

AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB GOGLEDD CYMRU



NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

A meeting of the **EXECUTIVE PANEL** will be held **MONDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2024** virtually **via Zoom** commencing at **14:00 hrs.**

Yours faithfully,
Gareth Owens
Clerk

AGENDA

1. Apologies

2. Declaration of Interests

3. Notice of Urgent Matters

Notice of items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 June 2024

5. Matters Arising

6. New Training Centre options (presentation)

7. Annual Performance Assessment 2023-24

8. Performance Monitoring Report Q1 2024-25

9. Urgent Matters

To consider any items which the Chair has decided are urgent (pursuant to Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972) and of which substance has been declared under item 3 above.

PART II

It is recommended pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business because it is likely that there would be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 12 to 18 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EXECUTIVE PANEL

Minutes of the **Executive Panel** of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 17 June 2024, virtually via Zoom. Meeting commenced at 14.00hrs.

Councillor

Cllr Dylan Rees (Chair)
Cllr Carol Beard
Cllr Chrissy Gee
Cllr Chris Hughes
Cllr Gareth A Roberts
Cllr Rondo Roberts (left 14:37)
Cllr Paul Rogers (from 14:19)
Cllr Gareth Sandilands
Cllr Rob Triggs

Representing

Ynys Môn County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Gwynedd County Council
Wrexham County Council
Wrexham County Council
Denbighshire County Council
Gwynedd Council

Also present:

Dawn Docx
Stewart Forshaw
Helen MacArthur
Justin Evans
Dafydd Edwards
Anthony Jones
Tracey Williams
Gareth Owens
George Jones
Lisa Allington

Chief Fire Officer
Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Treasurer
Area Manager
Head of Corporate Communications
Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Atebol - Translator
Executive Assistant

1.0 APOLOGIES

Councillor

Cllr John Ifan Jones

Representing

Anglesey County Council

ABSENT

Councillor

Cllr Paul Cunningham (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Alan Hughes
Cllr Dale Selvester

Representing

Flintshire County Council
Denbighshire County Council
Flintshire County Council

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest to record.

3.0 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

3.1 There was no notice of urgent matters.

4.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2024

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2024 were submitted for approval.

4.2 RESOLVED to:

- i) approve the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting held.**

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 The Chair asked if there was an update around paragraph 5.2 in relation to sickness absence whereby Audit Wales were going to be asked to provide sickness data across all three FRS in Wales. The DCFO confirmed that this information was actually provided annually by the Welsh government and the next update was due in October 2024. This would then be provided to Members for scrutiny.

5.2 Paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4 in connection with RDS availability, DCFO Forshaw highlighted that this data was now within the Performance Monitoring Report which was included on the agenda for today's meeting.

5.3 In respect to item 5.1, the Treasurer confirmed that he had spoken with Civil Servants in the Welsh Government and was expecting information on the Pensions Grant. With the election ongoing it was unlikely that a response would now be received until a new UK Government had been formed and the final figure agreed. It was expected that there would be a grant but the amount was as yet unknown. A residual financial risk remains but the approach taken during the budget setting process had minimised this risk.

6.0 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES IN WALES

6.1 CFO Docx presented the paper on the Governance Arrangements for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales and highlighted recent communication to council leaders from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for fire. The paper also confirmed the recent publication of the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Scrutiny Committee, "Sound the Alarm: Governance of Fire and Rescue Services", which considered the sector's governance arrangements.

- 6.2 These documents highlighted to Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's (the Authority) the work being undertaken to consider issues relevant to the governance arrangements around the fire sector in Wales.
- 6.3 One Member confirmed that they had attended a meeting with Council Leaders in relation to this matter and that it was expected that information would be shared in due course.
- 6.4 Some concern was expressed that the decision in Cardiff had been driven by the situation in the South, and that some of the ideas expressed by the Minister were not tenable. It was also felt that there would be little time for a Cabinet member to be able to sit on the Authority and that the proposed membership would need much more thought in order to make it work.
- 6.5 The Treasurer noted that further to his experience of sitting in Council Cabinets and in National Park Authority meetings, as well as being involved in the Fire Authority, he was concerned about some suggestions in the national papers on Governance. He felt that the idea that CFOs could be generalists without FRS experience may reduce cost-effectiveness and that Council Cabinet members were busy with a portfolio, and would not be able to prioritise FRA duties.
- 6.6 He further stated that a precept would be a more transparent means of funding FRAs, provided that the majority of members were constituent LA councillors.
- 6.7 The CFO advised that the opinion of the Audit Committee had been that there should remain representation by the Local Authorities to ensure continued accountability at a local level.

6.8 RESOLVED to:

- i) note the work initiated by the Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning with the South Wales Local Authorities; and**
- ii) note the second part of the report published by the Equality and Social Justice Committee's report setting out their opinions for change to the governance arrangements for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales.**

7.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 23-24

- 7.1 Area Manager Anthony Jones presented the Performance Monitoring Report for the financial year 2023-24 which provided information about incident activity during 2023/24 financial year, performance in relation to the Authority's improvement and well-being objectives, and other notable incident activity.

- 7.2 The Chair stated that it was pleasing to note the reduction in domestic dwelling fires.
- 7.3 One Member asked what kind of relationship North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) had with other partner agencies in connection with weather related emergencies. The CFO confirmed that the Service enjoyed a very good working relationship with Natural Resources Wales, along with other key partners, and response to these events was collaborative.
- 7.4 AM Jones advised Members that the Service also had representation on the all-Wales Wildfire board.
- 7.5 One Member asked if there were any plans to begin to install stove guards as a preventative measure and the CFO confirmed that the Service were already involved in the pilot which was proving to be very effective. However, plans to roll this out wider had not yet been finalised.

7.6 RESOLVED to:

- i) note the content of the performance monitoring report.**

8.0 EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW PROGRESS REPORT

- 8.1 DCFO Forshaw delivered the Summary Report on the Emergency Cover Review Task and Finish Group. This report gave Members an update on the progress made by the Emergency Cover Review (ECR) Task and Finish Group, established in response to the decision made by the Authority at its meeting on 18 December 2023, to develop a new permanent option for the provision of emergency cover across North Wales.
- 8.2 The Chair took the opportunity to thank all those involved in the Task and Finish Group for all of their hard work to date in looking for a viable solution.

8.3 RESOLVED to:

- i) note the engagement and efforts of all stakeholders on the ECR Task and Finish Group to work together to develop options for improvements to the provision of fair and equitable emergency cover across North Wales; and**
- ii) note the progress made by both the ECR Task and Finish Group and the Authority ECR Working Group to develop a new permanent option for the provision of emergency cover across North Wales.**

9.0 THE CHARTER FOR FAMILIES BEREAVED THROUGH PUBLIC TRAGEDY

- 9.1 ACFO Evans introduced the Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy paper which set out for Members of the Authority the

background, details and requirements of the Charter for Families Bereaved by Public Tragedy (the Charter).

- 9.2 The Chair noted that he welcomed the introduction of this Charter and that he felt it would be hugely beneficial.

9.3 RESOLVED to:

- i) endorse the ratification of The Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy at a future full Authority meeting, under the following terms:**
 - **the Chair of the Authority signs the Charter on behalf of the Authority;**
 - **the Chief Fire Officer signs the Charter on behalf of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service); and**
 - **that due regard be given to the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) during implementation and adoption of the Charter.**

10 REPORT ON 2021-22 DECARBONISATION REVIEW

- 10.1 ACFO Evans summarised the paper on the 2021-22 Decarbonisation Review which reported on progress towards enacting the recommendations of the Audit Wales report 'Carbon Emissions Reduction – North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority' dated March 2022.
- 10.2 A Member asked for thanks to be passed on to those officers involved in the organisation and delivery of the Sustainability Working Group. It had been easy to engage with and contribute to and had been extremely worthwhile.

10.3 RESOLVED to:

- i) note actions taken to date; and**
- ii) present recommendations for detailed decarbonisation policies to the Executive Panel over the coming year**

11.0 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT

- 11.1 AM Jones delivered the Strategic Risk Management paper which provided Members with an update on the content of the Authority's strategic risk register in accordance with the Strategic Risk Management Policy.
- 11.2 The Chair asked Members to note that this register was reviewed regularly by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority.

11.3 RESOLVED to:

- i) note the identified strategic risks that are facing the Authority following the end of year review.**

12.0 URGENT MATTERS

- 12.1 There were no urgent matters to raise.

Meeting closed: 14:49 hrs

Report to	Executive Panel
Date	16th September 2024
Lead Officer	Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Contact Officer	Anthony Jones, Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation
Subject	Annual Performance Assessment 2023/24



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To present to members of the Fire and Rescue Authority Executive Panel the Annual Performance Assessment for 2023/24,

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 Section 15 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires the Fire and Rescue Authority to make arrangements for the publication of the authority's assessment of its performance during a financial year by no later than 31st October in the financial year following that to which the information relates.
- 3 Schedule 1 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 makes provision requiring each public body to publish annual reports of the progress it has made in meeting its well-being objectives.

RECOMMENDATION

- 4 That Members:
 - i) note the contents of the Annual Performance Assessment for the period 2023/24; and
 - ii) approve the Annual Performance Assessment 2023/24 for publication on the Fire and Rescue Authority's website.

BACKGROUND

- 5 The Annual Performance Assessment is a self-assessment of progress against the previous year's improvement (The Measure 2009) and Well-being objectives (Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015).
- 6 There is flexibility in how FRAs choose to report on their performance but for consistency in reporting and accountability it is recommended that all reports contain:

- Evidence of the processes that the FRA has gone through to discharge its general duty to improve as expressed in the previous year's improvement plan;
- A summary assessment of the FRA's view of its success in achieving its improvement objectives as set out in the previous year's improvement plan;
- A statement of performance as measured by all statutory PIs, whether or not these relate directly to improvement objectives;
- Details of other performance information and its use, including the results of peer review, any assessments made by the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and other sources of qualitative information including benchmarking data;
- An assessment of performance by comparison with the FRA's performance in previous years and with other comparable bodies (including other FRAs) so far as this is reasonably practicable;
- Details of the ways in which the FRA has exercised its powers of collaboration during the reporting year including details of whether a collaborative activity has achieved its intended outcomes; and
- Any statements of activity that the FRA has issued as a result of any reports issued under Section 19 of the Measure by the Auditor General for Wales to that FRA in that reporting year.

INFORMATION

- 7 The design of this Annual Performance Assessment mirrors previous iterations of the APA during the life of the 21-24 Corporate Plan. APA 24-25 design will mirror the 'Our 5 Principles' design.
- 8 As it is the final year of the three-year plan, a reflection of progress over the life of the plan is included, as well as the annual update on progress.
- 9 The APA contains the All Wales Dwelling Fire Response Charter.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	The publication of the Annual Performance Assessment is a requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.
Budget	No implications
Legal	The publication of the Annual Performance Assessment is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.
Staffing	No implications
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	The Annual Performance Assessment will be published in English and Welsh.
Risks	No implications



North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Annual Performance Assessment 2023-24

Published Autumn 2024

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Welcome to the third and final performance assessment of our 2021–24 Corporate plan.

This assessment report, on our performance against our improvement and well-being objectives, marks the final year of the three-year corporate plan, which commenced shortly prior to both my arrival as Chief Fire Officer and the appointment of the current Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

During the past three years, we have achieved an incredible amount and adapted to challenges such as Covid-19 recovery, increasing cyber threats to our IT infrastructure, and significant financial challenges. However, it is the nature of continuous improvement that ensures public services have to constantly evolve and adapt in order to deliver the best possible value for money.

In my first 100 days, I established priorities for Retained Duty System (RDS) availability, Training, and Corporate capacity, which would be woven into subsequent iterations of the three-year Corporate Plan. These are manifest in the RDS staff experience review, the ongoing Emergency Cover Review work, and the Training Centre Project.

We have increased Corporate capacity to comply with governance and corporate governance responsibilities, while at the same time reducing our overall corporate staff headcount. The appointment of an Environmental and Climate Change Officer, a Risk, Safety, and Claims Manager, and a Procurement Officer, in particular, have strengthened our position.

Operationally, we have continued to deliver an average of 17,000 Safe and Well Checks each year to the people identified as being the most vulnerable to fire in their own home. This has contributed to a 15.75% reduction in accidental dwelling fires over the past three years, and whilst during 2022–23 there were no fire deaths across North Wales, sadly there were six fire deaths last year, highlighting the need to redouble our efforts and become even more intelligence-led in our activity.

Our mission is to make North Wales a safer place for everyone to live, work, and visit across our diverse communities. While this report is a reflection upon our work in the last financial year and the life of the Corporate Plan 2021–24, we have now published a new five-year plan for Keeping our Communities Safe to support our mission, which you can read [here](#).

As always, we welcome your feedback on any suggestions for improving our reporting. Our contact details can be found on the final page of this report.



North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority



Chief Fire Officer



Fire Authority Chair

Making North Wales a safer place to live, work and visit

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 which can be found [here](#).

About North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

There are 28 elected members of the [North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority](#). The Service, led by the Chief Fire Officer is made up of many different departments which all contribute to the running of the fire service. More information about how the service operates can be found [here](#).









About North Wales

Knowing about North Wales today helps the Authority plan to make positive changes for the future. Information about the area which the Service helps protect can be found [here](#).



Resources and Activity

Below is a summary of activity levels during 2023-24.

Fire Stations	Front Line Fire Engines	999 Calls Handled	Fire Service Staff (as on 31 March 2024)
 44	 54	 12,744	 907 (headcount)
Emergency Incidents Attended	Fires	False Alarms	Non-Fire Emergencies
 5,936	 1,657	 2,901	 1,378

Staffing

At 31 March 2024	Full time equivalent strength	Headcount of individual staff
Wholetime Operational (WDS)	269.00	270
Retained Operational (RDS/on-call)	370.75	466
Corporate Services	137.40	140
Control	31.00	31
Totals	808.15	907

Please note the 907 headcount figure quoted above, equates to 863 people. This is due to individuals who are employed by the Service in more than one role or position.

Over half of the personnel employed by the Authority are categorised as on-call firefighters.

What is Expected of the Fire Authority

Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales

Fire Prevention	must arrange for fire safety to be promoted in their area. This would include informing people about fire prevention and advising them how best to react if a fire does break out.
Fire Safety Enforcement	have a duty to enforce fire safety in non-domestic premises, for example, hotels, schools, shops and offices. This duty includes exercising powers to issue alteration, enforcement and even prohibition notices if they find that fire safety arrangements in premises are unsatisfactory.
Emergency Response	must make arrangements for receiving 999 calls and for sending trained and equipped personnel to extinguish fires and protect life and property at those fires. They must also make arrangements for rescuing people from road traffic collisions and for protecting them from serious harm.
Planning for and Responding to Other Emergencies	must make arrangements for the mass decontamination of people after chemical, biological or radio-active incidents, and for rescuing people from trains, aircrafts and collapsed buildings. They must also be prepared to assist with large-scale emergencies (including terrorist attacks) elsewhere in the UK. As 'Category 1' responders under the Civil Contingencies Act, fire and rescue authorities also have duties relating to large-scale events that threaten serious damage to the welfare of people, wildlife, the environment and primary supply chains.
Flooding and Inland Water Emergencies	must make arrangements to respond to incidents of flooding or water rescue which pose a direct threat of death or injury.
Equalities	must work towards eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people with different protected characteristics.
Welsh Language	treat the Welsh and English languages equally, promoting the use of Welsh and complying with defined Welsh language standards.
Continuous Improvement	must set objectives continuously to improve what they do, and publish information about their improvement and performance.
Future Planning	must work towards improving people's social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being as well as working in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the needs of future generations.

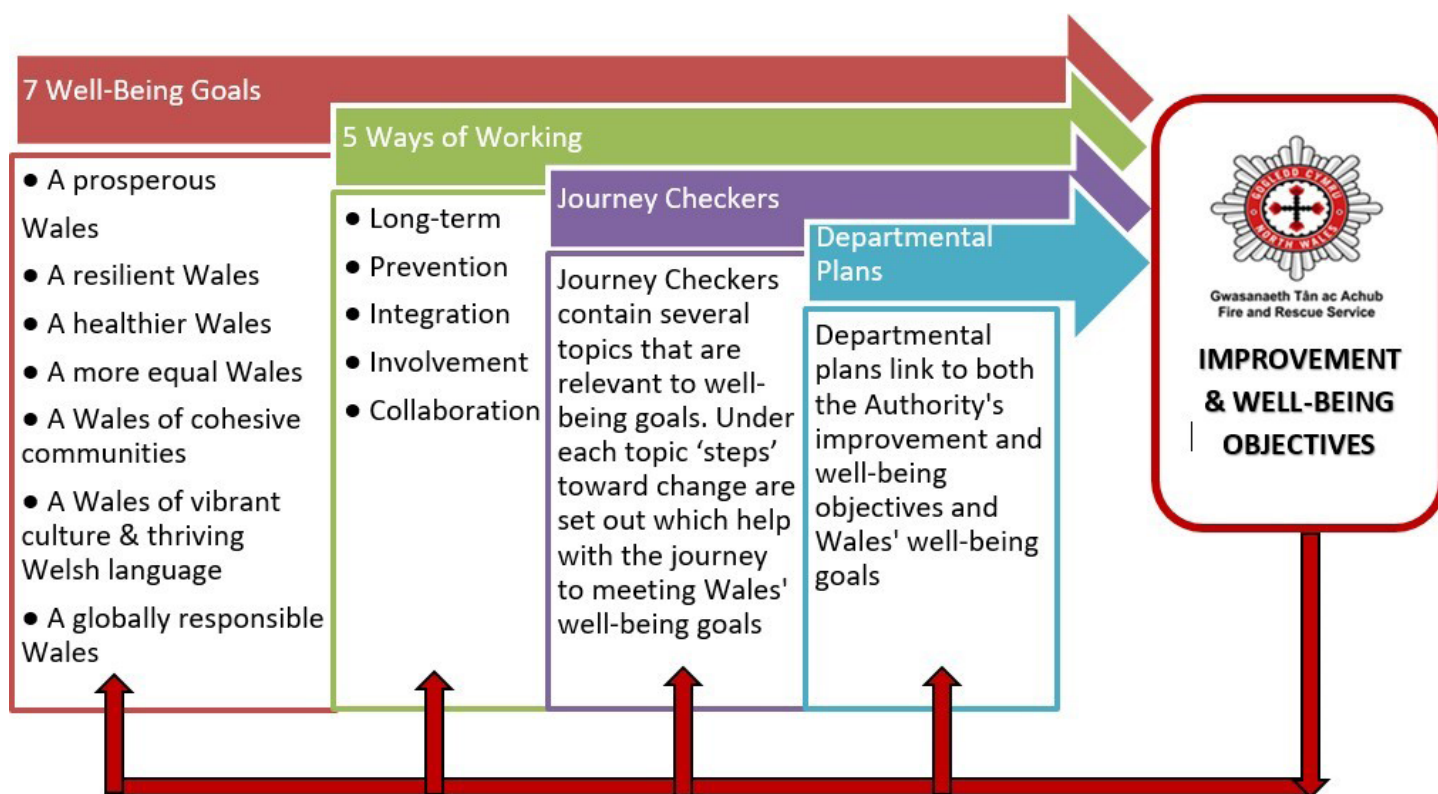
You can read more about our statutory obligations [here](#).

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 2023-24. The Authority is required to publish this assessment of its own performance for 2023-24 and the statutory performance indicators for the same year by 31st October 2024.

In 2018-19 the Authority increased the number of objectives that it was pursuing in order better to 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 Office for the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales website such as ‘journey checkers’, a new set of objectives was developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle that helped to identify opportunities for the Authority to improve its contribution to Wales’ well-being goals.



During 2023-24, work was undertaken to ensure the well-being objectives were embedded throughout all departmental plans where applicable. This work was further underpinned by the development of a set of ‘Building Blocks’ which are a set of measures to support both the well-being objectives and the departmental objectives.

The Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24 is currently awaiting approval from the Authority and it provides an overview of the governance arrangements as well as confirming a work plan for 2024-25.

Once approved and published, performance against the forward work plan will be monitored through the Service Leadership Team’s Performance Board.

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

Well-being goals met:



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 also 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 upon physical and mental well-being. Throughout 2023-24, 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.

Summary of achievements against Objective 1

During the first year of our Corporate Plan, everyone was still adhering to strict Welsh Government Covid-19 lockdown rules, yet the Service had to continue to function while keeping all our staff safe. New ways of working, along with finding ways to continue the delivery of safety prevention activities had to be explored, including completing Safe and Well Checks by telephone instead of in person.

A Safe and Well Check is carried out by Service personnel and specially trained employees from other partner agencies. During the check, personnel will identify safety hazards within the home, discuss fire prevention, and assist the occupier in creating an escape plan to use during a fire.

Our target for the number of completed Safe and Well Checks has been reduced from 20,000 (2021-22) to 17,500, but this is a conscious decision to better direct our resources to those individuals identified as being the most at risk from fire in the home.

During the three-year life of this plan we have:	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
• Completed 51,991 Safe and Well Checks	14,080	18,052	19,859
• Completed 15,466 Safe and Well Checks which originated from other agencies	4,895	5,733	4,838
• Attended 1,081 dwelling fires; the number of attendances has decreased slightly each year	400	344	337
• Completed 1,331 Fire Safety Audits	334	575	422

As the Authority responsible for enforcing the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in North Wales, the Service engages in an auditing strategy based on national guidelines. [Our Enforcement Policy](#) Statement sets out the general policy, and the principles that North Wales Fire and Rescue Service expects to follow.

Achievements in 2023-24

Action 1: To deliver 17,500 safe and well checks, with at least 25% of those being delivered to households referred to the Service by another agency.

- A total of 19,859 Safe and Well Checks were completed during the year, of which 24.4% were referred by a partner agency.
- A total of 6,032 Safe and Well Checks were classified as high priority and of these 54.5% were referred from a partner agency.
- 12,500 Safe and Well Checks were completed by operational crews.
- In collaboration with the NHS, performance analysts have undertaken work to identify those individuals within the community who may be more at risk from injury should a fire occur.
- Operational crews are now using this information to ensure a more targeted approach when completing Safe and Well Checks in their local area.
- Partnership Managers continued to foster relationships with external agencies to encourage high-quality referrals.

Action 2: To meet the increasing demand for provision and support of digital communications, including Cyber Security Standards and Accreditation.

- The Service successfully achieved the 'Cyber Essentials' certification.
- All nominated ICT staff undertook cyber training and passed the exam.
- The Service recruited a technical engineer with a specialism in cyber security.

Action 3: To progress our plans for a new immersive training and development centre to offer a wider range of training scenarios, and deliver improvements in training.

- The 'working group', consisting of Fire Authority members and key members of staff, visited the fire training centre at Dolgellau to review the current training facilities.
- Fact-finding visits were undertaken at Cheshire and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue training centres to see the opportunities that modern training facilities can offer.

- The following have now been completed:
 - ◊ Topographical surveys
 - ◊ Site investigation works
 - ◊ Ecology survey
 - ◊ Arboriculture survey
 - ◊ Flood consequence assessment
 - ◊ Design team update and design development
 - ◊ Planning update
 - ◊ Options appraisal
 - ◊ Exclusivity agreement
- New mitigation work is required on site, which can only take place during a single period of the year. Therefore, work will need to proceed from December 2023 up to October 2024 to have the site ready for any potential future development from December 2024.
- Consultation will take place with key stakeholders to develop a design proposal for the new Training and Development Centre, resulting in a final plan being submitted to the Fire Authority for approval.

Action 4: To continue to deliver fire safety audits based on the risk-based inspection programme.

- The Service promoted 'Business Safety Week' during September and offered small and medium businesses a range of fire safety advice.
- Business Fire Safety staff highlighted new legislation that came into force on 1st October, requiring all businesses to record a fire risk assessment and fire safety arrangements in full, regardless of the number of people employed and the size or type of business.
- Business fire safety staff attended a meeting to discuss the fire safety challenges faced by housing providers. Safety advice and best practices were discussed, including managing the risks involved with lithium-ion battery-powered scooters and e-bikes being stored in blocks of flats.
- Recently, the Fire Safety Department has enhanced its monitoring of fires involving 'white goods'.

Action 5: To continue to create an inclusive workplace that enable all staff to perform to the best of their ability, and meet the diverse needs of our communities.

- The Service has a dedicated 'Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion' officer.
- Through the Neurodiversity Staff Network, staff have been supported to attend external development opportunities, including:
 - ◊ Women in the Fire Service Development Weekend
 - ◊ Anti-Racism summit

- Staff attended the Asian Fire Service Association Conference in Leeds which had the theme 'Motivating Movement and Understanding Your Influence'. Attendees reported that this was a reminder that it is the responsibility of everyone to positively support change within the fire service.
- The Service promoted awareness of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion campaigns, including:
 - ◊ Deaf Awareness Week
 - ◊ Pride Month
 - ◊ Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month
- The 'Gender Pay Gap' (GPG) report 2022 was published, which provides a snap shot of the Service pay data for 31st March of each year. The most recent GPG data is 8.29%, which is slightly below the national average of 8.30% for 2022.
- The Training and Development department implemented a reporting service to review candidate learning assessments, which helps to develop skills and identify systemic barriers and biases to enable them to effectively design policies, practices, and services that are fair and inclusive for all.
- The Service contributes to the All Wales People and Organisational Development Group (PODG) to identify opportunities and proactively maintain an overview of all HR, Learning & Development, Equality & Diversity, and Welsh Language activities.
- The All Wales Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Group had been re-established with the intention of establishing baselines against His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire (HMIFRS) Spotlight Report and any other culture and inclusion plans.
- Carers support guidance has been made available for all staff to access. The Service recognises that some people already have, or are likely to take on, caring responsibilities, and that carers will inevitably constitute a part of the workforce. It also appreciates that some employees may have difficulty balancing their work and caring commitments.

Action 6: To improve the health, fitness, and well-being of staff through the provision of advice and information, active monitoring, and education.

- The Service has a dedicated 'Health, Fitness, and Wellbeing' team that provides lifestyle advice. They can support staff with exercise programmes and nutritional support. The team are also Mental Health First Aiders and can assist in a crisis.
- All staff can undertake a lifestyle review with the Physical Fitness team, which includes a fitness assessment.
- Working closely with the dedicated occupational health provider, the Service developed new ways of working to improve and prioritise employee health in the workplace.

- Service staff attended Fire-Fit conferences to keep up-to-date with trends, activities, and innovations.
- The 'Health, Fitness, and Wellbeing' team also provided support to potential new firefighter candidates at firefighter selection days.
- Promotional fitness:
 - ◊ 'Feet on Fire' is designed as a group challenge to encourage staff of any fitness ability to get out walking and track their daily movement.
 - ◊ Park Run events across the North Wales area.
- The Service signed up to the Healthy Wales Travel Charter.
- There has been a positive impact, with the number of days of absence by staff reducing by 7.5% (343 days or shifts) between 2021-22 and 2023-24.
- The HR Specialists are visiting stations and departments (during the day and evening) and providing HR Overview sessions, including recent important updates, to familiarise employees with the services that HR provides and the benefits available to them.
- The continuation of Siop Siarad sessions, which were prompted by the Fire Family Staff Survey. These sessions are aimed at promoting two-way conversations providing the opportunity to speak freely about wider issues, and highlighting views and new ideas from staff at stations and locations across the region. It is an opportunity to network and share new ideas, to be open to new ways of thinking, and to help staff feel included and able to challenge processes in a mutually supportive and positive environment.
- Introduction of a suicide support line. Staff from HR also attended a suicide and self-harm prevention event, which included information about national developments and a draft proposal for a service in North Wales.
- HR staff participated in an Attendance Management Audit where the robustness and effectiveness of controls that support the HR/payroll and sickness absence system(s) to ensure validity, accuracy, and timeliness of payments to employees were evaluated.
- The Service saw the introduction of online exit interviews to monitor and better understand why employees leave the Fire Service, and to identify areas for improvement in employee retention and engagement.
- Introduction of a 12-month Service Feedback Survey to ascertain whether new employees receive enough support during the initial phases of their career at North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is the primary piece of legislation governing workplace health and safety in Great Britain. Work related incidents and near misses are monitored through the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee. Whilst it is not currently mandatory, public bodies are encouraged to include a summary of their health and safety performance in their annual reports.

Health and Safety



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service

Safety event reporting statistics during financial year 2023/24



10% decrease in accidents

307 safety events were reported between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024, which compares with 412 in total for the comparable period in 22/23. This is a **34%** decrease.



149

Near Misses reported



51

injuries reported



24%

of injuries resulted in time off work



32

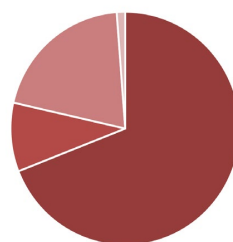
reports of White Fleet vehicle damage



45

reports of Red Fleet vehicle damage

Vehicle Accident Type



Forward: **58%**

Reverse: **25%**

Stationary: **17%**

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

Well-being goals met:



Working with local communities is extremely important to improve safety and to help communities become more resilient. The Authority worked closely with partner agencies throughout 2023-24 around targeted areas in order to assist communities and local businesses with pre-planning and education, enabling them to become more resilient in emergencies.

Summary of achievements against Objective 2 of the 2021-24 Corporate Plan.

The Service implemented well-rehearsed Business Continuity plans during the Covid-19 pandemic, and staff quickly adapted to working from home or other premises deemed safe. As a result, there was no disruption to our emergency response.

Technology continued to evolve quickly, with staff transitioning from using Skype to Microsoft Teams. The Service now also uses multi-factor authentication to increase protection from cyber security attacks.

New operational assets were purchased, such as underwater cameras, reach poles, and binoculars, to assist operational crews at flooding events and other emergency incidents.

Social media platforms continue to be routinely used to promote fire safety, and to provide information to local areas that may be affected by on-going or major emergency incidents.

During the three-year life of this plan, we have:

- Completed a planned project to replace all Mobile Data Terminal (MDTs), as the existing technology was approaching 'end of life'.
- The MDT replacement software brought enhancements to performance and information availability, along with an additional improvement to the hardware, which is now a device that can be removed from the fire engine.
- Introduced additional network infrastructure security controls to enhance the protection of the IT system.

Achievements in 2023–24

Action 1: To rollout Microsoft 365 as a means of further improving communication and integration with partners.

- During August, the Service launched its brand-new intranet, 'Hwb Tân'. Each department, area, or station has its own 'hub' (electronic area), with the ability to upload their own information and events to share with colleagues. Through M365, these files and folders are also accessible from personal devices.
- M365 training continued to be cascaded throughout the Service.
- A member of staff was recruited to plan and manage M365 training and respond to M365 queries as required.

Action 2: To continue to comply with Welsh Language Standards, including promotion of activities and learning.

- In May, staff took part in filming in the Welsh language soap drama series 'Rownd a Rownd', with the scenes aired during the autumn. The storyline saw one of the main characters involved in a fire, and our involvement helped ensure a strong emphasis on fire safety messages.
- Blue Watch, Caernarfon were also on camera in May, being filmed as part of S4C's 'Rygbi am byth' programme. The Crew Manager who is part of the Caernarfon Ladies rugby team, was being filmed as part of a docu-series following the team through the rugby season. The series producers were keen to find out more about the work at a fire station, which provided an opportunity to promote career paths within the service.
- The Service supported the campaign 'Defnyddia dy Gymraeg', which was launched by the Welsh Language Commissioner to encourage everyone to use their Welsh every day. New 'dry-wipe' boards were issued for use in workplaces and stations to help support Welsh learners and the Welsh Language Champions.

Action 3: To work collaboratively with our partners and communities to develop plans to reduce and respond to wildfires and climate related emergencies.

- Staff attended a two-day All Wales Wildfire Conference in Merthyr Tydfil in June. The event, hosted by Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, provided colleagues across Wales the chance to connect and develop future strategies when responding to wildfires.
- Staff attended the Royal Welsh Agriculture Show in July to highlight safety messages and draw attention to the dangers of wildfires.
- The All Wales Dawns Glaw initiative, a multi-agency task force aimed at tackling the impact of grass fires, is in the process of transitioning to the All-Wales Wildfire Board. They met at the Royal Welsh showground to launch the new Wildfire Charter.
- During September, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) officers received training from Fire and Rescue Service staff on the capabilities of our Environmental Protection Unit and pollution protective equipment. NRW officers got an insight into the contents of the

environment grab pack and had the opportunity to use some dammit paste to stop a leak. They also got to see a demonstration on how to use a dammit matt, before viewing the equipment carried by the Environmental Protection Unit and receiving an explanation on how the equipment is used.

- The 'Campaign Steering Group' continued to work with the Corporate Communications department to proactively promote safety and Wildfire messaging across all media platforms.

Action 4: To implement recommendations of the wildfire review.

- As part of the ongoing All Wales Wildfire work, the Wildfire Charter was drafted, reviewed, and finalised by all three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services in preparation for its launch and publication at the Royal Welsh Show, Builth Wells, during July. The Wildfire Charter can be viewed [here](#).
- The Wildfire Charter focuses on three key commitments:
 - ◇ Partnership Working
 - ◇ Environmental and Community Resilience
 - ◇ Prevention and Protection
- Senior managers were provided with information on the mobilisation and use of airborne assets, for example, drones and helicopters.
- During March, operational staff from across the Service area were being sized for the FlamePro Wildfire Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which will be issued later in 2024. This is a lightweight kit that will be of great benefit during challenging wildfire conditions.
- The Service continues to engage with the National Fire Chiefs Council regarding wildfire activities, and attend and participate in virtual debrief reviews and training updates.
- Tactical wildfire officers attended MET Office online training events, which covered:
 - ◇ Global and UK weather trends
 - ◇ Fire Science: Wildfire Behaviour
 - ◇ Meteorological factors of wildfires and smoke plumes
 - ◇ Climate change and the effects of wildfires

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

Well-being goals met:



Given the backdrop of financial uncertainty, the cost of living crisis, rising inflation and the potential increase in demand for services across the public sector, it is inevitable that the Authority will be faced with challenges in 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 the ability to recruit and retain sufficient on-call firefighters.

Summary of achievements against Objective 3 of the 2021-24 Corporate Plan.

The budget for the Service increased year on year (£37.07m - £39.41m - £44.39m); however, the Service continued to seek out cost saving measures to ensure the public receives value for money services.

To sustain service delivery, several internal reviews were undertaken, including:

- A Wildfire Review (2022-23)
- A Retained Duty System Review (2022-23)
- The Emergency Cover Review (2022-ongoing)
- A Catering Review to look at the role of Station-based cooks (2021-22)
- An Administration Review (2021-22)

On 16th January 2023, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, as part of the Financial Strategy 2023-26, agreed to pilot a maximum response time of 35 minutes. This decision reduces the number of appliances available across North Wales from 20 to 18 fire appliances during the daytime, and to 28 during the night-time. This came into effect on 1st April 2023.

Achievements in 2023-24

Action 1: To conclude the emergency response review and consult the outcomes with relevant stakeholders prior to implementing recommendations.

- The Emergency Cover Response public consultation (ECR) was undertaken between 21st July and 22nd September, which included an extension due to the high level of interest it attracted.
- Over 1,700 responses were received, demonstrating just how important this consultation was to the people of North Wales.

- At the Authority meeting on the 18th December 2023, when considering which option to implement from the ECR, FRA Members requested that “Officers continue to work with all stakeholders to develop a new permanent option, taking into consideration today’s decision and the limits of the proposed budget.”
- An internal appeal was launched asking for members of staff to get involved and be part of the new ‘Emergency Cover Review Task and Finish Group’ to look at alternative options for emergency cover. This group has begun to look afresh at the challenges around the current pre-planning and daily interventions that are needed to support the provision of more equitable emergency cover. This then allows the group to explore how improvements in effectiveness and efficiency can be delivered within the budget.
- February saw the first meeting of the ‘Emergency Cover Review Task and Finish Group’, where presentations were provided by the Service Transformation Team, Finance, and the Availability Manager, to recap the current position and challenges to generate ideas and discussion. The task and finish group continue to meet every two to three weeks to progress this piece of work.

Action 2: To adopt National Operational Guidance for Control rooms as part of a review of our Control Room staffing arrangements and workforce skills aimed at improving our resilience.

- A strategic gap analysis was carried out and completed.
- This analysis identified the work required to implement the National Operational Guidance.
- The work is progressing and should be completed by the end of 2024.

Action 3: To support the delivery of outcomes from the retained duty system staff experience review.

- A full review of the Retained Duty System (RDS) was conducted, with a focus on the experiences of staff working within this duty system. The review investigated issues raised by RDS staff; captured feedback and accounts of the retained duty system, identified the sources of the issues identified, and developed options for potential improvements.
- In total, 10 key lines of inquiry were established:
 - ◊ RDS pay and reward
 - ◊ RDS attraction, selection, recruitment, and onboarding
 - ◊ The RDS promotion process
 - ◊ Local line management and staff retention
 - ◊ Time allocated for training
 - ◊ Time allocated for administration
 - ◊ Utilisation of skills

- ◇ Engaging with primary employers
 - ◇ Recognising contributions and celebrating achievements
 - ◇ Resource requirements
- Considerable progress has been made against many of the recommendations. Supervisory and middle managers watched a presentation on the work completed so far, and the work which remains ongoing to address the recommendations.

Action 4: To refine pensions and payroll processes and implement budget modules.

- Progress for this action was slower than anticipated due to a HM Revenue and Customs review, an external audit, and the implementation of legal requirements for firefighter pensions.
- Work by the software consultants was identified but has yet to be agreed upon.
- A firefighter leaver factsheet has been reviewed and returned for further development.
- Work will continue to complete this action.



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

Well-being goals met:



During 2023-24, the Authority continued to improve the way in which it communicates and engages with communities about the services it delivers.

A collaborative approach working across our own functions and together with our emergency service partners, local authorities, public services boards and other stakeholders ensures the consistent and widespread promotion of safety messages as well as the development of innovative techniques and the sharing of best practices.

A particular focus this year was improving communications with our staff, in particular in relation to those employed under the retained duty system (on-call) and implementing the key findings from our very first Fire Family staff survey.

Summary of achievements against Objective 4 of the 2021-24 Corporate Plan.

The Emergency Cover Review was available for public consultation between July and September 2023. We worked with staff, representative bodies, members of the public, council representatives, and local vulnerable groups to understand what really matters should you, or someone you care for or represent, require our services in an emergency.

The consultation received over 1,700 responses. A new Service working group has been formed to develop a new permanent option, taking into consideration the results of the consultation and the limits of the proposed budget.

During the three-year life of this plan, we have:	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
• Attended 1,457 deliberate fires, where 2023-24 recorded the lowest number attended (466 incidents).	472	519	466
• Provided 40,899 children and young people with a fire safety educational talk.	2,061	18,001	20,837
• Successfully completed and analysed two internal Fire Family Surveys during 2021-22 and 2023-24.			

Achievements in 2023–24

Action 1: To procure and install stowage equipment to reduce the spread of fire contaminants.

- During May, five new appliances, featuring contaminant modifications, were delivered to the Service.
- The modifications were a result of the collaborative work of the 'Contaminants Group', consisting of representatives from the Fleet department, the Technical Operations department, and the Fire Brigades Union.
- The modified appliance stowage, coupled with the introduction of a robust operating procedure, will ensure that firefighter exposure to contaminants is significantly reduced.
- Other appliances in the Service will be modified in the future to increase storage space for kit bags.
- Every firefighter was provided with particulate flash-hoods to assist in reducing their exposure to fire contaminants.
- Every firefighter was provided with a personal issue Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kit bag to ensure their PPE is kept clean and free from fire contaminants.
- Two new industrial washing machines were commissioned to deep clean Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets and associated equipment to remove fire contaminants.

Action 2: To implement the All Wales People and Organisational Development Strategy.

- During the year, work expanded through the All Wales People and Organisational Development Strategy working group, and four new themes were agreed to be taken forward for the 2024–27 Strategy:
 - ◊ Resourcing the Fire and Rescue Service
 - ◊ Health and Well-being
 - ◊ Culture and Inclusion
 - ◊ Innovation and Technology
- However, in January, a decision was made to defer the drafting of the People and Organisational Strategy for 2024–27 due to the publication of the report into the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service culture and values.

Action 3: To continue to support the delivery and review of the fire family staff survey.

- The second 'Fire Family' staff survey was open between 18th September and 16th October, and was managed by an independent company called 'People Insight' to ensure transparency.

- The survey was open to everyone within the Service and aimed at seeking views on a range of subjects.
- A response rate of 43% was recorded, which is lower than the first Fire Family survey, which had a response rate of 50%.
- A Project Group has been created to take the lead in identifying and delivering an action plan.
- Regular updates continue to be communicated to all Service staff internally.

Action 4: To continue our delivery of Children and Young People programmes/activities and interventions introduce the Serious Violence Duty adopted in January 2023 by all strategic partners on the Safer North Wales Partnership Board.

- A new free learning platform '[StayWiseCymru](#)', with resources aimed at children and young people, was launched at the Fire and Rescue Services stand at the Urdd National Eisteddfod.
- StayWiseCymru hosts free downloadable resources on a range of safety themes, with lessons centred around Emergency Services and Safety Charities available. Resources are available for educators, blue light users, and the public.
- In June, staff visited hospitals across the region as part of 'Child Safety Week', connecting with patients and their families through our popular fire safety mascot, [Sbarc](#).
- The Service continued with its programme of [Phoenix Courses](#), which help build confidence in young people.
- Service staff attended Freshers Fairs to promote fire safety advice to university students.

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

Well-being goals met:



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, embracing 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.

Summary of achievements against Objective 5 of the 2021-24 Corporate Plan.

The Grenfell Tower fire during June 2021 put the spotlight on how all Fire and Rescue Services respond and deal with fires, especially in high rise buildings. The Service responded to the Welsh Government's White Paper 'Safer Buildings in Wales'. The Welsh Government also established a Joint Inspection Team, which included a senior member of our Fire safety team.

- Fire Scene Investigators were trained to comply with the new ISO standard 17020 (this covers the activities of inspection bodies), which came into effect in October 2023.
- The Service continued to adopt an Agile Working Policy for all staff (where appropriate for both the Service and the individual).
- Renewed the certification of the Gold Corporate Health Award.
- The Service reviewed and changed the Occupational Health Provider during the period.

Achievements in 2023-24

Action 1: To continue our focus on recruiting, developing and retaining a highly skilled, motivated and bilingual workforce.

- The Service offers five staff networks, which are themed around equality, but anyone can join:
 - ◊ Women in the Fire Service
 - ◊ Firepride Allies
 - ◊ Neurodiversity Staff Network

- ◇ Religion, Ethnicity, and Cultural Heritage (REACH) Staff Network
- ◇ Parents and Carers networks
- Three new welfare vehicles were introduced into the Service. These vehicles have been designed to offer facilities such as toilet amenities, and equipment to heat food during incidents of prolonged attendance.
- Introduction of three yearly DBS checks for all staff. DBS checks are an important part of safeguarding measures and ensure that the Service maintains a safe and secure working environment for both employees and the communities we serve.
- A review of the Wholetime promotion process was undertaken under the Organisational Resourcing Committee's remit to ensure the operational promotion processes are completed fairly and equitably. This has included reviewing the eligibility criteria, application process, shortlisting, and interview process.
- Continuing to work with the Welsh Language Officer to improve the information provided to applicants as part of the recruitment process relating to Welsh language requirements. This allows the Service to improve engagement, and to remove any perceived barriers to applying.
- 'Interviewing skills' training sessions were delivered to station managers to ensure they are skilled and appropriately trained to undertake interviews and professional discussions with employees and prospective candidates for both On-call and Corporate roles.

Action 2: To continue to work towards the revalidation of the Platinum Corporate Health Award.

- The Service successfully achieved gold and platinum status in the 'Healthy Working Wales' Award following an enhanced status check during April. These awards recognise employers who demonstrate policies and actions designed to promote happier and healthier workforces. The awards send a powerful message, internally and externally, that we are committed to creating a better working environment.

Action 3: To develop a talent identification and management process to replace the existing professional development programme.

- April saw the launch of the National Fire Chiefs Council's pioneering direct entry scheme. The scheme enables those with proven leadership skills to apply for Station Manager roles, without needing to have fire service experience or taking the traditional firefighter promotional route.
- The Service has replaced the long-standing internally set and assessed promotional process (ADC) that measured an individual's performance against the old fire service personal qualities and attributes. This has been replaced with an independently set and assessed set of managerial exercises that are marked against the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Leadership Framework. This new system uses trained psychologists to assess the behaviours and performance of our current and prospective supervisory and middle managers, and was recently rolled-out by the NFCC during the national selection process that was used to appoint the new Direct Entry Station Managers. Another benefit of this new approach is that it is suitable for all staff, including operational, control, and corporate services. In addition to this process

that is used for both supervisory and middle managers, our supervisory managers are also required to oversee and provide feedback to crews undertaking a fire service standard drill.

- End-of-Firefighter diploma interviews and presentations for our apprentice firefighter development programme have now been introduced, with these sessions having been designed to identify individuals who exhibit the skills and potential to progress their firefighting careers into leadership roles.
- The NFCC Supervisory Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) has been trialled by staff across the Service, with the first of these now graduating from the programme and receiving a certificate issued by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI). This qualification now forms part of a suite of leadership qualifications that is available to all staff to complete.
- Members of our Training and Development team have worked closely with the NFCC to develop a new Middle Management Leadership Programme (MLP). Four members of staff have recently commenced the programme, and they will work closely with their Line Managers and our Professional Development Coordinator to complete this qualification, as well as provide feedback to inform future leadership training decisions. As with the SLDP, this programme is suitable for staff in all roles, including operational, control, and corporate services.

Action 4: To commence year 1 of the 3-year operational training strategy.

- A training plan was finalised and published internally for operational crews to select and book courses.
- The firefighter module course was redeveloped to better meet the needs of the on-call firefighter.
- A new medical practitioner for driving medical examinations was appointed. This follows significant delays experienced by staff trying to obtain GP appointments.
- Members of staff have attended instructor courses to provide greater capability to deliver core skill training.
- Course feedback forms are being utilised, and their responses are then analysed to identify where improvements can be made.

Action 5: To review and respond accordingly to the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor for Wales Thematic Review recommendations.

- The latest thematic report 'Learning from Grenfell', was published in 2021, with recommendations for each of the three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales.
- An informal response was provided to the Welsh Fire Advisor about the proposal not to enact all the fire safety changes required by the Grenfell Tower inquiry.
- The Service engaged with Welsh Government and PRP consulting engineers and surveyors to identify any issues with buildings over 11 metres.
- Data sharing agreements have been drafted to ensure meaningful information can be shared between PRP and the Service.

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

Well-being goals met:



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 2023-24, 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 so as to become a more environmentally conscious and responsible organisation.

Summary of achievements against Objective 6

Following an Audit Wales review of progress, the Service recruited an 'Environment and Climate Change Manager'.

Service volunteers were sought to get involved with the new 'Environment and Sustainability Working Group' to look at reducing carbon emissions as well as wider environmental issues that could be addressed.

An Environmental Strategy covering the period 2023-30 was drafted in consultation with Authority members, including detailed policies around Fleet, Estates, and Procurement. The Strategy was formally adopted by the full Fire and Rescue Authority on 17th July 2023, and can be found [here](#).

During the three-year life of this plan, we have:	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
• Attended 290 flooding / evacuation from water incidents. These increased sharply over the three-year period.	76	68	146
• Attended 84 wildfire incidents, where firefighters were on scene for a total of 1,750 hours.	35 646 hours	35 628 hours	14 476 hours
• Installed nesting boxes on Service premises to help increase the declining number of swifts.			
• Carried out thermal imaging surveys at stations as part of our insulation upgrade work.			

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carried out an operational trial of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as a sustainable substitute for diesel fuel. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaged with the Welsh Government Energy Service to develop detailed plans to decarbonise our station estate. |

Achievements in 2023-24

Action 1: To support the delivery of the Environmental Strategy 2023-30.

- The Service presented its new Environmental Strategy 2023-30 to Fire and Rescue Authority Members as the latest step in our work to create a greener and more resilient Wales.
- The following planned actions have been completed on schedule:
 - ◇ Fleet decarbonisation plan
 - ◇ Heating decarbonisation plan
 - ◇ Power decarbonisation plan
 - ◇ Beginning supplier engagement to address emissions
- The Waste Reduction Strategy has been completed in draft form and will be finalised once practical arrangements have been made to accommodate the new waste management regulations within Wales. The Service will then reflect any revised practices.

Action 2: To continue to develop our monitoring and reporting of energy consumption and carbon emissions.

- Work was initially delayed due to energy invoicing problems.
- Electricity billing issues were resolved from July through to September.
- Finance and consumption record spreadsheets, as well as the monthly performance for 2023-24 against the 2019-20 baseline, are due to be completed during the first part of the 2024-25 financial year.

Action 3: To develop our reporting of greenhouse gases in line with Welsh Government carbon reporting.

- Work was required to resolve energy invoicing problems before data could be recorded.
- Consumption and usage data was reported for electricity, gas, LPG, water, and waste for the financial year 2022-23.
- Data sheets supplied by the Welsh Government were completed and returned to the Welsh Government.
- This action has been completed, and reported to Welsh Government.

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

Well-being goals met:



Social value is the value that people place on the changes they experience in their lives. During 2023-24, 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.

Summary of achievements against Objective 7 of the 2021-24 Corporate Plan.

The Service continued its commitment to recycling its own end-of-life products through collaboration with the charity 'Fire Aid'. Expeditions to Gambia took place in March 2022 as part of 'Operation Zephyr', where donations of a fire appliance and a rescue boat were delivered. More recently, staff from the Service participated in another national convoy to Ukraine to help deliver an array of surplus equipment.

Achievements in 2023-24

Action 1: To carry out a procurement review following the appointment of a new Procurement Manager.

- The Procurement and Contracts Manager was appointed in June and has been reviewing the inventory system and making initial configuration plans.
- Work has started to understand new procurement legislation, and external courses have been booked to look at sustainable procurement.
- Work on the 'Procurement Awareness Training Package' has been delayed pending engagement with WRAP Cymru, which will take place during the 2024-25 financial year.

Action 2: To continue with our build programme to replace training towers with new steel tower installations.

- All three steel towers have been installed at:
 - ◇ Barmouth Fire Station
 - ◇ Harlech Fire Station
 - ◇ Rhosneigr Fire Station

- There were some minor design changes noted for each station, and the Facilities department sought funding to complete these.
- All work was completed, subject to some minor adaptations to the towers as requested internally by the Training department.

Action 3: To continue to deliver Safe and Well Checks to the communities of North Wales.

- Community Safety staff connected with people living on canal boats along the Llangollen canal as part of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month.
- Home Safety Support Workers from across the three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales attended the first All-Wales Continuous Professional Development (CPD) event in Llandrindod Wells, which provided opportunities to learn from each other and share best practices.
- A specialist Occupational Therapist spent time on secondment from the Welsh Ambulance Service to find out more about our collaboration work, and to see the work that goes into the 'Hospital to Healthy Homes' referrals.
- During the year, a comprehensive video was produced to refresh the knowledge of all firefighting crews on how to correctly complete a Safe and Well Check. This provided the fire safety prevention team with the opportunity to remind all users of recent changes, including new interventions that are now available.
- Partnership Managers continue to explore new relationships with external partners to identify those most vulnerable to fire and provide them with suitable advice and interventions.
- Work remains ongoing with regional hoarding groups to identify people at risk.

Action 4: To review our health and attendance management arrangements.

- A review of existing policies and procedures took place:
 - ◊ A new 'Anti-Sexual Harassment' policy and procedure has been implemented since June 2023.
 - ◊ The 'Modified Duties, Reasonable Adjustments and Phased Return to Work' policy was updated following staff consultation.
 - ◊ The 'Attendance Management' policy underwent some changes in line with the Service's best practices and to make it more user-friendly.
 - ◊ The 'Disability Retention and Redeployment' policy was reviewed and updated to ensure equal opportunities are provided for those with disabilities, and to also ensure that reasonable adjustments are appropriate.

- A collaborative effort is underway between HR, the Health and Wellbeing team, and the Equality and Diversity Inclusion Officer to create a menopause solution that provides support to all staff members facing symptoms of the menopause. The Legal Compliance and Recruitment HR Specialists participated in a Menopause Champions course in June. They are now actively directing individuals to support resources and additional courses available in the workplace.
- A reporting service has been set up, working in partnership with 'Safecall', which provides a professional, independent, external, and confidential means for employees to report concerns. As a Service, we are committed to ensuring no fraudulent activity or unethical practices take place to create a safe and inclusive place to work.
- A suite of online training sessions has been launched for aspiring managers. These have been delivered monthly by a HR specialist.
- Physiotherapy visits continue to be monitored to establish trends and better support staff.



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:	Year 1 of our Plan		Year 2 of our Plan		Year 3 of our Plan	
	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Fires attended	1,879	26.71	2,011	29.27	1,657	24.08
False alarms attended	2,517	35.79	2,674	38.92	2,901	42.15
Road traffic collisions	207	2.94	234	3.41	251	3.65
Other emergency incidents attended	751	10.68	977	14.22	1,127	16.38
Where the rate is based on 10,000 population						
Fire deaths and injuries	58	8.25	40	5.82	44	6.39
Deaths and injuries arising from fires started accidentally	50	7.11	35	5.09	40	5.81
Where the rate is based on 100,000 population						
Dwelling fires confined to room of origin	375	87.62%	330	86.84%	329	90.88%
As a percentage of the number of dwelling fires attended						

Sector indicators were introduced for 2015 and agreed to be collected and shared by all three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales.

SECTOR INDICATORS:	Year 1 of our Plan		Year 2 of our Plan		Year 3 of our Plan	
	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Deliberate fires	472	6.71	519	7.55	466	6.77
Accidental fires (or motive not known)	1,408	20.02	1,492	21.71	1,191	17.31
Where the rate is based on 10,000 population						
Fire related fatalities	7	1.00	0	0.00	7	1.02
Injuries caused by fires	51	7.25	40	5.82	37	5.38
Fire related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires	5	0.71	0	0.00	6	0.87
Fire related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires	0	0	0	0.00	1	0.15
Fire related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires	39	5.54	26	3.78	26	3.78
Fire related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires	5	0.71	3	0.44	1	0.15
Where the rate is based on 100,000 population						
Dwelling fires	429	13.02	380	11.49	362	10.90
Accidental fires in dwellings	400	12.14	344	10.40	339	10.20
Deliberate fires in dwellings	29	0.88	36	1.09	23	0.69
AFA false alarms in dwellings	1,100	33.40	1,165	35.23	1,387	41.74
Where the rate is based on 10,000 dwellings						
Fires in non-domestic premises	156	4.74	158	4.70	132	3.87
AFA false alarms in non-domestic premises	295	8.95	365	10.86	387	11.35
Where the rate is based on 1,000 non-domestic premises						
Dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm was not fitted	58	13.52%	50	13.16%	54	14.92%
As a percentage of the number of dwelling fires attended						



The Dwelling Fire Response Charter in 2023-24

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 2023-24.

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 2023-24 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 19,859 SAWCs to householders, and 20,837 children and young people at key stages 1 - 4 received a fire safety talk.

During 2023-24 we attended 339 accidental dwelling fires. As a consequence of those fires, there were 6 recorded fatalities, but 26 people sustained injuries. The number of accidental dwelling fires in the FRA area has trended downwards with 344 accidental fires attended during 2022-23.

The number of accidental dwelling fires in the FRA area over the past five years, has positively started to trend downwards.

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

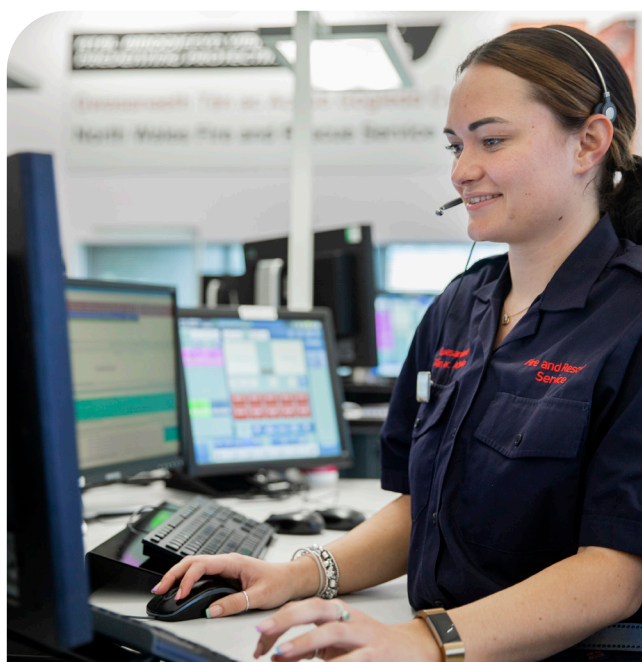
We are committed to reacting quickly and efficiently when emergency 999/112 calls are put through to us by the operator.

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 2023-24, we handled a total of 12,744 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 80.7% of occasions and between 91 and 120 seconds on 9.1% 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 2023-24, we received 76 malicious false alarms. In 47% 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 2022-23 we responded to 8% of dwelling fires within 1-5 minutes, 39% within 5-10 minutes, 30% within 10-15 minutes and 23% 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 2023-24, our crews attended 1,657 fires in a variety of different types of premises and at outdoor locations. Whilst fighting those fires, 16 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 2023-24, of all the dwelling fires that we attended, 92% 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 2023-24, 10 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 2023-24, we attended 362 fires in dwellings, of which 23 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 2023-24, we served one Enforcement Notice. No prohibition notices, formal cautions or 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 – Governance

We are still waiting for a copy of this report, and will provide an update as soon as possible.

Other Information

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External information sources used in compiling this document:

- [Wales Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics](#)
- [Wales Future Trends Report \(2021\)](#)

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.

Public consultations are listed below:

Title	Consultation	Publication	For year
Community Risk Management Plan 2024-29	Spring 2024	Summer 2024	2024-29
Emergency Cover Review	Summer/Autumn 2023	Winter 2023	2023-24
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

Recent staff surveys are listed below:

Title	Consultation	
Fire Family Survey	Autumn 2023	18 September – 16 October 2023
Fire Family Survey	Autumn 2021	18 October – 08 November 2021



Glossary and 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.

Wildfires

A grassland, woodland and crop fire where the incident was attended by four or more vehicles, or the Service was in attendance for six hours or more, or where there was an estimated fire damage area of over 10,000 square meters.

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:

- The victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be serious.
- The victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be slight.
- The victim was given first aid at the scene only, but required no further treatment.
- 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.

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.

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.

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.

Have your say

We are always looking for ways to improve our service and to present information that is meaningful. In order to help us to do this we want to ensure your views are considered when delivering our activities and keeping you informed. 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.

Other versions of this document are available

- In paper and electronic formats.
- In Welsh and English.
- In accessible formats through our website.

Write to us



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Call us



01745 535 250

Send us an email



Corporateplanning.helpdesk@northwalesfire.gov.wales

Visit our website



www.northwalesfire.gov.wales

Or follow us on



X (previously Twitter): [@northwalesfire](https://twitter.com/northwalesfire)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/northwalesfireservice

Instagram: [@northwalesfire](https://www.instagram.com/northwalesfire)

Please ring 999 only in an emergency

Report to	Executive Panel	
Date	16th September 2024	
Lead Officer	Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer	
Contact Officer	Anthony Jones, Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation	
Subject	Performance Monitoring, April 2024 - June 2024	

Purpose of Report

1. To provide comparative data relating to the Fire and Rescue Authority's 'Our 5 Principles for keeping communities safe' for the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year. The report also contains commentary on activity and proposed activity associated with the principles.
2. To highlight emerging trends in both increased, reduced and new demands.
3. To inform the development of new or revised activity to mitigate any increasing and emergent demand and risk.

Summary

4. The report has changed from its previous format to reflect the Fire and Rescue Authority's move to a Community Risk Management Plan.
5. There has been a significant (76%) increase in cases of short-term sickness in Q1 compared to the same period last year. P3.
6. There has been a substantial reduction in the number of fires attended. A total of 414 fires were attended, a 31.6% reduction on the same period last year. P7.
7. There has been a significant reduction in the number of accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) attended. 69 accidental dwelling fires were attended during the first quarter of 2024/25, 24.2% less than the previous year (91). This is despite the number of ADFs attributed to 'Faulty fuel supply – electricity' increasing by 100.0% from 5 to 10. P9.
8. A total of 798 False Alarms were attended during the reporting period. This is an increase of 13.7% compared with the same period of the previous financial year, due to rises in malicious false alarms, and in calls related to fire alarm due to apparatus. P20.

Recommendation

9. To note the contents of the performance monitoring report.

Information

Well-being Objectives	Helps the Authority to monitor its performance against the improvement and well-being objectives in the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2024-25.
Budget	No direct budget implications. However, reporting allows FRA to consider any potential impacts on budget due to unanticipated incident activity.
Legal	Supports the FRA, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to demonstrate how it is taking all reasonable steps, in exercising its functions, to meet its well-being objectives.
Staffing	No staffing implications. However, aligning reporting to the FRA's CRMP will be more efficient.
Equalities/Human Rights/Welsh Language	No implication identified.
Risks	No risk implications



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Monitoring Report: April 2024 – June 2024



Our five principles for keeping communities safe

PEOPLE

PREVENTION

PROTECTION

RESPONSE

ENVIRONMENT

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Our People Principle



1 Sickness Absence

According to the National Fire and Rescue Service Sickness Absence Report for April 2023 – September 2023, the average is 4.43 duty days sickness absence per staff member, equating to 5.82%.

Total time lost, for NWFRS, due to sickness absence during quarter 1 remains lower at 5.25% although has increased by 0.22% since quarter 1 of 2023/24.

There were 863 individuals employed in 911 roles by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) during quarter one.

Please note that throughout the report, the number of cases in the year to date (YTD) will not be a sum of the quarters as some individuals' absences will span across quarters. There may also be fluctuations in the numbers reported from quarter to quarter as a result of changes to employee data.

1.1 All Sickness Absence

	Year 2023/2024			Year 2024/2025			Absence Rate Variance
	Q1 Cases	Q1 Days Lost	Q1 Lost time %	Q1 Cases	Q1 Days Lost	Q1 Lost time %	
Long Term Sickness	64	3448	4.43%	51	3098	3.78%	↓ 0.65%
Short Term Sickness	88	472	0.59%	155	1204	1.47%	↑ 0.88%
Total	152	3920	5.03%	206	4302	5.25%	↑ 0.22%

During Quarter 1, the number of short-term absence cases has nearly doubled, with short term absence accounting for 1.47% of time lost, an increase of 0.88% from the same period in the previous year.

In contrast, the number of long-term sickness cases has reduced in comparison with the same period in the previous year, with long term absence now accounting for 3.78% of time lost.

Some duty systems may see a higher percentage of lost time despite fewer cases of absence being recorded. This is caused by there being fewer staff within that duty system. The sickness absence percentage calculation is proportionate to the number of staff within that duty system.

Short term means individual periods of sickness of 27 calendar days or less.

Long term means individual periods of 28 calendar days or more.

1.2 Short Term Sickness

Short Term Sickness equates to 1.47% of lost time during first quarter.

	2023/24 Q1 Cases	2023/24 Q1 Days lost	2023/24 Q1 Lost time %	2024/25 Q1 Cases	2024/25 Q1 Days lost	2024/25 Q1 Lost time %	Percentage change in cases
Wholetime*	24	122	0.49%	54	461	1.88%	125%
RDS /On-Call	44	263	0.62%	71	543	1.29%	61%
Control	7	34	1.51%	13	80	2.96%	85%
Corporate Departments	13	76	0.60%	17	120	0.94%	31%
Total	88	495	0.59%	155	1204	1.47%	76%

(*Wholetime - includes all operational staff, such as station based, rural and flexi duty officers)

(SLT have been split so operational members of SLT are included within wholetime figures and Heads of Departments are included within Corporate Departments).

Top 3 Short Term Sickness Absence Reasons (Cases)

	Absence Reason	Cases	Lost time %
1	Musculoskeletal – Lower Limb	21	2.54%
2	Cold, Flu	31	1.67%
3	Musculoskeletal – Upper Limb	9	1.20%

Lost time is based upon the days lost rather than the case numbers

The reasons for absence above are across all duty types.

The number of short-term cases has increased by 76% between Q1 last year and Q1 this year. However, the headcount for both Q1 periods remain at similar levels.

There have been a high number of cases of cold/flu, stomach bugs/norovirus and whilst we've had a number of covid cases with employees booking sick due to being symptomatic and unwell, this has remained at a similar level to Q1 2023. Since 2022, absence due to covid has been treated as normal absence for pay, reviews, stats etc.

20 cases or 12% of the short-term sickness cases were reported as being due to sickness and diarrhoea, of which there was only 6 cases of in the same period in the previous year.

UK Government reported on 28 April 2024 that 'there was an unseasonal rise in norovirus activity during weeks 16 and 17 of 2024, mostly attributable to increased reporting in adults aged 65 years and over. This coincided with more outbreaks reported in health and social care settings.

17 cases were due to short term mental health anxiety and stress, compared to 7 short term mental health cases in the same period in the previous year. 12 of the 17 cases were at operational stations (6 retained, 6 wholetime); and 3 in Control. Whilst they are short term absences for various mental health reasons, the same support is offered with employees signposted to NWFRS related support via OH, EAP, FFC as well as other local agencies that we are aware of.

1.3 Long Term Sickness

Long Term sickness equates to an average of 3.78% of lost time during quarter 1.

	2023/24 - Q1 Cases	2023/24 - Q1 Days lost	2023/24 - Q1 Lost time %	2024/25 - Q1 Cases	2024/25 - Q1 Days lost	2024/25 - Q1 Lost time %	Percentage change in cases
WDS Stations	12	833	3.35%	20	1296	5.27%	66%
RDS /On-Call	36	2378	5.53%	22	1207	2.88%	-39%
Control	2	150	6.81%	2	87	3.22%	0
Corporate Departments	9	329	2.70%	7	508	3.97%	-22%
Total	64	3690	4.42%	51	3098	3.78%	-20%

Top 3 Long Term Sickness Absence Reasons (Cases)

	Absence Reason	Cases	Lost Time %
1	Musculoskeletal - Neck	5	4.40%
2	Musculoskeletal – Lower Limb	6	4.26%
3	Musculoskeletal – Upper Limb	5	3.43%

Lost time is based upon the days lost rather than the case numbers

The number of long-term cases has decreased in Q1 this year compared with the same period last year by just over 20%. This has been a gradual decrease over 2023/2024 and has continued to reduce in 2024/25.

During 2023/24 there were a number of very long-term sick cases that were concluded with the employees either returning to work, resigning or leaving through ill health retirement.

In comparison with the other Welsh Fire and Rescue Services, North Wales had the lowest percentage of time lost due to short term absence out of all three services.

North Wales had the lowest time lost due to long term absence for Fire Control staff but was slightly higher than Mid and West Wales for wholetime uniformed staff and was at the average level for non-operational staff, with 7.54% of time lost.

Note, the All Wales data only reported on absence data for wholetime, control and corporate staff and is for the period April 2022 to March 2023 with the next update due in October 2024.

Our Prevention Principle



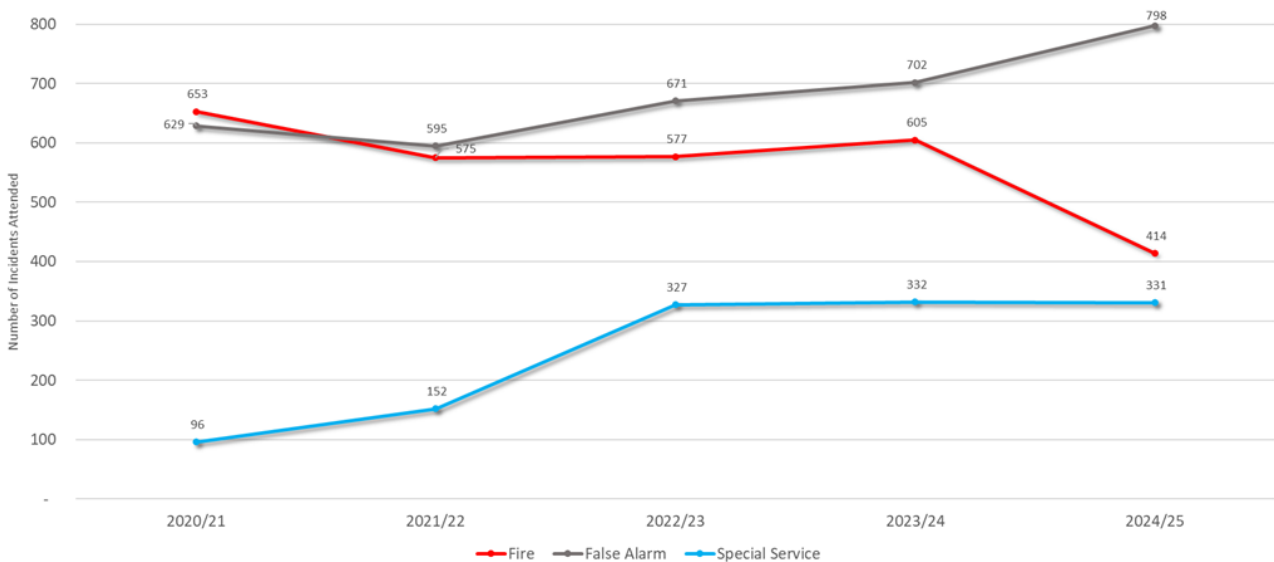
2 All Incidents

All Incidents – **1,543** incidents were attended during the first quarter of the financial year, which is a 5.9% decrease compared to quarter one (Q1) of financial year 2023/24, and 2.0% above the 3-year average of 1,512.

Fires – **414**, 29.4% less than the Q1 three-year average of 586.

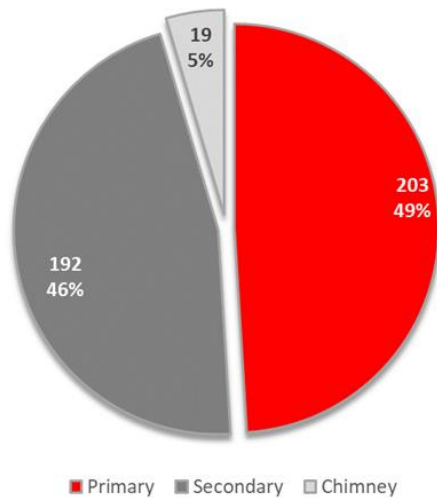
False Alarms – **798**, 21.6% more than the Q1 three-year average of 656.

SSCs – **331**, 22.6% higher than the Q1 three-year average of 270.



3 Fires, by Category and Motive

414 fires were attended; a 31.6% decrease from the 605 attended during Q1 of the 2023/24 financial year.



Primary Fires

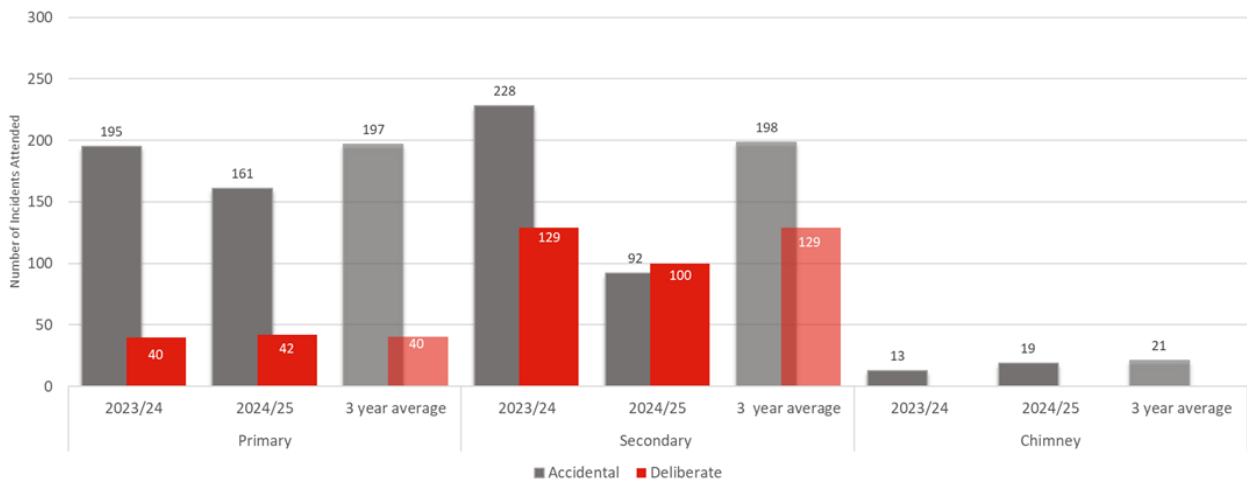
- **Accidental: 161** (79.3%).
- **Deliberate: 42** (20.7%).

Secondary Fires

- **Accidental: 92** (47.9%).
- **Deliberate: 100** (52.1%).

Chimney fires

- **19** (4.6% of all fires attended).



Actions taken to date:

- During the first quarter of the financial year 2024/25, a total of **5,006** Safe and Well Checks (SAWCs) were completed, this is ahead of target.
- Partnership Managers continue to foster relationships with external agencies to encourage high quality referrals and are working towards a seminar to further support this.
- Campaign Steering Group (CSG) continued to work with Corporate Communications to proactively promote fire, road and water safety across all media platforms.

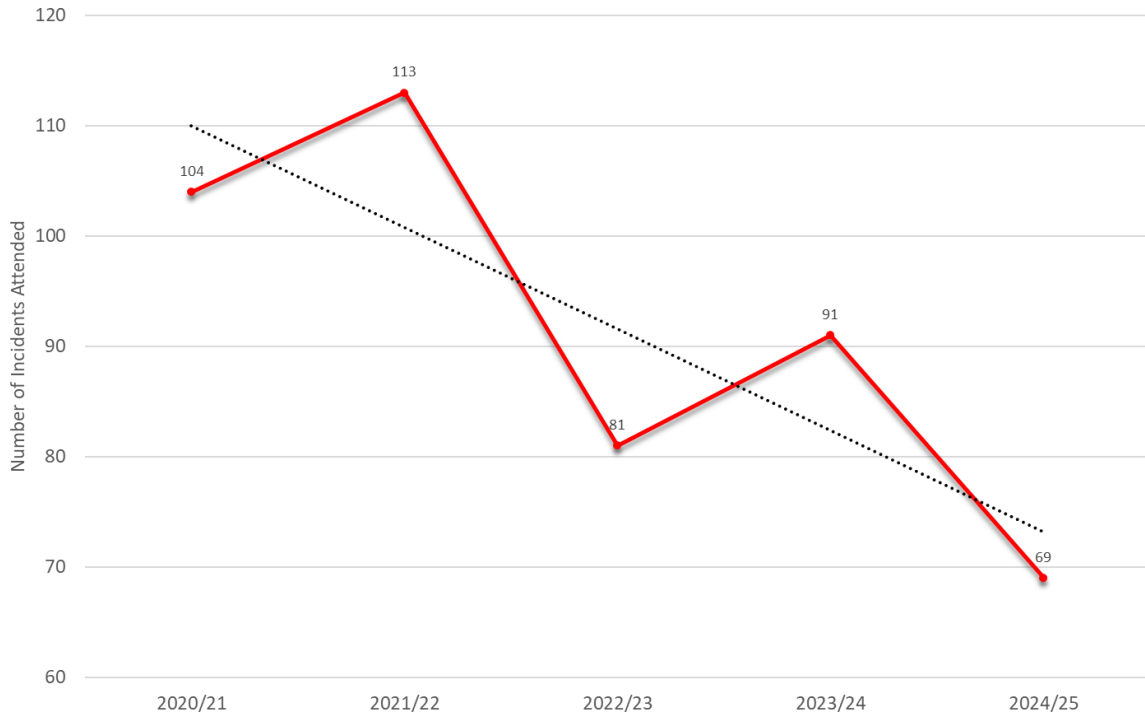
- There was significant media attention around fires involving tumble dryers that led to numerous social media posts, interviews with BBC involving FRS staff and the occupiers, local campaigns and radio interviews.
- Preparation for our Summer Safety campaigns which will include engagement with all caravan and camp sites across the service to promote safe use of BBQs and controlled burning. Contact will highlight the need to “police” their sites to discourage deliberate fire setting.
- Level 3 hotspotting events and Community Impact days with external agencies continue to gather momentum: 1 per month in each area.
- Significant amount of Road Safety engagement and input continues to be delivered, including Olivia's story, Biker Brew sessions, Biker Down courses and online safety videos.
- New lone working devices purchased for all HSSWs and for the first time will be given to the Compliance officers. Training and roll out will commence during Q2.
- Development of our prevention staff continues in line with the Department Objectives with at least 2 x 30 mins sessions each month using both external and internal providers.

Further Actions

Activity continuously ongoing.

4 Accidental Fires in Dwellings (ADFs)

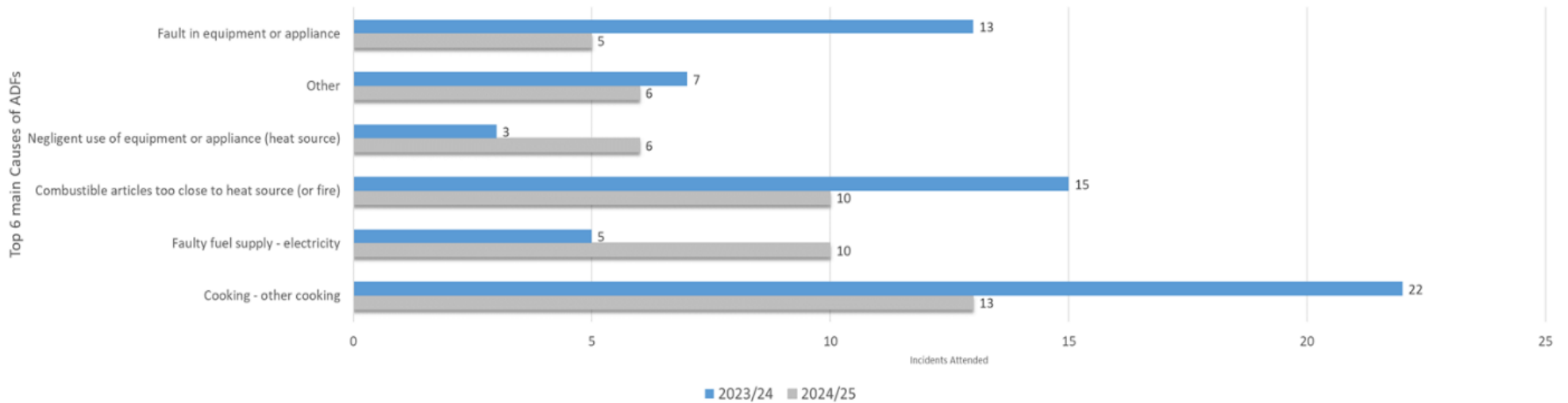
69 accidental dwelling fires were attended during the first quarter of 2024/25, 24.2% less than the previous year (91), and 27.4% less than the three-year average of 95.



5 Main cause of accidental dwelling fires

There were numerous main causes of ADFs. Although the most common during Q1 of 2024/25 was 'Cooking – other cooking', this still showed a 40.9% decrease from 22 to **13** compared with the same period last year. 'Fault in equipment or appliance' also showed a reduction of 61.5% from 13 to **5**.

Despite this, 'Faulty fuel supply – electricity' increased by 100.0% from 5 to **10**. Further analysis of this increase did not identify a trend in any particular piece of equipment as having caused the fires.



Action taken to date:

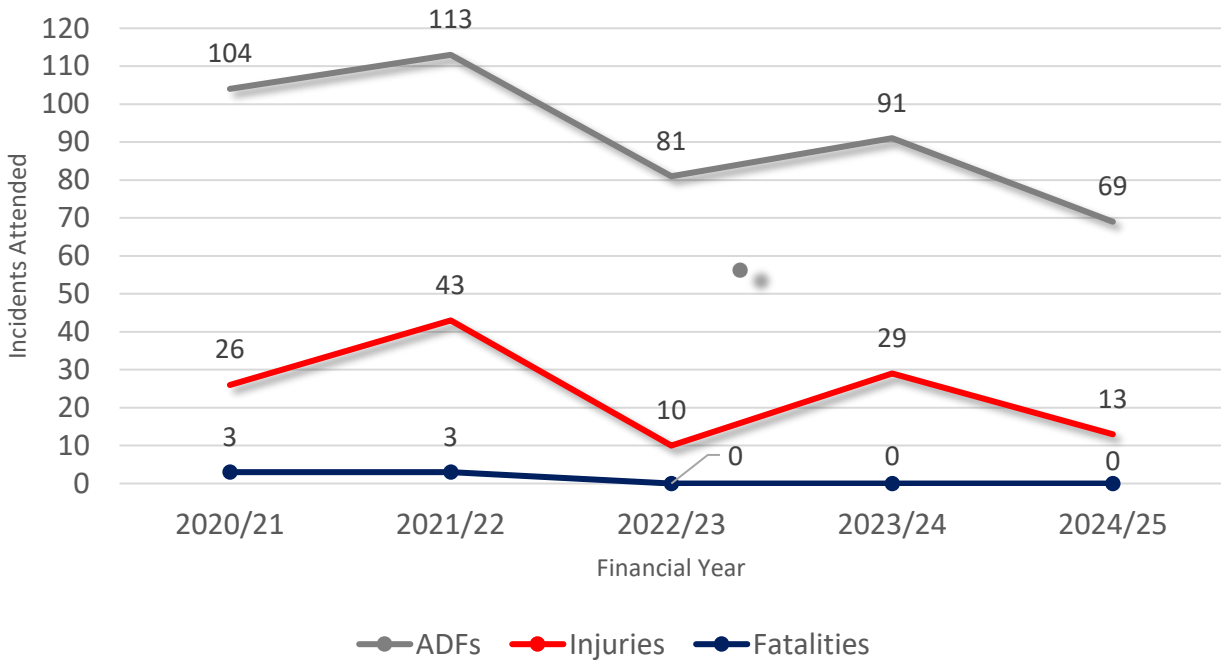
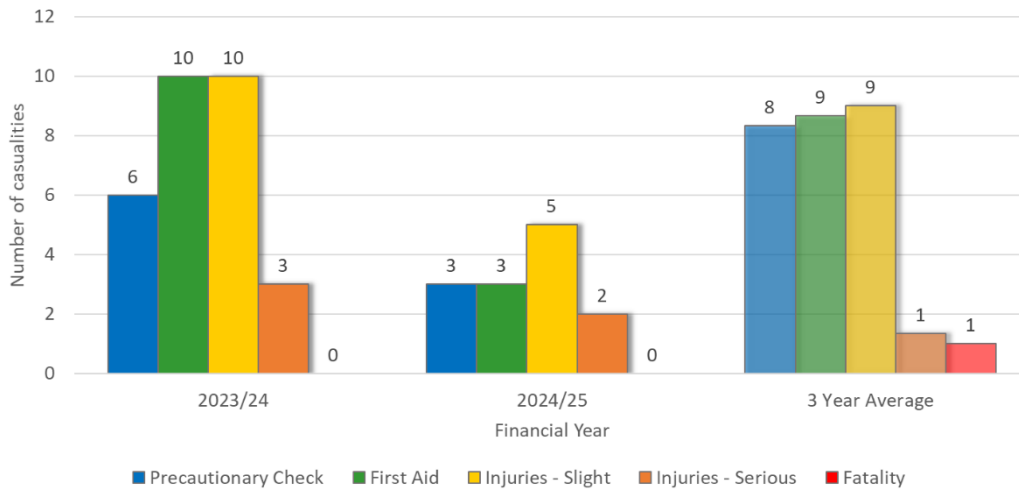
- During Q1, a refreshed SAWC policy and related procedures were submitted to SLT.
- Review of 'scoring criteria' completed during Q1, all areas offices are now consistent which will help us be as targeted as possible. This has helped ensure the HSSWs' lists are manageable and will help avoid "overdue" SAWCs.
- Engagement with operational crews continues on a very regular basis to ensure the 1 hour per activity is productive.
- 1 x Fire Awareness Child Education (FACE) and 7 x FireSafe programs delivered (Arson Reduction Team (ART) & DangerPoint).
- 5 x Phoenix courses delivered to 58 Children and Young People (CYP).

Further Actions:

Planning underway to determine how fire setting intervention activity will be delivered when Arson Reduction Team has disbanded.

6 Fatalities and Casualties from Accidental Fires in Dwellings

During Q1 of 2024/25, **13** people sustained injuries at **11** ADFs. No fatalities were recorded during the quarter.



Of the **13** casualties, **9** (69.2%) were 'overcome by gas, smoke or toxic fumes; asphyxiation', **1** sustained slight burn injuries, **1** sustained severe burn injuries, and **1** had 'breathing difficulties (other than 'overcome by gas, smoke or toxic fumes; asphyxiation)'. The **1** other casualty's injury type was recorded as 'Other'.

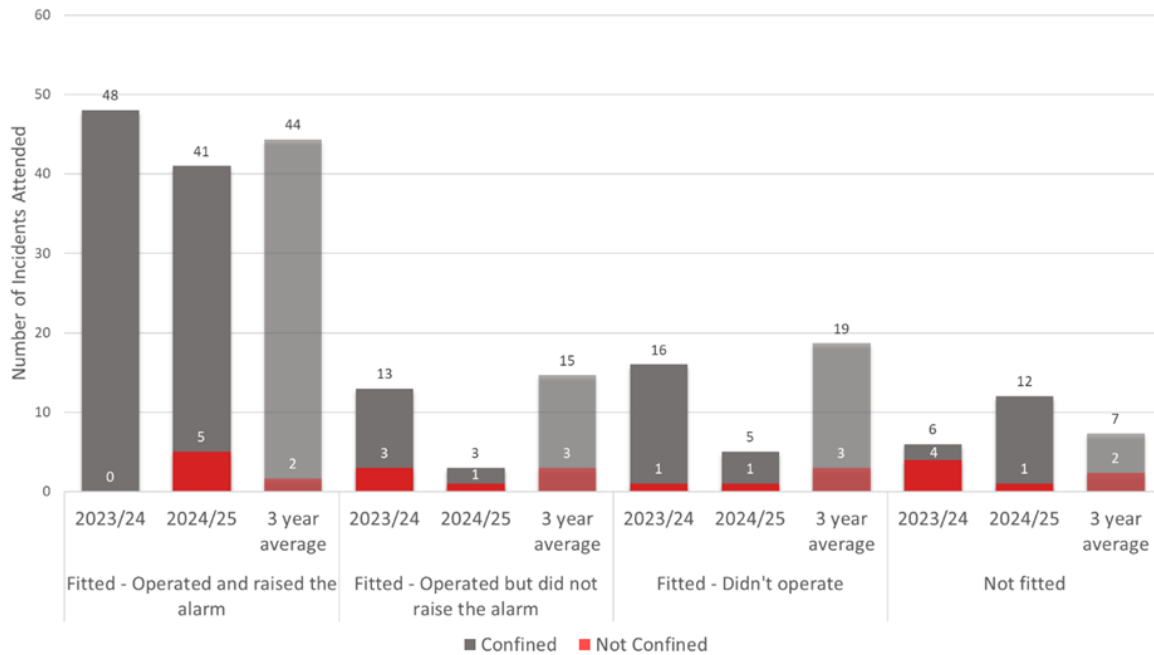
7 Smoke Detectors – Accidental Dwelling Fires

Detectors: smoke/heat detectors were present at **56** (81.2%) accidental dwelling fires attended during Q1 of financial year 2024/25.

Alarms only operated and raised the alarm at **46** (66.7%) ADFs.

Alarms were not fitted at **13** of the ADFs attended.

Of the **69** ADFs attended, **61** were confined to the room of origin, and **8** were not confined.



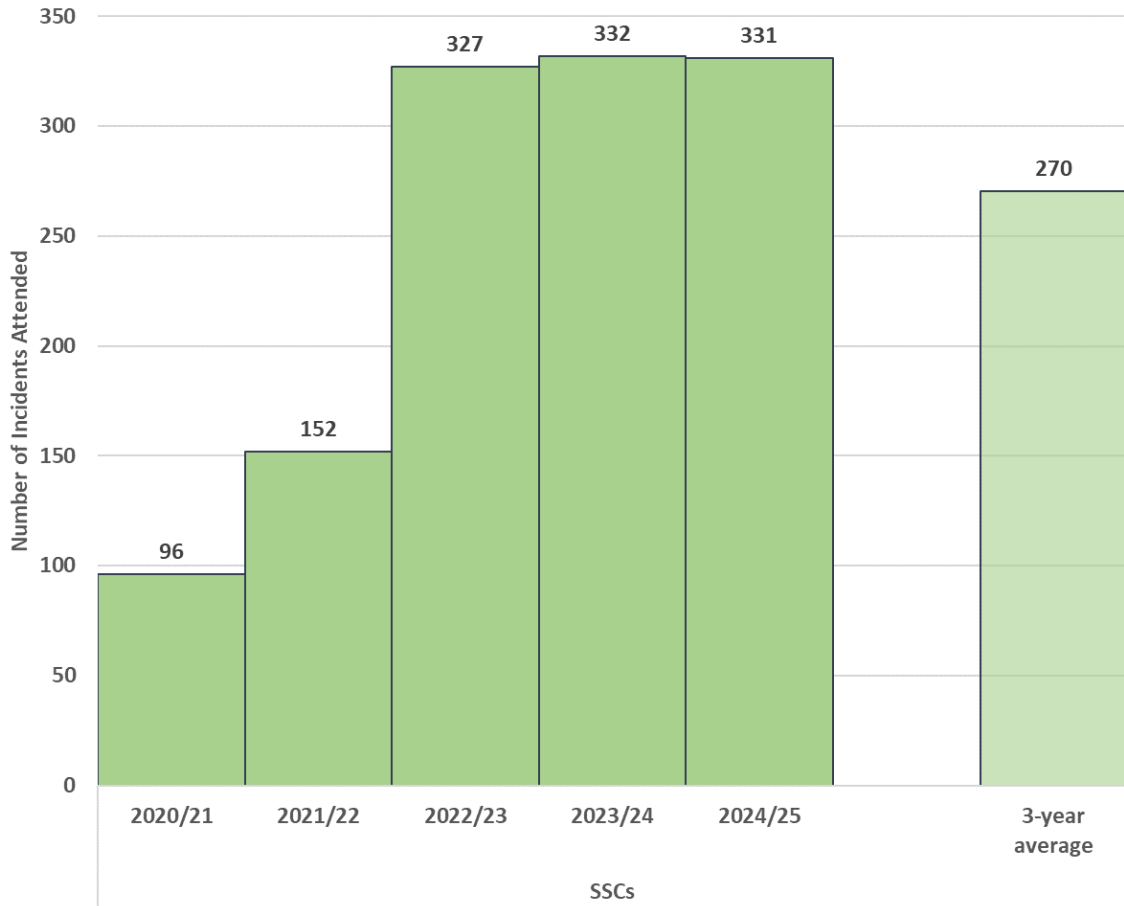
Actions taken to support the most vulnerable to fires in their homes

- SAWCs continue to be delivered across the service with effort to identify the most vulnerable ongoing.
- Partnership managers continue to foster relationships with external agencies to encourage high quality referrals.
- The 3 largest campaigns on the CSG planer during Q1 were:
 - Dementia Awareness week: 2 x events arranged involving over 60 people with dementia at Bodnant Gardens and Plas Mawr country estate.
 - Deaf Awareness week: SAWC Video incorporating British Sign Language launched. Also, all WT/DC staff given refresher training regarding fitting hard of hearing units.

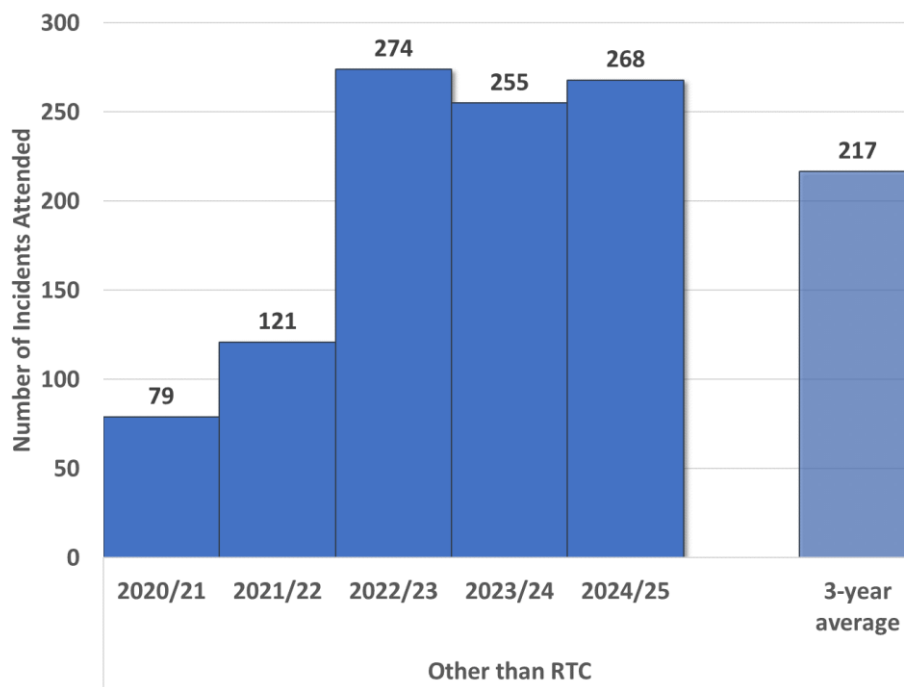
- Child Safety week. 3 engagement events held at our general hospitals.
- Engagement with vulnerable groups continues, for example, dementia groups, carers and practitioners, the travelling community, asylum seekers and many age-related groups.

8 Special Service Calls (SSCs)

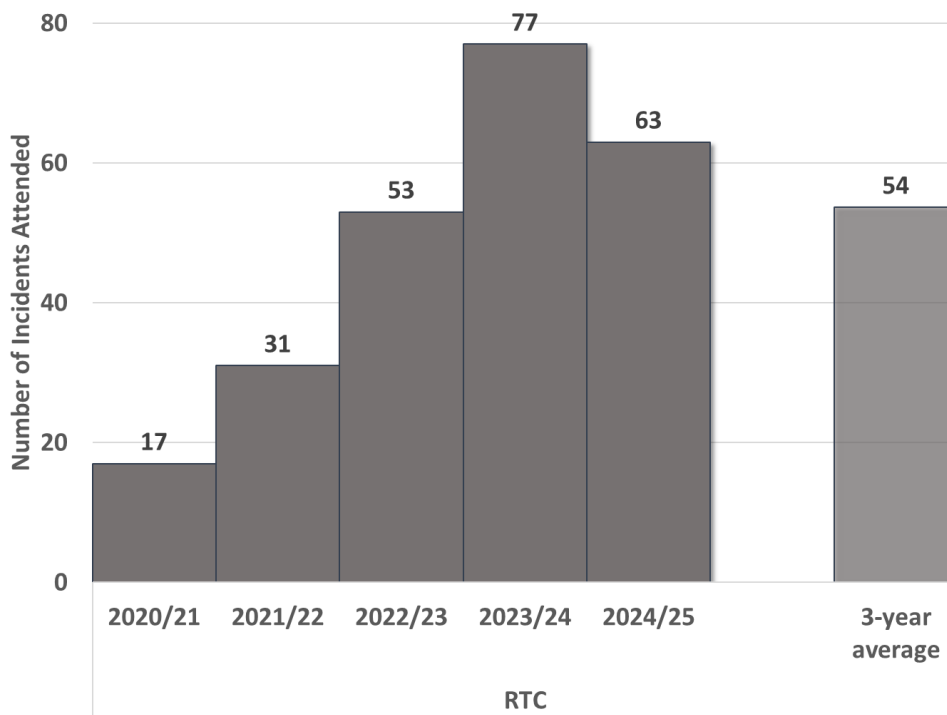
A total of **331** special service calls (including RTCs) were attended during Q1 of 2024/25. This is a 0.3% decrease compared with the previous financial year.



The following graph reflects special service calls **excluding RTCs**.



The number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) attended during Q1 of 2024/25 decreased 18.2% to **63** compared to the previous year.



Other than RTC, categories which saw the largest **increase** in attendances included:

- **5** Rescue or evacuation from water – an increase of 400.0% from 1.
- **5** Making Safe (not RTC) - an increase of 400.0% from 1.
- **5** Hazardous Materials incident - an increase of 150.0% from 2.
- **26** Other rescue/release of persons – an increase of 116.7% from 12.

Despite this, other categories saw a **decrease** in the number of incidents attended. These included:

- **15** Animal assistance incidents - a decrease of 42.3% from 26.
- **108** Assist other agencies - a decrease of 3.6% from 112.
- **15** Effecting entry/exit - a decrease of 40.0% from 25.

Actions taken to date:

During April videos messages were produced to support Water Safety Week, and more recently prepared, and facilitated 3 x simultaneous 'Drowning Prevention' events that will take place on July 25th in Wrexham, Bala and Llanberis. These are Multiy agency supported events and large social media activity expected, promoting the 'Float to live' message.

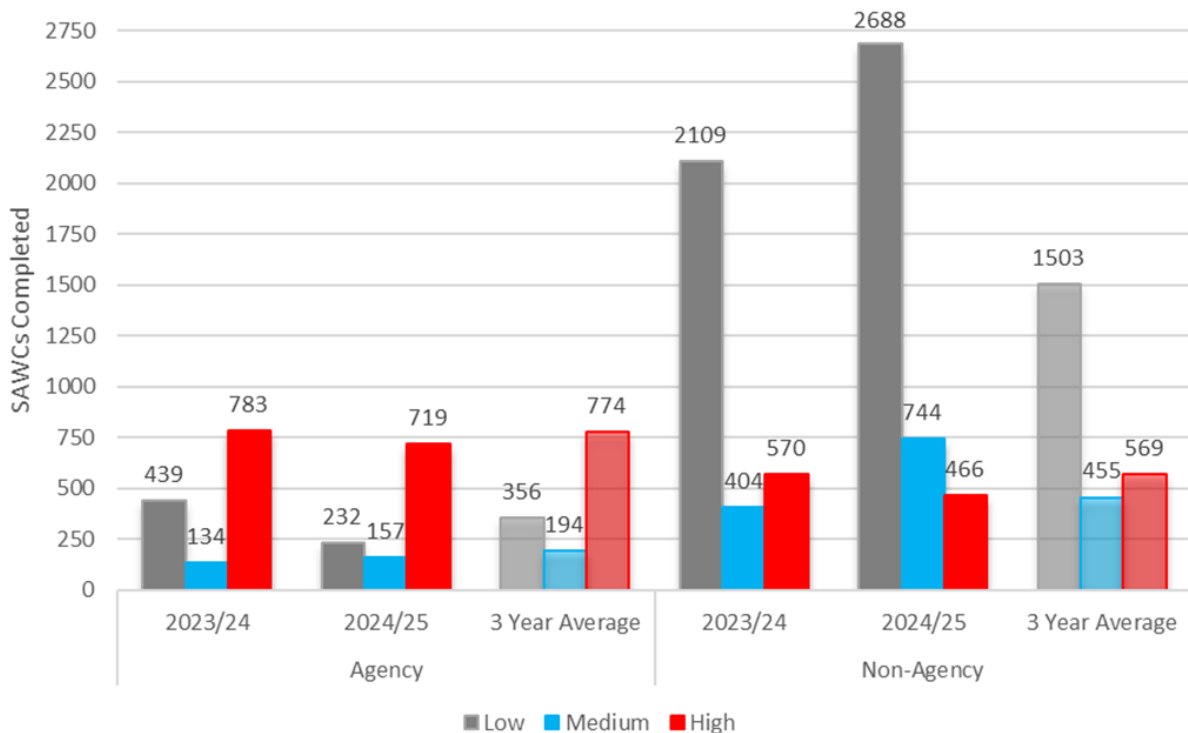
9 Safe and Well Checks

During the first quarter of financial year 2024/25, a total of **5,006** SAWCs were completed of which:

- **1,185** (23.7%) were High priority, with **719** (60.7%) of these coming from a partner agency.
- **901** (18.0%) were Medium priority, with **157** (17.4%) of these coming from a partner agency.
- **2,920** (58.3%) were Low priority, with **232** (8.0%) of these coming from a partner agency.

Whilst there has been a 12.8% increase in the number of SAWCs completed compared with the same period last year, there has been a 12.4% decrease in the number of high priority SAWCs completed compared with Q1 of 2023/24.

Number of 'Safe and Well Checks' completed by risk level, and where referred by another agency.



Actions taken to date:

- SAWCs continue to be delivered by all operational crews and the designated Home Safety Support Workers (HSSWs). Currently well ahead of target for the year.
- The WDS rural teams are managing the Low and Mediums on the Record Management System (RMS) list, with a monthly day of support from FS team members. No further action required.
- The re-introduction during Q1 of RDS crews being given SAWCs to complete on drill nights is being monitored.
- The WT/DC crews continue to conduct 1 hour each day of targeted activity using the Exeter data overlays. End of tour returns are received and monitored. No problems to report and output is generally good.
- Hotspotting is monitored at the tri-weekly Fire Safety meetings, any shortcomings are identified and dealt with accordingly.
- HSSWs continue to manage their RMS lists which im very pleased to state are finally in a very healthy and more manageable position. Managers have worked hard to try and ensure the referrals we receive are as targeted as possible.
- Now HSSWs lists are manageable, area Fire Safety teams are conducting regular door to door campaigns using the Exeter Data.

Further Actions:

- Agency Seminar: An event will be held during Sept/Oct where invited representatives from the main referring agencies will receive input from the Prevention team to help them identify our target audience. Its is imperative that our referrals are as targeted as possible to ensure we have the best impact and are able to deliver in a timely manner.
- It has been identified that the majority of SAWCs conducted during the WT/DC 1 hour per day activity and also during Hotspotting activity are being incorrectly classified as Low priority. During Q1, all crews have been instructed to start using the same priority classification process (contributory factors) as the area Fire Safety offices, this will help ensure the correct priority level is assigned to each SAWC.

This work is in the early stages and will be monitored accordingly, however should help reduce the amount of "low level" checks conducted and increase both Medium and Highs.

Our Protection Principle

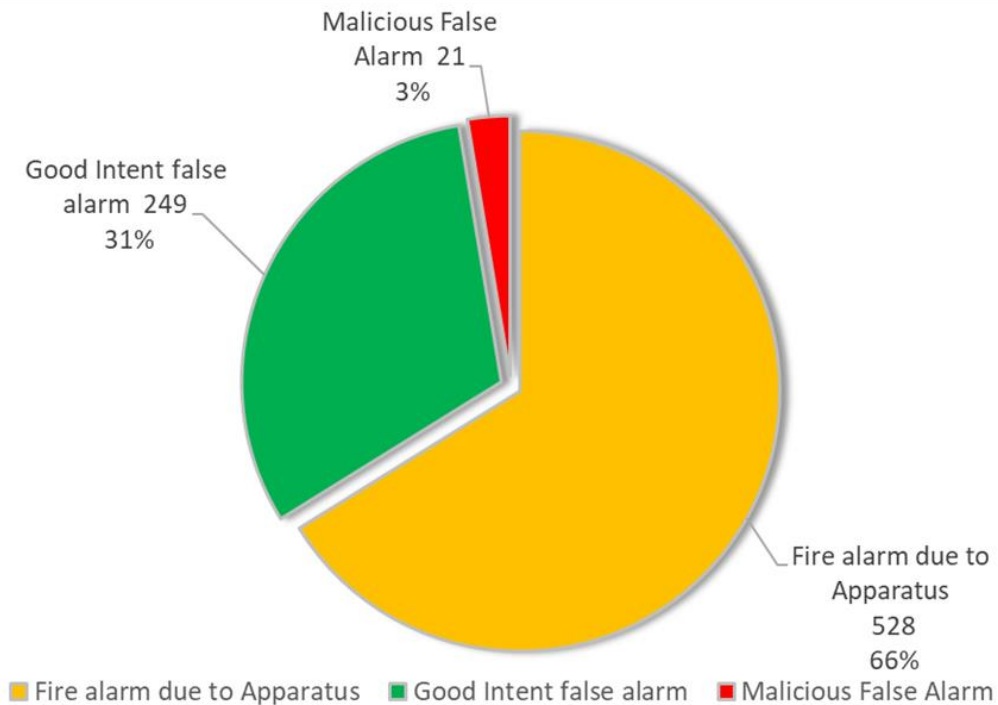


10 False Alarms

A total of **798** False Alarms were attended during the reporting period. This is an increase of 13.7% compared with the same period of the previous financial year.

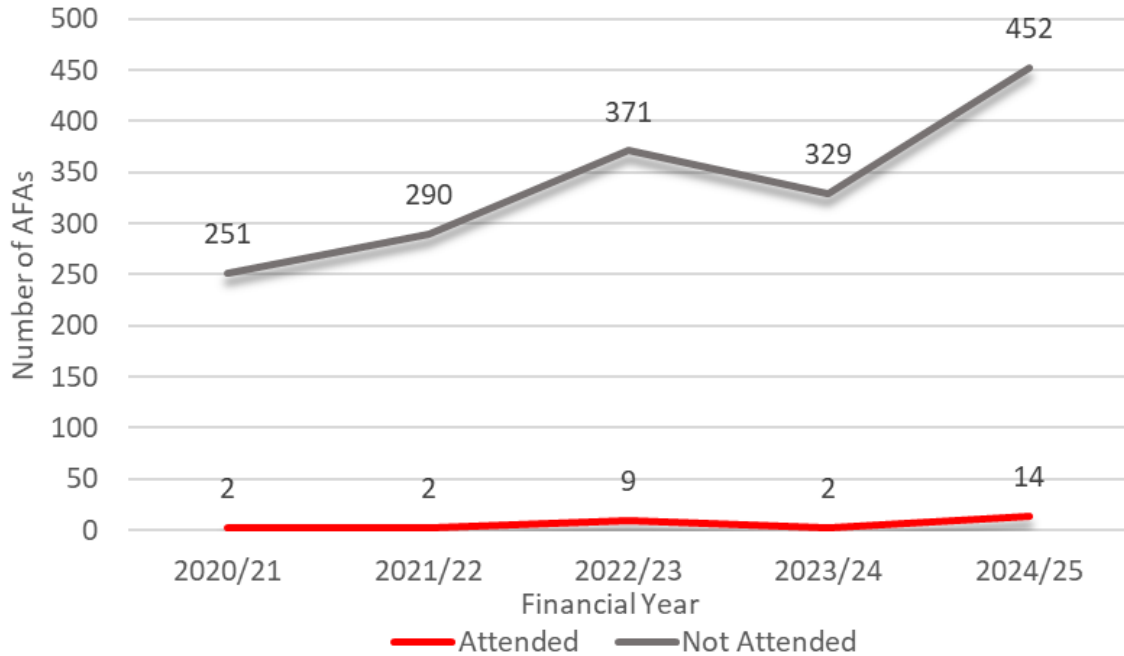
This rise in False Alarms can be attributed to a 29.7% increase in Fire alarm due to apparatus (AFA) (407 to **528**), as well as a 50.0% rise in Malicious False Alarms (14 to **21**).

Good intent false alarms saw a decrease from 281 to **249**.



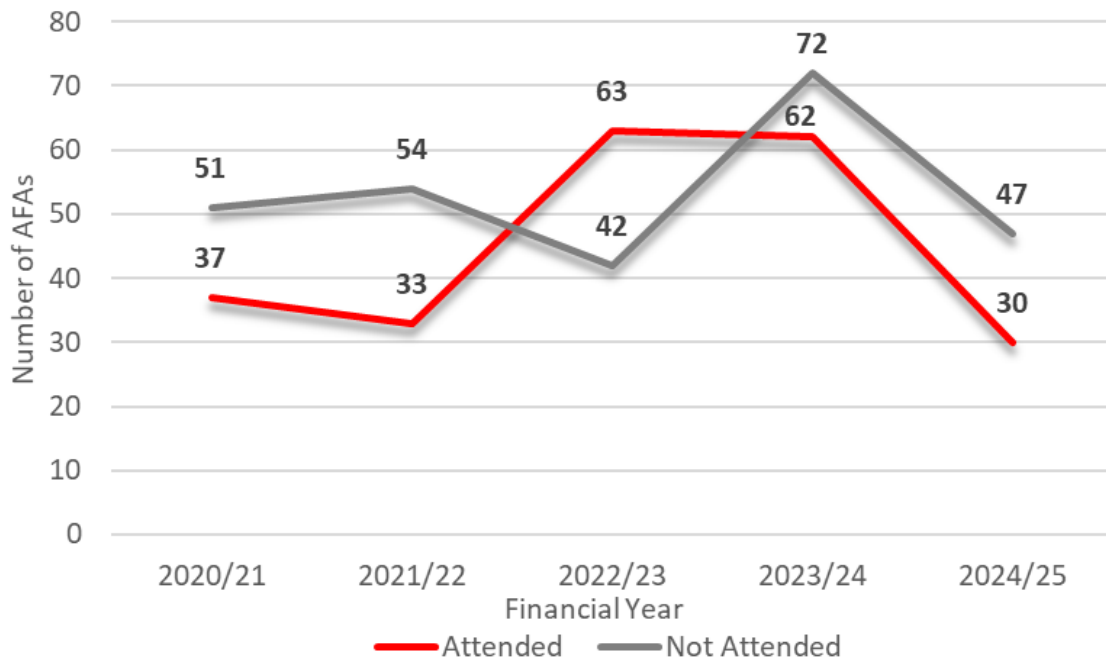
11 Commercial AFA calls

466 Commercial AFA calls were received during the reporting period, which is the highest number of calls received during any Q1 period in the last five years.



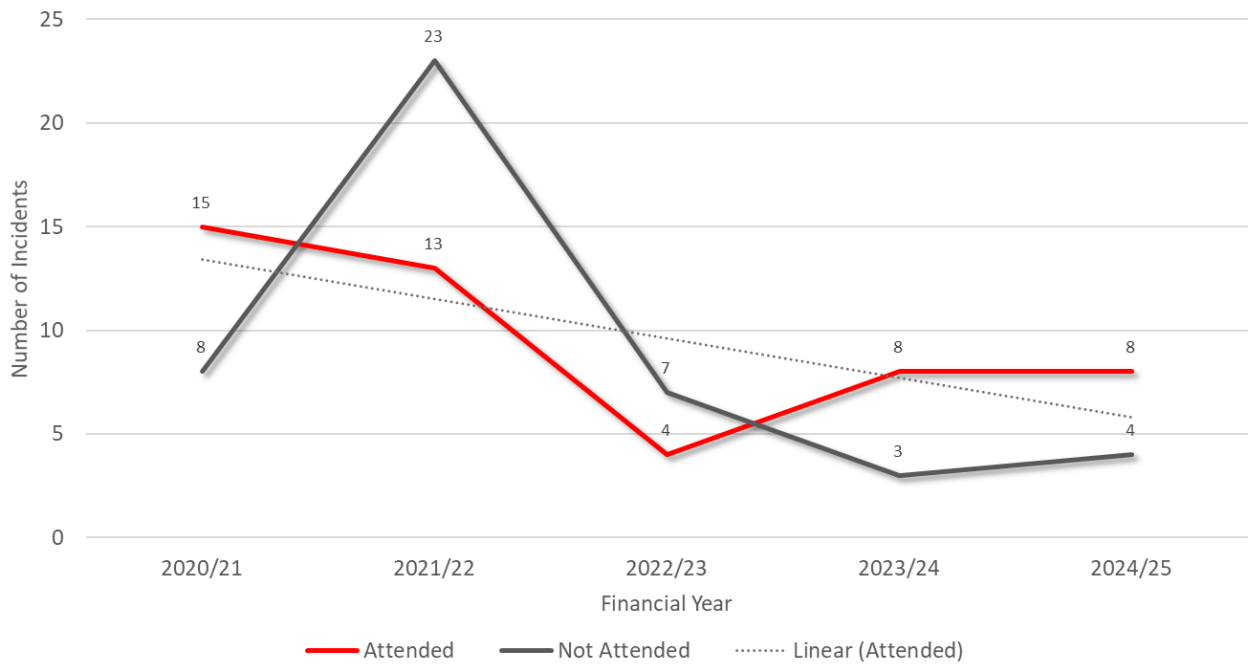
12 Hospital AFA calls

77 Hospital AFA calls were received during Q1 of 2024/25, which is the lowest number of calls received during any Q1 period in the last five years. **30** were attended, 51.6% less than last year (62).



13 HMP Berwyn

8 primary fires were started deliberately at HMP Berwyn. This is the same number as Q1 in 2023/24.



Actions taken to date:

- The communication procedure between HMP Berwyn and Control room, continues to work well with a number of incidents not being attended or resulting in crews being stood down before attendance.
- NWFRS maintain a working relationship with the HMP Berwyn Management team to continue the reduction in attendances where possible.

Our Response Principle



14 RDS Station Availability

The below table shows the average pump availability for all RDS Stations between 06:00 and 18:00. The availability is broken down by month, showing the respective weekday and weekend/bank holiday availability.

The table is representative of all RDS watches that are not based at wholetime or day crewed stations.

Average of RDS Stations Availability 06:00-18:00				
Day/Month	April	May	June	Q1
Weekday	5	4	4	4
Weekend (incl. Bank Holiday)	12	13	11	12
Overall Average	7	7	6	7

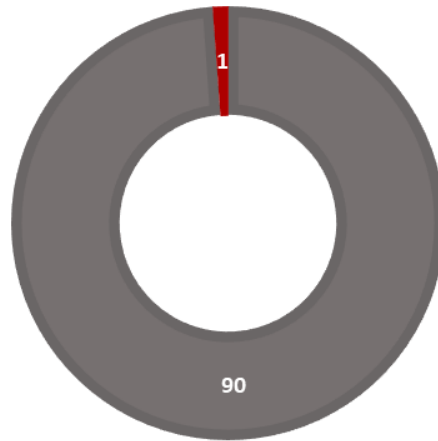
Please note that availabilities have been rounded down to the nearest whole number.

15 Planned 18 Pump Availability

Planning for 18 Pump availability for the next day has to be completed every afternoon. Time taken to complete this task depends upon the number of gaps that need to be covered and the available resources. This planning can take between 3 and 6 hours to complete initially.

18 PUMP PLANNED AVAILABILITY Q1 2024/25

■ 100% Pump Availability Met ■ 100% Pump Availability Not Met



Number of Days Planned Availability Achieved	
100% Pump Availability Met	
Weekday	61
Weekend/Bank Holiday	29
100% Pump Availability Not Met	
Weekday	1

N.B. The below comment from the Control Availability Manager explains the reasoning for why 100% availability is not showing as achieved for one weekday (29/05/2024).

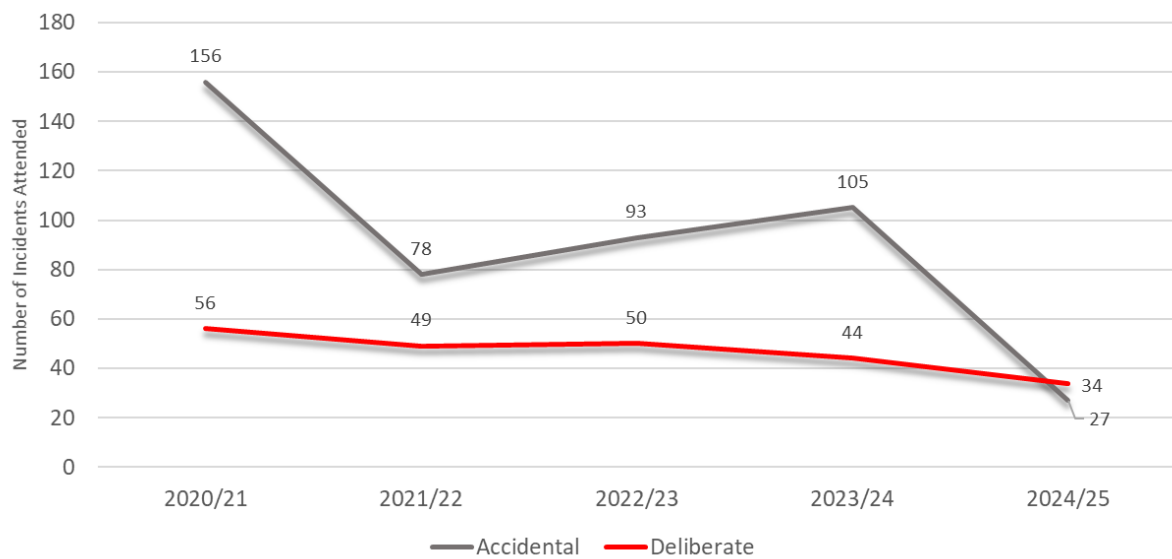
With regards to the 29th May – at the time of planning, there were 17½ appliances available due to no additional resources being available to use for deployments. However, the number of actual appliance per hour available on the day itself (recorded retrospectively as opposed to at the time of planning) did not drop below 18 appliances.

Our Environment Principle



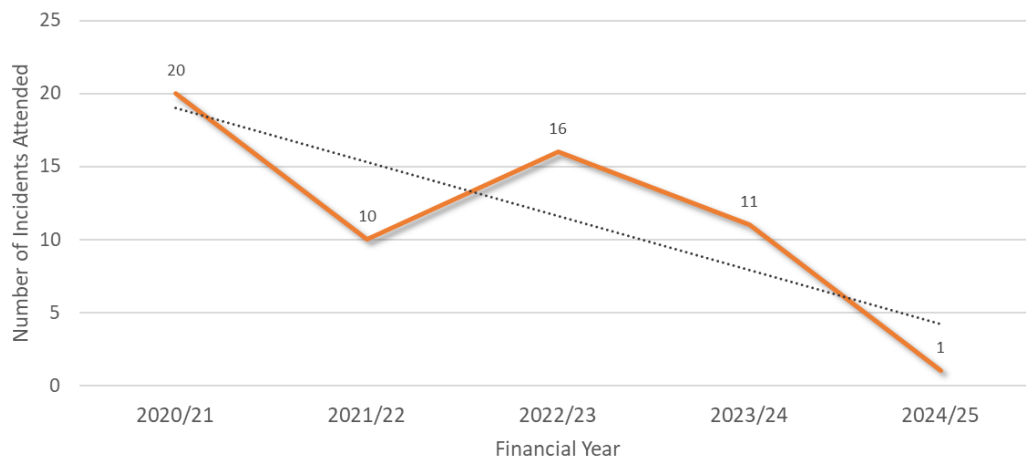
16 Grassland, woodland and crop fires

61 Grassland, woodland and crop fires were recorded during the quarter, a 59.1% decrease from the 149 recorded during the same period last year. This is 56.4% below the three-year average of 140.



17 Wildfires

1 wildfire was attended during the quarter. This is 91.7% below the three-year average of 12. As a result, the time spent at scene decreased to almost 8 hours, compared with 353 hours during the same period of the previous year.

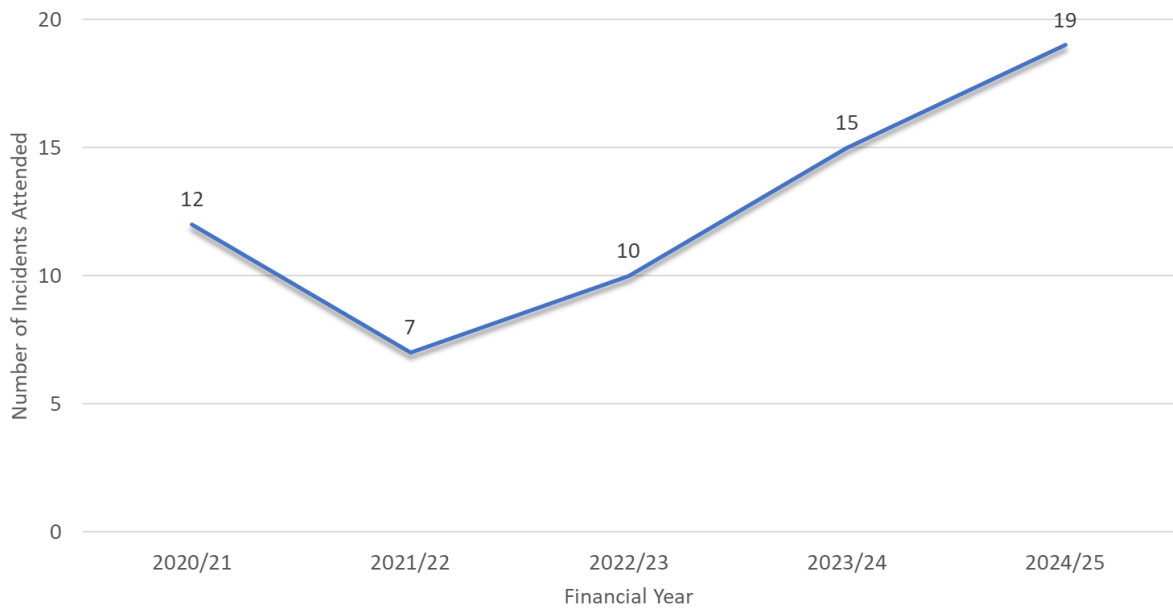


18 Flooding

There were **19** flooding incidents attended during the first quarter of 2024/25. This is a 26.7% increase in incidents attended compared to the same period of the previous year, and is a 72.7% increase over the three-year average (11).

This rise is attributed to attributed to a particularly wet spring, with 10 rain or storm weather warnings issued by the Met Office for one or more of North Wales' counties in May alone.

4 flooding incidents attended were to make a location safe, and advice was given at **10** incidents.



Glossary

Fires	All fires fall into one of three categories – primary, secondary or chimney.
Primary Fires	<p>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.</p> <p>Fires in any location are categorised as primary fires if they involved casualties, rescues or escapes, as are fires in any location that were attended by five or more fire appliances.</p>
Secondary Fires	<p>Secondary fires are fires that are neither chimney fires nor primary fires.</p> <p>Secondary fires do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes, and will have been attended by four or fewer fire appliances.</p> <p>Secondary fires are those that would normally occur in locations such as 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, etc.</p>
Chimney Fires	<p>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.</p> <p>Chimney fires do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes, and will have been attended by four or fewer fire appliances.</p>
Special Service Incidents	<p>These are non-fire incidents which require the attendance of an appliance or officer and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Local emergencies e.g., flooding, road traffic incidents, rescue of persons, 'making safe' etc; b) Major disasters; c) Domestic incidents e.g., water leaks, persons locked in or out etc; d) Prior arrangements to attend incidents, which may include some provision of advice and inspections.
False Alarm (general guidance)	<p>Where the FRS attends a location believing there to be an incident, but on arrival discovers that no such incident exists, or existed.</p> <p>Note: if the appliance is 'turned around' by Control before arriving at the incident it is not classed as having been attended and does not need to be reported.</p>
False Alarms - Malicious	These are calls made with the intention of getting the FRS 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 FRS really would attend a fire or special service incident.
False Alarms - AFA	These are calls initiated by fire alarm and fire-fighting equipment. They include accidental initiation of alarm apparatus or where an alarm operates and a person then routinely calls the FRS as part of a standing arrangement, i.e., with no 'judgement' involved, for example from a security call centre or a nominated person in an organisation.
Building - Dwellings	A property that is a place of residence, i.e., occupied by households, excluding hotels, hostel and residential non-permanent structures.
Building - Non-Residential	Properties such as hospitals, offices, shops, factories, warehouses, restaurants, cinemas, public buildings, religious buildings, agricultural buildings, railway stations, sheds, prisons.
Building - Other Residential	Properties such as hotels, hotels and residential institutions B&Bs, Nursing/care homes, student halls of residence.
Vehicle (Road and Other Transport)	Road vehicle, rail vehicle, aircraft, boat.
Outdoor	Fields, grassland, woodland, refuse containers, post boxes.
Wildfires	A grassland, woodland and crop fire where the incident was attended by 4 or more vehicles, or the Service was in attendance for 6 hours or more, or where there was an estimated fire damage area of over 10,000 square meters.
Short Term Sickness (STS)	Absences 27 calendar days and under.
Long Term Sickness (LTS)	Absences 28 calendar days and over.