

SWFRS Culture Review

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the reason for the Review?

Following an ITV News report on 12 December 2022, during which witnesses gave examples of sexual harassment, inappropriate behaviours and a protective culture within the workplace of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service ("the Service"), the Chief Fire Officer, Huw Jakeway, committed to commissioning an independent cultural review ("the Review").

The objectives of the Review and the full Terms of Reference can be found at <https://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2023/04/Independent-Cultural-Review-of-South-Wales-Fire-Terms-of-reference-4.4.23.pdf>

The Review team will be considering all information provided to us as part of the Review. If, however, you have a specific grievance or complaint that you wish to be dealt with separately, please follow the Service's Grievance Procedure (if a current employee) or Complaints Procedure (if an ex-employee or member of the public) in the usual way.

2. Who will be conducting the Review?

The Review is being led by Chairperson Fenella Morris KC, accompanied by fellow barristers Charlene Ashiru and Gethin Thomas. The Review team will also be assisted by experts from Walking the Talk, a company that specialises in workplace culture.

3. Who can contribute to the Review?

We, the Review team, invite current and former members of staff (including people that have retired), partner agencies and Blue Light colleagues, plus members of the public who would like to share their experiences to contact the Review team directly, by emailing swfrsreview@gmail.com.

We have been working hard to reach out to everyone who may have information they would like to share with the Review, including ex-employees, retired members of the Service and members of the public. If you know someone that might have something to contribute to the Review, please encourage them to get in contact with us as well.

4. Will the Review team be contacting and considering the opinions of partner agencies that work with and/or share premises with the Service's employees?

We encourage everyone that may have information to share with regards to the culture of the Service to contact us, whether or not they are employed by the Service. We will take into account all information shared with us when conducting the Review.

5. How can I contribute to the Review?

There are a number of different ways of participating in the Review, including the following:

- **Email:** you can email the Review team on swfrsreview@gmail.com providing details of your experiences of SWFRS and/or any other information you consider to be relevant to the Review, whether individual/personal to yourself or others, and/or institutional or Service-related.
- **1:1 Interviews:** you can arrange a 1:1 interview with a member of the Review team, either in person or remotely via Microsoft Teams, by contacting us at swfrsreview@gmail.com. All interviews will be recorded and transcribed so that the Review team has an accurate record of the interview, but no one in the Service will have access to the recordings or the transcripts.
- **Virtual focus groups & surveys:** All employees will receive a link to a survey where they can participate anonymously. The survey will open at 09:00 on 20 July 2023 and close at 20:00 on 18 August 2023. People will be selected at random to participate in specific Focus Groups. There will also be an open Focus Group that people can volunteer for and then a random selection will be made from volunteers. The Focus Groups will take place on 8 and 11 September 2023 at Blake Morgan's offices in Cardiff.

- **Station visits:** The Review team will conduct a limited number of station visits on 18 July 2023. Unfortunately, there is insufficient time to be able to visit all stations and all Watches, so we strongly encourage you to contact us directly on swfrsreview@gmail.com if you have any information you would like to share with the Review.

People are permitted to take time off work to attend interviews with the Culture Review Teams and/or Focus Groups, and the Service encourages them to do so. People will not be subjected to any repercussions for having participated in the Review.

6. How can I get in touch with the Review team?

You can email the Review team on swfrsreview@gmail.com providing details of your experiences of SWFRS and/or any other information you consider to be relevant to the Review.

7. Who has access to the Review team's email account?

Only the Review team has access to the swfrsreview@gmail.com email account. Nobody at SWFRS has access to the email account. Whilst the account was set-up by a member of SWFRS, the Review team has since changed the password and security information in order to ensure that the account is private.

8. How can I arrange a meeting with the Review team?

You can arrange a 1:1 interview with the Review team, either in person or remotely via Microsoft Teams, by contacting us at swfrsreview@gmail.com.

9. What will I be asked about?

If you choose to contribute the review by participating in one of the methods provided, the review team will ask you questions about a wide variety of matters, including (but not limited to) the following:

- the workplace culture of SWFRS (both positive and negative);
- perceptions and experience of diversity and inclusiveness at SWFRS (both positive and negative);
- the risk factors contributing to unacceptable behaviours, including bullying and harassment;
- psychological safety for staff in SWFRS;
- knowledge and experience of reporting and complaints processes, and your awareness of relevant policies, practices, processes, and supports.

We acknowledge that participating in the Review may be a stressful process for you and we want to do everything we can to ensure your participation is as comfortable as possible. If you would like to be accompanied when speaking with us, you are more than welcome to have someone attend with you. You also have the right to choose not to answer questions if you do not feel able to do so, and can withdraw your participation at any time.

10. Why have I been told to share good experiences of the Service?

We are keen to hear of all experiences, whether good, bad or indifferent, so that we can get a full overview of what is happening at the Service in practice, build upon/promote the good things, and address/work on the bad things. However, we are just as interested in hearing of the bad experiences as we are the good experiences - please do not be deterred from sharing the bad experiences by being asked to share good experiences.

11. Will the information I share be kept confidential?

The Review will lead to a Report which will be public. No personal information will be in the Report unless the person concerned agrees.

We want the Report to be comprehensive. We will be helped to produce a comprehensive Report if you communicate with us “on the record”. For example, if you tell us something “on the record” then we can put that to other people and explore it in full.

If you do not want to communicate with us “on the record”, then you can do so in confidence. The Review Team will keep that confidence as far as it is legally able to do so.

The Review’s Terms of Reference sets out its approach to Confidentiality, Privacy and Privilege in detail. It can be found at:

<https://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2023/04/Independent-Cultural-Review-of-South-Wales-Fire-Terms-of-reference-4.4.23.pdf>

Please do not hesitate to contact us on swfrsreview@gmail.com if you have any further questions.

12. Will the Review be a review of disciplinary and grievance processes only, or will it be a wider-reaching review of all aspects of the Service’s culture?

The Review will be a wider-reaching review of all aspects of the Service’s culture. The information that we receive will determine the key aspects of that culture that need to be looked into in more detail.

The desktop review of disciplinary and grievance processes is just one aspect of the Review, which will be considered alongside the other information that we receive.

The full Terms of Reference can be found at: <https://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2023/04/Independent-Cultural-Review-of-South-Wales-Fire-Terms-of-reference-4.4.23.pdf>

13. I have reservations about speaking to the Review team and fear retaliation if I do. What can I do?

You should not be punished or subjected to any form of retaliation for having contacted or spoken to the Review team. If you have concerns, please feel free to arrange to speak to us in confidence in the first instance in order to discuss your concerns, by emailing us at swfrsreview@gmail.com.

14. If I speak to the Review team about something I have witnessed but not challenged at the time, will I be punished?

You should not be punished or subjected to any form of retaliation for having contacted or spoken to the Review team. We understand that it is sometimes difficult to raise things you have witnessed at the time and sometimes it is only after the event that you feel able to raise the matter. We encourage people that have witnessed behaviour within the Service that they do not feel comfortable with to come forward and speak to us, by emailing us at swfrsreview@gmail.com in the first instance.

15. Can I share SWFRS documents with the Review team or will this be in breach of my contractual obligations?

If you are a current employee of the Service and you have documents that belong to the Service that you think might be relevant to the Review, the Service has agreed that you can share them with the Review team without being in breach of your contractual obligations. This has been agreed as an exception to the usual position in order to assist the Review. Any confidential documents belonging to the Service should not be shared any wider than the Review team, for any other purpose and/or with any other third parties (save as required by law or with any legal adviser), whether at the present time or in the future.

If you are an ex-employee of the Service and you have retained documents that belong to the Service, you may be in breach of your duties of confidentiality and, therefore, it would not be appropriate for the Review to consider those documents in the circumstances.

If you are unclear as to what your duties are with regards to documents you have in your possession, it may be advisable to take your own separate legal advice as the Review team are unable to advise you in this respect due to our independence.

16. Will promotion processes be considered by the Review?

If, when conducting the investigation, we feel that promotion processes and the documents in relation to promotion processes need to be looked at, that is something that we can arrange to do. If you have any concerns regarding promotion processes please do raise them with the Review team.

17. How far back does the Review go?

The Review will be looking at disciplinary and grievance processes over the last 7 years, but there is no time limit on the information that the Review team will consider as part of the Review.

18. Does my complaint have to be within the last 7 years?

No, there is no time limit on the information that the Review team will consider as part of the Review.

19. Will you be using information relayed through the Crimestoppers anonymous number to inform your Report?

Yes, it has been arranged that anything reported on the Crimestoppers line will be passed to the Review team. However, we encourage individuals to contact us directly as well so that we can obtain further details and investigate the matter further if necessary.

20. If statements are made by the Service or by individuals, will the Review team seek to test the veracity of those statements?

Yes, if somebody tells us something then we will seek to investigate it so that we can fully understand what is happening within the Service as best as possible.

If, however, somebody tells us something in confidence, we will be limited in terms of the extent to which we can investigate the matter and, therefore, there may be limited scope for us to take such matters into account when reaching our conclusions.

21. What is the timeline for the Review?

We are at the early stages of the Review and the current prospective timeline, as set out below, is subject to change. Further updates will be provided in due course.

The anticipated timeline for the Review is as follows:

- **Review Team Visits to Wales:** 9 June 2023 and 17-19 July 2023
- **1:1 Interviews:** June/July/August 2023
- **Staff Survey:** June/July 2023
- **Desktop Document Review:** June/July/August 2023
- **Virtual Focus Groups:** September 2023
- **Analysis of Data:** September/October 2023
- **Report Drafting:** November/December 2023
- **Public Report:** December 2023

22. Will the Review team liaise with senior managers during the process prior to the conclusion of the Report or will the process be kept to the Review team only until conclusion and publication of the Report?

The law that governs the publication of reports of this kind provides for a process whereby if something negative is to be said about a particular individual then that individual should have a chance to respond to that before the Report is published. It is also normal within these legal

frameworks to have what is often called a ‘factual accuracy check’, so if there is factual information then that needs to be checked before the Report is published. However, there will not be an opportunity for people to try to influence the Review team’s conclusions.

23. Who will be involved in writing the Public Report? Will the Service see a draft version of the Report before it is made public and/or will they get to choose which parts are made public?

Only the Review team and the Culture Experts will be involved in writing the Public Report. The entirety of the Report will be made public. Whilst the Service may see a draft version of the Report before it is made public, they will have no involvement in determining the contents of the Report and/or what is publicised.

24. Will our names be in the Public Report?

No personal information will be included within the Report unless the person concerned agrees.

25. Will there be recommendations and, if so, when will they be implemented?

Yes, the Review team will make recommendations based on what we have seen and heard. It will then be for the Service to implement those recommendations in practice. It will be for the Review team to determine whether periodic reviews in relation to those recommendations are necessary going forwards.