

South Wales Fire & Rescue Service

Freedom Of Information Model
Publication Scheme

Guide To Information

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

Raising Awareness - Reducing Risk

Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act requires every public authority to adopt and maintain a **publication scheme** that has been approved by the Information Commissioner and to publish information in accordance with the scheme.

From **1st January 2009** there will be one approved model scheme that all authorities will need to adopt.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (which is referred to as FOIA in the rest of this document) there is a duty on all public authorities to issue a publication scheme.

One of the aims of the FOIA is that public authorities should be clear and proactive about the information they will make public. To do this they must produce a publication scheme, setting out:

- *the classes of information which they publish or intend to publish;*
- *the manner in which the information will be published; and*
- *whether the information is available free of charge or an payment*

We must release the information as described in our publication scheme.

The purpose of a **publication scheme** is to make sure that a significant amount of information is routinely made available, without the need for a specific request. Publication schemes are intended to encourage organisations to publish more information proactively and to develop a greater culture of openness. The scheme brings together the many different types of information available to the public in a structured way and provides details as to how it can be obtained. This aims to save you time and effort.

South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's publication scheme consists of information already published and held by the Fire Authority, or information that is to be published in the future.

Information contained within the scheme is available in a number of ways but not necessarily made available in all of these ways. Generally information is available for downloading from our website, by email, by post and by personal inspection free of charge or, for a nominal charge. For charges please refer to the below section on '**Charging for Information**'.

The publication scheme will state whether the information is available free of charge or whether a charge would be payable.

How To Find The Information You Need

The publication scheme lists the different types of information we make available, grouped together to make it easy to find. These groups are called '**Classes of information**' and they are sorted into a number of different categories.

There are seven main classes of information:

- Who we are and what we do
- What we spend and how we spend it
- What our priorities are and how we are doing
- How we make decisions
- Our policies and procedures
- Lists and registers
- The services we offer

Within each of these categories there is information available on a number of different subjects.

Classes Of Information

Who We Are And What We Do

Since 1st April 1996, South Wales Fire & Rescue Service has been the responsibility of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority.

The Service employs some 1850 people including 1,000 Wholetime duty system Firefighters, 600 Retained duty system Firefighters and 250 non-uniform support staff and control personnel. The service operates from 50 Fire Stations and various office sites within the South Wales Area. The management team and many of the support services are based at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

The Service covers an area of 1085 square miles, which includes the cities of Cardiff and Newport and large towns such as Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouth, Pontypridd, Barry and Bridgend as well as the large agricultural, commercial, and industrial risks within South Wales.

The South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is the governing body responsible for ensuring the provision of fire services under the Fire

Services Act 2004 and subsequent fire related information. The Authority discharges its responsibilities by the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service). The primary functions of the Service are fire-fighting, special rescues and humanitarian services, fire safety, community risk reduction, including fire safety education services to schools, and helping to reduce road traffic collisions.

The Fire Authority meets several times a year and consists of 24 councillors drawn from the elected representatives of the ten local authorities within its boundaries listed as follows:

- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (1)
- Bridgend County Borough Council (2)
- Caerphilly County Borough Council (3)
- The City and County of Cardiff (5)
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (1)
- Monmouthshire County Council (2)
- Newport City Council (2)
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (4)
- Torfaen County Borough Council (2)
- Vale of Glamorgan Council (2)

The composition of the Fire Authority is determined by the size of the electoral representation within each local authority and the political proportionality across the combined area.

At the annual meeting, the Fire Authority appoints the Chairman and Vice Chairmen of the Authority, the Chairman, Vice Chairmen and Members of its Committees.

Amongst its many roles, the Fire Authority determines the annual budget, agree the levels of personnel and vehicles, approves the Service's plans, policies, and strategies, and approves the composition of any Committees, Sub-Committees, Advisory Groups and Task Groups.

The core functions of the Fire Authority are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. In general these are:

- To promote fire safety in order to prevent fires, and death or injury by fire, and to obtain the necessary information to assist in this.
- Extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in the event of fires, through the provision of personnel, services, equipment and training.
- Rescuing trapped/injured people from road traffic collisions, through the provision of personnel, services, equipment and training.

- Making arrangements to deal with calls for help and mobilising personnel, services and equipment to incidents.
- Dealing with emergencies other than fires or road traffic collisions as the Secretary of State may order. These include dealing with spillage and/or release of substances endangering life or the environment and responding to the effects of extreme weather conditions, e.g. pumping water from flooded property where there is life risk.

Management responsibility for South Wales Fire & Rescue Service rests with the Chief Fire Officer who is supported by five Principal Officers and a policy –making Corporate Continuity Board.

The management of SWF&RS is split into seven Directorates with a Director responsible for each:

Intervention – provides frontline emergency fire and rescue response for the South Wales area.

Risk Reduction –has two functional departments: Community Safety and Partnerships, and Legislative Fire Safety. The main aim is to proactively reduce the risk of fire and road traffic collisions to the public of South Wales.

Operational Planning, Development and Support –covers Fleet Services workshops, Operational Risk Management and health & safety.

Human Resources – functions encompass Human Resource Management, Training & Development, Training Support, Payroll, Resolutions and Occupational Health.

Finance and Asset Management –functions include production of financial accounts, provision of financial support and budget compilation, procurement and stores, and maintenance and development of properties owned by the Authority.

Legal, Administration and ICT – functions include corporate services, facilities management, ICT support, sustainable development, legal services, Principle Officers' Secretariat.

Policy, Performance and Communication –functions include Equality & Diversity, Welsh Language, Performance Management, Statistics, Policy, Media, Communications, Marketing & Design.

Corporate Governance is the set of processes, customs, policies, laws and institutions affecting the way the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service is directed, administered or controlled. Management and members are governed by these rules and as such a Register of Interests is maintained in the organisation.

Within this **Class** the Fire Authority has made available information on:

- Names of Members and Local Authority Represented
- Committee structures
- Organisational Structure
- Staff Structure
- Contact information of all stations and offices
- Geographical Area of Operations
- General Outline of Responsibilities

What We Spend And How We Spend It

All spending within the Fire Authority is governed by Financial Regulations that come within the statutory responsibilities set out in the Local Government Act 1972 and Local Government Finance Act 1988. The Accounts And Audit Regulations 1996 impose further responsibilities.

Financial statements of the Fire Authority are produced that records the business financial records of the Service. These statements provide an overview of the Service's financial condition in both short and long term.

Within this **Class** the below financial information is made available:

- Annual Budgets
- Annual Statement of Accounts
- Standard Conditions of Contract for the Supply of Goods and/or Services
- How to do Business with SWF&RS
- List of Contracts through Tendering and Value
- Financial Regulations
- Financial Audit Reports
- Staff Pay and Grading Structure
- Expenses Paid to or Incurred by Members of the Fire Authority and Senior Officers

What Our Prioities Are And How We Are Doing

The priorities and objectives for Fire Authorities in Wales have been set out in the National Assembly for Wales' Fire and Rescue National Framework document.

The performance of SWF&RS in discharging its duties is covered by the following plans.

Wales Programme for Improvement

The Wales Programme for Improvement (WPI) requires Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to continually improve their services, to make value for money improvements and efficiency gains that are 'genuine and sustainable or allow more or better services to be provided for the same resource input'. This reflects the Assembly Government's wider public service reform agenda and set out in the 'Making the Connections' agenda.

Each year we will publish our Annual Improvement Plan which outlines the priority areas to be addressed in the coming year and also gives comprehensive performance information against our strategic and core indicators.

Within this **Class** the Fire Authority has made available, for example, the below information.

The Annual Improvement Plan - primary aims are to inform our people of the strategic direction of the organisation, to provide the organisation's key objectives for the forthcoming year and to review our performance over the previous financial year.

The Risk Reduction Plan - that is designed to consider both the community risk and corporate risk so that the resources of the Fire Authority can be deployed to reduce the risk to the communities of South Wales, it also gives a roadmap for 5 years and identifies key activities to further reduce risk.

Strategic, Core and Local Indicators – Fire & Rescue Services in Wales are now reporting against the Wales Strategic and Core Indicators as set by the National Assembly for Wales. Strategic indicators are broken down into two areas:

- Risk Reduction and Community Safety
- Effective Response

These indicators are statutory and will be audited on an annual basis.

The core indicators are broken down into three areas:

- Risk Reduction and Community Safety
- Corporate Health – Workforce
- Corporate Health – Finance

Core indicators are set as a means to provide a fuller more rounded picture of performance and to enable SWF&RS to collect and publish information on key areas of service delivery and corporate functions.

Local Indicators are set by individual departments or directorates to reflect their local priorities.

Business Plans & Directorate Plans - to ensure that we deliver our corporate objectives are developed or initiatives outlined within our RRP and address the risks highlighted within our Joint Risk Assessment there is a comprehensive planning framework whereby each Directorate produces a business plan outlining their key priorities for the forthcoming year and the actions that they will undertake in order to help realise the corporate aims, initiatives and objectives.

Annual Regulatory Plan –is designed to set out all elements of regulation and inspection that will be programmed for the year ahead. The Wales Audit Office is responsible for the coordination of this plan.

How We Make Decisions

The framework for decision-making within South Wales Fire & Rescue Service rests with the Fire Authority as governing body and supporting committees. The Corporate Continuity Board is the management body responsible for enforcing these decisions.

Agendas on the points to be discussed are issued to members of each committee and the minutes record the decisions and actions made by each group.

In addition the Chief Fire Officers Association for the Fire & Rescue Services in Wales hold meetings that have a direct influence on the direction of policy in South Wales Fire & Rescue Service.

Within this **Class** the below agendas, minutes and background papers are made available.

- Fire Authority
- Finance & Performance Management

Our Policies And Procedures

The policies that are approved by the Fire Authority guides our actions toward achieving our priorities and objectives as set by the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004, National Assembly of Wales and other regulatory bodies.

Service Information Manuals or Organisational Policy & Procedures Documents are the principle guidance for all employees within South Wales Fire & Rescue Service in their day-to-day activities and operations. There are six categories:

- Conditions of Service
- Corporate & Communications
- Equalities
- Equipment, Clothing & Transport
- Finance
- Health, Safety & Welfare
- Operations

Within these categories contain our policies on:

- Health & Safety
- Human Resources
- Procurement
- Sustainable Development
- Equality
- Welsh Language Scheme
- Operations- Firefighting & Rescue
- Training
- Major Incidence & Civil Defence

Standing Orders Terms of Reference, Delegated Powers and Delegations to Committees are the overarching rules for the conduct of business within South Wales Fire & Rescue Service.

Within this **Class** the Fire Authority has made available the policies and procedures for delivering our services to the community and identifiable responsibilities as well as:

- Customer Service Standards
- Complaints Procedures
- Records Management and Personal Data Policies

Lists And Registers

Registers are formal records of information that can be required by statute. In addition there are other lists and registers relating to the functions of the Authority.

Within this **Class** the below Lists and Registers are made available for public inspection.

- Assets Register
- Complaints List
- Registers open to Public Inspection
- Register of Members' Interests
- Register of Gifts and Hospitality

The Services We Offer

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service employ approximately 1,000 Wholetime duty system Firefighters, 600 Retained duty system Firefighters and some 250 non-uniformed support staff, who are based throughout South Wales.

As a high performing organisation, we continue to deliver against a number of national objectives and targets set out in the Welsh Assembly Government's Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for Wales.

Prevention

We are committed to reducing the number of accidental and deliberately started fires, and the number of deaths and injuries caused by fire and other incidents, by working proactively in the communities of South Wales, and in partnership with other agencies, to raise awareness and educate the public about fire safety at home and at work.

Fire Safety at Home

Information provided on how to keep you at your home safe from fire.

Fire Safety at Work

Fire Safety at work is extremely important. You should make sure you and your staff are aware of what to do to prevent a fire in the workplace and how they will escape should a fire break out.

Arson Reduction

Information provided on arson and how the South Wales Fire and Rescue initiatives reduce its occurrence and impact.

Partnerships

The main remit of our Partnership Department is to represent the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service at the ten Unitary Authority Community Safety Partnerships within our area.

Intervention

We are committed to responding rapidly to major and catastrophic incidents in the area, in order to minimise the loss of life and injury and to reduce the physical and financial effects of any resulting loss and damage.

The Intervention Management Team's prime function is to provide support to Wholetime Duty System and Retained Duty System Stations in their response to emergency calls, and in the delivery of a range of educational programmes and risk reduction initiatives designed to meet the needs of the local community.

The Retained Duty System Management Team

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service has implemented a Retained Duty System Management Team that forms part of the Intervention Services Directorate. The role of the team is to assist in the management of the 26 Retained Duty System (RDS) Fire Stations and 9 Retained watches based at Wholetime Stations.

New Dimension

The New Dimension programme is the Department of Communities and Local Government's contribution to the Government's Civil Contingencies Capabilities Programme. Its aim is to enhance England and Wales' preparedness and resilience by improving the capability of the Fire and

Rescue Service to respond to major and catastrophic incidents, in order to minimise the loss of life and injury and to reduce the physical and financial effects of the consequential loss and damage.

Training

Operational firefighters are highly trained to respond to a wide range of emergency calls. Firefighters also spend time educating the public about fire safety by giving educational talks. The Training Department is responsible to ensure that all the necessary skills required in a modern Fire & Rescue Service are catered for. This evolves around maintaining current skills and activities both practical and managerial.

Control

South Wales' Control Room, based at Pontyclun, is the first point of contact for members of the public who dial 999 and ask for emergency assistance from the Fire and Rescue Service.

Information about the services South Wales Fire & Rescue Service offer to the community are set out using a variety of communication tools- leaflets, booklets, posters, newsletters, press and media, and Service Website.

Within this **Class** the below information is made available.

- Licensing
- Campaigns
- Community Safety Initiatives
- Regulatory Procedures
- Leaflets and Explanatory Booklets
- Media Releases
- Fees and Charges for the Provision of Services

How We Make Information Available

Information contained within the publication scheme is available in a number of formats but not necessarily made available in all of these ways. Details of availability are contained within each class of information:

- ***Online on our website***

When information is available to you on the SWF&RS website or another website a link will be provided. Links on our website will take

you to either a specific document or to an area within our website where you will be offered more choices as to the types of information available falling within that class. Note that when the link is to another organisation's website, provision of the information is the responsibility of that organisation and not SWF&RS. Information available on our website is free of charge and can also be requested by email or post.

- ***By email***

Information that is routinely available but not held on our website can be accessed by email and will be sent promptly within 5 working days on request. Please refer to the below section for '***Contact Details***' to send your request. Information available via email is also available by post upon request.

- ***By post***

Information that is routinely available will be posted within 5 working days upon request. Where there is a charge despatch of information will take place on receipt of payment. Please refer to the below section for '***Contact Details***' to send your request.

- ***By personal inspection***

Information made available as part of the publication scheme can be viewed, by appointment through the section for '***Contact Details***', at our Fire Service Headquarters Monday to Friday between the hours of 9.00am and 4.30pm. On receipt of your request you will be contacted within 5 working days to arrange an appointment.

Information that is not routinely available will take longer to process and may take up to 20 working days to be despatched.

Useful Links To Other Organisations Website Addresses

The information you are looking for may also be available from other organisations on their websites. There are useful links on our website that you can access:

www.southwales-fire.gov.uk (Your Community/Your Fire Station/ Links)

However, the Fire Authority cannot be responsible or warrants the accuracy of the information contained on other organisations' sites.

Restrictions And Exemptions To Information

The Freedom of Information Act sets out exemptions, that in some circumstances allow public authorities to withhold requested information. Some information that we hold may not be made public some of which are under data protection: for example, information need not be released if it would prejudice national security or law enforcement (court records).

If we decide we want to rely on an exemption so that we can withhold information you have requested, we will tell you which exemption has been applied and explain the reason why it is applicable.

Making A Request For Information

If you want to make a request for information that is **not** currently available in our publication scheme, please refer to the below section for **'Contact Details'** on making an application providing details of the information you are looking for.

Making An Application For Other Information

As well as being able to access information that is publicly available under the publication scheme, we will answer queries under the existing Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. This allows you to write and ask us to supply you with specific information. Please forward your application as specified in the below section for **'Contact Details'**. There may be a charge for information that is disclosed in response to a specific request. You will be advised at the time of your request.

Applications For Information Under The Freedom Of Information Act 2000

You can ask the Fire Authority for information that is not already published elsewhere, nor exempt under the FOIA. Under the FOIA you have the right to ask for information to be provided in a particular way and we will try to meet your request. You will be able to ask for assistance if you have any difficulty in formulating or making an application by referring your request to the below section for **'Contact Details'**.

We will help you as much as possible but we are not required to look for the information you request unless we have:

- a clear and understandable request with enough detail to locate the information.

- Your name and address or e-mail address so we can respond to your request; and
- An indication about the form in which you want the information.

This will ensure that your application is dealt with as quickly as possible. Some documents may include exempt information so you will only get the information that is not exempt. You only have a right to **information**, but not necessarily to **documents**.

Other Languages

We will make information available in most languages upon request. The length of time it takes us to deliver the information in the language requested depend on how quickly we can get it translated.

We will also make information available in different formats for people with disabilities upon request. Please refer to the below section for '*Contact Details*' when making your request.

Charging For Information

In the publication scheme some information may only be available at a charge in order to recover the costs of postage and photocopying.

The following information sets out our charging arrangements for information under the Freedom of Information Act:

- Information available through the publication scheme
- Information not in the publication scheme
- Disbursements charges (postage and photocopying)

Information available through the publication scheme

Information that is accessible on the publication scheme states whether there is a charge for that information. Most information is available for free.

If you would like a hard copy of the information which is electronically available on the publication scheme or our website, then we will charge 2p per sheet. You may also be charged for postage at the standard Royal Mail posting charges. If the copying and postage charge is less than £10 in total then we will waive the costs.

Information not in the publication scheme

A significant amount of information is already available via our publication scheme or on the website free of charge, but there may be some information that you might need to pay for. When you make a request (for information which is currently not available), we may charge you for the postage and photocopying costs (known as disbursements) as set out below.

Disbursements charges (postage and photocopying)

The cost for these charges will vary according to the number of copies and pages. Charges will generally apply as follows:

- ***Information is available electronically (website or email)***

There will be no charge for sending information electronically.

- ***By post***

Free unless the total cost for copying and postage exceeds £10, in which case we will charge the actual cost. To calculate the cost, we charge 2p a sheet for photocopying and paper costs and then the actual postage costs as advised by Royal Mail.

- ***By personal inspection***

Information can be viewed free of charge if you visit our premises. For pages of information that you want to photocopy, a charge of 2p per sheet may be made.

- ***Information requested in a format other than printed on paper or by email***

If you want to receive the information in a particular format (for example, on CD), then a charge may be made to provide the information in that format. You will be advised of the cost at the time of your request.

Documents Available

Information is made available in a number of formats of which are listed below including any charges.

INFORMATION	FORMAT	CHARGE
Minutes of Public Meetings	Online Hard copy on request	Free 2p per sheet
Annual Reports	Online Printed copy	Free 2p per sheet
Register of Member's Interests	Available to inspect	Free
Leaflets and Explanatory Booklets	Printed copy	Free
Lists	Online Hard copy on request	Free 2p per sheet
Financial Audit Reports	Online Hard copy on request	Free 2p per sheet
Corporate and Business Plans	Online Hard copy on request	Free 2p per sheet
Statistical Information	Online Hard copy on request	Free 2p per sheet
Standing Orders	Online Hard copy on request	Free 2p per sheet
Service Manuals	Online Hard copy on request	Free 2p per sheet
Environmental Information	Online Hard copy on request	Free 2p per sheet
Reports by External Inspectors	Online Hard copy on request	Free 2p per sheet
General Information	Online Hard copy on request	Free 2p per sheet

Contact Details

Our full title and address for sending any documents is:

South Wales Fire & Rescue Service

Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters
Lanelay Hall
PONTYCLUN
CF72 9XA

However from **1st February 2009** we will be moving to our new Headquarters and as such all correspondence should be sent to:

South Wales Fire & Rescue Service

Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters
Fforest View Business Park
Llantrisant
PONTYCLUN
CF72 8LX

The Responsible Officer responsible for Freedom of Information in the Fire Authority is the **Business Support and Knowledge Manager**.

Telephone: 01443 232000

Email address: swfs@southwales-fire.gov.uk

Complaints And Feedback

If you want to make any comments about this publication scheme or if you require further assistance or need to make a complaint, then initially this should be addressed to the Business Support and Knowledge Manager the officer responsible for Freedom of Information at the address that can be found under the section '*Contact Details*'.

If you are not satisfied with the assistance that you get from the Fire Authority's Responsible Officer, the Business Support and Knowledge Manager and we have not been able to resolve your complaint using the Fire Authority's complaints procedure and you feel that a formal complaint needs to be made, then this should be addressed to the Information Commissioner's Office, as below. This is the organisation that ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that deals with formal complaints.

The Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
WILMSLOW
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

By Telephone: 01625 54 57 45

By Fax: 01625 524510

By Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk