



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub

De Cymru

South Wales

Fire and Rescue Service



SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

# Strategic Plan 2020-2030

1ST APRIL 2024 - YEAR FIVE UPDATE

**RAISING AWARENESS  
REDUCING RISK**

This document is also available in Welsh

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## Managing the fuel, reducing the risk

Our cover shows wildfire teams carrying out prescribed burns to install firebreaks at locations in the Rhondda that are vulnerable to fire. The firefighter is using a leaf blower to extinguish flames along an established control line. This work is carried out from October to March in preparation for the wildfire season.

# Foreword



**Stuart Millington**  
Chief Fire Officer  
South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service

Welcome to the fifth annual progress update of our Strategic Plan 2020-2030. The plan communicates how we will ensure we achieve our vision of making South Wales safer, by reducing risk, through actions and delivery against our Strategic Themes and Objectives.

Working in partnership with colleagues in parallel frontline services, and our associates across other sectors, we aim to protect and serve all communities of, and visitors to, South Wales. This year, we will be overseen and assisted by the four Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

This year's update reflects on the progress the Service has made over the past year, including the findings of the recent Independent Culture Review, and the recommendations made as a result.

The Report clearly sets out the changes which need to be made to make our Service a better and safer place to work. However, we must recognise that for the vast majority of us, we come to work to do a good job and maintain a professional approach to our colleagues and our duties at all times. It has been a difficult year for the Service, through the process of the Review and reflecting on its findings and recommendations, but we recognise and embrace the opportunity it presents to shape our future.

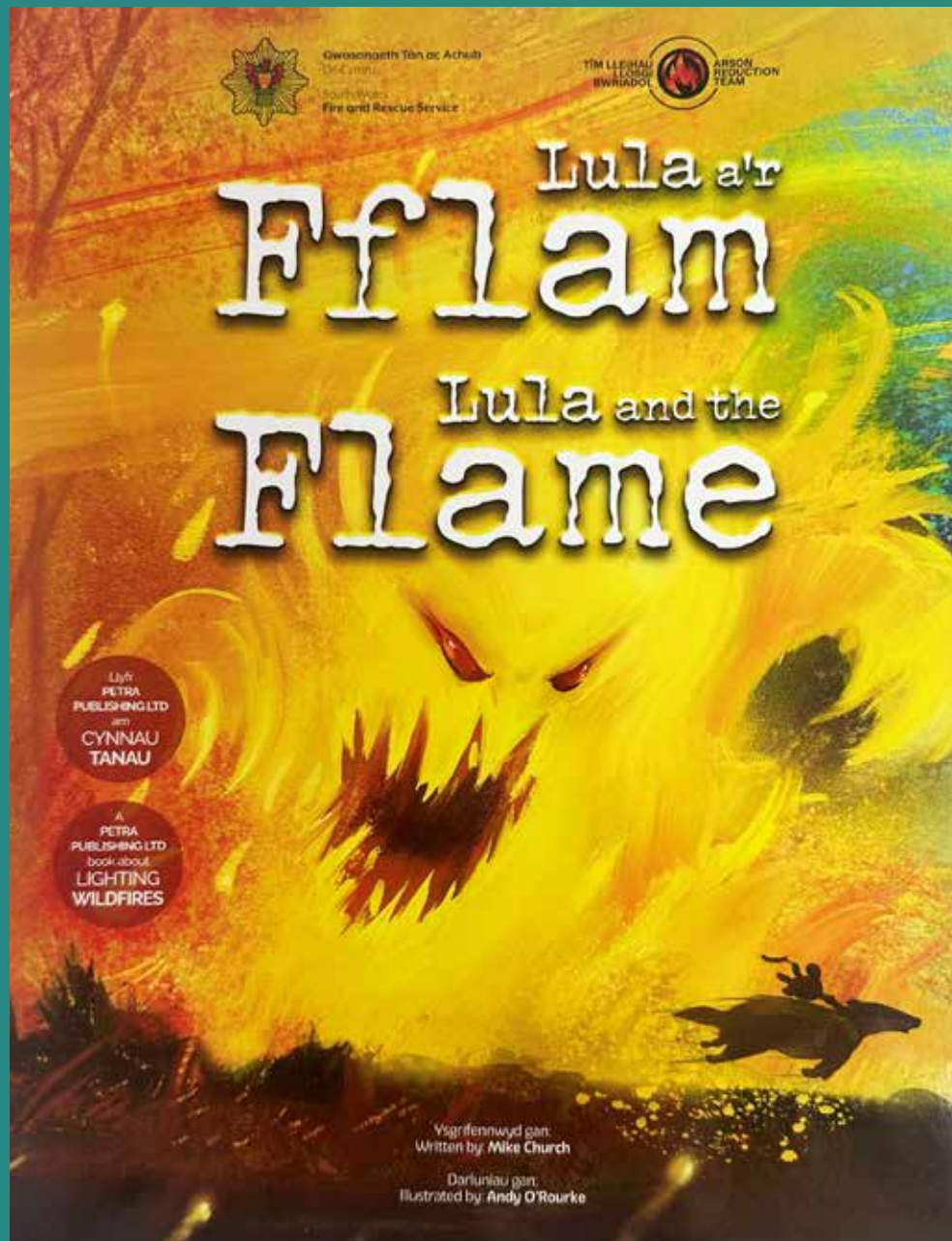
This next chapter will involve accepting the recommendations made in the Review and ensuring a positive implementation of each and every one of them. While acknowledging past transgressions, we must look forward to a brighter, more united future, in which we empower leaders to make decisions at the appropriate level, with a clear, shared understanding of the differences between expected behaviours and those going against the values of the Service. We must recognise and be recognised for the positive work that happens at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service on a daily basis.

Our work continues to support anybody who has been impacted by the negative behaviours identified in the Report as we focus on ensuring the Service is a safe place, where anyone can feel free to speak up, without fear of reprimand or judgement, and know they will be listened to.

I look forward to seeing the positive changes we can make in line with this year's plan, and being part of shaping a brighter and more positive future for the Service on this journey we undertake together.

Thank you.





### Book writing project spreading fire safety awareness

Children from six primary schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf worked together with local experts and a storywriter to pen the tale of a tortoise named Lula, who has a close brush with wildfire on her quest to find warmth.

The Arson Reduction Team at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, alongside partners and experts from organisations including Natural Resources Wales and South Wales Police, helped bring to life this children's book highlighting how severely the environment can be damaged by wildfire. It is hoped that the book will be used as an educational tool by local authorities, emergency services, and other schools, to teach children about the dangers of fire.

**Pictured left: Author Mike Church at one of the launches**



# Independent Culture Review

At the end of 2022, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service was the subject of intense media scrutiny following press reports of misogyny and ineffective disciplinary procedures. This resulted in the commissioning of an Independent Culture Review Report. Fenella Morris KC and her team were appointed following a process led by an independent panel. The appointment panel consisted of Rachel Williams and Councillor Lis Burnett; who were accompanied by Paula Kathrens, partner at Blake Morgan Solicitors. Chief Fire Officer Huw Jakeway was also available in an advisory capacity only and took no part in the decision-making process, with panel members Rachel Williams and Councillor Lis Burnett having sole responsibility for the appointment of the independent Chairperson.

## The scope of the Review was to:

- Assess the existing policies, procedures and systems on bullying, harassment, grievances, whistleblowing concerns, dignity at work, complaints and any other processes for raising concerns, how they are applied and comparing them to best practice;
- Assess existing disciplinary policies and procedures and how they are applied, compared to national terms and conditions of employment and best practice;
- Review the last seven years of historic complaints, including bullying, harassment, whistleblowing concerns, and dignity at work complaints and how they were dealt with;
- Review how historical staff disciplinary cases over the last seven years were dealt with and how that impacts on culture;
- Assess the effectiveness of development programmes and training that support dignity, respect and prevention of inappropriate behaviour;
- Consider and comment on the values, behaviours, standards and decisions of leaders at all levels in the Service, both professional and personal (where relevant), and how they impact and/or influence culture;
- Consider the impact of individual or group behaviour and standards of staff, and how this influences culture;
- Comment on whether there is an open and supportive culture, including support for staff involved in traumatising events and the impact those may have;
- Identify areas of strength, good practice and exemplar behaviours;
- Consider the difference in experiences of staff from an equality and diversity perspective; and
- Make recommendations on findings in the Review.

Current and former employees, managers, and members of the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) were invited to engage with the process alongside desktop research and review of documentation.

The [Independent Culture Review Report](#) was published at noon on Wednesday, 3rd January 2024. A number of negative themes were identified:

- Poor culture and inappropriate behaviours
- Standards falling short of that expected and demanded by our communities
- Assault, bullying, harassment, discrimination and other inappropriate behaviours
- Lack of inclusivity and inappropriate conduct
- Negative treatment of female Firefighters
- Informal networks – existence of a “boys club”
- Lack of transparency in promotion processes
- A fear of speaking up
- Significant improvements required in policies and procedures
- Improvements required for disciplinary processes
- Inadequate communication at all levels

There was also recognition of positive aspects and activities:

- A universal proud commitment to service of the community
- A usually warm and supportive watch culture
- The dedication, passion and commitment of corporate staff
- An excellent internal occupational health service
- Positive measures to support mental health and the neurodiverse
- The Chief Fire Officer's championing of the prevention of violence against women and girls
- A greater commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

A total of 82 recommendations were made. These were broken down into areas for improvement and timescales, the initial phase identifying actions for the first 1-3 months. The recommendations were accepted in full by the Service's leadership and by the Fire and Rescue Authority at a special meeting on 15th January 2024.

In a statement to the Senedd on 6th February 2024, the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership concluded that the failures of the Service were so serious that she could have no confidence that the recommendations of the Review would be fully implemented. In addition, she stated that recommendations from the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor's thematic reviews had not been implemented, raising important matters of Firefighter and public safety. The Fire and Rescue Authority was disbanded and replaced by four Commissioners, whose terms of reference<sup>1</sup> are to:

- a. Implement of all the recommendations of the review of SWFRS culture and values within deadlines stipulated in it.
- b. Establish and oversee a new senior management team and related processes that are untainted by the failings identified in the report. As a first step, they will appoint a Chief Fire Officer and, as necessary, other senior staff necessary to contribute fully and effectively to the FRA's recovery.
- c. Establish and implement a process to identify grievance cases arising during the period covered by the report which may have been improperly and/or unfairly dealt with. They will also ensure those cases are reopened and re-examined, leading to a fair and just outcome.
- d. Implement all of the recommendations made in the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's thematic reviews on:

Learning from Grenfell Tower Inquiry  
Fire and Rescue Service capacity  
Fire and Rescue Service operational training

- e. Make arrangements for a significant and sustained reduction in SWFRS's attendance at false alarms.
- f. Develop proposals for the future governance of FRA to minimise the risk of further such failings.
- g. Discharge other functions of the FRA and its members as set out in statute and the FRA's standing orders.
- h. Advise the Welsh Government on progress with the above, and on the potential for ending intervention.
- i. Undertake all their work in the full spirit of social partnership, and through continual and effective engagement with SWFRS staff and representative bodies.

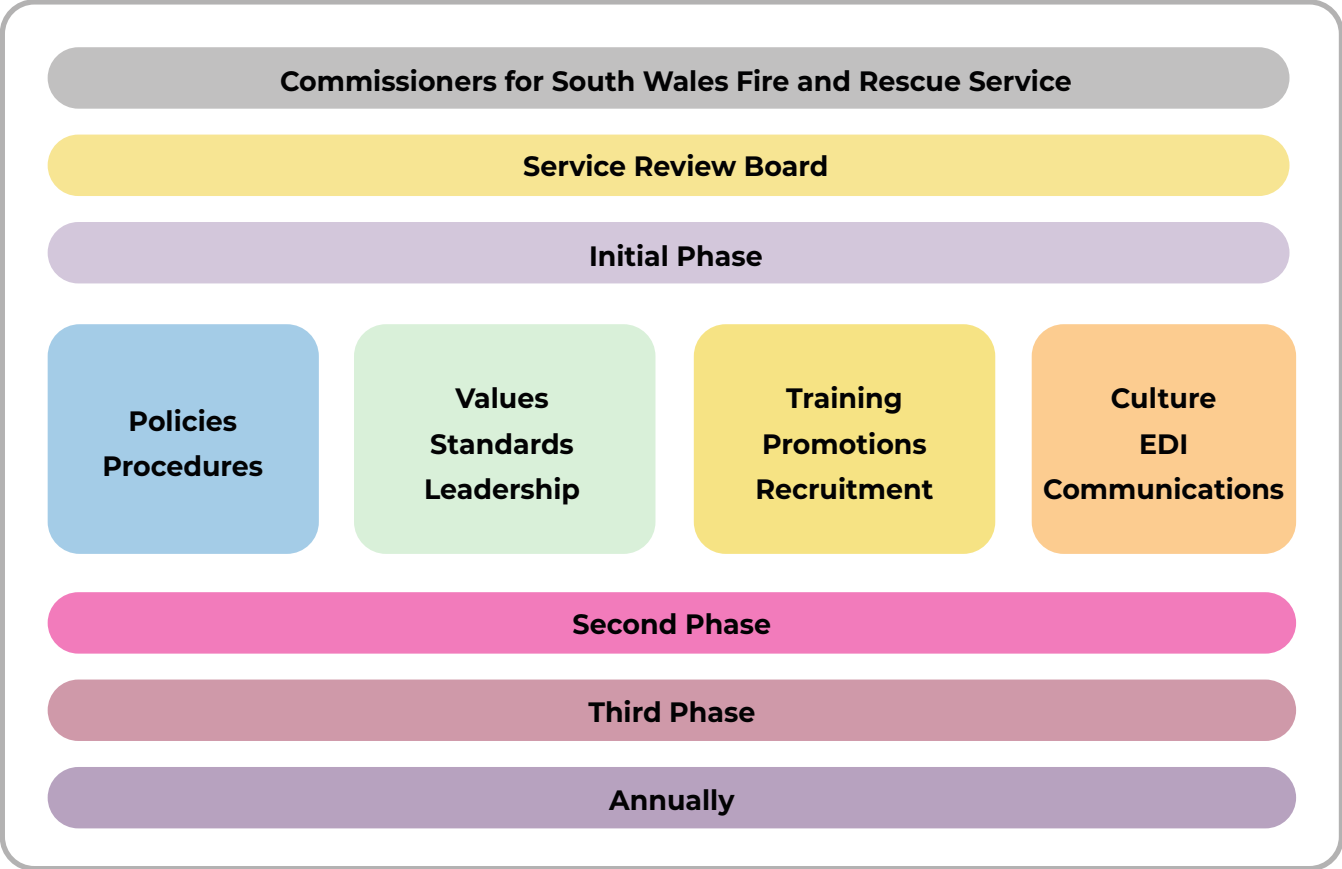
Details on Welsh Government's intervention and updates can be found [here](#).

<sup>1</sup> As published by Welsh Government <https://www.gov.wales/south-wales-fire-and-rescue-authority-intervention> Updated 28th February 2024



# The Service’s Governance Structure

The following graphic shows the internal development and reporting structure for the initial phase of work on the Review’s recommendations. Four working groups have been established, drawing on Senior Middle Leaders and volunteers from all roles and ranks. These working groups will develop action plans and identify resources and ways of working that will ensure change is embedded at all levels.



Our aim is not only to deliver on the recommendations outlined in the Independent Culture Review Report. Our intent is:

**To create a safe, modern fire and rescue service in South Wales and to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect, free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and inappropriate behaviours.**

This will ensure the communities of South Wales have a fire and rescue service they can be proud of.  
Progress on implementation of the recommendations will be subject to a dedicated reporting stream.

# Thematic Reviews

As already noted, Commissioners appointed by Welsh Government to oversee improvements to the Service have been charged with full implementation of the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor's thematic reviews. This will be developed in close cooperation with the workforce and statutory partners under the terms of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act which promotes well-being through improving public services through social partnership working.

The reviews provide in-depth analysis of specific topics as they relate to the three FRAs for Wales and focus on:

## **Fire and Rescue Services in Wales: Learning from Grenfell**

The Review, published in 2021, reports on action taken by the three Welsh FRS against the recommendations contained within the Grenfell Tower Enquiry (GTI) Phase 1 report. A number of operational issues relevant to the Welsh FRS are identified that are not explicitly recognised either within the GTI Phase 1 report or its recommendations, which may not be unique to high rise incidents.

## **Broadening the role of Firefighters in Wales**

Considering the outline specification developed by the Broadening of the Role Working Group, convened by Welsh Government in 2020, the review considers capacity within the three Welsh FRS to carry out additional work arising from broadening of the role, safely and without detriment to core functions. The specification agreed by the Working Group outlines additional duties in support of Health and Social Care colleagues.

## **Fire and Rescue Service operational training**

Published in 2022, this review considers the amount of time available for skills maintenance training and exercising within the existing station work routines and on the Retained Duty System (RDS), a concern raised in the previous thematic review. The report focuses on core and additional skills for Firefighters and supervisory managers.

Click on pictures below or use the QR codes to read the full reports.



Fire and Rescue Services in Wales:  
Learning from Grenfell



Broadening of the role of  
firefighters in Wales

2021 Thematic Review report by the  
Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and  
Inspector for Wales



Thematic Review of operational  
training within the Welsh Fire  
and Rescue Services

October 2022





# Our Strategic Themes

The table below sets out the eight Strategic Themes which are the foundation for our Strategic Plan 2020-2030. Our annual improvement objectives are built within these themes, which also structure our priorities and planning as we work to deliver on our mission statement:

**“To make South Wales safer, by reducing risk.”**

We have mapped these themes to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (WFGA) to demonstrate how our priorities contribute to the seven well-being goals.

Following consultation, we have renamed two of our strategic themes to better reflect our purpose in these areas:

- **Engaging and communicating** has been changed to **Involving and communicating**  
This recognises the need to ensure our staff and communities are at the heart of shaping the future development of the Service
- **Protecting our environment** has been changed to **Protecting and enhancing our environment**  
To acknowledge the active role we have in ensuring future generations can enjoy the natural environment, through our operational response and our public sector role as a responsible custodian

Strategic Theme	What we will do	Strategic Theme	What we will do
<b>Keeping you safe</b> 	Focussing on prevention work to help reduce the need for you to call us	<b>Protecting and enhancing our environment</b> 	Carrying out our activities in a way that helps sustain the planet for our future generations
<b>Responding to your emergency</b> 	Ensuring we respond quickly and effectively when you need us	<b>Using technology well</b> 	Continually look to use the latest technology where it can improve our service to you
<b>Working with partners</b> 	Working with the South Wales PSBs and other partners to deliver a Fire and Rescue Service that meets your needs	<b>Valuing our people</b> 	Supporting a diverse workforce that represents your community, is well trained and motivated to deliver our service
<b>Involving and communicating</b> 	Ensuring all our communities and staff are involved in helping us provide an excellent service	<b>Continuing to work effectively</b> 	Ensuring our service provides value for money and is clearly accountable

# Well-being Statement

The sustainable development principle of the Well-being of Future Generations Act states that:

**“Public Services bodies 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.”**

We are committed to meeting our duties under the WFGA.

As we develop our Strategic Themes, which are the high-level priorities shaping our plan, the seven WFGA goals are considered to ensure we contribute to their achievement and our plans are mapped to these. The newly introduced Social Partnership Duty places new focus on our responsibilities as a public sector body in Wales, to our communities, our staff and to future generations.



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 – Taking a longer-term view in our Strategic Plan 2020-2030 allows us to consider how future trends and changes will impact the public and our services, including climate and demographic change.
- Putting resources into **preventing** problems – Our preventative activity ranges from working with businesses and building owners to make premises safe to working with individuals and groups to change behaviour, all with the aim of preventing the need for an emergency response.
- Using an **integrated** approach by balancing social, economic, and environmental needs – Our planning process is undertaken collectively by involving various stakeholders including our staff, our partners and members of the public, to ensure the impact of proposals are fully explored. This will continue to develop in accordance with the Social Partnership Duty.
- **Collaborating** with others to help meet well-being objectives – We work with a wide range of partners at a strategic and local level.
- **Involving** others to reflect the diversity of an area – Our consultation and engagement activities ensure there are opportunities to contribute views and ideas. The additional duty to work in Social Partnership will place particular focus on our relationships with representative bodies.



**Long-term**



**Preventing**



**Integration**



**Collaboration**



**Involvement**



## 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 by producing Equality Impact Assessments when developing projects, amending or writing policies, designing initiatives/campaigns, etc. These assessments are kept under review to ensure our activities are truly inclusive. By addressing any barriers to accessing our services, our focus is on the people we serve.

## Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023

The Act directs public bodies in Wales which are in scope for the Social Partnership Duty to a framework which complements the WFGA and the Socio-economic duty in its four key principles:

- Social Partnership – consulting and working with trade unions or, where there is no recognised trade union, other staff representatives when setting well-being objectives and taking strategic decisions on their delivery
- Socially Responsible Procurement – requires publication of a procurement strategy that ensures consideration of factors other than cost in public spending, including supply chain management
- Fair Work – substituting ‘fair work’ for ‘decent work’ in the Prosperous Wales well-being goal focuses on providing conditions that enable a healthy, inclusive environment that is attentive to well-being
- Sustainable Development – taking account of the impact of decisions taken today for the future

These responsibilities are recognised in current processes and our plans. We will continue to build on positive relationships with trade unions by introducing dedicated planning sessions and committing to delivering on the recommendations of the Independent Culture Review, with particular focus on well-being. The Wales’s Fire and Rescue Service’s Procurement Strategy 2022-2027 is being reviewed to address the new duty. For our Service, we have developed sustainable development principles which direct our decision-making processes and we will continue to consider immediate need and long-term impact to ensure transparency and accountability.

## Community Risk Management Plans (CRMPs)

Our 47 fire and rescue stations produce annual CRMPs based on the needs of the communities they serve, identifying local risks/priorities including building/premises risks, water, and roads. These plans also highlight community activities and initiatives that are planned and delivered locally and support the work of Public Service Boards (PSBs).

In our [Annual Improvement Plan](#), we provided an overview of the area we serve, highlighting some of the specific challenges faced and how they impact our communities. This demonstrates the thread joining our stations’ plans to our strategic priorities, linked by our work with unitary authorities and coordinating bodies, including local PSBs.

## Our Public Service Boards (PSBs)

We continue to work with and support the PSBs in our area. PSBs have a responsibility to prepare and publish local well-being plans and report annually on their progress to show how responsibilities under the WFGA are being met.

We 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.

The structure of our PSBs has changed, as five authorities combined to form Gwent PSB in 2021 and Bridgend PSB and Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB merged from April 2023. We will continue to engage at a strategic and local level with the new PSB structures.

Please click on the relevant logo below to visit a PSB website.





# Developing Our Plan

Development of our plans is a continual process of monitoring and review as we identify opportunities for improvement. We consider progress we are making towards our overarching vision of “Making South Wales safer by reducing risk” and the longer-term impact of our activities for our staff, partners and the communities we serve. In 2023-2024 the publication of the Independent Culture Review (ICR) was an unprecedented event for the Service and its recommendations will influence our plans in the coming months and years. The subsequent decision by Welsh Government to intervene, replacing the Fire and Rescue Authority governance structure by the appointment of four Commissioners, places the Service in a position of extraordinary change. Our Strategic Planning Framework will be reviewed and republished to reflect these changes and the new Social Partnership Duty which sets out expectations for in scope public bodies to consult and work with trade unions in setting well-being goals.

This update has been produced in a period of significant focus on our people and culture. The ICR, led by Fenella Morris KC, was informed by a programme of staff engagement and fact finding. This has produced a clear picture of areas for improvement that were echoed in other staff engagement activities, including the Hydra 10kv Debrief session delivered by the Hydra Foundation in July 2023. This session provided an opportunity to learn the views of 60 staff under a broad heading of “What Matters”, evaluating the Service’s position to identify any gaps in ensuring a safe, fair workplace for all. Separate from the ICR, the word cloud below, generated from all feedback in the session, illustrates synergy of issues raised.



We consult with our staff, our communities, and our partners before finalising our objectives. We regularly meet with our Senior Leadership Team to review this feedback and consider all fire and rescue related risks that could affect the communities of South Wales to determine ways to effectively work on preventing these risks from harming those within our communities.

We also consider our budgets and the laws that impact us, to make sure that we focus our work in the right areas. We then develop more detailed plans for each year, which support delivery of our objectives. Progress on our plans was regularly reported to the Fire and Rescue Authority and new mechanisms for reporting to the Commissioners will be developed.

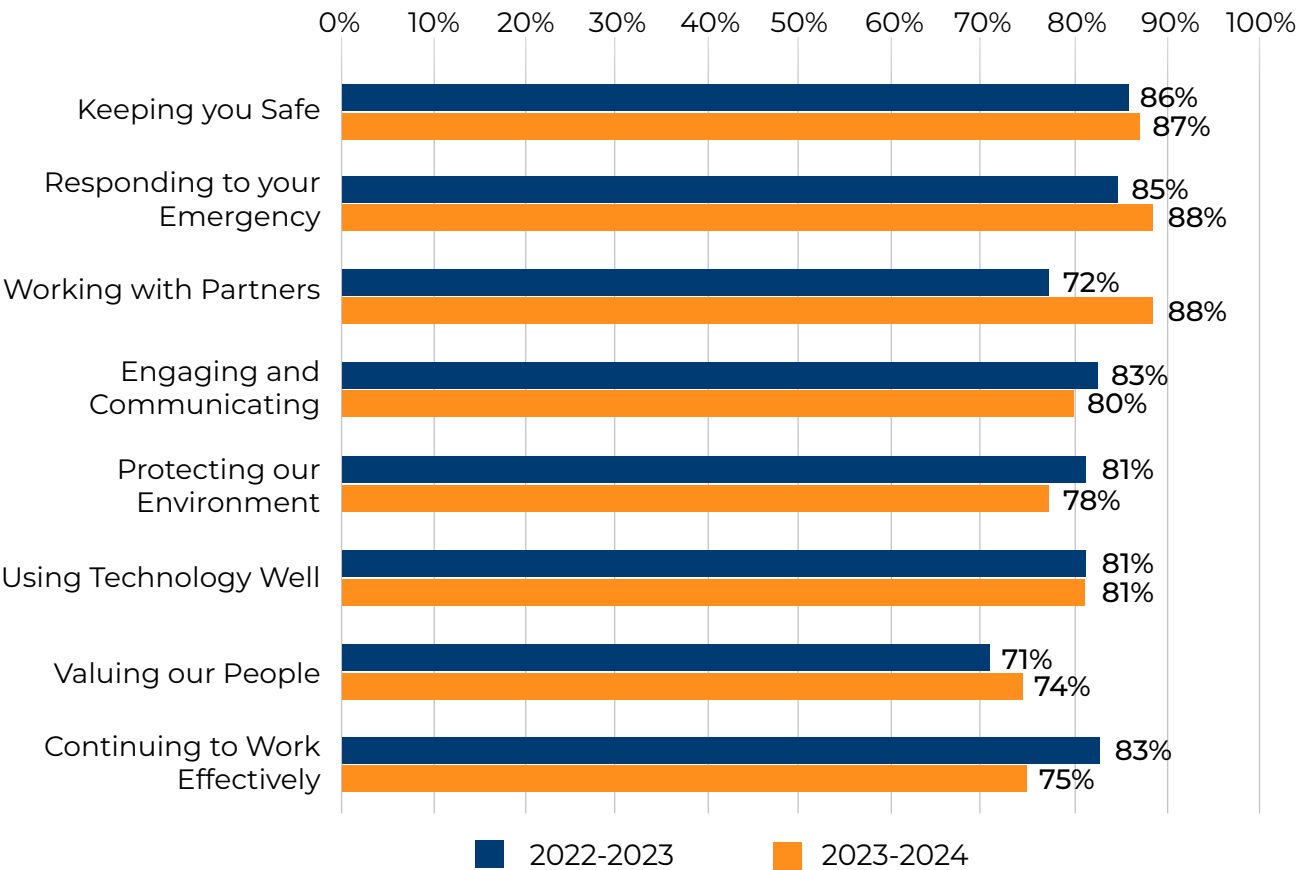
Consultation and other engagement activities

Our consultation activities monitor whether there is consensus on our proposed priorities and any additional concerns from our staff, communities, and partners. We identify key issues and themes raised, producing a response document which is published on our website. From the consultation, priorities may be amended or refocussed. Where necessary, we provide additional explanation of the background to and purpose of proposed objectives.

Annual consultation with our staff, the public, and our partners seeks their views on our proposed objectives for the coming financial year. This year's survey was open from 31st October 2023 to 24th January 2024. We saw lower levels of engagement and feedback, particularly amongst staff groups, possibly due to other consultation activity in relation to the Independent Culture Review, the Hydra 10kv session that was held with a group of 60 staff, and other targeted questionnaires. We also held focus meetings on station with Wholetime and On-Call crews - their feedback is included in our review of key themes.

Overall, 212 people engaged with the survey, a drop of 23.5% from 277 in the previous year. This converted to 108 respondents providing feedback, a fall from 212 or 52.4%. The key results were:

- There was broad agreement with our proposed strategic themes and objectives, with 81% of responses positive (Strongly Agree or Somewhat Agree).
- Core areas of service delivery (Keeping you safe, Responding to your emergency and Working with our partners) saw highest levels of agreement and all increased year on year.
- Lowest levels of agreement were for Valuing our people, Continuing to work effectively, and Protecting and enhancing our environment.



Agreement with Strategic Themes and Objectives - Comparison of agreement via consultation responses

## Key themes raised by consultation

### **Prioritise areas highlighted in the Independent Culture Review as an opportunity to improve**

- Valuing staff is critical
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – the Service should become more inclusive
- Communication, particularly to stations, should be improved, and feedback should be provided wherever possible

All these themes relate to issues also raised in other staff engagement sessions, identifying the need for an overarching commitment to delivering in full on the recommendations arising from this landmark assessment of the Service. The importance of our staff in all aspects of the Service, the need to ensure a safe and inclusive environment, while involving and communicating effectively at all times, was underlined throughout our consultations and drives our commitment to change.

### **Raise awareness of our services and communicate more effectively, both internally and externally, including better targeted communication to those most at risk in our communities**

The breadth of services and support we deliver has not been effectively communicated, based on feedback received. We will therefore look at ways to improve this, particularly how we identify and target those most at risk.

### **Focus on prevention work to reduce risk in our communities**

Our commitment to reducing risk continues and will be supported by releasing capacity from other activities, as directed by Welsh Government's directions to the Commissioners.

### **Review of the On-Call system**

Aspects of On-Call systems were questioned in various consultations, including the duty system, recruitment, retention and training. The Retained Management Team will progress a review of On-Call arrangements.

### **Explore more collaboration opportunities with other organisations**

Feedback recognised the importance of partnership working and data sharing. Opportunities will continue to be identified and developed.

### **ICT should be improved, and the Service should stay innovative by providing all staff cohorts with the best technology available**

Ensuring technology provides the best solutions was a recurring comment, for provision of information and recording activities.

### **More efficient use of vehicles to improve sustainability and reduce cost**

Reviewing the use of appliances/pumps when carrying out community safety activities and arrangements for use of electric vehicles for necessary journeys were raised.

### **Provide value for money - the Service should be more effective and accountable**

Aligned to better communication, the need for transparency was raised, recognising the need for accountability as a public service.

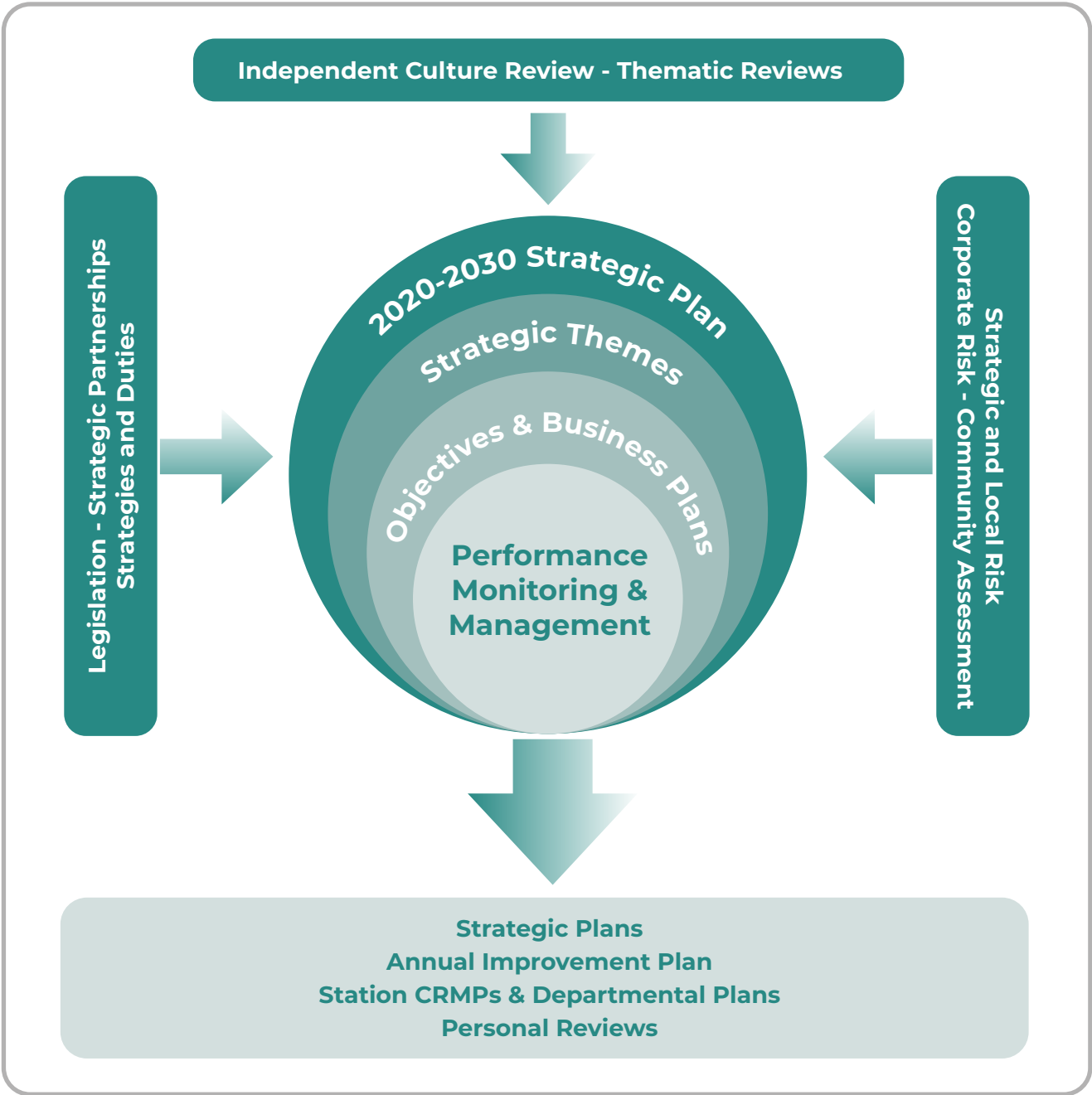


The context of this plan

We are required to comply with a range of legislation relating to public sector bodies and specifically to Fire and Rescue Authorities, the duties of which were conferred to four Commissioners by Welsh Government from 6th February 2024. These legal requirements provide context for our plan for 2024-2025 alongside our overarching mission “To make South Wales safer by reducing risk”. Our legislative responsibilities include:

- Fire and Rescue Service Act (2004)
- Local Government (Wales) Measure (2009)
- Fire and Rescue National Framework (2016)
- Equality Act (2010) and Public Sector Equality Duty
- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) (2015)
- The Socio-Economic Duty (2021)
- Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act (2023)

The Independent Culture Review report and recommendations provide additional context for our plans.



# Other Plans and Strategies

We have developed other strategies and plans that support the achievement of our overall strategic aims:



## [Our Strategic Plan 2020-2030](#)

This document sets out our longer-term strategy to ensure we deliver an effective and sustainable service. It introduces the eight Strategic Themes covered in this update.



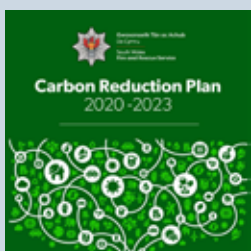
## [Our Annual Improvement Plan 2023-2024](#)

Each year we look back at the previous year to review the impact of our planned improvement activities, and also look forward to the coming year by presenting an outline of proposed actions for public consultation.



## [Our Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026](#)

Setting out our equality objectives for the next three years, this plan details how we will work toward our commitment to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in all we do.



## [Our Carbon Reduction Plan 2020-2023](#)

This plan sets out how we will continue to improve the ways in which we use our resources to ensure the least harm to our environment.



## [Our Welsh Language Monitoring Report](#)

This document sets out our action to comply with our duties under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and how we are supporting Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision.

# Our Strategic Themes

## Keeping you safe

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A resilient  
Wales



A Wales of cohesive  
communities



A healthier  
Wales



A globally  
responsible Wales

### What does this mean?

By understanding risk in our communities, we can provide advice, direct campaigns, and take informed action that will make South Wales safer. Our work to prevent emergencies is supported by an evidence-led risk reduction programme. Every fire and rescue station develops an annual Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) focussed on community needs and underpinned by local knowledge. This is supported by monitoring of known and emerging risks that enables us to identify the premises and people most at risk.

Our Annual Improvement Plan identified risk factors for dwelling fires, many of which relate to socio-economic disadvantage. We recognise the importance of working with partners to reach those most at risk and to be developing our use of data to produce intelligent targeting of activity. This ensures we are responsive and effective, with many of our risk reduction activities acknowledged as innovative.

We have recognised the impact of attending false alarms on our resources as fire false alarms have accounted for an average of 44.4% of incidents since 2013-2014, peaking at 47.2% of all incidents attended in 2020-2021. Our attendance at these incidents have provided an important route for providing risk reduction advice to households and communities, but we recognise this approach is not sustainable given other increasing demands on the Service and are addressing the recommendations published by Audit Wales<sup>2</sup>. We are planning a programme of education and consultation on proposals to restrict our attendance at fire false alarms focussing on Automatic Fire Alarms in non-domestic settings.



**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 (RTCs)
- Reducing the number of deliberate fires
- Improving safety in and around water
- Improving fire safety in buildings in our communities

### We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Incidents attended
- Resource demands
- Risk reduction activities in domestic, business and other settings

<sup>2</sup> Audit Wales 'Fire False Alarm Reduction – South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority' Audit year 2022-2023, issued May 2023, Document reference 3570A2023. [Link to document](#)

## What we have done in 2023-2024

**Continued to work with partners on initiatives to reduce the number of deliberate fires** building on already successful partnerships to ensure safety messages achieve the broadest reach across the communities of South Wales.

- Our Fire Crime Unit was re-named as the Arson Reduction Team (ART) to reflect our prevention role and reduce the stigma that can be faced by victims of fire crime. Their work with stations and partners has continued to help reduce deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour, targeting local hotspots
- Work in communities is a vital element of prevention work and our Youth Team has developed a new 'doorstep intervention' called Street Firefighter as part of the REFLECT Project. It aims to build and restore relationships within communities by offering local children and young people a safe space to engage, build resilience and life skills and start to create a pathway to positive life choices
- We are working with PSBs, National Resources Wales (NRW) and Waste Operators on mapping each Unitary Authority to establish if there is a link between the frequency of refuse collections and deliberate fires

**Worked to understand those who are at most risk in our communities** so that our risk reduction resources are better targeted and reach those who need our support the most.

- Our Learning Evaluation After Fire (LEAF) project gathers information from those who have experienced an accidental dwelling fire. Community Safety practitioners make contact to better understand the impact of these events. This helps us understand how we can improve our services, what safety approaches work, and how we can target those most at risk while also providing extra support where needed

**Explored opportunities to improve our capture of information on buildings and other settings**, making communities safer and improving Firefighter safety by developing our fire investigation capability, high-rise audit programme, land management plans and collection of information by crews at operational incidents.

- Our Business Fire Safety Team have helped to establish a working forum with Welsh Government, fire engineers, and other Welsh FRSs to produce a risk-based inspection programme for high-rise premises
- We began development of a land management information, continuing work on identifying and building relationships with landowners and partners and piloting arrangements for information sharing on high-risk locations. We have made additional data available at incidents via MDTs (Mobile Data Terminals) and continue to develop this capability

**Promoted water safety awareness amongst our communities** to ensure our messaging targets locations and groups at greater risk by sharing information with our partners.

- We worked with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) on including drowning prevention messages at Crucial Crew events for Year 6/7 children
- In July we launched the Waterside Responder initiative in partnership with the RNLI, providing free guidance and throwlines to venue staff of businesses near water to help prevent accidental drownings relating to the night-time economy

**Expanded our road safety 30-20 Options, Seatbelt Options and Domino (aimed at 15-25-year-olds) initiatives**, continuing to promote the messages of our [Fatal Five](#) campaign highlighting the main contributory factors that cause serious RTCs



- A significant change this year has been the introduction of the 30-20mph speed limit reduction across Wales. Our stations and Road Safety Team worked with key partners to deliver educational sessions prior to, and following, the implementation. We have also expanded delivery of our other Road Safety campaigns. The impact of the road speed changes and our campaigns are being evaluated

Station personnel and our Risk Reduction Team engage with our communities in a variety of ways, here are some examples from 2023-2024:

- Station crews in the Vale of Glamorgan collaborated with South Wales Police and the Vale of Glamorgan Council to secure the derelict area behind Hinds Garages in Barry so public access is not possible. Since this work was completed, there have been zero fire calls to the area, and anti-social behaviour has also significantly reduced
- In October, Whitchurch Red Watch attended Llanishen Skate Park with the Arson Reduction Team, Skate Academy UK, and South Wales Police to educate a group of young people on the impact of deliberate fire setting within the Llanishen area, prior to Halloween and Bonfire Night
- Ely Station invited primary school pupils to enter a poster competition. The prize was a visit to the Station and having their posters on the dangers of starting fires made into signs
- In Brynmawr, station crews and our Arson Reduction Team have been working closely with local partners to tackle the growing issue of deliberate fire setting and anti-social behaviour including a fire safety campaign at Lakeside Business Park and supporting the business park management team to implement further security measures

### What we will do in 2024-2025

**Develop and implement a revised response policy for Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) including education of building owners and managers about the impact of false alarms on us and their businesses.**

Responding to false alarms represents significant opportunity costs for our personnel and resources. The [Welsh Government's Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016](#) identifies the reduction of false alarms as a key efficiency saving and it is one of our key improvement objectives. We will, therefore, be proposing a revised AFA response policy which enable additional work on risk reduction and training to ensure frontline skills are enhanced. This will also reduce the number of fire engines on the roads, reducing our carbon footprint and making roads safer. Focus on non-domestic alarms could see a reduction of up to 40% in AFAs in a full year, or an overall reduction of 25% in fire false alarms.

**Improve our use of data and intelligence to target more effectively those most at risk of fire, including expanding our use of partnership and other external data sources.**

Ensuring our systems for recording and sharing risk information are effective will improve the accuracy of information available to crews and improve targeting of activity. This will include scoping a new Operational Intelligence System (OIS) which will improve workflow and efficiency for Business Fire Safety.

**Further develop our integrated and risk-based approach to the deployment of prevention and protection resources.**

Commencing a trial programme of fire safety checks of non-domestic premises by operational crews will improve the ability to capture information on a wider scope of buildings to support Firefighter and community safety at operational incidents.

Implementing any changes necessary to our Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) based on National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) recently published draft Guidance on risk, highest risk occupancies and prioritising fire safety interventions. This will enable us to be consistent in defining and prioritising risk including decisions on interventions to reduce the impact of fire, following sector best practice.

**Enhance our efforts to communicate water safety messages to those at greatest risk.**

Working in partnership with Water Safety Wales and the RNLI will further support our work towards water safety and drowning prevention.

**Educate and advise on the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(FSO) and the [Fire Safety Act 2021](#).**

Ensuring that managers of workplaces or common parts of buildings containing two or more domestic premises are aware of their responsibilities and advise and support them to meet their responsibilities.

**Prepare for the impact of climate change on our communities (for example, increased wildfire and flooding) and work with our partners to reduce this.**

Invest in training, equipment, education, and community resilience to ensure that we, our partners, and our communities are not only prepared for the increasing risk due to climate change of flooding and wildfire, but have also done everything possible to mitigate their impacts should they occur.



**REFLECT Street Firefighter**

Doorstep interventions, like **REFLECT Street Firefighter**, can have a positive impact on social inclusion and increase the personal achievements of young people aged 11-25. This helps us to achieve key objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by giving them a voice and providing support and education.

Street Firefighter involves South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's dedicated Youth Team using a restorative approach to challenge certain types of decision-making. This helps the children and young people participating to develop healthier attributes including feeling empowered, increasing confidence and self-worth, improving relationships, and gaining a sense of belonging within their communities.

[REFLECT website page](#) (includes contact information)

[News article about REFLECT Street Firefighter](#)

# Responding to your emergency

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A resilient  
Wales



A healthier  
Wales

## What does this mean?

From Joint Fire Control (JFC) receiving an emergency call through to the action of our crews at an incident to post-incident support advice on reducing risk, we are focussed on ensuring the best outcome for all including our personnel.

Ensuring our response is effective depends on our crews being available and appropriately trained so they are ready to deal with the situations they face. Our Training Department ensures that courses are delivered to prepare our crews for current and future demands, using post-incident debriefs to identify good practice and areas for improvement.

This focus on responding efficiently and effectively to any emergency provides assurance that we are ready to meet the changing needs of our communities, from an ageing population to the effects of climate change or the emergence of new technology such as electric vehicles.

Welsh Government's direction on implementation of all the recommendations made in the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's thematic reviews will be developed and taken forward in social partnership to ensure the continued operational effectiveness of the Service. Plans to reduce attendance at False Alarms through a focus on Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) response will be developed with implementation providing increased capacity for training and skills development. This change will, however, present challenges in other areas such as JFC where we expect an increase in calls challenged.

For our On-Call Firefighters, our continued focus on an effective recruitment and retention programme will ensure we maintain availability and recognise the important contribution made to our communities.



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, Joint Fire Control staff and other staff to respond to current and future risks in our communities

### We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Calls received and incidents attended
- Recruitment activities
- Training and development activities

### What have we done in 2023-2024

**Reviewed the structure of JFC and recruitment activities** to ensure an efficient and effective response to emergency calls by our experienced and trained team.

As the first point of contact, and an integral part of our response, increasing the resilience of our JFC has been a priority.

- Seven new recruits joined JFC and completed their competency development this year. Another recruitment campaign is planned for early 2024-2025
- Minimum crewing on watches increased to seven and we are working towards a further increase to eight and a maximum of 12 crew per watch in 2024

**Ensured our systems for recording and sharing risk information effectively supports our activities** so that information is available to those who need it when it is needed.

- The structure for operational working groups was reviewed and revised, clarifying decision-making processes and identifying workstream leads to maintain effective oversight
- We have mapped out and improved the flow of reporting for Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI), improving information available to our crews and preparing for work on a new Operational Intelligence System (OIS), to be implemented in the next financial year
- Risk Reduction teams are developing our Safeguarding database to share information between the Safeguarding and Fire Safety Intervention teams. This will improve our efficiency in identifying and supporting those most in need
- Our Youth Team has developed a Youth Intervention Enquiry Form which allows parents and professionals to refer a child or young person to the Service. Information on this will be published in the new financial year

**Conducted research into emergency response to fires involving electric vehicles** supporting our development to meet changing risks and demands.

- We established a working group focussed on our emergency response to fires involving electric vehicles and other lithium battery related incidents. With new and innovative responses emerging, options were scoped and will be trialled in the new financial year

**Ensured our training programmes prepare our staff for future challenges** - in addition to considering operational training and future demands on the Service, we support staff in their chosen career development pathways.

- In JFC, eight staff qualified as Airwave Communication Tactical Advisors and four as National Control Liaison Officers. We aim to build on this as we focus on the continuing professional development of JFC staff
- Our Operational Development and Review Team collaborated with Skills For Justice Awards to become the first Fire and Rescue Service to develop accredited qualifications for Wildfire response. The three levels of training range from awareness to supervisory and tactical managers and comply with National Operational Guidance
- Using findings from Welsh Government's Thematic Review "Fire and Rescue Services in Wales: Learning from Grenfell" and National Operational Guidance, our High-Rise Working Group have developed a new Standard Operational Procedure (SOP) and Evacuation Guidance. Work with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board has secured a high-rise residential facility where the new guidance and SOP can be taught in real world scenarios. Five exercises have taken place with Operational and JFC staff taking part and 20 dates have been arranged to ensure all Wholetime watches will have received training by the end of next year
- The High-Rise Working Group also collaborated with our Breathing Apparatus (BA) team in developing a Tactical Officer high-rise course, and a smoke curtain training programme, to be delivered from April 2024



**Explored opportunities to increase delivery of online training to develop operational competence**, enabling training to be delivered more flexibly, integrated with operational activities, and reducing the requirement for travel to a central venue.

- The review of our two-year BA course included commencing development of online content for appropriate sections to make the course more accessible and flexible to our staff

**Promoted vacancies through expanded social media use and face-to-face engagement activities** - through a calendar of Firefighter Fit sessions and participation in careers fairs, we raised awareness of career opportunities, and recruitment of On-Call Firefighters has remained a priority.

- Stations used local community events, including those at station sites, to promote recruitment opportunities. They have continued working with Skills for Justice to identify suitable applicants, inviting people to take part in their drill nights which provides an opportunity to experience some parts of the role and meet the crews
- We designated August our On-Call month, and Media and Communications colleagues worked with staff across the Service to develop a new recruitment campaign. Using the slogan "Same Skills, different roles, be more with On-Call", they produced several videos to show how skills from other employment can transfer to the On-Call Firefighter role. New internet pages with relevant information, social media channel posts, posters and other promotional content was used for maximum reach

**Developed and introduced new specification 4x4 fire appliances** - to enhance our response capability with additional agility.

- We purchased seven new Scania fire appliances capable of delivering over 3,000 litres of water a minute and accommodating up to six crew members. Three of the seven chassis ordered for "fit for purpose" 4x4 fire appliances have been delivered to the manufacturers for body builds with completion scheduled for April 2024

Other examples of work in this area include:

- Joint Fire Control Green Watch was awarded an Operational Excellence Award in June for the fire survival guidance they provided at an incident, alongside a number of other traumatic incidents during one night shift
- Green Watch Cardiff Central and Roath were awarded an Operational Excellence Award after rescuing three children from a complex high-rise fire in Cardiff
- Bridgend Extrication Team achieved first place at the Avon UKRO Regional Heavy Rescue Challenge, 3rd in the Standard Extrication Scenario and 3rd in the World Overall at the World Extrication Challenge
- In October we participated in the multi-agency exercise (Waterworld project) which involved crews attending flooding and water rescue activities across the region, to help provide a consistent approach in the event of widespread flooding
- We organised a one-day RTC simulation that involved Cardiff University, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST), South Wales Police, and Medserve (BASICS) as well as JFC and Operational personnel, a total of over 100 participants. This included real-life scenarios for medical students to experience and learn about how to work with others in an emergency

## What we will do in 2024-2025

**Review our operational training programme in response to the recommendations of the Welsh Government Thematic Review of operational training within the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.**

We will continue work on reviewing our training programmes for operational personnel, led by our Effectiveness and Efficiency working group.

**Make changes to our driver training courses in response to the introduction of Section 19 of the Road Safety Act (2006).**

This legislation covers exemptions from speed limits for emergency service vehicles and we will reflect this in the training for our emergency response drivers and instructors. This, along with the [Fire Standards Board Emergency Response Driver Framework](#), will help maintain and improve upon the high standards we have developed.

**Develop collaborative working via the All-Wales Training Managers group, focussing on deliverables and integration with risk based working groups.**

The main benefits are the standardisation of training across Wales, identifying any trends in unsuccessful assessment results, and peer assessment of courses and assessors as required.

**Implement outcomes of our internal On-Call strategic review.**

This will include identification of options and strategies to develop and improve recruitment, retention, training, and contracts of employment.

A new one-week initial course has been designed to be followed by a two-week BA course. This will allow new entrants to increase contracts at point of entry and will be rolled out following a pilot in 2023-2024.

**Systems update/upgrade for Joint Fire Control.**

We will work with South Wales Police and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service to ensure compatibility between our systems, install new hardware to ensure JFC systems are resilient and efficient and continue to support Multi Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT) rollout by connecting with WAST.

## Teamwork at Joint Fire Control

Calls to our Joint Fire Control (JFC) can be complex - the operator taking the initial call mobilises our response and focusses on the caller, passing information on to JFC colleagues so that they can coordinate further support from our teams or from other agencies. One supervisor supports the operator, while another oversees all the ongoing actions and ensures other calls are being managed and monitored effectively. The first operator keeps talking to the caller to help keep them safe until crews arrive, known as "fire survival guidance". It takes a whole watch to effectively respond to a call.

In June 2023, JFC Green Watch received a call to a house fire. When crews arrived, they were faced with a well-developed fire on the ground floor and confirmation that persons were reported. The incident had to be carefully managed before access could be gained. The casualty was located and given initial CPR before medical colleagues arrived. EMERTS (Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service) at the scene stated the actions of the crews in attendance and through fire survival guidance had in no doubt saved this person's life. The outstanding efficiency and professionalism of Green Watch JFC during this incident was recognised as they received an Operational Excellence award.



# Working with partners

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:

 A resilient Wales

 A Wales of cohesive communities

 A globally responsible Wales

 A prosperous Wales

## What does this mean?

Through our work with partners across the region and within the fire and rescue sector, we deliver service improvements for the communities of South Wales. Collaboration with others means that we avoid duplication of resources, making best use of public money. It also creates a better experience for the public as our understanding of other organisations and services increases – we can signpost to other providers and they can refer to us. Work within the sector ensures we share and adopt best practice, and we are involved with a range of forums and working groups to ensure our operational capability is effective.

Our partnerships and collaborations are regularly reviewed to ensure effective use of resources and maximise benefits achieved. As partnerships progress, we seek opportunities for further cooperation.

As a statutory partner on the Public Service Boards (PSBs) within our service area, we support delivery of Well-being Plans and local priorities to ensure our activities deliver long-term improvements to people in our communities. Many of our fire and rescue stations are a focus for community activity and have valuable relationships with local groups, while our Arson Reduction Team works closely with Community Safety partners to reduce crime and disorder.

Delivering outcomes against this theme will further embed partnership working in our activities.



Working with 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
- Continually reviewing and building on our existing partnerships, embedding principles of social partnership

### We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Partnership agreements and activities
- Engagement with PSBs
- Our range of partnerships and collaborations

### What we have done in 2023-2024

**Mapped our current partnership working activities and data sharing agreements** helping us to identify and develop new opportunities for collaboration.

- Community Safety are reviewing their partnership arrangements and recent recruitment of a Partnership Officer will ensure the completion of the review and identification of new partnerships opportunities in 2024-2025
- A referral process for [St John Ambulance Wales](#) has been established and work is continuing with Public Health Wales utilising All-Wales NHS Manual Handling to identify referral pathway for bariatric patients

- We have supported the Joint Emergency Services Estates Group (JESEG) in looking at more effective ways of working with other blue light services. Data Map Wales has been identified as a suitable tool for sharing information and we are ready to begin trialling this
- In collaboration with Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MAWWFRS) we have identified an effective process and drafted a data sharing agreement to enable sharing of risk information for over the border incidents. We hope to complete this work in 2024 which will enable us to identify, share and access information that will improve our services

**Review and enhance our relationships with Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners and National Resilience in Wales** - to ensure cohesive and collaborative approach to risks, threats, and harm to our communities in line with emerging risks.

LRF groups are multi-agency partnerships made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, and others. These agencies are known as Category 1 Responders, as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act.

- We have ensured we have representation on each group to ensure cohesive and collaborative approach to risks, threats, and harm to our communities in line with emerging risks

**As PSBs launched their Local Well-being Plans 2023-2028, we ensured our continuing engagement** enabling us to better understand the challenges faced by our communities and to support those most in need.

- Our work with Public Service Boards (PSBs) continues to be supported by Group Managers of each Unitary Authority (UA) and, following the restructure of PSB sub-groups, Station Commanders have been allocated to these sub-groups to ensure our representation at all levels

**Reviewing our working arrangements with external agencies to ensure suitable support for our mental health provisions for staff** - to ensure we offer our staff an effective range of support.

- We have recently procured a new Employee Assistance Programme to support employees with guidance and counselling, and we continue to work with Mind Mental health and other agencies

Some examples of other work involving partners this year includes:

- Cardiff and Vale Community Resource teams hosted [“Stay Steady” clinics](#) in Roath and Barry Fire and Rescue Stations and NHS physiotherapists ran falls clinics from Roath and Whitchurch. The NHS physio staff have been given training by our Community Safety Team on what to look for and how to refer people for Home Safety visits. Next year, Bridgend Falls Team plans to host “Stay Steady” clinics at stations located within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board area
- Sharing premises, Abercarn has welcomed the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) to share their station premises so two patient transport vehicles currently work from this site
- The Service’s Advanced Driver Training Team and South Wales Police have developed integrated training programmes that address the unique challenges faced by both Fire and Rescue Service and Police drivers, with the training curriculum designed to instil a comprehensive understanding of vehicle dynamics, emergency response protocols, and effective communication strategies



- Blue Watch at Roath Fire Station pioneered a new initiative in 2023, providing blue light awareness to bus drivers at Cardiff Bus Depot. The Watch used information, videos, and advice to help educate drivers on what to do when blue light vehicles are passing/approaching on South Wales roads. These information videos have now been added to Cardiff Bus's driver training programmes. Inspired by their success, the Watch is now looking to offer the initiative to other bus companies in Cardiff
- Our Community Safety Team has developed a new Professional Concerns process which has delivered referrals to our local Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH). Training is being updated on our electronic training system (e-Hyb) to ensure all staff receive the appropriate level of understanding for their role

## What we will do in 2024-2025

### **We will work in collaboration with partners to identify those most at risk in our communities.**

Those most at risk frequently have limited contact with support services. We will therefore work with partner agencies to ensure referral routes are shared and signposted, and we will monitor our onward referrals to other agencies.

To prevent deliberate fire setting, we will work with partners to deliver appropriate, targeted and effective interventions including taking positive action to address insecure, void and derelict buildings which present a risk to both the community and to our Firefighters.

Review and enhance working relationships with [Gwent Local Resilience Forum](#), [South Wales Local Resilience Forum](#) and [National Resilience in Wales](#) to ensure cohesive and collaborative approach to risks, threats and harm to our communities in line with emerging risks.

### **Improve our data sharing arrangements to support partnership working.**

Working with our partners to share information will maximise the value of our data and enable us to share a richer picture of our communities.

Build on our work with other fire and rescue services to ensure we are making the best use of data to benchmark and monitor our activities, including work with comparable Services and Welsh FRS.

### **Develop our arrangements for partnership working to ensure those participating are able to realise maximum benefit from their involvement.**

Building on success of work in collaborative training and education on the services we can provide, we will assess the impact of supporting other agencies on our service delivery.

Further develop collaborative working with Health and Safety Peer Group partners, MAWWFRS and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS), ensuring regular communication and promoting shared understandings and benchmarking processes.

Explore potential for enhancing our collaborative work with other fire and rescue services in learning and skills development, developing new opportunities for exchange.

Continue to develop our monitoring of partnership activities to ensure we have maximum reach and support, producing a gap analysis to identify new opportunities.

### **Maximise opportunities for co-location and flexibility, adapting the property portfolio in line with community risks and new operational requirements.**

This will develop our support of the Joint Emergency Services Estates Group (JESEG) co-location strategy by exploring further co-locations with our emergency service partners.

# Involving and communicating

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A resilient  
Wales



A Wales of  
cohesive  
communities



A more  
equal Wales



A Wales of vibrant  
culture & thriving  
Welsh language

## What does this mean?

Our plans are shaped by communication – the feedback we receive, discussions to explore and understand risk, sharing of information and best practice within the sector and with our partners in other areas of activity. Effective communication provides the opportunity for us to shape our future in collaboration with the stakeholders and communities that we serve.

The need for improvements in communication has been regularly highlighted in consultation feedback and is a key theme of the recent Independent Culture Review (ICR). We must improve our communication internally to ensure our staff are better informed and more engaged which will support positive cultural change. We also need to deliver greater transparency in our reporting to provide stakeholders and the public with the information they need, and to raise awareness of our activities and the positive impact we have in the communities of South Wales. This change will be delivered as part of an overall communications strategy.

A key question for the coming year, in responding to the challenges of the ICR and greater scrutiny from Welsh Government, will be “how does our future look?” A positive future will require clarity and purpose, and much of this will be developed by staff-led working groups, responsible for areas of the ICR recommendations.



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

### We will involve and communicate by:

- Involving our communities, making sure they have their say in what we do
- Helping to keep our communities safe by delivering safety education and attending community events
- Ensuring we develop and promote communication channels within the Service
- Recognising the role of social partnership, further developing open and transparent relationships with stakeholders

### We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Responses received to surveys and engagement initiatives
- Engagement via our Stakeholder Register
- Local community activities
- Social media activity
- Engagement with the Shout forum, our internal staff communication sessions

### What we have done in 2023-2024

**Expanded and promoted channels that enable our staff and stakeholders to provide feedback and comment on our plans and services** to improve our capacity to receive feedback from staff and members of our communities.

We recognise that being able to receive quality feedback starts with the availability of information. We continually review the systems we use and the way we present information to improve accessibility but this year we have:

- Redesigned our Annual Improvement Plan to provide information at a local level and redesigned the survey to help make it easier to complete. This was supported by a “Quick Read” version that received positive feedback
- Developed and promoted a range of channels, including becoming the first fire and rescue service to introduce the Crimestoppers Speak Up advice line and website, and relaunching the Shout forum, a regular Service-wide opportunity for information sharing and discussion. This format was used to engage with staff in a series of events across the Service for discussion of the ICR and the Draft Action Plan responding to the recommendations made
- So that we hear from the next generation, we have developed proposals for a Youth Forum for 13-18 year olds to help shape our future plans, including trialling risk reduction initiatives targeted at young people. We will promote and launch this later in 2024
- Started a review of the accessibility of our website using the Silktide Index (an international standard which evaluates the accessibility of sites based on their level of compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). This allows us to monitor our score and we continue to work with our website provider to improve functionality
- Promoted safety messages, events and recruitment opportunities in a range of ways, including digital screens, social media, leaflets, and newspaper and radio advertising

**Improved coordination of our involvement in community events and activities, providing support for fire and rescue stations** - to help them in developing their local involvement and role within their communities.

- Stations expanded their involvement in local community events, using these opportunities to promote information about the Service, safety messages and recruitment information
- In addition to the 999 Emergency Services Day at Cardiff Bay which we coordinate annually, local 999 days were held at Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Ogmere, and Llantwit Major, ensuring the opportunity to attend events was taken into our communities. In collaboration with South Wales Police, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and other partners, these events were a chance to see live demonstrations, meet our crews and gain safety information in a family-friendly environment

**Launched a standardised engagement toolkit for use across the Service** with resources for planning, delivering, and evaluating events and other engagement activities. To provide consistency in our approach to engagement and allow us to collate data on events and areas for improvement, we have:

- Developed an Engagement Toolkit with guidance for planning, delivering, and evaluating activities, from organising a recruitment event to taking part in a local show or running a Service-wide consultation exercise
- Updated the Station Event Management Plan which includes templates to complete for all relevant considerations including Health & Safety, site facilities, key contacts, promotion of the event, risks involved, refreshments, cancellation process, etc.

**Shared more information on the range of activities undertaken by South Wales Fire and Rescue Service using digital and non-digital methods** – the responsibilities of a modern fire and rescue service are wide ranging and, as a public body in Wales, we also have a role in delivering on a broader agenda, particularly in respect of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

- Two new volunteer roles were created which involve public engagement and promotion of drowning prevention messages in locations with known water hazards as well as raising awareness of our On-Call opportunities

Other local activities this year included:

- For [International Control Room Week](#) we celebrated our “Heroes in Headsets” by sharing stories from JFC staff about their experiences working for the Service, their visit from London Fire Brigade and the celebration of new starters
- Firefighters from Maindee Fire and Rescue Station visited the Africa Day event, run by Zimbabwe Newport Volunteering Association and Newport City Council. They engaged with people about recruitment for On-Call and delivered safety messages
- In June, staff from Caerphilly Fire and Rescue Station supported Caerphilly’s first ever Pride event, with nearly 24,000 visitors attending during the day. Several other organisations, including Gwent Police, Caerphilly Runners, and many local businesses were part of the celebrations
- Firefighters from Cwmbran attended the Girls World Cup themed inclusivity football festival organised by Torfaen Sports Development
- In December, Aberbargoed crew constructed a sleigh, and used it to hand out selection boxes to the children in the community, whilst also offering festive fire safety advice and promoting the Service’s safety messages

## What we will do in 2024-2025

### Communicate better information on who we are and what we do

Design and deliver a communications campaign around the Action Plan for the ICR recommendations.

Plan and undertake a communication campaign around proposed changes to our response to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs). This will ensure our communities are aware of our proposals, enabling them to have a say on these proposals.

Produce and publish an external newsletter which will give our communities an insight into what we do, throughout South Wales, but also more locally in the community.

Review our website in terms of content, accessibility and ‘back end’ changes that can be made to improve functionality. This will provide the best possible user experience and ensure compliance in advance of any further Welsh Government review, until we are able to commission a new website that is built with accessibility as a key priority.

### Work with staff, stakeholders, communities, and partners to implement recommendations of the Independent Culture Review, co-creating improvements to the Service.

The report, published on 3rd January 2024, has led to additional scrutiny from the media and various stakeholders. The potential adverse effect that this may have on how we are viewed, and ultimately trusted to deliver our functions effectively means that we must provide reassurance on the changes we are making. A communications plan has been developed to ensure that key information is delivered frequently while we also promote various avenues for stakeholders to provide feedback to us. Our staff-led working groups will continue their work on modelling change. The Service’s Consultation and Engagement Group will ensure that all public facing events and engagement opportunities are effectively planned, managed, and reviewed.

### Ask our staff how we can improve communication.

This will be a focus for our working groups. We will also continue to evolve our staff engagement platforms and programme of consultation activities.



**Begin work to develop a Citizens Forum, enabling diverse voices to shape the services we provide.**

We will implement our planned Youth Forum and explore opportunities to develop further groups or support and engage with existing groups. Effective involvement will help us to shape our plans and identify issues that matter to our communities.

**Map out our activities and our stakeholders to ensure we are involving appropriate groups.**

To support working in social partnerships and develop our collaboration with other agencies, we will complete and maintain a record of our activities, identifying joint work and identifying future opportunities.

**Recognise and promote the work of stations in community support and involvement.**

Our work on developing a toolkit for stations will be rolled out and will provide improved recording of our community activities.



**British Red Cross - Emergency Response**

The Service has worked for some time with British Red Cross to ensure those experiencing a crisis incident receive the support they need. With the individual's permission, and where a referral is appropriate, British Red Cross volunteers provide emotional and practical immediate and interim support. In November 2023, the arrangement was expanded from the team based at Ely Fire Station with a volunteer-led British Red Cross Emergency Response team and vehicle – a Land Rover Defender – based at Pontypridd fire Station.

The teams' vehicles are stocked with items such as clothes, blankets and hygiene packs, enabling them to attend different kinds of emergency incidents and support people in crisis, such as domestic fires, floods or major incidents. Practical support can include emergency financial grants and food deliveries, emergency accommodation or referrals to other agencies.

In the coming year, we will be working together to raise awareness of this support with Red Cross ER volunteers commencing a programme of presentations to Joint Fire Control and watches at our Wholtime stations.

# Protecting and enhancing our environment

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A globally Responsible Wales



A healthier Wales



A resilient Wales



A Wales of cohesive communities

## What does this mean?

We recognise our activities influence the local and global environment, negatively through the impact of the resources we use and positively in our work to reduce risk and protect the environment. Our Carbon Reduction Plan 2020-2023 sets out our programme to meet Welsh Government's objective of a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. This includes consideration of the resources we use – from reducing, reusing and recycling, to evaluating the environmental consequence of our procurement decisions, which are subject to our own Sustainable Procurement Principles and the recently introduced Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act. The impact of climate change is evidenced by changes to the demands we face: more frequent and prolonged periods of extreme weather are expected to increase wildfires and flooding. This can only be tackled by effective partnerships, so we continue to collaborate with key partners to understand and address these challenges.

We have a strong community focus to our work, making the natural environment safe and accessible. Knowledge of protected sites and support for local action is key, from working with schools to supporting local partnerships.



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
- Reducing our energy use and our carbon footprint
- Considering how our activities impact on the environment
- Reducing the amount of waste produced

### We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Our Carbon Reduction Plan and progress towards becoming carbon neutral
- Our fleet and provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging points
- Business travel miles
- Waste produced

### What we have done in 2023-2024

**Reviewed developments in fuel and other technologies to identify opportunities that might be beneficial to the Service's fleet asset replacement policy and procurement strategy** – to evaluate and progress our aspiration for a greener fleet.

- We are continuing to expand our electric vehicle fleet and supporting infrastructure. We have commenced an evaluation exercise with Mid and West Wales Fire Service to identify alternative sources of fuel such as biodiesel and how they could contribute to our carbon reduction plan

**Implementing an accredited Environmental Management System (EMS)** - to gain recognition for our environmental practices and demonstrate our commitments to sustainability, consideration of environmental impacts, compliance with legislation, and environmental protection.

- A gap analysis was completed, identifying the necessary actions to achieve accreditation levels of an EMS. We have begun work on our Initial Environmental Review (IER), Environmental Policy and Improvement Plan, and have drafted a proposal for an EMS data management system. We are aiming to complete these early in the new financial year, therefore attaining Level 1 of the EMS. Attainment of higher levels has already been mapped out and we will work on this throughout next year

**Developed an open dialogue with staff on our carbon reduction position and the challenges we face** – by engaging and involving colleagues across the Service, we increased awareness of our activities and encourage innovative solutions.

- A new Sustainability page on our staff intranet was developed. This offers a one-stop-shop for information and updates on activity relating to sustainability, with data on carbon emissions and energy currently displayed
- We promoted Wales Climate Week by sharing the work we have been doing, including building a network of Sustainability Champions across the Service who will help to promote sustainability in their area through training and initiatives
- As part of our commitment to Healthy Travel Charters, the Sustainability Team carried out a Service-wide commuting survey to learn how our staff travel to and from work. The results of this were published on the staff intranet along with information on more sustainable options
- We commenced a new waste collection contract to ensure our waste is disposed of in accordance with new recycling legislation
- To meet our duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of our functions, land management is now part of station plans. This means stations will be involved in assisting with local plans and enable them to understand the risk at sites whilst gaining a greater understanding of their value ecologically and to the community

**Agreed and defined the standard requirements of a sustainable building** – in the longer term, this will ensure our buildings are resource-efficient and environmentally responsible throughout their life cycle.

- Our new Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Wales facility at Whitchurch Fire Station opened, representing the three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales. It was designed with sustainability in mind, and will provide a modern, environmentally considerate, and functioning building. New Photovoltaic (PV) solar panel installations will provide an estimated 10,287 kWh of electricity per year, and annual CO2 savings of 2,184kg. The incorporation of a 400V battery system will also mean any excess energy generated on sunny days can be used at night – making the building 'self-sufficient'
- Our planning application for New Inn Fire Station was approved in February 2024. We aim to achieve a net-zero carbon rating by using sustainable materials, solar panels, advanced insulation and ventilation system, rainwater harvesting and efficient irrigation systems for outdoor landscaping, and provision of green spaces to enhance biodiversity and provide habitats for local flora and fauna. The planning and development of this project will inform all our future building developments

Other local initiatives include:

- All stations and work locations continue to develop ways to be more environmentally conscious. In July, our station at Ogmore Vale became the first and only UK Fire Station to receive a Green Flag Community Award from [Keep Wales Tidy](#), for their Well-being and Education Garden. The station is currently engaging with our Community Fire Safety Education Lead, local schools, and Early Years Flying Start Setting to establish a joint engagement package and are further working with Keep Wales Tidy in the hopes of installing an orchard package at the garden, to help support biodiversity, enhance nature, and support community engagement. They also have a new green living roof which will support and flourish the biodiversity of the station and its nearby habitats encouraging healthy ecosystems for plants, fungi, insects, birds, and other mammals to use

## What we will do in 2024-2025

### **Continue to develop our response to wildfires.**

Working with colleagues in [Natural Resources Wales](#) (NRW) to understand local terrain, where the most vulnerable habitats may be or where there could be serious financial or ecological implications from fires. These fires are a drain on emergency service resources and present risk to life and property.

### **Begin development of our first carbon neutral station.**

Replacement of the existing New Inn Fire Station with an updated and sustainable new build will make sustainability a key objective, with the aim to achieve a Net Zero Carbon (NZC) energy rating.

### **Continue upgrades to our real fire training facility (RFTF) to reduce environmental impact**

Our RFTF is fitted with a smoke treatment system called a smoxidiser; smoke produced within the building is captured, extracted and filtered before release to the atmosphere meeting all legal and environmental requirements. However, Firefighters' personal protective equipment (PPE) is a potential source of exposure to toxic contaminants commonly released from fires. We will establish a process for handling used PPE which will reduce the health risks of dirty PPE to Firefighters.

### **Improve our waste management using data collected on waste streams.**

By engaging with and educating our staff on the requirements of the [Welsh Government workplace recycling legislation](#), we will improve the quality and quantity of recycling from workplaces, taking an important step towards reaching zero waste. We will also implement an audit process as part of the Environmental Management System (EMS) along with benchmarking and target setting. Periodic audits will examine volumes and variations in waste across the Service and physically inspect locations to identify wasteful practices enabling us to reduce waste.

### **Measure the impact of our actions and report our progress.**

Developing a dashboard of metrics to demonstrate change on a granular level will enable monitoring of activity by sites, allowing local action to be taken to reduce energy use, for example. Permission has been granted to re-baseline using Welsh Government reporting methods so that data discrepancies across different mediums internally and externally can be addressed.

### **Review our fleet management system**

To ensure efficiency and longer-term sustainability goals while maintaining record compliance.

### **Work with partners to protect our environment.**

Sharing best practice via the All Wales FRS Sustainability Group and engaging with partners and other agencies on a collaborative approach to reducing our environmental impact will benefit all sharing knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to find solutions to sustainability issues.

We will continue to review developments and opportunities in fuel and other technologies to identify any with potential benefits to the Service.

### **Identify ways to enhance and develop our well-being areas and green spaces.**

Landscaping proposals for the new build net zero carbon fire station at New Inn will include outdoor amenity space to offer a pleasant environment and provisions for staff well-being.



### **Redevelopment of New Inn Fire Station**

Having received planning permission for the redevelopment New Inn Fire Station, work will commence in 2024 and is expected to complete in 2026. The layout of the new building maximises spatial efficiency, with fire station functions and activities located where they will be most effective. The site will accommodate equipment and training apparatus, including a replacement training tower. Landscaping will include outdoor amenity space to offer a pleasant environment and provisions for staff well-being and wildlife will be supported with bat and birdboxes.

Replacing the existing building, which is over 70 years old, is an exemplar project for the future builds with sustainability as a key objective. Our aim is to achieve a Net Zero Carbon energy rating, achieved by installing a full solar array to the building roof, air source heat pumps and increased insulation.



# Using technology well

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A resilient  
Wales



A globally  
responsible Wales



A healthier  
Wales

## What does this mean?

Technology supports our work across the Service, from operational firefighting techniques and equipment to the back-office systems that deliver business services and record our activities. Our priority is to use the best technology to record and monitor emergency calls, send the right vehicles and crews to you, and help us at the scene of the emergency incidents.

Improvement in ICT, which is one aspect of our technology use, was raised in consultation, identifying a need for innovation. With the recent transition to Office 365, new systems and ways of working are bedding into our day-to-day activity and development will continue. Systems are continually reviewed to identify potential for improvement in terms of ease of use and/or functionality.

As technology is used everyday across the Service by so many of us, a further point raised in consultation was a conduit for users to provide feedback on system development. We will explore how this can be strengthened in our already rigorous testing and procurement processes, so that we make better use of ICT.



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

### We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Cyber security incidents
- Online meetings
- Helpdesk calls

### What we have done in 2023-2024

**Explored the use of digital devices to promote new and innovative working practices**, improving the recording of information and updating records to deliver sustainable efficiencies in data management.

- Use of our 24/7 helpdesk system has been extended to more departments, enabling them to manage requests and workloads, for example, monitoring of Information Governance requests and their progress
- We have publicised a QR code for Crimestoppers allowing members of the public to report concerns. We have also added a QR code for the FlyMapper app on our new Arson Reduction Team vans, promoting reporting on fly tipping as part of our work with Fly-tipping Action Wales
- Most of our recruitment activity is now online, from identification of a vacancy to appointment. This has improved the experience for applicants and is more efficient for recruiters

**Reviewed the Service's Management Information System to ensure data is available for monitoring and planning activities** ensuring we are evidence-based in our decision making.

Our Business Management Information System (BMIS) helps us to capture and present data and information about our performance. Improvements we have made include:

- Developing reports for our Training and Development Team for ease of monitoring course registrations and completions

**Used technology to expand our suite of risk reduction activities** – use of technology can increase our risk reduction reach through efficiencies and engaging a wider audience.

- Our Youth and Fire Safety Intervention Teams have bought two electronic devices that allow them to download games to help educate children and young people on a range of topics, but specifically around the risks of fire. Research is being undertaken into developing our own games, so we can tailor them more to our service and communities
- We started development of a “virtual decisions” educational package which will allow children and young people to play out their own story by making different decisions. Using both electronic and virtual reality equipment will make this more engaging and impactful in teaching the importance of positive choices

**Enhance and grow the recently introduced electronic Risk Based Inspection Programme for non-domestic premises, based on the risk to life safety of relevant persons** – this will support pre-planned visits to check compliance in accordance with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.

- An electronic audit form was developed to enhance the information available on the Risk Based Inspection Programme
- A review of the current system was completed this year, and a working group has been established to support sourcing a new Risk Based Inspection Programme system provider for the Service

**Continued the programme to upgrade all servers** enabling us to review applications and reduce costs while increasing efficiency and security.

- Throughout the year our ICT department have continued their work on the upgrade of all our servers which will ensure we are using technology at its optimum and allow us to review our applications for further improvement

Plans to develop a messaging system for confirmation of Occupational Health appointments via text messages has been postponed as we are considering an all-encompassing Patient Management System.

We have also used national processes produced by The [Cyber Technical Advisory Group](#) to draft a Cyber and Forensic Readiness policy which, once finalised, will be reviewed and integrated with guidance from [Gwent Local Resilience Forum](#) and the [National Fire Chiefs Council](#), early in the new financial year.

## What we will do in 2024-2025

**Upgrade appliance communication systems to provide additional applications for real-time use.**

Develop additional real-time risk information that can be delivered to mobile data terminals (MDTs) on fire engines and other internet connected devices, providing crews with accurate risk information en-route to and at incidents.

Co-ordinate the replacement of main scheme handheld radios which are nearing end of life. This will provide increased resilience and enhanced functionality.

Replace the basic mobile phones on our fire engines with smart devices to provide Firefighters access to apps that will enhance service delivery, e.g., FlyMapper App.

**Make more efficient use of ICT to engage with our operational workforce.**

Increase the use of online video conferencing for meetings and training which will enable real-time collaboration, increase productivity, save time, and help people who are working remotely feel less isolated and more engaged.

**Increase the use of mobile technology.**

Review and trial digital devices to promote new and innovative working practices that can lead to sustainable efficiencies. A report will be produced providing options and costs. Budget has been built in for 2024-2025 to provide additional ICT equipment for our Operational Risk Management (ORM) department.

**Improve digital collaboration and working opportunities.**

Set up a new working group to explore the technological requirements necessary to deliver efficiencies on projects such as Commercial Fire Safety Checks, Business Fire Safety Tactical Officer Role and Operational Intelligence Systems.

**Provide increased resilience and security to our ICT systems.**

Work with the Welsh Government Cymru Security Operations Centre (SOC) initiative to deliver a 'defend as one' approach for a joined up public sector where intelligence is shared.

Replace our existing server infrastructure, storage and networking with a Hyper-converged infrastructure (HCI) that will ensure a more resilient and secure infrastructure to run our desktop and server virtualisation systems.

Plan and run Business Continuity Management (BCM) simulations involving disruptive challenges to test their impact on our service delivery. This will identify improvement opportunities in existing arrangements, develop staff competencies and confidence and test existing procedures, plans and systems to ensure they offer the degree of protection expected.

**Provide additional resources to support new and ongoing projects for JFC**

As from 1st April 2024 a senior ICT Manager will be permanently appointed to JFC to coordinate future projects liaising on the South Wales Police Control Room System Project as well as looking at the future replacement of Command & Control for the Service.

# 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

## What does this mean?

The year has had an unprecedented focus on our staff, past and present, through the Independent Culture Review that was announced in January and commenced in April 2023. This has been a significant challenge for everyone involved and we appreciate the courage and candour of those who shared their experiences with Fenella Morris KC and her team. Now that the report and its recommendations have been published, we recognise that as this financial year draws to a close, it is actually the start of our journey to build a culture that is inclusive, supportive and positive for everyone. Our staff-led Working Groups, established to develop proposals in response to the recommendations, draw from all areas of the Service and have been open to all to join. Their work will be informed by, and communicated to, the whole Service. In addition to ensuring maximum staff involvement, we are working with external partners to advise on and review our action plan, ensuring that we remain objective, transparent, and fair.

Feeling valued in the workplace begins with feeling respected and trusted, elements of our core values. If we are to realise our aspiration to be an employer of choice and attract the right people, with the right skills and values, who represent the communities we serve, we must also look at other aspects of employment. This includes the support we provide during sickness or other life challenges, and opportunities for training and development so that all fire and rescue service careers are rewarding.

We will develop a wide-ranging approach to improving employee well-being to reduce sickness absence and focus on health and fitness promotion. Whether an employee or volunteer in the Service, everyone has a key role in keeping our communities safe.



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

### We will value our people by:

- Delivering fundamental change in our culture, responding to the recommendations of the Independent Culture Review
- 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 valued at work
- Delivering on the recommendations of the Investors in People (IiP) report
- Encouraging and supporting a bilingual culture across the Service

### We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Staff turnover, retention and recruitment
- Personal review – engagement score
- Staff absence
- Attacks on crews and other traumatic incidents

## What we have done in 2023-2024

**Reviewed and raised awareness of the Service's full range of employee benefits programmes** - to ensure support available to all staff is promoted and accessible.

- An All-Wales Service Benefits contract for staff has been launched, which includes a more user-friendly platform and a wider range of benefits than previously available. Information about the new scheme was communicated to staff at the end of 2023-2024 across a range of methods
- Our Learning, Development and Inclusion (LDI) Team launched the Coaching and Mentoring Plan which is a detailed four-year schedule detailing how the scheme will be developed, implemented, monitored and reviewed. Year One, starting April 2023, included building the foundations such as processes and documentation, training a group of staff to become coaches to a formally recognised standard, and engaging with staff to increase coaching style conversations such as the Personal Review process

**Ensured all staff have access to a learning pathway** – so that all employees can build their knowledge and skills to support their career with the Service.

- Our LDI Team launched the Pathways programmes at the start of the year to assist in developing skills and working towards progression and promotion. All staff have access to a Pathway with a range of levels available. The Pathways not only support staff to develop within their current role but also provide opportunities to select personalised learning plans to help their prospects for promotion

**Reshape our equality, diversity and inclusion framework to meet the needs and challenges of a modern fire and rescue service** – this will ensure our services and processes are fair and accessible.

- We have recently re-written our Strategic Equality Plan and are working on our new Inclusive Action plan for rollout in April 2024
- The Independent Culture Review included the experiences of staff from an equality and diversity perspective. Implementation of the recommendations will help us to reshape our equality, diversity and inclusion framework
- In addition to the review, a cultural benchmarking event was held for staff at our Cardiff Gate Training and Development Centre. Hydra's 10KV forum allows staff to provide feedback anonymously. The comments and feedback were published on our Culture Dashboard available to all staff

Other examples of activity include:

- At the end of 2023, JFC recruits took part in a joint passing out parade with their Firefighter colleagues at Cardiff Gate. This was the first joint event of this type and will continue in the future
- The Planning, Performance and Risk and Media & Communications Teams expanded on staff engagement for the Annual Improvement Plan consultation by holding discussion meetings across the Service. This will continue and be expanded to implement a schedule that supports all stations and departments to engage with Service consultation on a regular basis, face-to-face or virtually
- Media & Communications Team also made changes to internal communications, after reviewing the feedback from a recent survey. The CFO bulletin is now available as a video clip, in addition to the written document on the staff intranet. A focus group will meet to explore feedback on the intranet, Shout forum, newsletter and staff app and discuss how to involve operational staff more



- The Personal Review process continues to embed across all areas of the Service. This year our HR Department asked staff for feedback and used this to inform a review. There will now be a single annual process which can be better tailored to roles and individual plans
- In December an updated Exit Interview process was launched, including a new short, anonymous survey for staff to provide initial feedback and, for increased flexibility, options on how to complete the exit interview

## **What we will do in 2024-2025**

### **Respond to the findings of the Independent Culture Review Report (ICRR).**

Implement the recommendations of the ICRR which will enable a positive working environment for all our staff and hold all to account for maintaining our core values.

Ask our staff how we can communicate better including on decisions made and around the action plan resulting from the ICRR. This will ensure all employees have the information they need and help to build relationships between teams.

Explore the development of an apprenticeship academy to facilitate our ambition to diversify.

Develop a strategic lead role within our People Services directorate on outreach activities to underrepresented groups.

### **Transform our People Services functions to provide optimum operational support and put people at the heart of everything we do.**

The work to review the structure of People Services is coming to fruition with a view to approval for implementation from April 2024.

### **Review our On-Call Firefighter retention rates.**

After the success of the On-Call recruitment month held in August 2023, we want to repeat the campaign and enhance it, to generate interest in and promote the On-Call role.

Our Retained Management Team are working with Skills for Justice (SFJ) to embed a newly designed qualification. This will also dovetail with the new trial 1-week initial course.

### **Develop and monitor training for all staff to deliver development of foundation skills, e.g., ICT.**

Research new ways to train and re-engineer current courses to best utilise our online technology including exploring opportunities to increase the delivery of online training to develop operational competence, achieved through virtual sessions and Micro-Teaching.

# Continuing to work effectively

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A prosperous  
Wales



A Wales of vibrant  
culture & thriving  
Welsh language



A healthier  
Wales

## What does this mean?

Demonstrating our effectiveness demands transparency and accountability across the full spectrum of our activities, as a fire and rescue service and all related business activities. This includes producing plans that are accessible and informative, providing performance information on a regular basis and using measures that are meaningful.

It also means using feedback for improvement, from activities such as consultation, audits and reviews. This evidence is considered and acted upon where opportunities for improvement can be identified. In the last year, Audit Wales published their report on [Fire False Alarm Reduction](#) in South Wales and this has been reviewed by a workgroup focussed on managing the impact of false alarms on the Service. Reducing attendance at Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) actuations would provide capacity to increase training hours and risk reduction activity, and a model for this will be considered in the coming year. As outlined in the Commissioners' brief from Welsh Government, recommendations of recent Welsh Government Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor (CFRA) Thematic Reviews will also be implemented alongside the recommendations of the Independent Culture Review. Work on delivering these improvements will be achieved in social partnership, working with staff, representative bodies and other stakeholders.

This year has been challenging in terms of the scrutiny directed on the Service, and we will use this to identify new ways of measuring our performance that go beyond the incidents we attend to look at how effective we understand the Service and the people integral to its success. Developing metrics that enable us to measure progress on our journey in building an inclusive, fair culture will be a priority, and we will work with and learn from other Services on this.

We will also be clearly accountable to the public by making sure that our communities understand the risks in their area. We will inform communities what we are responsible for delivering, how this will be supported by our partnership arrangements, and what our plans are.

Our aim is to maximise value for money while improving our service. Recently introduced duties on Procurement and Social Partnership will ensure this delivers benefits to the communities we serve.



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

### We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Outcomes of internal and external audit programmes
- Benchmarking against other fire and rescue services
- Audit Wales opinion on financial statements
- The number of complaints and compliments received

### What we have done in 2023-2024

**Prepared and planned for the impact of The Procurement Bill and the Public Procurement & Social Partnership Bill** – to ensure compliance with public procurement regulations to ensure efficiency, transparency, and flexibility.

- Our Procurement team has developed Sustainable Procurement Principles to ensure our work with contractors includes and promotes environmental considerations. They also developed a Sustainable Toolkit that takes procurement leads through a series of questions relating to environmental sustainability, ensuring informed decisions are taken in their procurement of goods and services
- We participated in Welsh Government's consultation of the regulation for the Procurement Bill and members of our Procurement Team are registered for Welsh Government's training for this, due to start in May 2024

**Reviewed and amended procedures following any future legislative changes in Wales** - to ensure we can discharge our duties as a regulatory body.

- We have continued our work to implement the national McCloud Pension Reform Exercise, the data remedy exercise has commenced, and we are prioritising cases, as recommended in legislation
- For the Matthews Pension Remedy, we have sent letters to people who are eligible and those who do not meet the criteria. The legislation was enacted by Welsh Government on 1st February 2024, so we have 18 months to complete this

**Reviewed our disposal procedures** – to ensure our assets, from vehicles to furniture, are managed throughout their lifecycle. Our Procurement Policy and process already promotes consideration of disposal when procuring items but this year we have been reviewing our existing processes for disposal of items:

- We ensure re-usable items such as furniture is kept in storage to be re-used by others upon request
- We have implemented new processes for old uniforms - textiles are recycled where possible and where this is not possible, they will be destroyed and incinerated to produce energy for the National Grid (refuse derived fuel)
- A Waste Stream process document has been developed to advise staff how to correctly dispose of waste or unwanted items, it is due to be published early in the financial year

Other examples of work in this area include:

- Our Information Governance (IG) Team have developed a site security questionnaire which will inform a future IG audit programme
- The website pages for IG have been redesigned and are currently being updated. This will provide an updated Disclosure Log for publication of information requests within the Publications Library. This updated version will make our Freedom of Information requests more accessible to the public.
- Operational Risk Management (ORM) produced a new Accidents and Near Misses reporting process and are currently providing training on it to different areas of the Service
- Research into age-appropriate evaluation tools has been carried out and the Youth Team are drafting ideas for their own evaluation form to be used when engaging with children and young people. This will allow us to identify which practices are most engaging and effective

**What we will do in 2024-2025**

**Explore ways to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of our activities, including prevention activities to ensure they continue to make people safer.**

Develop Community Safety and Partnerships data quality assurance guidance and procedures.

Develop and implement quality assurance processes within our JFC involving inspection and audit of areas including call handling and incident logs. This will ensure the required standard of work and consistency of processes.

**Ensure transparency and accountability by producing accessible, clear information for the public.**

Map out and publish our decision-making groups and processes.

Introduce proactive reporting of information most frequently requested via Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, ensuring transparency and accountability by producing accessible, clear information for the public. It will also contribute to efficiency.

**Assure best value to the public through fair and robust procurement procedures, collaboration, partnership working and with due regard to the Service's Medium Term Financial Strategy.**

Train our Contracting Team on the requirements of new Public Procurement Regulations which will become UK Law in October 2024. This will minimise the risk of challenge from suppliers and help to protect us against any contractual non-compliance.

Collect data in line with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 to capture well-being outcomes included in the procurement processes. The Act provides a framework for improving well-being in Wales through social partnership working, promoting fair work, changes to how public spending in Wales is allocated and the way goods and services are procured through socially responsible public procurement. Discussion with Welsh Government has indicated that this will be required by 2025.

Formulate an action plan for meeting the Commitments in the Welsh Governments' [Code of Practice – Ethical Employment in Supply Chains](#).

## Cyber Security - Protecting our systems and your data

Cyber security protects the devices we all use and the services we access - both online and in the office - from theft or damage, reducing the risk of cyber-attack. It helps to prevent the data we access from being compromised, which could disrupt our work and cause financial loss or reputational damage.

Most cyber breaches are based upon techniques like phishing emails, which we continue to monitor and train people to identify and raise any concerns. We also use many technical security systems to protect our systems including those from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).

Another major cause is flaws in unpatched or out-of-date computer systems. Our programme of desktop patching, server upgrades, network device replacements and system reviews are an important part of our continued focus on delivering a resilient network that meets user needs, from frontline to agile working.

A positive cyber security culture is essential because it's people that make an organisation secure, not just technology and processes. If this is in place, people view security as a collective and collaborative endeavour that supports, and is supported by, their everyday work.





# 2022-2023 Statistics Overview



**34,682** calls received by Joint Fire Control for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service area, including:

**1,052** calls referred to other agencies.

**2,500** calls that did not require emergency response and were dealt with by Joint Fire Control.

**10,413** repeat calls relating to incidents already in progress.



**18,705** incidents attended.



**6,031**  
fires including:

**623** accidental dwelling fires  
**1,228** grass/wildfires  
**2,706** refuse fires

**71.0%** of fires attended were deliberate



**8,746**  
false alarms in response to:

**5,419**  
automatic fire alarms

**3,023**  
calls made with good intent

**304**  
malicious calls



**3,928**  
Special Service calls including:

**848**  
road traffic collisions

**47**  
water rescues

**3,033**  
other emergency incidents\*

Risk reduction activity included:



**1,014**  
school visits



**12,308**  
home safety checks



**655**  
fire safety audits



Number of employees\*\*:  
**1,627**



Percentage of male employees:  
**83%**








Percentage of female employees:  
**17%**

\* Other non-fire incidents requiring attendance of an appliance or officer.

\*\* Employee figures correct on 31st March 2023.

# Strategic Performance Indicators

It is important that we evaluate our performance to ensure that we are as efficient and effective as possible. We monitor a range of indicators across the Service, reporting on which will be developed in the coming year. We also set annual projections against Welsh Government’s Strategic Indicators and monitor our performance against these as an element of our assurance processes. Our preliminary predictions shown below are subject to change, based on full year incident reporting.

	Financial Year 2019-20	Financial Year 2020-21	Financial Year 2021-22	Financial Year 2022-23	Financial Year 2023-24*	5 Year Trend	Projected Financial Year 2024-25
Fires attended	5,482	5,481	5,565	6,031	5,366		5,743
False alarms attended	7,858	8,324	8,367	8,746	9,258		8,660
Road Traffic Collisions attended	995	643	859	848	836		838
Other Special Service Calls attended	2,569	2,275	2,711	3,079	3,137		2,906
Deaths and Injuries arising from all fires	84	49	62	63	36		55
Deaths and Injuries arising from accidental fires	64	42	53	52	30		46
Percentage of Dwelling Fires contained to the room in which they originated	84.20%	82.23%	83.81%	82.65%	84.57%		83.59%

\* Data correct at 26th March 2024 – these are not full year figures and are subject to change.

\*\* Includes modified HFSCs carried out by phone from April 2020.

# Our Budget 2024-2025

Our Service is funded by the 10 unitary authorities we serve, based on the population of each area. In 2024-2025 the budget cost is equivalent to £1.20 per person per week. This is an increase from 2023-2024 budgeted cost of £1.11 per person per week. The main drivers for this increase were inflationary pressures, pension changes and pay awards. We will continue to identify efficiencies but will remain subject to inflationary pressures in all areas of business.

<b>TOTAL BUDGET 2024-2025</b>	<b>£95,840,240</b>
Employees	59,401,610
Pensions	14,267,503
Premises	7,174,457
Supplies and Services	5,845,524
Support	5,305,190
Training	1,834,599
Transport	1,724,590
Contracted Services	1,352,970
Income	-1,066,203

Around two thirds of our budget is assigned to staff and related costs, excluding pensions.

<b>EMPLOYEE BUDGET</b>	<b>£59,401,610</b>
Operational staff	43,953,388
Corporate staff	10,668,165
Control staff	1,593,613
Other staff costs (Includes overtime, travel and other staff related costs.)	3,186,444

## With 47 stations and over 1,600 staff, we are there in an emergency for:

- 10 unitary authorities covering 2,800 sq km with 3.7 sq km of inland water
  - Over 650,000 households and more than 1.5 million people
- Businesses in South Wales, including over 36,000 businesses already in contact with us

**24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year**  
**– costs £1.20 per person per week**

# Welsh Language

We are committed to effectively serving those who choose to communicate via the medium of the Welsh language. In our commitment to support Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 ambition of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, we promote opportunities for bilingualism and development of Welsh language skills for our staff. 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

We publish a “quick read” version of this plan and both versions are available on our website with “Speak the website” audio facility. If you would like this information in another format, 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 reporting on them. For regular updates and invitations to take part in future consultations and surveys, contact us to join our Stakeholder Register.



### Write to us

Service Performance & Communications  
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service  
Forest View Business Park,  
Llantrisant, CF72 8LX



### Website

[www.southwales-fire.gov.uk](http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk)



### Email us

[hys@southwales-fire.gov.uk](mailto:hys@southwales-fire.gov.uk)



### Call us

01443 232000



@SWFireandrescue



@SWFireandrescue



@sw\_fire\_and\_rescue

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





## On-Call Recruitment

Our “Same Skills, different roles” campaign was launched for On-Call month in August 2023. Since then we have seen an increase in enquiries via social media, email, phone, and our website and there has been an increase in applications received for this important role. Following last year’s success we are planning our next campaign for August 2024.

For information on becoming an On-Call Firefighter, visit our [website](#) or scan the QR code below.





Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
De Cymru



South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service  
Forest View Business Park, Llantrisant, CF72 8LX

01443 232000  
[www.southwales-fire.gov.uk](http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk)