COMMISSIONERS FOR FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Papers for the People Committee to be held on:

Wednesday 11 June 2025, 1000hrs

In person at South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, Forest View Business Park, Llantrisant, CF72 8LX

Or

Remotely via MS Teams: Link
https://bit.ly/People-Committee-11-06-2025

Please ensure you join the meeting 15 minutes prior to meeting time

Any issues please contact
01443 232000 and ask for Governance Support

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

    Attendees are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare both orally and in writing any personal and/or prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (Exercise of Functions) (Wales) Directions 2024 and the Local Government Act 2000.

3. Chairperson's Announcements

4. To receive the minutes of;

5.

REPORTS FOR DECISION

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

Signature of Monitoring Officer:

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

**MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY 27 MARCH 2025 AT 1030 HRS
IN MEETING ROOM 08 AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS**

PRESENT:-

COMMISSIONERS:
Chairperson - Mr Vij Randeniya

OFFICERS:
Gabrielle Greathead – Interim Monitoring Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Christian Hadfield – Director of Corporate Support, Christian Landeg-John, Advisor to Commissioners, Scott Morris - Governance Officer, Kate Owen - Secretariat, Assistant Chief Officer Alison Reed – Director of People Services, Lisa Shroll – Head of People Services, Wayne Thomas – Head of Corporate Support.

1.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Chief Fire Officer Fin Monahan, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Brian Thompson – Director of Technical Services Hannah Goodchild – People Services Manager, Kate Havard - Audit Wales, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Dean Loader – Director of Service Delivery, Dominic Mika – Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, Lisa Mullan, Head of Finance, Procurement and Property.

2.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3.   CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairperson's announcements.

4.   MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – 7 FEBRUARY 2025

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 February 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

5.   UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

There were no updates on outstanding actions.

6. **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025/26**

The Director of People Services presented a report setting out a Pay Policy Statement for the 2025/26 financial year, as required by the Localism Bill 2010. The Statement was required to outline the remuneration levels of its Chief Officers, the approach to pay on appointment, change to the level of Chief Officer pay and the Service's general policy approach to all staff.

It was anticipated that there would be sufficient time to publish the Statement bilingually by the statutory deadline of 31 March 2025.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

> 6.1   That the Board of Commissioners approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26.

7. **PRE-RECRUITMENT GOVERNANCE**

The Head of People Services presented a report setting out proposals for pre-recruitment governance, in order to address a lack of transparency in recruitment procedures identified in the culture review report.

The report proposed the introduction of a structured vacancy review process prior to recruitment to all vacancies within the Service. Responsibility for the review process would sit with the recruiting manager in each case, and the proposed changes aimed to increase efficiency, improve resilience, enhance workforce planning and financial/strategic oversight and strengthen line manager accountability. The Chair welcomed the proposals as a means of reducing delays in recruiting to posts.

RESOLVED:

> 7.1   to note the report and the assurances given in relation to progress developing Recruitment and Promotions processes; and
>
> 7.2   to agree the revised recruitment approval process set out in the report, including:-
>
> - The introduction of line manager responsibilities and due diligence into the pre-recruitment process
> - The streamlining of the PeopleXD authorisation process.

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

8.   NFCC COMMISSIONED REPORT – INDEPENDENT CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT PANEL

The Director of People Services presented a report introducing the report of the Independent Challenge and support Panel, established by the National Fire Chiefs Council as part of its work to improve culture and inclusion within Services.

RESOLVED:

8.1   To note the report.

9.   AGILE WORKING FRAMEWORK

The Head of People Services presented a report setting out a status update on the Service's Agile Working project, which was working towards less rigid working practices, increased flexibility and employee satisfaction. The introduction of agile working was a strategic priority for the Service, following the findings of the culture review report. The report set out three proposed phases, and the consultation on the proposals had just been completed. The next step would be the development of an Engagement and Communication Plan to ensure consistency and transparency. It was noted that further work was required with Estates and ICT to ensure that e.g. stations were properly equipped to become remote working locations for staff otherwise not based there. This would form part of the Phase Two development framework, to be completed by the end of September. The Chair noted further:-

- the need to ensure that mechanisms were in place to measure the impact of the policies, once introduced
- the varying expectations and attitudes of employees across various cohorts
- That care was needed to ensure that essential elements of productivity and staff satisfaction that could only be achieved by in-person working were not lost.

RESOLVED:

9.1   To note the report and the assurances given in relation to progress to address the recommendations at paragraphs 108-110 of the culture review report; and

9.2   To note the intention to develop a Future Workplace Strategy.

10.   FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR PEOPLE COMMITTEE 2024/25

The Interim Monitoring Officer introduced the latest iteration of the Committee's Forward plan 2024/25.

RESOLVED:

>   10.1   To note the report.

11.   TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRPERSON DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 OR 2)

No such business was brought forward.

12.   ITEMS TO REPORT BACK TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The report considered at Minute 6 – Pay Policy Statement 2025/26 - requires the approval of the Board of Commissioners.

13.   CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair made the following requests:

a)   That where a Director is unable to attend a Committee meeting, an appropriate deputy be nominated to attend in their place, on the basis that Directors with cross-cutting responsibilities should be represented irrespective of whether they were presenting a particular report.

b)   That where the subject of a report was identified as an area of risk in the Strategic Risk Register, the risk implications are highlighted to Commissioners so that the impact of management and mitigation measures could be scrutinised.

c)   That at the close of each committee meeting there is an informal agenda item providing an opportunity for meeting participants to reflect on the effectiveness of the meeting.

UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

No Outstanding Actions

Minute No	Item	Action	Leading Officer	Current Status:

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE   AGENDA ITEM NO 6
                                                                        11 JUNE 2025

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY MONITORING OFFICER

REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION

REPORT APPROVED BY THE DEPUTY MONITORING OFFICER
REPORT PRESENTED BY DEPUTY MONITORING OFFICER, WAYNE THOMAS

SUMMARY
The purpose of the report is to recommend and seek Commissioners approval of the People Committee's terms of reference.

RECOMMENDATION
That the Commissioners note and approve the terms of reference for the People Committee.

---

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Section 37 of the Local Government Act 2000 requires South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority ("the Authority") to keep up to date and publish its Constitution. The Constitution sets out how the Authority works and how it makes decisions. It sets out the governance of the Authority and highlights the way in which the Authority makes decisions and carries out its functions.

1.2 The Constitution was last updated and approved by the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service at the Board of Commissioners meeting held on 25th October 2024.

1.3 Section 6 of the Constitution outlines how the Commissioners will appoint regulatory committees to discharge functions set out in Section 11 of the document, which outlines budget and policy framework procedure rules.

1.4   The People Committee is appointed to discharge the functions described in Section 11 of the Constitution and in accordance with sections 81-87 of The Measure. The Committee will ultimately enable the Commissioners to ensure that the Service has a well-equipped, skilled and motivated workforce that is able to work safely and whose composition reflects the diverse communities it serves.

2. ISSUE

2.1   Following the implementation of the legislation The South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (Exercise of Functions) (Wales) Directions 2024 in February, the functions of the Fire and Rescue Authority have been transferred to the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

2.2   The required changes and amendments have been incorporated into the terms and reference of the People Committee, attached at Appendix 1, to reflect the new governance arrangements and delegation of powers/responsibilities following the intervention protocols being enacted by Welsh Government.

2.3   The Committee's terms of reference outline the committee's purpose and the general authority of the committee.

2.4   The Committee will provide a general annual report to the Board of Commissioners.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1   **Community and Environment**

3.1.1   Well-Being Of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – Ensuring that the appropriate governance arrangements are in place is consistent with the sustainability duty under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the well-being goals of a more equal Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

3.2   **Regulatory, Strategy and Policy**

3.2.1   Legal - Section 37 of the Local Government Act 2000 requires the Authority to keep up to date and publish its Constitution. The Constitution outlines how the Commissioners will appoint regulatory committees, including the People Committee, to discharge functions set out within the document.

3.2.2 Governance & Audit - The People Committee is integral to the Service's governance arrangements. The Committee will enable the Commissioners to gain assurance in policy and strategy development.

.
3.3 **Resources, Assets and Delivery**

3.3.1 None

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Authority is required to have and keep up to date terms of reference for its regulatory committees.

4.2 The terms of reference for the People Committee have been updated following the Welsh Government legislation implemented on 5th February 2024 which indicates that the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority functions must only be exercised by the Commissioners.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 That the Commissioners note and approve the terms of reference for the People Committee.

Contact Officer:	Wayne Thomas Deputy Monitoring Officer	
Background Papers	**Date**	**Source / Contact**
None		

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Terms of Reference – People Committee

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

1.   Purpose of Committee

1.1   The Committee demonstrates the Authority's commitment to ensuring that the Service has a well-equipped, skilled and motivated workforce that is able to work safely and whose composition reflects the diverse communities it serves.

2.   General Authority of the Committee

2.1   The Committee is authorised by the Commissioners for South Wales Fire & Rescue Service to:

2.1.1 Monitor staff work/ life balance, working conditions and well-being, including the monitoring of absence.

2.1.2 Monitor the implementation and operation by Service of Human Resources and Equality frameworks, policies and procedures, and ensure that action is taken where appropriate.

2.1.3 Monitor the implementation and operation of the training and development function of the Service.

2.1.4 To become familiar with the relevant Pension arrangements and requirements for the Service and to review scrutinise and challenge where necessary the arrangements the Service has in place to ensure Pension Scheme compliance.

2.1.5 To become familiar with the pay, remuneration and terms and conditions of employment utilised by the Service and to consider and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners on the statutory content of the Pay Policy Statement each year.

2.1.6 Set up working groups or task and finish groups to report to the Committee on specific matters within these terms of reference.

3.   Annual Report

3.1   The Committee will provide a general annual report to the Board of Commissioners.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE AGENDA ITEM NO 7
11 JUNE 2025

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES

STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN UPDATE

THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION

REPORT APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES
REPORT PRESENTED BY DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, COHESION AND
EQUITY BUSINESS PARTNER, MATTHEW COLLINS

SUMMARY
This report provides an overview of the updates that have been made to the Service's current Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026 to ensure it remains relevant for the Service today

RECCOMENDATIONS
That Commissioners approve the publication of the updated Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026

---

1. **BACKGROUND**

1.1 As a public sector organisation in Wales, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service must create and publish equality objectives in the form of a 'Strategic Equality Plan', required via the Public Sector Equality Duty, under the Equality Act 2010. The Service reports on its progress against the plan each year through the publication of annual reviews.

1.2 The Service's current Strategic Equality Plan is running 2023-2026. This Plan has outdated information contained within such as legacy Vision, Mission and Values and information regarding the South Wales Fire Authority.

1.3 It has been identified that our current Plan needs to be updated to reflect the Service as it is today. Therefore, this paper presents the updated Strategic Equality Plan for approval, so that the context within the report remains accurate, whilst still working towards the equality objectives contained within which the Service is making significant progress against (as outlined in 2.2)

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

2.1 The People Committee members are asked to approve the following changes to the Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026:

   2.1.1 Creation and inclusion of a new foreword by the Chief Fire Officer to update our communities on the CFO's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. This foreword has been approved for use by the CFO.

   2.1.2 The replacement of information regarding the South Wales Fire Authority with information about the role of the Commissioners.

   2.1.3 The new Vision, Mission and Values have a page within the updated Strategic Equality Plan.

   2.1.4 Information regarding how our equality objectives align with the recommendations from the Morris Report to ensure a coherent approach to inclusive actions taken has been added to the Plan.

   2.1.5 The staff demographic information has been updated to reflect the Service as of 31st March 2025. Given the improvements made in our data collection since initial publication of the Strategic Equality Plan, this dataset is a more accurate representation of our workforce.

   2.1.6 Our equality objectives outlined within the Plan remain the same until the end of this financial year to ensure we remain on track towards achievement. Work will begin on a new Strategic Equality Plan shortly, which will then be published on the 1st April 2026 running from 2026 to 2030.

2.2 The People Committee members note the following updates regarding progress against the 6 Strategic Equality Plan objectives.

2.2.1   Through the re-launch of the Service's Inclusive Workforce Group, the increase in capacity in the Neurodiversity Partnership Network, and the creation of a DICE Champion Network, the Service has ensured the involvement and perspectives of underrepresented groups. The changes in governance of SWFRS, such as the introduction of the Culture and Connections Board and the Independent Advisory Group, ensure involvement at a Strategic level.

2.2.2   SWFRS has made progress against the second of its equality objectives by advancing the accessibility of its sites through refurbishments. Changes have been made to the Service's Equality Impact Assessment process to enable us to meet the demands and standards of being an inclusive employer.

2.2.3   The Service has introduced a 'Taking Care of Behaviours' training package and is creating further training to embed a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion across SWFRS.

2.2.4   The Service has made progress against its fourth equality objective by introducing EDI induction training once individuals have been promoted. This ensures that all lead by example in the Service. The publication of the Service's Culture Statement further evidences significant progress for the championing of EDI across SWFRS.

2.2.5   By improving how it captures the diversity of its workforce, and those in the recruitment process, the Service has made progress in the way it reports on diversity, with 2025 seeing an average of 10% increase in the demographic information it holds. Further improvements regarding interview panel training and tailored recruitment activity to underrepresented groups has continued to mark achievement against the fifth objective.

2.2.6   Finally, updates to key procedures have ensured the Service remains on track to achieve its sixth objective. The introduction of an agile working procedure, the improvement of maternity leave provision and the introduction of a menopause procedure and risk assessment are examples of this.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 **Community and Environment**

    3.1.1 The Service ensures use of inclusive language within all documentation both internally and externally. This document evidences our ambitions under Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, the Welsh Language, Well-Being of Future Generations Act and the Socio-Economic Duty.

    3.1.2 The Service understands the importance of equality impact assessments and as such an impact assessment on the Strategic Equality Plan has been completed. The Strategic Equality Plan will be translated and published in the Welsh Language.

    3.1.3 The Service understand importance of consultation and the Strategic Equality Plan has been through this process.

3.2 **Regulatory, Strategy and Policy**

    3.2.1 The Service understands the legal obligations it holds to adhere to all relevant Acts and Legislation, including the Equality Act 2010. The recommendations in this report seek to meet our duties under this Act.

    3.2.2 The Service is striving to complete as many Morris Review recommendations as possible in a timely and consistent manner. As these recommendations have been aligned to the Strategic Equality Plan objectives, work undertaken to meet the recommendations also mark progress against the DICE agenda.

3.3 **Resources, Assets and Delivery**

    3.3.1 The Service recognises the strain on the People Services department to deliver consistent high-end services in relation to the ongoing and ever evolving DICE agenda.

    3.3.2 The Service recognises that meeting our Strategic Equality objectives may require capital investment.

    3.3.3 The Service recognises the impact on all departments to achieve the objectives outlined within the Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026. People Services will support these departments in making inclusive changes.

4. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Service's Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026 has been updated to reflect the changes that have occurred since its initial publication.

4.2 To continue to meet its legislative requirements, People Services should publish this version to ensure the public have confidence that our plans are aligned, and we remain active in making inclusive improvements.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Commissioners approve the publication of the updated Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026.

Contact Officer:	Matthew Collins DICE Business Partner OR Hannah Goodchild People Services Manager Culture and Engagement

Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
None*		

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Strategic Equality Plan

2023-2026

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Fin Monahan OBE, DFC, PhD
Chief Fire Officer

Welcome to South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's Strategic Equality Plan 2023–2026. This plan sets out our equality objectives for the next three years and reaffirms our long-term commitment to becoming a truly inclusive, fair, and forward-thinking organisation. These objectives align closely with our broader strategies, including the 'Strategic Implementation Plan 2025-2040', ensuring that equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are embedded in all aspects of our work—from how we serve our communities to how we support and develop our people.

We know that the communities we serve across South Wales are vibrant and diverse, and our Service must reflect and respond to this in how we operate. We recognise that inclusivity is not just about representation, but also about building a culture where everyone feels heard, respected, and valued. Such a culture will help build trust and cohesion across our Service, which will allow us to realise the vision set out in our strategy—to become a truly outstanding Fire and Rescue Service, protecting the 1.6 million people in South Wales.

Over the past few years, we've taken important steps forward, listening more deeply to our people and learning from their lived experiences. The independent Culture Review helped shine a light on both our strengths and the challenges we must still overcome. It highlighted the pride our staff take in their work, but also identified clear areas for change, including leadership behaviours, internal communication, and cultural consistency across the organisation.

Diversity of thought, experience, knowledge and skill is a catalyst for transformation and can only be achieved through diversity of people. This Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026 builds on this foundational belief, and the progress already underway in the service - setting out tangible, achievable actions that will support a more inclusive workplace, more accessible services, and stronger engagement with our communities. Our commitment is not only to meet our statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, but to lead by example as a public service.

We understand that change takes time, but through consistent focus, open dialogue and collective accountability, we aim to foster a Service culture that is not only safer but fairer. For everyone.

WHO WE ARE

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service serves around 1.5 million people across 10 unitary authorities within the South Wales region. We are the one of the largest Fire and Rescue Service's in the UK covering 1,100 square miles, over 650,000 households and are in contact with over 36,000 business premises.

The Service is now governed by 4, Welsh Government appointed, Commissioners who have been charged with ensuring the full and sustainable implementation of recommendations arising from the Morris Review, as well as acting on recommendations of the Welsh Government's Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor. Our Commissioners have replaced the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and will have full powers to restructure and reform Service management and instil a positive, non-discriminatory culture.
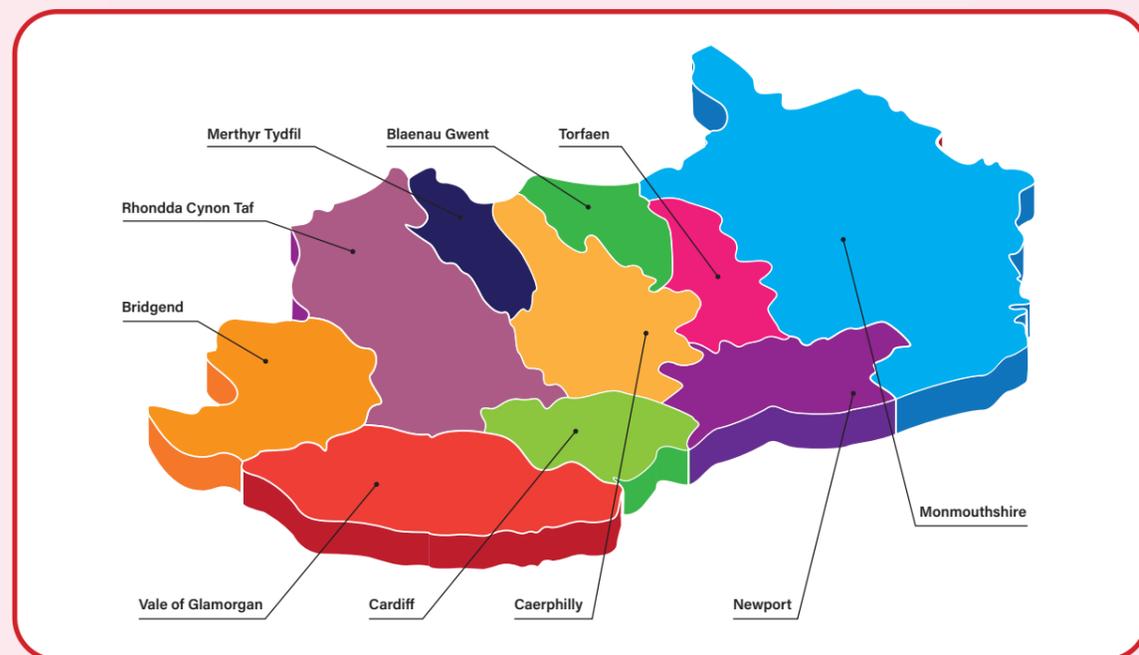
The Service serves a diverse population within Wales and responds to over 17,000 emergency calls each year. In addition to our emergency response, we focus heavily on the early intervention, education and protection of our wider communities, which also includes a specific focus on supporting our under-represented groups who may be at a higher risk of socio-economic inequality due to multiple disadvantages.

As a Service we recognise the benefits and excellence that a diverse workforce brings. We also recognise how a diverse workforce that reflects our communities can bring positive results for Service Delivery. Currently we are aware that we have more to do in relation to increasing the diversity of our workforce so that we are more representative of our South Wales communities (Please see staff and community data in Appendix 1 and 2 of this document). We continuously aim to reduce the barriers that exist in us creating a more diverse workforce and this plan will help us achieve more equity in relation to recruitment, training, leadership and people processes to ensure that we are seen as an Employer of Choice for all.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service provides cover 24 hours a day over 365 days of the year. We are a dedicated, professional, and caring Service of over 1,650* staff working as: Wholetime Firefighters (765), On-Call Firefighters (433), Joint Fire Control (38), Corporate staff (328), Volunteers (20) and Auxiliary Firefighters (89).

*Approx as of 31st March 2025

OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

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**

OUR LEGAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service has a desire to put EDI at the heart of everything we do, going beyond meeting our statutory duties. This strategy aims to deliver progress against both our legal and ethical responsibilities. Here we outline our approach to our duties and responsibilities as well as how we intend to report on them.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 applies to all employers and outlines a series of duties seeking to protect communities, stakeholders, and employees against direct and indirect discrimination.

The Act promotes equality for the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Under this Act we aim to work towards the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This includes:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

As a Service we also incorporate Welsh specific requirements as part of this duty with a focus on increasing inclusion and equity for socio-economically disadvantaged groups (Socio-Economic Duty). In addition to this we also strive to incorporate the additional duties set out in The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act Wales 2016, such as operating as a bilingual Service to promote a Thriving Welsh Language. This aims to create a more sustainable Wales of the future.

Reporting

As a public body in Wales, we are required to adhere to the UK specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 which include:

- Providing published information on an annual basis which demonstrates our compliance with our equality duties.
- Preparing and publishing our equality objectives which aim to meet the general equality duties.
- Ensuring all objectives are specific, measurable and are published in a way that is accessible to all.

All EDI reports and information relating to activities and objectives will be published on our internal and **external websites**.

STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

This section contains the new equality objectives we have set out until 2026. The objectives have been split in to three key areas:

'Our Services and Infrastructure'

'Our Culture'

'Our People'.

Each objective shows what we will do and how we will know we have achieved the actions that we have set out.

This plan will be delivered across the Service to ensure that our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded into everything we do.

The equality objectives have been mapped to recommendations from our independent culture review to ensure that we have a coherent strategy that aligned to all our inclusivity targets.

OUR SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Objective 1: Ensure under-represented groups are involved and at the forefront of all design and delivery for services, ensuring equity of access for all.

We will do this through:

- Ensuring new ways of working to improve service delivery.
- Building relationships with external groups seeking input as to how we can better serve them.
- Working with Local Authorities, Charities, Health Boards and other organisations to combine resources to reduce 'consultation fatigue'.
- Asking our communities for feedback on what and how we are doing. Using data to ensure we access all groups by taking our services to them.
- Communicating and engaging with those we serve to let them know what we are doing and why.
- Providing robust Integrated Assessment processes whereby all actions are assessed to ensure they are fit for all.
- Collecting and analysing data to ensure we are inclusive across all groups.
- Linking our communities, stakeholders and employees' feedback and thoughts throughout Senior Management Team discussions.

We will know we have done this when:

- Integrated Assessments are completed across the Service and returned for publishing.
- Senior Management decisions consistently include equality considerations.
- Data from events and consultations portray feedback from partners and communities.
- Results of our engagement processes are shared within our strategic reviews.
- Our collaboration register continues to grow and advance how we manage our services.
- Our community and partner feedback portrays our services are fit for purpose for all members of the community.

OUR SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Objective 2: Align our Service's infrastructure to enable us to meet the demands of being a world class employer

We will do this through:

- Collaborating with others to share learning and resources.
- Identifying and embedding creative solutions and technology that delivers a 21st Century Fire and Rescue service that focuses on inclusion and equity.
- Ensuring our employees have the relevant training and resources to support them in their engagement with diverse Welsh businesses, stakeholders, and communities.
- Continuing our capital development programme in creating accessible, inclusive workplaces and facilities.
- Ensuring our suppliers also meet our values and commitment to EDI, the real living wage and modern slavery.
- Continuing to promote and embed Welsh language both internally and externally to the Service.
- Providing robust Integrated Assessment processes whereby our infrastructure is assessed to ensure it is fit for all.

We will know we have done this when:

- We adopt best practice opportunities that provide equity and inclusion.
- Feedback from community groups and key stakeholders indicates that our services are fit for all (consultation and collaboration).
- Training data to support engagement and work-based activities shows an increase in completion rates.
- Our new capital development initiatives show improvements which create accessible inclusive workplaces of a modern-day Fire and Rescue Service.
- Suppliers provide their code of conduct in relation to EDI and an Integrated Assessment which showcases how their services meet our values and EDI objectives.
- We receive Welsh Government feedback on the use of Welsh language within the Service and training data linked to the upskilling of Welsh language with internal employees.

OUR CULTURE

Objective 3: Embed a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion across SWFRS

We will do this through:

- Maintaining ongoing dialogue around EDI.
- Exploring ways to promote EDI into the future. Enforcing a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, prejudice, harassment, and bullying.
- Challenging behaviours and speech that do not align with either our Service's expected standards of behaviour and values or those of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Leadership Framework.
- Continuously review policies and procedures to promote a safe, equitable and inclusive culture where colleagues feel they can be themselves at work and where all employees feel they have a voice.
- Maintaining networks that champion EDI across the Service. Focusing on best practice advised by the NFCC EDI Network.

We will know we have done this when:

- Our employee interactions demonstrate increased engagement and positive feedback e.g., through our Investors In People (IIP) survey, Shout Forum etc.
- All policies and procedures are forward thinking, whilst adopting best practice, and have an accompanying Integrated Assessment.
- Feedback from internal networks shows policies and procedures are working for all.
- Our networks are proactive in ensuring EDI is at the forefront of all employee considerations, acting as visible champions, challenging non-inclusive behaviour and facilitating important conversations.
- We continue to implement guidance received from the NFCC EDI Network.

OUR CULTURE

Objective 4: Ensuring all lead by example, role modelling and championing EDI across SWFRS

We will do this through:

- Embedding the NFCC Leadership Framework.
- Ensuring the Senior Management Team are empowered as diversity champions and EDI change agents.
- Ensuring senior leaders, managers and champions are highly visible in their commitment to EDI.
- Defining and establishing leadership accountability for EDI at all leadership levels.
- Embedding EDI within our training and leadership development programmes, enhancing leadership capabilities for all aspects of EDI.
- Providing all leaders with the skills and resources to generate 'upstander culture' across the Service, thereby limiting 'bystander' behaviour.

We will know we have done this when:

- All Senior Management Team members have received comprehensive training on the importance of EDI as part of strategic best practice.
- There is increased visible leadership around EDI issues where senior leaders are clear advocates and champions for all protected characteristics and under-represented groups e.g., through the challenging of behaviours and mindsets, putting EDI on the Board agenda for decision-making, attendance at EDI events.
- Data and feedback across the Service reflects a significant shift in behaviours and attitudes in relation to 'bystander' behaviour (exit interview, cultural surveys, disciplinaries etc.)

OUR PEOPLE

Objective 5: Increase the diversity of our workforce at all levels across the Service

We will do this through:

- Championing SWFRS as a truly inclusive employer of choice, embedding EDI in all our activities when promoting careers within SWFRS.
- Showcasing the varied support structures and benefits the Service can provide to a diverse workforce at all levels within the Service.
- Removing barriers (real and perceived) for recruitment and promotion into all Service roles through the effective design of attraction, selection and retention processes and activities, supported by a robust Integrated Assessment.
- Designing inclusive communications, media and attraction campaigns which build on developing engagement within under-represented groups. This will include the provision of inclusive and regular positive action events which promote equity of opportunity.
- Ensuring fair and transparent selection and assessment activities for all levels across the Service through the provision of effective recruitment, unconscious bias and EDI training.
- Supporting individuals from protected characteristic groups to have equity in opportunities for promotion to the next level e.g., coaching and mentoring etc.

We will know we have done this when:

- Our communications and recruitment/selection documentation are inclusive as per feedback from our communities.
- Returns on Integrated Assessments for all attraction, selection and assessment processes are increased.
- Recruitment applications show an increase in diversity at all levels across the Service.
- Recruitment, unconscious bias, and EDI training statistics shows that all employees conducting recruitment, selection and assessment activities have received relevant training.
- Data planning shows an increase in diverse interview panels.
- Workforce data shows an increase in under-represented groups across all levels of the Service.
- Statistics show an increase in coaching and mentoring partnerships for those from a protected characteristic.

OUR PEOPLE

Objective 6: Ensure all staff are supported with the right policies, tools, and processes to ensure equity within the workplace

We will do this through:

- Creating, embedding, and supporting all individuals with appropriate policies and procedures that have undergone Integrated Assessments.
- Collaborating with internal and external subject matter experts to ensure best practice when creating and embedding any activities that may impact a protected characteristic or under-represented group.
- Ensuring reasonable adjustment requests are assessed in line with Service procedures with the focus on the individual.
- Ensuring our Neurodiversity plan and support structures are in place and promoted across the Service.
- Embedding staff networks within the Service with a focus on equity, inclusivity, and wellbeing e.g., Inclusive Workforce Group, EDI champions and Wellbeing champions etc.
- Ensuring all individuals are provided with a comprehensive learning package around EDI issues.
- Ensuring all employees have a regular Personal Review to focus on their wellbeing, workplace experiences and performance across the year.
- Ensuring protected characteristics have specific action plans to ensure their experiences in the workplace are equitable and inclusive.

We will know we have done this when:

- We have received positive feedback from all groups within the Service around the inclusiveness of our policies.
- In-house networks show an increase in engagement and completion of action plans.
- Data from Neurodiversity Assessments and Work with Me Passports show an increase in reasonable adjustment requests.
- Training records for EDI show an increase in completion rates.
- Completion rates of the Personal Review process show an increase year on year.
- SWFRS have action plans published for specific protected characteristics e.g., Gender equality, Anti-Racist Action Plan.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

This document will be published on our website and reported on annually to assess progress.

This Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026 has been a result of consultation with external partners, our internal Inclusive Workforce Group, Employee Unions, and our internal colleagues.

We will continuously review our objectives to ensure they are fit for purpose and reflect the needs and requirements of our diverse communities and workforce.

As a public service we are proud to serve our diverse communities in Wales and we encourage you to let us know how we can continue meeting your needs.

If you would like to engage with us around any aspect of this report or wish to receive this information in an alternative format or language, please contact us at:

inclusion@southwales-fire.gov.uk

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead,
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,
Forest View Business Park, Llantrisant, CF72 8LX

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

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Staff Demographic

Appendix 2: Community Demographic

Community data is taken from the Office for National Statistics Wales: Census 2021.

APPENDIX 1

STAFF DEMOGRAPHIC

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service has over 1,650 employees. The data contained within Appendix 1 is specific to the number of individual employees within the Service (i.e. focuses on Service headcount as opposed to contracts), therefore within additional Service publications the data may appear differently or disproportionate when reviewing specific organisational or Service groups. All categories within the dataset are voluntarily provided except for 'Age' and 'Gender Identity'. This means that we may not hold as much equality information about our staff as we would like to. The way we gather and capture this information may change over time as we look to improve our internal processes. The following data has been compiled to provide a snapshot of the Service as it stands at 31st March 2025 and will be used as a baseline to measure against in the future reporting of this Strategic Equality Plan.

Age

Age Range		
< 20	17	1%
20-25	168	10%
26-35	426	25%
36-45	499	30%
46-50	431	26%
56-60	132	8%
<66	15	<1%
Total	**1,688**	

Ethnic Origin

Ethnic Origin		
Asian	6	<0.5%
Black Caribbean, African	3	<0.5%
Mixed or Multiple Groups	14	<1%
White	399	24%
Ethnic Group not listed	14	<1%
Prefer not to say	38	2%
Undisclosed	1,203	72%
Total	**1,677**	

Sex

Sex		
Female	319	81%
Male	1,358	19%
Total	**1,677**	

Disability

Disability		
Yes	37	5%
No	919	55%
Prefer not to say	16	<1%
Undisclosed	705	42%
Total	**1,691**	

Religion/Belief

Religion		
Buddhism	3	<0.5%
Christianity (All denominations)	232	14%
Hinduism	0	0%
Judaism	0	0%
Islam	2	<0.5%
Sikhism	1	<0.5%
No Religion or Belief	351	21%
Prefer not to say	469	28%
Undisclosed	595	35%
Total	**1,653**	

Welsh Language

Welsh Language Skills		
Level 0	626	37.01%
Level 1	94	5.5%
Level 2	42	2.48%
Level 3	28	1.65%
Level 4	18	1.06%
Level 5	31	1.83%
Undisclosed	852	50.38%
Total	**1,691**	

Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation		
Bisexual	6	<0.5%
Homosexual (Gay / Lesbian)	11	<0.5%
Heterosexual (Straight)	675	40%
Sexual Orientation not listed	0	0%
Prefer not to say	415	25%
Undisclosed	570	34%
Total	**1,677**	

Gender Identity

Gender		
Same as Birth	1,072	64%
Different from Birth	2	<0.5%
Prefer not to say	9	0.5%
Undisclosed	594	35%
Total	**1,691**	

Welsh Speaking

Welsh Speaking Skills		
Level 0	204	12.06%
Level 1	42	2.48%
Level 2	16	0.9%
Level 3	10	0.6%
Level 4	6	0.35%
Level 5	9	0.53%
Undisclosed	1,404	83.02%
Total	**1,691**	

APPENDIX 2

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC*

Age

Age Range		
17 and under	314,348	20.6%
18-24	135,737	8.9%
25-34	204,948	13.4%
35-44	188,522	12.4%
45-54	195,811	12.8%
55-64	196,025	12.9%
65-74	158,069	10.4%
75+	130,445	8.6%
Total	**1,523,905**	**100%**

Gender Identity**

Gender		
Different from sex registered at birth	5,570	0.4%
Same as sex registered at birth	1,165,636	93.7%
Not answered	72,972	5.9%
Total	**1,244,178**	**100%**

Sex

Sex		
Female	778,892	51.1%
Male	745,023	48.9%
Total	**1,523,905**	**100%**

Ethnic Origin

Ethnicity		
Asian, Asian British, Asian Welsh	61,105	4%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	20,630	1.4%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	31,050	2%
Other ethnic group	17,953	1.2%
White	1,393,179	91.4%
Total	**1,523,905**	**100%**

Religion

Religion		
Buddhist	4,682	0.3%
Christian	606,240	39.8%
Hindu	8,360	0.5%
Jewish	1,225	0.1%
Muslim	50,278	3.3%
No Religion	752,916	49.4%
Not answered	89,719	5.9%
Other religion	7,496	0.5%
Sikh	2,989	0.2%
Total	**1,523,905**	**100%**

Sexual Orientation**

Sexual Orientation		
All other sexual orientations	3,630	0.3%
Bisexual	16,663	1.3%
Gay or Lesbian	20,746	1.7%
Did not answer	86,924	7%
Straight or Heterosexual	1,116,211	89.7%
Total	**1,244,178**	**100%**

Disability

Disability		
Limited a little	170,220	11.2%
Limited a lot	164,277	10.8%
Not disabled	1,189,408	78.1%
Total	**1,523,905**	

Welsh Language Skills

Welsh Language Skills		
Some Welsh Language Skills	228,543	15%
Does not apply	46,587	3.1%
No Welsh Language Skills	1,248,77	81.9%
Total	**1,523,901**	**100%**

Welsh Speaking

Welsh Speaking		
Can speak Welsh	152,850	10%
Cannot speak Welsh	1,324,468	86.9%
Does not apply	46,587	3.1%
Total	**1,523,905**	**100%**

*Community data is taken from the Office for National Statistics Wales: Census 2021.

**This dataset provides Census 2021 estimates that classify usual residents aged 16 years and over in England and Wales by gender identity. The estimates are as at Census Day, 21 March 2021.

Main Language

Main Language		
African Language	2,303	0.2%
Arabic	6,106	0.4%
Caribbean Creole	6	0%
Does not apply	46,587	3.1%
East Asian Language	6,230	0.4%
English or Welsh in Wales	1,419,783	93.2%
French	941	0.1%
North / South American	3	0%
Oceanic / Australian	13	0%
Other European	20,513	1.3%
Other Language	146	0%
Other UK	71	0%
Portugese	2,173	0.1%
Russian	740	0%
Sign Language	613	0%
South Asian Language	11,665	0.8%
Spanish	1,943	0.1%
Turkish	1,163	0.1%
West or Central Asian Language	2,905	0.2%
Total	**1,523,904**	**100%**

Marital and Civil Partnership Status

Marital and Civil Partnership Status		
Divorced / Formerly in a civil partnership now legally dissolved	129,124	7.7%
Does not apply	300,366	18.4%
In a registered civil partnership	2,678	0.2%
Married	583,808	34.7%
Never married and never registered a civil partnership	522,979	32%
Separated	27,676	1.7%
Widowed / Surviving partner from civil partnership	90,437	5.3%
Total	**1,657,068**	**100%**

Household Deprivation

Household Deprivation		
Household is deprived in four dimensions	1,419	0.2%
Household is deprived in one dimension	233,909	32.9%
Household is deprived in three dimensions	34,521	4.9%
Household is deprived in two dimensions	115,595	16.3%
Household is not deprived in any dimension	324,820	45.7%
Total	**710,264**	**100%**

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

@SWFireandrescue   @SWFireandrescue   @sw_fire_and_rescue

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE   AGENDA ITEM NO 8
                                                              11 JUNE 2025

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES

ANNUAL REVIEW FOR RECRUITMENT 2024/2025

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES, ALISON REED
REPORT PRESENTED BY PEOPLE SERVICES MANAGER, HANNAH GOODCHILD

SUMMARY
This report provides an overview of the activity of the Service's recruitment function within 2024/2025. This includes attraction, engagement and recruitment and selection activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS
That Commissioners note the content of the report.

---

1. BACKGROUND

1.1.   The following report provides an update on the Service's recruitment activities for 2024/25. This year has seen significant changes of the Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Team make up which has required fast and deliverable attraction and recruitment of both fixed term and permanent staff.

1.2   November 2024 saw the appointment into role of the new permanent Chief Fire Officer. The recruitment process was managed by Gatenby Sanderson, but there were also internal activities such as a Stakeholder Panel that contributed to the process.

1.3   In addition to the above we have onboarded a Head of Communication and Engagement to improve communication methods and levels across the service. Two permanent Assistant Chief Fire Officers have also been appointed along with a permanent Area Manager that will offer Operational stability.

1.4 2024 saw significant changes to the People Services Directorate as the Service adopted a Business Partnering (BP) model, implementing a team of specialist Business Partners, one of these being a Recruitment and Retention BP.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

2.1 Recruitment Practice Updates

During 2024/25, the Service has continued to move with the recruitment market and best practice and has introduced a number of key and new working practices. This has included:

- The introduction of psychometric tests for some senior level recruitment processes.

- Introduction of LinkedIn to make job opportunities more visible and to give the opportunity to reach out to those who are 'available for work' and that meet the criteria of the person specification.

- A refresh of recruitment adverts, job descriptions and person specifications into one Applicant Information Pack, (to also consider accessibility needs).

- Shortlisting documentation to try and increase the number of applicants that pass through the shortlisting process.

- The introduction of an administration pool to reduce the amount of recruitment and resourcing required and to have candidates readily available that have passed a recruitment process for corporate administrative roles.

- A change to our Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) provider and using one that offers all pre-employment checks including Right to Work and References. This will introduce efficiencies by reducing time in terms of processing and ensure documentation is accurate and all in one place.

- A project to review our Onboarding strategy and the 'experience' of new employees.

2.2　**Outreach Work**

2.2.1　Work has taken place for outreach during this year which has included:

- Attending engagement events in Butetown.
- Attendance at local Iftar event at Cardiff Castle with future scope to develop cadet involvement at annual Iftar.
- Careers conversations with students from Willows High School, which has a large black and minority ethnic population.
- Scoping recruitment websites that will offer the best reach and have the greatest traction to increase our diversity.
- Ongoing collaboration with the Media Department to diversify attraction methods, embracing new age of technology and scope around social media platforms such as TikTok.
- Initial conversations commenced with Legal team looking into options to support the DICE agenda , pushing boundaries within attraction and recruitment.

2.2.2 Overall External Engagement Statistics

- 12 work out with the watch (WOWTW) events hosted, including one female only session.

- 38 events attended / hosted varying from school talks, Interview guidance and techniques, Career Fairs, Large scale events such as 999 day and bespoke events such as WOWTW.

- Volunteers have carried out recruitment 'pop ups' to promote our on-call opportunities and support the recruitment team.

2.2.3 Internal Engagement

The Service's Volunteer coordinator has recently relocated to operate within the People Services function which has led to greater engagement opportunities across the Service and externally.

2.3　**Recruitment Statistics**

The following provides an overview of the amount of work undertaken within the Recruitment team in 2024/2025.

- 16 Operational Recruitment Process' / Campaigns delivered e.g. WDS FF, AM, GM, Auxiliary, Control

- 76 Corporate and bespoke roles advertised some of which large campaigns including Admin Pools, Apprentices

- 73 On-Call Recruits placed on initial courses through 24/7 annual recruitment.

2.4 **Future Work and Challenges**

2.4.1 We will be launching a recruitment reform project in Q1/FY26 to develop a recruitment strategy and define recruitment processes that are befitting a modern Fire and Rescue Service, and to position us as an employer of choice. This will include attraction and engagement initiatives to reach out to underrepresented groups.

2.4.2 We will focus our efforts on a long term and sustainable attraction and engagement strategy.

2.4.3 We recognise that our employer branding needs to be stronger. We will review our approach and capitalise on the new set of Values, alongside the Core Code of Ethics. We will utilise different social media channels following feedback at events, in particular in reference to the younger demographic, and underrepresented groups.

2.4.4 During the last 6 years much campaigning has been undertaken in terms of increasing female applicants. However, whilst this work continues, there remains more effort to be undertaken in terms of why people from ethnic minority groups and socially deprived areas are not applying. This will be addressed under the recruitment reform project.

2.4.5 A significant project for the coming FY is Organisational Resourcing and Workforce Planning under our Step Forward Project – Talent Management. Resource is currently being identified to take this project forward.

2.4.6 The Service wide digital transformation project will enable a wholesale review of our HR/Payroll and Finance systems. A project has recently been established and the recruitment and onboarding experience will be at the forefront of this project, alongside credible management information (MI).

2.4.7 The Recruitment and Retention Business Partner will be responsible for the production of key metrics which have been introduced for the coming FY, with the intent to highlight opportunities for process improvements, as well as promote what is working well. Some of the KPIs are jointly held with the DICE Business Partner, for example outreach and community engagement, candidate demographics etc.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

3.1.1 The Service ensures use of inclusive language within all recruitment information and creates inclusive job descriptions and adverts. Unconscious bias is removed where possible at all stages when recruiting, and all managers are given EDI training prior to any involvement in recruitment. All vacancies and opportunities are advertised across a range of platforms to ensure heightened promotion across South Wales reaching all socio-economic backgrounds.

3.1.2 Our ambition is to improve the diversity profile of the Service and this will continue to be a key strategic focus for us going forward.

3.1.3 All recruitment materials are bilingual with both English and Welsh versions published. The Service provides all applicants with the opportunity to complete all sections of a recruitment process through either the medium of Welsh or English and also publishes all Welsh Essential roles via Safle Swyddi. This therefore meets the Welsh Language Standards.

3.1.4 The Service utilises an online platform by which to advertise vacancies and collect application forms, paper print outs are available for those unable to use an online system. Shortlisting and interview paperwork is emailed across to hiring managers and application forms are visible via Core XD. Feedback is often typed into the marking document rather than this being printed and handwritten. This allows for more environmentally friendly practice thus allowing the Service to be more sustainable.

3.2 **Regulatory, Strategy and Policy**

    3.2.1 The Service protects all data submitted by applicants through the online portal. Access to this information is restricted to only personnel that requires such. Where possible personal information is redacted to reduce information share but also help remove unconscious bias.

3.3 **Resources, Assets and Delivery**

    3.3.1 Over the last 12 months the Service has faced recruitment pressures and has struggled to recruit into some key roles, for example, Finance and Legal. This has required market supplements being added when the business case demands it to do so, and using specialist recruitment teams and websites for these hard to recruit positions. Further work will be done on this to find solutions for the future.

    3.3.2 The Service recognises the need to deliver consistent high-end services in relation to ongoing Recruitment. The upskilling of the wider department is underway to allow flexibility within the personnel able to support this function.

4. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Service has continued to deliver high quality recruitment practise through both internal and external processes. Utilising the online People XD function has allowed for quicker, more transparent and data driven recruitment, however, we recognise there is still work to be done to develop further and actively utilise this management information.

4.2 The Service has forged some great external connections to allow for new engagement events to be delivered. With the addition of a more holistic Engagement Strategy such work can continue in a deeper and more consistent way.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   That Commissioners note the content of the report.

Contact Officer	Hannah Goodchild HR Manager		
Background Papers	**Date**	**Source / Contact**	
None			

Appendices	
None	

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE   AGENDA ITEM NO 9
                                                                    11 JUNE 2025

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES

ANNUAL REVIEW OF TRAINING 2024/2025

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION

REPORT APPROVED BY ACFO BRIAN THOMPSON

REPORT PRESENTED BY AREA MANAGER, NEIL DAVIES

SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the Training & Development department's activities during 2024/2025, which includes highlights from each of the training lead areas that are delivered by Cardiff Gate Operational Training, Leadership and Personal Development Academy.

RECOMMENDATIONS
That Commissioners note the content of this report.

---

1.   **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to provide Commissioners with an overview of the Training department's activities during the financial year 2024/25. To evidence this, this report will provide a high-level overview of some of the highlights from each of the work streams that the Service has delivered.

In line with the strategic priority - Responding to your Emergency, course delivery is continuously reviewed by the management team at Cardiff Gate Operational Training, Leadership and Personal Development Academy, to ensure it meets the demands of our operational firefighters, whilst working within the guidance provided by Welsh Government's Chief Fire & Rescue Advisor and Inspector (CFRA&I), NFCC National Operational Guidance, HSE, and other sector leading bodies.

2. **TRAINING UPDATES**

The Training & Development Department deliver a wide range of training which ensures all operational personnel receive the most up to date role critical training.

2.1 OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our Operational Development team continues to provide learners with the support they require to achieve their goals.

Within Wales an education provider must be used to access any apprenticeship frameworks, the apprenticeship provider (SWFRS) is classed as the sub-contractor.

Our education provider Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC) conduct an annual learners voice survey. This survey invites feedback from the apprentices on their experience.

Learner voice for all(CAVC) Apprentices took place with all learners (including SWFRS) from April 2024 until May 2024. There were no concerns regarding the results, the majority of responses were over 90% - good or very good. The survey attracted a response rate of 87% of the SWFRS apprentices, making the results a robust reflection of the learner's opinions.

Celebrating achievement

On the 13th February 2025, apprentice Firefighter Serena Williams (centre) Bridgend station won the emergency service sector award at CAVC apprenticeship awards ceremony. She was also nominated for the Welsh language award.

We are proud to communicate that the centre has also successfully passed two external quality assurance audits in 2024/25, carried out by the Skills for Justice (SFJ) the awarding body. These audits reviewed our SFJ Award Qualifications and FRS Quality Assurance Standards. This success affords us the assurance from SFJ to maintain our direct claim centre status. Direct Claims Status is given to Centres on an individual qualification basis and allows centres to claim certification without waiting for an external quality assurance activity to take place. This demonstrates that SFJ have an assured level of confidence and trust in our teaching delivery.

During the visit, our qualification assessment was identified as an area of good practice during direct observation by the external quality assurer. Also, the FRS Quality Assurance Standards were met for our Firefighters and Control firefighters development pathways.

WDS apprenticeship program
In 2024/25 we delivered the firefighting apprenticeship to 42 WDS trainees, and the Service currently has 56 WDS apprentices on the two year programme.

In the financial year 2024/25 the service accessed **£214,630.26** of Welsh Government funding against a yearly allocation of **£311,239** (August 24 – July 25 academic year). We are on target to claim the full allocation of funding.

2.2 INCIDENT COMMAND

Initial Course Statistics 24-25

- SFJ Initial (ICL1) – 5 courses – initial pass rate 81% - 100% success rate following re-assessment.
- SFJ Intermediate (ICL2) – 3 Courses – initial pass rate 75% - 100% success rate following re-assessment
- SFJ Advanced (ICL3) – 1 Course – initial pass rate 83% (1 person awaiting re- assessment).

Incident Command Redevelopment
Incident Command has had a complete rebrand with all courses being reviewed and a "brand" created for workbooks, presentations and delivery. This has given the incident command department a digitalised professional image. New Maintenance of skills packages were also rolled out.

All command instructors attended the Fire Service College and gained an SFJ qualification in the design and delivery of Incident Command, a first for SWFRS.
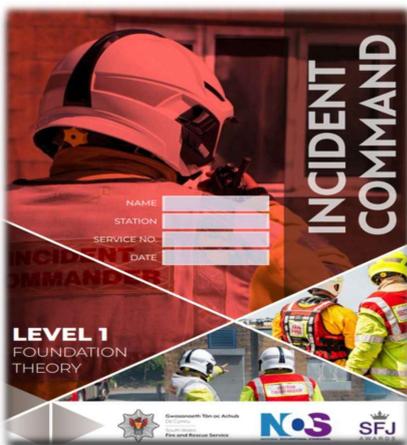
In collaboration with other UKFRS and UK leading experts, XVR (command software) scenarios have been redesigned and redeveloped for 24/25.

Incident Command level 2 is nationally recognised as the biggest increase in command responsibility within the fire and rescue service. Data provided by K Lamb Associates Ltd, accrued from 33 UK Fire and Rescue Services has shown that Incident Command Level 2 has the highest failure rate of all command levels.

We have developed our current Incident Command Level 2 course to increase the candidates learning, increasing physical contact time from 3 days to 5 days, with an 8-week development period that is tutor contact led with opportunities during the 8 week period for candidates to attend Cardiff Gate Incident Command suite, something that has not been routinely available before. This increased development has proved fruitful, with the current pass rate being 75%, increased from a one-course previous failure rate of 75%.

The assessment criteria were re-developed across all levels to provide a more robust assessment process and to provide real incident command assurance. During the recent external quality assurance visit the Incident Command assessment process came out as an area of strength.

A new Incident Command Level 3 course has been developed with a whole new suite of XVR incidents and scenarios created.

The command team have developed and launched an Incident Command Aide Memoire to not only assist candidates but incident commanders across the Service.

THE ROLE OF THE INCIDENT COMMANDER IS TO:

- ✓ Command and control the Incident
- ✓ Identify hazards and manage risks
- ✓ Assess resource requirements
- ✓ Determine an incident plan
- ✓ Co-ordinate and deploy available resources
- ✓ Evaluate process against the plan

OBJECTIVES

- Maintain the safety of personnel, other responders and the public
- Save life and reduce harm
- Minimise the impact of the incident and Fire Service actions at the earliest opportunity on any identified environmental risk
- Promote business continuity, community recovery and restore normality

ROLES OF A SAFETY OFFICER

SAFETY OFFICER WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- ✓ Recording an Analytical Risk Assessment (ARA)
- ✓ Identify safety issues
- ✓ Start corrective action
- ✓ Maintain safe systems of work
- ✓ Ensuring people are wearing the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- ✓ Observe the working environment
- ✓ Monitor physical condition of crews
- ✓ Regular reviews
- ✓ Update the Incident Commander when circumstances change

DECISION CONTROL PROCESS

SITUATION
- Incident Information
- Resource Information
- Risk Information

Active Monitoring

- Why?
- Expectations?
- Benefit vs Risk?

← Active Monitoring →

DECISION CONTROLS

ACTIONS
- Communications
- Control

PLAN
- Objectives
- Tactical Priorities
- Operational Tactics

INFORMATIVE MESSAGES

H - Height
A - Area
U - Use
L - Location of fire
E - Equipment
T - Tactical Mode

V - Vehicles involved
P - Position of incident
O - Operational activity
E - Equipment in use
T - Tactical Mode

Revalidations

It was identified by the Incident Command team that the current process of re-assessing our incident commanders every 4 years sat outside current national operational guidance (NOG). The team re-designed the process to align with NOG, completely overhauling the re-assessment process, aligning it to a revalidation process.

Using XVR, all scenarios were redesigned to align with SFJ assessment criteria, all assessment forms were re-written to allow for a best practice approach.
The process is now redesigned to incorporate a CPD year to further enhance the development of our Incident Commanders.

Sessions are managed in a positive, productive, learning environment of which the team has received extensive positive feedback from candidates. The team has worked through a staggering number of sessions to revalidate the Service's incident commanders:

- **408** ICL1 – Crew/Watch Managers, and Firefighters with command pass that can respond as acting Crew Manager
- **71** ICL2 – Station Managers
- **29** ICL3 Group Manager
- ICL4 Area & Brigade Manager will take place later this year.

Command Hours

From early 2025, the logging of command hours was incorporated into pdrPro. This enhancement brings SWFRS in line with NFCC guidance, which mandates that incident commanders record their command hours as part of ongoing competency management and to ensure adequate exposure to incident command practices.

Command hours may be accrued through attendance at live incidents, as well as participation in practical or simulated exercises. This initiative is designed to support the continuous development of commanders by ensuring they have regular opportunities to maintain and enhance their skills.
The first tranche of command hour logging will run from April 2025 to March 2026.

During this time, feedback and incident information recorded by commanders will be carefully reviewed and analysed to inform and further improve incident command training across the Service.
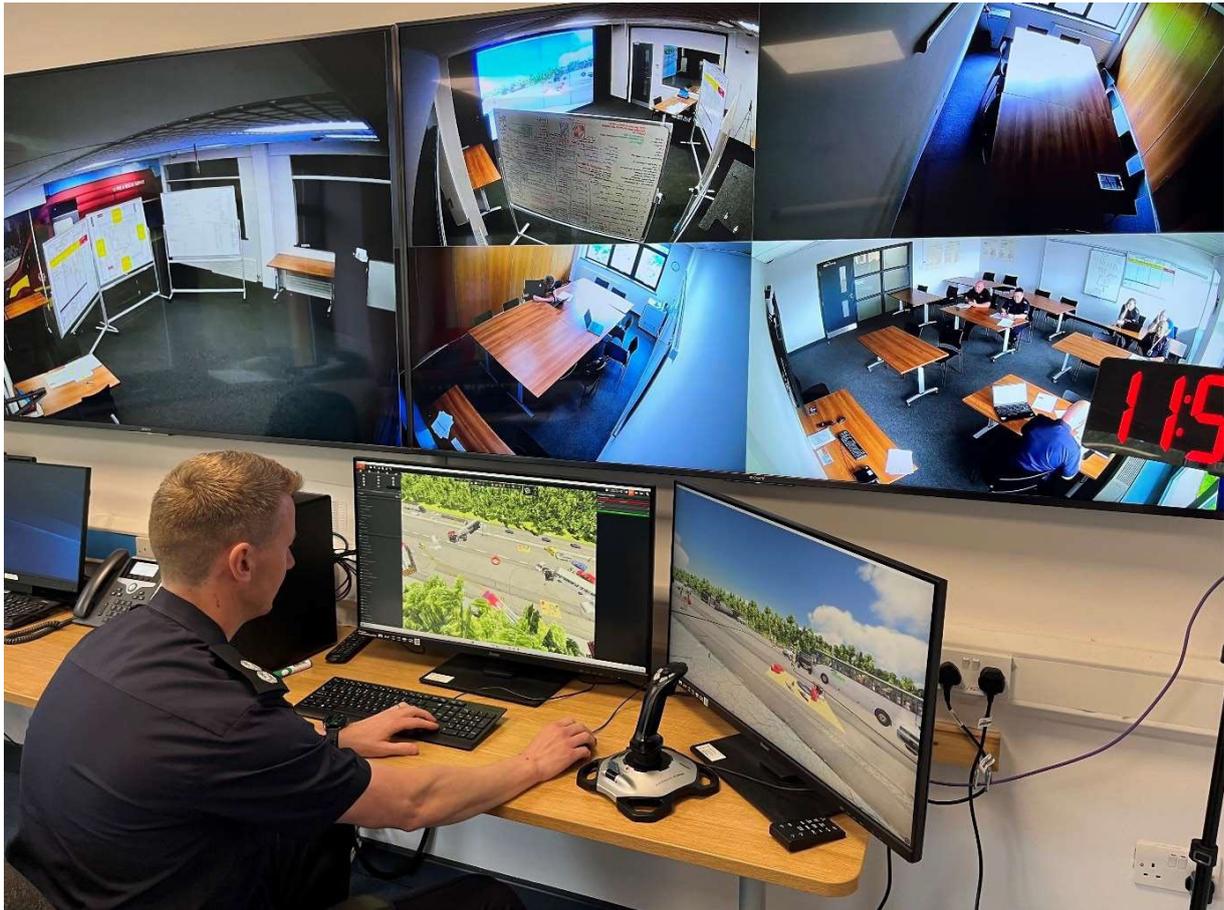
2.3 OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW TEAM (ODRT)

The ODRT continue to provide operational assurance and themed incident monitoring across the Service, collating and sharing operational learning for the benefit of service delivery improvement.

During 2024/25 the team facilitated multiple debriefs that fall within the categories below.

- Multi Agency Debrief (based on Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) debrief model with Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) recommendations).
- Structured Incident Debrief (large scale incident debrief with recommendations).
- Critical Incident Debrief (critical learning watch based debrief with recommendations).
- Special Service Report (specific event / procedure report).

Some examples of these debriefs include –

Structured Debrief at Ron Skinner & Sons Tredegar – a car showroom with several hundred cars inside completely destroyed by fire.

Structured Debrief Report

Incident 028234 Ron Skinner & Sons

16/08/2024

Debrief Date: 16/10/2024

Debrief Team: WM ****& WM ****

The Magic Cottage Charity Shop Abergavenny. A large commercial property in the heart of Abergavenny that had historic significance to the market town. This building was completely destroyed by fire.

Structured Debrief

Incident 045954
The Magic Cottage Charity Shop
10/11/2024

Debrief Date: 16/12/2024

Debrief Team: GM ****

SM **** & WM ****

Some examples of Critical Incident debriefs that the team have undertaken include

✓	🗎	Name	
		TEIFY HOUSE MAY 2024 - REDACTED 2024	•••
		TALBOT GREEN EV FIRE - REDACTED 2024	•••
		HOARDING HOUSE REDACTED 2024	•••
		HIGH RISE HOARDER -REDACTED 2024	•••
		BARRY CARAVAN REDACTED 2024	•••
		ATLANTIC RECYCLING-REDACTED 2024	•••
		BLUE POOL WATER RESCUE - REDACTED 2024	•••
		CAPITAL VALLEY RHYMNEY-REDACTED2025	•••
		DOW CORNING REDACTED 2024	•••
		GLANRHYD HOSPITAL - REDACTED 2024	•••
		HUGGARD CENTRE - REDACTED 2025	•••
		NORTH STREET CANNABIS FACTORY - REDACTED 2024	•••
		WESTBOURNE SCHOOL REDACTED 2025	•••

Members of the team visited RAF Waddington in March. The purpose of the visit was to look at how the RAF debrief and to discuss the JUST Culture they have developed which allows individuals to feel comfortable about admitting and learning from mistakes.

Also during this period and in partnership with ICT, the team has developed and launched a new intranet page. This page will give personnel from across the Service access to operational learning to share best practice to improve service delivery. https://fshqsp13ws.swfs.southwales-fire.gov.uk/public/home/en-gb/training/ODRT_2/Pages/Home.aspx

2.4 DRIVER TRAINING

On November 6th, 2024, the Driver Training Team introduced Emergency Response Driver Training (ERDT) during the hours of darkness for all service drivers attending Initial ERDT Courses.

The dangers of Night Driving are obvious due a number of factors, including reduced visibility, fatigue and the fact that drivers must be able to stop in the distance they can see to be clear, which is lit by their headlights on an unlit road system, and vastly decreased at night.

Training for reality is our aim. This element together with the recently introduced Convoy Training (for stations that respond with more than one vehicle) means that new drivers will return to their respective stations with enhanced skills and knowledge gained in environments that reflect the ones that they will respond to emergencies in. Therefore, our drivers are safer, whilst we are also reducing the risk for all other road users in the communities that we serve.

Feedback from students that attended the new course state -

Watch Manager (WM) – (Light Vehicle ERDT Initial)
''The nighttime element was a great addition to the course. We were able to practice previously learned elements while also experiencing the additional elements that come with driving at night. Doing this with an instructor present improves our safety, allows us to learn how to adapt our driving and covers the service to show its drivers have been taught and proven competence during the hours covered in this element".

WM – (Light Vehicle ERDT Initial)
''The night drive was a good addition to the ERDT, providing good input and techniques to assist with response driving at night. This was beneficial and would be particularly useful for learners who have not experienced nighttime response driving before''.

Firefighter (Ff) – (Large Goods Vehicle ERDT Initial)
''The night drive element of the course provided a huge benefit to me as a new LGV emergency response driver. There is a big difference driving in daytime conditions to nighttime conditions, so it was an excellent opportunity to be able to experience this with an instructor to provide input on how to navigate it safely. I hope this is a part of all future courses to provide drivers with this experience".

Ff (Large Goods Vehicle ERDT Initial)
''I found the night drive very beneficial and a great addition to the course. The opportunity to experience the challenges posed by driving at night with instructor guidance was excellent and gives me greater confidence moving forward to safely driving on station, particularly with winter on the way and large parts of the shift pattern being in darkness.''

2.5 TECHINICAL RESCUE TEAM

2.6 Rescue Tender Operators Course

The technical rescue team is proud to announce the successful completion of its Rescue Tender Operator Course. A program launched by the Technical Delivery Team. This intensive course was designed to equip our firefighters with the specialised skills and knowledge required to operate the rescue tender, a crucial vehicle in advanced road rescue scenarios.

Recognising the evolving challenges of technical road rescue, our department has been committed to expanding and honing our firefighters' capabilities to respond to increasingly complex incidents on our roads. The Rescue Tender Operator Course reflects this commitment, focusing on enhancing technical expertise, ensuring quick, efficient, and safe operations in the field.

The course curriculum includes in-depth training on the specialised equipment and operations involved in technical road rescue. Participants mastered the intricacies of rescue tender operations, Vehicle Re-location, Lift and Tilt Plans, Casualty Centred operations, and lifting equipment Safety cells. Beyond the technical elements, the course also emphasised critical decision-making, teamwork, and scene management, essential components for safe and effective rescues.

A key feature of the course was its hands-on approach. Each participant engaged in live simulations that tested their ability to perform in multiple rescue scenarios. These scenarios were designed to reflect the real-world challenges of road traffic collisions, providing trainees with a realistic experience of the coordination and technical skills needed. From stabilising vehicles to managing extrication pathways, each operator left the course well-prepared for the demands of rescue tender operations.

For our Technical Delivery Team, the development of this course was not only to teach essential rescue skills but also to foster a culture of excellence and resilience within the department. The dedication of the instructors and the commitment of the participants have set a high standard for future courses.

As we celebrate the success of this course we look forward to further expanding the Rescue Tender Operator Course to ensure that every rescue station has trained operators ready to handle the unique challenges of road rescue. By investing in advanced training programs like these, SWFRS remains at the forefront of emergency response, committed to the safety and well-being of our community.

2.7 Technical Rescue and the Training Support Unit (TSU) launch a new online training suite for Large Animal Rescue

The Technical Delivery Team & TSU are proud to announce the completion of a new series of online training videos dedicated to Large Animal Rescue, an essential component of our service's commitment to safeguarding both human and animal lives. This comprehensive digital training suite was produced through a collaborative effort by our Technical Delivery and TSU, who came together to create accessible, high-quality training content specifically tailored for the unique challenges of large animal rescue operations.

This ambitious project, brings critical, scenario-based training directly to our personnel through a modern digital platform. Filming took place over a series of focused sessions at Pencoed College, where our technical specialists, in coordination with our skilled TSU, captured key rescue scenarios and practical guidance to prepare our teams for real-life situations involving large animal rescues.

The video suite covers essential techniques and best practices for handling large animals in emergency situations, ensuring that our personnel are well-prepared for incidents involving livestock, horses, and other large animals. By providing this resource online, we aim to offer flexible, self-paced learning options that cater to varying schedules, allowing team members to revisit and reinforce vital skills as often as needed.

A true testament to cross-departmental collaboration, this project would not have been possible without the combined expertise of our Technical Delivery Team's on-the-ground knowledge and the TSU technical prowess. Each video segment demonstrates practical techniques, safety protocols, and communication strategies required in large animal rescues, giving our teams a comprehensive

visual tool that complements their hands-on training.

The new Large Animal Rescue suite will soon be available on our internal training portal, where it can be accessed by all operational personnel. This digital format not only supports ongoing professional development but also strengthens our Service's capacity to respond effectively and compassionately to incidents involving animals in distress.

2.8 BA Department

Real Fire Training Facility (RFTF) Decontamination.
Early in 2024 the BA department received support to invest in and develop a decontamination provision for firefighters contaminated by fire effluents during training at the RFTF.

An interim decontamination facility, using temporary units and a timber structure, has been built and in operation since early 2025.
The interim Decontamination facility provides the department with the opportunity to implement and test suitable decontamination processes in preparation for planning and construction of a permanent facility.
The development has enabled the removal of all contaminated PPE, Equipment and personnel from the Babcock main building, returning it to a zero contaminants zone and creating a healthier environment for both RFTF users and non-users.
The next steps will see a project team established involving invested Service departments to develop and build the permanent decontamination facility.
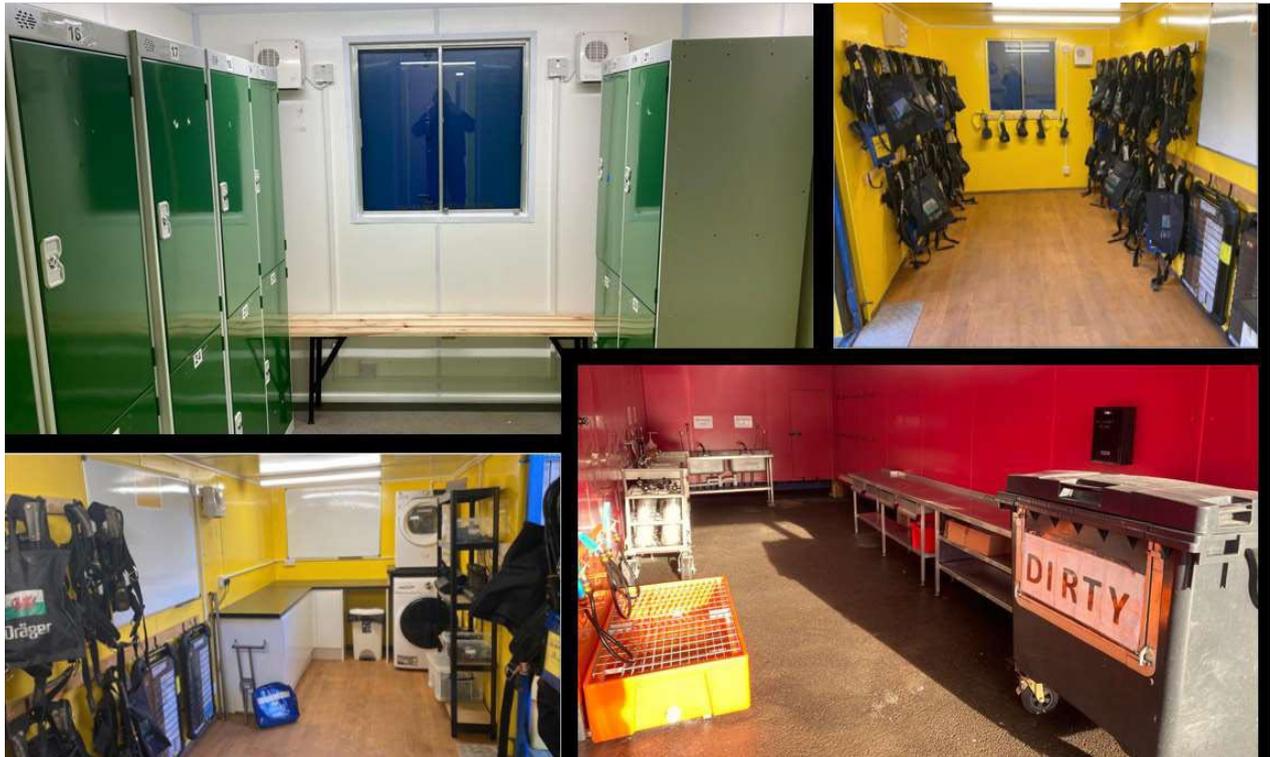
Hose Trials

As part of the department's commitment to the delivery of the Thematic Review of Operational Training recommendations, and in support of the findings from the CFRA&I report on the operational effectiveness of firefighting within SWFRS, the BA department carried out a series of hose and branch trials.

The practical trials assessed flow rates, throw of water, efficiency and stowage of the equipment.

The project involved:

- Assessing flow rates of already used hose within SWFRS (19mm Hose reel, 45mm delivery hose and 70mm delivery hose).
- Assessing practical use of 22mm hose Reel and 51/52mm delivery hose with the view of introducing within the Service.
- Assessing smooth bore branch and nozzle options.

Following the trial the department shared the findings with Service departments and all Wales Training Leads.
A multimedia video was produced to communicate the trial and results.
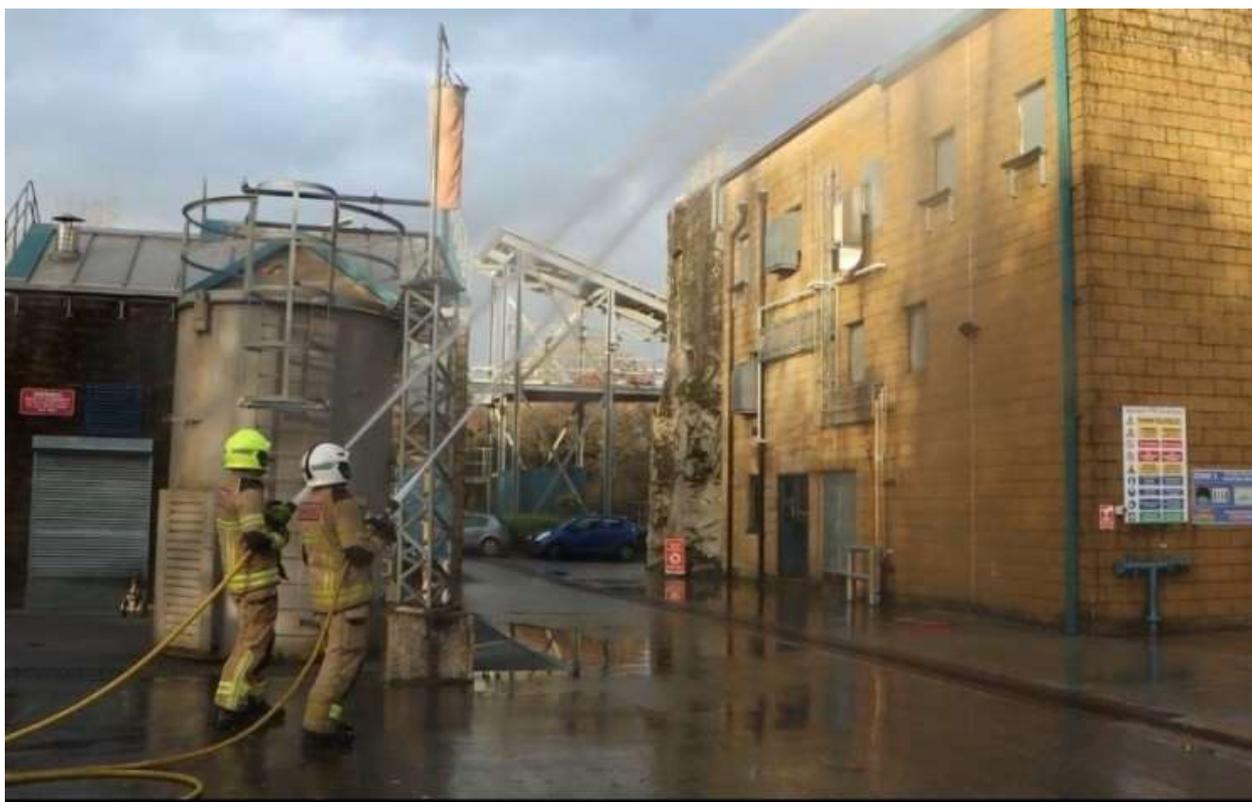
Building Firefighting Tactics

The BA department have supported GM Mike Evans with the development and creation of Building Firefighting Tactics Guidance.

Members of the BA department have sat on the Firefighting Tactics Working Group and contributed to the R&D of areas within the document.

The BA department has developed:
- A briefing and debriefing model to support operational BA deployment.
- Supporting briefing and debriefing resources, briefing book and BA deployment board.
- The door entry procedure to be more effective and efficient in line with national / international research.

BA department have supported OAST with the Q1 exercises providing operational crews with training in line with the new Building Firefighting Tactics Guidance.

As well as supporting GM Evans with the Building Firefighting Tactics, all course content documentation and practical delivery is being amended to develop Ff's knowledge and understanding.
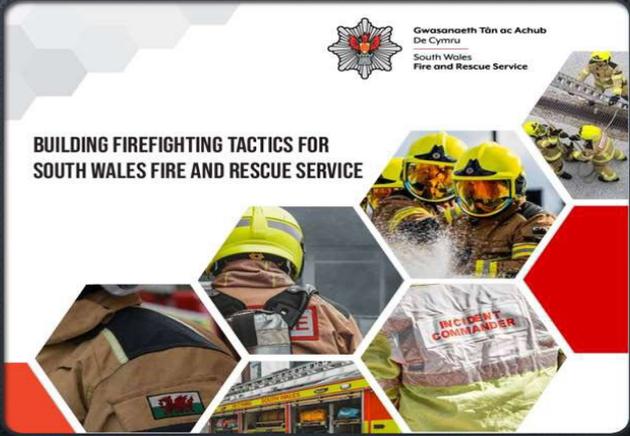
2.9 PLANNING & PARTNERSHIPS

During the Spring Half Term 2025, we were pleased to partner with Babcock International, our PFI partner to host a STEM development day for our fire cadets and other young adult groups at Cardiff Gate Operational Training, Leadership and Personal Development Academy.

The teens, aged 13 to 16, were given a tour of the state-of-the art site, which includes a dedicated area for complex road traffic collision scenarios, a confined space shaft, a hazmat training rig, brick built fire houses and large animal rescue training area.

The day provided the teenagers with the opportunity to learn about the dangers associated with fire, as well as witnessing a variety of other emergency rescue scenarios, providing them with an up-close insight into the important role firefighters play in keeping the public safe.

Daniel López Rae, Babcock Contract Manager for Fire Colleges, said: "We are always looking at ways to support SWFRS, and Babcock is proud to provide them with facilities management and training scheduling support at the site – and we had a fantastic day supporting them.

This was a fantastic day for the guests and is a great example of Babcock collaborating with our customer, and I'd like to thank SWFRS for their support in putting on a successful educational event."

2.10 High-Rise Training

Prior to the establishment of a dedicated High Rise Delivery Team (HRDT) in 2025, all high rise training was conducted by training personnel with support from the high rise working group.

During 2024/25, they completed Phase 1 training 'Core Skills and Mass Evacuation Procedures' with all WDS crews, commanders and control room operators – the sessions were rated at 4.83 out of 5 by those who took part.

The training took place between (April 24 and April 25) and were run at Brecknock House (a disused high-rise venue provided in partnership with C&VUHB) and focussed on:
- Building size up & Info Gathering
- Water supply strategies and hose management
- FF Lift procedures
- Passive & Active Safety systems including smoke control
- Bridgehead set up and stairwell protection
- Smoke blocker vs AOV demonstration
- Mass and Emergency Evacuation Procedures

The HRDT have started to run Phase 1 training (as above) for all RDS crews which will be completed by July 2025.
They are also running Phase 2 training for all WDS operational crews and tac managers 'Building Construction & Failure'.
The training takes place at Cardiff Gate Training Centre (April 25 – July 25) and focusses on:
- Introduction to new NOG compliant SOP
- Introduction to new command and functional roles
- High-Rise Construction
- Building Materials and façade fires
- New and emerging high-rise fire risks
- Signs of building failure
- Wind driven Fires
- Mass Evacuation Procedures refresh
- Practical smoothbore and branch below demonstration

The new Mass Evacuation Procedures have been created by the team and adopted by M&WWFRS to ease the training burden on our joint Fire Control. A new immersive 360° high-rise building walkthrough has been developed by the TSU using newly acquired articulate software, as a training and maintenance of skills aide along with a new dedicated High-Rise Training intranet page.

2.11 Other high profile events hosted by the department

- Fire Cadet Games
- UKRO All Wales Extrication, Trauma, and Rope Rescue Competition
- Women in the Fire Service event
- CAVUHB Med student pre-hospital RTC event

2.12 Priority Workstreams & Look Forward

The training management team are currently engaged in several additional high priority workstreams, such as -

- The completion of the Thematic Review of Operational Training and full implementation of the seven recommendations therein in this calendar year. This will result in significant changes to operational tactics and working practices, that will generate additional work for the training department.

- The training management team have already highlighted that the current instructor establishment is insufficient to deliver the current training schedule and it needs to be increased. Approval was gained at SLT in February 25 to increase the instructor establishment by five watch managers, and to trial a training allowance to incentivise attraction/recruitment/retention to the instructor roles that have been historically difficult to fill. This has been exacerbated in recent times with the increases to the cost of living, fuel/energy etc., and the inability to undertake secondary employment.

- Continue with the trial and data collection from the temporary decontamination facility to influence the design & build of the permanent welfare & decontamination facility at the RFTF.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS**

   That Commissioners note the content of the report.

Contact Officer		Area Manager, Neil Davies	
Background Papers		**Date**	**Source / Contact**
None			

Appendices	
None	

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE   AGENDA ITEM NO 10
                                                                11 JUNE 2025

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES

ANNUAL REVIEW OF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT 2024/2025

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED BY ACO ALISON REED, DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES
REPORT PRESENTED BY LISA SHROLL, HEAD OF PEOPLE SERVICES

SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the Learning & Development department's performance during 2024/2025, which highlights activity, development and advancements for the Service's Learning & Development Team within 2024/2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS
That Commissioners note the content of this report.

---

1. BACKGROUND

1.1   The purpose of this report is to provide Commissioners with an overview of how the Learning & Development function has performed during the financial year 2024/25. To evidence this, this report will provide a high-level overview of some of the highlights from each of the work streams that the Service has delivered, along with some performance metrics.

2. LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT (L&D) UPDATES

2.1   **INTRODUCTION TO L&D**

In 2024/25, the Learning and Development (L&D) team achieved full staffing capacity with the successful onboarding of two new team members in August 2024. With a fully onboarded and trained team in place, the department's capacity to design, deliver, and evaluate development opportunities across the organisation has been significantly strengthened.

During the final quarter of 2024, the Learning and Development team experienced a challenging period in which two experienced team members were absent for approximately 2-3 months: one due to planned leave and the other unplanned. This significantly impacted the department's day-to-day operations and capacity. Despite these challenges, the team demonstrated strong resilience and effective operational flexibility. Our newly onboarded colleagues played a critical role in maintaining continuity, quickly adapting to increased responsibilities and ensuring that key priorities continued to be delivered. As a result, the department was able to operate with minimal disruption and maintain near-normal levels of service delivery.

The L&D team has played a central role in advancing organisational leadership through the delivery of three key leadership and management programmes:
- The second cycle of the Supervisory Leadership and Management Development Programme, and
- A complete annual cycle of the Middle Manager Leadership and Management Development Programme.
- Launch of the Strategic Leadership and Management Development Programme.

These programmes are vital to equipping current and aspiring leaders with the skills required to operate effectively within a high-risk, high-accountability environment. They also support succession planning, build leadership resilience, and ensure alignment with the values and behaviours expected in a modern fire and rescue service.

In addition to delivering leadership programmes, the L&D team has facilitated a series of Masterclasses designed to support both personal and professional development across the organisation. These sessions provided targeted learning opportunities aligned with the evolving needs of staff at all levels. To further embed a culture of continuous learning, the L&D team actively promoted our L&D solutions through a series of station visits. These visits served as a platform to raise awareness of the importance of personal development, enabling employees to discuss their training needs, leadership aspirations, ongoing development, and any support required around neurodiversity or inclusive learning practices.

This section of the report begins with an update on Personal Review (PRS) activity, before progressing through key areas of leadership and management development, including our Leadership Programmes, Masterclass Series, and a summary of additional learning and development initiatives. These include the Additional Learning Fund, bespoke events, and other training activities delivered by the L&D team throughout the 2024/25 financial year.

2.2   **Personal Reviews**

2024/25 was the third full year for Personal Reviews (PR), with a 10% increase in individual contracts across the Service from previous year. The teams have always attempted to achieve 100% completion rates across the Service, however this can be dependent on a number of issues and this is something that the team continue to drive with increased training, engagement and communication.

The key difference in 2024/25, driven by the feedback and concerns received, was our ability to implement a positive change by actively listening to our people. As a result, the Personal Review process was streamlined from a biannual to an annual cycle, improving both efficiency and engagement.

The following shows the final breakdown for 2024/25 with a 'full' completion right up to 'system sign off', for all 'contracts' (report taken showing contracts in place as at 31 March 2025) of 63.72%.

Directorate	Team	ONLY CONTRACTS LIVE AT YEAR END					
		Total No. of Contracts	Area 1- Wellbeing section filled in by employee	Area 2- Met with LM	Main PR Signed Off by Employee and LM- (electronically)	FULL Personal Review Cycle Completed %	PR Discussion held by LM, but not signed off (Area 2) %
	Senior Leadership Team	11	11	10	9	81.82	90.91
People Services	HR Department and OCC Health	54	43	41	32	59.26	75.93
	Risk Reduction	113	88	79	68	60.18	69.91
Corporate Services	Business Support Department	22	19	19	20	90.91	86.36
	Finance & Procurement	28	21	21	21	75.00	75.00
	Property Strategy & Maintenance	8	7	7	6	75.00	87.50
	Service Performance & Communications	31	28	24	20	64.52	77.42
Technical Services	ICT Department	27	21	17	16	59.26	62.96
	Health & Safety	4	4	4	3	75.00	100.00
	ORM Department	43	31	23	22	51.16	53.49
	Fleet & Engineering	26	23	21	20	76.92	80.77
	Training Department	57	54	51	48	84.21	89.47
Service Delivery	Operations Department - WDS	732	607	522	485	66.26	71.31
	Operations Department - On-Call	535	352	258	231	43.18	48.22
	Operations Department - Support	42	29	28	27	64.29	66.67
Fire Control	Joint Fire Control	67	41	22	13	19.40	32.84
	Grand Total	1800	1379	1147	1041	57.83	63.72

It is important to understand that this completion rate is based on number of contracts rather than individual people, as some employees do have more than one contract of employment. The contract number is also reflective of the number of contracts that existed during the financial year, and some of these may have been fixed term contracts for a few weeks or months. The Service's position on measuring "contracts" as opposed to "people" was to ensure where people have more than one contract, they are able to have a meaningful PR, based on the role they are undertaking. The example being where an individual has both a Corporate role and an On-Call Firefighting role. In this instance, the employee would have two PRs. Where a Firefighter has both a wholetime and on-call role, they have the option to have one PR due to the nature of the role.

The actual number of employees (as of 31st March 2025) who have had the full PR 'system signed off' by both the line manager and the employee is 57.83%.

There may be reasonable explanations why the PR may not have been completed, for example long term sickness absence, maternity leave, employee secondments. The PR system, as with many of the Service ICT systems are stand alone and do not fully integrate with each other, requiring much manual intervention.

Work is being undertaken as part of our digital transformation to improve the reporting functionality of the PR system to enable more reflective data to be produced for analysis, as well as raising awareness for both line managers and employees of the requirement to undertake a final sign off for it to be deemed fully 'completed'. This is a primary focus during Q1 as we enter the new PR year and upskill line managers in completing effective and meaningful PRs, as well as system training to improve overall completion.
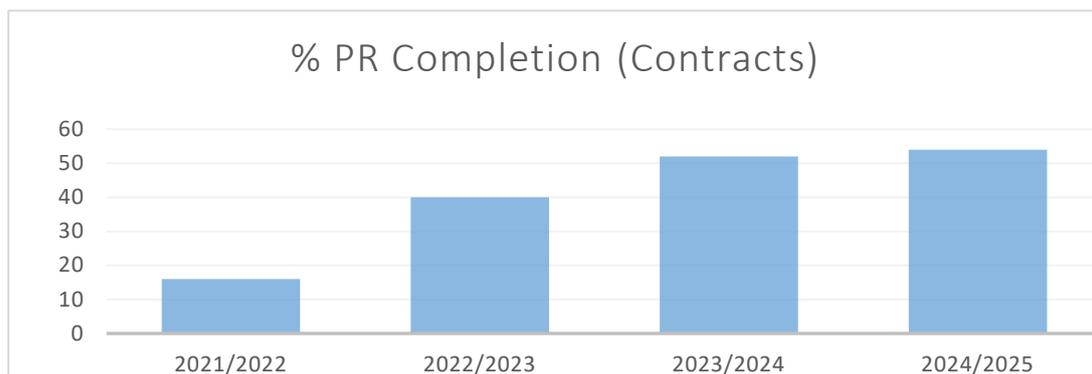

The following data collected for PRs also gives the Service other data that is interesting to ascertain Service performance against 'People':

A - Energy and Engagement Ratings:

The graphs below illustrate trends in Energy and Engagement levels across the Service over the last 3 years. The Energy rating initially increased from 7.4 to 7.9, before returning to 7.4, indicating a fluctuation in perceived energy levels among staff. In contrast, the Engagement rating has remained consistent, averaging 7.9 year on year, demonstrating sustained employee commitment and involvement.
The decline in the Energy rating may reflect a broader shift in workforce sentiment, potentially influenced by the organisational changes following the Morris Review and the resulting transition within the Service. This suggests that while engagement has been maintained, perceived energy

and motivation may have been temporarily affected by the wider context of structural and cultural change.

Energy Rating
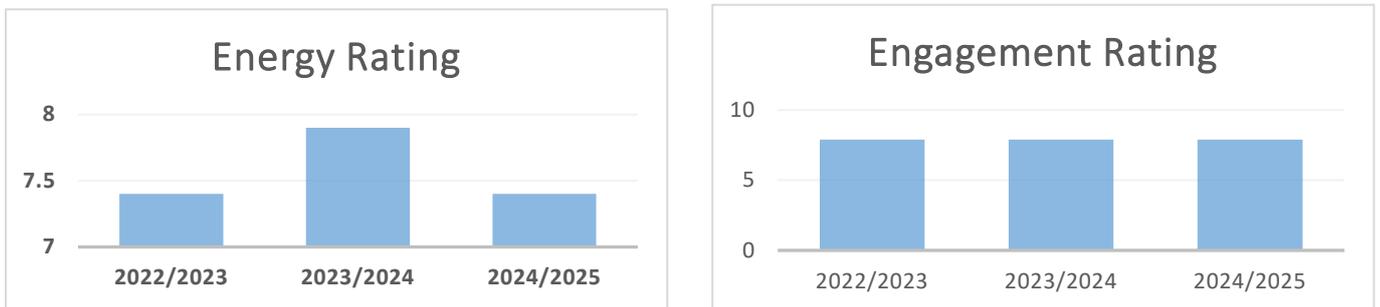
Engagement Rating

The chart below shows the energy and engagement levels across the scale.

- **Energy Level:** 56% of responses fall into the Extreme Energy category (ratings 8-10), with less than 5% of respondents reporting Low Energy levels (ratings 1-4).
- **Engagement Level:** Over 66% of respondents rated their engagement levels between 8-10, and 3% rated their engagement as low.

This indicates that the majority of individuals who have completed their Personal Reviews report high levels of **engagement** and **energy**, suggesting that a significant proportion of the workforce feels motivated and connected to their roles when participating in the PR process.

Energy and Engagement 2025
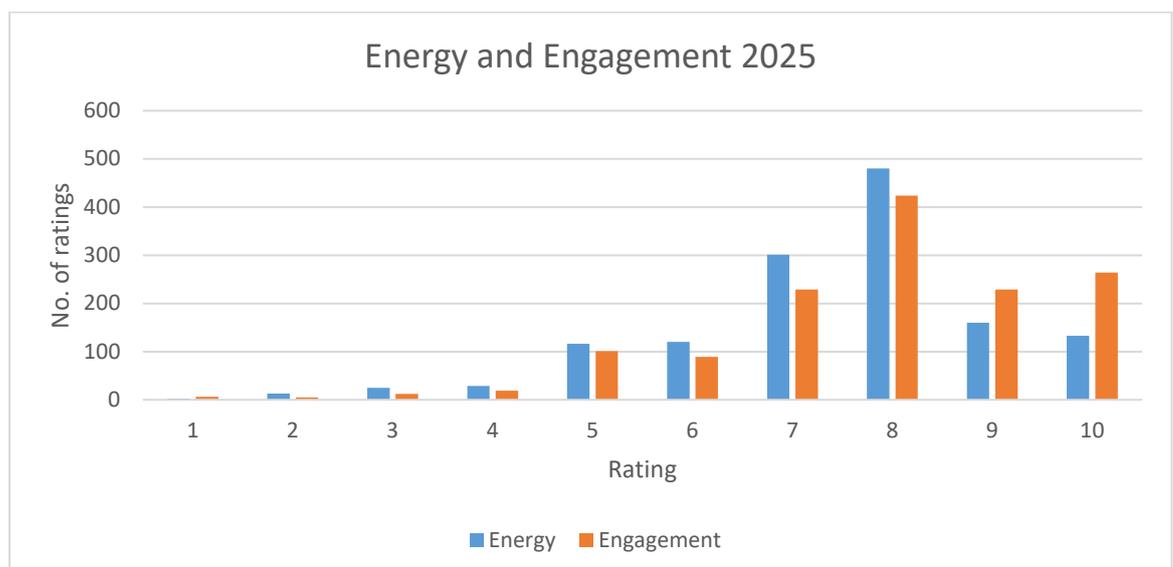
The illustration below demonstrates that, on average, the majority of individuals rate their Energy and Engagement levels above 5, indicating that those completing their Personal Reviews are generally engaged, motivated, and energised.

However, a small proportion of respondents continue to rate their experiences between 1 and 4, highlighting that there remains scope for improvement in these areas. The illustration also reveals a gradual year-on-year decline in overall ratings, although the majority of responses still fall within the higher end of the scale.

This data provides valuable insight into the current sentiment across the Service. It helps identify areas where support may be needed to re-engage individuals reporting lower energy or engagement levels. At the same time, it underscores the importance of sustaining and building upon the positive experiences of those who continue to feel energised and committed.

Combined Energy and Engagement Ratings 2022-2025

No. of Ratings vs Rating (1–10)

Legend: 2022/2023 · 2023/2024 · 2024/2025
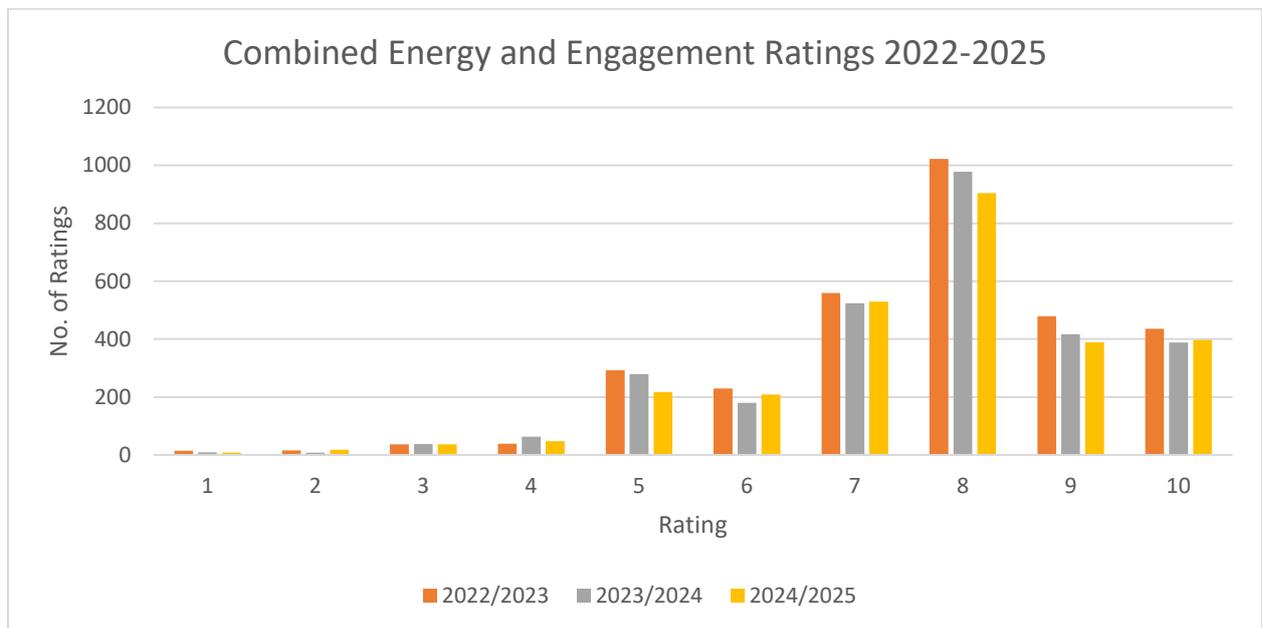
B - Referrals:

In 2024/25, a total of 70 referrals were made following Personal Review (PR) discussions, representing an increase from 47 in the previous year. This rise suggests that PRs are proving effective in facilitating meaningful conversations between individuals and their line managers, creating a space for greater openness and transparency. Through these discussions, individuals may feel more comfortable raising concerns and are increasingly aware of the support services available to them.

Referrals by Service Area
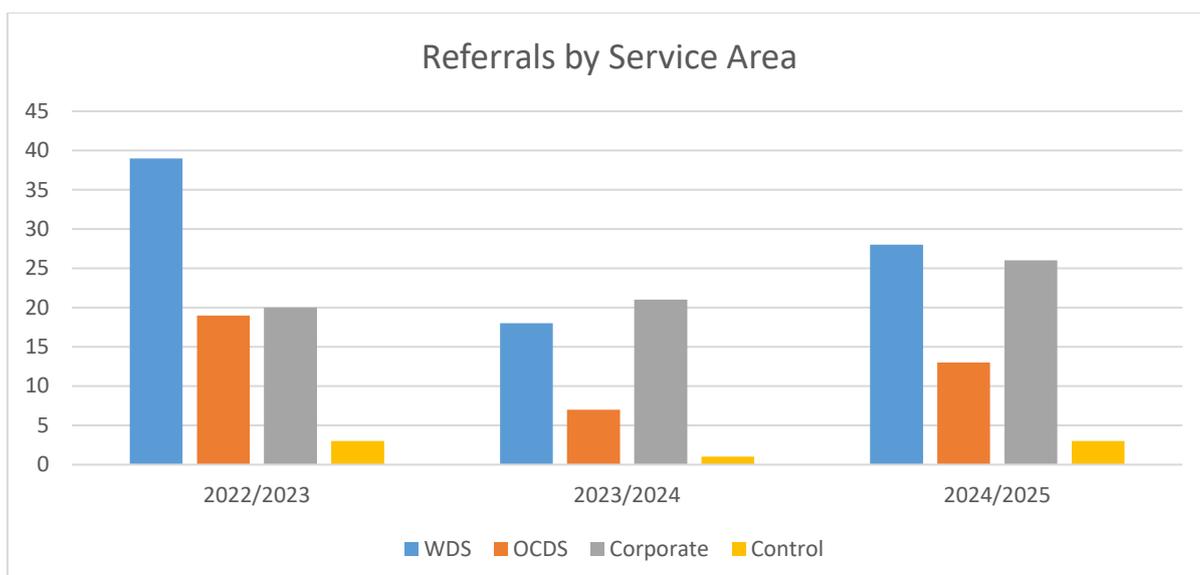
Several factors may have contributed to this increase. The outcomes of the Morris Review may have empowered staff to prioritise and advocate for their own wellbeing. In addition, improved training and communication around support services could mean that individuals now have a clearer understanding of where and how to seek help. Strengthened relationships with line managers may also be encouraging greater honesty and trust during PR conversations.

Alternatively, the rise in referrals could reflect a growing need for support, potentially linked to the broader cultural transformation and organisational change currently underway within the Service. As the culture shifts and conversations become more frequent and candid, it is likely that more individuals are choosing to come forward, which is a positive sign of cultural progress and psychological safety.

.

C - Performance Grid Assessment Rating:

Completing a PR discussion allows an individual's performance and behaviour to be discussed. This is an important part of the PR discussion as it can highlight and identify areas of improvement, but also allow room for recognition.

The chart illustrates that Category E ("*Achieving* Expectations" in both behaviour and task) continues to represent the highest number of individuals across all three years. However, despite maintaining its leading position, there has been a steady decline in this category over time. Category B ("*Significantly* Meeting Expectations" in both behaviour and task) consistently holds the second-highest count, though it too shows a decrease in the most recent year.

Meanwhile, Categories A, D, G, H, and I have remained consistently low across all years. This trend is a positive indicator, as these categories represent lower performance levels. The persistently low figures in these underperforming categories suggest that only a small number of individuals are performing significantly below expectations.

However, caution should be applied when reviewing this as it is a line manager rating and the results do not fully align with the findings of the Morris Review conducted in 2023/24. To address this possible concern, the L&D Team will focus on raising awareness about how to conduct PRs effectively, what best practices entail, and how to facilitate honest conversations.

Performance Grid Assessment Rating

Category	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
A – Partially Meeting Expectations	18	12	16
B – Significantly Meeting Expectations	348	367	307
C – Exceeding Expectations	258	331	310
D – Partially Meeting Expectations	29	23	21
E – Achieving Expectations	432	385	362
F – Significantly Meeting Expectations	201	161	135
G – Not Meeting Expectations	1	1	2
H – Partially Meeting Expectations	6	3	3
I – Partially Meeting Expectations	2	1	0

Future for PRs:

In 2024/25, the performance review process had been refined following feedback from people across the service. Key improvements include a more streamlined, user-friendly approach, consolidating the review into a single annual session, and providing greater clarity on specific review areas. Masterclass training and one-to-one support will continue to be available to ensure staff can make effective use of the PR system.

Looking ahead, the following actions will strengthen our team's approach to performance reviews and maximise their value as a tool for continuous development and improvement:

- Data-Driven Planning- Analyse data collected through PRs to inform targeted, strategic action plans. Insights should be used to identify areas where staff need additional support, maintain high levels of engagement, and address areas of lower energy or motivation.

- PR Training- Implement mandatory PR training for line managers (LM) across the service to ensure leaders are equipped to conduct meaningful, developmental personal reviews. Additionally, line managers will be supported in setting meaningful personal development objectives for their team members through the launch of the new L&D Prospectus. This resource outlines the full range of learning opportunities and services available across the organisation, offering clear guidance on how these can be effectively used to support individual and team development.

- Cultural Reframing and Education around PRs- Promote a meaningful shift in mindset around performance reviews, from a compliance-driven task to a process centred on personal growth and development. This involves delivering clear, consistent communication and providing ongoing education that reinforces the true purpose of PRs. Tailored resources should help all staff understand that the review process exists to support their development, not simply to meet procedural requirements.

By embedding these actions, the PR process can become a more powerful tool for employee development, organisational effectiveness, and sustained engagement.

2.3 Corporate Inductions

In 2024/2025, the L&D Team organised and facilitated four Corporate Inductions, welcoming a total of 29 new corporate employees to the organisation. This involved coordinating with various departments, arranging speakers, and managing the logistics of the sessions. Recognising the critical role inductions play in shaping the onboarding experience, the team is about to launch a project to revamp the induction process in 2025/26, aiming to ensure consistency and improve the experience for all new members joining the Service.

2.4 Leadership and Management Development Programme

Commonly referred to as "Pathways," the Service's Leadership and Management Development Programmes currently comprise four distinct levels, each aligned with the NFCC Leadership Framework. Each programme is designed to target specific leadership levels: Leading Yourself, Leading Others, Leading the Function, Leading the Service ensuring individuals develop in line with the framework's structure and the standards and behaviours expected of a modern-day Public Service leader.

2.4.1 Leading Yourself

The Leading Yourself Development Programme includes four distinct Masterclasses held throughout the year. These sessions support any individuals at the foundation level of the Service by providing them with tools and knowledge to aid in their personal development. In 2024/25, 16 sessions were scheduled in, with 11 sessions cancelled, and thus only 5 sessions delivered of this programme, with a total of 21 delegates participating, of which 1 was operational, and the rest corporate staff.

Scheduled sessions have been cancelled due to low uptake, which is a cause for concern. Several factors may be contributing to the limited participation, including ineffective communication that may not be reaching the intended audience, a potential lack of interest in personal development, geographical challenges related to remote or hard-to-reach locations, or competing priorities that staff may view as more pressing. This presents a concern for the L&D team, as significant time and resources are invested in scheduling sessions and preparing materials. Last-minute cancellations and low delegate uptake often result in session cancellations, impacting both efficiency and resource allocation.

However, for those who have completed the session, the feedback has been positive:

> Feedback gathered, gave the following results:
>
> Delegates rated the content of the programme and how it supported their ongoing development at an average rating of **4.7 out of 5**
>
> Delegates stated:
>
> > *"Excellent course, well presented. I was apprehensive before attending but the trainer instantly put me at ease and helped me get the best out of the course."*
> >
> > *"Very well presented with lots of attendee participation. Lots of ideas shared. Felt the course provided a safe space to talk openly."*
> >
> > *"I could see the importance of the circle of influence and it helped me think more about letting go of things I can't control."*

2.4.2 Leading Others

2024/25 saw the start of the second cycle of the Supervisory Leadership Pathways, 'Leading Others'. This programme provides leadership and management development training, aimed at enhancing awareness of effective leadership across the Service. It also focuses on upskilling participants and expanding their knowledge in key leadership areas, aligning with strategic themes and preparing the first line leaders i.e. Supervisory.

Following a comprehensive review of feedback from delegates who participated in the initial roll-out of this programme, the L&D team undertook a structured evaluation of the content, delivery methods, and overall accessibility of the programme. Informed by this analysis, several key improvements were implemented. These included modifications to increase engagement and inclusivity, with a particular focus on supporting individuals with neurodiverse traits. This continuous improvement approach reflects the organisation's commitment to embedding inclusive learning practices that recognise and value cognitive diversity.

Key changes:
- Expanded Face-to-Face Learning: Increased in-person sessions from two days to five, in response to delegate feedback indicating that face-to-face learning was more enjoyable, engaging, and conducive to deeper understanding.
- Streamlined E-Learning Content: Developed two bespoke e-learning modules to replace the NFCC SLDP content, reducing the required online learning from approximately 300 hours to just 4 hours, significantly improving accessibility and efficiency.

- Introduced Micro-Teach Sessions: Incorporated micro-teach components to accommodate diverse learning styles and promote more interactive, learner-centred engagement.

By making these development programmes more accessible, we not only support individual growth but also strengthen the collective leadership capability of the Service. This is essential for driving a positive organisational culture, improving performance, and enhancing service delivery to our communities.

The Team successfully delivered 10 cohorts for this programme (2 were cancelled due to low uptake in numbers), with 55 delegates in total, a 51% decrease from the previous year. The delegates included a mix of 9 Corporate staff and 46 Operational staff. Below is an illustration of this, year on year, clearly showing a decline in numbers.
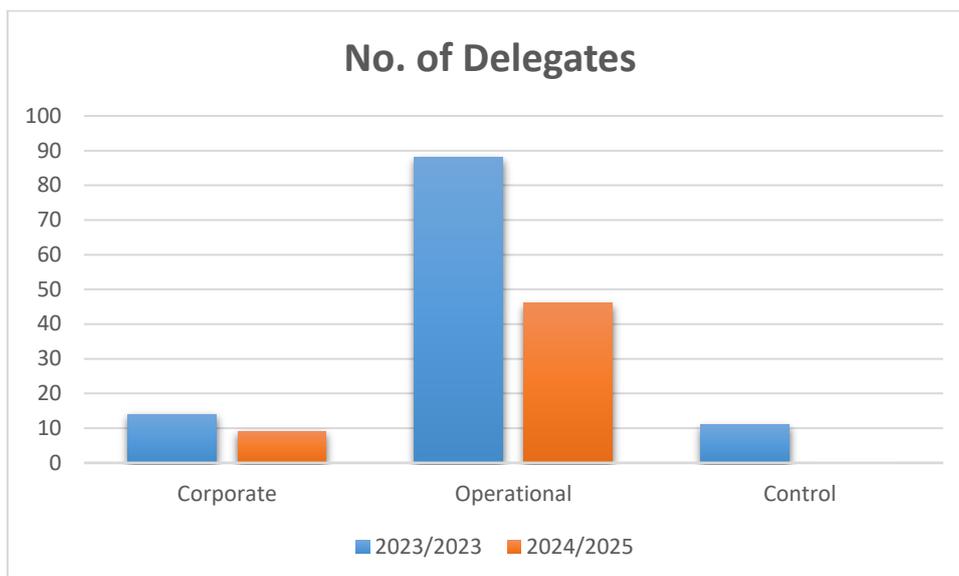
Several factors may be contributing to the significant decline in delegate participation in the programme:

- Change in Eligibility Criteria: A decision was made for the programme to be completed after the promotional process, meaning it is no longer a prerequisite, which may have reduced motivation to enrol.
- Initial Surge in Participation: A large number of leaders completed the programme during its first year, resulting in a natural decrease in demand in subsequent years.
- Underdeveloped Learning Culture: The current learning culture appears to be largely driven by external incentives such as promotions and pay progression, rather than a focus on personal growth, continuous development, or self-improvement.

In 2024/25, 18 delegates have submitted their portfolios, with 10 having received a pass mark. These portfolios are submitted into the L&D Team for it to be assessed and quality assured.

From the feedback gathered from the attending delegates, the following results were obtained.

Content supported their ongoing development: **Average rating of 4.7 out of 5**

General feedback from delegates:

"The content of the course was very relevant to me personally, the information I've obtained over the last 2 days will stand me in good stead at this stage in my development from a Firefighter to a Supervisory Management".

"Good course with interesting views expressed good to reflect on different styles of management.".

"Good to have discussions around coaching and mentoring, seeing other peoples views on the subject".

At the conclusion of the 10 programme cohorts, overall feedback indicates that the programme is perceived as engaging and enjoyable, with the micro-teach component highlighted as a particularly effective and valued element. Delegates consistently reported feeling better prepared for the promotional process upon completion. Notably, in the most recent Crew Manager (CM) promotion process, 41 out of the 58 successful candidates had completed the development programme, representing a positive 71%, which suggests a strong correlation between programme participation and success at promotional process.

However, there has been a significant decline in applications for this development programme in 2024/25, primarily as the programme is no longer a requirement for eligibility in the Crew Manager promotional process. This may result in significant knowledge and skills gaps for individuals promoted into leadership roles, as they may lack the necessary training to effectively prepare for these positions.

Portfolio Completion

Following the completion of two full cycles of the development programme, it was stipulated that portfolios should be submitted to the L&D team within six months of the final face-to-face session. However, after the programme was no longer a mandatory eligibility requirement for the promotional process, portfolio submissions declined significantly. To date, a total of 93 delegates across both cycles have not submitted their portfolios, and these are now considered overdue.

Future for Leading Others Development Programme

A clear decision is required to ensure that aspiring and newly promoted leaders are equipped with the necessary leadership and management training. Completion of this development programme provides a strong foundation for effective leadership within the Service. Therefore, it is recommended that the programme be made mandatory as part of the eligibility criteria for future promotional processes.

It is also essential to encourage a culture where development is viewed as a personal and professional responsibility, not merely a requirement for promotion or financial progression. Line managers should be held accountable for supporting their delegates in the timely completion of portfolios, ensuring they are well-prepared for the roles they aim to undertake. The programme will continue to be reviewed regularly, with improvements implemented where appropriate. These updates will align with the Service's core values and our ongoing commitment to developing our people to enhance organisational effectiveness and service delivery.

2.4.3 Leading the Function

Based on feedback received following the first cycle of the programme, efforts were made to streamline and enhance accessibility. Similar to the supervisory programme, delegates reported that face-to-face sessions were more conducive to effective learning. In response, and in collaboration with the University of South Wales (USW), the structure was revised to increase in-person delivery from two to four days. One of these sessions now includes an action learning set to support the completion of assignments.

While some delegates have found the assignments lengthy, challenging, or not directly aligned with their current roles, it is important to recognise the broader intent of the programme. As future middle managers, delegates are encouraged to adopt a wider perspective and embrace the transformational change required in leadership roles. It is also important to note that this programme is aligned to an ILM Level 5 Award, which includes an expectation of independent research and self-directed learning as part of the assignment process.

The Middle Management Leadership and Management Development Programme scheduled four cohorts for delivery in 2024/25. However, one cohort has been rescheduled twice due to low enrolment and is now planned for completion in 2025/26. To date, 28 delegates have completed the programme, 26 from Operational roles and 2 from Control. Of these, 18 delegates have successfully passed their portfolios.

In 2023/24, each cohort was filled to capacity. However, similar to the Leading Others programme there has been a decline in applications for the Pathway programme in 2024/25, largely because completing the programme is no longer a requirement for eligibility in the Station Manager promotional process.

As with the *Leading Others* programme, a clear decision is needed to ensure leaders receive timely and effective leadership development. Making this programme a mandatory prerequisite for progression is a logical and strategic step to support that goal.

2.4.4 Leading the Service

The Strategic Leadership Programme named "The Pioneer Programme" was launched early this year in January 2025. This is the last programme to launch as part of the Leadership and Management Development programmes, with the delivery of this programme set to conclude in Summer 2025.

This strategic level residential development programme was co-designed in partnership with the University of South Wales (USW) and developed collaboratively with the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.
Although Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service did not nominate any delegates for this cohort, both South Wales and North Wales Fire and Rescue Services have actively participated, reflecting a shared commitment to building strategic leadership capacity across Wales.

This current cohort includes 9 delegates from SWFRS and 3 delegates from NWFRS. In 2024/25, so far 7 sessions have been completed, with the rest of the sessions to be concluded in 2025/26.

The programme is specifically tailored for current and aspiring strategic leaders, equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and mindset required to lead effectively at a senior level within the fire and rescue sector. It addresses complex organisational challenges and equips participants to proactively engage with sector-wide issues such as workforce reform, cultural change, community risk, and inter-agency collaboration.

The re-introduction of this programme represents a significant step forward in supporting succession planning and strengthening leadership resilience across the Welsh fire services. It aligns with national leadership frameworks and responds directly to the evolving expectations placed on fire and rescue services in a rapidly changing public service landscape.

2.4.5 Overview of Leadership Training

There has been a decline in the number of delegates completing leadership development programmes. The Supervisory programme saw a 55% decrease, while the Leading the Function programme experienced a 10% decrease in completions.

Despite this downward trend, the L&D team remains committed to delivering these programmes and ensuring they are accessible to all who wish to participate. This ongoing provision reflects L&D's strong commitment to embedding leadership development as a core element of the Service's professional growth strategy.

2.5   **MASTERCLASSES**

The L&D Team offer a variety of different Masterclasses, from Understanding and Dealing with Change, Resilience and Emotional Intelligence to An Introduction to Coaching and Mentoring. These are short courses of half, full or two days long to suit various needs across the organisation following an individual's Personal Review.

Throughout the year, a total of 16 Masterclasses were delivered, including two sessions provided by external providers, with an overall attendance of 134 delegates. The attendees included 42 from corporate staff, 3 from control staff, and 89 from operational staff. Additionally, two Masterclasses were scheduled but ultimately cancelled due to low enrolment.
The graphics below show a slight increase in the number of sessions delivered compared to the previous year, with a 14% rise in delegate attendance year on year.
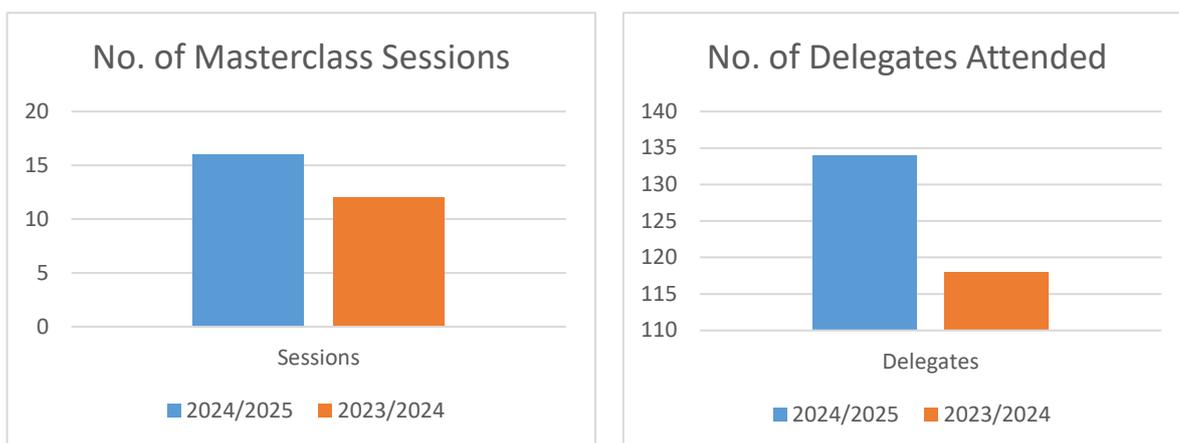
It's important to keep in mind that, since these Masterclasses are considered developmental rather than essential, the Service currently does not cover the cost for operational staff to attend if the sessions fall outside of their rota days. This further reduces the incentive for individuals to sign up for these Masterclasses. However, the L&D team has implemented actions to shift the perception of these Masterclasses and make them more accessible. For instance, future sessions will be held at various locations, not just at HQ, which should attract more participants, particularly those for whom distance or location was previously a barrier. Additionally, with the ongoing drop-in sessions, the team is working to highlight the benefits of attending a Masterclass, such as personal development and self-promotion, to help individuals see the value in investing in their growth.

These masterclasses have received positive feedback averaging a score of 4.8 /5 in relation to how they support develop and how relevant they are to an individual's career.

For 2025/26, the team have been hard at work in creating and looking to launch new masterclasses, such as, Skills for Interviewers, Presentation Skills, Professional Report Writing & Communication, Neurodiversity Awareness and Beginners Welsh.

2.6   **ADDITIONAL LEARNING FUND (ALF)**

The Additional Learning Fund (ALF) has been used by individuals across the organisation for learning or development opportunities that can be fully or partially funded by the L&D budget. In 2024/25, 45 individuals took advantage of the ALF, with 9 from operational roles and 36 from corporate roles. In total, £46,799.13 was used from the ALF budget. The ALF budget was allocated to a variety of activities, including sending our colleagues to the national Women in the Fire Service (WFS) event, training for CIPD Level 5 and 3, CIPPs and other qualifications and attending various conferences and seminars. This helps to advance learning and to expand learning opportunities.

There have been 7 additional applications for the ALF, which were rejected for various reasons, resulting in a total cost of £14,070.

WFS Event:

2.7   **Learning Management System**

The E-Hyb is in it's second cycle, where the platform is available and accessible to all personnel across the Service. The E-Hyb enables comprehensive course management, allowing users to create, upload, and organise content for delivery to learners. It also provides tools for learner enrolment and management, tracking and reporting, assessments, and testing. Additionally, the system supports certifications and compliance training, ensuring learners meet both regulatory and organisational standards.

Currently, we offer three mandatory e-learning modules: Introduction to Unconscious Bias, Inclusive Language, and Inclusive Leadership. The L&D Team works closely with other departments to meet industry regulatory standards, such as collaborating with the Service's Safeguarding Lead, Melanie Evans, to roll out updated Safeguarding training Service-wide in compliance with UK Safeguarding requirements and legal regulations.

As it stands, the completion rates for 2024/2025 are shown below:
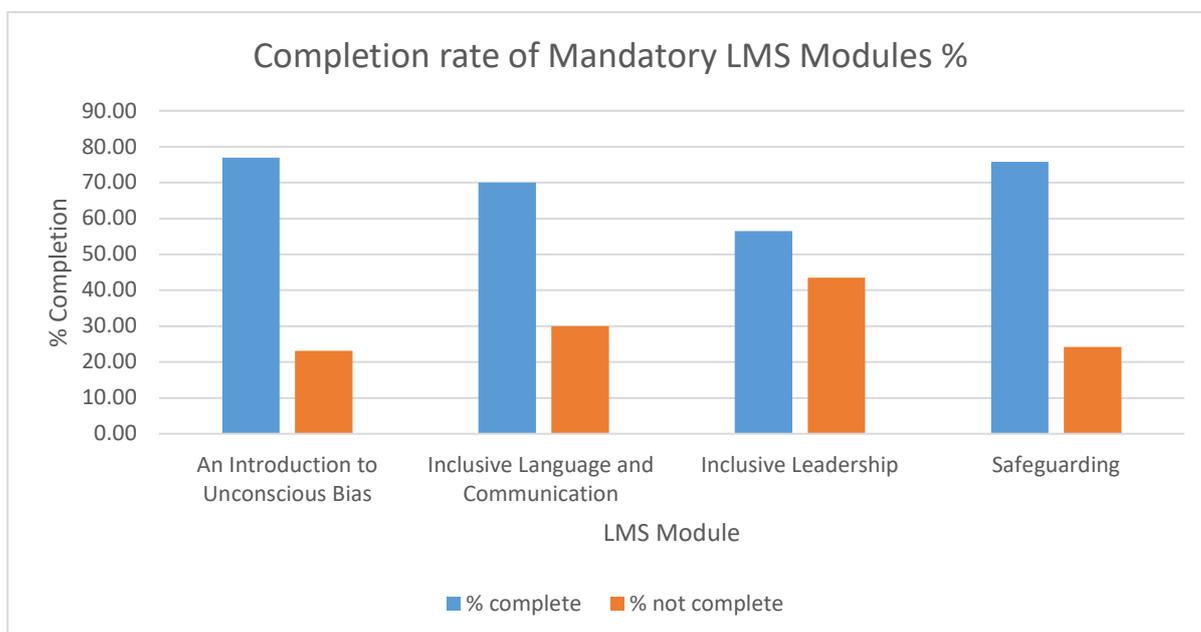
The data highlights significant rates of incomplete mandatory training, indicating a clear need to increase focus on ensuring all staff across the Service complete these essential modules. This is not solely for reporting purposes, but more importantly, to ensure everyone has a solid understanding of key topics that are relevant to their roles. Completing this training will better equip individuals to navigate these subjects in their day-to-day work.

Further work around the E-HYB will continue to grow as we expand e-learning options across the organisation throughout future years to come.

2.8 OVERALL LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE

Together with Pathways training days, Masterclass sessions, and other general training, the table below shows an uplift of 140% in training days from the previous year However, the number of people that have received training has decreased by 18.5%.

This shows that, despite the significant increase in training days, each day is being under-utilised, leading to a potential waste in resource as each session could be filled more to capacity. However, this also shows commitment from the L&D team, in ensuring the sessions are scheduled in and run with at least the minimum number of delegates, as to not disappoint delegates and to ensure those who want the development, gets it. The team trained 247 individuals despite being a small team of 3 trainers.

Course	Sessions		Cohort		Cancelled/Rescheduled		Delegates	
	2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025
Leading Yourself	7	5	NA	NA	3	11	41	21
Leading Others	24	50	12	10	0	2	113	55
Leading the Function	6	40	3	4	0	2	31	28
Leading the Service	NA	7	NA	1	NA	0	NA	9
Masterclasses	12	16	NA	NA	0	2	118	134
Total	49	118	15	15	3	17	303	247

The current data underscores the urgent need for clear decisions regarding the payment structure for developmental Masterclass sessions, particularly for operational staff attending outside of scheduled rota days. Without this support, engagement and attendance are likely to remain low. Additionally, a more robust approach is needed to address course cancellations, including holding individuals accountable for last-minute withdrawals, which result in wasted time and resources. A cultural shift in the approach to learning and development is essential. Staff must recognise that registering for a Masterclass is a commitment, and attendance should be expected except in exceptional circumstances, with appropriate notice given to the L&D team.

There is also a pressing need to formalise leadership development by making relevant training mandatory for all current and aspiring leaders. While it is encouraging that many participants engage positively with the programmes, there must be greater emphasis on completing them in full, this includes submitting required portfolios on time. Line managers play a key role in this process and must actively support their team members by providing guidance and protected time during work hours to complete programme requirements.

In addition, more focused action is needed to ensure that mandatory training modules on the Learning Management System are completed by all staff. Compliance should not be optional; it is a requirement aligned with the Service's core values and legal obligations. Line managers must be held accountable for ensuring their teams meet these standards.

Finally, the narrative surrounding Personal Reviews must evolve in line with the organisation's culture change. PR conversations should be conducted with integrity and purpose, with development objectives actively tracked and supported. Line managers must again be held accountable for the quality and consistency of these reviews to ensure they drive meaningful growth and development across the service.

3.   CHALLENGES

3.1   Leadership Training Drop Off:

During 2024/25 the Service removed the requirement for leadership training to be undertaken prior to entering a promotional process. Since this decision was made the team have seen a significant decline in delegate applications for the Leading Others Pathway and for the Leading the Function (middle) Pathway. As a result, fewer aspiring leaders are pursuing the crucial leadership and management training, leading to individuals seeking promotions who may not be fully prepared for leadership roles. This is extremely worrying and is an area that needs addressing as we move forward. This decline has meant that the L&D team have found it difficult to fill scheduled courses into 2024/25 due to low numbers of attendees. It is recommended that Heads of Service are to actively champion and encourage participation in these programmes. Their advocacy can significantly increase applications by reshaping how we talk about leadership development, as a checkbox for promotion, but as an investment in becoming a stronger, more resilient, and more impactful leader. Changing the narrative in this way helps future leaders understand that these programmes equip them not just for the next level, but to become the kind of leader who uplifts teams, drives better outcomes, and navigates challenges with confidence and integrity.

3.2 Payment for upskilling of Uniformed staff:

The Service currently does not pay for Uniformed colleagues at FF to WM level to attend Masterclasses or general soft skills training to support their ongoing development (Leadership however is funded). Therefore, we see fewer of our operational colleagues coming forward to attend non-mandatory courses than their Control or Corporate counterparts. Although this has a serious financial cost it would be good to look at how we encourage individuals to drive up their soft skills training especially in light of the findings of the Morris Review.

3.3 Non-essential/ optional development participation and sign up

The current low attendance figures, particularly for masterclasses and leadership development, highlight a gap, not just in uptake, but in how learning is perceived. Adopting a model of "mandated learning" can be a powerful lever for driving both participation and meaningful development across the organisation, not through enforcement, but by shifting how we value and embed learning into our culture. By introducing a mandated model, we signal a clear organisational commitment: that continuous development is not optional for growth, but a shared responsibility and expectation for all. However, mandating participation shouldn't feel punitive or top-down. It should be framed as an investment in our people, with clear connections to personal growth, better leadership, and improved service outcomes. When learning becomes a core part of how we operate, not an add-on, it creates a culture where development is seen as empowering, not burdensome. This approach will require us to enhance the learning offer, making it more relevant, engaging, and accessible, and to support managers and leaders to actively promote and role-model participation. Over time, this cultural shift will help ensure that learning is not something we have to make people do, but something they expect, value, and seek out for themselves.

3.4 Personal Reviews

One of the ongoing challenges with Personal Review (PR) completion rates stems from the fact that they are not currently embedded as a core, accountable responsibility for line managers. Without clear expectations or consequences, PRs can too easily become deprioritised or seen as a tick-box exercise, rather than the valuable tool they are intended to be.
To truly shift the culture, we need to reframe the narrative around PRs, not as an administrative task, but as a critical part of how we support, engage, and grow our people. PRs should be moments for honest, meaningful conversations about development, wellbeing, behaviours, and performance. They are an opportunity to strengthen relationships, align expectations, and show staff they are seen, supported, and valued.

For that reason, it is recommended that conducting a PR becomes a mandatory objective for all line managers, not to enforce compliance, but to reinforce a cultural standard, that everyone, without exception, deserves the time and space to reflect, develop, and be heard. This is about embedding a mindset that quality development and dialogue are part of what makes us a strong and people-focused organisation. While we are formalising this as an expectation, the way we communicate it is crucial. It's not about enforcing a rule, it's about setting a standard that reflects who we are and what we stand for. By making PRs non-negotiable in practice, but values-led in purpose, we can ensure they become something people see the value in, not just the requirement.

Proposed Mandatory Objective for Line Managers:

As a line manager within SWFRS, I will demonstrate accountable and values-led leadership by:

- *Ensuring that all team members receive a timely and meaningful Personal Review (PR) within the reporting period, with a focus on personal development, wellbeing, performance, and behaviours, conducted with integrity and aligned to our organisational values.*
- *Monitoring and ensuring full completion of all mandatory EDI training modules across my team, reinforcing our commitment to an inclusive and respectful working environment.*
- *Meeting or exceeding all agreed performance objectives relevant to my role and team, proactively addressing challenges and contributing to the continuous improvement of our service.*

Through this, I will help to create a culture of accountability, growth, and inclusion, where people feel valued, supported, and empowered to perform at their best.

4. IMPLICATIONS

There are no contra implications for this report.

4.1 Community and Environment

4.1.1. There are no implications in this arena for L&D activities as predominantly activity is internally focused. What can be evidenced in the area however is the teams responses to enabling an inclusive learning culture that support the Wellbeing of Future generations act through effective provision of training and which in turn supports the aims in delivering a more economical Wales through skills training and uplifting of competencies. All aspects of training delivery are consulted upon with the relevant representative bodies.

4.2 **Regulatory, Strategy and Policy**

4.2.1 There are no impacts of implications for regulatory strategic or policy initiatives as this paper is solely an update on progress for the year 2024/2025. All future changes that have impacts will be submitted though a separate paper with an accompanying business case.

4.3 **Resources, Assets and Delivery**

4.3.1 There are no additional resources being requested as a result of this report, nor any major amendments to assets or delivery as this report is for information only.

5. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

5.1 This report has outlined the progress to date for 2024/25 for the Learning and Development team. There are no key additional areas arising as a result of this report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 That Commissioners note the content of this report.

Contact Officer:		ACO Alison Reed	
Background Papers		**Date**	**Source / Contact**
None			

Appendices	
None	

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE   AGENDA ITEM NO 11
11 JUNE 2025

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE SUPPORT

WHISTLEBLOWING, COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS, AND CONCERNS REPORT

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED BY THE HEAD OF CORPORATE SUPPORT
REPORT PRESENTED BY THE HEAD OF CORPORATE SUPPORT, WAYNE THOMAS

SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of whistleblowing disclosures, complaints and compliments received by the Service during the financial year 2024/25. It also presents an overview of concerns raised through the FRS Speak-Up service during 2024/25. Due to the sensitive nature and GDPR considerations associated with this information, all information presented has been anonymised.

The key headlines are as follows:

- There were no whistleblowing disclosures in the financial year 2024/25.
- The number of complaints received by the Service has decreased by 11% compared to the previous year, from 75 to 67.
- There was one complaint escalated to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales – the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales did not pursue the complaint further.
- The number of compliments received during 2024/25 decreased by 37.5% compared to the previous year, from 112 to 70.
- The number of concerns raised via FRS Speak Up in the financial year 2024/25 was 50 (up until February 2025). This was slightly lower than the 53 complaints received during 2023/2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Commissioners consider and note the content of the report.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Service is committed to the highest standards of openness and accountability. In line with that commitment, the Service recognises that an important aspect of accountability and transparency is a mechanism to enable employees to voice concerns about breaches or failures in a reasonable and effective manner. "Whistleblowing" is the term used when an employee has a concern about danger or illegality that has a public interest aspect to it: usually because it threatens others (e.g. customers, colleagues, or the public). The Service does have a Public Interest Disclosure available to staff, which has been written to take account of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (which protects members and staff making disclosures about certain matters of concern).

1.2 The Service has a commitment to positive customer experience and is committed to the behaviours set out in our Values and sets out what behaviour our communities should expect from staff.

1.3 The importance of effectively addressing all concerns received from staff and members of the public was made within The Morris Report and will therefore continue to be a priority for the Service.

1.4 In April 2023 the Service introduced a new anonymous reporting line, via FRS Speak Up.   Any member of staff or member of the public can report a concern via FRS Speak UP. All concerns are investigated, and an audit mechanism has been introduced to record decisions against each concern.   Further detail in relation to the themes and numbers of concerns raised is outlined elsewhere in this report.

1.5 This report sets out all whistleblowing disclosures, complaints and compliments received by the Service for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, and focuses on the nature of complaints and the learning they provide to inform Service improvement. The themes of all complaints are identified and analysed to ensure organisational learning. The report also captures the number of concerns raised via the FRS Speak Up reporting line.

1.6 The aim is for the Service to be sensitive to the service user and community member needs, prioritise communication and provide clear and current information.

1.7 The Service also receives several compliments from members of the public, which are reported through Routine Notice on a weekly basis.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

2.1 The Service prioritises addressing complaints to ensure that these are dealt with appropriately and efficiently. The Business Support Team monitors the number of complaints received as well as the quality and timeliness of responses.

2.2 The team works closely with Heads of Service and appropriate managers to ensure that corrective actions are put in place and learning from complaints is built into future service design. There is a strong commitment to improve responses and the aim is to reduce the number of complaints.

2.3 The Service faces several challenges in dealing with complaints, the main one being that the number of cases with added complexity has increased, where responses may need input from multiple departments.

2.4 The key headlines from complaints performance in 2024/25 are as follows:

- There were no whistleblowing disclosures in the financial year 2024/25.
- The number of complaints received by the Service has decreased by 11% compared to the previous year, from 75 to 67.
- There was one complaint escalated to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales – the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales did not pursue the complaint further.
- The number of compliments received during 2024/25 decreased by 37.5% compared to the previous year, from 112 to 70.
- The number of concerns raised via FRS Speak Up in the financial year 2024/25 was 50 (up until February 2025). This was slightly lower than the 53 complaints received during 2023/2024.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 **Community and Environment**

3.1.1 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion – all members of the public and our staff should have the appropriate mechanisms to raise concerns when they believe the Service has fallen short in our duty as a public service. We ensure that we can receive formal complaints via phone, the website, via email and via letter.

3.1.2 Well-Being Of Future Generations (Wales) Act – effectively managing and learning from complaints is fundamental to ensuring that the Service continues to work effectively within our communities. This process contributes to the well-being goal of "a Wales of cohesive communities".

3.1.3 Safeguarding – some complaints received may have safeguarding implications. All safeguarding concerns identified as part of this process are referred urgently via the appropriate channels.

3.1.4 Consultation and Communications – we formally acknowledge receipt of all complaints in writing and include an overview of what will happen next. We will maintain contact should any further information be required and ensure to notify complainants when complaints have been resolved.

3.2 **Regulatory, Strategy and Policy**

3.2.1 Legal – the Service has numerous statutory responsibilities. Complaints made may identify shortcomings in these areas – complaints are escalated to the Senior Leadership Team when received, to ensure that any potential non-compliance can be immediately resolved.

3.2.2 Financial - should the Service fail or be negligent in certain areas, litigation could arise that would not only impact on the reputation of the Service, but also have financial implications.

3.2.3 Information Management/Data Protection – complaints made often contain sensitive personal information. All information held relating to a complaint made is therefore held securely and only accessed by limited numbers of staff.

3.2.4 Health, Safety and Wellbeing - Public Interest Disclosures and complaints made may identify areas of risk to our staff or members of the public. Issues of this nature raised are escalated and investigated immediately.

3.2.5 The Morris Report – the importance of providing staff with robust mechanisms to raise complaints of improper behaviour in the workplace was identified within the report. Recommendations were proposed within the report under the heading of "Speaking Up", which stated that we need to expressly refer to and encourage speaking up within our Culture Review action plan, highlight the importance of speaking up within our procedures as part of their review and support staff that speak up and keep them safe both at and outside of work. It was also recommended that we continue using the Crimestoppers FRS Speak Up line and initiate appropriate investigations, taking appropriate actions and keeping accurate records. Our complaints and concerns process therefore ensures that staff can make complaints in a safe and confidential manner,

while the ongoing progress of their complaint will be regularly communicated to them.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

While there has been an increasing trend in the total number of complaints received and an increase in those that are complex (where responses may need input from multiple departments), the complaints process is resourced entirely from existing resources within the Service.

4. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Service receives, investigates, and resolves complaints from members of staff and the public, which are logged by the Business Support Team.

4.2 While there were fewer complaints received this year compared to the previous year (67 received this year compared to 75 during the previous year), there is an ongoing upward trend in complaints received by the Service. Monitoring this trend to identify potential repeat areas of poor performance, with a view to implement plans to increase awareness of these and to provide guidance to staff, would ultimately reduce the number of complaints received.

4.3 The second year of introducing FRS Speak Up saw a total of 50 concerns raised. 6 concerns raised in relation to misogyny (-3 compared to last year) with 10 raised in relation to discrimination/harassment (+1 compared to last year) and 0 concerns were raised in relation to fraud/corruption (-12 compared to last year). There were 0 concerns raised in relation to Health & Safety breaches (-3 compared to last year) and 16 in relation to poor/unsafe working practices (+13 compared to last year). 18 concerns were categorised as "other" (+1 compared to last year). All concerns are investigated and there is an audit showing action taken in response to each concern. Some of the concerns raised have contained very little evidence in relation to the detail of the concern and due to the requester not wanting any follow up communications, it is often difficult to fully investigate a concern. We are working with Crimestoppers to ensure that more detailed information is provided when an individual raises a concern.

5. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commissioners consider and note the content of the report.

Contact Officer:	Wayne Thomas Head of Corporate Support	
Background Papers	**Date**	**Source / Contact**
None		

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Data on whistleblowing, complaints, compliments and concerns raised via FRS Speak UP

Appendix 1: Data

Report Title – Whistleblowing, Complaints, Compliments and Concerns raised via FRS Speak UP Report

1. **Count of complaints**

The chart below shows the number of complaints received by the Service during the last 5 financial years. During 2021/22, there was a 58% increase (14) in complaints received when compared to the previous year. This was followed by a 74% increase received in 2022/23 (38 to 66), and a 14% increase received during 2023/24 compared to the previous year (66 to 75).

The Service received 67 complaints during 2024/25, which was a 11% decrease compared to the previous year (75 to 67).

|	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Count of Complaints	24	38	66	75	67
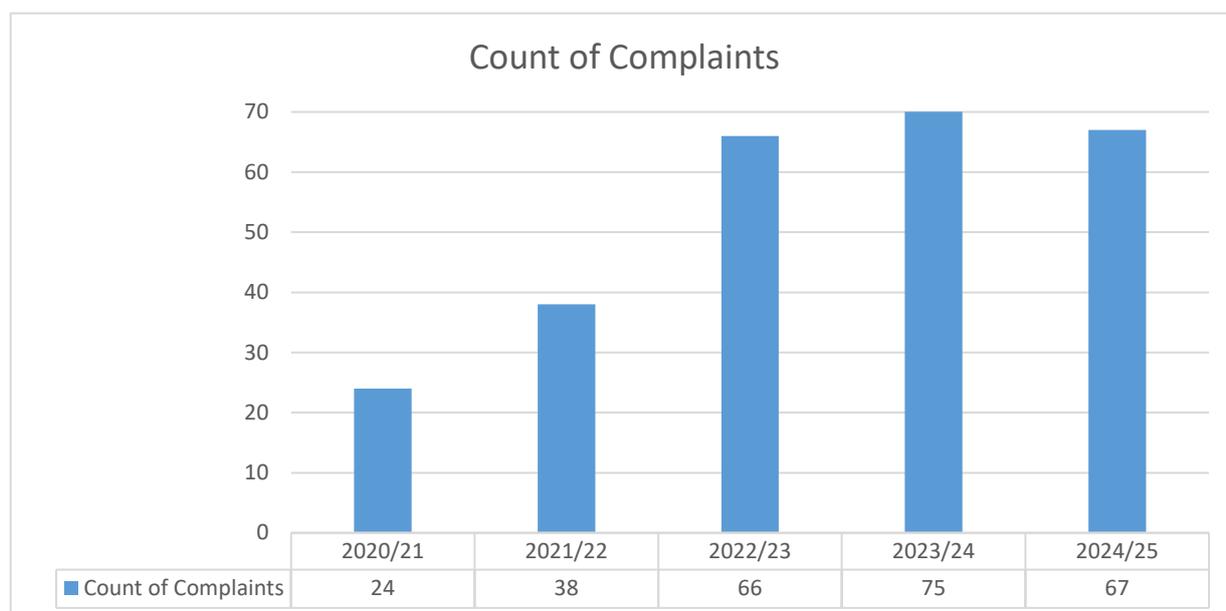
Figure 1 – A count of complaints received by the Service during the last 5 financial years.

2. **Classification of Complaints 2024/25**

All complaints recorded have been classified into four main areas:

- Behaviours
- Driving
- Service Delivery
- Miscellaneous

Complaints that have been classified as "Miscellaneous" are any complaint that does not fall into any of the other 3 categories.

Complaint Classification	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Miscellaneous	8	6	13	20	23
Service Delivery	4	5	4	12	15
Driving	2	9	8	10	9
Behaviour	10	18	41	33	20
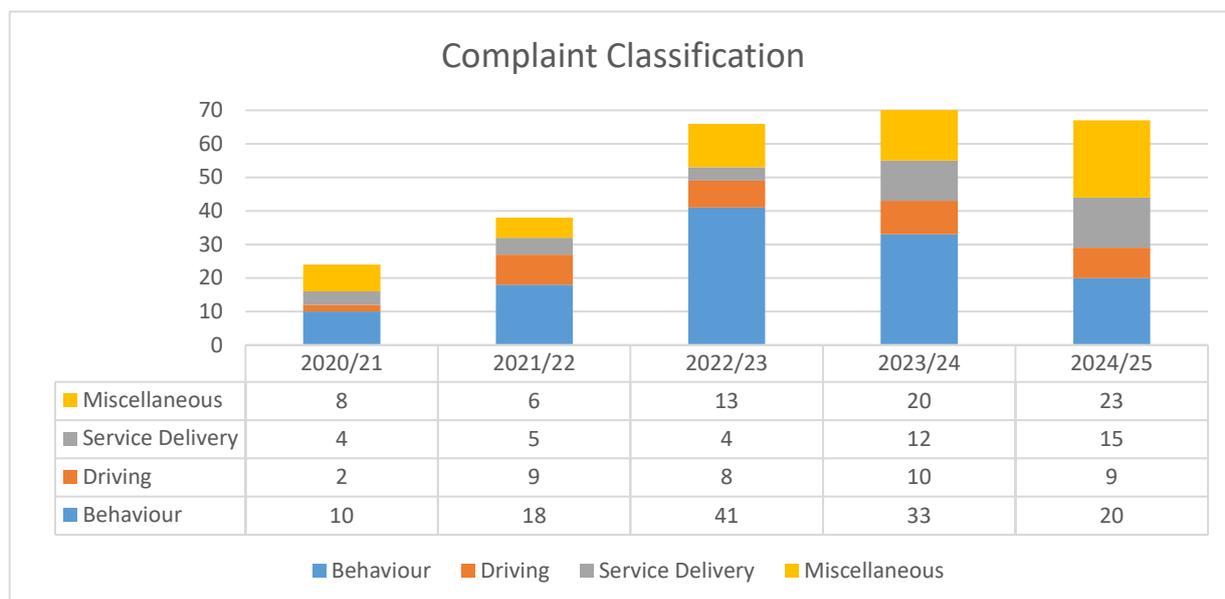
Figure 2 – A breakdown of the complaints received by the Service during the last 5 financial years, by classification.
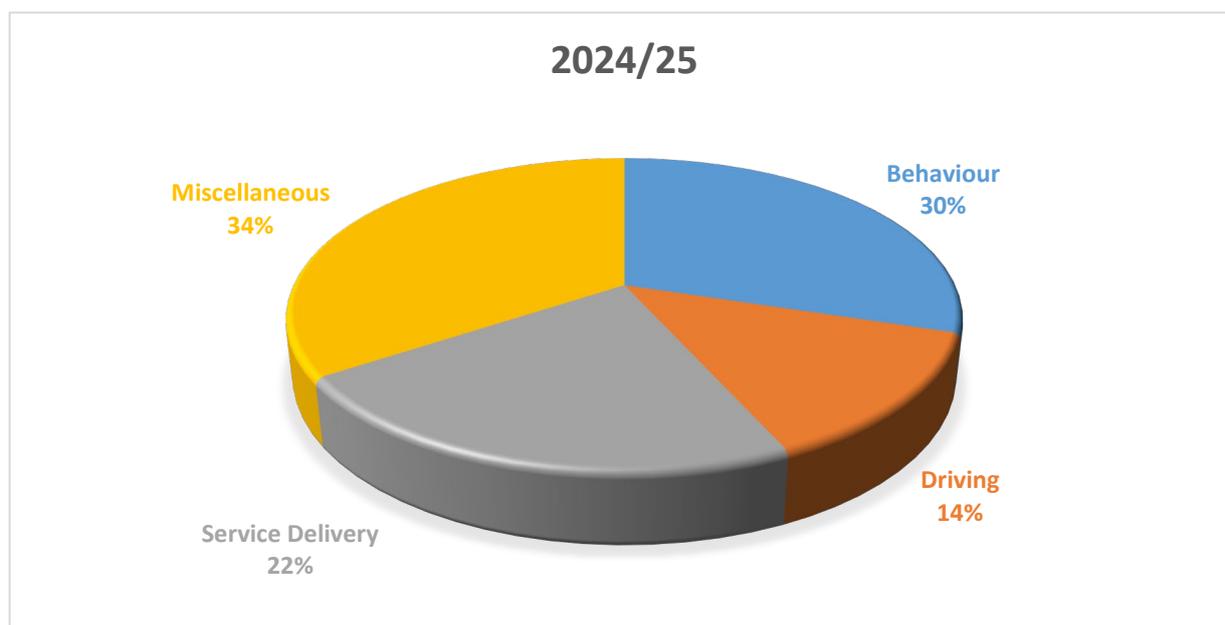

Figure 3 – A breakdown of the complaints received by the Service during 2024/25, by classification.

The Service received more complaints classed as "Miscellaneous" than each of the other categories this year. The lowest proportion of complaints received each year has either been due to "Service Delivery" or "Driving".

3. Compliments received.

The chart below shows the volume of compliments received by the Service during the last 5 financial years.

Count of Compliments

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Count of Compliments	90	151	82	112	70
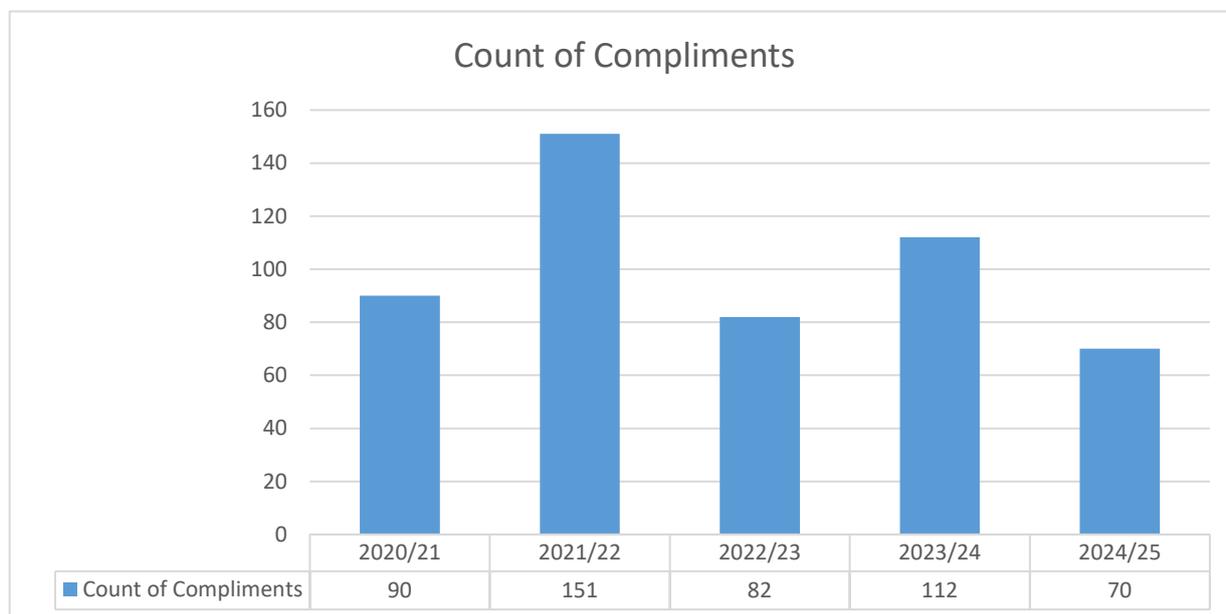
Figure 4 – A count of compliments received by the Service during the last 5 financial years.

The number of compliments received during 2024/25 decreased by 37.5% compared to the previous year, from 112 to 70. The number of compliments received during 2024/25 has been the lowest number received during the last 5 years.

The number of compliments received during each of the last 5 financial years has been higher than the number of complaints received.

4. Concerns raised via FRS Speak Up (April 2024 – February 2025)

Contact method used when raising the concern:

Contact Method			
Month	Telephone	Online	Two-way	Total
Apr-24	1	5	0	6
May-24	0	12	0	12
Jun-24	1	3	0	4
Jul-24	0	4	0	4
Aug-24	0	4	0	4
Sep-24	0	2	0	2
Oct-24	0	2	1	3
Nov-24	1	5	1	7
Dec-24	0	1	1	2
Jan-25	0	5	0	5
Feb-25	0	1	0	1
Mar-25				0
Total	3	44	3	50

Concern type:

	Report by Incident Type						
Month	Discrimination/ harrassment	Fraud/ Corruption	Health and Safety Breach	Misogyny/ VAWG	Poor/Unsafe Working Practices	Other	Total
Apr-24	1	0	0	2	0	3	6
May-24	3	0	0	2	3	4	12
Jun-24	0	0	0	0	1	3	4
Jul-24	2	0	0	0	2	0	4
Aug-24	2	0	0	0	1	1	4
Sep-24	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Oct-24	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
Nov-24	0	0	0	1	6	0	7
Dec-24	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Jan-25	0	0	0	0	2	3	5
Feb-25	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mar-25							0
Total	10	0	0	6	16	18	50

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE   AGENDA ITEM NO 12
                                                                          11 JUNE 2025

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR PEOPLE SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT ON GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINE ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR 1 APRIL 2024 TO 31 MARCH 2025

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES
REPORT PRESENTED BY HEAD OF PEOPLE SERVICES, LISA SHROLL

SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of grievance and discipline matters investigated by the Resolution Unit during the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Commissioners note the content of this report.

---

1. BACKGROUND

1.1   The main purpose of the Grievance Procedure is to ensure that individual employees who feel aggrieved about the way they have been treated either by a manager, colleague, or organisational procedure, are given the opportunity to have their issue(s) resolved in a fair and just manner.

1.2   The purpose of the Discipline Procedure is to help and encourage all employees in achieving and maintaining standards of conduct, attendance, and job performance. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all employees in dealing with discipline related matters.

1.3   Both the Grievance and Discipline Procedures are a statutory obligation under the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended 2008).

1.4   Disciplinary and Grievance cases are at present managed by the People Services Manager responsible for Culture and Engagement, supported by three Investigators.

1.5 The Service continues to address the Morris Review recommendations and as such has endeavoured to bring in additional communication avenues which employees can report unacceptable behaviour within the workplace.

1.6 The Service has aligned with new legislation to support zero tolerance to sexual harassment within the workplace.

1.7 The Service has introduced "Conflict Resolution Training" to 88 managers across both operational and corporate contracts to align management approach but also upskill the managerial workforce in soft skills.

1.8 The Service has begun a "Taking Care of Behaviours" roadshow, whereby imparting wider knowledge and expectations around the areas surrounding high disciplinary themes for example sexual harassment, bullying, vexatious allegations.

1.9 The Service has embarked on a journey to train a minimum of 8 employees to deliver mediation training to ACAS accredited level.

1.10 Please note that the breakdown of the figures contained in this report are given in general terms rather than specific case detail to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the employees concerned and are related to the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

1.11 Please note attached appendices referring to the historical grievances and disciplinary case reviews in response to Morris Review recommendations.

2. ISSUE

2.1 **Grievances**

2.1.1 During the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, 35 formal grievances were received (compared to 10 formal grievances in 2023/24) a significant rise.

2.1.2 Of the thirty-five grievances:

- 22 were received from wholetime personnel, two from On Call employees, ten were received from corporate employees and one from a control employee.
- Seven were from female employees, twenty-eight from male employees.
- Five were allegations of bullying and/or harassment.
- One was an allegation of vexatious allegations.

- One was an allegation of breach of data
- Sixteen were in relation to management decisions or policy changes.
- Seven were in relation to eligibility changes and wider promotional process'
- Five were submitted against process' relating to promotions

2.2 Disciplinaries

2.2.1 During the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, there were 53 reported alleged breaches of discipline, considerably higher than the 31 reported in FY23/24.

2.2.2 Of the 53 reported disciplinary breaches:

- 6 related to Corporate, 13 to On-Call and 34 to Wholetime employees at Firefighter level, 24 related to those in a management or ranked operational role.
- 26 breaches related to management or ranked officers, whilst 27 related to non-managerial employees.
- 9 cases related to female employees, the remaining related to male employees.

2.2.3 The issues resulting in a disciplinary investigation being launched can arise from conduct within and outside of the workplace. Of the 53 reported disciplinary breaches:

- 14 related to bullying / harassment/ abuse of position
- 12 related to conduct with potential to breach Service Core Values
- 11 relate to domestic / social behaviours / sexual harassment
- 16 relate to other allegations

2.2.4 The issues resulting in a disciplinary investigation can sometimes result in the serving of a suspension from duty, a neutral act implemented as a last resort, to protect the employee, their wellbeing, the integrity of the investigation, and the protection of witnesses and evidence.

2.2.5 The Service conducted risk assessments that resulted in a total of 28 suspensions during FY 24/25, with an additional 3 alternatives to suspension enacted.

2.2.6   Outcomes of the investigations that were concluded in the financial year, resulted in one dismissal for gross misconduct, 25 cases were still pending conclusion on 31st March 2025.

IMPLICATIONS

The following outlines the considered implications for each of the category groups below:

3.1   **Community and Environment**

3.1.1 The discipline procedure sets out fair and transparent measures for addressing conduct that falls short of the standards expected. The procedure also provides a route for employees to respond to allegations made against them.

3.1.2 The grievance procedure provides the avenue for concerns to be considered in a fair and just manner.

3.1.3 A risk assessment is completed prior to deciding to suspend an individual from the workplace.

3.1.4 Safeguarding considerations may also be made where it is deemed appropriate.

3.1.5 All procedures are equality risk assessed.

3.2   **Regulatory, Strategy and Policy**

3.2.1 These procedures are consistent with current employment law, ACAS Statutory Codes of Practice, and the relevant National Joint Council Conditions of Service (Grey and Green)

3.2.2 Information is stored and maintained in line with the Service's Data Protection procedures and Data Protection legislation.

3.3   **Resources, Assets and Delivery**

3.3.1 A restructure of the People Services Department has resulted in the bolstering of specialist resource in investigations within the Directorate.

3. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 This report presents an overview of discipline and grievance cases for the financial year 2024/2025.

4.2 In the period covered by this report, both grievances and disciplinary cases were above average. This is not unexpected given the gravitas towards education of zero tolerance, increasing awareness and promotion of reporting lines.

4.3 People Services highlight the need to clearly define the difference between complaints and grievances moving forward, in addition to the need to educate on grievance of a process rather than an overarching 'grievance submission'. Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures are currently being drafted by our employment lawyers, which are anticipated for launch early Q2/FY26. The Service is also in the process of implementing within its structure a formal Professional Standards Unit (PSU) during Q1/FY26.

4.4 The Service anticipates an overall reduction in cases over the 18-24 months with the launch of a Leadership Academy with a focus on Leadership and Personal Development, alongside projects such as the Educate to Prevent programme of training which includes:

- Taking Care of Behaviours face-to-face roadshow,
- Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation training for instructors and line managers,
- Confidentiality, GDPR and Social Media behaviours,
- Conflict Resolution

as well as the -

- Promotions Reform project,
- Introduction of a Mediation framework to encourage early resolution in line with ACAS strategy and
- Development and integration of the Professional Standards Unit

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   That Commissioners note the content of this report.

Contact Officer:	Hannah Goodchild People Services Manager	
Background Papers	**Date**	**Source / Contact**
None		
Title		

Appendices	
App 1	Historical Grievance Project Terms of Reference
App 2	Historic Case Review Project – Progress Report, May 2025.

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

Appendix 1 – Historical Grievance Project Terms of Reference

Project Title
Historic Grievance Case Review
Project Aim
A review of Historic Grievance Cases: Welsh Assembly Government action which arose from the Morris Report 2024
Terms of Reference
To 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 for the reasons identified in the report; and to ensure those cases are reopened and re-examined, leading to a fair and just outcome.
Project Background
The Morris Report, published on 3 January 2024, into the culture of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service set out a number of recommendations which the Service is currently working to address. Since the publication of the Morris Report, four Commissioners have been appointed to take over all the functions of the Fire and Rescue Authority. These changes were outlined in a letter from the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership to staff, dated 6 February 2024. This letter also set out arrangements for historic grievance cases to be reopened and re-examined.
Project Summary
This project examines a sample of historical grievance cases identified by SWFRS for review. Each review involves conducting research into the individual case, reviewing the process that was followed and all documentation available. The cases selected vary in nature, size and complexity therefore a mixed methods approach is adopted in order to gain valuable insight into each case such as; reviewing meeting transcripts, correspondence and interviewing the individuals. The results of the research are considered and analysed to produce the findings. A report is then produced and presented to the Commissioners to determine next steps. The progress and outcome of the project will be reported to the Welsh Assembly.

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

Project Parameters

The project focuses on Grievance cases from the past 7 years however, it has been agreed that certain cases will be reviewed and considered on their own merits. Therefore, there is no hard cut-off date for the case reviews but there are limitations when reviewing older cases, as listed above.

The project looks at Historic Grievance cases however a number of other cases, such as disciplinary cases, will be reviewed if specifically requested by the Commissioners / WAG / SWFRS.

The review looks at cases dating back 7 years prior to when the Morris Review commenced, that being April 2023. The majority of cases should be within the period April 2016 – April 2023.

Project Scope
In Scope

Historic Grievance Cases

31 historic grievances cases were initially identified following a desk top review. The cases were submitted as part of the Culture Review. Resource was allocated to the project in September 2024.

17 cases are due to be reviewed, 3 of which were ex-employees who contacted the Commissioners via their local Member of the Senedd.

Some cases are interlinked with current investigations. Some cases are outside of the Morris report parameters, as they relate to disciplinary matters however, the cases are being reviewed as it was felt it was ethically right to do so.

Out of Scope

- New casework (unless intrinsically linked)
- Cases dated outside of the Morris report parameters
- Disciplinary cases (unless requested Commissioners / WAG / SWFRS)

Constraints

The nature and age of each case is different and varies in level of complexity. Due to the complexity of some of the cases and that some of the events took place 10 years prior to this review, information held on SWFRS records is limited. Some of those involved in the cases have retired or left the service so access to key witnesses may be limited. One of the cases involves reviewing extensive hard copy documentation provided to SWFRS in paper form. In the absence of accurate records, it is important to highlight that these reports can only be produced based on the information available to the reviewer.

There has been reluctance from individuals to cooperate fully with the process at times however, the reviewer has worked to establish good working relationships with the individuals who are having their case reviewed.

Where an individual requires wellbeing support, the reviewer has sign posted them to internal and external resources, depending on what is available to them.

Access to documentation is the main barrier in collating information in order to conduct the reviews. The reviewer will work more closely with Information Governance going forward to access information that is not readily available on the confidential drives.

The impact on the service, due to potential outcomes, is considered in each report and risks and recommendations highlighted. Once the review project is completed, it would be worthwhile to review all outcomes and identify themes to develop an overall action plan for the service.

Review Process

A template report has been produced to standardise the case reviews as much as possible. Each report will be anonymised and redacted, where required, to ensure that the identity of the individual is protected.

Each report will include the following (if applicable):

- a fact-find and analysis of documentation available in relation to the case
- a detailed evaluation of the case
- an interview with the individual (if appropriate)
- a critical analysis of the process
- identification of risk factors
- recommendations for remediation, if appropriate, or rejection of claim
- a list of recommendations for SWFRS in order to produce an overall action plan following the conclusion of all case reviews

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

A detailed case report will be written and presented to the Commissioners for each case.

The Commissioners will then determine next steps.

Project Details

12-month project commencing from September 2024.

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

Historic Case Review Project

Progress Report

May 2025

Historical Grievance Case Review Project Progress Report

Background to the Project

The Morris Report, published on 3 January 2024, into the culture of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service set out a number of recommendations which the Service is currently working to address.

Following the publication of the Morris Report, four Commissioners were appointed to take over all of the functions of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

The changes required were outlined in a letter from the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership to staff, dated 6 February 2024. This letter also set out arrangements for historic grievance cases to be reopened and re-examined.

The project Terms of Reference required SWFRS to establish and implement a process to identify cases, during the period of covered by the report, which may have been improperly and/or unfairly dealt with for the reasons identified in the report; and to ensure those cases are re-opened and re-examined, leading to a fair and just outcome. A full copy of the project 'Terms of Reference' can be found at Appendix 1.

31 historic grievances cases were initially identified following a desk top review. Resource was allocated to the project in September 2024.

17 cases were identified to be reviewed, 3 of which were ex-employees who contacted the Commissioners via their local Member of the Senedd to request a review of their previous cases.

It was found that some of the cases are interlinked with current investigations. Some cases were found to be outside of the Morris report parameters, as they related to disciplinary matters however, it was decided that the cases would also be reviewed as it was felt it was ethically right to do so.

A similar review process has been followed for each case, but as each case varies in nature and complexity, the information included in each report varies as required.

This project has helped to establish recommendations for the review of the Services Data Retention Schedule which is currently in progress.

Limitations / Challenges faced

The nature and age of each case differs in levels of complexity. Due to the complexity of some of the cases, and that some of the events have taken place 10 years prior to this review, information held on SWFRS records was limited. Some of those involved in the cases have retired or left the service. Some case reviews have involved reviewing extensive hard copy documentation, provided to SWFRS, in paper form.

In the absence of accurate records, it is important to highlight that reviews could only be conducted based on the information available to the reviewer.

At times, there was a reluctance from individuals to cooperate fully with the process however, the reviewer worked to establish good working relationships with the individuals who are having their case reviewed and gain their trust in the review process whilst remaining impartial.

Where an individual required wellbeing support, the reviewer signposted them to internal and external resources depending on what is available to them.

Access to documentation has been the main barrier in collating information in order to conduct the reviews. The reviewer worked closely with the Information Governance department to access information that was not readily available on the People Services confidential drives.

Each report considers the impact on the service, due to potential outcomes. The reports highlight risks and recommendations for the Commissioners to consider on behalf of SWFRS. Once the review project is fully complete all outcomes will be reviewed to identify themes to develop an overall action plan for the service.

Progress Review

An update has been provided below in relation to the Historical Grievance Case Review Project progress:

17 cases were identified for review.

2 cases have been successfully closed.

2 cases are currently being reviewed by the Commissioners. The outcomes of the cases are yet to be determined.

2 cases in the process of being quality assured ahead of being put forward to the Commissioners for review.

3 cases are currently on hold due to being interlinked with current investigations.

1 individual decided to withdraw their request for a review of their case.

1 case is currently in the final stages of being reviewed.

6 cases are due for review.

Topline Summary of Outcomes

The outcome of 1 case was that there was no case to answer. The findings evidenced that although there were some learnings that had come from the review, ultimately the decision was correct, and process concluded. The Commissioners agreed with the findings and recommendations, and the outcome was communicated to the individual.

The claimant in the second case was successful in the outcome of their review. The findings showed that, although SWFRS were not at fault for decisions made at the time, that it would be fair to award compensation to the individual. The service is currently planning to fully resolve the issue with the individual formally.

Future Activities to Conclude the Project

There are 6 cases due to be reviewed with another 2 currently being on hold. The Service will need to determine the way forward with the 2 cases on hold and decide whether they should be considered with the current ongoing grievance cases.

The 6 cases that are due for review are currently being prioritised and will be conducted within the agreed 12-month timeframe for the scope of the project. The last 6 cases will be reviewed in line with the terms of reference.

General Improvements Identified

Due to the nature of the project, it is not appropriate to discuss the recommendations of individual case matters. General improvements have been identified and will form part of the final report when the project has been concluded.

General improvements identified involve:

- Training and skills development
- Process improvement
- Policy development
- Correspondence and case management improvement
- Refining of the services data retention schedule
- Establishing Joint Fire Control procedures with Mid & West Fire Service

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE   AGENDA ITEM NO 13
                                                11 JUNE 2025

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH UNIT (OHU) ACTIVITY REPORT – 1 APRIL 2024 TO 31 MARCH 2025

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES
REPORT PRESENTED BY PEOPLE SERVICES MANAGER, AMELIA O'SULLIVAN

SUMMARY
This OHU Activity Report spans the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The report provides data on services and expenditure, updates on Occupational Health initiatives and an outline of strategic development.

RECOMMENDATIONS
That Commissioners note the content of this report.

---

1. BACKGROUND

1.1   This is the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) Activity Report covering 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 showing some comparisons to the previous reporting period.

1.2   The report provides data on services and expenditure, updates on Occupational Health initiatives and an outline of strategic development.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

2.1   The Occupational Health Team consists of two part-time Occupational Health Physicians; Senior Occupational Health Nurse and Occupational Health Nurse (full time); Senior Health and Fitness Adviser and Health and Fitness Adviser (full time); Administrative support is provided by a Senior Medical Administrator, two Medical Secretaries and one Administrative Assistant. Some services (physiotherapy, investigations, specialist advice and intervention and counselling/psychotherapy) are provided through an outsourced / partnership arrangement.

2.2   The aim of OHU in South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is to protect, promote, and maintain the health, safety, and wellbeing of all staff, both operational and non-operational. Firefighting is a physically and mentally demanding profession, so ensuring personnel are fit for duty and supported in their health is critical for both individual performance and public safety.

2.3   The activities of the OHU span a wide range of services as detailed in Appendix 1. Case management, routine medicals, pre-employment medicals and the work involved in progressing with the investigation and treatment of incapacitating or potentially incapacitating medical conditions is the core element of services provided.

3.   CONSULTATIONS

Table 1. Provides a breakdown of consultation categories for the period 2024/2025. (Blue 2023/2024). Health and Fitness activity is captured in Table 2.

APPOINTMENT TYPE	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
Routine Medical Surveillance WDS/ RDS	77	119	62	71	**329**
Routine Medical Surveillance AUX	0	1	1	1	**3**
Asbestos Check	0	62	36	40	**138**
First Appointment Telcons	48	54	55	57	**214**
First Appointment Face to Face	50	92	71	86	**299**
Follow Up Appointment Telcons	160	162	201	179	**702**
Follow Up Appointment Face to Face	49	48	52	49	**198**
Physiotherapy Face to Face	89	95	98	93	**375**
Physiotherapy Telcons	2	3	1	0	**6**
D&A Pre Employment	16	5	11	3	**35**
Recruit Pre Employment *	27	52	50	26	**155**
Counselling * (inc Tel Cons)	168	134	135	160	**597**
Spirometry	12	2	10	12	**36**
Audio	8	12	8	9	**37**
BP	2	2	8	0	**12**
TOTAL APPOINTMENTS	**708**	**843**	**799**	**786**	**3136 (3159)**

The number of appointments remained consistent with the previous reporting period.

Table 2. Health and Fitness Advisers activity 2024/2025 (Blue 2023/2024)

APPOINTMENT TYPE	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
Routine Fitness Tests	147	216	205	234	802
Fitness Re-Tests	12	6	3	14	35
Functional Assessments	23	20	16	23	82
Health & Fitness Support	2	3	7	6	18
Recruitment Assessment Days	9	1	2	1	13
Recruitment/Educational Events	0	1	7	2	10
Pre-Employment Fitness Assessment	29	52	52	27	160
TOTAL APPOINTMENTS	**222**	**299**	**292**	**307**	**1120 (1146)**

The overall number of health and fitness appointments is consistent with the previous reporting period. To support the recruitment of operational staff, the number of recruitment assessment days has increased during the current reporting period. As a result, there has also been a corresponding rise in the number of pre-employment fitness assessments completed.

A functional assessment provides critical benefits in confirming a firefighter's fitness to return to work following injury or illness. This comprehensive evaluation measures the individual's physical capabilities—such as strength, endurance, flexibility, and mobility—against the essential job demands of firefighting. By simulating real-world tasks, the assessment helps determine whether the firefighter can safely and effectively perform operational duties. It reduces the risk of re-injury, protects coworkers and the public. Ultimately, it ensures a safe, confident, and sustainable return to duty. During this reporting period, **82** functional assessments were completed, up from **37** in the previous period.

Table 3. Referrals by type received for 2024/2025 (Blue 2023/2024)

	1	2	3	4	
REFERRALS	QUARTERS				TOTAL
2024-25	**164**	**290**	**204**	**222**	**880 (617)**
LGV	26	39	26	36	**127**
Management Referral	17	40	53	57	**167**
Sickness Absence	48	64	53	49	**214**
Self-Referral	10	9	12	10	**41**
Follow Up from RMS (including asbestos checks)	45	133	43	58	**279**
HFA to Medical Advisor	0	0	0	2	**2**
Other (including NU Recruits)	18	5	17	10	**50**

There were **9** Cases referred to the Independent Qualified Medical Practitioner in 2024/2025 compared to **8** in 2023/2024

4.   INVESTIGATION/TREATMENT SERVICES

4.1   Since 2001 the Fire & Rescue Authority agreed to allocate funds for a contingency initiative to reduce the costs to the Service arising from delays in NHS investigation and treatment services. Funds are used when the projected costs to SWFRS and ultimately the public of any NHS delay, are estimated to be considerably more than the cost of investigation or treatment that is available on a private basis.

Table 4. Provides the Contingency Budget Expenditure 2024/25 (Blue 2023/24)

SERVICE	NUMBER	COST (£)
Surgical Procedures	1	£5,409 *see table 4.1 for more detail
Specialist Referrals	23	£6,766 (Average cost per referral £294)
Scans and X-Rays	6	£2,305 (Average cost per scan £384)
TOTAL	**30** **160**	**£14,480** **£88,229**

Table 5. Breakdown of single Surgical Procedure (Shoulder) authorised during reported period

	NHS	Private
Anticipated delay in treatment	24 Months	3-4 weeks
Recovery timescale	4 Months	4 Months
Approx.Total of absence from Operational role	**28 Months**	**5 Months**

Due to a year on year overspend, during November 2023, referrals for private treatment were scrutinised and a medical fund review, which facilitated a cost benefit analysis was introduced. The Service is currently exploring the introduction of salary sacrifice private healthcare as a more value added alternative that will benefit a higher number of employees than those benefitting from individual referrals. The project team is currently collaborating with other Welsh FRS to explore opportunities to maximise purchasing power.

5. INVOLVEMENT AND SPECIALIST ADVICE TO ORGANISATION

5.1 The Occupational Health Physicians and Occupational Health Nurses may be required to provide specialist Occupational Health input into organisational policy development and support the Service in several initiatives.

5.2 The following demonstrate initiatives within this reporting period where specialist advice has been provided by the Occupational Health Clinicians.

- Health & Safety Committee
- 'Your Health' Delivery Group
- Post Incident Support Review Group
- Ill Health Capability Panel
- Claims Reduction Group
- Continuous review of vaccination requirements for Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and International Search and Rescue (ISAR).
- Contaminants Working Group
- Control of Noise at Work Regulations.

6. PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICE

6.1 Musculoskeletal conditions and injuries are the leading causes of sickness absence and reduced productivity within SWFRS. Prompt access to physiotherapy plays a key role in supporting faster recovery from these issues

6.2 SWFRS continues to benefit from on-site physiotherapy services 1 day per week. The contract was awarded to Performance Physiotherapy through the National Procurement Service (NPS) in December 2023. They have a wide range of experience relevant to the role of the Firefighter and since joining the Service they have developed a good working relationship with the Occupational Health professionals and the Health & Fitness Advisors (HFAs). The on-site availability of a physiotherapist continues to improve the quality and efficiency of the services to staff. The physiotherapist regularly communicates with clinicians, offering timely advice on necessary investigations or treatments, which helps shorten the duration of an employee's absence from work.

7.   Employee Wellness and Mental Health Support

7.1 Psychological ill health is the second leading cause of reduced performance and sickness-related absences. SWFRS has benefited from a long-established partnership with the Department of Liaison Psychiatry at UHW, which has provided highly effective treatment for firefighters dealing with the trauma associated with Fire & Rescue Service duties, as well as other psychological health conditions, both work-related and personal. Conditions commonly referred to this service include post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, depression, panic disorder, and phobias. A significant portion of sickness absence is linked to non-occupational stressors, such as family bereavement, relationship breakdowns, caregiving responsibilities, and challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Preventative measures focus on raising awareness of stress and coping strategies, ensuring that early support is accessible through the Occupational Health Unit and counselling services.

7.2 The table below provides the number of referrals to the Department of Liaison Psychiatry in this reporting year compared to 2023/2024.

Table 6. NHS Partnership referral numbers

YEAR	NUMBER REFERRED
2024/2025 (* from June 24)	24
2023/2024	23

The table below outlines the different types of cases referred to the service.

Table 7. Cases referred by type

Cases Assessed	Number
PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)	8
Anxiety	7
Depression	4
OCD (Obsessive-compulsive disorder)	0
Stress	0
Declined therapy	1
Dropped out	3
Traumatic grief reaction	1
Signposted to other therapy	0

* Our psychotherapist was on long-term sick leave until June 2024, so we engaged CBT Cardiff during this period. They received **3** referrals at the start of the reporting period.

7.3   The capacity of individuals to manage and overcome personal stressors can be significantly improved with the help of high-quality professional counselling. Through the National Procurement Service (NPS) Framework, an external provider has been selected to offer these counselling services. The current contract includes on-site counselling available three days a week over a four-day period. This arrangement helps reduce the waiting list for counselling and increases flexibility for employees to schedule their sessions. On average, the waiting time to begin counselling is about 2-4 weeks.

Table 8 presents a detailed breakdown of the figures for this reporting year. While most appointments are conducted in person, employees also have the option to choose telephone counselling if preferred.

Table 8. Provides a summary of in-house counselling appointments.

2024-25	Appts Available per month	Slots not Filled	Attended	Unable To Attend	DNA
April	66	0	58	8	4
May	73	1	69	13	3
June	64	8	41	15	1
July	70	10	53	10	1
August	68	14	45	7	2
September	60	7	36	16	2
October	72	5	53	17	0
November	61	4	44	13	1
December	51	2	38	14	1
January	69	0	61	15	2
February	70	5	52	15	3
March	62	3	47	11	2
TOTAL	786	59	597	154	22

Unable to Attend appointments (UTA)

- The Unable to Attend (**UTA**) appointments would have been rearranged for another day. Slots available due to these cancellations would have been offered to others on the waiting list so in most cases cancellations are filled where possible.

Did Not Attend appointments (DNA)

- The Did Not Attend (**DNA**) figure is mostly due to individuals being 'forgetful' or due to the nature of their role they may have been on an emergency call and couldn't attend. A text reminder is sent out by the counselling service. There were **38** DNAs in the previous reporting period so there has been an improvement in attendance of these appointments during this reporting period.
- Given no notice for a DNA means that the counselling service would charge us for these appointment slots.
- The service recognises that some employees seeking counselling are dealing with poor mental health, including conditions such as anxiety and/or depression. Missed appointments are common in counselling services, as employees may feel overwhelmed by the prospect of attending sessions.

Appointment slots not filled

- In August 2024, one counsellor commenced maternity leave, prompting a transition to a new counsellor during the second quarter. This handover period likely contributed to an increase in unfilled appointment slots.
- Some slots are unfilled due to employee availability to attend the appointments offered to them. Some examples may be that an employee is unable to attend the first/last appointment due to childcare commitments. Another example may be that an operational member of staff may find it difficult to attend a first appointment of the day if they are coming off night shifts.

7.4   As part of the Service's ongoing commitment to employee Health & Wellbeing, an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) was launched on 1st December 2015. A new contract was awarded in August 2023 to Vivup.

    7.4.1   SWFRS has signed up to this service to provide additional support to all employees through the NPS arrangements.

    7.4.2   The EAP is on online resource that is available free of charge to all staff offering immediate information, answers, and advice on a range of workplace and personal issues.

    7.4.3   Vivup's Services include.

- **Employee Benefits Platform:**

Vivup provides a centralised, easy-to-use platform for employees to access and manage their benefits, including discounts, salary sacrifice options, and more.

- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):**

Vivup's EAP offers confidential support to employees facing personal or work-related issues. This includes access to counselling, self-assessments, and 24/7 support.

- **Wellbeing Resources:**

Vivup offers resources and tools to support employees' physical, mental, and financial wellbeing, including access to online assessments, self-help workbooks, and podcasts.

    7.4.4   The implementation of the above preventative measures, along with the professional counselling initiative, plays a key role in

enhancing employees' mental health and wellbeing while reducing sickness-related absences in SWFRS.

8.   AWARENESS RAISING EVENTS/INITIATIVES

8.1   Since July 2024 every work location has been provided with blood pressure monitors.

Providing blood pressure monitors to workplaces offers several benefits:

1. **Early Detection**: Employees can monitor their blood pressure regularly, leading to early detection of potential health issues like hypertension, which can be managed more effectively with timely intervention.
2. **Health Awareness**: Promotes awareness about cardiovascular health, encouraging employees to take preventative measures and adopt healthier lifestyles.
3. **Improved Productivity**: Healthy employees are more productive, and regular monitoring can prevent long-term health issues that may result in absenteeism.
4. **Reduced Healthcare Costs**: By helping employees manage their health, employers can reduce long-term healthcare costs related to chronic conditions like heart disease.
5. **Employee Well-being**: Showing care for employees' health can improve morale, job satisfaction, and retention rates.
6. **Stress Reduction**: Monitoring blood pressure can help identify stress-related issues, allowing for timely intervention to manage work-related stress.

Overall, it helps create a healthier and more productive work environment.

8.2   Occupational Health Nurses now participate in the induction days for both crew managers and watch managers. During the presentation, they share valuable information about the Occupational Health Services available to all staff, including guidance on when and how to refer an employee to the Service. Additionally, the session covers three scenarios that managers might face: managing an employee with poor mental health, addressing fitness concerns, and supporting employee wellbeing after an incident. These sessions have been positively received.

8.3   The Occupational Health Team, as part of the Your Health group, will collaborate with other members to contribute to health awareness days, using the NHS national campaigns calendar for guidance.

8.4   The Occupational Health Nurses participate in the physical and practical sessions organised by recruitment. During these sessions, they conduct basic medical tests and provide guidance on the pre-employment medicals they will be required to pass.

8.5 Occupational Health clinicians consistently offer health promotion and guidance to employees during routine medical check-ups and consultations.

9. FRAMEWORK FOR POST CRITICAL INCIDENT SUPPORT

9.1 The nature of the work of a Fire and Rescue Service is such that attending traumatic incidents is an unavoidable aspect of the job.

9.2 Post-incident support for fire and rescue services is a crucial aspect of managing the aftermath of an emergency, ensuring that the well-being of responders and affected individuals is prioritised. A Post Incident Support Review Group has been established and meet bi-monthly to review the support offered to operational staff post critical incident.

10. HEALTH AND FITNESS ADVISER INITIATIVES / PROJECTS

10.1 During this reporting period, the Health and Fitness Advisers have undertaken the following initiatives / projects:

Efficiency
- Continued co-operation with Occupational Health Team and ICT to streamline working practices.

Health & Wellbeing
- Developed 'Your Health' intranet page which is divided into two sections those being Mental Health and Physical Health to provide information and resources to support the mental and physical health of staff.
- Developed Health & Fitness Advisers intranet page which is divided into two areas those being Fitness and Nutrition to provide information and resources to support the health and fitness of staff.
- Delivered yoga sessions to staff to support their Health and Wellbeing.
- Leading group walking sessions at Headquarters every Wednesday ('Walking Wednesday') to encourage staff to undertake more regular physical activity.
- Developed walking route guides for Headquarters and Occupational Health to support staff to undertake more regular physical activity.
- Involved with developing workout videos in order to motivate staff to undertake more regular physical activity.
- Ongoing delivery of presentations to new starters on the benefits of health and fitness to promote a healthy work / life balance.
- Organised internal wellbeing events linked to National Campaigns such as National Fitness Day.

Fitness

- Continued fitness support for firefighters presenting with physical fitness issues.
- Continued support to provide functional assessments and fitness support to speed up firefighters returning from injury/illness.
- Continued collaboration with the training department to provide role-related fitness sessions to Wholetime recruits throughout the training course. The aim of this is to encourage the uptake of lifelong physical activity amongst firefighters.

Gyms

- Ongoing fitness equipment replacement and upgrades: Continued updating of cardiovascular and resistance training equipment across all sites.
- Ongoing purchase of cost effective, multi-user functional fitness equipment due to decreased fitness equipment budget to maximise value for money.

Other

- Supporting the recruitment of WDS and On Call firefighters.
- Assisting with the delivery of Workout with the Watch days for potential firefighter applicants including specific sessions for underrepresented groups aimed at providing fitness advice in relation to the role.
- Delivery of educational events to college students on how to prepare for the physical demands of firefighting.
- Collaborating with the Firefighters Charity to provide online workshops to staff on preventing musculoskeletal injuries (musculoskeletal injuries are one of the leading causes of sickness absence in the service).

11.   STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

11.1 The Occupational Health Service has acquired a Patient Management System designed to provide an intuitive interface for managing employees' medical information, appointments, health surveillance, and other occupational health data. Currently in its initial stages, the system is expected to be operational by Autumn 2025.

11.2 A strategic review of the Occupational Health service provision is currently in progress to ensure the Unit provides appropriate value add services to meet the ever-changing demands of a modern fire and rescue service.

12. IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Community and Environment

12.1.1 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- All employees have the same access to Occupational Health Services.

- The Occupational Health Unit based at Pontyclun is accessible to all employees.

- Employees are offered face to face or telephone consultations when appropriate to suit their own individual needs.

- Occupational Health staff have received training on EDI impact assessments.

12.1.2 Welsh Language

- The Occupational Health Service includes staff that are fluent Welsh speakers.

12.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

12.2.1 Information Management

The recent acquisition of a Patient Management System will provide a user-friendly platform for handling employees' medical records, appointments, health surveillance activities, and other occupational health-related information.

12.2.2 Data Protection / Privacy

Occupational Health maintains medical records for all SWFRS employees. The team at Occupational Health is knowledgeable about the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and strives to ensure that personal data associated with Occupational Health is handled in a lawful and secure manner.

12.2.3 Morris Report

The Morris Report stated that the Service had many positive aspects including 'an excellent internal occupational health service' and we will continue to build on this.

12.3 **Resources, Assets and Delivery**

12.3.1 Procurement

We have procured a Patient Management System and implementation is due to commence imminently. This will provide efficiencies and a positive patient experience.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 That Commissioners note the content of the report.

Contact Officer:	Amelia O'Sullivan People Services Manager	
Background Papers	**Date**	**Source / Contact**
None		
Title		

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Occupational Health Services

Appendix 1: Occupational Health Services

The Occupational Health Unit provides the range of services required by Fire & Rescue Authorities under Health and Safety Law, Employment Law, Equality Law, Pension Provisions and in accordance with directions issued by relevant government departments. Firefighting can be extremely demanding and hazardous occupation requiring high levels of medical and physical fitness. The prevention of unnecessary ill health and incapacitation are essential factors in our efforts to maintain optimum operational effectiveness and efficiency. A good quality occupational health service has a vital role to play.

The range of services provided includes:

- Medical surveillance of all Wholetime Duty System (WDS), On Call System (OCS) and Auxiliary (AUX) Firefighters on a 3-yearly cycle or annually dependent on role.

- Physical fitness assessments of all WDS, OCS and AUX Firefighters.

- Pre-employment screening medical examinations of all WDS, OCS and AUX Firefighters and corporate staff. A drug and alcohol test is completed at all pre-employment medicals.

- Post-incident surveillance of Firefighters exposed to toxic and hazardous Substances.

- Post incident support to Operational staff and USAR/ ISAR teams.

- Medical advice on fitness for employment and rehabilitation following illness, injury or identification of health problems during consultations and medical surveillance/fitness assessments.

- LGV medical examinations.

- Assessment of eligibility for ill health retirement and injury awards.

- Case management following a sickness absence, management or self-referral.

- Medical advice and support to specialist teams i.e. USAR and ISAR teams.

- Health promotion and Wellbeing Events.

- Specialist advice on the assessment and control of health risks associated with firefighting.

- Progressing the medical management of cases faced with NHS delays.

- Managerial referral consultations when work may be adversely affecting health and wellbeing, or vice versa.

- Immunisation management of the USAR and ISAR teams through outside providers

Expected Date of Report	Report Title	Purpose of Report	Information and Assurance or Decision	Lead Director/Contact Officer	Progress
		People Committee FWP 25/26			
11 June 2025	Review of TOR	For Commissioners to review the TOR for the Committee	D	Monitoring Officer	
11 June 2025	Recruitment and Attraction Annual Report	To update Commissioners on recruitment and attraction activity during 2024/25	I&A	ACO PS: Contact Officer: Lisa Shroll	
11 June 2025	Annual Review of Training, Learning and Development 2024/2025.	To update Commissioners on Training and Learning and Development Department activity during 2024/25.	I&A	ACFO TS Contact Officer: Neil Davies	
11 June 2025	Whistleblowing, Complaints Compliments, and Concerns Report.	To update Commissioners on whistleblowing, complaints and compliments received by the Service	I&A	Head of Corporate Support	
11 June 2025	Grievance and Discipline Cases Overview	To provide Commissioners with an update on grievances and disciplinary cases that have occurred through the Service	I&A	ACO PS: Contact Officer: Lisa Shroll	
11 June 2025	Historical Grievance and Discipline Cases Overview	To provide Commissioners with an update on historical grievances and disciplinary cases reviews	I&A	ACO PS: Contact Officer: Lisa Shroll	

11 June 2025	Strategic Equality Plan	To provide an updated Strategic Equality Plan for Commissioner Approval	D	ACO PS: Contact Officer: Lisa Shroll	
26 Sep 2025	Update on Market Supplements	To provide Commissioners with an update following the implementation of the market supplement policy	I&A	ACO PS	
26 Sep 2025	Update to Family Friendly Policies	To provide Commissioners with updates to our family friendly policies	D	ACO PS	
26 Sep 2025	Welsh Language Update	To provide Commissioners with the annual Welsh Language Report	D	Contact Officer: Wayne Thomas	
26 Sep 2025	Investors in People	To provide Commissioners with an update from Investors in People	I&A	ACO PS	
26 Sep 2025	White Ribbon Report	To provide Commissioners with an update surrounding ongoing work with White Ribbon	I&A	ACO PS	
18 Dec 2025	Job Evaluation	To provide an update on the Job Evaluation process	I&A	ACO PS Contact Officer: Jemma Wells	
18 Dec 2025	Six monthly personal review update	To provide Commissioners with a six monthly update on persona reviews	I&A	ACO PS Contact Officer: Serena Ford	

18 Dec 2025	Gender Pay Gap	To update on the analysis of the gender pay gap across the Service	D	ACO PS	
18 Dec 2025	Pay Policy Statement	To consider the Services Pay Policy Statement in Compliance with the Localism Act 20211 and associated guidance	D	ACO PS	
18 Dec 2025	Inclusive Action Plan	To provide Commissioners with an update on the IAP	D	ACO PS	
18 Dec 2025	Firefighter Pension Update	To provide Commissioners with an update on the McCloud remedy cases	I&A	ACO PS	
19 March 2026	Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity overview	To provide Commissioners with an update on the collection of diversity data and inclusion initiatives.	I&A	ACO PS Contact Officer: Matthew Collins	
19 March 2026	People Services Plan	To provide Commissioners with an update on the People Services Plan	D	ACO PS	

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

AGENDA ITEM NO 15

**To consider any items of business that the Chairperson deems urgent
(Part 1 or 2)**

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

AGENDA ITEM NO 16

Any items to report back to the Board of Commissioners Committee

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

AGENDA ITEM NO 17

'Reflections on the Meeting'

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

   Attendees are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare both orally and in writing any personal and/or prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (Exercise of Functions) (Wales) Directions 2024 and the Local Government Act 2000.

3. Chairperson's Announcements

4. To receive the minutes of;

REPORTS FOR DECISION

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK