



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
Fire and Rescue Service

**TÂN FIRE**

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

# Social Partnership Duty Annual Report 2024-25

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# Introduction

The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023, (SPPP Act), which came into force on 01 April 2024, requires public bodies, including North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, (NWFRA), to produce an annual report to evidence how they have complied with The Social Partnership Duty created by the SPPP Act.

The Social Partnership Duty requires North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to seek consensus or compromise with their recognised trade unions, when

- i. setting their well-being objectives; and
- ii. making decisions of a strategic nature about the reasonable steps they intend to take to deliver those objectives.

Section 16(2) of the Act sets out several specific requirements relating to the Duty, with which NWFRA must comply when 'seeking consensus or compromise'.

In order to seek consensus or compromise a public body must include its recognised trade unions or other representatives of its staff in the process of setting objectives or making decisions, by (in particular) –

- a. consulting them at a formative stage of the process, and
- b. otherwise involving them throughout the process by;
  - i. providing sufficient information to enable them to properly consider what is proposed, and
  - ii. providing sufficient time to enable them to adequately consider what is proposed and respond.

Section 18 of the SPPP Act states:

1. A public body must prepare, in respect of each financial year, a report of what it has done to comply with the duty.
2. The report must be agreed with the public body's recognised trade unions or contain a statement explaining why it was not agreed.
3. The public body must publish the report, and submit it to the Social Partnership Council, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year.

# Background

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority delegates responsibility for certain functions to the Chief Executive/Chief Fire Officer of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS).

In addition to the requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to set well-being objectives, there is a separate statutory duty for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales to consult with the public annually on improvement objectives, as required by the [Local Government \(Wales\) Measure 2009](#).

Welsh Government Fire Circular ([W-FRSC\(2024\)06](#), dated 6th April 2024) provides that the “duties under the 2009 Measure and the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act 2015 can be discharged through the publication of a single report.”

NWFRS has established a Governance Assurance Framework to discharge its responsibilities on behalf of NWFRA. Part of that Framework includes a Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee (JCNC), chaired by a Principal Officer, and whose membership includes representatives from each of the recognised trade unions. Relevant officers from across the Service attend with the Head of Operational Response and Head of Human Resources attending each meeting.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority’s recognised trade unions are;

- The Fire Brigade Union,
- Fire & Rescue Service Association,
- Fire Officers Association,
- Fire Leaders Association,
- UNISON,
- Unite.



# How we complied with the Social Partnership Duty

JCNC meets six weekly and the Social Partnership Duty has been incorporated into the objectives of the Committee and is included as a standing item on the agenda for each meeting.

The Committee's focus is on fostering good working relationships with all representative bodies and discussing matters of relevance to all staff.

Although the Committee is strategic, a broad range of issues are discussed at each meeting; these can include forward looking matters of strategic importance through to more tactical issues.

Notably all policies and procedures are highlighted for consultation prior to approval by the Service Leadership Team, ensuring that matters of note or concern are addressed at the relevant time. During the course of the year the following matters have been considered and recorded under the social partnership duty:

- Emergency Cover Review – a staff led working group to consider future options for improving rural availability
- Development of a new Training Centre – updates and dialogue relating to the options for training facilities critical to operational firefighters
- External review of culture – engagement with the members of JCNC in relation to the external review and appointment of the independent consultant
- Station manager framework – engagement and development of principles around changes to the way in which stations are supported
- Agreement of proposed changes to the promotional process for operational staff to ensure a fair, consistent and transparent approach

Following Fire and Rescue Authority approval of the Community Risk Management Plan for 2024-2029, work has focussed on the development of the 2025-26 improvement and well-being objectives. The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager attended each of the following meetings, to initially brief the Trade Union representatives on the new Social Partnership Duty and then to consult with the Union representatives and subsequently provide sufficient information to enable them to properly consider the draft objectives and how they were to be achieved.

## 26th February 2024

Trade Union representatives were provided with an overview of the requirements of The Social Partnership Duty and advised that formal consultation with Trade Unions would be conducted through the work of the Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee.

## **21st August 2024**

Trade Union representatives were reminded of the requirements of The Social Partnership Duty and advised that Heads of Department had been tasked with developing their improvement and well-being objectives for 2025-26 and that public and staff consultation on those draft objectives would take place between 21st October and 16th December 2024.

Representatives were invited to make any comment about well-being objectives either at the meeting or subsequently by contacting the Corporate Planning and Performance Manager.

## **3rd October 2024**

Draft objectives were shared with Trade Union representatives and they were reminded that the consultation period of eight weeks was about to commence and that staff were actively encouraged to participate in the consultation.

## **8th January 2025**

The outcomes of the consultation were reported to the representatives and copies of the draft Community Risk Management Implementation Plan, in which the improvement and well-being objectives will be published following consensus or compromise with the Trade Union representatives and ratification by the Fire and Rescue Authority, were shared and comments invited by the 10th February 2025.

## **20th January 2025**

At the request of The Fire Brigades Union a face to face meeting with the Corporate Planning and Performance Manager took place to discuss specific aspects of a number of objectives. The Union provided feedback on the wording of three objectives, as opposed to the nature of the objectives themselves. The objectives were reworded based upon their feedback and agreed prior to progressing to the Fire and Rescue Authority for approval.

## **19th February 2025**

As no further comments were received from any other Trade Unions by the 10th February, the draft, first annual Social Partnership Duty Report was shared with JCNC Trade Union representatives in advance of the February 19th meeting in order for the content to be agreed,

At the meeting the Trade Union representatives present agreed that consensus on the NWFRA 2025-26 well-being objectives had been reached and this was captured in the minutes of the meeting.

The contents of the first annual Social Partnership Duty Report was agreed upon at that meeting, prior to approval by the Fire and Rescue Authority on 28th April 2025.

NWFRA approved the Social Partnership Duty report for publication on the 28th April and can be accessed [here](#).