

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
De Cymru



South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service



# Annual Improvement Plan

How we did in 2021-2022 and what we plan to do in 2023-2024



**RAISING AWARENESS  
REDUCING RISK**

This document is also available in Welsh



# Welcome to our Annual Improvement Plan



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Chief Fire Officer  
South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service



**Councillor Steven Bradwick**

Chairperson  
South Wales  
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Hello, and welcome to our latest Annual Improvement Plan.

This plan reflects on our successes and achievements from 2021-2022, but also details our plans and Strategic Themes to help us achieve our mission of keeping South Wales safe by reducing risk in 2022-2023 and beyond.

The Service's objectives and priorities have been developed in consultation with our staff, the communities that we serve and our connected stakeholders. The feedback obtained reflects the eight Strategic Themes outlined in our previous plan, which will provide a focus to enable the Service to continue to reduce risk and support our communities in their times of need.

This year, we welcomed a new South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, along with 14 new members who will continue to provide good governance, robust scrutiny and support for us as a Service to deliver our ambitions of making South Wales safer.

The last few years have been challenging, but we have also learnt so much during the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff across the Service have been outstanding through this complex and challenging time, they have been resilient in adapting to new ways of working, ensuring that we have kept our communities safer. We have also assisted other partners in delivering essential and critical services. Despite the easing of Covid-19 control and safety measures, such as social distancing and routine testing, we need to ensure that we maintain and continue to embrace new ways of working, whether by having meetings online or by delivering training and awareness sessions online.

These changes will also help us deliver against our [Carbon Reduction Plan](#) as we consider sustainability and how we use our resources efficiently while reducing the Service's environmental impact. Climate change is upon us, and we are witnessing the new demands this will place on our service provision, from the impact of wildfires to responding to flooding incidents. Our own actions should therefore set an example.

Your views and experiences are essential in shaping a new way forward for us.

At the end of this plan, we hope you will tell us what you think about our objectives, and that you will complete our consultation survey or simply just get in touch; your thoughts, views and ideas are essential to our success.



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# Introduction

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is one of the largest fire and rescue services in the UK, covering 10 unitary authorities and a population of 1.5 million. Recent census data shows that we serve some of the most densely populated and fastest growing communities in Wales. Geographically we are responsible for rural, coastal and urban settings covering over 2,800 square kilometres.

The services we must provide are outlined in a range of legal frameworks including:

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 ('the Measure')
- The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 ('the WFGA')
- The Welsh Government Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016

As a designated 'Welsh Improvement Authority', the Measure requires us to set and publish improvement objectives and to consult on these, demonstrating that our plans have regard to the seven aspects of improvement:

- Strategic effectiveness
- Sustainability
- Service quality
- Efficiency
- Service availability
- Innovation
- Fairness

We are also required by the WFGA to set and publish well-being objectives designed to maximise our contribution to improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of future generations of people in Wales. Under the 'sustainable development principle', which contains seven goals, we must take all reasonable steps to meet these objectives. Each year we publish a statement and an annual report on our progress, including our response to any recommendations from the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

We have a duty to keep the people, communities, businesses, and environment of South Wales safe from fires and other hazards. To do this effectively and efficiently, for now and for future generations, we continually consider the needs and views of our communities, by working across departments, with partners and with our communities. This Improvement Plan looks back to 2021-2022 and reviews delivery against our plans. It also looks forward to 2023-2024, outlining our proposed objectives and activities.

# The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015

The sustainable development principle of the WFGA is:

**“All Public Services should act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”**

The Seven Goals of the WFGA are:



As we develop our Strategic Themes, which are the high-level priorities that shape our plan, the WFGA goals are considered to ensure we contribute to their achievement.

The WFGA also identifies the following **five ways of working** which we must consider and act in accordance with when planning and making decisions:

- Balancing short term needs with **long-term** needs
- Putting resources into **preventing** problems
- Using an **integrated** approach, balancing social, economic and environmental needs
- **Collaborating** with others to help meet well-being objectives
- **Involving** others to reflect the diversity of an area



## The Socio-economic Duty 2021

Since March 2021, public bodies in Wales have had to consider how strategic decisions affect those who live in less favourable social and economic circumstances, for example, experiencing poverty or unequal access to services such as transport. Such disadvantage can result in inequalities of outcome including poorer health, lower educational attainment, and less favourable work opportunities. We therefore give due regard to socio-economic disadvantage in making strategic decisions, which contributes to the WFGA goals.

# Our Public Service Boards

We continue to work with the Public Service Boards (PSBs) in our area. PSBs have a responsibility to prepare and publish local well-being plans and report annually on progress showing how responsibilities under the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFGA) are being met.

We will always consider the long-term implications of our actions and how we can be effective members of our PSBs, collaborating and taking an integrated approach to delivering services, to help people feel safe and well in their daily lives.

Our work with the PSBs demonstrates our commitment to the sustainable development principle of the WFGA, the seven goals of the WFGA and applying the five ways of working.

We identified various actions that contribute to the achievement of the seven goals when defining our eight Strategic Themes and objectives in our long-term [Strategic Plan for 2020-2030](#).

We will monitor and measure our progress toward these objectives within our planning and monitoring processes.

Gwent PSB formed in 2021, replacing the five local authority PSBs for the area – Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. A single Gwent Well-being Assessment has been produced which will inform the overarching plan from 2023. Well-being plans produced by each local authority for 2018-2023 will continue to full term.

Please click on the relevant icon for the current PSB well-being plan and objectives for your area.



# About Us

“To make South Wales safer, by reducing risk”

Our mission statement describes the overall purpose of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service: what we do, who we do it for, and how and why we do it. As well as a statutory duty to provide certain services, from responding to fires or carrying out inland water rescues to prevention and risk reduction, we must work in partnership for the benefit of our communities, now and in the future. This is aided by understanding our communities and the challenges we face.



### Protection

- Road Safety
- Home Fire Safety Checks
- Business Fire Safety
- Fire Crime Patrols



### Prevention

- Education
- Home Safety Awareness
- Community Engagement
- Arson Prevention



### Response

- Road Traffic Collisions
- Domestic/Commercial Fires
- Environment Protection
- Urban Search and Rescue
  - Transport Incidents
  - Animal Rescue

### Premises

47 Stations plus Headquarters  
Joint Fire Control  
Cardiff Gate Training & Development Centre  
Occupational Health Unit.

### Staff




Staff are employed across the following contracts (at 31st March 2022).

Wholetime Firefighters	On-Call Firefighters	Control Staff	Corporate Staff	Volunteers	Auxiliary Firefighters
806	528	41	390	31	71

Our staff are our greatest asset – over 1,600 individuals, some with multiple contracts - from firefighters and control staff to corporate personnel supporting those on the front line. Our stations are based in the communities they serve with 19 stations staffed by wholetime personnel (nine of which also have On-Call complement, living or working locally and responding to incidents when needed) and 28 by On-Call personnel only.

We shared nine stations with colleagues from other emergency services. Joint Fire Control, operated with Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, is in the Joint Public Service Centre at South Wales Police HQ. Colocation helps us to work together effectively which is further supported by liaison across the Service established with Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST), the NHS, Gwent Police and South Wales Police.

## Area

		
Unitary Authorities 10	Total Coverage 2,800km <sup>2</sup>	Coverage by Inland Water 3.7km <sup>2</sup>

Although the region is largely urban, including Cardiff and Newport and large valleys towns, there are many rural communities, and the Wye Valley has been designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Pre-pandemic, Cardiff International Airport saw over 32,000 flights each year, serving more than 1.5 million passengers. In 2019 there were 37 million Tourism Day Visits to the Service area, resulting in £1.9 billion total expenditure. Post-pandemic, visitor numbers are expected to recover by 2023, according to Government.

South East Wales is the gateway to Wales, with over 9,100km of roads, including the A470, A449 and the M4. While traffic volume reduced significantly during the pandemic, road journeys are increasing but we are yet to establish longer-term changes to travel patterns and the impact on our services.

### Households

Household numbers increased by 4.6% from 621,328 in 2011 to 650,100 in 2021, with the highest rate of change recorded in Newport (+8.1%). Overall, the increase is largely due to the rise in one-person households. Our work to understand risk has identified that older people who live alone are more vulnerable. Therefore, we have worked extensively to build partnerships that support our work in the community.

Owner occupied property accounts for 68% of dwellings, with around 15% being privately rented and 17% provided by local authorities or social landlords. We recognise that the cost of living crisis will put significant pressure on many households and we will continue to target our risk reduction advice appropriately.

### Deprivation

We have some of the most, and least, affluent communities in Wales. Although overall employment rates in our Service area are the highest in Wales, three of five unitary authorities with the lowest employment rates are also in South East Wales. Additionally, 13% of lower super output areas (a statistical area with comparable population) in the region are in the most deprived 10% in Wales.

Many factors, including poor health, disability, age, and ethnicity, do not exist in isolation. For example, just over 50% of those identifying as disabled in Wales are employed, compared with 80% of those who are not disabled. In common with other public bodies in Wales, we take into account this layering of factors when considering our socio-economic duty.



## Education

There are over 600 maintained schools including around 75 Welsh medium schools in our area with over 240,000 pupils. Our school engagement programmes see station personnel visit local schools to deliver fire safety messages to pupils. The Crucial Crew initiative, a multi-agency event delivering personal safety workshops to Year 6 and 7 pupils, is coordinated by our Education Services Team.

At sixth form and further education colleges, our Road Safety Team focusses on driver safety. Our Freshers Campaign, active at the three universities in the region, promotes home safety to those living away from home for the first time.

## Climate Change

Met Office climate change projections anticipate an increase in warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers with greater frequency and intensity of extremes. Although drier summers are expected, an increase in heavy summer rainfall events will impact on the frequency and severity of surface water flooding in addition to more frequent winter storms.

The impact of extreme heatwaves for fire and rescue services was evident during Summer 2022, with wildfires causing environmental and property damage. In some places this was followed by localised flooding as ground conditions were not able to cope with subsequent summer storms. Our water rescue capability is therefore developing alongside our significant expertise in dealing with wildfires. We recognise the importance of joint working in these areas and are therefore building strong partnerships with other organisations.

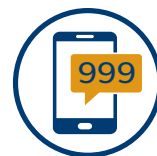
## Business

There are over 35,000 businesses in our region, ranging from heavy industry and manufacturing to tourism and leisure. Our Business Fire Safety (BFS) department offers support and monitors fire safety compliance working with the business community.

BFS colleagues also work extensively with those responsible for business and high-rise premises, including care, healthcare and social housing sectors.



## In 2021-2022, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service:



Handled

**32,454**

Emergency Calls



Received

**403**

Hoax/Malicious Calls



Of which

**142**

were challenged or not attended for another reason



Attended

**17,502**

Incidents



Of which

**5,566**

were fires



**8,367**

were false alarms



**2,711**

were other special  
Service calls \*



**858**

Road Traffic Collisions



**131**

involved extrication  
of persons



Attended

**3,975**

deliberate fires



And

**363**

deliberate road vehicle fires



Were called to

**614**

Accidental fires in the home



Carried out

**1,097**

KSI-4 school visits



Engaged with

**36,822**

young people



Carried out

**8,121**

home safety checks



Carried out

**702**

fire safety audits

Providing  
**Prevention,  
Protection  
and Response**

**24**

hours a day

**7**

days a week

**365**

days of the year

Costing only

**92<sub>p</sub>**

per person per week

\*incidents other than Fires, False Alarms and Road Traffic Collisions  
2021-2022 data is provisional and may be subject to change



# What We Did in 2021-2022 and how We Performed

It is important that we evaluate our performance to ensure that we are as efficient and effective as possible. We therefore set annual targets against Welsh Government's Strategic Indicators and also compare our performance against the other Welsh Fire and Rescue Services. This section gives information on the progress we are making against those key performance indicators. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) are reviewing the "family groups" which enable comparison between similar fire and rescue services, and this will be included in future reviews.



Total fires attended were similar over the last three years and we performed better than expected, although there was a small increase in 2021-2022. This was mainly due to increases in deliberate grass and refuse fires.



Easing of Covid-19 restrictions saw increased road traffic last year. Although there was a rise in the number of Road Traffic Collisions attended by our crews, the total was below pre-pandemic levels. Longer term changes in traffic patterns, particularly relating to commuting, will be monitored.



Other Special Service Calls\* attended increased in 2021-2022 and exceeded the target we had set. The main increases were in Effecting Entry, from 210 calls to 342, and Assisting Other Agencies from 393 to 487 as we provided support to other emergency services.



We attended slightly more False Alarms last year. Although calls made with good intent fell by 242, those caused by automatic fire alarms rose by a similar number (+235). Hoax/malicious calls increased by 50 to 261 despite greater success by Joint Fire Control in identifying such calls.



Deaths and Injuries due to fire increased in 2021-2022 by 13 to 67. Note that 2020-2021 had recorded the lowest annual total in records since 2009-2010. Fatalities due to fire fell for the second year running, and most injuries requiring the victim to go to hospital were slight.



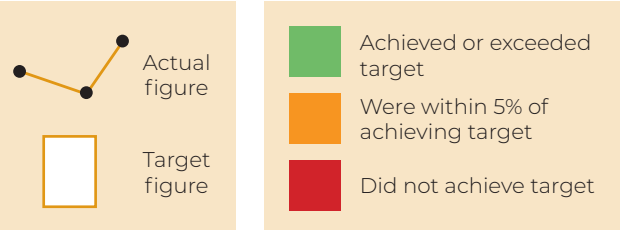
Despite an increase from 42 deaths and injuries due to accidental fires in 2020-2021, the total of 58 victims in 2021-2022 was below target and lower than the previous three years.



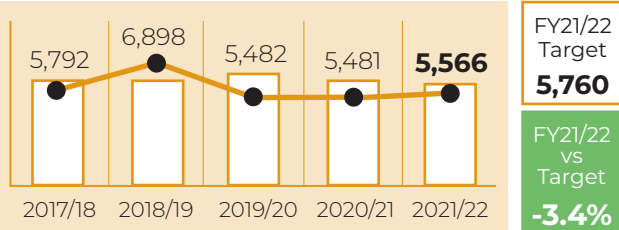
This is a measure of the spread of fire at stop. We were marginally below our target of 85%.

\*incidents other than Fires, False Alarms and Road Traffic Collisions  
2021-2022 data is provisional and may be subject to change

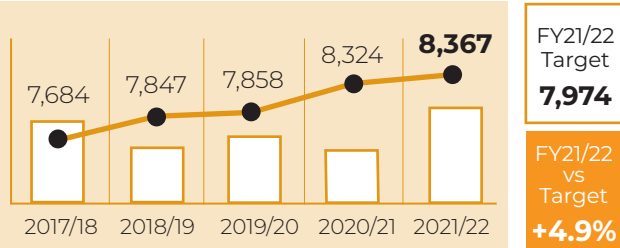
Key



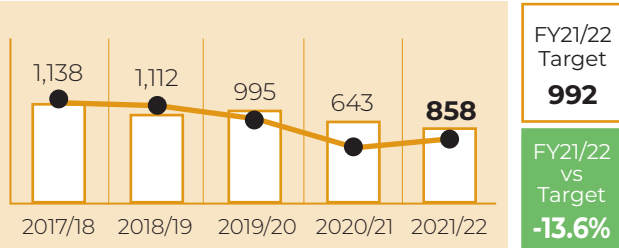
Total number of Fires attended



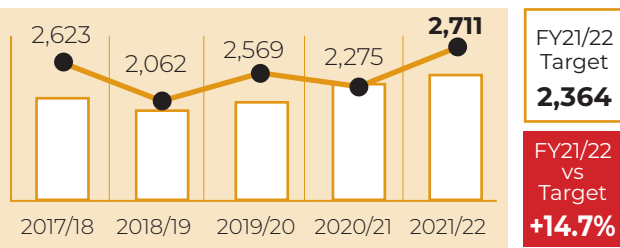
Total number of False Alarms attended



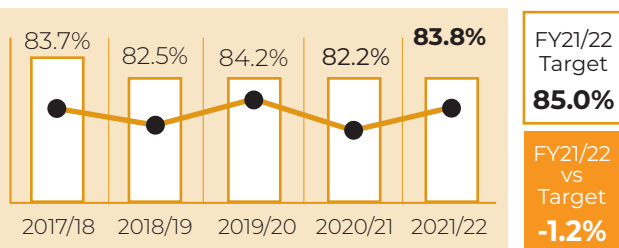
Total number of Road Traffic Collisions attended



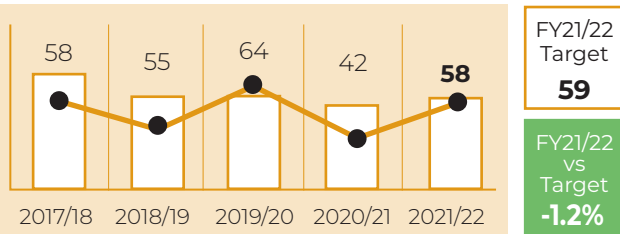
Total number of Other Special Service Calls attended



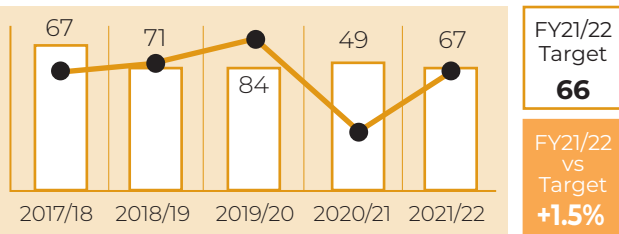
% of Dwelling Fires which were contained to the room in which they originated



Total number of Deaths and Injuries arising from Accidental Fires



Total number of Deaths and Injuries arising from All Fires



2021-2022 data is provisional and may be subject to change



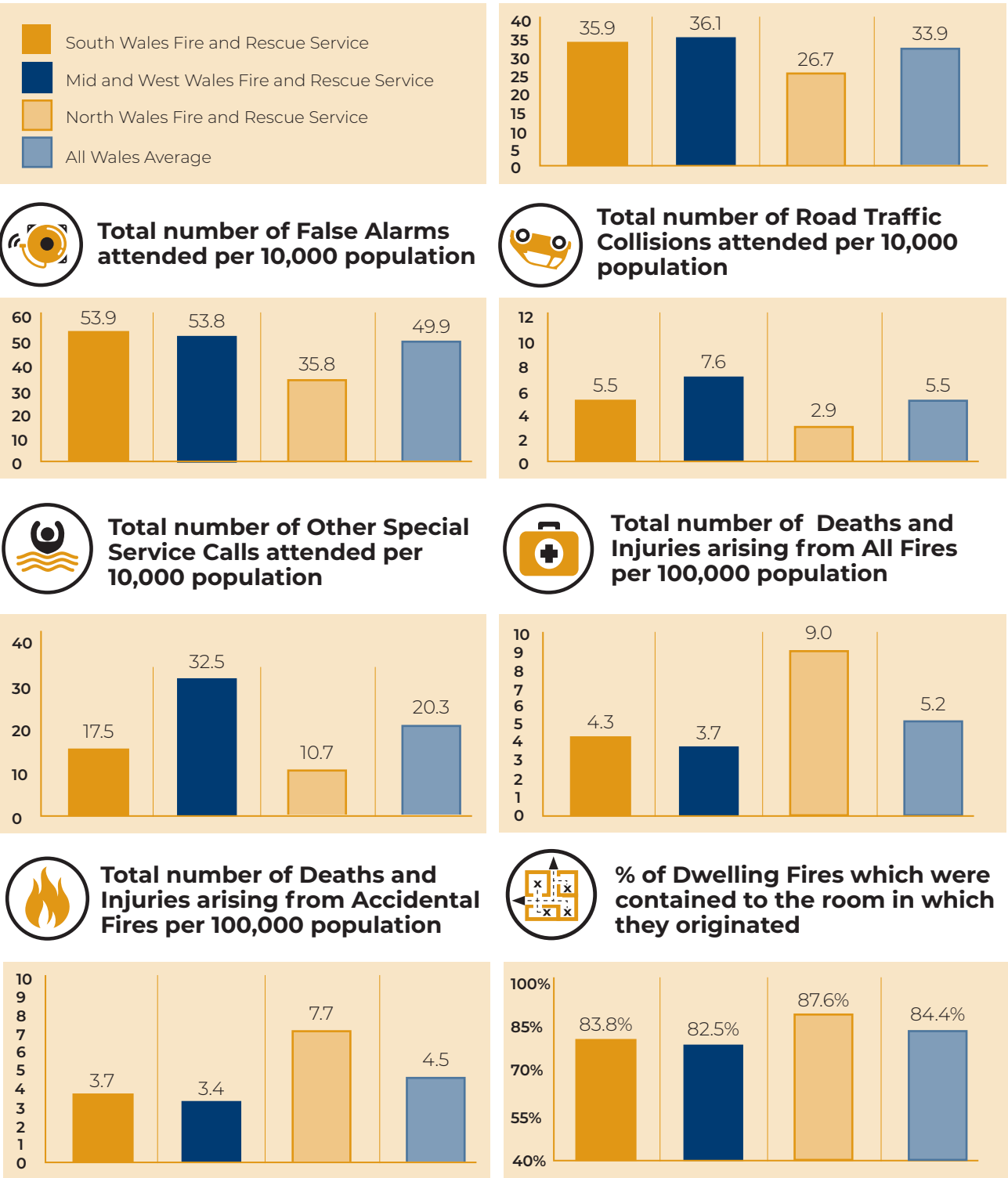
# 2021-2022

## Comparisons to other Welsh Fire and Rescue Services

	South Wales	Mid & West Wales	North Wales
The total number of fires attended	5,566	3,295	1,879
The total number of false alarms attended	8,367	4,917	2,517
The total number of road traffic collisions attended	858	694	207
The total number of other special service calls attended	2,711	2,974	751
The total number of deaths and injuries arising from all fires	67	34	63
The total number of deaths and injuries arising from accidental fires	58	31	54
The percentage of dwelling fires which were contained to the room in which they originated	83.8%	82.5%	87.6%

For information from other services:  
[Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service](#)  
[North Wales Fire and Rescue Service](#)  
[Stats Wales](#)

Key



To better compare incident statistics across the three Welsh FRs, incidents for 2021-2022 have been divided by the total population of each area and then multiplied by a standard number to give equivalent rates. This better illustrates the impact of incidents. Note that these comparisons are a snapshot for a single year and will vary year to year, particularly in relation to categories with smaller totals.

This benchmarking provides a measure of the services we deliver to our communities and informs our strategic decisions, identifying differences in demand and areas for focus on improvement.

# We had eight Strategic Themes with supporting objectives in 2021-2022

## Keeping you Safe

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A resilient Wales



A Wales of cohesive communities



A healthier Wales



A globally responsible Wales



Focussing on prevention work to help reduce the need for you to call us

### We will keep you safe by:

- Reducing the impact of false alarms on our resources
- Reducing the number of fires in the home and understanding the causes and behaviours of them
- Reducing the number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTC)
- Reducing the number of deliberate fires
- Improving safety in and around water
- Improving fire safety in buildings in our communities

### What we planned to do in 2021-2022 and what we did:

#### Collaborate with partners to reduce Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS - attending false alarms caused by fires alarm systems)

- We introduced new procedures to assist Stations in monitoring UFS and engaging with key stakeholders, including health boards, education authorities and housing associations. This has raised awareness of the impact on both the Service and those affected. The UFS Working Group continues to monitor and provide support

#### Evaluate information from LEAF (Learning and Evaluating After Fire) to inform targeted fire education and prevention activity

- The LEAF project, which seeks to understand the experience of those affected by accidental dwelling fires, will be supported by our home safety practitioners. This will ensure we support households as well as improving our understanding of these traumatic events and the effectiveness of our response

#### Enable fire station staff to conduct Enhanced Home Fire Safety Checks

- Following pandemic restrictions, we resumed in-person Enhanced Home Fire Safety Checks, providing additional safety advice to households on smoking cessation, carbon monoxide awareness, crime prevention and falls safety. This is being delivered across eight of our unitary authorities and discussions continue with the remaining unitary authorities

#### Investigate new initiatives for Road Traffic Collision (RTC) education and work with road safety partners to reduce RTCs

- We deliver road safety advice to over 200 people per month through a combination of events including 30-20 (speed reduction), Domino (road safety targeted at 15-25 year-olds) and Options (mobile phone use or not wearing seat belt). We use local community centres and sports clubs to reach into our communities. We have expanded into new areas, developing partnerships in Bridgend, Caldicot and Chepstow
- Our approach to the 30-20 speed reduction initiative focusses on 'behavioural change' as we collaborate with Welsh Government and Go-Safe to deliver road safety advice. This has been very well received and will continue to be rolled out during 2022

#### Gather local community intelligence and adopt a partnership approach to reducing deliberate fires, house fires and RTCs

- Fire crime practitioners continue to establish strong partnerships and identify opportunities for arson reduction
- The Healthy Hillside project has seen us work closely with communities and partners including Natural Resources Wales, Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council to better manage our hillsides for wildlife, and in doing so, support the local communities in the Rhondda
- Regular multi-agency initiatives, such as Operation Dawns Glow (targeting wildfire), Operation Elstree (anti-social behaviour in coastal areas) and Operation Bang (during the period around Halloween and Bonfire Night) continue. Several fly tipping locations have been identified and, working with partner agencies, these areas have been cleared to reduce opportunities for deliberate fire setting. We use local intelligence and incident data to identify key locations for patrols to enable local engagement and education opportunities, providing assurance to the local community
- We are developing reports to provide stations with better local information, enabling them to coordinate initiatives with support from teams across the Service

#### Produce an All-Wales Accidental Dwelling Fire campaign focusing on cooking, electrical and candle safety

- We have continued to promote home safety messages on these topics in response to incident trends and to support national safety weeks. Development of an all-Wales campaign continues

#### Plan firefighter visits to buildings to identify and mitigate risks and gather site specific risk information (SSRI), to ensure staff safety

- We have improved recording and monitoring systems for stations to monitor local risk. This is supported by strategic and working groups, bringing together colleagues from across the Service to capture and share risk information. Work is ongoing to ensure the right information is available when it is needed



### Deliver actions arising from the 'high rise buildings project'

- The High-Rise Working Group continues to coordinate activity, supporting colleagues and stakeholders
- Our Business Fire Safety department works with Responsible Persons where Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) and other combustible cladding has been identified, monitoring progress of remediation works
- 'The Welsh Fire Safety Act 2021' was introduced on 1st October 2021 and is now incorporated into the inspection programme, requiring Responsible Persons to provide details of material used. We await guidance from Welsh Government on other aspects of the Act
- All high-rise residential buildings have undergone Phase 1/Phase 2 audits incorporating the latest National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) guidance relating to compartmentation, which delays fire spread. Our community safety practitioners engage with residents of high-rise buildings. An All-Wales Fire Survival Guidance policy has been produced

### Improve the quality of the data we collect following an incident to identify and target higher risk citizens in our communities

- Virtual and in-person training has been delivered on completing Incident Recording System (IRS) records, capturing information on incidents attended. Training has also been delivered to stations on completing records of home fire safety checks. Analysis of this information supports our risk reduction planning

### Identify operational improvements that can be made as a result of our Water Rescue Strategy

- The Water Rescue Strategy 2021-2026 outlines planned improvement to our rescue capability and is programmed in a phased approach
- In Phase 1 we have upskilled our rescue tender stations to Type C capability (the ability to enter the water and carry out a swift water rescue)
- Phase 2 will see all wholtime stations achieving Type D capability (the ability to enter slow moving shallow water to assist in rescue from flooding)
- We continued our work with national water rescue working groups, including the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and Swim Wales, to deliver warnings and information to the public. In collaboration with the RNLI, we deliver training to establishments and operators alongside watercourses, including sessions for Cardiff Council park wardens at Blackweir, Cardiff
- Trials were initiated in Caerphilly and Cardiff areas to establish a water risk toolkit for use across the Service, enabling stations to develop local risk profiles, plan operational response and undertake exercises against it. This will assist in the identification of appropriate sites for public rescue equipment
- We held a family event to support those affected by drowning in Wales. This was a highly emotive event with families invited to come together more regularly to support each other and initiate their own campaigns to support drowning prevention

### Deliver the River Usk Trackway Project (a deployable trackway to be used during flooding incidents) project and work with Water Safety Wales to reduce water related incidents

- Funding has been secured to initiate the River Usk Trackway project, which will provide a deployable boat launch point close to Newport city centre. We are working with construction consultants to progress this scheme





## Responding to your Emergency

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A resilient  
Wales



A healthier  
Wales



Ensuring  
we respond  
quickly and  
effectively  
when you  
need us

### We will respond to your Emergency by:

- Responding effectively when you need us
- Doing all we can to make sure that our On-Call Duty System (OCDS) crews are available
- Training our firefighters, emergency Fire Control Staff and other staff to respond to current and future risks in our communities

### What we planned to do in 2021-2022 and what we did:

#### Focus on increasing the retention rates and availability of our On-Call firefighters

- Timescales for On-Call recruitment stages have been reduced, allowing candidates to access the initial course more quickly
- We developed On-Call recruitment days incorporating an ability test, physical and practical assessment, and interview in one session. Stations are supported by the On-Call and Media and Communications Teams in promoting opportunities. A new On-Call Development booklet gives candidates a four-week plan prior to their initial course which has improved performance and reduced the number of unsuccessful recruits

#### Ensure resilience is in place to support periods of increased activity within Joint Fire Control (JFC)

- A restructure of JFC has been carried out and we trained a cohort of new recruits. Recommendations from the outcome of a recent review will be implemented. Operation Willow Beck, planning for fire and rescue services to provide mutual support during spate call conditions, was progressed

#### Consider a new contract system for our strategic reserve (wholetime firefighters making up crew shortages at On-Call fire stations), to enhance On-Call availability

- 'On-Call Support' was introduced in February 2022 and is open to all competent Wholetime Firefighters to cover On-Call station shortfalls on the middle two rest days of their rota system

#### Improve the training pathway from initial recruit to competent On-Call firefighter

- We worked with our partner, Skills for Justice, to evaluate, design and implement changes to the On-Call qualification, and are continuing to identify opportunities to improve efficiency within the On-Call pathway

### Review core competency skills for all operational staff to address emerging future risks

- We established a project to evaluate e-learning packages to ensure they comply with all relevant policies and guidance. The project will continue in 2022-2023 to deliver a support system
- The annual audit system was developed by our Operational Assurance and Support Team (OAST) in collaboration with the Operational Development and Review Team (ODRT) and Training Department so that key themes can be identified for improvement

### Ensure training delivery reflects National Operational Guidance, maintaining consistency across the Service and on an all-Wales FRS basis

- The National Operational Guidance Implementation Group consults with our specialist working groups to recommend updates to training materials. The Training Support Unit then implement changes to ensure our firefighters receive the most up-to-date guidance

### Design training exercises, involving 10 or more fire engines, for identified high risk sites to develop Incident Commanders

- Two large-scale exercises, supplementing local exercises, were carried out in 2021. Further venues and specific themes are being identified to test and develop operational capability
- Exercises 'Ivor' and 'Taxing Tower' both involved more than 10 fire engines and special appliances as well as other emergency services and partners. Exercises 'Ivor' simulated a complex rail incident and 'Taxing Tower' a high-rise incident

### Enhance station commanders' ability to drive forward a performance-based culture and implement the new Personal Review process

- Our OAST engaged with station staff in person and virtually via initial induction courses, seminars, audits and meetings to raise awareness of ways to capture performance data and influence future outcomes
- A new Personal Review process was introduced to support open dialogue around well-being and career aspirations, involving all our staff in 2021-2022



# Working with Partners

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:

-  A resilient Wales
-  A Wales of cohesive communities
-  A globally responsible Wales
-  A prosperous Wales



Working with the South Wales PSBs and other partners to deliver a fire and rescue service that meets your needs

## We will work with our partners by:

- Working with Public Service Boards (PSBs) to support our communities
- Working with our partners to deliver our services where they are needed
- Reviewing and evaluating our existing partnerships

## What we planned to do in 2021-2022 and what we did:

### Support emergency service colleagues and partners during and post Covid-19 pandemic

- We continued to support our colleagues in NHS Wales and Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) during the pandemic - driving ambulances, administering vaccines and working at community vaccination centres, with over 100 of our staff volunteering to assist
- Work with our PSBs and other partners in support of post Covid-19 community recovery
- Our Operational Managers continued to engage via the PSBs and their subgroups to ensure we provide support wherever required, while stations engaged with local communities

### Work with Welsh Government to implement the recommendations made within the White Paper “Safer Buildings in Wales”

- We continued our collaboration with Welsh Government and fire and rescue services in Wales to implement the recommendations of this White Paper that will see an overhaul of the existing system for building safety in Wales

### Support the Gwent Climate Mitigation steering group and apply relevant best practice

- In addition to supporting the Gwent Climate Mitigation Group and our PSBs in their action to address climate issues, work has been taking place with both the Gwent and Cardiff Healthy Travel Charters

### Work with the Social Value Portal to embed the national Themes, Outcomes & Measures (TOMS) into our procurement processes

- We are working with Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service to embed social value clauses into relevant contracts. Wider consultation is taking place across the Public Sector in Wales on methods of social value recording and management. The Social Partnership & Public Procurement (Wales) Bill, which will become law in 2023, provides a duty to ensure socially responsible outcomes are pursued through supply chains. This supports the WFGA goal of “A Prosperous Wales”

### Progress the data sharing project between our Service and the two other Welsh FRSs

- The ability to share data is essential for an effective emergency response to critical incidents, such as Storm Dennis in 2020 which saw people, property and businesses impacted by flooding and storm damage. The Joint Emergency Services Group Wales (JESG) has coordinated work with multiple agencies to enable data to be shared for preparedness and response

## Co-ordinate a strategy with our emergency services partners to develop future colocation opportunities

- A mapping exercise commenced to identify and map all emergency services sites, developing criteria to monitor suitability and condition. This will assist future planning and we are exploring the use of [DataMapWales](#) to share information using a secure online platform

## Support the healthcare agreement to build closer working relationships with University Health Boards (UHBs)

- Business Fire Safety (BFS) supports the healthcare compact to build closer working relationships with UHBs. This is a voluntary agreement between Welsh Government's Department for Health and Social Services and the Chief Fire Officer's Association Wales. It helps to reduce risks in hospitals and other health service settings, and our work includes:
  - Sharing information and giving advice on false alarms and fire calls
  - Advising on building regulations

## Review our stakeholder and partnership register in relation to our obligations under the new socio-economic duty

- Our Consultation and Engagement Group has led on this review to ensure we are engaging with a wide range of partners. This will ensure that we are effectively connecting and engaging with our communities, and that our plans are coordinated to meet shared challenges. Alongside this work, a new engagement toolkit is being developed to assist stations and departments across the Service in their work with communities and partners

## Identify new methods and opportunities to conduct joint training with partners

- Exercise ‘Ivor’ tested our response to a major rail incident and Exercise ‘Taxing Tower’ was a multi-agency response to a high-rise incident. Partner organisations involved included South Wales Police, WAST, Hazardous Area Response Team (HART), Cardiff University, Cardiff Council and Welsh Water
- In Community Safety, operational and strategic level training packages have been developed using a variety of platforms, including face to face (on and off site), virtual platforms and multi-agency settings. Working with partners to train community safety practitioners has strengthened relationships and raised awareness, assisting in two-way referrals and signposting, improving our service to the public.
  - We hosted WAST Dementia Training and Mental Capacity Awareness from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) Mental Capacity Lead and worked closely with Improvement Cymru to improve service delivery
  - Community safety practitioners were trained to install and link Telecare smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors in high-risk households for existing customers of the Cardiff Telecare Service (which supplies pendant alarms)
  - Care and Repair provided training regarding their services so we can directly refer to them.
  - We established an All-Wales Fire and Rescue Service referral pathway for WAST staff visiting high risk households, providing a remote training package and an easy to refer pathway
    - To increase understanding of high fire risk, we provided training for ABUHB staff including district nurses
    - Training was delivered to Western Power Distribution staff on the installation of smoke alarms

## Explore new partnerships and innovative ways of collaborating with social housing groups

- We are the Primary Authority Scheme holder for Community Housing Cymru which is the umbrella organisation for housing associations in Wales. This provides organisations with standard advice from one point of contact. Led by Business Fire Safety, we have provided advice regarding fire door specification and delivered a virtual presentation which was ‘attended’ by over 60 housing association representatives

# Engaging and Communicating

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:


- 

A resilient Wales
- 

A Wales of cohesive communities
- 

A Wales of vibrant culture & thriving Welsh language
- 

A more equal Wales



Ensuring all our communities and staff are involved in helping us provide an excellent service.

## We will engage and communicate by:

- Involving our communities and make sure they have their say in what we do
- Helping to keep our communities safe by delivering safety education and attending community events

## What we planned to do in 2021-2022 and what we did:

### Develop and roll out a Service-wide communications “app” for all staff

- Our staff app is live and regularly updated with the latest Service news and information. Future development will be led by feedback from users

### Establish a reporting tool to track our progress against new Investors in People (IiP) recommendations and action plan

- We have used our Business Management Information System (BMIS) to develop and track the IiP action plan

### Develop a non-digital engagement plan to connect and involve our communities, such as using billboard vehicles for outreach education messages

- We have liaised with the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales regarding digital exclusion, particularly focussing on our socio-economic duty as the most vulnerable may be excluded from accessing information via digital platforms for a variety of reasons
- Non-digital methods are considered in each major campaign plan and referenced in our new Communications and Engagement Strategy 2022-2025. Methods employed, such as for our Christmas safety campaign and wholtime firefighter recruitment campaigns, include use of billboard vehicles, leaflets, brochures, newspaper adverts, radio and TV, outdoor banners at stations, and face-to-face engagement events

### Raise awareness throughout the Service, and communicate with external partners, to gain ideas for carbon reduction

- Sustainability champions have been nominated from all departments and a Sustainability Steering Group established. This group will engage with and involve staff in planning for carbon emissions reduction, encouraging shared ownership of plans to reduce the Service’s carbon footprint. Champions will encourage ideas for the delivery of key actions

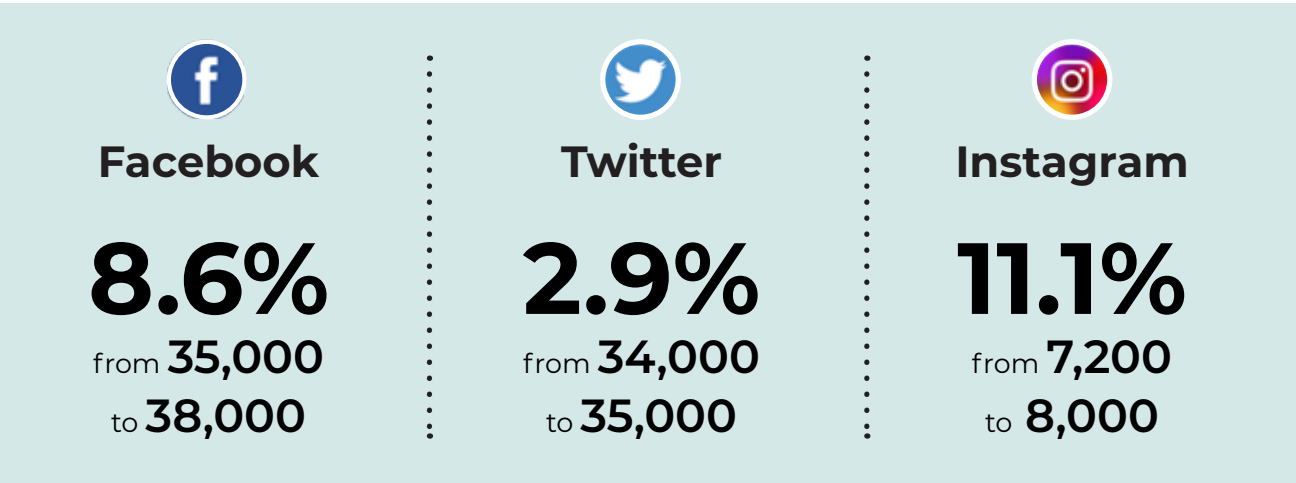
### Facilitate increased sharing and exchange of information between our station commanders and our operations management team

- We have improved the way we communicate by installing video conferencing equipment at all stations. Regular on-line meetings are also held with all station commanders

## Increase use of social media by stations to share good news stories and community safety messages

- We expanded our website and social media platforms, and re-invigorated Stations’ Facebook pages for more engagement with our communities. When schools share updates with us on social media following school visits, we thank them or share posts on our social media channels

## Increase in social media followers



## Work with our schools and colleges to deliver innovative approaches to Key Stage 1-4 fire and road safety education

- We employed a blended approach by making use of Microsoft Teams for remote delivery to classes. This supported schools in maintaining rewarding educational sessions
- We delivered the ‘Bernie Pantomime’ to 1,336 students across 18 schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly. This resource provides a curriculum linked, bi-lingual, audience appropriate and engaging pantomime that educates pupils about the danger of deliberate grass fires



# Protecting our Environment


Supporting the following Well-being Goals:

 A globally responsible Wales

 A healthier Wales

 A resilient Wales

 A Wales of cohesive communities



Carrying out our activities in a way that helps sustain the planet for our future generations

## We will protect our environment by:

- Reducing the usage of single use materials
- Expanding the use of electric vehicles (EV)
- Reducing our energy and our carbon footprint
- Considering how our activities impact on the environment
- Reducing the amount of waste produced

## What we planned to do in 2021-2022 and what we did:

### Implement the actions contained in our Carbon Reduction Plan 2020-2023

- Audit Wales have reviewed our Carbon Reduction Plan and made several recommendations which we will implement
- To meet the challenging targets in terms of carbon reduction and biodiversity as set out by Welsh Government we recognised the need for additional expertise and recruited our Sustainability Officer, with additional support provided by a graduate from the Welsh Government All-Wales Graduate Scheme. They will greatly assist us in improving our plans to achieve our sustainability goals

### Record, monitor, report and publish our carbon impacts, energy consumption and waste produced

- We continue to work to establish measures to monitor progress against the baseline year of 2018-2019. A new waste contract will be awarded in 2022-2023, enabling us to monitor our waste more effectively
- Energy measurement has progressed to identify consumption at station level. Other elements of our carbon footprint measure have been developed, including adjustments to account for replacement of diesel pool cars with electric vehicles
- By 1st April 2022 we had 27 dual charging points installed at 11 strategic stations plus HQ and Cardiff Gate Training and Development Centre

### Implement additional electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across the Service

- The first part of the implementation at strategic sites has been completed at Fire Service HQ, Cardiff Gate Training and Development Centre and 11 other sites with further installations planned. Funding has been secured from Welsh Government to support this work, to provide us with EV charging points at every site by the end of 2022-2023

## Explore more opportunities to go ‘paperless’ and ensure promotional / marketing items are environmentally friendly

- Single use materials, such as leaflets, are now discouraged and replaced with messages via our social media platforms. We do, however, recognise that some essential materials must remain, for example leaflets distributed at food banks, so that information is available to all
- Paper will always be required on stations but steps to reduce and recycle are improving, assisted by the introduction of mobile devices. Station printing is now monitored and ordering of paper has reduced

## Explore the further reduction of unnecessary travel

- Staff forums, such as our middle leader events, take place online with groups dialling in from stations, and training is being delivered via online platforms where possible
- Fire and Rescue Authority meetings are held online, and videos of meetings are available on our website
- Over 30% of Risk Reduction department meetings are now conducted virtually, negating the need to travel, and work is ongoing to further improve on this

## Consider using rainwater and appliance tank water to achieve water sustainability

- A project has been initiated and companies have been requested to provide costs to develop a system of rainwater capture, initially for HQ Fleet for vehicle cleaning. We are exploring the scope of rainwater use
- We are implementing green energy solutions, where appropriate, and embed sustainability into our design process
- We explore green energy solutions for all major projects, and we are investigating retro fit options for Fire Service HQ and other sites

## Reduce our frontline appliance age to 12 years to reduce impact on the environment and improve safety

- Our Vehicle Replacement Programme has been reviewed to reflect this aim, which will improve the efficiency of our fleet. Note that this excludes specialist appliances

# Using Technology Well

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:

-  A globally responsible Wales
-  A resilient Wales
-  A healthier Wales



Continually look to use the latest technology where it can improve our service to you

## We will use technology well by:

- Using the most suitable technology and equipment to improve our services
- Reviewing the standard and use of technology and equipment across the Service

## What we planned to do in 2021-2022 and what we did:

### Explore the use of mobile tablets on stations and the use of navigation software and smartphones on fire engines

- Mobile tablets have been provided to operational officers with a further rollout planned. These will provide greater flexibility and improve recording of activities
- A trial of mobile devices on appliances started. This enables input of community safety and incident data as well as access to apps such as Fly Mapper, allowing crews to report fly tipping incidents directly to the relevant local authority

### Replace our end-of-life office productivity tools with Microsoft Office 365 and embed improvements in collaborative and agile working, using Microsoft Teams

- The systems upgrade commenced in Summer 2021 with the Microsoft Office 365 rollout, aiming to migrate station personnel in Autumn 2022. The initial phase involving HQ departments has already had a positive impact on working practices with departments able to collaborate more effectively

### Review HQ firewall, Fleet, Joint Fire Control (JFC), Asset Management, Finance and Procurement systems

- Work on the HQ inner firewall has progressed, and a new system is being procured
- The Tranman system, used by our Fleet & Engineering Department to manage information about our vehicles, has been upgraded. All Fleet & Engineering staff were trained, and future development will see training for operational staff to enhance their use of the system
- Asset Management system requirements have been explored and options will be tested before a decision on any change is finalised
- Work on JFC, Finance and Procurement Systems will be progressed in 2022-2023

## Review developments in technology that provide improved document discovery and security

- The upgrade of our SharePoint system has enabled centralised on-line library development. This will improve identification of documents meeting specific criteria

## Embed the use of polling software used to encourage and facilitate engagement

- We use polling software to facilitate audience participation at large meetings, engagement events and training days. This enables attendees to submit questions and interact with polls designed to capture feedback. This helps us to effectively shape future events

## Create an action plan for design and delivery of our Intranet Project

- The Service's internal Intranet system has been redesigned and upgraded. Work continues in developing content and additional resources to support staff

## Rollout CoreHR talent and attendance management modules

- CoreHR is our centralised human resources system. The talent module supports our Personal Review process, recording regular well-being and development meetings for staff with their managers. This went live in April 2021 and will be supplemented by the Learning Management System currently in development
- The Attendance Management module will be progressed in 2022-2023

## Develop more automated reports for our Human Resources department using the Business Management Information System (BMIS)

- BMIS provides dashboards and statistics to managers and teams across the service. Reporting for Human Resources is regularly reviewed and continues to develop

## Implement any findings from our review into how we model risk as an organisation

- A review of risk modelling was carried out and we are exploring the findings

## Design and deliver improvements to our Disaster Recovery plan, in line with the JFC technology replacement project with South Wales Police

- Informed by learning from the Covid-19 response, a review is underway

## Gain accreditation to Cyber Essentials Plus

- Cyber Essentials Plus is a rigorous test of an organisation's cyber security arrangements. We continue to update our systems to achieve compliance with this accreditation. It will provide assurance that the Service has put in place a range of cyber security and data protection measures



# Valuing our People

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:

-  A more equal Wales
-  A healthier Wales
-  A prosperous Wales
-  A Wales of vibrant culture & thriving Welsh language



Supporting a diverse workforce that represents your community, is well trained and motivated to deliver our service

## We will value our people by:

- Attracting a workforce that reflects and represents our communities
- Developing our people by identifying training and development opportunities
- Supporting our people to feel well, healthy, and happy at work
- Delivering on the recommendations of the Investors in People report
- Encouraging and supporting a bilingual culture across the Service

## What we planned to do in 2021-2022 and what we did:

### Involve fire station staff in identifying and supporting potential future firefighters and volunteers

- Following the lifting of pandemic restrictions, On-Call recruitment events, open days and recruitment evenings were reintroduced. A QR code is used at events for online registration of interest. This activity is supported by Recruitment and Media & Communications teams
- Station commanders continue to develop links with community groups with stations supporting recruitment sessions and signposting to resources and guidance. We also encourage our fire cadets to consider a career with the Service
- Establish a clear strategy to attract and retain staff for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to become an employer of choice, including amongst groups currently under-represented
- The operational recruitment process was reviewed to identify any barriers for those who could be disadvantaged (such as requiring a driver's licence when first recruited). We also analysed our internal promotion processes to identify any indirect barriers faced by staff from under-represented groups
- We held virtual positive action events in which firefighters shared their stories
- Work to produce a Service-wide recruitment and retention strategy has commenced, linking in with Equality & Diversity and other departments as well as the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) recruitment hub working group

## Ensure that equality and diversity is firmly embedded in all our HR key policies and procedures

- We have introduced an Integrated Assessment process to evaluate the impact of all policies, procedures and activities, ensuring we consider under-represented and marginalised groups

## Launch and rollout the new Personal Review process to all staff

- Our Learning & Development team launched the new digital Personal Review platform in April 2021 which is embedding across the Service. Positive impact has been reported and the process has encouraged constructive conversations around well-being and longer-term career development

## Identify, develop and retain high performing talent and our future Service leaders

- Our new development pathways, which set out learning and skills requirements at all levels, are mapped against the NFCC framework. The four delivery areas of the framework ensure that leadership behaviours are embedded across the Service. These are scheduled to launch during 2022-2023

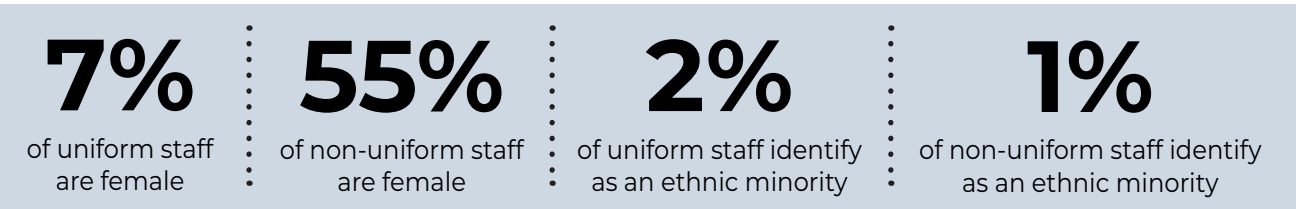


## Embed our well-being strategy across the Service and deliver a line manager training package for diversity and occupational health, to support the physical and mental well-being of our staff

- The project was developed, and a training package will be produced and developed to address key strands and identify themes

## Review our welfare facilities, well-being areas and working environments to ensure we provide a healthy and safe workplace for our people

- Well-being areas and other facilities have been developed at several locations in collaboration with staff working at these locations. Where possible, we have used reclaimed and donated materials to reduce environmental impact. Additional facilities are planned at other locations
- Our Well-being Delivery Group meets quarterly to review staff well-being and involves representation from across the Service
- A pro-active approach has been adopted to support staff on an individual basis following traumatic operational incidents and the Service's new Mental Health Strategy is being embedded through work with all staff



# Continue to Work Effectively

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A prosperous Wales



A Wales of vibrant culture & thriving Welsh language



A healthier Wales



Ensuring our service provides value for money and is clearly accountable.

## We will continue to work effectively by:

- Being clear and publicly accountable
- Maximising value for money while improving our service
- Developing new ways of working

## What we planned to do in 2021-2022 and what we did:

### Develop a method to assess what impact our buying and supplier choices have on those disadvantaged and vulnerable in our community

- We have begun work to embed social value clauses in all prescribed contracts and report on their effectiveness in line with legislation and the aims of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. Our work continues to capture more information around social value and sustainability so that we can manage our supply chains more effectively
- The inclusion of social value clauses within procurements will encourage our suppliers to provide benefits to our communities. These include providing employment, apprenticeship and training opportunities, the use of local supplies and services, and support for environmental considerations with the aim of creating a more sustainable Wales

### Implement the outcomes and decisions from the Job Evaluation exercise

- The Job Evaluation exercise is complete and the outcomes in terms of any salary changes have been communicated. We will be providing refresher training to Job Evaluators to support the ongoing maintenance of the Service's Job Evaluation Scheme. This will ensure that going forward, every post whether new or amended, will receive the appropriate level of remuneration

### Explore methods of measuring, monitoring and reporting departmental performance, supported by the use of technology

- We have expanded use of our Business Management Information System to enable and support the measuring, monitoring and reporting of an array of performance information including:
  - Station monthly and annual audit information
  - Operational core competency
  - Home fire safety checks
  - Site Specific Risk Information (SSRIs)
  - Unwanted fire signals
  - Various aspects of health and safety

## Implement an improved long term vehicle replacement programme for our fleet and review the efficiency of our fuel tanks

- In 2021, our Senior Management Team agreed to reduce the life span of front-line appliances to 12 years. We have altered the vehicle replacement programme to reflect this

## Review Joint Fire Control structure, governance, location, working patterns and flexible team rotas within the Joint Public Service Centre

- Following completion of the review, the project has moved into the consultation and implementation phase. A restructure and redistribution of some workstreams has been completed to assist with workload

## Implement the court decision regarding Firefighter Pension Fund tapering arrangements and communicate clearly to affected staff

- Following the court of appeal ruling on firefighter pensions schemes, the Fire and Rescue Authority agreed at its July 2021 meeting to proceed to process cases. We are actively offering two pension benefits statements to those who are retiring and working on all other cases to prepare them for processing. We have also issued ongoing communications including FAQs and are working to provide scheme members with illustrations and access to an on-line pension modeller

## Review the way flexible rostering provides 24/7 fire cover

- The objective of Flexible Rostering is to achieve optimum crewing levels through advance planning and flexible deployment of station-based staff in a way that matches resources to demand. The operating principles for effective Flexible Rostering have been agreed in negotiations between the Service's Senior Management Team and Representative Bodies. The system will undergo an annual review by a joint working party or at the request of any of the parties concerned, as appropriate, to ensure the principles outlined continue to be effective



# Audit of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's 2021-2022 accounts

Each year Audit Wales audits the Service's financial statements. The Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the FRA's financial statements on 26th July 2022.

*"In my opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and of its income and expenditure for the year and have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and UK adopted international accounting standards."*

**Auditor General for Wales**

## Accountancy

	Audited 2020-2021 £Million	Published 2021-2022 £Million	Budgeted 2022-2023 £Million
Employee Related Costs	62.5	62.5	63.5
Premises Related Expenses	5.5	5.3	5.6
Training Expenses	1.3	1.6	1.8
Supplies and Services	5.2	5.5	5.3
Transport Related Expenses	1.3	1.4	1.5
Contracted Services	0.9	1.0	0.9
Capital Costs / Leasing	4.4	4.1	4.9
Income	-7.5	-7.7	-4.2
Total	73.6	73.7	79.3

## Our budget for 2022-2023

Revenue Grants	£6.9m	Capital Programme	£2.4m
Private Finance Initiative Grant	£1.0m	Property	£1,300,000
		Vehicles	£84,000
		ICT Equipment	£420,000
		Ops Equipment	£610,000

# South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's 2021-2022 Internal Audits

During 2021-2022, ten audits were carried out by TIAA, our contracted internal auditor. Each audit assessed an area of activity against four levels of assurance – substantial, reasonable, limited or none, with recommended actions (if any) being transferred to our Business Management Information System (BMIS) for quarterly monitoring of progress.

Audit Name	Assurance Level	No. of Actions
Assurance Review of Mitigating Controls	Substantial	1
Assurance Review of Station Visits	Substantial	1
Assurance Review of Equality and Diversity	Substantial	3
Assurance Review of Strategic Planning	Substantial	0
Assurance Review of Payment Cards	Substantial	4
Assurance Review of Performance Management	Substantial	1
Assurance Review of Safeguarding	Reasonable	8
Assurance Review of Key Financial Controls	Reasonable	0
Assurance Review of CoreHR	Reasonable	4
Assurance Review of Death in Service Scheme	Reasonable	1

In addition, a follow up review audit was undertaken on actions arising from twelve audits carried out between September 2019 and July 2021.



# What We Plan to Do in 2023-2024

Our vision remains to make South Wales safer by reducing risk. This aim, established in our Strategic Plan 2020-2030, is fundamental to our activities and shapes our planning which is structured around eight Strategic Themes (as detailed on pages 46-47).

As well as delivering an effective response to our communities when they need us, this model ensures our plans are aligned to the principle of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

“All public services should act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The themes and related objectives have developed in consultation with our staff, communities, partners and other stakeholders. In the following pages, we outline our work in developing our proposals for 2023-2024 and our priorities for improvement. These proposals are open to consultation for 12 weeks from the publication of this Improvement Plan. You can find details of how to ‘Have Your Say’ at the end of this document. Please take a few minutes to tell us what you think.

We are committed to building equality, diversity and sustainability into everything we do – from valuing and developing our people to delivering person-centred services to the communities of South Wales. You can find out more about how we plan to achieve this in our Strategic Plan and other key plans, available on our website or via links below.





# How We Developed our Plan for 2023-2024

## Initial Consultation

In an early consultation exercise during June 2022, our staff, stakeholders and key partners were asked to rate the importance of the Service's eight Strategic Themes and respond to the following three questions:

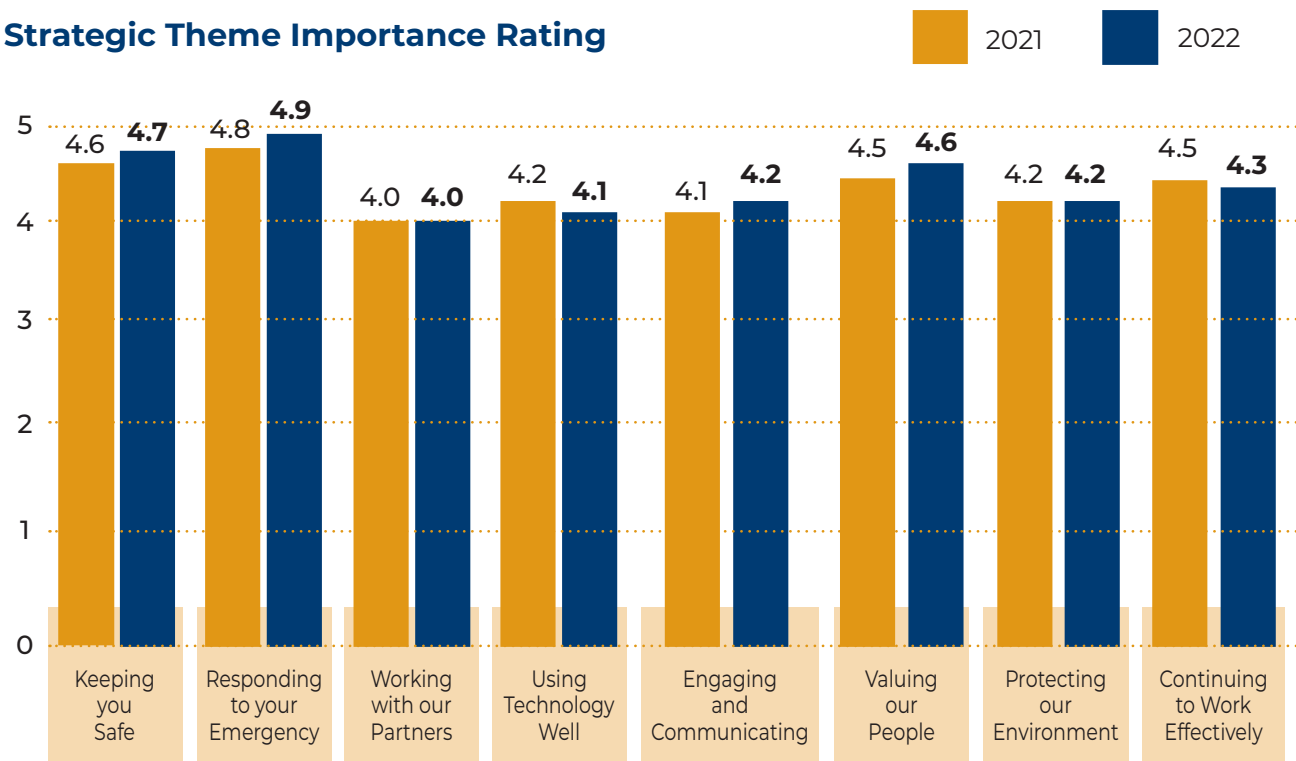
- What should we be doing next year to improve our Service in 2023-2024?
- If you could make one change to our Service, what would it be?
- Are there services we should focus less on?

The survey, available in Welsh and English, was promoted by email to our stakeholder register and to all staff via email, internal newsletters, the staff app and on the Service intranet.

We received 130 responses, a 67% increase from 78 responses in 2021. The majority were received from employees and volunteers (111 responses), with more than half from corporate staff (68 responses).

Overall, on a scale of 1-5 (from not important to very important), all Strategic Themes were rated as important/very important. The average score for two themes was slightly lower than the same exercise in 2021 ('Using Technology Well' and 'Continuing to Work Effectively'), while four were rated higher ('Keeping you Safe', 'Responding to your Emergency', 'Engaging and Communicating' and 'Valuing our People' – the first two of which were most important overall).

Strategic Theme Importance Rating



An evaluation report on this consultation was shared with our Senior Management Team and the Fire and Rescue Authority. Feedback to the questions asked was analysed and recurring themes identified for consideration in development of this Improvement Plan. These themes are detailed on the following pages with brief responses. Note that although we asked for feedback on areas for improvement, we also received positive comments, for example, confirming that “All work undertaken is useful” and “We prioritise and focus on the correct themes”.

## Complaints and Compliments

We considered complaints to identify any recurring issues. A total of 39 complaints were received in 2021-2022, all of which were addressed satisfactorily. There were no significant issues raised requiring change to procedures but, where appropriate, advice and/or training was provided to individuals involved. No recurrent themes were identified.

We also regularly receive positive messages and letters of appreciation which are shared Service-wide.

“All the firefighters were excellent and very caring looking after my wife and myself while we were trapped in our car. There was always a firefighter holding my wife’s hand as she was very frightened. They were very good while they cut the doors off and dismantled the car.

We have been told we were lucky to be alive and we thank them all from the bottom of our hearts.”

“I would like to thank the two lovely young men who came out to my home this morning to assess my fire safety needs. They were both absolutely delightful and made my home safe and advised me what to do in the future, should I need their help.”

## Developing the plan

As well as considering information from the initial survey, the Senior Management Team and the Fire and Rescue Authority reviewed our Strategic Themes and Objectives against performance outcomes. Meetings were held with Heads of Service and other managers to reflect on feedback and to identify priorities for 2023-2024, progressing from plans being implemented in the current year.

Colleagues in operational and risk reduction roles were invited to comment on the draft document before final review and sign off by the Senior Management Team.

Consultation Comments - Themes and Responses

Consultation Theme	Our Response
Improve staff morale, listen to staff, value staff more, and improve employee welfare and well-being	<p>We recognise that our staff are our greatest asset in ensuring that we continue to keep our communities safe. We have numerous features in place including the Shout forum to enable exchange of ideas, a well-being group dedicated to all staff well-being and pro-active individual support to those attending traumatic incidents.</p> <p>However, we are always looking for ways to improve, such as developing the staff app and updating the Shout forum to include details of ongoing surveys to further enable staff to have their say on issues being explored by the Service.</p>
Improve and increase engagement with communities	<p>We faced significant challenges recently in finding ways to engage with our communities, with limited opportunities for face-to-face activities. More services were delivered digitally, and we continue to develop our website and Station Facebook pages. Recognising that digital access is not an option for all, we consider engagement by non-digital means when developing campaigns. Going forward, we intend to explore new ways and opportunities to give all our communities a voice and are proposing this as a priority in this plan.</p>
Improve staff remuneration	<p>Staff remuneration is subject to national negotiation and agreement. We do, however, continue to consider other support available to staff and will be reviewing staff benefits.</p>
Ensure continued focus on prevention education	<p>Prevention education is a key component of our Risk Reduction activity, and we continue to develop this provision, including strategic work with partners.</p>
Greater focus on working sustainably and in an environmentally friendly capacity to reduce environmental impact	<p>Our Carbon Reduction Plan sets out our ambitions and the challenges we face. We have identified numerous activities and significantly increased the monitoring of our carbon emissions to assess the environmental impact of our activities.</p>
Focus on service delivery and the core functions of the fire service	<p>We remain committed to ensuring that our statutory duties are fulfilled, including aspects of risk reduction and partnership working. We will also remain vigilant to changes that could impact on the services we provide, particularly as they relate to the most vulnerable in society.</p>
Introduce a consistent flexible working / working from home policy for corporate staff	<p>We recognise the value of flexibility and line managers decide the most appropriate working arrangements for their teams. This will vary as some roles are office-based, limiting opportunity for flexible working.</p>























































Consultation Comments - Themes and Responses

Consultation Theme	Our Response
Improve efficiency in working practices and adapt to change	The need to adapt to change and continually improve is recognised and improving efficiency is seen as continuous rather than a one-off exercise. A review of Joint Fire Control has moved into the implementation phase, and we are developing an evaluation toolkit to review projects and learn how we can improve similar activities in the future.
Improve recruitment and promotion for all, and make the On-Call role more attractive	Review of recruitment and promotion processes is underway. We recognise the importance of our On-Call personnel and continue to explore ways of making this role more attractive in terms of recruitment and retention.
Continue collaborating with partners	We are statutory members of the Public Service Boards across our ten Unitary Authority areas, helping us build relationships and identify opportunities for collaboration. We actively seek to develop our existing partnerships and to identify new partners.
Learning and development opportunities, including for corporate staff	It is the intention that all staff will have access to a suitable learning pathway going forward and, as previously mentioned, we intend to streamline the promotional process for staff. An ongoing programme of Masterclasses covering a range of development topics is available and individual development needs can be identified via the Personal Review process, potentially funded via the Additional Learning Fund.
Improve quality of management and change the management structure in the Service	The review of promotion processes and development opportunities will include management pathways.
Improve communication at all levels	Although we have various communication channels in place, we understand that this is an area that needs constant attention to ensure that all staff feel part of the service.
Broaden the role of the firefighter to respond to medical and other emergencies	We are engaging with Welsh Government on the 2021 thematic review on <a href="#">Broadening the role of firefighters in Wales</a> .
Focus on core responsibilities and less on collaborative/partnership work	As mentioned previously, our core responsibilities are our priority, which includes working with partner agencies such as the Unitary Authorities, Police and Health. We cannot work in isolation but seek to work collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for public safety and well-being.

# Our Strategic Themes

The table shows how our Strategic Themes align with Well-being of Future Generation Goals and support our Public Service Boards Objectives.

Strategic Theme	Supports Well-being of Future Generation Goals	Supports Public Service Boards Objectives
 <b>Keeping you Safe</b>	 A Resilient Wales  A Wales of Cohesive Communities  A Healthier Wales  A Globally Responsible Wales	 Safer Communities  Best Start  Reduce Social and Economic Inequalities
 <b>Responding to your Emergency</b>	 A Resilient Wales  A Healthier Wales	 Safer Communities  Working Together
 <b>Working with Partners</b>	 A Resilient Wales  A Wales of Cohesive Communities  A Globally Responsible Wales  A Prosperous Wales	 Working Together
 <b>Engaging and Communicating</b>	 A Resilient Wales  A Wales of Cohesive Communities  A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language  A more Equal Wales	 Working Together
 <b>Protecting our Environment</b>	 A Globally Responsible Wales  A Healthier Wales  A Resilient Wales  A Wales of Cohesive Communities	 Working Together  Getting Involved
 <b>Using Technology Well</b>	 A Globally Responsible Wales  A Wales of Cohesive Communities  A Healthier Wales	 Working Together  Protect the Environment
 <b>Valuing our People</b>	 A more Equal Wales  A Healthier Wales  A Prosperous Wales  A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language	 Employability, Skills and Opportunities  Healthy Lifestyles
 <b>Continue to Work Effectively</b>	 A Prosperous Wales  A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language  A Healthier Wales	 Reduce Social and Economic Inequalities  Working Together  Cities that Work



# What We Plan to Do in 2023-2024



## Keeping you Safe

### This means...

We will provide prevention of, and protection from, emergencies to keep our communities safe. Evidence suggests that our preventative activities have been extremely influential in the reduction of emergencies in recent years, a trend we are keen to maintain and improve. One of the key drivers for our preventative campaigns programme is the information we obtain from, and share with, other organisations, which allows us to develop specific campaigns based on statistical evidence.

### Our Objectives:

- Reducing the impact of false alarms on our resources
- Reducing the number of fires in the home and understanding the causes and behaviours of them
- Reducing the number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)
- Reducing the number of deliberate fires
- Improving safety in and around water
- Improving fire safety in buildings in our communities

### Our priorities in 2023-2024 will include:

- Looking at how we can use non-digital methods to share safety messages with our communities
- Promoting water safety awareness amongst our communities
- Building on our partnership approach to reduce deliberate fires
- Working to reduce wildfires through land management, including coordinating our work with landowners and partners
- Using every opportunity to improve safety, including giving advice when we attend false alarms
- Working to understand those who are at most risk in our communities



## Responding to your Emergency

### This means...

We will always ensure that we provide an efficient and effective response to our communities when needed. This requires us to have highly trained personnel and the latest equipment available to ensure that the safety of our communities is never compromised. We will continue to invest in our firefighters and Joint Fire Control staff to ensure that they can respond to the wide range of incidents we face now and in the future.

### Our Objectives:

- Responding effectively when you need us
- Doing all we can to make sure that our On-Call crews are available
- Training our firefighters, Joint Fire Control staff and other staff to respond to current and future risks in our communities

### Our priorities in 2023-2024 will include:

- Embedding the recent review of Joint Fire Control
- Ensuring our training programmes prepare our people for future demands
- Ongoing review of marketplace for kit and equipment to ensure our firefighters are prepared
- Promoting the On-Call opportunities within communities



## Working with Partners

### This means...

We have a well-established and proud history of working with our partners to deliver measureable improvements, efficiencies and meeting future demands. This will include contributing to local priorities and assisting in improving community well-being. We recognise the benefits of working in partnership with other organisations to deliver best value services for the communities we jointly serve, and that sharing knowledge and skills is at the heart of our Service's future.

### Our Objectives:

- Working with Public Service Boards (PSBs) to support our communities
- Working with our partners to deliver our services where they are needed
- Reviewing and evaluating our existing partnerships

### Our priorities in 2023-2024 will include:

- Developing data sharing opportunities to improve planning and outcomes of the communities we serve
- Exploring opportunities to share premises with other emergency services
- Strengthening our relationships with existing partners to find new opportunities for working together
- Continuing our work with other fire and rescue services in Wales on risk reduction
- Developing our work with our PSBs to ensure we are supporting those most in need



## Engaging and Communicating

### This means...

We will improve the way we communicate and engage with our staff, stakeholders, communities, and partners by taking a positive approach to communication. Communication is a key priority in making sure all are aware of the work we undertake, the challenges we face and can be involved in shaping our services of the future. We believe that we can effectively deliver our key messages through ensuring a continued focus on education, engagement, and communication. Working as part of a well-connected community can deliver wider improvement than working alone, therefore ensuring greater opportunity to keep residents, businesses and visitors to South Wales safer.

### Our Objectives:

- Involving our communities and make sure they have their say in what we do
- Helping to keep our communities safe by delivering safety education and attending community events

### Our priorities in 2023-2024 will include:

- Ensuring our engagement activity reaches all our communities, exploring new ways and opportunities to give them a voice
- Developing a toolkit to support our safety education and community engagement
- Coordinating and promoting our involvement in community events
- Increasing awareness of our activities and plans within the Service and with our communities and partners





## Protecting our Environment

### This means...

We know that our activities have an effect on the global and local environment and are committed to minimising any negative impacts. We have developed a Carbon Reduction Plan and a Biodiversity Plan which together propose a range of actions that focus on reducing our environmental impact and protecting and restoring biological systems. We commit to embracing renewable energies to support sustainability and the environmental goals of the WFGA.

### Our Objectives:

- Reducing the usage of single use materials
- Expanding the use of electric vehicles (EVs)
- Reducing our energy and our carbon footprint
- Considering how our activities impact on the environment
- Reducing the amount of waste produced

### Our priorities in 2023-2024 will include:

- Developing open dialogue with staff on our carbon reduction position and the challenges we face
- Expanding our network of EV charging points to support increased use of EVs
- Exploring new ways of working sustainably



## Using Technology Well

### This means...

Using technology well to improve our processes and systems to make them future proof, as we recognise that this plays a vital role in how well we deliver our services. From our operational firefighting techniques and equipment to our back-office support systems, we intend to maximise technological advances and improve service delivery. Technological development will make a positive contribution to the wider well-being of our staff and the communities we serve, ensuring operational resources are best placed to respond effectively to incidents.

### Our Objectives:

- Using the most suitable technology and equipment to improve our services
- Reviewing the standard and use of technology and equipment across the Service

### Our priorities in 2023-2024 will include:

- Delivering more training via our upgraded ICT systems on stations such as video linking from other locations to stations
- Increasing the use of mobile technology, such as tablets to improve efficiency
- Continuing to develop the Service's HR system to enhance reporting and the user experience, improving our self-service procedures
- Procuring and implementing a Patient Management System for the Service's Occupational Health Unit
- Continuing to enhance and grow the recently introduced electronic Risk Based Inspection Programme
- Exploring technology to enhance the suite of risk reduction activities we provide
- Increasing the delivery of online training packages to support operational competence. This will be achieved through virtual sessions and supportive videos
- Improving Wi-Fi provision across the Service and ensuring connectivity for video conferencing, computers, phones, and mobilisation
- Using recent ICT upgrades to enable more staff engagement via video linking across the Service



Valuing our People

This means...

Our workforce should represent the communities we serve, be diverse, equally valued and have access to development as well as professional opportunities. Our People Plan, Strategic Equality Plan and Mental Health and Well-being Strategy will support our work on recruitment, the gender pay gap, inclusion and health, and help develop the culture and behaviours needed within our Service. This will deliver improvements for both current/future staff and users of our services. Increased staff participation in our online Shout forum will help us better understand staff issues and allow more staff to easily contribute to what we do.

Our Objectives:

- Attracting a workforce that reflects and represents our communities
- Developing our people by identifying training and development opportunities
- Supporting our people to feel well, healthy, and happy at work
- Delivering on the recommendations of the Investors in People report
- Encouraging and supporting a bilingual culture across the Service

Our priorities in 2023-2024 will include:

- Embedding the personal review process to support open dialogue around well-being and career aspirations, and acknowledge the contribution of every role to making communities safer
- Expanding the availability of well-being areas for our staff at all locations
- Reviewing the Service’s range of employee benefits
- Developing our understanding of the career journey of our people, from recruitment to retirement
- Ensuring all staff have access to a learning pathway
- Streamlining our promotional processes
- Promoting our Shout forum, making it more mobile and facilitated at different Fire and Rescue Stations
- Increasing the diversity of applicants to the Service
- Reviewing our working arrangements with external agencies to ensure suitable support for our Mental Health strategy
- Improving internal communication and engagement within the Service to ensure staff voices are heard whilst being open and transparent with clear feedback



Continue to Work Effectively

This means...

We always aim to demonstrate value for money and deliver our services at the lowest possible cost and highest possible standard. When considering how much to spend, the need to improve the way we provide our services whilst reducing risk in the communities of South Wales remains our priority. We will work on medium and long-term planning, developing new ways of working and delivering our services against continued financial challenge and the changing risk profiles of our communities. We will support Fire and Rescue Authority Members and provide them with the information they need to effectively conduct their leadership and scrutiny roles.

Our Objectives:

- Being clear and publicly accountable
- Maximising value for money while improving our service
- Developing new ways of working

Our priorities in 2023-2024 will include:

- Developing an evaluation framework to ensure our projects deliver
- Reviewing all training courses to ensure minimal impacts on frontline delivery
- Improving our information governance and data management processes to support data sharing and better ways of working
- Exploring new ways to receive feedback on our activities



## Welsh Language

We are committed to effectively serve those who choose to communicate via the medium of the Welsh language. In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards 2015, the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has received a Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner setting out the Welsh Language Standards that apply to the Authority. This Compliance Notice is published on our website and gives details about what services citizens can expect to receive in Welsh. We seek to engage with Welsh speakers and learners to improve the overall standard of our service provision.

## Alternative versions

If you would like this information in an alternative language or format, such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please contact us.

## Have Your Say

We are always looking for ways to improve our services and to present information that is meaningful. In doing this, we want to ensure that your views are considered when delivering our activities and presenting information to you.

We would particularly welcome your comments and/or questions with regards to our proposed objectives via our consultation survey [Have Your Say 2022](#)

## Write to us



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## More information



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We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English  
We will respond equally to both and will reply in your language of choice without delay.