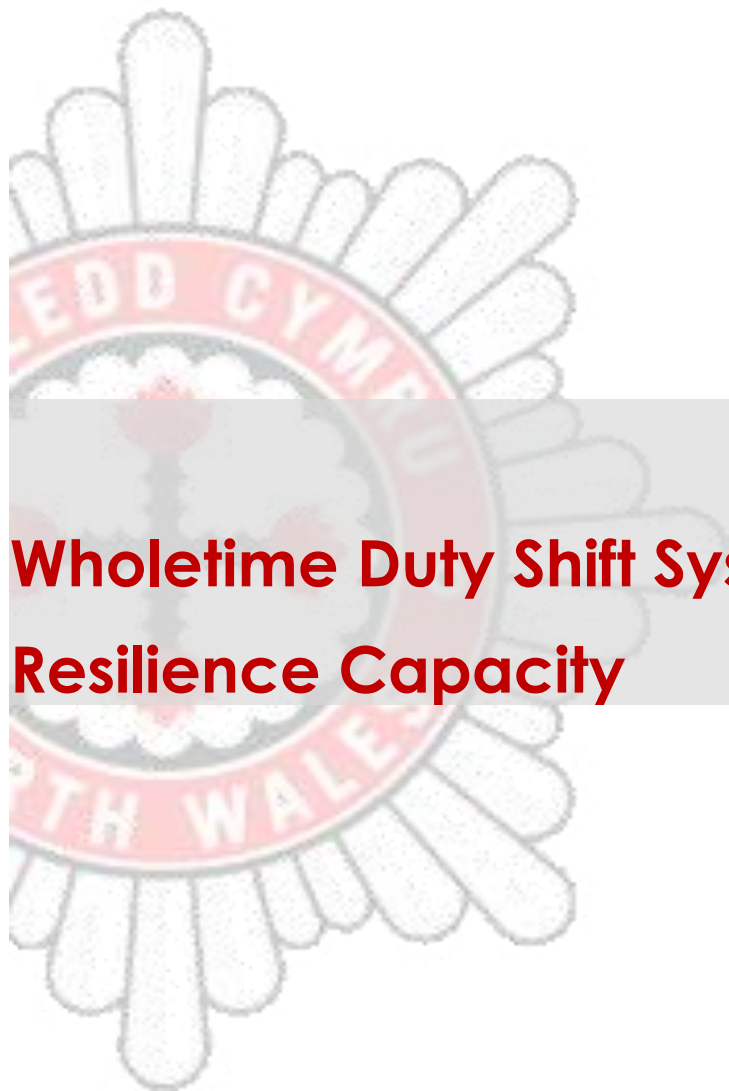


Collective agreement



**Wholetime Duty Shift Systems
Resilience Capacity**

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ABBREVIATIONS

DC	-	Day Crewing
WDS	-	Wholetime Duty Shift
WT	-	Wholetime
NWFRS	-	North Wales Fire and Rescue Service
FA	-	Fire Authority
FBU	-	Fire Brigades Union
NJC	-	National Joint Council
WDSR	-	Wholetime Duty Shift Rural
TC	-	Training Compensatory
TIL	-	Time in Lieu
BH	-	Bank Holiday
LS	-	Long Service Leave
GA	-	Good Attendance Leave

DEFINITIONS

CREWING DEFICIENCIES - This includes all planned and unplanned leave, absence (as per the Grey Book) and pre planned activities including off watch training. The Rostering Policy provides further clarification.

WDS SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM - The NWFRS WDS Shift Duty System is a National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book) agreed shift system based on personnel working all of their duty hours on station with no on call element. The Grey Book refers to this as 'Shift Duty System' with each period of twenty-four hours being divided into a day shift and a night shift. This document will therefore use this terminology for Rhyl, Deeside and Wrexham.

THE AGREEMENT

1. This collective agreement details the current resilience capacity within two of the existing Wholetime Duty Shift (WDS) systems currently in use in North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) as agreed by NWFRS and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). These being the WDS shift duty system in operation at Deeside, Rhyl and Wrexham, and the Day Crewed (DC) shift duty system in operation at Caernarfon, Bangor, Holyhead, Llandudno and Colwyn Bay.
2. This collective agreement details clarification of existing practices and changes to working practices that will enhance the existing resilience across these duty systems, for this capacity to be released to provide a more effective and resilient response model for the whole of North Wales.
3. This agreement has primacy over previous agreements where applicable.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGREEMENT

4. The administration of the agreement will be the responsibility of the Head of Response and the Chief Fire Officer in conjunction with representative bodies. In operating this collective agreement, the Head of Response and the Chief Fire Officer will ensure that the Service is mindful of its responsibilities for equality in the workplace.

PURPOSE OF THE AGREEMENT

5. The agreement has been designed in Social Partnership to detail the current working arrangements and existing resilience capacity within two WDS systems already utilised in the Service. In addition, the agreement contains clarification of current working practices, and amendments to working practices that will collectively illustrate how the existing eight Wholetime stations in NWFRS can be self-resilient within the current establishment of 178 posts. This will enable the additional capacity within the establishment of 208 posts to be released to provide a more effective and resilient response model for the whole of North Wales

SCOPE

6. This collective agreement will apply to all WDS system based operational personnel deployed to the eight NWFRS stations referenced above.

DATE OF OPERATION

7. The practices contained within this collective agreement are detailed in the Wholetime Rostering Policy and Procedure (which will require regular review throughout this pilot in conjunction with representative bodies). This will be implemented on the 1st September 2025 along with revised Rostering Policy and associated documents, after the signing of this collective agreement between the Service and the representative bodies and will be monitored and reviewed as follows.

MONITORING OF THE AGREEMENT (to commence fully on 1st January 2026)

8. The operation of the system will be jointly reviewed in at least quarterly intervals by the Head of Response and the Chief Fire Officer in conjunction with representative bodies with feedback shared with all staff. Regular updates will be provided to the Fire Authority. The purpose of the review will be to consider progress, performance and other issues in relation to:
 - a.) Staff welfare
 - b.) Staffing and resilience
 - c.) Pump availability
 - d.) Attendance management (Inc. Short and long-term sickness cover)
 - e.) Shift start and finish times
 - f.) Detachments
 - g.) Leave allocation
 - h.) Resilience/detachment/overtime payments
 - i.) Training
9. The CFO and FBU Brigade Secretary will be responsible for facilitating the reviews whilst reserving the right to delegate, as appropriate to another Officer.
10. The CFO or the FBU Brigade Secretary reserves the right to revise any aspect of this agreement subject to appropriate negotiation, to deliver a more effective and resilient response model for the whole of North Wales.

INTRODUCTION

11. NWFRS currently operates two duty shift systems specific to Wholetime Firefighters based at the eight existing Wholetime Fire Stations in NWFRS. These are Day Crewed and WDS Shift Duty System, both of which are National Joint Council (NJC) Grey Book agreed. An additional duty system for Wholetime Firefighters, the Wholetime Duty System Rural (WDSR) has been locally agreed. NWFRS also operate the Day Duty System and a bespoke Training Delivery Manager shift pattern for non-station based Wholetime Firefighter roles. Any additional duty system would be subject to local agreement with representative bodies.
12. This document focusses on the WDS Shift Duty System and Day Crewed duty systems only in order to demonstrate how through adherence to existing rostering protocols the eight Wholetime stations in NWFRS can be self-resilient, within the current establishment of 178 posts.
13. By demonstrating the above, any additional posts above these 178 up to the maximum existing establishment of 208 can therefore be utilised to provide a more effective and resilient response model for the whole of North Wales.

DAY-CREWING DUTY SYSTEM OVERVIEW

14. NWFRS Day-crewing duty system is a National Joint Council (NJC) Grey Book agreed shift system based on working a combination of hours both on station and on call from a base location.
15. On call cover is provided by either residing (and providing an address) in owned or rented accommodation within a specified response area/time of the Day-crewing duty system station in question (approximately five minutes).
16. This arrangement of on station hours and on call hours enables personnel to provide an immediate response to incidents during on station hours and an approximately five-minute response during on call hours.
17. Currently NWFRS operate five Day-crewing duty system stations across the Service with each station using a two-watch system with seven posts on each watch, these being located at Caernarfon, Bangor, Holyhead, Llandudno and Colwyn Bay.

The NJC Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book) states:

The hours of duty of full-time employees on this system shall be an average of forty-two per week. The hours of duty of part-time employees shall be pro-rata. The rota will be based on the following principles:

- 1. An average of thirty-five hours per week shall be worked at the station.*
- 2. An average of seven hours per week shall be on standby at home. Staff members are required to respond to any emergency call received during this standby period.*
- 3. Staff members on this system may be requested to undertake retained duties outside the hours at 1 and 2.*
- 4. There shall be at least two complete periods of twenty-four hours free from duty each week.*
- 5. One hour per day shall be specified as a meal break. Account shall be taken of meal breaks interrupted by emergency calls.*

WORKING HOURS DAY CREWING

18. Staff are required to work an average of 182.5 shifts per year, excluding annual leave as calculated by the four days on followed by four days off shift pattern.
19. One shift is classified as a period of 24 hours. This shift is split into on station hours and on call.
20. Currently the arrangement on all DC duty stations in the Service is for the hours of 12.00 hrs. - 22.00 hours to be on station, and the period 22.00 hrs. - 12.00 hours requested to be on call (as per the Grey Book).
21. The stand by period between 10.00 hrs - 12.00 hours is further sub classified as 'positive hours' to comply with point (2) of the Scheme of Conditions of Service of the Grey Book. Employees are required to respond to any emergency call received during this stand by period.
22. Existing arrangements require DC duty personnel to work four consecutive periods of duty followed by four days off (as per the Grey Book).

LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR DAY CREWING

23. In line with National Joint Council (NJC) Grey Book conditions of service, and NWFRS procedures Watch Managers, Crew Managers and Firefighters are entitled to the following leave;

Scale A Leave	-	25 days (3 x blocks of 7 days, 1 x block of 4 days ie 16 duty days taken in 4 blocks)
Scale B Leave	-	5 days
Public Holiday Leave	-	8 days
*Long Service Leave	-	3 days
*Good Attendance leave	-	1 days (Awarded to approximately 50% of staff)

Long-Service leave applies to employees who, at the start of the leave year, have at least five years continuous full-time or part time service under this scheme of conditions of service

Good Attendance leave will be awarded to those staff who have not taken sick leave in the preceding 12-month period

RESILIENCE CAPACITY DAY CREWING

24. Staff are required to work an average of 182.5 shifts per year before any type of leave is allocated. This is calculated using the four days on four days off shift pattern
25. Currently across the Service there are 14 posts on each of the five DC duty stations making 70 posts in total.
26. The above provides the Service with 2100 available shifts per year on each of the five DC stations (150 shifts average for each of the 14 crew members after leave entitlement).
27. The current procedure to provide a ridership of five personnel per day 365 days per year equates to a requirement of 1825 full shifts per year to achieve 'optimal' crewing.
28. The above therefore leaves an initial surplus of 275 shifts per year on each of the five DC duty stations in the Service subject to conditions. This equates to 137.5 shifts per watch.
29. The table and information below describe the particulars of the above in more detail.

DAY CREW ESTABLISHMENT FIGURES & TABLE ALL STATIONS

Current Day Crew duty operating model			
Station	Fulltime Appliances	Posts	Roster Model
Colwyn Bay	1 WT	14	Current DC
Llandudno	1 WT	14	Current DC
Bangor	1 WT	14	Current DC
Caernarfon	1 WT	14	Current DC
Holyhead	1 WT	14	Current DC
Total Staff required		70	

DAY CREW STATION CALCULATIONS

30. After deductions for leave (32.5 days per year average) and taking account of the four days on four days off duty system in use, the Service have the following shifts available at each of the five DC stations.

14 personnel x 150 shifts per year (average)	=	2100 shifts per year available
5 posts per day 365 days per year required	=	1825 shifts per year needed
275 shifts initial spare capacity per year	=	15% resilience capacity
Current absence rate of all types (2023-2024)	=	8% absence**
275 shifts spare per year – 168 shifts absence	=	107 shifts spare capacity per year
14 posts with 5 training days per year	=	70 training days per year
		37 resilience shifts per station per year

185 total shifts per year across all DC stations enhancing resilience if shared

** 8% absence includes all planned or unplanned leave which includes short and long term sick, maternity leave, paternity leave, career breaks bereavement leave and jury duty**

WDS SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM OVERVIEW

31. The NWFRS WDS Shift Duty System is an NJC Grey Book agreed shift system based on personnel working all duty hours on station with no on call element. NWFRS have three stations with this duty system.
32. Deeside and Rhyl operate a four-watch system with seven posts on each watch
33. Wrexham operates a four-watch system with 13 posts on each watch
34. Existing arrangements on all three of the 24-hour on shift duty system stations require personnel to work two nine-hour day shifts followed by two 15-hour night shifts followed by four rota days.

The NJC Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book) states:

The hours of duty of full-time employees on this system shall be an average of forty-two per week. The hours of duty of part time employees shall be pro rata. The rota will be based on the following principles:

- 1. Each period of twenty-four hours shall be divided into a day shift and a night shift.*
- 2. The night shift shall not be less than twelve hours.*
- 3. There shall be at least two complete periods of twenty-four hours free from duty each week.*
- 4. Leave days shall change week by week in a regular progressive manner.*
- 5. No rota system shall include continuous duty periods of twenty-four hours.*
- 6. Three hours shall be specified for meal breaks in every twenty-four hours. The timing of these periods is at the discretion of the authority. Account shall be taken of meal breaks interrupted by emergency calls.*

WORKING HOURS WDS SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM

35. Staff are required to work an average of 182.5 days per year, excluding annual leave entitlement as calculated by the four days on followed by four days off shift pattern.

36. One shift is currently classified as either one nine-hour day shift or one 15-hour night shift.
37. Existing arrangements require WDS shift duty system personnel work two consecutive nine-hour day shifts followed by two consecutive 15-hour night shifts followed by four days off.
38. In NWFRS the day shift start time is 0900 with the night shift start time being 1800.

LEAVE ARRANGMENTS FOR WDS SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM

39. In line with NJC Scheme of Conditions of Service, and NWFRS procedures Watch Managers, Crew Managers and Firefighters are entitled to the following leave each calendar year;

Scale A Leave	-	25 days (3 x blocks of 7 days, 1 x block of 4 days ie 16 duty days taken in 4 blocks)
Scale B Leave	-	5 days
Public Holiday Leave	-	8 days
*Long Service Leave	-	3 days
*Good Attendance leave	-	1 day (awarded to approximately 50% staff)

Long-Service leave applies to employees who, at the start of the leave year, have at least five years' continuous full-time or part-time service under this scheme of conditions of service

Good Attendance leave will be awarded to those staff who have not taken sick leave in the preceding 12-month period

RESILIENCE CAPACITY WDS SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM - RHYL AND DEESIDE

40. Staff are required to work an average of 182.5 days per year, before any type of leave is calculated. This is calculated using the four days on four days off shift pattern
41. 28 posts are based at Deeside Fire Stations and 28 posts at Rhyl Fire Station.

42. Rhyl and Deeside Fire Stations operate a four-watch system with seven posts on each watch.
43. The above provides the Service with 4200 available shifts per year at Deeside and 4200 available shifts at Rhyl (150 average shifts for each of the 28 crew members after leave entitlement).
44. The current procedure to provide a ridership of five personnel 365 days per year across both day and night shifts requires 3650 full shifts per year (1825 day & 1825 night).
45. The above therefore leaves an initial surplus of 550 shifts per year at both Deeside Fire Station and Rhyl Fire Stations subject to conditions. This equates to 137.5 shifts per watch
46. The table below and associated information below show the particulars of the above in detail.

WDS SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM ESTABLISHMENT TABLE & FIGURES RHYL/DEESIDE

Current 24-hour on Shift operating model Deeside and Rhyl			
Station	Fulltime Appliances	Posts	Roster Model
Deeside	1 W/T	28	Current WDS Shift Duty System
Rhyl	1 W/T	28	Current WDS Shift Duty System
Total Staff required		56	

WDS SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM FIGURES RHYL/DEESIDE

47. After deductions for leave (32.5 days per year average) and taking account of the four days on four days off duty system in use, the Service have the following shifts available at Deeside and Rhyl.

28 posts x 150 duty shifts per year average = 4200 shifts per year available

5 posts per shift 365 days per year x2 = 3650 shifts per year needed

550 shifts initial spare capacity per year = 15% resilience capacity

Current absence rate of all types (2023-2024) = 8% absence

550 shifts per year – 336 shifts absence = 214 shifts spare capacity per year

28 posts with 5 training days per year = 140 training days per year

74 resilience shifts per station per year

****494** total resilience shifts per year across three WDS Shift Duty System stations enhancing resilience if shared*

****** 8% absence includes all planned or unplanned leave which includes short and long term sick, maternity leave, paternity leave, career breaks bereavement leave and jury duty******

RESILIENCE CAPACITY WDS SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM - WREXHAM

45. Staff are required to work an average of 182.5 shifts per year, before any type of leave is calculated. This is calculated using the four days on four days off shift pattern
46. 52 posts are based at Wrexham Fire Station.
47. Wrexham Fire Station operates a four-watch system with 13 posts on each watch.
48. The above provides the Service with 7800 available shifts per year (150 shifts average for each of the 52-crew member after leave entitlement).
49. The current procedure to provide a ridership of 9 personnel 365 days per year across both day and night shifts requires 6570 full shifts per year (3285-day shifts and 3285-night shifts).
50. The above therefore leaves an initial surplus of 1230 spare shifts per year subject to conditions.
51. The table below and associated information show the particulars of the above in more detail.

WDS SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM TABLE AND FIGURES - WREXHAM

Current 24-hour on Shift operating model Wrexham			
Station	Fulltime Appliances	Posts	Roster Model
Wrexham	2 WT	52	Current WDS Shift Duty System
Total Staff required		52	

WDS SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM RESILIENCE LEVELS WREXHAM

52 posts x 150 duty shifts per year average	=	7800 shifts per year available
9 posts per day 365 days per year x 2	=	6570 shifts per year needed
1230 shifts initial spare capacity per year	=	18.5% resilience capacity
Current absence rate of all types (2023-2024)	=	8% absence **
1230 shifts per year – 624 shifts absence	=	606 shifts spare capacity per year
52 posts with 5 training days per year	=	260 training days per year

**346 surplus shifts per year

**494 total resilience shifts per year across three 24-hour duty shift stations enhancing resilience if shared*

** 8% absence includes all planned or unplanned leave which includes short and long term sick, maternity leave, paternity leave, career breaks bereavement leave and jury duty**

CONCLUSION

The above figures illustrate that there are 679 total surplus shifts across the 24 hour on shift duty system and DC duty systems and demonstrate a 'proof of concept' that the existing duty systems and establishment of 178 personnel on the eight existing wholetime stations provide sufficient resilience to cover all crewing deficiencies, whilst at the same time allowing leave of all types to be accommodated. Furthermore, this will also provide sufficient resilience capacity for personnel to be rostered from the rota by the Training and Development Department for five days per year to undertake training and development courses whilst on duty.

The successful implementation of this collective agreement will allow NWFRS to trial other proposals for effective emergency cover across the whole of North Wales.

ENHANCING RESILIENCE CAPACITY

Alignment of promotion process with the leave year

- Existing arrangements result in the annual supervisory promotion process taking place after leave requests for the upcoming year have been requested and accepted. This process ordinarily takes place between the months of January and March each year, typically involving all roles from Area Manager to Firefighter.

- 54. The promotion process invariably results in personnel being moved stations and/or Watch`s, in some cases involuntarily meaning that leave clashes become inevitable.
- 55. In these circumstances leave is often honoured, frequently resulting in deficiencies that are then back filled with overtime payments to other staff.
- 56. By aligning the promotion process and undertaking it prior to leave requests being made this will avoid the existing clashes and free up resilience capacity.

Undertaking training days or other Service activities on rota days

- 57. Existing arrangements require personnel to attend several training days per year often on rota days. This rota day training is remunerated at a rate of time and a half. This is broken down into a Training Compensatory day (TC) day plus 50% Time in Lieu (TIL).
- 58. The above arrangement has resulted in a significant accumulation of TIL across Service personnel as well as an accumulation of TC days, both of which must be accommodated and therefore leave Watch`s short with the deficiency being back filled with overtime payments to other staff.
- 59. Under this agreement most training and development courses will be taken on duty days. Any training days worked on rota days must be taken as overtime and not TC/TIL.
- 60. Personnel attending other authorised Service activities on rota days such as staff network, groups and forums must take time accrued as overtime and not TIL.

Shift start times

- 61. Existing arrangements for personnel are such that differing duty systems start their shifts at different times. This creates a barrier for resilience as crew members from a Day-crewing duty system stations are unable to be detached to cover at a WDS Shift Duty System station and vice versa.
- 62. The above often results in a Day-crewing stations for example having `spare capacity` i.e. six or seven personnel on duty on a given day but being unable to release that capacity to a WDS Shift Duty System station. The deficiency is therefore backfilled with overtime payments to other staff.

63. Aligning shift patterns to a universal start time will free up resilience capacity as it will allow personnel to cover deficiencies across a broader span of stations and avoid any remedial actions that might impact on taking leave or riding below the optimum crewing level of five.
64. Under this agreement and it's pilot the existing WDS shift and Day-crewing duty systems start and finish times will align as shown below from 1st September 2025 and through to the first full 12 months of the pilot (1st January 2026 to 31st December 2026).

Start and finish times at existing WDS stations under this agreement			
Station	Day Shift	Night shift	Positive hours
Rhyl, Deeside, Wrexham	08.00 – 18.00	18.00 – 08.00	N/A
Caernarfon, Bangor, Holyhead, Llandudno, Colwyn Bay	08.00 – 18.00	N/A	** Locally agreed**

****By local agreement each day crewed station can serve the two additional positive hours required each day on either side of the time required on station or as an hour either side of the shift time**.**

Quarterly reviews will allow for feedback from all parties with regards to the impact of the changes.

65. Pilot Evaluation

After the pilot period has ended (31st December 2026) those responsible for the monitoring of this collective agreement will conduct its evaluation to determine a permanent way forward. During this evaluation period this collective agreement will continue to operate.

Approval of leave

66. Existing rostering protocols provide the Service with procedures whereby a large proportion of in year crewing deficiencies, (either through long term or short-term sickness) can be covered through detachments, resilience cover or through more robust approval of `non-primary` leave i.e. Bank Holiday (BH) and Time in Lieu
67. The approval of leave will be defined within an updated whole-time rostering policy and procedure which will follow existing processes of consultation.

Redistribution of leave (2026 leave year onwards)

68. Existing leave protocols allow for two personnel to be off on annual leave (AL) at any one time aside from a designated resilience week where it is one. This respective arrangement is four at Wrexham and three on designated resilience weeks.
69. The above arrangement results in no resilience capacity being available during some months. By redistributing Statutory Annual Leave equally through the year and the introduction of a revised Rostering Policy, *this will more evenly distribute resilience capacity across the year.*

Existing resilience cover

70. Existing resilience procedures stipulate that it can only be used to cover short term sickness absences i.e. less than 16 days meaning that if capacity exists it cannot be utilised as the station in question is not obliged to release that crew member if they choose to take leave. Under this collective agreement the 16 day `rule` will be reviewed, with new parameters, allowing resilience to be used to cover a wider range of crewing deficiencies.
71. It is anticipated that improving the capacity of resilience, will improve whole-time station crewing shortfalls. In order to achieve this, we will agree in social partnership a new whole-time rostering policy which will look to make improvements on crewing deficiencies, resilience arrangements and distribution of leave.
72. This agreement moves to allowing resilience to be used to cover a wider range of crewing deficiencies. Allowing resilience to be used to cover a wider range of crewing deficiencies will increase the resilience capacity of existing station duty systems.

Amendment of wholetime rostering guidance

73. For the above to be achievable then any ambiguity needs to be removed from the Rostering Policy and accompanying documents to provide clarity for all managers and personnel. To do this there will be a requirement for these documents to be revised ahead of the commencement date (1st September 2025). Any revision would be subject to agreement in social partnership.

This local Collective Agreement will form part of the contract of employment through mutual agreement for those personnel employed on Wholetime Day Crew and Wholetime Duty on Shift stations in NWFRS. The undersigned parties have committed to this collective agreement.

Signed

Date

On behalf of the FBU

Signed

Date

on behalf of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service