total of two RTCs per 10,000 of the population in the 2020/21 financial year. Of those, 71 required the use of equipment to rescue those trapped; approximately one attendance per 10,000 of the population.

Whilst the number of RTCs attended in North Wales stayed relatively consistent over the five-year period from 2016/17 to 2020/21, there was an increase in RTCs attended in the financial year 2021/22 from 105 in 2020/21, to 207. The lifting of pandemic travel restrictions resulted in increased road traffic and a 97.1% increase in RTCs. North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service also saw a reduction in the number of RTCs attended in 2020/21 when compared with the year before. It is likely that other fire and rescue services witnessed a similar reduction due to pandemic restrictions which resulted in there being fewer vehicles on the roads, followed by an increase once restrictions were lifted.



In October 2021 staff joined with representatives from Outreach Rescue Medic Skills (ORMS) for 'Exercise Hotwheels' hosted at Llandudno Fire Station.

Organised by one of the Service's Crew Managers, the Road Traffic Collision exercise involved On-Call Firefighters from Llandudno and Conwy, student medics from ORMS and British Association for Immediate Care doctors from the area. Staff from the Professional and Service Standards department and fire control were also involved.

The exercise gave crews experience in working alongside medics in extricating live casualties with injuries from vehicles, enhancing the working relationships and understanding between medics and crews.

**Action: embed safeguarding practices into day-to-day activities and ensuring these are aligned with national policy and guidance**

In 2021/22, Level 1 and Level 2 Safeguarding training was delivered across the Service which received positive feedback. Since its implementation the number of appropriate safeguarding referrals increased and the content of information within referrals improved. In addition, a review of staff training was undertaken to identify which staff members needed training at Levels 3 and 4 and training is being planned for those identified.

A safeguarding quarterly meeting was established to ensure that best practice was shared and any issues resolved. It also ensured that national policy and guidance aligned with Service activity and actions were undertaken to achieve this. Partnership Managers were included in multi-agency meetings regarding vulnerable people in the community and data sharing agreements were established which enabled NWFRS to deliver Safe and Well Checks to the most vulnerable.

The Safeguarding risk assessment was completed by the Service in line with the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) guidance. There was a Service representative in the All Wales Safeguarding Group, who ensured that peer assessment with the other Welsh Fire and Rescue Services was completed. Safeguarding was also included as a standing item within all risk assessments that were linked to activities and engagements with children and young people.

Additionally, the Authority supported National Safeguarding week in November 2021, when the North Wales Safeguarding Board arranged a number of safeguarding workshops and safeguarding information materials for professionals and the general public to access. The week presented an opportunity to raise awareness of important safeguarding issues, facilitate conversations and share examples of best practice. The Service also worked closely with partners such as the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST), launching a new digital fire risk referral process as an all Wales initiative.

**Action: continue to develop and deliver interventions and engagement with children and young people through targeted activities**



During 2021, young people attended face-to-face Phoenix courses based at Menai Bridge and Flint. These courses were designed to encourage community spirit and fire safety skills through vocational activities. Educationists continued online sessions for young people throughout the summer, and the Service hopes to launch the exciting online Staywise platform following the appointment of a Project Manager.

The Service also committed to involvement with the 'Be a Nice Guy' (BANG) campaign after an appeal from North Wales Police, for people to consider how they celebrated Halloween. There was a focus on reminding parents to protect their children from the fire risk posed by some fancy-dress costumes.

## **Action: work with organisations that support vulnerable people**



The Service helped develop an agreement with the British Red Cross (BRC) in relation to its 'Prepare, Respond, Recover' assistance programme. The agreement allows the BRC to provide aid in the form of practical and emotional support to individuals affected by emergency incidents. Those affected may have experienced emotional trauma, required immediate practical support (e.g. money, hygiene packs, clothes etc.) as well as assistance in finding temporary accommodation in the event their home was uninhabitable after a fire.

## **Action: implement the latest technological advancements and upgrades to enhance efficiency, accuracy and safety**

In November 2021, at an exercise at Hafod-Dinbych, a specialist vehicle which acts as a mobile transmitter was tested by staff from Service and colleagues from North Wales Police. The Emergency Service Network (ESN) Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) is a mobile transmitter designed to be deployed



when events such as power outage or flooding disable transmitter sites. This network gives first responders immediate access to life-saving data, images and information in live situations and emergencies on the front line. Investment in ESN will also mean improvements to 4G network coverage, which will enable 999 calls to be made securely from mobile phones in some of the most remote and rural parts of Great Britain.

## **Action: implement the findings of the Grenfell Tower Fire inquiry and review to mitigate the risk of such a tragedy occurring in North Wales**

The Authority continued to work to improve the safety of High-Rise Residential Buildings. At a local level, this involved continuing to audit residential buildings and providing support to responsible persons in order for them to comply with current fire safety requirements. Nationally, the Service worked with Welsh Government to support initiatives and law changes which they are making, to make residential properties safer. This included the creation of a Joint Inspection Team, advising and informing the remediation scheme being run by Welsh Government, and working to ensure any future legislation is fit for purpose.

In addition, the Service reviewed how it trains, prepares, communicates between Fire and Rescue Service control rooms, and also how they (the Service Control Centre) link to the incident ground and the sharing of risk critical information. Other progress included how Control deals with calls in high volume conditions; wider command and control training and competence; the provision and effectiveness of operational equipment and the creation and revision of evacuation training, underpinned by policies and procedures.

**Action: introduce more eco-friendly electric vehicles to promote better air quality whilst reducing carbon emissions**

The Service currently has 146 vehicles within its light vehicle fleet, six of these are electric vehicles and four plug-in hybrid (PHEV). In addition there are twenty-nine hybrid cars which have recently been added to the Service’s fleet. Whilst still using some petrol, hybrid cars store their own kinetic energy from the turning of their wheels in a separate electric battery. This makes them a much more sustainable option than other cars, without having to be charged. These vehicles have helped with the transition to a more eco-friendly fleet.

In 2021/22 the Service applied for Welsh Government Grant funding for Electric Vehicle Charging Points which would improve the ability to charge an increasing number of electric vehicles.

**Objective 2: continue to work collaboratively to help communities improve their resilience**

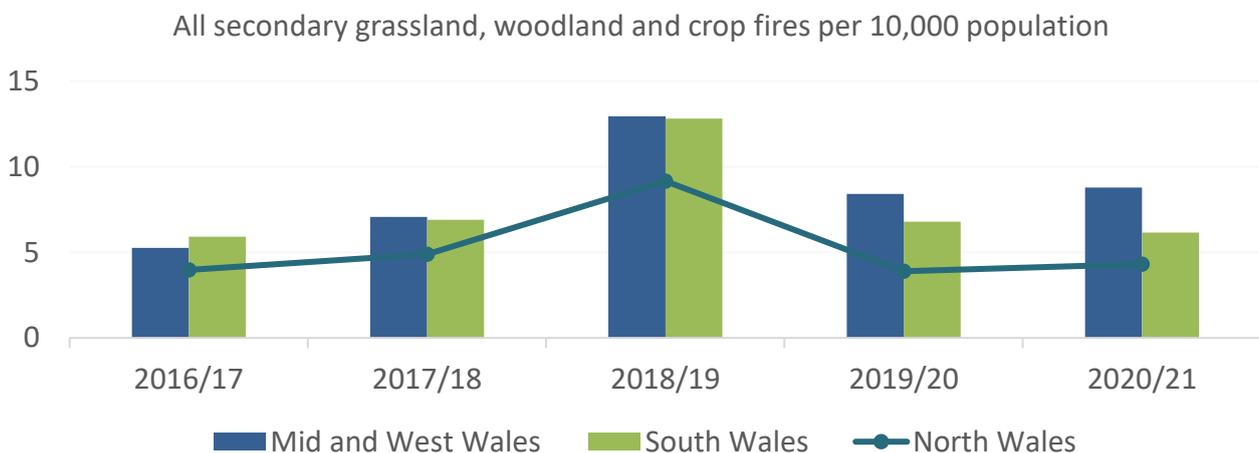


Working with local communities is extremely important to improve safety and help communities become more resilient. The Authority worked closely with partner agencies throughout 2021/22 around targeted areas to assist communities and local businesses with pre-planning and education, enabling them to become more resilient to emergencies.

The risks faced by communities are ongoing, and the Authority remained committed in 2021/22 to working with and supporting people to become more resilient. Working in close collaboration with partners, the Authority continued to ensure that a joined-up message was communicated, not only about safety but also about a range of other initiatives designed to improve the well-being of the whole community.

**Action: work with partners and stakeholders such as Natural Resources Wales and farmers/graziers, to identify locations in North Wales which are at greater risk of outdoor/grassland fires and help to develop emergency response plans**

The Service deals with different types of deliberate fire setting, ranging from grassland fires as a result of anti-social behaviour, the burning of household/garden refuse, to farmers and landowners burning grassland which is permitted during winter months. The Service attended a total of 879 secondary fires in 2020/21 (46.8% of all 1,879 fires attended), with 329 started deliberately.



The graph above shows that the number of secondary grassland, woodland and crop fires attended in North Wales remained relatively constant since 2016/17, notwithstanding an unusual increase in 2018/19.

In March 2022, staff at the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Joint Communications Centre were inundated with calls when they assisted colleagues in Mid and West and South Wales Fire and Rescue Services, dealing with overflow calls from their control room.



The Service control room also dealt with a very high number of calls notifying them of controlled burning as the public heeded 'call before you burn' messages.

**Action: continue to contribute to the development of a multi-agency regional wildfire plan**



The Service continued to be an active partner of the Denbighshire Moorland Project Board. The board was established to assist in running the Denbighshire Moorland Management and Wildfire Prevention Project. The aims of the board are to manage the risk and impact of wildfires by identifying areas at high risk of wildfire and implementing practical land management solutions.

During the fire at Mynydd Wawr, Y Fron in March 2022, the Service was able to work in partnership with Natural Resources Wales to secure the use of a helicopter to help tackle the fire. This was in accordance with an all Wales Fire and Rescue Service agreement, which is in place to provide the Service with the additional capability to deal with this growing area of risk.

**Action: build relationships with partners such as Natural Resources Wales, Local Resilience Forums, the Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG) and inland flood and water rescue groups to improve the joint capabilities of agencies to help those affected by flooding**

Partnership work continued on an all Wales basis to promote water safety messages and to support interventions that educate the public about the dangers of open water and activities such as 'tomb stoning' where people jump from elevated positions into water.

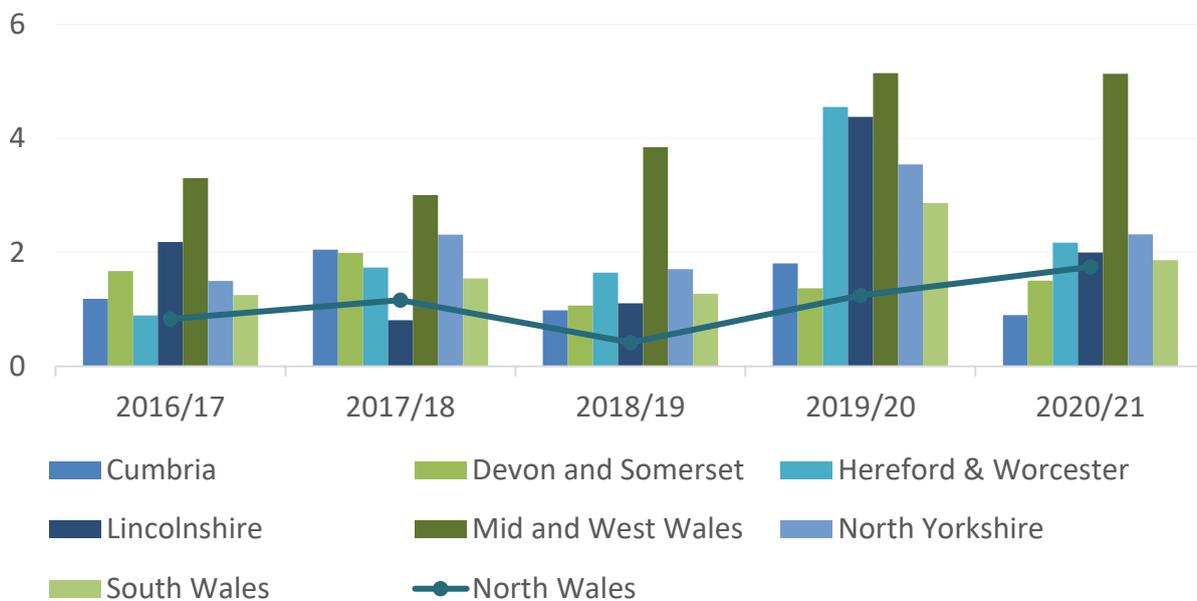


Storms Dudley and Eunice hit the UK at the end of February 2022, followed by storm Franklin with heavy rain and strong winds. In five days, the region saw three named storms, which the Service responded to.

Working alongside North Wales Resilience Forum partners, the Service was able to ensure a multi-agency response to these extraordinary multi-weather events, with regular updates and briefings from the Met Office and Natural Resources Wales. Storm Eunice was forecast as the worst storm in a generation, and the response involved four tactical coordination meetings with 25 partner

organisations present as well as two strategic coordination meetings with 20 partner organisations. A strategic holding area was set up at NWFRS headquarters in St Asaph to provide resilience. The storm divided in two before it reached Wales, and whilst North Wales was not affected as badly as Gwent, in South Wales, damage was experienced in many areas including Tywyn, which required a multi-agency response to a block of flats which involved Aberdyfi Search and Rescue Team, Gwynedd Council, and Tywyn fire station resulting in the successful and safe evacuation of 16 residents.

Flooding incidents per 10,000 population



The number of flooding incidents per 10,000 population, rose slightly in North Wales after being relatively consistent over the five-year period 2016/17 to 2020/21, temporarily dropping below one incident per 10,000 population in 2018/19.

The most currently available data places North Wales alongside South Wales as the Fire and Rescue Services with approximately two flooding related incidents per 10,000 population in 2020/21. The other Fire and Rescue Service in Wales experienced considerable increases in flooding incidents attended in both 2019/20 and 2020/21, with increases in the later period due to the severe weather and flooding that hit Wales during February 2020.

**Action: work collaboratively with communities and retained firefighters to enhance resilience of fire cover in their areas**



At the beginning of 2021 the Service’s new website, designed by the Corporate Communications department, went live as part of continuous efforts to make information and safety messages clear, simple and easy to access especially for potential on-call firefighters. A series of social media initiatives were also developed for individual station Facebook accounts in order to promote recruitment events at stations, such as advertising ‘Brew with the crew’ events, where members of the public can sit with current crew members in the station and discuss what it is like to be a firefighter.

The Service's recruitment and availability team worked throughout the year to improve communication with stations to develop local recruitment initiatives with an emphasis on priority stations where more personnel are needed. The team also attended jobs fairs, career events and community events to promote on-call opportunities and other employment opportunities within the Service.

Staff also attended meetings with local employment engagement officers and local employers to encourage them to consider the benefits of supporting the on-call duty system, by agreeing to release staff during work hours.

**Action: introduce Microsoft 365 as a means of further improving communication and integration with partners**

All Service staff were given a license to enable them to use Microsoft Teams, prior to this only 120 staff had access to a Skype for Business license. The Service used multimodal training strategies to ensure all staff in the organisation have had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with Teams and feel confident in attending meetings with other agencies. This especially benefitted our staff in the Local Resilience Forum as previous to this they would need to ask one of their Police colleagues to host meetings.

The introduction of Multi-Factor Authentication enabled staff access to their Service emails from home. Previously only staff that had been allocated a Service laptop were able to do this. This change was of great benefit to on-call staff who were previously unable to respond to outstanding emails until they were on fire service premises.

**Objective 3: to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible, making the best use of resources available**



Given the backdrop of financial uncertainty, amplified by the pandemic, and the potential increase in demand for services across the public sector, it is inevitable that the Authority will be faced with challenges to being able to sustain its services over the coming decades. The pressure on fire and rescue services is likely to come from several different directions including being able to recruit and retain sufficient operational firefighters who meet the requisite fitness standards, as well as the potential expansion of the firefighter role that could increase pay significantly.

Rationalising the Authority's own costs and finding a balanced way of funding the Service over the next few years will help sustain fire and rescue services into the future, making the area more resilient to demographic and other changes.

**Action: deliver fire and rescue services in North Wales within the agreed budget**

The Authority remained committed to playing its part in building stronger and safer communities. It recognises that in order to prepare for the future financial challenges whilst being able to sustain service delivery requires flexibility and innovation.

The initial planning assessment for 2021/22 identified a net budget requirement of £37.07m compared to £35.9m for 2020/21; developed using current service provision, whilst being mindful of the need to keep the increase to constituent authorities as low as possible. In November 2021 Members reflected on some key challenges that had been highlighted through the new Chief Fire Officer's situational assessment, and the consequences for the Authority's budget. The revenue budget subsequently approved in December 2021 included an increase of £1.3m to address those challenges.

Authority	2020/21 Contribution £	Population	Population %	2021/22 Contribution £	Increase in contributions £	Increase %
Anglesey Council	3,689,651	69,864	10%	3,915,486	225,835	6.1%
Gwynedd Council	6,596,692	125,220	18%	7,017,885	421,193	6.4%
Conwy County Borough Council	6,230,520	118,320	17%	6,631,214	400,694	6.4%
Denbighshire County Council	5,060,195	96,021	14%	5,381,432	321,236	6.3%
Flintshire County Council	8,282,403	157,264	22%	8,813,821	531,418	6.4%
Wrexham County Borough Council	7,214,775	136,535	19%	7,652,042	437,266	6.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,074,237</b>	<b>703,224</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>39,411,879</b>	<b>2,337,642</b>	<b>6.3%</b>

During the year, significant work was undertaken to identify and review all expenditure, in particular costs in relation to fleet management and training delivery. This enabled the Service to report an underspend of £0.07m for 2021/22 as well as maintaining earmarked reserves of £3.46m, for future known pressures.

The detailed annual statement of accounts summarising the financial performance of the Authority for year ending 31 March 2021 is available on the Service website when published.

In summary, the Authority's financial position in relation to its revenue budget for 2021/22 was:

	2021/22 Budget £000	2021/22 Outturn £000	2021/2022 Variance £000
Employee Costs	28,379	26,916	-1,463
Premises	2,725	2,579	-146
Transport	983	1,034	51
Supplies and Third-Party Payments	5,005	4,837	-168
Income	-2,485	-3,041	-556
Capital Financing and Interest Charges	2,467	2,305	-162
Transfers to/from Reserves	0	2,374	2,374
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>37,074</b>	<b>37,004</b>	<b>-70</b>

## Action: continue to pursue ongoing internal efficiencies

Various cost-saving efficiencies were implemented during 2021/22 which included;

- Introducing LED lighting and roof insulation in order to save energy long term;
- Increasing the number of electric and plug in hybrid vehicles in the fleet to reduce fuel usage and promote sustainability for the future;
- Continuing to extend bilingual in-house media training to more staff to reduce the need for external resources.

As well as ensuring the careful management of its revenue budget, the Authority continued to scrutinise its capital programme in order to ensure that best value was achieved. The Authority remained committed to ensuring that its assets are utilised efficiently and effectively and continued to analyse the capital programme against possible negative revenue implications.



The initial trial of the new iTrent employee self-service platform ended in October - having received positive feedback from those taking part.

The trial piloted the use of Employee Self-Service and Manager Self-Service with a small group of departments, allowing for controlled assessment of the effectiveness and take up of the new platform.

## Action: build on existing measures to monitor operational performance by fire crews before, during and after incidents

The Service continued to build on existing measures for monitoring all aspects of operational performance, including the provision of risk-based audits, operational assurance and the sharing of best practice. Covid Workplace Audits (CWPA's) continued during the first few months of the financial year 2021/22 with 18 CWPA's conducted between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 followed by a series of Strategic Management Inspections (SMI's) which involved at least two members of the Professional Service Standards Team along with either a Principal Officer or an Area Manager. Changes were also made to fitness management processes followed by the Service to comply with Covid regulations, in line with guidelines set by the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC).

## Action: develop a more flexible model for the delivery of training and development including providing training more locally to support the needs of retained/on-call firefighters

In 2021, the Service's Training and Development department delivered a number of local on-call initial training courses including events at Llanberis, Rhyl and Deeside. These courses would typically have been delivered residentially at Dolgellau but were relocated to fire stations close to those attending in order to minimise disruption and travelling time. The service also had a number of new starters who joined from other fire and rescue services and this enabled the Service to offer training at wholtime stations to work through bespoke development programmes.

In 2021 the Service also ran two supervisory leadership and management courses provided by a local college and delivered online. These were open to those in supervisory roles or who were in the process of developing themselves in preparation for supervisory roles. They were attended by personnel from all duty systems, including a number of RDS personnel.

Following on from an external quality assurance visit by Skills for Justice, the Service's training and development accredited centre met the Skills for Justice Awards compliance criteria and maintained its low risk rating. Skills for Justice is a non-profit organization which supports employers across the UK to develop workforce, leadership and research strategies to improve and retain skilled staff in Policing, Probation Services, Custody and Detention, Armed Forces, Fire & Rescue and Local Government. The Accredited Centre was judged by Skills for Justice to have appropriate occupationally competent, skilled and knowledgeable internal quality assurers and reliable, robust internal quality assurance systems in place.

**Action: focus on improving the effectiveness of cover provided through the Retained/on-call Duty System (on call firefighters)**

In 2016, a new model was introduced by the Authority to better balance its resources to correspond to risk. The model allowed for a new way of planning that ensured there are at least 20 strategically located fire crews available in North Wales at times of relatively low risk, and at least 38 available at times of higher risk. Across the Service operational managers reviewed local factors affecting specific stations to determine whether there were barriers to recruitment. For stations identified as critical to support the 20/38 model, dedicated selection days were held and applicants were progressed more rapidly than those applying for lower priority stations.

The Service sought to further enhance the effectiveness of on-call firefighter recruitment during 2021/22. The 'Can you fill these boots?' on-call recruitment campaign ran for a third year in support of the national campaign to recruit more on-call firefighters across the whole of the UK. Press statements were placed on the Service's social media platforms, and banners and posters were supplied to on-call stations to be distributed in the local areas, to attract the attention of potential recruits or willing employers.



As part of this work, staff stepped up their efforts to recruit on-call firefighters in a number of areas to help protect communities across the region –including fire stations located at Aberdyfi, Abersoch, Amlwch, Bala, Beaumaris, Benllech, Betws y Coed, Cerrigydrudion, Corwen, Harlech, Llangefni, Llanrwst, Menai Bridge, Porthmadog, Rhyl, St Asaph and Tywyn.

**Action: review Business Continuity Management and enhancing the Service's capability to deal with large-scale incidents**

In January 2022, staff from the Service took part in a Hazardous Materials Environmental Protection (HMEPO) training event at RAF Valley on Anglesey.

The Service's HMEPO Lead Officer, explains more:

"RAF Valley is a fast jet training facility providing advanced pilot training using 30 Hawk T2 aircraft. It is also home to Anglesey airport operating daily commercial flights to UK airports."



"The site houses several different hazards and risks which the Service and our on-site airport fire-fighting teams plan and exercise for, as well as being a major employer within the area."

"The event included a risk visit to the explosive and fuel storage areas on site, a HAZMAT exercise based on a Hawk jet crash affecting an explosives storage building, and a presentation on the growing risk from incidents involving lithium ion battery powered vehicles and storage systems. In addition, 'show and tell' sessions were included focusing on the capabilities and advantages of utilising both the High-Volume Pump and the Environmental Protection Unit equipment on site."



There was also a Business Continuity Awareness Week in May 2021, with the theme 'business continuity starts with you'. The focus was on a 'back to basics' approach - how to raise awareness, embed business continuity, and build resilience within organisations.

**Action: continue to monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of programmes undertaken in partnership with other organisations**

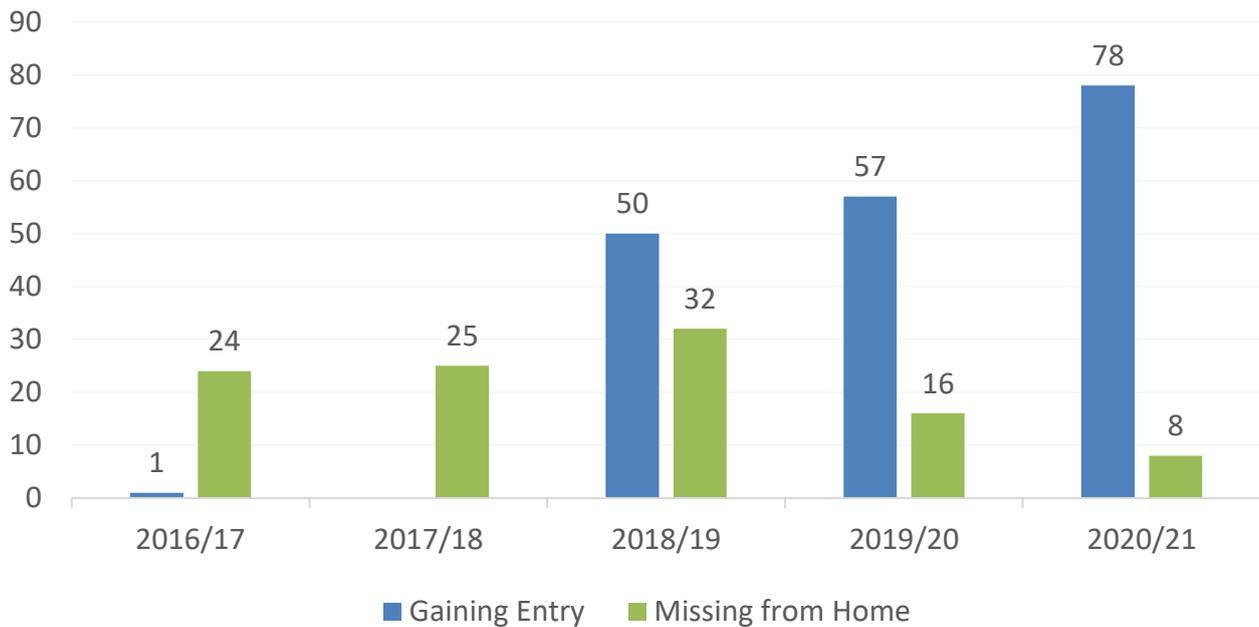
Statistics from North Wales Police suggest that 3,000 people are reported missing from home every year. Early deployment of resources can help to improve the chances of finding people who may have gone missing for a variety of reasons. The Service continued to support police with the 'Missing from Home' scheme, where Service personnel assist in the vital early stages of a search for missing persons. Crews remain on call for fire service incidents, but respond to assist police to locate people who are missing from home (as and when required).

The scheme was expanded in 2018/19 to include staff from each of the 44 fire stations who can now be called upon to provide assistance, and as a formally coordinated arrangement, is a national first.

The 'Gaining Entry' scheme introduced in 2018/19 continued through 2021/22, which meant that operational crews could continue to support the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) to gain entry into properties for people requiring medical care and to those unable to assist themselves. The scheme allows crews to gain entry in a timely manner, with reduced damage to the property due to the additional ability to replace door locks to secure a property before departure. This specialist training is organised through the Emergency Services Collaboration Board and was provided to all whole-time staff.

The graph below shows the number of call outs when assisting with 'Missing from Home' and 'Gaining Entry' incidents. The Service attended increasing numbers of 'Gaining Entry' incidents year on year since 2018/19.

## Number of Gaining Entry and Missing from Home incidents



During the year, community safety staff identified an increase in the numbers of incidents attended in high-rise flats in Flint. In order to highlight safety messages to local residents, slides were created and displayed on the digital boards located in communal areas of buildings. The slides, which featured messages on cooking, smoking and electrical safety were seen by up to 270 residents.



The Service helped to promote messages about keeping our communities safe, featuring on the national stage within a video created for 'BBC Newsround' which can be viewed [here](#). The RSPCA also promoted the #BangOutOfOrder campaign to highlight the impact of fireworks on animals - their [video](#) can be viewed to find out more.

### **Action: develop an effective asset management system that promotes optimal resource allocation**

The Service's Control team worked to progress delivery of a new Integrated Communication Control System (ICCS) to replace the current Airwave system, to ensure compliance with Home Office Emergency Services Network rollout. To ensure compatibility, emergency service control rooms must have a compliant ICCS to take radio and telephony communications with stakeholders.

A contract with Capita, who provided the technology began for the new system in September 2020, with a draft project plan which went live at the Joint Communications Centre in May 2021, followed by installation at the Secondary Control site in Rhyl in June 2021. Delivery of the replacement ICCS was achieved in alignment with the Wales Emergency Services Network User Group deliverables.

**Objective 4: to continue to identify opportunities to encourage greater engagement with people, communities, staff and stakeholders**



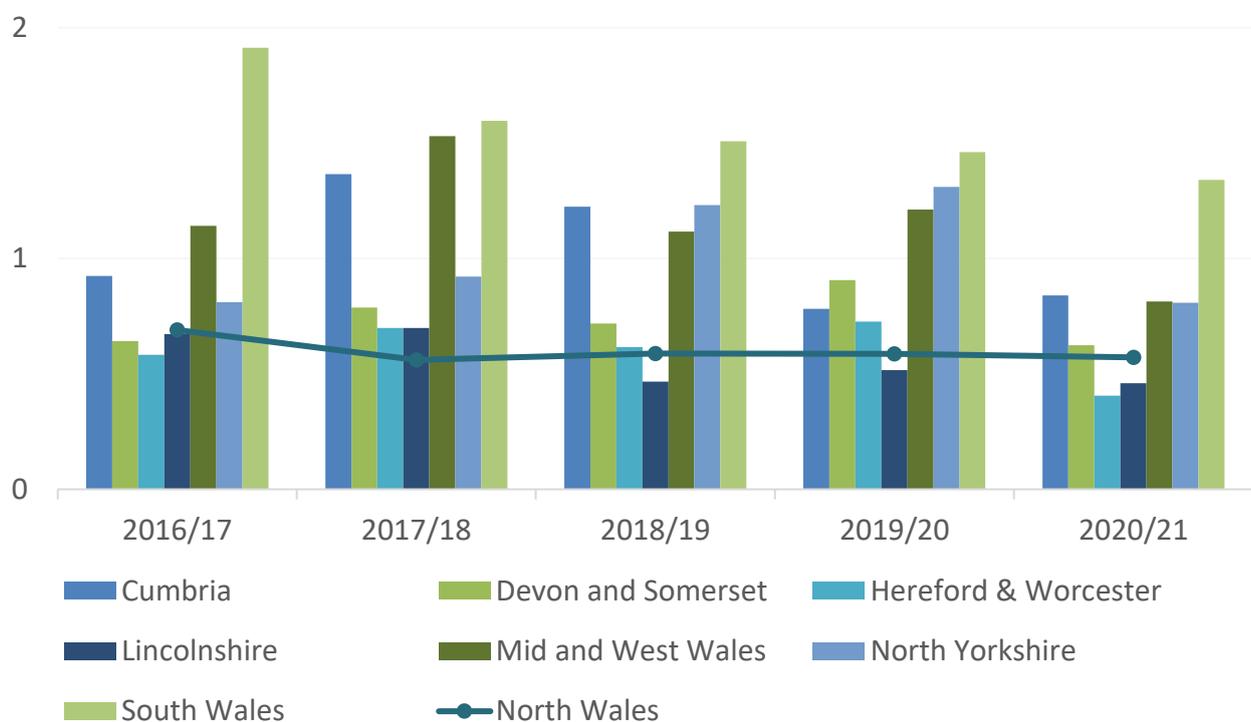
During 2021/22 the Authority continued to improve the way it communicates and engages with communities about the services it delivers.

A collaborative approach with local authorities, public services boards and other stakeholders ensured the consistent and widespread promotion of safety messages, throughout the challenging conditions experienced during 2021/22.

**Action: raise awareness of, help prevent arson attacks and reduce the number of deliberate fires and false alarms**

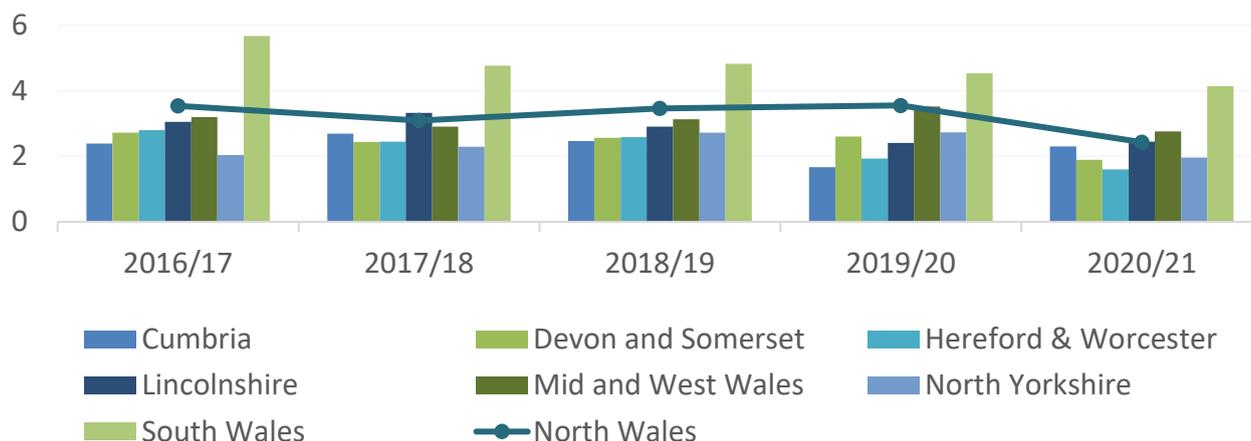
Malicious false alarms present a significant risk to local communities, and unnecessarily compromise the resources available to tackle genuine emergencies. Throughout the five-year period 2016/17 to 2020/21, NWFRS consistently responded to less than one malicious false alarm per 10,000 population. Targeted campaigning and education around the impacts that malicious false alarms have may have contributed positively to low numbers. More broadly, however, it is encouraging to observe a general steady decline in malicious false alarms in the other Fire and Rescue Services over the five-year period, particularly Mid and West Wales.

Malicious Fire False Alarms per 10,000 population



In 2021/22, the Service attended 1,879 fires with 471 started deliberately. The number of deliberate primary fires attended by the Service remained relatively stable between 2016/17 and 2020/21, ranging between three and four per 10,000 population, highlighting the importance of ongoing arson prevention strategies to avoid future increases. The Service also delivered training for 120 new NWP recruits during six sessions, consisting of Community Support Officers and Police Officers. The training focused on raising awareness of the issues regarding deliberate fires and the work that the Service does to reduce such instances.

Deliberate Primary Fires am bob 10,000 population



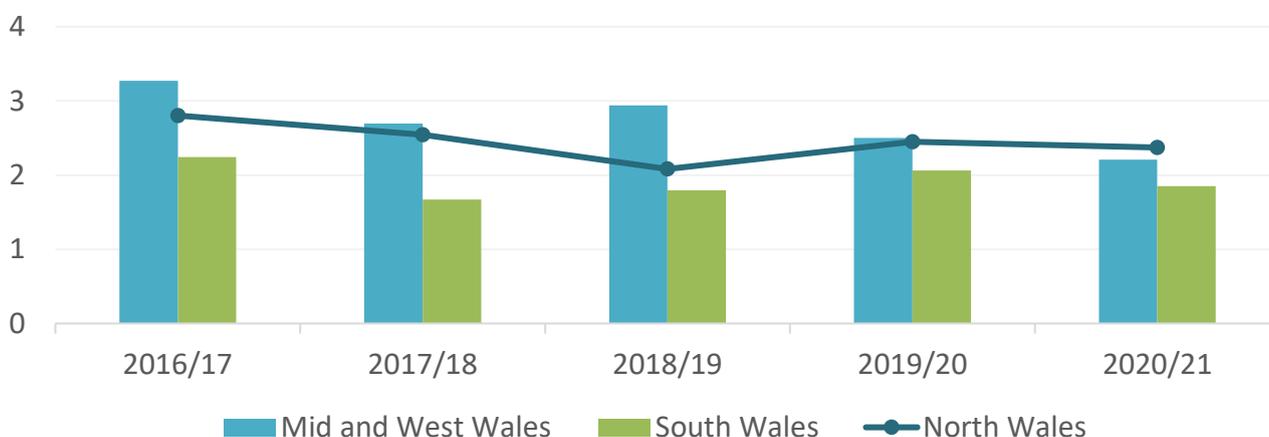
**Action: engage with local employers, communities and those directly affected by fire and other emergency incidents to develop prevention activities and campaigns**

In October 2021 the Chief Fire Officer met with representatives from a local social housing provider, as well as colleagues from the Community Safety Department to discuss the partnership with the Service. This partnership working included the signing of a new three year partnership initially established seven years ago, which meant that a Home Safety Support Worker was embedded within the social housing team, giving direct access to 4,000 of their properties across the North Wales area.

The Service also trialed a new partnership with a local social housing maintenance provider, which will see a Home Safety Support Worker in a part funded role liaising directly with residents referred to the scheme - this includes people who have been signposted to help make their homes safe prior to them leaving hospital. In addition, there was an initiative in 2021 which saw the Service link in with the local authority to utilise their resources to help keep residents safe.

**Action: promote national and local safety campaigns, ensuring that areas of greatest risk are prioritised, for example, fires caused by cooking**

Accidental dwelling fires by cooking appliance source of ignition per 10,000 population





In April 2021 the Service held a 'Register My Appliance' Week, reminding households to look around their homes and register their appliances on the portal [registermyappliance.org.uk](http://registermyappliance.org.uk). Nearly 60 leading brands are represented on the portal, developed by the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances, with most manufacturers welcoming details of products up to 12 years old and includes advice on safe usage. It is reported that 49% of people have never registered their products and this initiative was aimed at encouraging everyone, members of the public and staff alike, to make their homes safer by registering machines.

**Action: maintain the currency of existing information-sharing agreements, and seek to establish new agreements where appropriate**

The Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) supports organisations directly concerned with the health, education, safety, crime prevention and social well-being of people in Wales. The consistent approach promoted by WASPI helped the Service to develop effective ways of sharing personal information effectively and lawfully.



The Community Safety Department reviewed and, where necessary, updated its Data Disclosure Agreements (DDAs) with a view, once complete, to transferring to a central Service register.

Staff from the Service met with colleagues from Centre of Sign, Sight and Sound (COS) to discuss continuing the partnership for another two years from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2022. The partnership sees staff from the Conwy and Denbighshire Community Safety Team providing training and intervention equipment to COS staff in order that they can deliver Safe and Well checks to residents of North Wales living with Sensory loss.

**Action: conduct a health and well-being survey of all staff, promoting activities throughout the Service**

The Service took a number of actions to make sure that health, fitness and wellbeing was actively promoted during 2021/22, ensuring that employees were encouraged to maintain a fit and healthy lifestyle. A health and well-being survey was carried out to assist in highlighting the self-perceived well-being of employees.

In May 2021 the Service committed to supporting a mental health awareness week in collaboration with Mind charity. Staff from the health, fitness and wellbeing team posted different activities for colleagues on the Workplace Facebook platform each day, encouraging staff to think about their own mental health and the importance of supporting others around who may be struggling. During the week staff were encouraged to make time to visit the 'Mental Health Support' page of the intranet, to help signpost them to mental health advice and support available including access to the colleague support team, blue light mental health champions and the Care First employee assistance programme. Many staff also benefited from 'Mindfulness' sessions, as well as the weekly 'Centergy' exercise sessions which offered 60-minute mind-body workouts incorporating yoga and pilates.



## Action: complete a review of the Corporate Communication Strategy

A new Corporate Communications Delivery plan for 2021-24 was published following the review of the Corporate Communications Strategy.

The delivery plan outlines the direction and framework to actively support and engage with a wide range of internal and external audiences and to do so clearly and effectively.

## Action: develop an online generic / standalone rolling survey which reflects all seven corporate objectives which could be used to record feedback from all stakeholders on the services the Authority provides

Work continued to improve and develop the Authority's website in order to create a more interactive environment for surveys and engagement. This programme of work will continue into 2022/23 with the aim of transitioning all Corporate reports, plans and assessments to a dedicated area on the website rather than as attached PDF documents. The Authority remained committed to ensuring that objectives are met through engagement.

## Objective 5: to maintain a suitably resilient, skilled, professional and flexible workforce

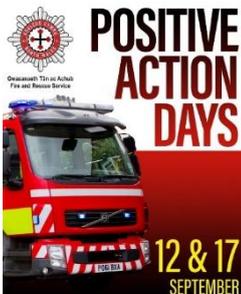


The Authority continued to extend its efforts to attract, develop and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity within the communities it serves.

Supporting equality and diversity lies at the heart of the Authority's culture and core values: a commitment to diversity and inclusion; a desire to strive for excellence; protecting communities and valuing its people. A workforce that is appropriately developed and trained to be safe benefits the people of Wales, and a well-developed performance management framework supports managers in meeting the demands of their roles.

## Action: recruit, develop and retain a highly skilled, motivated and bilingual workforce

In early 2021 it was announced that there would be a review of the promotions process. There were two aspects to this work, a review of temporary promotions and a longer-term piece of work involving permanent promotions. Since the review was announced, work was ongoing to address the issues raised by staff and members of the Fire Brigades Union to gain a better understanding of concerns. The Chief Fire Officer made the following comment:



*'As these reviews continue I am confident that it will lead to an improvement in practices and to an acceptable way forward for the Service as a whole, ensuring that we can maintain the highest standards for service delivery.'*

The Service also hosted positive action days on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of September 2021 for prospective firefighters in under represented groups which included females and people from LGBTQ+, black and ethnic minority groups.

**Action: develop employment practices aimed at increasing the employment prospects of people who might otherwise find it difficult to gain access to work and prioritise action to promote gender equality**

The UK-wide National Joint Council Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) was established in 2015 in order to consider matters relating to equality, diversity and cultural issues such as bullying and harassment. A cross-cutting Service sub-group consisting of staff, representative bodies and senior management, was established. Work of the sub-group continued with a forward work plan to reaffirm and embed the Service's commitment to embrace inclusion. Work included promotion of the group as a response to global protests against racism, reminding staff to embrace inclusion and reject racism. An online event, 'Pride Inside' was promoted to encourage staff participation and support 'Pride' month.

The Service's health and well-being team continued to be involved in the recruitment process and provided virtual fitness assessments and online positive action days/events to support under represented groups. 'Get Fire Fit' was an opportunity to develop females interested in joining the Service, which included engagement and support leading up to recruitment stage.

In March, international women's day was celebrated by the Service and whilst the original theme was 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow', which aimed to recognise women who are working to build a more sustainable future, this was later adapted to be 'Break The Bias'. This means each of us becoming more aware of our conscious and unconscious biases, and being willing to question ourselves and others. It means speaking up for change and being willing to think differently, hire differently, and promote differently.

**Action: adopt agile and flexible working models which will contribute to a low carbon society though reducing emissions associated with travel for work purposes**



At the end of 2021, a review was carried out by Audit Wales on the Service's progress towards achieving carbon neutrality. As part of this journey, Audit Wales emphasised the need for everyone to understand the challenges and opportunities associated with achieving carbon neutrality.

The Service introduced an agile working policy for staff, for whom it was suitable, which enabled them to work from home as well as from the office offering a hybrid arrangement, vastly reducing the number of staff members commuting on a daily basis to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service premises.

**Action: continue to seek out new opportunities to develop apprenticeship schemes within the Service**

The latest cohort of apprentices joined the Service in June 2021, after recruitment was paused in 2020 due to the pandemic. The group, which included a mix of firefighter and future leader apprentices, started on their learning journey supported by staff from the training and development department. Their first development module incorporated learning about core operational roles and responsibilities, with sessions held at various training locations. The first group of future leader apprentices who joined the Service in April then went onto



their placements on wholetime watches and periods supporting various departments across the Service, along with enrolment on academic and vocational qualifications.

**Action: adopt a more holistic approach to improving employee wellbeing, continue to invest in reducing absence and concentrate on health promotion**

During September an 'Agile Working' policy was formally agreed, which introduced a blended approach of working from the office, home or other Service locations.

"This move supports the Welsh Government's long-term ambition to see 30% of Welsh workers working from home, or close to home, following the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, it builds on the success of the working arrangements we have put in place in light of the coronavirus restrictions."

"The pandemic has made us rethink several of our working practices, with many of us also reassessing how our home life fits with our work life. Working in an agile way is an important step."

**Action: renew certification of the Gold Corporate Health Award**

In May 2021 the Service was re-awarded the Platinum Corporate Health Standard for a further 12 months, following an on-line assessment. The Corporate Health Standard is funded as part of the Welsh Government's 'Healthy Working Wales' programme, and is the national quality framework and award to encourage employers to improve health and well-being in the workplace and within communities.



The Corporate Health Standard has four levels of award to recognise each stage of the developmental health and well-being work achieved by employers. The four levels are Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. The Service previously achieved Platinum, the highest Standard, in 2017.

The Platinum level recognises responsible employers who demonstrate an organisational commitment to support not only their employees, but also other employers and the local community. The Platinum Standard is awarded to exemplar employers who demonstrate sustainable development as an integral part of their business practice and culture. Sustainable Development can be understood as improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of people and communities to achieve a better quality of life for our own and future generations.

The Assessor from Public Health Wales gave extremely favourable feedback and complimented the Service and the Authority's work, saying that the issue of sustainability is one that is comprehensively considered by the Service.

**Action: continue to contribute to the All-Wales 'People and Organisational Development Strategy'**

Work continued on implementing the All-Wales 'People and Organisational Development Strategy' 2018/21. The key elements of the strategy included; resourcing, health and wellbeing, fitness, inclusive workplaces (equality and diversity), reward and recognition, management information systems, and training and development. The strategy underpinned the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services' commitment to lifelong learning and workplace competence, supporting new ways of working for the benefit of the public in Wales.

## Action: improve ways of supporting staff to become future leaders

During 2021/22 the Service continued to develop its recruitment and selection process to ensure resilience at all levels. New apprentice fire-fighters were moved around Service departments to help them obtain a comprehensive understanding of all functions and their responsibilities.

Bespoke progression plans were developed for candidates on the Service's 'high potential' programme, designed to help fast track talented candidates. Candidates were exposed to a range of development and enrichment opportunities, such as masterclasses, in order to support progression and build on their skillsets.



As part of the staff development process to support and develop leaders, a masterclass in tactical incident command was hosted online for temporary and newly promoted Managers.

The interactive session focused on the role of the tactical manager including how to become a confident incident commander, nonverbal communication, as well as understanding decision bias and the psychology of decision making.

This masterclass was one element of a whole range of courses and support available to staff who wished to develop and progress

within the Service.

## Objective 6: to develop ways of becoming more environmentally conscious in order to minimise the impact of our activity on the environment



In 2017, the Welsh Government set the ambition of achieving a net carbon neutral public sector by 2030. In March 2019, it published Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales, which aims to support the public sector to baseline, monitor and report progress towards carbon neutrality.

In 2021/22 the Authority reaffirmed its commitment to improving environmental performance and considering it in all areas of its work, from fire prevention to making sure that it considers environmentally friendly technology. The Authority also committed to renewing its environmental vision to become a more environmentally conscious and responsible organisation.

## Action: establish a Strategic Board with responsibility for developing an Environment Strategy for the Authority

The Service remains committed to establishing a Strategic Board with responsibility for developing a robust Environment Strategy. Following on from the unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19, which delayed the progress in developing the strategy during 2020/21, these delays have continued into 2021/22. However, the Authority recognises the significant threats that climate change presents and is fully committed to developing the strategy.

The Authority did continue to pursue its current sustainable development action plan, with planned maintenance aimed at reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions. A number of premises received replacement boilers/equipment and upgrades to the fabric of the buildings during 2021/22.

**Action: explore opportunities to reduce plastic packaging on goods brought in to the Service**

The Service currently has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with North Wales Police's (NWP) Procurement Department to deliver all major tenders, therefore all higher valued tenders include social value and sustainable procurement principles as per NWP's tender requirements.

Recyclable goods were actively sourced by the Service, for example the purchase of wooden pencils in cardboard tubes for use by community safety staff when delivering intervention and engagement sessions, as well as new refill spray and hand gel bottles in response to the global shortage of spray bottles. The Service plans to retain these into the future as a means of reducing plastic waste.

During the pandemic, the Service introduced telephone SAWCs to low and medium risk households deemed capable of installing their own smoke detectors. Safety advice was provided to the occupier via telephone and the smoke detector was then posted to them. The packaging selected to transport the detector was carefully selected to ensure that it was recyclable in order to reduce the environmental impact. Fuel consumption by NWFRS vehicles was also reduced as a result of the new approach to delivering SAWCs, which brought its own environmental benefits.

**Action: identify ways to use water supplies as responsibly as possible**

Rain water harvesting systems (RWHS) have been installed at Nefyn and Tywyn fire stations as part of new-build schemes (in 2014 and 2015 respectively). Rain water from the RWHS is used to supply all non-potable water at both stations and helps to reduce the demand on incoming mains water supplies.

All Service buildings have undergone assessments relating to their accessibility in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. During the past decade the majority of sites have had their urinals removed and replaced with low-flush WCs and have also had percussion taps installed in washrooms and changing rooms.

These combined measures have led to a reduction in mains water demand at the sites in question from not having urinals flushing regularly (irrespective of building occupancy levels) and taps being unintentionally left running.

**Action: seek opportunities to reduce the amount of waste the Authority sends to landfill**

The Service consistently tries to re-use and re-purpose items as an alternative to throwing them away, with all delivery boxes received by the Service re-used to transport goods to stations and offices across the region. Metal dry-cleaning coat hangers provided by the uniform cleaning company are returned for re-use, and the cardboard they use to support the shape of items of uniform are recycled. Personal and protective equipment that cannot be repurposed is sent to recycling containers held at the North Wales Police HQ in Colwyn Bay. Uniform such as t-shirts, trousers and firefighter gloves are repurposed for use in the Service training centre in Dolgellau by attendees, and as back-up uniform should it be required. The cardboard boxes and printer cartridges that are distributed to Service

premises are recycled once returned after use. Retention of the original packaging allows individuals to return the cartridges to a central site, and a free collection is arranged on a monthly basis.

**Action: identify ways to increase biodiversity on premises**

The Authority continued to pursue its biodiversity action plan, published in December 2019. A contract to ensure grounds maintenance and biodiversity enhancement commenced in May to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act, 2016. As a result, grounds maintenance commenced at all sites and continued throughout 2021/22.

**Action: work with Public Services Boards across North Wales to understand climate change from a regional perspective**

New groups have been established (e.g. North Wales Decarbonisation) as well as new reporting mechanisms (e.g. Welsh Government Carbon accounting) in order to achieve this action. As part of the broader climate change agenda the Welsh Government Energy Service continued promoting a regional approach. Given the increasing importance and emphasis on climate change the Conwy and Denbighshire PSB agreed that there would be merit in undertaking some work in order to map the different initiatives and groups working to that agenda and ascertain how PSB could best add value. Work is ongoing to develop a regional approach to reducing carbon footprints. The table below shows how the decarbonisation groups of interest feed into one another:



BUILDINGS	LAND	FLEET	PROCUREMENT	
Regional Leadership Board				North Wales Chief Executives Forum
North Wales Economic Ambition Board – Low Carbon Energy Programme Board/Project Board				
Economic Recovery Group				
Regional Economic Framework – Zero Carbon Economy				
North Wales Planning Officers Group				
North Wales Energy Strategy – Task and Finish Group				
Public Service Boards				
<i>(Gwynedd &amp; Mon Climate Change Sub-Group)</i>	<i>(Conwy &amp; Denbighshire Environmental Resilience Group)</i>	<i>(Flintshire &amp; Wrexham Environment Group)</i>		
North Wales Decarbonisation Officer Advisory Group				
County Surveyors Society Wales (CSS) (Including street lighting, transport, asset management and waste)				Operational Groups  Key: National Regional
Ystadau Cymru (Welsh Government Lead)		All Wales Fleet Managers Group	All Wales Heads of Procurement (WLGA lead)	
Consortium of Local Authorities Wales (CLAW)		North Wales Fleet Managers Group	N. Wales Procurement Forum (Cross-sector) (facilitated by NPS and Welsh Gov)	
North Wales Group of Ystadau Cymru (Chair NW Police)			North Wales Heads of Procurement	
RSL Climate Change Group				
North Wales Energy Matters Group				

**Action: working with landowners to reduce incidences of wildfires and encourage notification of controlled burning**



Prior to the 2022 April bank holiday, the Service’s Community Safety Manager for Conwy and Denbighshire recorded a powerful video at the scene of a fire in the open in Nantmor, appealing to residents and land owners to avoid burning rubbish and garden waste. This message was also communicated over the subsequent bank holiday weekend to encourage residents to think twice about burning in their gardens, with the footage clearly demonstrating how easily small fires can spread.

**Action: replacing technical rescue units to achieve greater fuel efficiency and lower engine emissions**

Valuable information was gained following a consultation with users through the Vehicle Resource Group. This assisted managers within the Operations and Fleet departments to reach an agreement and a joint vision of the type of vehicle required. This will facilitate the production of a detailed specification that will be required to progress the procurement process. A review will be carried out which will consider vehicle suitability and equipment requirements.

**Action: report on energy usage and reduce carbon prevalence within NWFRS buildings, including the development of an ‘Invest to Save’ fund for future carbon reduction projects**

The Authority allocated £110k to cover LED lighting and roof insulation, amongst other energy saving strategies. As LED lighting uses much less electricity than other bulbs, and with the growing energy crisis which began in 2021, this will promote efficiency and sustainability for the future within the North Wales Fire Service buildings as well as saving costs.

Below is a table showing the details of the new electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles added to the fleet alongside the twenty-five hybrid vehicles which were already in the fleet.

<b>Make, model &amp; number of vehicles</b>	<b>Efficiency Rating</b>	<b>CO2 g/km</b>
BMW i3 Range extender x3	A	13
Nissan Leaf Acenta x1	A	1
Kia Soul EV Automatic x1	A	1
Renault Zoe I Dynamique Nav ZE 40 Automatic x1	A	1
Kia E-Nitro Electric Estate 150kW 364 kWh 5dr Automatic x1	A	1
BMW 3 Series Saloon 330e Sport Pro 4dr Automatic x1	A	37
Kia Nitro Estate 1.6 GDi PHEV 3 5dr DCT x3	A	31

**Objective 7: to ensure that social value and sustainability are considered, including during procurement processes.**



Social value is the value that people place on the changes they experience in their lives. During 2021/22 the Authority continued developing its social value and ensured that social, economic and environmental issues were considered as part of its activities including support for the local Young Firefighters Association (YFAs) and the Phoenix Project.

**Action: continue to seek out opportunities to add social value to communities**



The Service continued to focus on reducing the incidence of arson as part of its drive towards delivering social value in 2021/22.



In December 2021 the Community Fire Safety Team assisted Llanfairfechan food bank in delivering food parcels to the local community. The food bank is run by volunteers to deliver basic foods, toiletries and occasional treats. They mainly rely on donations from the community. This partnership was established because members of the Community Safety Team engaged with County and Town Councils across North Wales to open doors to groups working in their areas. Recipients of the food parcels also received fire safety advice and the option for a safe and well check to be carried out in their homes.

**Action: develop a Social Value and Sustainable Procurement Strategy**

Whilst progress towards agreeing a Social Value and Sustainable Procurement Strategy for the Authority was delayed by the challenges presented by the pandemic, the Service recognises the importance of developing a sustainable and ethical procurement strategy. Despite limited progress, sustainability still played a key part in decisions around procurement and purchasing as evidenced in this objective and objective six.

As part of the planning process for adding more fuel-efficient vehicles to the fleet, any tendering process routinely considered the benefit of local suppliers who met Service requirements.

**Action: explore options for local procurement to be delivered via national/regional collaboration both within the fire and rescue sector and across other blue light agencies**

Following extensive trials and end user feedback, Ballyclare Ltd were the successful manufacturer selected to supply the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services with structural fire kit. The Xenon fire kit is lightweight and provides maximum protection, aiming to minimise the risk of heat stress – which can impact decision making – by reducing the physiological load on the wearer.

The innovative design provides high levels of comfort, breathability and freedom of movement, whilst ensuring excellent thermal protection including being water resistant and quick drying.



**Action: ensure procurement frameworks and contracts measure social value and sustainability during tendering processes**



Performance trials for the new Xenon fire kit took place back in April 2019 in Earlswood, where crews on an all-Wales basis took part in the extensive end-user trials. The comprehensive evaluations took place over a period of five days, with each set of kit evaluated in a number of key areas through practical scenarios. These included: road traffic collisions, working at height, hose running, working in confined spaces and in fire situations. Following the intensive performance trials, the shortlisted kits then underwent Station based pilots. The final stage saw experienced crews carrying out extensive compartment firefighting techniques and procedures in extremely challenging conditions in Dolgellau’s Fire Behaviour Facility.

**Action: further develop opportunities to work with ‘Fire Aid’ to ensure that equipment is recycled where possible**

A Wrexham Firefighter visited West Africa in March 2022, having embarked on on a charity expedition to help form an ambulance and fire service in rural Gambia. He explained:

“I have been selected by the National Police Aid Convoy charity (NPAC) and the International Police Association (IPA) to take part in Operation Zephyr to deliver 35 ambulances, fire appliances and support vehicles to Gambia in West Africa.

“Gambia currently has the highest infant mortality rate in the world, where 1 in 5 children will not survive past 4 weeks old, and 1 in 20 won't make it past 5 years old.

“Queues outside the main city hospitals are not made up of ambulances, but of wheelbarrows containing women in labour, whilst Mules and Donkeys will transport civilians from the rural villages often over 50 miles to seek medical help.

“The state of the fire and rescue service is not much better, with the main central fire station in Banjul containing three fire appliances, one of which was recently involved with a head on collision with a HGV, the other had broken down a long time ago, leaving now one appliance, dating from the 1980s still on the run. The firefighters take shelter from the sun underneath their fire appliances, hoping they can respond to an emergency with the very limited equipment they have.

“This convoy aims to provide functioning emergency vehicles, PPE, radios, medical equipment and training to this emerging but still very poor African nation. Our emergency service families need our help.”



### **Action: develop a procurement awareness training package**

The Authority continued to draw together examples of good practice in relation to the procurement of sustainable products in 2021/22. Work was also put into the reuse of equipment to demonstrate good practice in relation to the sustainable procurement of goods and services. This will be used to develop a training package for departments, for purchasing goods and supplies.

### **Action: ensuring that the procurement of new operational equipment includes consideration of 'total end of life' disposal**

The Authority supported the implementation of an all-Wales procurement group which covers the three Welsh services. This identified opportunities for joint procurement, and during 2021/22 the roll-out of the new fire kit was finalised. The Service also procured a number of fire appliances using the all-Wales framework. Significant joint working was evident during Covid, with Kent Fire and Rescue Service providing a national platform for the procurement of PPE. Future projects include the all-Wales procurement of Service uniforms and employee benefits.

### **Action: promoting social value and sustainability within the Service**

Over the summer of 2021 the Service's Head of Community Safety shared a video to introduce the Community Safety team, encourage communication, and to ensure a consistent approach to delivering Safe and Well Checks. These videos helped keep colleagues informed and demonstrated flexibility and ingenuity to continue with prevention work despite the challenges presented by Covid-19.

In January 2022 the Service also resumed face to face youth activity including School visits, Phoenix courses, Cadet meetings, Deadly Impacts and FACE / Firesafe sessions.

The decision was taken in late December (2021) to temporarily suspend face to face sessions to help protect our young people and our staff as news of the new variant emerged. Staff once again adapted brilliantly, providing online provision to help keep everyone safe - however, the importance of interacting face to face sometimes cannot be underestimated.

For other work, the development of online interaction has proved very successful, leading to the Service's decision to continue with a blend of both online and face to face provision.

# MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

## Background

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993 and as part of this legislation, both the Welsh and English languages have equal legal status and neither must be treated any less favourably. The Authority no longer needs to develop and implement Welsh Language Schemes; however, it must instead comply with a set of Welsh Language Standards.

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued fire and rescue authorities with their Compliance Notice on 30 September 2016. This document lists which of the Standards, as listed in full in the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No.5) 2016, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority must comply with, along with any exemptions and their implementation dates.

The Authority is required to publish its Welsh Language Standards annual report for 2021-22 by September 2022 and to publicise it appropriately.

The Authority is committed to ensuring that, in conducting public business in Wales, the English and Welsh languages should be treated on the basis of equality in order to recognise and value the rich diversity of communities, against a backdrop of significant natural and cultural heritage.

The Authority also acknowledges its duty towards its staff, most of whom are residents of North Wales, and who themselves reflect the linguistic and cultural make-up of their own communities. By acknowledging its moral and legal duties to protect the cultural heritage of the area and meet the expectations of the local community, the Authority continues to work towards ensuring that it conducts its public business in both languages.

During 2021-22, the Authority continued to comply with the set of Welsh Language Standards issued in the Compliance Notice of 30 September 2016. In January 2022, the Service successfully appointed to a newly created full-time post of Welsh Language Officer, demonstrating the Authority's continued commitment to promote the Welsh Language. However, despite three widely-advertised attempts to recruit a Welsh Language Translator during this period, the Service was unsuccessful in appointing. As a result, the provision of translation services is being sought externally through a competitive tendering process.

The Authority also continues to work collaboratively with external language groups via the Welsh Language Officer, in addition to the introduction of a Welsh Language Governance Group that serves the purpose of;

- Co-ordinating between departments on Welsh Language issues
- Scrutinising and offering guidance to improve any aspect of the bilingual provision
- Collaborating on how to resolve any challenges or complaints
- Ensuring that the Welsh language is being treated as favourably as the English language within the Service.

The Authority also continues to collaborate with the two other Welsh fire and rescue services, with partners such as North Wales Police and local authorities, and with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) in order to share information on best practice.



**Establishment of a Welsh Language Governance Group**



**Exceeding provision by continuing to facilitate Welsh emergency calls**



**82% of our staff have some Welsh language skills**



**36% of our staff are fluent Welsh speakers**



**Welsh drop-in sessions for learners and others to use Welsh at work**



**Recruitment of a dedicated Welsh Language Officer - a new post demonstrating commitment to the Welsh language**

### **Service delivery standards**

The Compliance Notice which lists these standards can be seen on the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service [website](#). Arrangements have been made to meet the Service Delivery Standards that have come into force including the following:

**Standards 8-17** – All staff have been made aware of the requirement to respect language choice when dealing with telephone calls to and from members of the public.

Additionally, the Authority recognises the value and benefit of offering language choice and as such has continued to operate a fully bilingual Control Room/Joint Communications Centre, despite there being no statutory requirement to answer 999 calls bilingually. In addition to recognising its moral and ethical duty to deal with 999 calls swiftly and effectively in the caller's language of choice, the Authority's decision to go above and beyond the requirements of the Standards also acknowledges the benefits in terms of safety in emergency situations when some callers are able to communicate more effectively in Welsh.

Job vacancies in the Control Room are advertised with a Level 4 requirement to ensure an active language choice is offered to any caller wishing to speak Welsh.

Welsh language ability of Level 4 or above is required in order to be able to offer a proactive language choice. Data is collected on how many Service users contact us in Welsh for monitoring and evaluation purposes. During the 2021/22 year, 2.8% of calls (343) were handled in Welsh. The majority of these calls coincide with the end of the controlled burning period. Control operators use a bilingual standard greeting when answering the call, which should indicate that people can continue in Welsh if they wish, however, as the initial contact with the 999-emergency switchboard is monolingual English, this could be a barrier to continuing in Welsh. Awareness campaigns highlighting our bilingual Control operators are being explored further. Training is provided to ensure that staff are able and willing to deal with calls in Welsh.

**Standards 32, 36, 58-60** – All public materials are displayed bilingually including the Service's website and corporate Social Media accounts. Any posters, leaflets, or other promotional material are also bilingual. With the exception of operational signs, all signs are bilingual.

**Standards 62-64** – Service policy notes that staff with front facing positions must be fluent in the Welsh language (Level 4 and above). The number of positions identified as being front facing is 91. However, a number of staff members within these roles were employed by the Service prior to this requirement and therefore are supported on Welsh language matters where the need arises. This helps to monitor compliance and identify any potential skills gaps. In addition, Welsh language promotional material can be seen in reception areas to encourage staff to use Welsh.

**Standards 73-77** - All tender advertisements are bilingual. In relation to the Welsh Language Act, if a supplier prefers to correspond in Welsh this can be arranged; any tender or related documents submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than those submitted in English. We would issue a tender in Welsh if the need arises e.g. Welsh Language Training. Both languages are treated equally (it is noted that not many tenders are submitted to us in Welsh but sometimes parts are in Welsh). Use of external Welsh language translation services help compliance with standard 76.

### **Operational standards**

The Compliance Notice which lists these standards can be seen on the NWFRS [website](#). Arrangements have been made to meet the Operational Standards that have come into force including the following:

**Standards 96-101** - Staff have a right that is promoted and communicated to them, to receive any relevant correspondence in Welsh or bilingually. Relevant forms are available bilingually for use for

various reasons relating to their employment. Staff can view these on our staff information site. A record is kept of preferred language of Staff to receive correspondence in their preferred language.

**Standards 102 -108** - New and revised policies are published internally in both Welsh and English and each policy is required to have an associated integrated impact assessment to ascertain its impact on the Welsh language and to identify and promote ways of creating a positive impact and avoiding negative impact.

**Standards 125 – 132** - In terms of developing Welsh language skills, as mentioned, the Service offers Level 1, 2 and 3 courses using internal Welsh language learning materials. Staff can receive support from a Welsh Language Officer or Language Champion. Conversation sessions are offered, and 1-to-1 sessions to promote and support staff to develop their Welsh language skills.

Welsh language learning courses are offered to all staff through the Learn Welsh service and through Coleg Cambria provision. Language Awareness training is offered in two ways; either face-to-face, usually for operational staff joining in groups, or an online module is provided through LearnPro. The requirement to include Welsh language on e-mail signatures and out of office messages is promoted to staff. Examples are available on our staff Information site along with relevant logos. In terms of training, essential and desirable modules are available bilingually on the LearnPro online training system.

**Standard 143** – Complaints are monitored and dealt with by the Human Resources (HR) Department and Business Support Unit. Complaints and letters of appreciation are reported annually to the Fire Authority. No complaints were received in 2021-22 in relation to the Welsh language. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has published a complaints procedure on its website and also has an internal policy for staff on how to raise a concern or complaint.

**Standard 147** – As of 31 March 2022, 692 employees out of 843 (82%) were able to demonstrate that they had Welsh language skills (Level 1 and above), which relates to the physical headcount of staff e.g. people only counted once where they have more than one position. A total of 307 employees were classed as fluent speakers (Level 4 and above) which equates to 36% of all staff.

**Standards 150,151** – In the past, language ability levels of candidates were assessed at the shortlisting stage, but more recently owing to the throughput of candidates and the availability of resources to conduct assessments, only successful candidates who are offered posts are assessed to confirm their Welsh language level and establish how much support they will require to reach the required level during their probationary period. Sometimes this happens in the first few weeks if they have not had an assessment during the recruitment process.

Support is offered through NWFRS Welsh learning resources, drop-in sessions with the Welsh Language Officer, support from one of the Welsh Language Champions, as well as the offer to attend Level 2 courses delivered by Coleg Cambria.

This method has successfully seen those staff joining with little or no Welsh ability being able to reach Level 2 and 3.

### **Recent appointments**

All posts require some level of Welsh and the Service's minimum requirement is Level 2 speaking and listening skills.

During 2021-22 there were several senior operational staff appointed where successful candidates were required to achieve Welsh language ability of Level 3 on appointment or within the probation period.

The table below shows the number of operational appointments in different roles and the number that met Welsh language requirements on appointment.

<b>Role</b>	<b>No. Appointed</b>	<b>No. that met Level 3 requirement on appointment</b>
Area Manager	4	2
Group Manager	6	5
Station Manager	12	10
Watch Manager	18	18
Crew Manager	15	15

Similarly, the table below shows the number of support staff appointed and that met Welsh language requirements on appointment.

<b>Of the 19 Support staff appointed</b>	<b>Required Level</b>	<b>No. that met the required level of skills on appointment</b>
11	Minimum Level 2	4
12	Minimum Level 4	8

In addition, three members of staff were recruited to the Control Room who all met the requirement for Level 4 or above Welsh language skills on appointment. Furthermore, during an internal promotion process within the Control Room, one Station Manager and six Watch Managers were appointed and all met the required level.

Four appointments were made for senior staff and three of those met the requirement of Level 3 on appointment.

Generally, where staff appointed did not meet the required level of Welsh language skills, they are supported to reach the required level within their probation period.

### **Monitoring, Promoting and Developing the Welsh Language within the Service**

Monitoring and promoting the Welsh language among staff within the Service is delivered internally in a variety of different ways including:

- In January 2022, a Welsh Language Officer was appointed for the first time, demonstrating the continued commitment to promote the Welsh language and monitor progress.
- The HR monitoring system, iTrent, is used to keep track of Welsh language ability of staff including their Level of ability (on a scale of 0-5 with 4 being fluent) and monitoring Welsh Language assessments (either formal or self-assessment).
- The Welsh Language Champions scheme offers a financial allowance for staff members that commit to promoting the Welsh language within their departments or fire stations. Welsh Language Champions are spread across the Service areas and departments and facilitate the promotion of using Welsh at work, support staff with Welsh language assessments, and promote Welsh language activities with other staff. The Welsh Language Champions are rewarded for their efforts and submit a quarterly task form noting their achievements in order to receive an allowance.

- The Welsh Wednesday monthly bulletin shares information about the Welsh language, learning Welsh, and using Welsh more on a day to day basis. Included within is a section reminding staff of key Welsh language standards and ways they can ensure compliance e.g. bilingual e-mail signatures and out of office messages.
- A new weekly Welsh drop-in session is available on Microsoft Teams each Friday for staff that wish to take up the opportunity to use Welsh with another staff member or for any help or advice to do with Welsh language development.
- During December 2021, the Service took part in a national social media campaign to promote Welsh Language Rights Day and promote its commitment to ensuring that staff are aware of their rights in regards to the Welsh language.
- The Welsh Language Officer offers 1-2-1 Welsh speaking sessions which are available to all members of staff to help build confidence and prepare staff to use their Welsh skills with others within the Service.
- Various language confidence learning courses and sessions have been offered to staff, including an innovative Welsh Language Resilience course that teaches behavioural change strategies for speakers to use more Welsh.
- In addition, during 2021, members of staff concluded their trial of Say Something in Welsh and feedback noted that the delivery was excellent, with the only barrier to progressing being time constraints. An extension of this service is being considered for new and future staff that may wish to improve their Welsh.
- The Service has attended Welsh community events such as the Urdd Eisteddfod that was held in Denbigh this year. This afforded staff with the opportunity to work on the stall and make use of their Welsh language skills with members of the public. The importance of using the 'Dwi'n Siarad Cymraeg' (I speak Welsh) badge was highlighted by a member of public who expressed that it gave them confidence to use Welsh with staff.
- Bilingual corporate Social Media Accounts continue to be operated across a variety of different platforms e.g. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter where information is shared about our services across North Wales. Where appropriate, staff will record bilingual promotional or informational videos for a more interactive provision.
- Staff are encouraged to engage with Welsh national events e.g. St. David's Day celebrations in 2022 involved encouraging people to complete Welsh challenges in order to win a hamper. This succeeded in introducing staff to a variety of ways of being able to use Welsh in their day to day activities, with the opportunity to win a local Welsh produce hamper helping to motivate staff to take part whilst also supporting local Welsh businesses.
- An award for 'Contribution to the Welsh Language' is included as part of the Community Awards ceremony 2022, where a member of staff will be awarded for their service in promoting the Welsh language or for excellence in succeeding to learn Welsh. During the pandemic, the Awards Ceremony had to be postponed or strictly limited, so the 2022 ceremony will be the first opportunity to present this award since 2019.
- One of the primary areas of the Service that is public facing is the work of our Home Safety Support Workers. They are responsible for delivering safety advice, guidance, and equipment in the homes of identified target groups to contribute to their health, safety and wellbeing. They also proactively support the delivery of fire safety awareness activities and safety campaigns. Because of this, an active language choice is offered at the first point of contact if it has not already been stated on referral from a partner agency. Many of those receiving a Safe and Well Check are vulnerable people where offering language choice is even more important. During 2021-22, a total of 14,062 Safe and Well Checks were carried out with 1,679 (11.9%) of these being delivered in Welsh.

## Welsh Language Development

The Training and Development Department maintains a record of all the Welsh courses attended and assessments undertaken by employees, and records the results on its internal recording system. Following a Welsh language assessment, the ability of staff is subsequently recorded onto the iTrent system, where internal staff information is stored such as leave requests and timesheets. The Training and Development Department also facilitates internal Welsh courses provided by Coleg Cambria, and members of staff are encouraged to request courses during their annual appraisal.

The use of Welsh is also encouraged among staff on social media, especially on individual fire station social media accounts. Key phrases and a social media toolkit are available to highlight the importance of including Welsh in posts or tweets on these accounts.

During the recent Wholetime Firefighter recruitment process, a bilingual option was offered to applicants during the physical fitness testing stage. This was undertaken to encourage potential new staff members to establish Welsh as a default language with other Welsh speakers. It is well documented that this is the primary way of increasing the use of Welsh among Welsh speakers as opposed to changing linguistic behaviours and habits later on. Facilitating this also complies with the Welsh language standards.

The Authority will continue to concentrate its efforts on encouraging more applications from Welsh speakers, as well as encouraging people to be confident when noting their linguistic skills.

The Authority will continue to look at new ways of engaging with its communities to highlight the Welsh language services on offer and emphasise that Welsh is a valued skill in its workplace.

## Future Opportunities

This report has demonstrated that the bilingual capacity of the Service's workforce surpasses the bilingual landscape of North Wales and ensures that a competent bilingual service is provided to all.

The following priorities and opportunities have been identified:

- Adopt techniques to improve the informal use of Welsh in and around the workplace and to ensure frontline staff are being proactive in providing a Welsh language public service – to include exploring other ways of promoting language use using connections with external forums and groups.
- Explore new ways of raising awareness of the availability of Welsh speaking call handlers with Service users and assist in promoting call handler recruitment to ensure continued commitment to the requirement for Level 4 Welsh language skills.
- Continue to build on opportunities to facilitate the continuity in the use of Welsh by staff after achieving their required level. In addition to this, providing the same opportunities for confident Welsh speaking members of staff to be able to use their language of choice naturally at work.
- The Service is in talks with researchers from Bangor University to implement its ARFer behaviour change methodology. ARFer aims to change language practices by helping colleagues who can speak Welsh (but have established a habit of using English) to use more Welsh at work.

Key performance indicators are monitored to see trends and allow us to consider where any improvements can be made, for example;

- One indicator monitors the bilingual capacity of the Service's workforce so it can be monitored to see whether there are increases or decreases when appointments or resignations/retirements are made.
- Another tracks the usage of our front-line Welsh services; particularly take up of Home Safe and Well Checks in Welsh and Welsh calls made to our Control room.
- The Service is therefore eager to progress in delivering statutory obligations so that services can be further improved for Welsh-speaking Service users in their language of choice.

## **PROGRESS AGAINST STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES**

### **What the Act requires the Authority to do**

The Equality Act (2010) requires the Authority to write an equality plan every four years. The Authority's Strategic Equality Plan 2020/2024 identifies five priorities. These priorities are broken down into six equality objectives that the Authority wants to help bring about to make Wales a fairer place to live. The aim of the Equality Act is to ensure that everyone has the right to:

- be treated fairly;
- have the same chances as others;
- be free from discrimination.

The categories for the objectives are based on the area headings in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's "How Fair is Wales" document. These headings also align with the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network Strategic Equality Plan; this enables joint objectives to be included in individual public sector organisations' strategic equality plans.

Having identified these objectives, the Authority has a duty to take all reasonable steps to pursue them and to report publicly after the end of each financial year on the progress it has made. The Equality Act lists a number of characteristics which must be taken into consideration when determining the actions to be undertaken. These are the 'protected characteristics':

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or belief/non-belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation;
- Socioeconomic status and associated inequality.

A number of sources have been used to develop the Authority's strategic equality objectives:

- equality impact assessments;
- combined improvement and risk reduction planning objectives;
- business plans from heads of departments;
- existing strategies and plans;
- outcome of engagement activities.

Legislation allows for the objectives to be changed at any time, therefore ongoing engagement is undertaken to ensure objectives remain current. The Authority continuously examines the most effective methods of engagement via existing links with community groups and organisations, and endeavours to establish relationships with new groups and local communities. The Authority is required to publish this assessment of its own performance for 2021/2022 by 31 March 2023.

## Priority 1 – Life and Health

### Equality Objective 1

Reduce dwelling fires and associated casualties through a comprehensive prevention strategy that specifically targets people living in North Wales who can be shown to be at greater risk because they may share one or more particular characteristic.

#### **Working to achieve this objective, the Authority has:**

- Continued to build on its relationships with its strategic partners underpinned by agreed data sharing agreements to allow the Authority to focus on those most at need. This supports the delivery of Safe and Well Checks targeting those most at risk in the community.
- Collaborated with Care and Repair, giving the Authority direct access to vulnerable members of the community before they return to their homes from hospital. This allows the Authority to proactively install interventions, making their homes safer. As communities emerge from Covid-19, the programme of re-engagement has commenced which has seen an increase of higher risk referrals made to us by our partner agencies.
- The Authority in addition to the CFOTG 2007 report (revised 2009), has continued to identify/review its approach to its target audience. This included wider input themes from the North Wales Community Risk Register, Safeguarding Adults Regional Board (SARB) in Wales and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). Partnership Managers are embedded into local partnerships which allows the Authority to directly engage with those most at risk, for example hoarding, as a member of the North Wales Hoarding Group.
- Launched a number Fire Safety (business owner) interactive tools (virtual fire risk assessment of a workplace) and it is being explored whether this can be utilised in Welsh and British Sign Language.

## Priority 2 – Employment

### Equality Objective 2

Through our own employment practices, programmes and schemes we aim to increase the employment prospects of people who might otherwise find it difficult to gain equal access to the world of work. We will prioritise action to advance gender equality in North Wales.

#### **Working to achieve this objective, the Authority has:**

- Conducted face to face positive action events during the year following postponements due to Covid-19 during 2020/21. These were advertised and open to females, people from LGBTQ+, black and ethnic minorities and with disabilities. The events took place prior to the recruitment campaign for whole-time firefighters, encouraging potential applicants that 'there is no such thing as a typical firefighter'.
- The Authority was approached by NFCC project team to provide information for a case study on the activities undertaken for positive action events held during the year. Once finalised, this will be shared

as a good practice case study for other fire and rescue services to view.

- Produced firefighter fitness guidance booklets that are shared with potential applicants to improve their fitness. This has been shared with the members of the Get Fire Fit Facebook page. Fitness Support Packs were created and provided to all enquiries leading up to wholetime firefighter recruitment.
- Celebrated neurodiversity week that including interviews with members of staff to raise awareness and support.
- The Fire Fit Steering Group (Get Fire Fit) operated virtually via Facebook Workplace to share ideas to improve fitness and achieve standards for becoming a firefighter. The online Get Fire Fit exercise videos have been shared in the lead up to wholetime firefighter recruitment and its continuous use has been used to promote retained duty system (RDS) firefighter recruitment.
- A working group was formed to review and produce a draft policy and procedure outlining the process to be followed for the recruitment and promotion process of wholetime operational staff and crew manager and above. A watch manager and crew manager recruitment process were also undertaken following the structure of the draft policy and procedure, resulting in the substantive appointment of 9 watch managers and 16 crew managers. An evaluation and feedback session were held with the working group and members of the interview panel to identify any areas of amendments required.
- Further promotion processes for all levels of roles were also completed between January and March 2022, which included an appropriate level question specifically related to equality, diversity and inclusivity in accordance with our Core Values.
- Developed a recruitment information booklet to be used when advertising support role vacancies providing a more attractive and engaging proposition for candidates from all backgrounds, with the benefits and key information about the role in one place.
- Created a right to work checklist in accordance with the UK Border Agency with a guidance document and checklist for managers included. This supports managers verifying original documents provided by applicants at the start of employment and ensures that the Authority complies with statutory processes in the event of attracting candidates from further afield.
- The Authority has introduced a new RDS contract, in addition to the existing contract, to enable applicants that can offer availability from their workplaces to be considered for an RDS role. This change is also aimed to attract a more diverse workforce, which is anticipated will help to improve daytime availability at RDS fire stations.
- Continued to gather equality monitoring information from all applicants at the application stage of each recruitment process, so that data can be compiled to monitor and ensure the effectiveness of job advertising. This also included asking the applicants where they had seen the advert to ensure roles are advertised in the most appropriate places.
- Collated equality data at each stage of high-volume recruitment campaigns to monitor and track the progress of applicants from under-represented groups throughout our recruitment processes.
- The Authority's Strategic Equality Plan's Employment Monitoring Report will be completed and placed

on the website in Autumn 2022. This report will form the basis for continuity planning, and act as a catalyst in identifying who works for us this is useful information broken down by age, disability, race, religion sex and sexual orientation. The report helps to identify underrepresentation amongst staff in the various work types (i.e. Operational, Support Staff and Control Staff). This work is still a key priority for the Authority, although it has experienced a delay as a result of the pandemic. However, work has recommenced and remains a priority for the Inclusivity, Diversity and Equality Steering Committee during the coming year.

- Covid-19 related difficulties continued to impact on attending recruitment events with some career events being postponed at short notice due to rising levels of transmission within communities. To adapt and overcome the Service embraced the use of electronic technology to provide an input to virtual recruitment fairs where possible.
- Introduced a new organisational structure which includes Recruitment and Availability Managers across the three areas of the region (West, Central and East), who will assume the responsibility for attendance at recruitment events.
- Although Covid restrictions continued to present challenges to the Service in the first part of the year the Operational Resourcing Committee continued to utilise social media and electronic media to engage potential recruits to the Service. Information was shared across personal networks and contacts to encourage engagement and participation from diverse groups, including sports teams.
- Held positive action events in March 2022 in advance of the Wholetime Firefighter recruitment campaign, with the events being rebranded to be called Taster Sessions. The advertising of these sessions clarified who the events were aimed at and included the purpose being to remove barriers for people from underrepresented groups to apply as opposed to this guaranteeing an offer employment.
- The Fire Authority received an update in September 2021, on the work of the Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) had integrated into the daily business of departments. It included the 27 objectives forming the IFSG Work Programme 2019-22 and how each one has been either achieved or embedded. A newly established Inclusion, Diversity and Equality Steering Group will now build on this work to performance manage equality, diversity and inclusion in the Authority.
- Coaching and mentoring was offered via the Academi Wales site, whilst internal coaches/ mentors completed appropriate qualifications. Opportunities has also been sought following the introduction of the NFCC Coaching and Mentoring Portal and Toolkit, before further work is carried to create a coaching culture across the organisation in the coming year.
- Developed two electronic ED&I learning packages for staff on the Service's learning management system. A series of leadership and management events will now be delivered during 2022/23 to build on this learning and also the areas of interest that were identified through the Service's cultural survey and staff appraisals.
- An essential skills training course for supervisory/team managers was introduced following an initial pilot and includes more specific scenario-based exercises around bullying, harassment and role modelling behaviours.
- For all progression and development events candidates and students are asked if they have any specific needs that would require adjustment to the event or process. Advice has been taken through

our Human Resources function to determine what reasonable adjustments can be made and the appropriateness of those adjustments for each case

- Ensured that the Service's Core values are at the centre of all development events being delivered by the training and development function, with training and development members of staff being role model's through their actions and behaviours.
- Embedded the Core Values within the programmed Essential Skills for Line Managers development events.

### Equality Objective 3

We will progress an inclusive culture where leaders and staff demonstrate their commitment to promoting equality and support for a fair and inclusive workforce.

#### **Working to achieve this objective, the Authority has:**

- Offered coaching and mentoring courses to train members of staff as coaches and mentors if requested via appraisal processes. Where coaching and mentoring support has been identified to support development or has been specifically requested, staff have been signposted to the coaches who provide support to the public sector in Wales through the Academi Wales Learning Portal.
- The LearnPro modules Challenging Unacceptable Behaviour and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion have been completed and are available online for all staff to complete.
- Provided training to LGBGTQ+ allies and managers, with work ongoing on producing a series of leadership events for delivery in 2022/23 to include managing diverse teams and promoting an inclusive culture.
- Revised the promotion processes at all levels during 2021/22, with the review completed in consultation with representative bodies and feedback from staff groups. Equality, transparency and fairness was at the heart of these processes and a review of the processes is due again in 2022/23.
- The Authority appointed two new Policy Development Managers who are responsible for reviewing policies across the Service and streamlining the policy writing, quality assurance and approval process. It is anticipated that this will improve the timeliness of policy review which embeds equality analysis within the development.
- The recruitment policy and grievance policy have both been updated to reflect current practice and published on the intranet. Several other policies are being reviewed at the time of writing this update report.
- Work has been undertaken on discipline policies and will fall under the remit of the Policy team to progress. In addition, a new EDI Officer was appointed following the retirement of the existing incumbent who will be responsible for progressing any equality related policies.
- Further work has been completed to ensure the service reduces the gender pay gap. This is a result of further women being recruited into the service including operational roles. Gender gap data for 2021/22 has been submitted to the government and it was published on their website as per the legislative reporting requirements.

- The Employment Monitoring Report will be published in the Autumn of 2022. This includes all employment data identified by the Welsh Specific Equality Duty 2011 ensuring this is reported by contract type, permanent and fixed-term contracts, full-time, part-time and other flexible working arrangements. This information enables the authority to monitor the diversity of its workforce and plan positive action activity accordingly.

#### Equality Objective 4

Through a comprehensive programme of tailored education and advice provided singly and in collaboration, to empower people living, working and visiting North Wales to continue to reduce their own level of risk from fire and other hazards throughout the different stages in their lives.

##### **Working to achieve this objective, the Authority has:**

- Recommended its programme of engagement with specific communities/schools/colleges. The extent of the engagement will be determined by Covid levels in the communities as we emerge from the pandemic.
- All Wales resources continue to be developed and aligned with the new curriculum. Where there are any identified issues in an area, engagement will include this subject matter. All sessions have supporting bespoke/tailored lesson plans. A member of staff has completed British Sign Language (BSL) level 1 which supports community safety delivery. Work continues to develop a range of materials that via the StayWise Cymru education platform.
- Included the possible impact of the cost of living crisis affecting the most vulnerable groups in our communities during community safety activities, in addition to any further impacts from the Grenfell Tower fire inquiry.
- Placed a series of equality information leaflets on the Authority website under each of the protected characteristics, with information explaining the Social Model of Disability included on the equalities page on the intranet.

#### **Priority 4 – Personal Safety**

##### Equality Objective 5

Reduce the risk of death or injury from fires in North Wales by the provision of effective prevention and protection services and emergency fire and rescue response.

##### **Working to achieve this objective, the Authority has:**

- Continued to deliver training in Welsh language to staff, with a view to continue with a training plan of new starters and refresher training for existing members of staff.
- Delivered training to all departments and new employees for safeguarding the most vulnerable people in our community, with regular reviews to identify best practice and resolve any issues identified. The Authority also completed the NFCC Safeguarding self-assessment and is preparing to do an all Wales peer review.

- Continued to increase the number of face-to-face visits in the community, whilst being constantly reviewed and informed on Welsh Government Covid-19 advice and guidance.

## **Priority 5 – Participation and Communication**

### Equality Objective 6

By being open and accountable about what we do and what our plans are, encourage more people to involve themselves in the process of determining the way fire and rescue services are delivered in North Wales, and aim to increase the range of representative voices that contribute to that process.

#### **Working to achieve this objective, the Authority has:**

- The Equalities Advisor has led on suitable messaging and campaigns and coordinated our attendance at events with under-represented groups, which has embraced and developed relationships in our communities.
- Been part of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network who have been meeting bi-monthly and identified engagement with underrepresented groups as one of their key objectives for 2022/23. This collaboration will widen access and enhance the ability to connect with different community groups across North Wales.
- Actively engaged with underrepresented groups through its strategic partners and other agencies. This work has been supported by the Equalities Officer and will continue with the support of staff networks, to create better connections with communities as a way of continually achieving our strategic equality objectives and outcomes.
- Continued to emerge from Covid-19 with increasing face to face engagements in the community, to develop a sustained and prolonged re-engagement programme which has seen referrals being received from over 60 partner agencies through data sharing agreements.
- Delivered Community safety campaigns coordinated through the Campaigns Steering Group, which have been scheduled and resourced appropriately in advance for the coming year with clear objectives and evaluation afterwards.
- Considered appropriate means and methods of communications as part of the strategies adopted, with collaboration undertaken with partners in North Wales and with Welsh FRS partners as appropriate.
- Corporate Communications has supported work involving looking at how best to deliver Safe and Well Checks and educational programmes, whilst meeting equality and diversity objectives as part of this delivery.
- Developed a new easy-read safe and well leaflet with the help of external expertise in this field – this was trialled successfully and has now been adopted across all of North Wales.
- Increased our engagement with more with local communities via local events, recruitment events and Service open days. This has seen a significant increase in engagement with local members of the

public helping to raise awareness of our safety messages as well as recruitment opportunities. This work is supported with a new events toolkit as guidance to staff on how best to take part in local events or organise station events to ensure consistency of approach.

- Conducted an accessibility audit of our website which concluded in confirming our accessibility standards are the highest standard possible which will continue to be reviewed regularly.
- Continued to use established public procurement routes, via the various available frameworks. Collaborative procurement is continuing between the 3 Welsh fire and rescue services.
- The Socio-Economic Duty has been considered against Strategic organisational decisions and incorporated into the Services Integrated Impact Assessment template.

In accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, specified employment information in respect of employees and applicants between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022 has been published on our website.

To promote equality of opportunity and access, please contact our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI Officer, if you require this report in large print, different language and/or format.

## PERFORMANCE INFORMATION SUMMARY



The Fire and Rescue Authorities (Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2015 introduced three statutory performance indicators that accompany locally collected sector indicators.

STATUTORY INDICATORS:		2020/21		2021/22	
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate
RRC/S/001i	Fires attended	1,770	25.34	1,879	26.70
RRC/S/001ii	False alarms attended	2,314	33.13	2,517	35.79
RRC/S/001iii	Road traffic collisions	105	1.50	207	2.94
RRC/S/001iv	Other emergency incidents attended	509	7.29	751	10.68
Where the rate is based on 10,000 population					
RRC/S/002i	Fire deaths and injuries	50	7.11	58	8.25
RRC/S/002ii	Deaths and injuries arising from fires started accidentally	47	6.68	50	7.11
Where the rate is based on 100,000 population					
RRC/S/002iii	Dwelling fires confined to room of origin	339	87.60	375	87.62
As a percentage of the number of dwelling fires attended					

SECTOR INDICATORS:		2020/21		2021/22	
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate
SEC/FI/001i	Deliberate fires	446	6.38	471	6.70
SEC/FI/001ii	Accidental fires (or motive not known)	1,324	18.93	1,408	20.02
Where the rate is based on 10,000 population					
SEC/IN/002i	Fire related fatalities	5	0.72	7	1.00

SEC/IN/002ii	Injuries caused by fires	42	6.01	51	7.25
SEC/IN/002iii	Fire related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires	4	0.57	5	0.71
SEC/IN/002iv	Fire related fatalities in deliberate dwelling fires	0	0	0	0
SEC/IN/002v	Fire related injuries in accidental dwelling fires	32	4.57	39	5.54
SEC/IN/002vi	Fire related injuries in deliberate dwelling fires	1	0.14	5	0.71
Where the rate is based on 100,000 population					
SEC/FI/001iii	Dwelling fires	387	11.78	428	12.99
SEC/FI/001iv	Accidental fires in dwellings	360	10.96	400	12.14
SEC/FI/001v	Deliberate fires in dwellings	27	0.82	28	0.85
SEC/FA/003ii	AFA false alarms in dwellings	940	28.62	1,100	33.40
Where the rate is based on 10,000 dwellings					
SEC/FI/001vi	Fires in non-domestic premises	145	4.53	156	4.74
SEC/FA/003i	AFA false alarms in non-domestic premises	273	8.54	295	8.95
Where the rate is based on 1,000 non-domestic premises					
SEC/SA/004i	Dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm was not fitted	61	15.76	58	13.55
As a percentage of the number of dwelling fires attended					

## THE DWELLING FIRES RESPONSE CHARTER IN 2021/22

During 2012 the three Welsh fire and Rescue Authorities jointly developed an all-Wales Charter to ensure that wherever people live in Wales, they can expect to be helped and supported to remain safe from fire in their homes. They should also be able to expect that if a fire does break out, they will receive a prompt, effective and professional emergency response to their call for assistance.

The Charter makes seven specific commitments that the Fire and Rescue Authority will:

1. Take the lead in driving down the number of dwelling fires that occur and in reducing their impact on people.
2. React quickly and efficiently every time we receive an emergency 999 call to attend a dwelling fire.
3. Attend dwelling fires swiftly and properly equipped to deal with them.
4. Deal with dwelling fires effectively, efficiently and professionally.
5. Help to restore normality to communities in the aftermath of dwelling fires.
6. Investigate the causes of dwelling fires and hold relevant people to account when appropriate to do so.
7. Strive to maintain high standards and improve aspects of what we do.

The following pages provide information about our compliance with these commitments during 2021/22.

For consistency, we use a standard narrative for reporting against the Charter each year, and only update the figures within the narrative framework.

**1. We will take the lead in driving down the number of dwelling fires that occur and in reducing their impact on people.**



We are committed to taking the lead in maintaining a downward trend in the incidence of dwelling fires and associated casualties in Wales.

In 2021/22 we provided advice and encouragement to people on how they can prevent fires from starting in their home and how they can keep themselves safe from fire. Our prevention activity included delivering 14,036 SAWCs to householders, and 8,279 children and young people at key stages 1 - 4 received a fire safety talk.

During 2021/22 we attended 399 accidental dwelling fires. As a consequence of those fires, five people lost their lives and a further 39 people sustained injuries. The number of accidental dwelling fires in the FRA area has trended upwards with 327 accidental fires attended during 2018/19.

The number of accidental dwelling fires in the FRA area over the past five years, which had declined in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18, has sadly trended upwards.



**2. We will react quickly and efficiently every time we receive an emergency 999 call to attend a dwelling fire.**

We are committed to reacting quickly and efficiently when emergency 999/112 calls are put through to us by the operator.

Our emergency fire control facility remains available around the clock every day of the year, with special arrangements in place for a seamless transfer of calls from one control facility to another in the event of serious disruption or a surge in the number of calls coming in at the same time.

Sophisticated mapping and electronic systems help us to: a) identify the location of the reported incident and b) send the most appropriate available resource to attend the incident.

In 2021/22, we handled a total of 12,470 emergency 999/112 calls. We were able to obtain enough information about dwelling fire incidents to alert the appropriate initial response within 90 seconds on 89.2% of occasions and between 91 and 120 seconds on 6.6% of occasions.

However, we know that the speed of call handling – although important - is not the only relevant yardstick. Knowing where our services are needed requires specialist skills to effectively glean information from callers who may, for example, be unfamiliar with the area they are in, be frightened or in distress, be very young, or have communication or language difficulties.

Another important skill is recognising when a caller is abusing the 999/112 system by falsely claiming that there is an emergency when, in fact, there is not. It is a criminal offence to knowingly make false calls to the emergency services. Sadly, that does not seem to deter a minority of people who tie up the 999 lines and divert services away from people who may be in a genuinely life- threatening situation. Every time we turn out to one of these malicious false alarms, it wastes both time and money, and places the rest of the community at higher risk.

In 2021/22, we received 80 malicious false alarms. In 45% of cases, we were able to establish that these calls were not genuine and so avoided needlessly mobilising resources to attend.

### **3. We will attend dwelling fires swiftly and properly equipped to deal with them.**

Once we have answered the emergency 999/112 call and allocated the most appropriate resources to make up the initial attendance at the incident, our next priority is to get to the incident quickly, safely and properly equipped to deal with it.



In 2021/22 we responded to 10% of dwelling fires within 1-5 minutes, 53% within 5-10 minutes, 20% within 10-15 minutes and 17% in over 15 minutes. These times include the time it takes for personnel to turn in to the fire station as well as the travel time. As a result, a number of things can affect the speed of response figures, including the urban/rural geography and the nature of road networks in the area.

Speed of response to dwelling fires is extremely important, but we cannot over-emphasise the importance of preventing those fires from happening in the first instance, and of having at least one working smoke alarm fitted and a pre-planned escape route in case a fire does occur. However, if a dwelling fire has occurred, we ensure that our firefighting crews are properly equipped to deal with it.

We equip our firefighters with high quality personal protective equipment and firefighting equipment. We require them to be operationally fit and healthy and we make sure that their skills are routinely tested and exercised. We also routinely check that the way our crews dealt with incidents was in accordance with accepted firefighting procedures.

We take the safety of our firefighters very seriously, given the nature of the work that they undertake. In 2021/22, our crews attended 1,878 fires in a variety of different types of premises and at outdoor locations. Whilst fighting those fires, no operational staff received an injury.

### **4. We will deal with dwelling fires effectively, efficiently and professionally.**

We are committed to dealing with fires effectively, efficiently and professionally. To this end, we equip our highly trained fire crews with the right skills, knowledge, information, firefighting equipment and command support so that whatever the circumstances of the dwelling fire, they will be correctly prepared to deal with it.



In 2021/22, of all the dwelling fires that we attended, 89% were successfully contained within the room of origin, without spreading any further. Although a number of factors could contribute to this statistic that would be outside the control of the attending crews such as how long it took for someone to discover the fire in the first instance, whether or not internal doors had been shut to help prevent the spread of the fire, and how far away from a fire station the dwelling was located, we still consider this to be a reasonable indicator of our firefighting success.

We recognise the importance of research and equipment improvements, and ensure that we invest time and effort in staying in touch with the latest developments.

We also take very seriously the professional image of the fire and rescue service. We place great emphasis on the personal qualities and attributes of all our operational staff, as well as their physical and psychological fitness and the high standard of their operational and management training.

We encourage all our staff to adhere to a set of core values that was adopted nationally by the UK Fire and Rescue Service. This expresses our commitment to valuing service to the community, people, diversity and improvement.



## **5. We will help to restore normality to communities in the aftermath of dwelling fires.**

We are committed to helping to restore normality to communities in the aftermath of dwelling fires.

A fire in the home can leave people feeling extremely vulnerable. When people have lost their possessions, they will have need for practical as well as emotional support. When people have been injured or killed in the fire, the experience can affect whole communities as well as the individual and his or her immediate friends and family. For this reason, the fire and rescue service's role in supporting communities does not end when the fire was extinguished and everyone was accounted for.

In all cases, the cause of the fire will be investigated and carefully recorded. Every detail of how and where the fire started, how far it spread, any special circumstances, and any particular factors that contributed to the fire will be recorded as a source of future learning, research and monitoring.

If there are reasons to believe that a fire was started deliberately in a dwelling, either by someone living there or by someone else, this will be followed up with the police and other relevant agencies.

In some premises, such as blocks of flats or houses occupied by a number of different tenants, the post-incident investigations might indicate that a landlord had failed to ensure the necessary level of fire safety. Our specialist fire investigators might then be involved in a criminal investigation and court proceedings.

If a fire is found to have started accidentally, we might undertake some form of community safety activity or campaign in the vicinity, offering advice and reassurance by way of free SAWCs.

## **6. We will investigate the causes of dwelling fires and hold relevant people to account when appropriate to do so.**



We always investigate the causes of dwelling fires. In many cases the cause and origin of a fire will be very clear and straightforward, but in others a more in-depth, forensic investigation will be required to ascertain the most likely cause of the fire. In 2021/22, 25 dwelling fires were recorded as having an unknown cause.

If a crime is suspected, the investigation of the fire will be conducted with the police. People suspected of deliberately setting fire to a dwelling are likely to face criminal prosecution, although in some cases this may not be the only course of action available, for example if the fire was started by a young child or by a person attempting suicide.

In 2021/22, we attended 428 fires in dwellings, of which 29 were found to have been started deliberately.

In some residential premises, such as flats and houses of multiple occupation, the communal and shared areas are covered by regulations that require whoever is responsible for those premises (such as the landlord or the premises manager) to have good fire safety arrangements in place. Failure to do so can lead to the closure of the premises and prosecution of the responsible person with the prospect of imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

As an enforcing authority, we ensure that responsible persons fulfil their obligations under this legislation, and can select from a range of enforcement options available to us, depending on the seriousness and risk posed by the contravention.

In 2021/22, There were no enforcement notices or formal prohibition notices issued, and no prosecutions were concluded during the year.



**7. We will strive to maintain high standards and improve aspects of what we do.**  
We continuously strive to maintain high standards and improve aspects of what we do.

Under legislation, Fire and Rescue Authorities are classed as ‘Welsh Improvement Authorities’ and are expected to routinely review and continuously improve their own performance through a formal process of setting, implementing and reporting against annual improvement objectives.

We do not limit our improvement activity to this formal annual process; high standards and continual improvement form an integral part of our everyday running of the Fire and Rescue Service.

Examples of improvement activities that go on include:

- Responding positively to peer reviews, audits and inspections;
- Responding positively to consultation responses, feedback from stakeholders, complaints and compliments;
- Learning from our experiences, such as from post-incident debriefs, reports of accidents, or ‘near misses’;
- Contributing to working groups, sharing good practice, and learning from research undertaken;
- Taking opportunities to learn from, and with, other organisations through partnerships, committees, boards and professional associations;
- Planning for potential challenges in order to maintain our operations, such as through business continuity management processes;
- Planning for potential challenges to future service delivery, such as through local resilience forums;
- Continuously developing the technical and professional skills of our staff;
- Maintaining and renewing our physical and computerised assets such as our equipment, vehicles, buildings and technology

## WHAT OTHERS SAID ABOUT US

### [Audit Wales – Review of Involvement 2019/20](#)

The 2019/20 report by Audit Wales focused on the Authority's approach and management of involving stakeholders when proposing service and policy changes, and in the design of activities. The report concluded that the Authority has pockets of good engagement activity but is yet to shift to an integrated strategic approach to involvement.

### [Audit Wales - Corporate Resilience 2020/21](#)

The most recent report by Audit Wales reviewed the Authority's approach to corporate resilience in order to provide assurance on how well it is addressing the financial and capacity challenges facing public bodies. The report found that the Authority has demonstrated its short-term resilience, but needs to take some major decisions to remain resilient in the future:

- Finance: The Authority has managed budgets well, but some key risks need to be addressed to remain financially sustainable;
- Governance: The Authority has an appropriate governance framework, but Members need to play a more central role in addressing the big risks facing the Fire and Rescue Service;
- Workforce: The Authority has a resilient workforce and has dealt well with immediate challenges, but there are some medium-term risks that need to be managed to ensure services are sustainable;
- Assets: The Authority has good examples of how it is integrating assets and developing its use of technology, but there are some long standing challenges that need to be addressed to help support future resilience; and
- Business continuity: The Authority's business continuity plans helped maintain corporate and operational resilience in responding to the pandemic.

## OTHER INFORMATION

The **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004** clarifies the Authority's duties and powers 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 **Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (Wales) Order 2007 and (Amendment) Order 2017** place duties on the Authority in connection with emergencies involving chemical, biological or radioactive contaminants; structural collapse; trains, trams or aircrafts; and flooding and inland water emergencies when they present a risk of death, serious injury or illness.

The **Civil Contingencies Act 2004** requires the Authority to plan for and respond to large scale emergencies that threaten serious damage to human welfare, the environment or to security.

The **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** requires the Authority to enforce fire safety in non-domestic premises, including the communal parts of blocks of flats and houses in multiple occupation.

Under the **Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009** the Authority must set objectives to continuously improve what it does and publish information about its improvement and performance.

The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** requires the Authority to work towards improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of future generations of people in Wales, both individually, and as a statutory member of Public Services Boards in North Wales.

The **Equality Act 2010** places duties on the Authority to have due regard to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with different protected characteristics.

**The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011** replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993. As part of the new legislation in Wales the Welsh language has equal legal status with English and must not be treated any less favourably. Public bodies no longer need to develop and implement Welsh Language Schemes and must comply with a set of national Welsh Language Standards instead.

**The UK Data Protection Act 2018** was introduced to modernise data protection laws and meet the needs of an increasingly digital economy and society. It provides a legal framework for data protection, implements GDPR standards across all general data processing and ensures that the UK continues to have appropriate data protection legislation in place after it leaves the EU.

### **Welsh Government – People and Communities**

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/safety/fire/?lang=en>

### **Audit Wales**

Audit Wales 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 and Rescue Authorities across Wales to deliver a programme of financial and value-for-money audits.

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### **External information sources used in compiling this document**

Wales Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics: [Fire incidents \(gov.wales\)](#)

England Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics:

[Fire statistics data tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Welsh Government Future Trends Report 2017:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2018-12/170505-future-trends-report-2017-en.pdf>

### **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.

## CONSULTATIONS:

Each year the Authority seeks the opinions and views of the North Wales public and other stakeholders as part of its process of developing its strategic plans and objectives.

Recent consultations are listed below:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Consultation</b>	<b>Publication</b>	<b>For year</b>
Improvement and Well-Being Objectives for 2020/21 onwards (new Environmental Strategy)	Autumn/Winter 2019	March 2020	2020/21
Improvement and Well-Being Objectives for 2019/20 onwards	Summer/Autumn 2018	March 2019	2019/20
Improvement and Well-Being Objectives for 2018/19 onwards	Autumn 2017	March 2018	2018/19
Improvement and Well-Being Objectives for 2017/18 onwards	Autumn 2016	March 2017	2017/18
Improvement Objectives for 2016/17	Autumn 2015	March 2016	2016/17
Improvement Objectives for 2015/16	Autumn 2014	March 2015	2015/16

## GLOSSARY / DEFINITIONS

### - **Fires**

All fires fall into one of three categories – primary, secondary or chimney.

### - **Primary Fires**

These are fires that are not chimney fires, and which are in any type of building (except if derelict), vehicles, caravans and trailers, outdoor storage, plant and machinery, agricultural and forestry property, and other outdoor structures such as bridges, post boxes, tunnels, etc.

Fires in any location are categorised as primary fires if they involve casualties, rescues or escapes, as are fires in any location that were attended by five or more fire appliances.

### - **Secondary Fires**

Secondary fires are fires that are neither chimney fires nor primary fires. Secondary fires are those that would normally occur on open land, in single trees, fences, telegraph poles, refuse and refuse containers (but not paper banks, which would be considered in the same way as agricultural and forestry property to be primary fires), outdoor furniture, traffic lights.

Secondary fires do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes, and will have been attended by four or fewer fire appliances.

### - **Chimney Fires**

These are fires in occupied buildings where the fire is confined within the chimney structure, even if heat or smoke damage extends beyond the chimney itself.

Chimney fires do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes and will have been attended by four or fewer fire appliances.

### - **Special Service Incidents (other emergency incidents)**

These are non-fire incidents which require the attendance of an appliance or officer and include:

- local emergencies e.g. flooding, road traffic incidents, rescue of persons, 'making safe' etc;
- major disasters;
- domestic incidents e.g. water leaks, persons locked in or out etc;
- prior arrangements to attend incidents, which may include some provision of advice and inspections.

### - **Fire Deaths (fire related)**

This is where a person whose death is attributed to a fire even if the death occurred weeks or months later. There are also occasional cases where it becomes apparent subsequently that the fire was not the cause of the death. These figures are therefore subject to revision.

- **Fire Injuries**

For consistency after April 2009 across the UK, fire casualties are recorded under four categories of severity:

- i) the victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be serious;
- ii) the victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be slight;
- iii) the victim was given first aid at the scene only, but required no further treatment;
- iv) a precautionary check was recommended – the person was sent to hospital or was advised to see a doctor as a precaution, but having no obvious injury or distress.

- **False Alarm (general guidance)**

Where the Fire and Rescue Service attends a location believing there to be an incident, but on arrival discovers that no such incident exists, or existed.

Note: if the appliance is 'turned around' by Control before arriving at the incident it is not classed as having attended and does not need to be reported.

- **False Alarms – Malicious**

These are calls made with the intention of getting the Fire and Rescue Service to attend a non-existent incident, including deliberate and suspected malicious intentions.

- **False Alarms – Good Intent**

These are calls made in good faith in the belief that the Fire and Rescue Service really would attend a fire or special service incident.

- **False Alarms – Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA)**

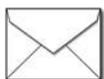
These are calls initiated by fire alarm and fire-fighting equipment. They include accidental initiation of alarm equipment or where an alarm operates and a person then routinely calls the Fire and Rescue Service as part of a standing arrangement, with no 'judgement' involved, for example from a security call centre or a nominated person in an organisation.

## ALTERNATIVE VERSIONS AND HOW TO CONTACT US

### Other versions of this document are available:

- in paper and electronic formats;
- in Welsh and English;
- as a short summary leaflet of the key points;
- in accessible formats through our website.

### Contact Details:



North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS)  
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters  
Ffordd Salesbury  
St Asaph Business Park  
St Asaph  
Denbighshire  
LL17 0JJ



01745 535 250



[www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk](http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk)

### You can also follow us on:



@northwalesfire



[www.facebook.com/northwalesfireservice](http://www.facebook.com/northwalesfireservice)

## AN INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING OUR SERVICES

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is constantly looking for ways to improve its operations and delivery of services. By regularly publishing information that is meaningful we hope to attract an increasing level of engagement with the people and communities who rely on our services.

So, if you have any comments about this assessment, or how we might improve our future annual performance assessments, we would very much like to hear from you.