



Cynllun **Gwirfoddolwyr**
Volunteer Scheme



South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Community Safety and Partnerships

Volunteer Handbook

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru



South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Background

Volunteer Scheme Overview

Benefits of Volunteering

Support and Training

Additional Detail

Volunteer Charter

This handbook has been developed to ensure you have a rewarding and enjoyable experience during your time as a volunteer with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. We are committed to supporting our volunteers and this handbook will help you to access the support we provide. This booklet is intended to be a guide and it provides useful information, including contact details and information about the policies or procedures that might affect you. We hope it helps you get the most out of volunteering with the Service.

Once you have completed your application form please e-mail to:

SWFRSvolunteers@southwales-fire.gov.uk
01443 232087

or post it to the following address:

Youth and Volunteer Manager
Community Safety & Partnerships Department
South Wales Fire & Rescue Service HQ
Forest View Business Park,
Llantrisant
RCT
CF72 8LX

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Background

The unitary authorities serviced by South Wales Fire & Rescue Service (SWFRS) are:

Bridgend	Monmouthshire
Blaenau Gwent	Newport
Cardiff	Rhondda Cynon Taff
Caerphilly	Torfaen
Merthyr Tydfil	Vale of Glamorgan

Our Vision

To make South Wales safer by reducing risk

Our vision statement describes an ideal future and unites SWFRS around a common purpose.

Our Mission

We will achieve our vision by:

Serving our Communities' needs

Working with others

Facing challenges through innovation and improvement

Reducing Risk through education, enforcement and response

Succeeding in making South Wales Safer

Our mission statement describes the overall purpose of SWFRS; what we do, who we do it for. And how and why we do it. It also sets the boundaries of our current activities.

Our Values

Our **VALUES** define what we stand for — they are our core rules. Once defined, the values that are important to us should be reflected in everything we do.

SWFRS has a set of values which describe how we will work as an organisation. Whenever you come into contact with SWFRS, as a member of public, a partner, a business or a member of staff, these values should always be evident.

Caring - We will be caring and compassionate displaying concern and empathy for others.

Dedicated - We are dedicated to the communities where we live, work and visit. We are devoted to saving lives and working in partnerships as an integral part of our communities.

Disciplined - We are clear about our roles and operate within agreed levels of authority, within a disciplined environment. We consider that the highest form of discipline is self-discipline.

Dynamic - We will embrace, and are capable, of changing or being changed. We partake in vigorous activity, with energy and enthusiasm, achieving high effectiveness.

Professional - We will demonstrate professionalism in all that we undertake. This means we will carry out our duties in a competent and dependable manner, demonstrating expertise in all that we do and ensuring that we demonstrate commitment to the high standards expected of SWFRS at all times.

Resilient - We will anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly through adaptability, evolution and growth in the face of turbulent change. We will withstand and recover quickly from difficult conditions.

Respectful - We will respect each other and the communities we serve. This means treating people fairly, accepting differences and acknowledging the contribution of our colleagues and our communities.

Trustworthy - We can be relied on to be honest and truthful. Our values reflect the core ideology of SWFRS

The Service promotes a vision of an environment in which volunteering is encouraged and supported to enhance the Service and improve the outcomes for individuals and communities.

The Purpose of the Volunteer Scheme

The scheme has been established to enhance service delivery and to build and develop relationships in the communities in which we all live and work.

Not only does the scheme provide the chance to make a valuable contribution to the safety and security of your community, it also provides the Service with additional skills, knowledge and resources.

Volunteers are welcomed from all backgrounds to undertake a variety of roles to address the needs of the Service and the Community.

As the scheme progresses the roles will become more varied.

Volunteer Rights

Volunteers should:

- be treated fairly, with respect and without discrimination
- if not selected for a role be given an explanation as to why
- have a nominated person for support, supervision and feedback
- know how to report any problems or concerns
- have appropriate insurance cover for the roles being carried out
- receive adequate training and support
- be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses
- have their performance reviewed and feedback provided
- be asked only to undertake tasks appropriate and accessible
- be provided with a safe environment in which to volunteer

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers are asked to:

- perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability
- operate within our guidelines, procedures and standards
- wear issued uniform in line with Uniform Policy
- give the commitment you know best suits your availability
- arrive as agreed and be punctual
- be trustworthy and reliable
- report any concerns or problems
- respect confidentiality
- be respectful to people you engage with
- treat all people fairly and with respect
- not use abusive or offensive language or behaviour
- attend relevant training and performance meetings
- if claiming benefits, be aware of your responsibilities to inform Job Centre Plus of voluntary involvement with the Service.

Volunteers will be asked to sign a volunteering agreement upon commencement.

Benefits of Volunteering

There are many benefits to becoming a volunteer with SWFRS, some of which are as follows:

- Being part of a team and meeting new people
- Contributing your knowledge and skills to help others
- Learning new skills Getting involved with and helping your local community
- Your contribution being valued by SWFRS, the local community and your fellow volunteers
- Access to the Blue Light Programme (co-ordinated by the mental health charity MIND)
- Access to the Firefighters Charity (subject to qualifying criteria)

It can also help you gain experience in a unique area and will be a valuable addition to your Curriculum Vitae (CV)

You will develop many skills such as:

- Awareness and understanding of the risks
- Ability to provide advice and guidance to assist in reducing that risk
- Developing confidence as your role progresses.
- Enhancing your communication skills by dealing with differing individuals

We appreciate all who choose to volunteer with SWFRS, and will do the best we can to make your experience rewarding and enjoyable. Each volunteer will receive a full induction and training to support the role for which you have volunteered.

Upon completion of induction and training, and providing you feel comfortable, you will then commence in your volunteering role.

You may be offered, or request additional training at any point.

Review Meetings

After you have been carrying out your volunteering role for a short period of time, SWFRS will conduct an initial review meeting. This is to ensure that you are fully happy within the role and to answer any additional queries or issues you have encountered upon commencement. The review will be conducted at a mutually convenient place and time and you will also be able to discuss how you feel that things are progressing within your volunteering role. It is an opportunity for volunteers to raise issues and for you to talk constructively about your involvement with SWFRS.

You will subsequently receive on-going support from your SWFRS contact and regular review meetings. As part of your ongoing development and to assist with the review meetings, please make a note of how you have found each role or task that you have carried out, what you did and if there were any issues you wish to discuss.

Confidentiality

Volunteers may at times have access to confidential or sensitive information and it is essential that this information remains confidential and is not shared.

Confidentiality means not discussing personal or confidential information relating to individuals or the Service. If confidentiality is breached the volunteer arrangement may be terminated. Should you have any concerns about something you have heard or seen, this should be discussed with the Volunteer Manager.

Expenses

The Service will reimburse travel expenses to and from home to your place of volunteering. All other expenses incurred during your voluntary work will need to be agreed in advance by the service.

Volunteers must keep accurate records of mileage and provide receipts where required and submit in a timely manner. All expenses will be paid directly into the bank account as notified upon commencement in your volunteering role. Mileage will be paid at the current NJC Car Allowance Casual User Rate.

- 46.9 pence per mile for vehicles 451cc to 999cc
- 52.2 pence per mile for vehicles 1000cc to 1199cc
- 65 pence per mile for vehicles 1200cc to 1450cc

Insurance

All volunteers are covered under the terms of the SWFRS insurance policy whilst undertaking their role. Any volunteer drivers using their own vehicles are required to inform their insurers of their voluntary activities.

Health and Safety

The Service places great importance on the health and safety of its volunteers and considers health and safety to be a management function equal to that of any other responsibility.

Details of the organisational arrangements for health and safety are set out within a framework document and comprise of supplementary policies, procedures and practical guidelines. These documents are known as Health and Safety Guidance Notes (HSGN). These HSGN's set out the arrangements for the implementation of the safety policy throughout the Service.

Equality and Diversity

We want to ensure that we provide equality of opportunity in all aspects of volunteering. Everyone has the right to be treated fairly and without discrimination.

SWFRS is committed to promoting equality and diversity and firmly opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, including on the grounds of race, religion, gender, gender reassignment, sexuality, marital status, age or disability.

For further information see the SWFRS Equality & Diversity Procedure OP-02.005

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all volunteers who, during the course of their volunteering role, have direct or indirect contact with children and families and vulnerable adults or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

There is a duty on organisations to make appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Also government guidance makes it clear that it is a shared responsibility, and depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

What is safeguarding?

The Government has defined the term 'safeguarding' as:

"The process of protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are living in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables them to have optimum life chances."

Our commitment to safeguarding

SWFRS is committed to protecting and supporting vulnerable people including children, young people or adults.

The Service not only recognises, and responds to, the risk from fire, road traffic collisions and other life threatening scenarios but across a broader range of themes associated with those who may be at risk from harm.

The Service recognises the significant role it can play in partnership with other agencies and works with the adult and children's' safeguarding boards for South Wales.

Cessation of role

If and when you do decide to cease your volunteer role with the Service, we hope you will take part in an informal exit interview so that we can get some feedback about how you found your time with us.

We always welcome any suggestions you may have for how we might improve the volunteer scheme.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Volunteer Charter

10

Volunteering is freely undertaken and not for financial gain; it involves the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community

Volunteers are deployed to perform roles that either:

- Enhance our services by adding value to the services already performed, or
- Free up time for staff to allow them to perform work that may be more productive and for which their training, skills and expertise are essential

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Volunteers will not be used to replace staff or affect their pay and conditions of service.

Roles will be clearly identified, reviewed and agreed before any recruitment process will take place to enable volunteers with appropriate skills to be matched. When suggesting a volunteer role the following will be taken into consideration:

- Roles should enhance, compliment and support those of paid staff and add value
- Roles should improve and enhance the service received by the public
- There should be a link between the volunteer role and the objectives set by South Wales Fire and Rescue Service so as the role has meaning and purpose

A role description will be agreed and produced for each volunteering position and a copy provided to the volunteer when they commence. A copy will also be provided to the relevant department to ensure that both the volunteer and appropriate staff are aware of the boundaries in which they are operating.

SWFRS will also aim to develop strong relationships with the voluntary sector organisations within our Service area and where possible formalise partnership opportunities.



Huw Jakeway
Chief Fire Officer