



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Strategy | 2025



**COURAGE TO ACT
COMPASSION TO CARE**

Introduction

We have a very important responsibility serving and protecting the communities in South Wales. Over 1.5 million people rely upon us; we must never let them down. This is our strategy for the future development of the service that describes our journey towards our destination expressed in our vision.

Put simply, we seek to be an outstanding Fire and Rescue Service. This strategy outlines how we will achieve this; how we will modernise and develop to address the challenges of today, as well as those well into the future.

Our people are our greatest asset. They are dedicated, professional, and they selflessly serve our communities day and night, whatever the weather, whatever the challenge. To deliver on our mission and to address current and future challenges, we need to work together as a single cohesive team. This strategy recognises the importance of our people and places them at the heart of what we do, as well as being central to shaping our future.

We are proposing changes that will improve the ways in which we live, work, and interact with each other as well as with the public and our partners across South Wales and beyond. This will help us to become outstanding and enhance the service we provide to our communities.

Our vision

Working together as one team to be an outstanding Fire and Rescue Service, protecting South Wales today, ambitiously innovating for tomorrow.

Our mission

To serve our communities, by reducing risk and responding to emergencies.

Our values

Developed in extensive consultation with our people, give us the agreed framework for US to serve and protect OUR communities effectively in South Wales. They are **Compassion, Courage, Respect, Integrity** and **Excellence**.

- We act with **compassion**
- We approach situations with moral and physical **courage**.
- We **respect** each other, our partners and the public we serve
- We act with **integrity**
- We aim for **excellence** in all that we do

This can all be summed up in our motto:

**COURAGE TO ACT,
COMPASSION TO CARE**

Ends: To achieve the vision and deliver on our mission we will achieve each of the following strategic goals, which are supported by detailed plans with timescales and resources required.

- Develop clear governance, policies and procedures
- Harness the advancements in digital technology to deliver a modern, digitally excellent, affordable and future proofed service
- Achieve operational excellence through safe, effective and assertive prevention, protection and response capabilities
- Work together as one team
- Have a people centred approach in all we do
- Develop excellent, empowered and selfless leaders
- Become a learning service, constantly evolving and ambitious
- Pursue a just culture, underpinned by our values, to allow our people to build high performing teams
- Develop excellent communication and engagement approaches with our staff, partners and communities
- Drive sustainability and reduce our environmental impact

Develop clear governance, policies and procedures

We know that clear governance is our foundation for success. It gives us a structure that demonstrates accountability and transparency, gives confidence that we are focused on things that matter, and that we have truly learned the lessons of the past.

- Continue at pace with the Step Forward Programmes for Governance and Policy and Procedures. We seek to have a service wide 'can do' approach that is made possible through policies that identify and manage risk whilst allowing us to unleash our potential.
- Develop an operating model that gives strategic direction and supports excellent operational delivery for all that we need to do as we serve our communities
- Establish a Programme Management Office to support and embed change and improvement, along with enhanced service assurance for operations and corporate services.
- Establish an efficiency programme to provide value for money for the taxpayer and maximise how we use our resources to best effect as we modernise.

Harness the advancements in digital technology to deliver a modern, digitally excellent, affordable and future proofed service

Technology and digital tools and skills are developing at pace, leading to the '4th Industrial Revolution'. In this digital age, it is time for us to place data and digitisation at the heart of our activities. It is time to embark on digital change to provide a modern, effective, better affordable and more responsive service to our communities.

- Build a digital backbone that harnesses advancements in technology, embraces cyber security, uses big data and cloud computing, exploits digital systems for safety and communications
- Develop a Future Fire Think Tank to establish a conceptual approach to the delivery of our service with technology and data informing the way we look ahead with a good understanding of the 'why, what and how' of our mission.
- Develop intelligence and surveillance systems and approaches to be ahead of the changing world, challenges and threats we will face using data, digitisation and technology to protect our communities and our personnel.

Achieve operational excellence through safe, effective and assertive prevention, protection and response capabilities

We want to be outstanding in all that we do, working as one to be safe, protecting our communities, looking ahead and innovating for the future.

With a clear sense of purpose, and learning and education driving our ambition, we will set the highest standards while supporting and empowering our people to be operationally excellent. We will keep focused on looking ahead, keeping pace with change and sharing our progress with others. We will change our culture by moving the service from a blame to a 'Just Culture' to enhance our operational effectiveness. This will support greater personal responsibility and empowerment, whilst encouraging our people to speak up about safety, compliance and performance.

- Develop a strategic level safety system that harnesses the 'Just Culture' to identify and manage risks, provide assurance, maintain compliance and allow lessons to be identified and applied to future activities.
- Understand, mitigate and manage risk to enhance operational effectiveness by drawing on data insights drawn from an enhanced reporting system.

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- Review, at pace, our approach to fatigue, decontamination and risks to life.
 - Collaborate across the service, and with others, to ensure compliance with national thematic reviews and lessons, allowing us to develop local robust plans based on community factors and needs.
 - Review and update policies and procedures to reduce bureaucracy and ensure legal and regulatory compliance in all of our operational activities.
 - Engage and communicate with key groups of people to gather data and insight to work with others to reduce risk for people in our communities through the development of a Community Risk Management Plan.
 - Focus on improvements to Fire Control through a dedicated project, with defined outcomes to enhance moral, stabilise retention, solve terms and conditions inconsistency.

Work together as one – ‘One Team One Mission’

Working together, focused on a shared mission, we will deliver as one team. We will give the best experience for our people by putting respect and compassion at the centre of all decisions. We will inspire forward thinking, build enthusiasm for what is possible, and trust our teams to overcome challenges.

We will invest in our people, so we all feel proud to be a key part of the service, embracing the thought: I know what we do, I care about it, I feel part of it, and I am proud of what we are achieving together.

- Develop a ‘One Team, One Mission’ approach to all we do so our people understand that we all rely on each other to deliver on our important mission to protect our communities.
- Launch, embed and sustain our new mission, vision and values across all that we do and in all key touchpoints with our people through their employee journey.
- Develop an organised programme of corporate staff working out on stations to enhance mutual understanding,
- Embed strategic communication in all that we deliver so colleagues feel informed and engaged and understand the valuable part they play in the success of the service.

Have a People Centred approach in all we do

With a clear sense of purpose, we must restore the highest standards of behaviour and professionalism to the service and empower our people to strive for excellence. How our people feel, think and take action to deliver is crucial to the success of our service, we cannot do anything without their support. Our people must feel supported, and we must build a service about which they are rightly proud.

- Achieve recommendations as detailed in the Fenella Morris KC Independent Culture Review.
- Set high standards, and expectations for positive behaviour to build trust and loyalty. We must all live and work by our values with our leaders setting the example.
- Provide clarity on both behavioural expectations and processes that define ways of working.
- Recognise our people's contributions, dedication, service and successes through local and national awards. Set up clear procedures for citations to be submitted, verified and processed.
- Encourage feedback so that our staff feel heard, and we continue to improve through surveys, focus groups, an annual Personal Review and through confidential reporting mechanisms.
- Provide the representative bodies with opportunities at a variety of levels to represent their members as part of our social partnership approach. (Covered above point)
- Ensure our people feel empowered to deliver a great service for our communities by developing philosophies of leadership and followership suited to a modern fire and rescue service.

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- Promote diversity, culture and inclusion to ensure all our people are completely comfortable in our organisation and that everyone feels part of one truly cohesive team.
 - Support the talent and ambitions of all our people with clear pathways for development and promotion and invest in our people to train and develop for specialist roles and professions.
 - Support our people to be healthy and well through workplace health and safety, putting wellbeing of our people at the heart of the way we work and recognising the balance of supporting people to work in an environment that best suits their needs to do their roles successfully
 - Develop a sustainable approach to agile working, beginning with a clear policy that encourages our people to work together with an understanding and respect for the part we each play.
 - Recognise the part families, friends, retired colleagues and people in our communities play in delivering our core purpose. We will seek to be a much more family-oriented service.
 - Forge stronger bonds and develop a deeper recognition of their support with an enhanced approach to community events and engagement.
 - Establish a new approach to disciplines and grievances by providing early intervention, mediation, support and leadership training to deal with issues as early as possible. Establish a new Professional Standards Unit to deal with discipline and grievance cases.

Develop excellent, empowered leaders

Our commitment to change and operational excellence comes from the passion within our leaders to lead the way and be the best they can. From empowered leaders come strong, high performing teams who make a positive difference for everyone.

- Set clear standards for leadership. Supported by leadership and academic experts, we will establish a leadership, training and personal development academy helping us to harness the leadership potential of our people.
- Identify and nurture talent to give a strong foundation for our future success.
- Introduce an innovative Fire Think Tank to embed a new philosophy of empowered leadership and dedicated followership.
- Provide education and training to our leaders, at every stage of their careers.
- Identify a clear development pathway for our people to become tomorrow's strategic leaders.

Be a learning service, constantly evolving and ambitious

With learning and excellence driving our ambition, we will keep focused on looking ahead and will keep pace with change. We will share our progress with others and learn best practice from them. We will need to be humble so that we can really learn. We will honestly debrief what we do and learn lessons from our mistakes so that we can be better next time. We will strive to explore the latest research and to identify the trends that will affect us in the future. We will use the knowledge we build to adapt, modernise and be the very best we can. We will rekindle belief and confidence in our fire service.

- Review and improve our processes for evaluating, debriefing and learning lessons to allow us to review and reflect and be even better for the future.
- Develop a trial programme of internal recruitment and investment in education to grow personnel for key posts.
- Improve our internal service inspection and assurance systems to include behaviours and culture.

- Develop a system of 'Improvement Advocates' in every team and on stations that support team leaders with the latest safety, operational, compliance and change standards.
- Implement a service wide intelligence function that helps us be prepared for major events, incidents of all kinds and critical infrastructure protection.
- Promote engagement with the latest academic and professional research and information at every level across the Service to ensure that we are at the very cutting edge in our sector.
- Develop how we learn from other organisations by attending conferences, visiting other FRSs, developing short-term exchanges and embedding people into other organisations to humbly learn from others to adapt and change.

Pursue a just culture, underpinned by our values, to allow our people to build high performing teams

It hasn't always been easy, and we haven't always got it right. However, moving forward with integrity we will build a culture that seeks to understand how things went wrong to improve them for the future. We will have accountability within the system we create and respond to instances where we don't meet our new standards with fairness, in a just manner.

- Drive forward with our Step Forward Programme for values, behaviours and standards and embed the work across all areas of the service.
- Move from a blame culture to a 'Just Culture' built on trust and honesty, that encourages our people to feel empowered to report issues, near misses and lessons to allow us to learn from the mistakes we make or to address systemic issues within the organisation.
- Develop a 'FAIR' analysis flowchart system that examine mistakes fairly and through a lens of transparency and improvement.
- Align the learning and development from the leadership academy with the changes to support managers and their teams in adopting the principles of embedding a 'Just culture'.
- Recognise and celebrate success of our people who lead the way in embedding the values and culture we are striving to embed through visible selfless leadership, honours and awards.
- Place a much greater emphasis on the positive aspects of our culture including our proud history and traditions, our symbols, ceremonies and how we engage socially. We must celebrate those who go above and beyond and welcome new people into our organisation with appropriate ceremony. We will also place a greater emphasis on recognising the sacrifices our families make.

Develop excellent communication and engagement approaches with our staff, partners and communities.

Sharing the passion and including everyone on the journey of change needs superb communication that engages, inspires and gives clarity to the part we each play to have the courage to act and compassion to care as we serve our communities.

- Continue at pace with the Step Forward Programmes for Communication and Engagement.
- Build a communication and engagement strategy, built on data and evidence to target when and how to engage with the public and other partners and stakeholders to reduce risk for the public.
- Improve access to digital channels, through personal devices, so that our staff can access information from anywhere at any time.
- Develop a cascade system for traditional transmission of important information, to increase accountability.

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- Enhance public safety and well-being and deliver clear, accessible, and timely information to educate and inform the public, promoting safety and resilience.
 - Ensure the service has the best available digital technology and operational communication equipment, with back-ups, to support our 24/7 response.

Drive sustainability and reduce our environmental impact

We are committed to playing our part in creating a globally responsible Wales, balancing short term needs to safeguard long term environment for future generations. We have a bold ambition to do our best to live in harmony with nature

- Focus on sustainability and harness emerging green technologies to reduce our impact on the environment.
- Respond to climate related emergencies whilst driving down our own environmental impact.
- Work to reduce the impact of climate change by minimising and offsetting our carbon footprint and achieving net zero by 2030 in line with Welsh Public Sector Net Zero: Emissions and Recommendations.



STEP FORWARD

Change and Transformation: Step Forward



STEP FORWARD
COMMUNICATION
& ENGAGEMENT

Communication and Engagement

Develop excellent communication and engagement, with our staff, partners and communities



STEP FORWARD
DIGITAL
TRANSFORMATION

Digital Transformation

Ambitiously transform our use of data and our digital and technology capability in all areas, to deliver a modern, digitally excellent, affordable and future-proofed fire and rescue service.



STEP FORWARD
DIVERSITY, INCLUSION,
COHESION & EQUITY

Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity

To embed a fair, inclusive, and equitable culture within SWFRS by enhancing diversity, fostering staff engagement, and driving measurable progress in workforce representation and equity.



STEP FORWARD
ETHICS, VALUES &
BEHAVIOURS

Ethics, Values and Behaviours

Develop a just culture underpinned by our values and ethics to become an elite team with new ways of working.



STEP FORWARD
GOVERNANCE
& STRATEGY

Governance and Strategy

Develop clear governance to run our service with transparency to serve our communities.



STEP FORWARD
LEADERSHIP

Leadership

Develop excellent, empowered and selfless leaders



STEP FORWARD
POLICIES
& PROCEDURES

Policy and Procedure

Develop coherent policies and procedures that reduce bureaucracy, balance our risks, empower our people and provide value for money for the taxpayer.



STEP FORWARD
A SAFE & POSITIVE
ENVIRONMENT

Safe and Positive Environment

To embed a culture of professional excellence within SWFRS by fostering psychological safety, modernising facilities, strengthening recognition, and ensuring robust support systems.



STEP FORWARD
TALENT
MANAGEMENT

Talent Management

Work together as one team providing excellent talent management, career progression and development through a people centred approach

Communication and Engagement

Aim: Develop excellent communication and engagement, with our staff, partners and communities.

While communication and engagement are intrinsic to all projects, this focussed activity will see two important strands:

- **Involving and engaging** within the Service and also with our communities and stakeholders, mapping out activities and **supporting engagement** across the organisation.
- Secondly, **communicating change** - not only the changes that are delivered but our **aspirations for the future** and the change that we want to make, developing a shared commitment.

Digital Transformation

Aim: Ambitiously transform our use of data and our digital and technology capability in all areas, to deliver a modern, digitally excellent, affordable and future-proofed fire and rescue service.

Recognising the importance of **data, digital and technology capability** in all areas of fire and rescue activity, and how this will **support culture change**, this project will bring together existing and some projects to develop skills and **transform our digital landscape**. It will ensure coordination of activity and ensure the development of skills and capacity in our systems and **use of data to inform our planning**.

Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity

Aim: To embed a fair, inclusive, and equitable culture within SWFRS by enhancing diversity, fostering staff engagement, and driving measurable progress in workforce representation and equity.

This project will deliver on our aspiration for a **fair and equitable Service** by supporting activity across the programme and developing an **evidence base** to demonstrate progress. Workstreams will build on previous DICE activity in developing **staff networks** and **supporting neurodiversity**.

Governance and Strategy

Aim: Develop clear governance to run our service with transparency to serve our communities.

This project will set the structures in place to support change now and **prepare us for future challenges** – as directed by Welsh Government, Commissioners will be making recommendations on a model for future governance. This project will deliver three workstreams:

- Ensuring we **are robust in delivery of statutory functions** – this refers to the statutory functions of the Fire and Rescue Authority, set out in legislation with a review of the National Framework expected.
- Transparency and scrutiny, which will clearly set out our processes by producing accessible information alongside new ways of working with stakeholders to develop these.
- Decisions made and shared is an extension of the first two workstreams, acknowledging the need for openness – this workstream will ensure that **decisions are taken at the right level, and that they are communicated and enacted**.

Leadership

Aim: Develop excellent, empowered and selfless leaders.

This project will be driven by the Senior Leadership Team but will **recognise leaders in all areas and roles across the Service**.

- **Assured leadership standards** via benchmarking and application of relevant Fire Standards, to demonstrate effective leadership of the Service.
- To support effective leadership, a programme to **develop leaders** will ensure the right skillsets. This will include a **forward thinking 'Leadership Academy'**.
- And a workstream that will focus on leadership **setting direction** - setting targets and driving continuous improvement through a clear, shared vision.

Policy and Procedure

Aim; Develop coherent policies and procedures that **reduce bureaucracy, balance our risks, empower our people** and **provide value for money for the tax payer**.

The function of policies and procedures was clear in the Culture Review Report, setting the boundaries for decisions and actions. This project will see a holistic approach taken, addressing systems as well as specific procedures.

- This will start with **effective processes** for development, publication and monitoring of policies and procedures, including consultation mechanisms and monitoring.
- Ensuring **consistent policies and procedures** will address the form and accessibility of documents, looking at potential to **simplify and streamline** while delivering a **clear and comprehensive** document library.
- With significant specific direction and recommendations regarding **handling of misconduct**, ensuring procedures are clear, issues raised are acted upon and all roles are clearly set out will be at the core of this work.
- To ensure all procedures are applied and administered **effectively and fairly**, training and guidance will be developed and rolled out.

Safe and Positive Environment

Aim; To embed a culture of **professional excellence** within SWFRS by fostering psychological safety, modernising facilities, strengthening recognition, and **ensuring robust support systems**.

The overall goal of the Step Forward programme, this project many of the day-to-day aspects of the workplace that are important to us and we should expect – **inclusive facilities** that help us deliver our **best, support** when we need it and the **confidence to ask for that support**, as well as **recognition** of a job well done.

Talent Management

Aim: Work together as one team providing excellent talent management, career progression and development through a people centred approach.

With the **transformation of People Services** already underway, this project takes in the full career journey, building on other projects to embed our values and culture at all points. It will include strands to ensure fair processes in all points throughout career pathways, describing and considering career journeys and how progression can be supported. There will be specific focus on developing:

- On-Call processes and support.
- Apprenticeship Academy for those at the start of their careers.
- Developing our recruitment processes so that we are recognised as an employer of choice, attracting a diverse workforce.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

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

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