

**AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB GOGLEDD CYMRU**



**NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

A meeting of the **EXECUTIVE PANEL** will be held  
**MONDAY 15 DECEMBER 2025 at 14:00 hrs.**  
virtually **via Zoom**

Yours faithfully,  
Gareth Owens  
Clerk

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**AGENDA**

**1. Apologies**

**2. Declaration of Interests**

**3. Notice of Urgent Matters**

Notice of items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

**4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 September 2025**

**5. Performance Monitoring Q2 Report 2025/26, for assurance**

**6. Strategic Risk Management – Review of Risk Register, for assurance**

**7. Budget Setting 2026/27, for approval**

**8. Consultation re National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services 2026, for approval**

**9. Urgent Matters**

To consider any items which the Chair has decided are urgent (pursuant to Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972) and of which substance has been declared under item 3 above.

**PART II**

It is recommended pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business because it is likely that there would be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 12 to 18 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

**None**

**NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**  
**EXECUTIVE PANEL**

Minutes of the **Executive Panel** of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 15 September 2025, virtually via Zoom. Meeting commenced at 14.00hrs.

**Councillor**

Cllr Dylan Rees (Chair)  
Cllr Carol Beard  
Cllr Sharon Doleman  
Cllr Chris Hughes  
Cllr John Ifan Jones  
Cllr Gareth A Roberts  
Cllr Paul Rogers (arrived 14:09)  
Cllr Gareth Williams  
Cllr Antony Wren

**Representing**

Anglesey County Council  
Conwy County Borough Council  
Conwy County Council  
Conwy County Borough Council  
Anglesey County Council  
Gwynedd County Council  
Wrexham County Council  
Gwynedd County Council  
Flintshire County Council

**Also present:**

Dawn Docx  
Helen MacArthur  
Justin Evans  
Anthony Jones  
Mike Plant

Bethan Millington  
Dafydd Edwards  
Matthew Powell  
Steve Morris  
Heledd Davies  
Lisa Allington

Chief Fire Officer  
Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Head of Performance, Planning and Transformation  
Deputy Head of Corporate Communications  
Treasurer  
Deputy Clerk and Monitoring Officer  
Head of ICT  
Atebol - Translator  
Executive Assistant

**1.0 APOLOGIES**

**Name**

Cllr Rondo Roberts  
Cllr Mark Young (Deputy Chair)  
Gareth Owens

**Representing**

Wrexham County Council  
Denbighshire County Council  
Clerk and Monitoring Officer

**ABSENT**

**Name**

Cllr Paul Cunningham  
Cllr Alan Hughes  
Cllr Dale Selvester

**Representing**

Flintshire County Council  
Denbighshire County Council  
Flintshire County Council

**2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

### **3.0 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS**

3.1 There were no notices of urgent matters.

### **4.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2025**

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2025 were submitted for approval. A proposal was made that they were a true and accurate record of proceedings. This was seconded and passed with all in favour.

#### **4.2 RESOLVED to:**

- i) **approve the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting held.**

### **5.0 MATTERS ARISING**

5.1 Item 7 of the previous minutes relating to the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor's report referred to an action plan and it was asked if an update against that action plan could be given.

5.2 ACFO JE advised that progress against the recommendations was being made around equipment and budget provision had been put in place for future appliances to be retro fitted with flow meters. A working group to address the recommendations and carry out a gap analysis had been set up to inform future policy changes and training requirements.

### **6.0 WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION REGARDING THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES IN WALES**

6.1 CFO Docx presented the paper on the Welsh Government consultation regarding the governance arrangements for fire and rescue services in Wales, the purpose of which was to bring to Members' attention the publication of a public consultation around future Governance Arrangements for Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) in Wales.

6.2 It was noted that the paper provided to Members had been written prior to the release of the consultation.

6.3 Members were advised that there would be two Member seminars facilitated to discuss the consultation and the Authority's response to the same and these would be an in-person seminar on 29 September and a virtual seminar on 2 October. Invites would follow in due course.

6.4 The CFO confirmed that there was no provision in this consultation for a pan-Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, or for a change to the way in which the Authority was funded as these would both require changes to primary legislation which could not be done prior to the next Senedd election.

**6.5 RESOLVED to:**

- i) Note the content of the consultation; and**
- ii) Agree to attend a workshop to scrutinise the proposals and submit a response drafted on behalf of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority), setting out Members' views regarding the proposals.**

**7.0 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2024/25**

7.1 ACFO Anthony Jones presented to Members the Annual Performance Assessment for 2024/25.

7.2 A Member noted their concern in relation to the increase in wildfires over the last three years, the resources that had to be allocated to these, and the financial impact that might have on the figures for the next financial year.

7.3 ACFO Jones confirmed that that concern was shared by officers and this was a trend that could be seen across Wales, along with a rise in flooding. He further confirmed that there were dedicated officers, vehicles and PPE allocated specifically to wildfires to improve the Service's response to them and that they were monitored very closely.

7.4 The CFO added that an all-Wales approach had been put in place to tackle the issue of wildfires, but that this had become a bigger issue over the years. Smaller grass fires might also create issues as if they were not tackled quickly enough, they could easily turn into wildfires. This highlighted the importance of providing a rural fire service which the Emergency Cover Review/Collective Agreement had now begun to address.

7.5 The Chair noted that wildfires had recently been reported on nationally, and that it had been highlighted that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service recorded their data in a different way and asked that officers look into this in more detail. ACFO Evans confirmed that Prevention and Protection were already investigating this.

- 7.6 A Member asked what work was taking place with partner agencies to prevent wildfires and therefore reduce the number of incidents, and ACFO Evans confirmed that the Service continued to work closely with the Local Resilience Forum (the LRF) and in collaboration with other Welsh Emergency Services from a prevention perspective.
- 7.7 The CFO noted that the withdrawal of the Arson Reduction grant had limited the prevention work that could be carried out. The Chair confirmed that he would raise this at the next Social Partnership Forum meeting.
- 7.8 It was asked what the rise in Health and Safety incidents could be attributed to, and ACFO Jones confirmed that these related in the main to the Service's red fleet and was generally due to low-speed parking and manoeuvring incidents resulting in minor damage.
- 7.9 The Chair highlighted that the Service had a much lower percentage of smoke alarms not fitted than the other Welsh FRS's and congratulated the prevention team for the work carried out during safe and well checks.

**7.10 RESOLVED to:**

- i) Note and endorse the contents of the Annual Performance Assessment for the period 2024/25 for approval by the Authority.**

**8.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING, 1 APRIL 2025 – 30 JUNE 2025**

- 8.1 AM Mike Plant advised Members that the purpose of this report was to provide an update on performance for the period 1 April 2025 – 30 June 2025 (quarter 1 2025/26). It was clarified that the performance measures reflected the five key principles outlined in the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan (CRMIP) for the 2025/26 financial-year and included commentary on emerging trends and future actions.
- 8.2 Thanks were given to all involved in preserving life and property at the recent wildfire at Mynydd Bodafon, a serious incident which had lasted for over 30 hours. Their hard work and commitment was appreciated.
- 8.3 A Member commented on the statistics in relation to engagement with children and asked if there were any steps that could be taken to improve these. AM Plant responded that campaigns had taken place to educate the public about the risks of setting fires in the open, but that there was room for improvement in this area.

- 8.4 Members were pleased to note the increase in completing high priority safe and well checks within target and asked how 68% compared to previous years. ACFO Evans stated that this was a pleasing statistic; however, further work was taking place to increase this further over the remainder of the year.

**8.5 RESOLVED to:**

- i) Note the content of the Performance Monitoring Report.**

**9.0 BIODIVERSITY REPORT AND PLAN**

- 9.1 ACFO Helen MacArthur delivered the Biodiversity Report and Plan and sought a recommendation for formal approval and adoption of the Service's statutory Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Report (2022-2025) and the associated Biodiversity Action Plan (2025-2028), ensuring compliance with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- 9.2 One Member asked for thanks to be passed on to those responsible for putting together such a well thought out and well written report on what was a matter of great importance.
- 9.3 It was asked if the deadline date for habitat creation, greening stations and native tree planting by May 2028 could be brought forward at all to make it more ambitious, and ACFO MacArthur confirmed that, if possible, this would be progressed. However, it should be borne in mind that the Service only had one Environment and Climate Change manager and there were therefore restricted resources available.
- 9.4 The Chair asked if a quarterly update in relation to Table 2 of the report, which detailed the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Action Plan 2025-2028, could be delivered to Members so that progress could be reviewed regularly, and ACFO MacArthur agreed to develop a timetable of review. It was further asked if the table could be Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rated to indicate progress.


**9.5 RESOLVED to:**

- i) Endorse the draft Biodiversity Report and Plan for approval by the Authority; and**
- ii) Approve the publication of the Report and Plan on the Service's website until it has been considered for ratification by the Authority.**

**10.0 URGENT MATTERS**

- 10.1 There were no urgent matters to discuss.

Meeting closed: 14:54 hrs

Report to	<b>Executive Panel</b>	
Date	<b>15 December 2025</b>	
Lead Officer	<b>Anthony Jones, Assistant Chief Fire Officer</b>	
Contact Officer	<b>Mike Plant, Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation</b>	
Subject	<b>Performance Monitoring, April 2025 – September 2025</b>	

## PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To provide members of the Executive Panel (the Panel) with an update on performance for the period 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025 (quarter one and two of financial year 2025/26). The performance measures reflect the five key principles outlined in the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan (CRMIP) for the 2025/26 financial-year and include commentary on emerging trends and future actions.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 Compared to the same period in 2024/25, fire incidents have increased to 1,313 (845 in 2024/25). Whilst this represents an overall increase of 55.4%, the increase for secondary fires is 99.2%. The increase in secondary fires reflects the dry weather conditions experienced, with fires in the open driving the increase.
- 3 Accidental dwelling fires have increased this quarter by 8.7% compared with the same period last year, with a total of 150 incidents attended.
- 4 Attendance at special service calls remained consistent with last year, however, the number of RTCs has risen by 21.5%.
- 5 Work continues to support our communities with a total of 9,828 safe and well checks completed during the period. Although a decrease in overall terms of 2.6% for the same period in 2024/25, the focus remains on medium and high priority visits. In addition, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) remains committed to education through school visits, the provision of the Phoenix course and individual interventions to address fire setting.

## RECOMMENDATION

6 It is recommended that Members:

**i) Note the content of the Performance Monitoring Report.**

## BACKGROUND

7 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is required to work to reduce risk and address the safety of its communities and to do so in a sustainable manner. The CRMIP outlines the principles against which the Authority measures its performance. Focussing on five key principles the performance is reported on a quarterly basis, with a focus on key risks and emerging trends.

## INFORMATION

8 The Performance Report is for the period 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025. Unless otherwise stated, all figures are based on the first two quarters of the 2025/26 financial-year, with comparisons made to the same period of the previous financial-year (2024/25).

## IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	Demonstrates the Authority's performance against the improvement and well-being objectives in the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan (CRMIP) 2025-26.
Budget	Allows activity and key risks to be considered at part of the budget setting process.
Legal	Supports the Authority, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to demonstrate how it is taking all reasonable steps, in exercising its functions, to meet its well-being objectives.
Staffing	Reporting is aligned to the CRMIP 25/26 and includes an update on staffing matters.
Equalities/Human Rights/Welsh Language	No implication identified.
Risks	Demonstrates how the Authority is managing its delivery against community risks.





Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
Fire and Rescue Service

# North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Monitoring Report: April 2025 – September 2025



**Our five principles for keeping communities safe**

**PEOPLE**

**PREVENTION**

**PROTECTION**

**RESPONSE**

**ENVIRONMENT**

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# Our People Principle



## 1 Sickness Absence

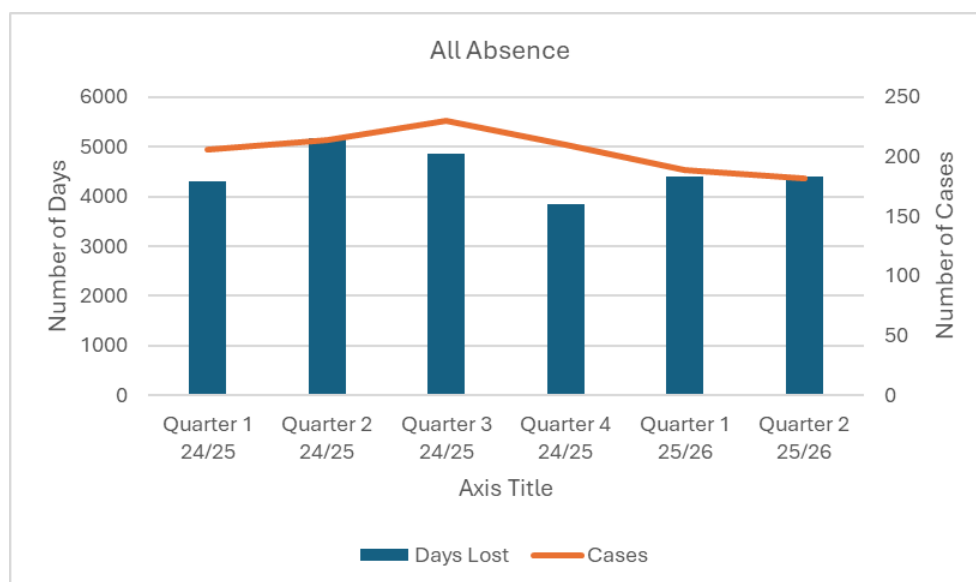
The Service aims to encourage all its employees to maximise their attendance at work while recognising that employees will, from time to time, be unable to come to work because of ill health.

Total time lost, for NWFRS, due to all sickness absence has reduced from 5.12% during quarter one to 4.60% during quarter two. This remains lower in terms of days lost and cases than the same period in the previous year.

951 individuals were employed by NWFRS as at 30/09/2025, which is an increase of 26 people from the same period in 2024/25; however, total time lost due to all sickness absence is lower than the previous year, demonstrating a continued improvement in sickness absence levels.

Please note that throughout the report, the number of cases in the year to date (YTD) will not be a sum of the quarters as some individuals' absences will span across quarters. There may also be fluctuations in the numbers reported from quarter to quarter because of changes to employee data.

### 1.1 All Sickness Absence



The number of days lost, and cases, due to all absence in quarter two of 2025/26 has decreased slightly compared with the previous quarter. The overall number of days lost during quarter two of the current year is lower than the days lost in the same period in the previous year. There has been an increase in the number employed.

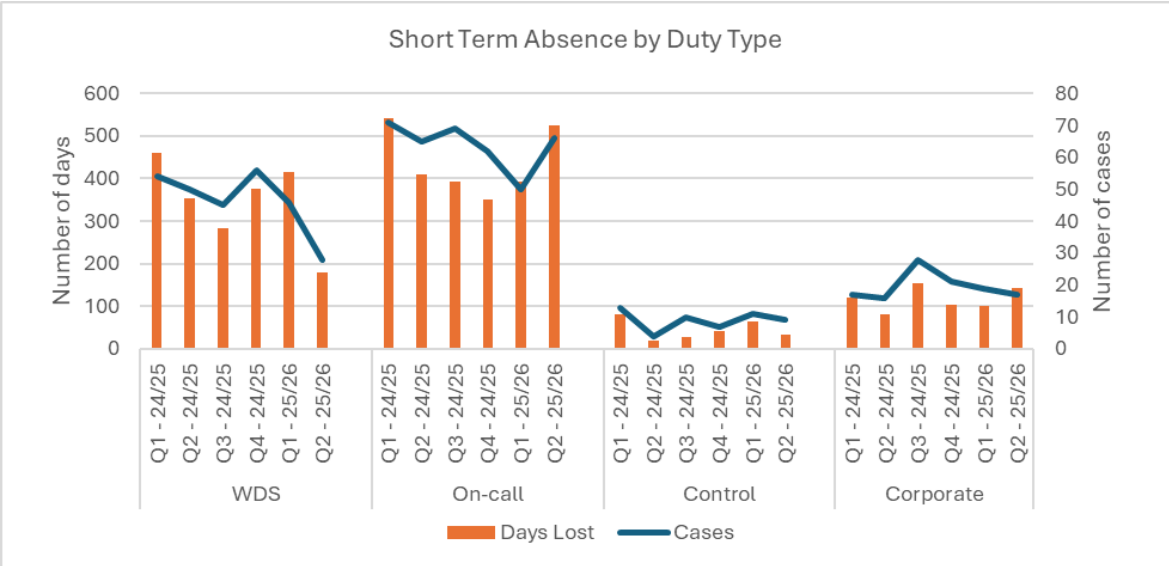
Overall, within NWFRS, all musculoskeletal absence, which includes lower limb, upper limb, back and spinal disorders, neck, ribs, hip, accounted for 30.4% of all absence during quarter two, which is slightly lower than the 33.0% recorded for the full year 2024/25, but similar to the 29.0% reported in the National Fire Services Absence Report for April 2024 to March 2025. All mental health absence accounted for 29.5% of all absence during quarter two, which is an increase compared to the 19.0% recorded for the full year 2024/25.

**Short term** means individual periods of sickness of 27 calendar days or less.  
**Long term** means individual periods of 28 calendar days or more.

1.2 Short Term Sickness

On average, over the full year of 2024/25, short term absence has accounted for 1.12% of all time lost.

Short Term Sickness during quarter two of the current year equated to 1.01% of time lost, which is at a similar rate (1.02%) of time lost across all duty types during quarter two of the previous year.



(\*Wholtime - includes all operational staff, such as station based, rural and flexi duty officers)

(SLT have been split so operational members of SLT are included within wholtime figures, and Heads of Departments are included within Corporate Departments).

The number of cases and days of short-term sickness from employees on both the Wholtime and Control duty systems have reduced in quarter two from quarter one. On-call employees account for 50.6% of the Service establishment, with 59.7% of short-term absence being from employees on the on-call duty system, with these absences lasting an average of 7.92 calendar days per employee.

The number of cases and days lost from corporate staff has also increased during quarter two, accounting for 16.1% of short-term absence in quarter two compared with 12.7% in quarter one. Corporate staff absence lasted on average 8.35 days per employee during quarter two, with musculoskeletal absence being the highest reason reported.

### **Top 3 Short Term Sickness Absence Reasons (by cases)**

	<b>Absence Reason</b>	<b>Cases</b>	<b>Lost time %</b>
1	Musculoskeletal - Lower Limb	15	22.6%
2	Musculoskeletal - Upper Limb	11	13.2%
3	Musculoskeletal - Back and spinal disorders	9	10.3%

*Lost time % is based upon the days lost rather than the case numbers*

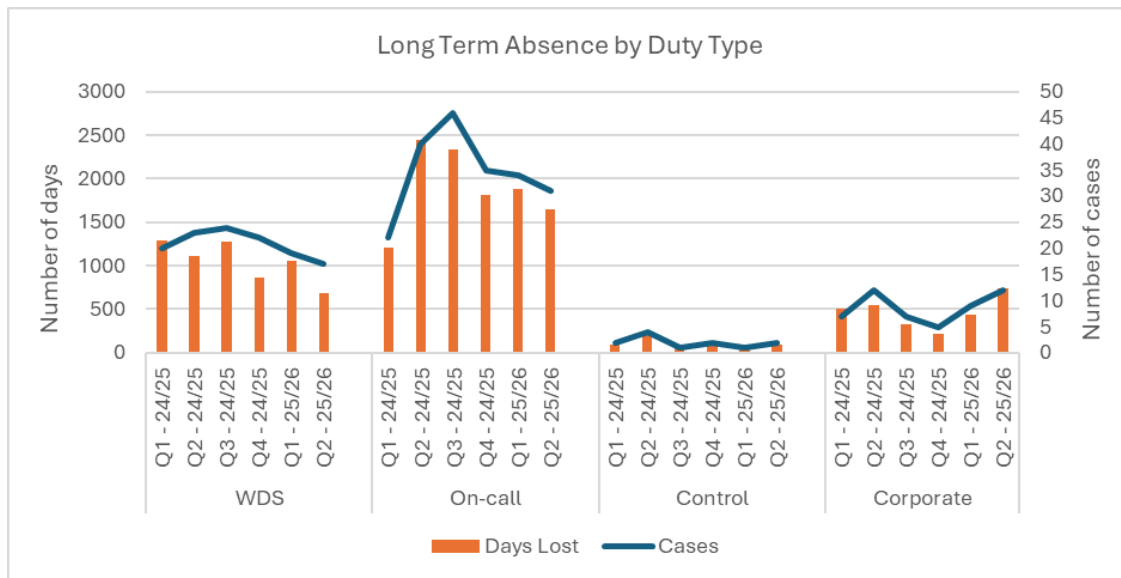
The top three reasons for short-term absence based on the number of cases during quarter two of 2025/26 has continued with musculoskeletal related absence being the top three reasons. Cold/flu reasons were the highest reason for short term absence throughout the 2024/25 year, and whilst this had reduced during quarter one, this reason still accounted for 8.4% of time lost to short term absence during quarter two in the current year.

Time lost due to absence for all musculoskeletal absence reasons accounted for 46.8% of all short-term sickness during quarter two. 63.0% of all the musculoskeletal short-term sickness was reported by employees on the on-call duty system, and 17.2% was corporate staff absence. Whilst there has been a noted increase in short term musculoskeletal absence reasons during quarter two, it is also noted that employees are continuing to access physiotherapy treatments provided by the Service, with shoulders, neck and back being the highest reason for treatment. Employees can access physiotherapy prior to absence in the aim this will prevent absence altogether or from becoming long term in nature due to early intervention.

### **1.3 Long Term Sickness**

On average over the full year of 2024/25, long term absence has accounted for 4.23% of time lost.

Long term sickness accounted for 3.60% of time lost across all duty types in quarter two, compared to 3.99% in quarter one. The number of cases and days lost due to long term absence during quarter two has reduced compared with quarter one, with the exception of cases in corporate roles, which has continued to increase from quarter one.



### Top 3 Long Term Sickness Absence Reasons (by cases)

	Absence Reason	Cases	Lost Time %
1	Mental Health - Stress	8	15.6%
2	Musculoskeletal - Lower Limb	7	7.6%
3	Failed Medical/Fitness Test	7	9.6%

*Lost time % is based upon the days lost rather than the case numbers*

The top three long term sickness absence reasons have remained similar in quarter two of 2025/26, except that the top two reasons have reversed.

Mental health absence is recorded separately to identify the different reasons of poor mental wellbeing - stress, anxiety, other (which includes phobia, bereavement, trauma/PTSD) and depression are the most common mental health reasons recorded within the Service.

Long term absence due to mental health has increased during quarter two, with 15.6% of all long-term absence being due to stress related mental health reasons, 30.0% of which were work related reasons.

Further support for employees suffering poor mental health is currently being reviewed with a view to implementation over the next quarter; this includes increased contact from the Health, Fitness and Wellbeing team during absence to offer holistic wellbeing support and advice, increase of signposting resources relating to specific areas of concern and financial wellbeing on the Service intranet, rebranding of the existing colleague supporters and blue light champions to Wellbeing champions and refresher training, re-promotion of the EAP with new marketing literature, additional options for immediate specialist counselling to be offered via OH and additional information and resources to be added to the website for families of employees about the frontline role undertaken, signs/symptoms of someone who is struggling and signposting for support.

This is in addition to the current support provided, which includes access to occupational health, employee assistance programme and physiotherapy treatment. Signposting to external agencies, such as the Firefighters Charity, Parabl, and other specific services is also provided to employees.

Musculoskeletal – Lower limb absence remains within the top three reasons for long term absence, in terms of the number of cases, however the number of days lost is slightly less than those who were long term absent due to failed medical/fitness tests. Absences due to this reason include employees who are awaiting surgical intervention or are recovering from surgery but due to the physical nature of operational roles, employees must have fully recovered before returning to work to avoid further exacerbation or injury.

Of those employees absent during quarter two due to any musculoskeletal reason, the absence lasted on average 117 calendar days per employee (the absence may have been across more than one reporting period). Employees are considered for modified duties and phased return to work where applicable, to aid an earlier return to work and as a pathway to returning to full duties, which is also supporting mental wellbeing due to engagement with normal routines.

# Our Prevention Principle



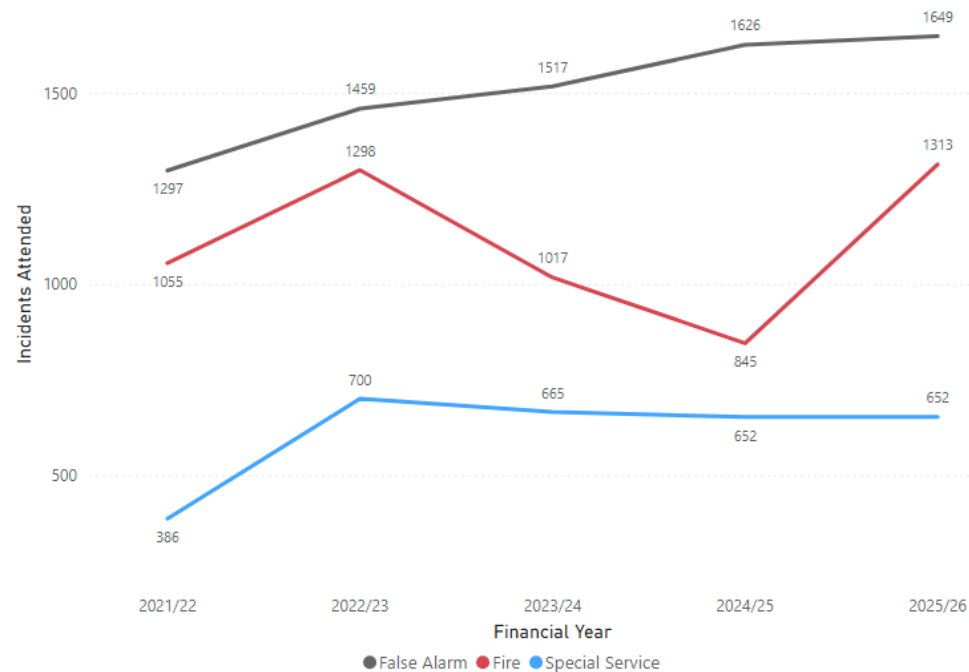
## 2 All Incidents

**All Incidents** – **3,614** incidents were attended during the first half of the financial year, which is a 15.7% increase. This is also 10.9% above the 3-year average of 3,260.

**Fires** – **1,313**, an increase of 55.4%, and 24.7% more than the three-year average of 1,053.

**False Alarms** – **1,649**, an increase of 1.4%, and 7.5% more than the three-year average of 1,534.

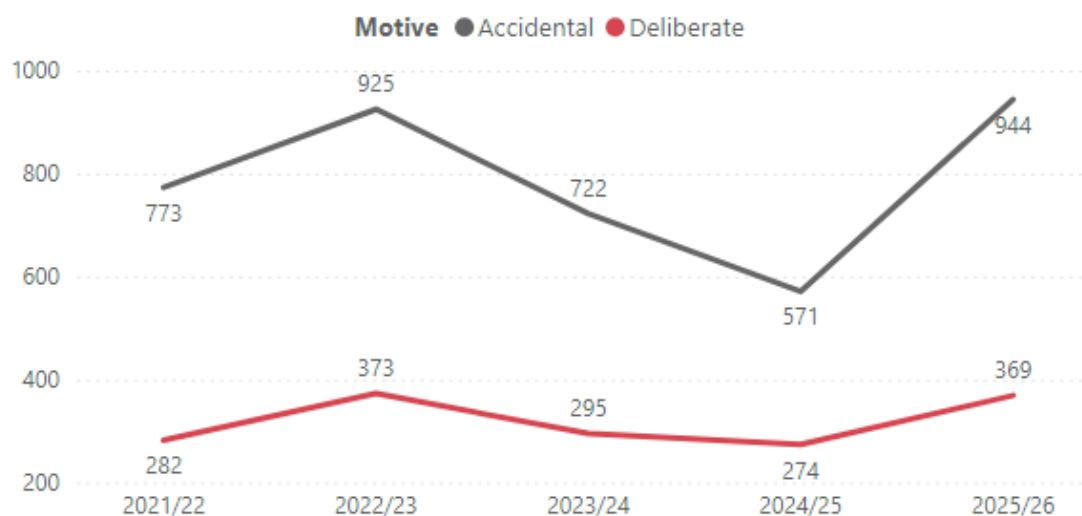
**SSCs** – **652**, no change compared with the previous period, but 3.0% less than the three-year average of 672.





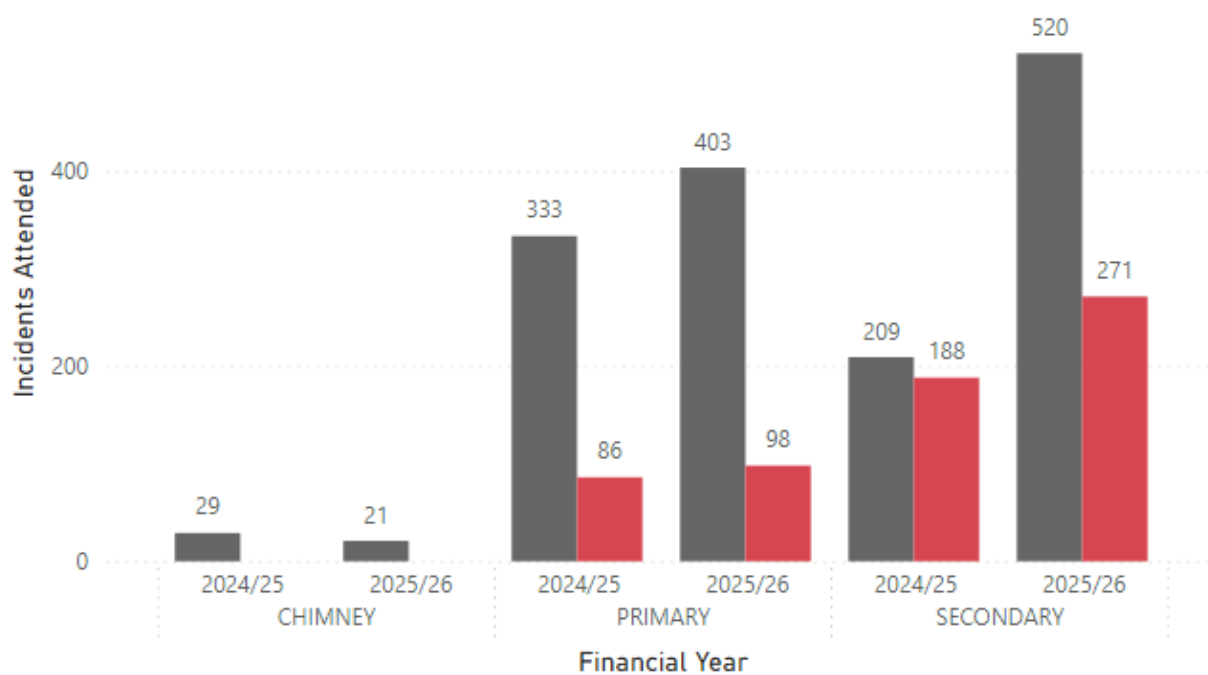
### 3 Fires

1,313 fires were attended; a 55.4% increase from 845.



	Accidental (2025/26)	Deliberate (2025/26)	Total (2025/26)	Total (2024/25)	+/- YoY
<b>Primary</b>	403	98	<b>501</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>19.6%</b>
<b>Secondary</b>	520	271	<b>791</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>99.2%</b>
<b>Chimney</b>	21	0	<b>21</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>-27.6%</b>

**Motive** ● Accidental ● Deliberate



## **Actions taken to date:**

### **Wildfire Prevention and Community Engagement**

Actively promoted wildfire prevention messaging throughout the year, aligned with the All-Wales Wildfire Wise campaign. This includes:

- Social media and media interviews targeting deliberate fire-setting, countryside safety, and landowner responsibilities.
- Incident-specific media engagement to reinforce prevention messages.
- Seasonal messaging tailored to weather conditions and local risk profiles.

### **Local Initiatives and Partnership Working**

Prevention staff and colleagues collaborated with local partners to promote BBQ safety in the Clwydian Range, a known hotspot for wildfire risk due to disposable BBQ use. The initiative involved:

- Joint patrols with Clwydian Rangers, targeting areas such as Horseshoe Falls and Esclusham Mountain.
- Public engagement to raise awareness of fire safety and restrictions in heritage and protected landscapes.

This was a successful initiative, highlighting strong public engagement and the value of future collaboration with partner organisations.

### **Engagement with narrow-gauge railway lines**

We have seen a rise in wildfires near to or on the embankments of the narrow-gauge railway lines within North Wales (Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway and Llangollen Railway). Many of these wildfire incidents have been attributed to embers being emitted from the steam trains. Officers from the Western area have attended several meetings with Ffestiniog Railway colleagues, to gain further understanding to prevent further fires in the future.

The company have now fitted anti-spark devices to their steam trains and have adopted a 'fire train carriage' (water bowser, pump and hose jets) which is used to soak the embankment prior to the passing of a steam train during hot weather and as an initial attack in the event of the fire on the embankment.

Early discussions have taken place with Llangollen Railway, with further meetings to be arranged.

## Further Actions

Stakeholder meeting with partner agencies (NRW, NFU and Local Authorities) to be arranged in Q3 2025/26 regarding the recent spike in wildfires. The purpose of the group will be to review the statistical data, consider the impact of wildfires to the community as a whole and to consider options to prevent further wildfires in the future.

## Additional note

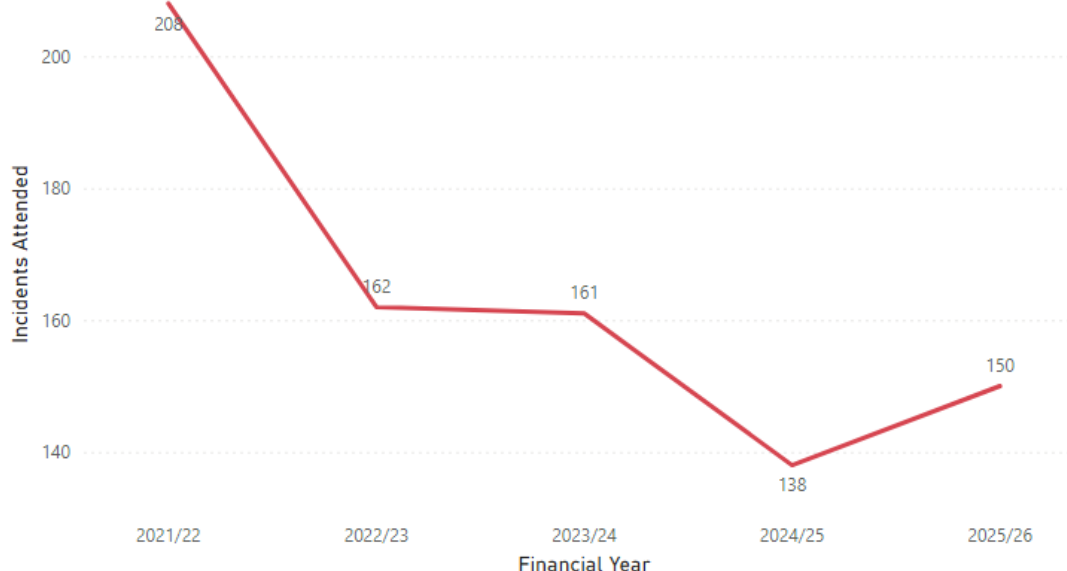
It is important to note that a number of wildfires have been attributed to arson and controlled burning by farmers, which have subsequently become unmanageable and out of control. The engagement work in dealing with arson related incidents and with farmers used to be conducted by the Arson Reduction Team (ART). However, ART was disbanded early 2025 due to the cessation of grant funding from WG. The arson and deliberate fire prevention work which used to be completed by ART has now been absorbed into the workload of the current Prevention Team, which is proving to be a challenge.

As such, the Head of Prevention is looking at ways to realign workstreams and to potentially create a business case to grow the department and to look at ways to part-fund a 'Land Engagement Officer' type role with other stakeholders such as NRW, LA, NFU. This will be discussed during our initial stakeholder group meeting.

## 4 Accidental Fires in Dwellings (ADFs)

**150** accidental dwelling fires were attended, an 8.7% increase from 138.

Whilst this is an increase over the previous financial year, it is important to note that this is still 2.6% less than the three-year average of 154, and is also significantly less than the number of ADFs attended during the financial years prior to 2024/25.



The average response time of the Service to ADFs during the quarter (excluding Late Fire Calls) was 12 minutes. This is based on the time of call to the arrival of the first appliance.

Unitary Authority	ADFs	YoY	Avg Response Time
Anglesey	16	↑ 3	00:17
Conwy	28	↑ 2	00:11
Denbighshire	25	↑ 7	00:10
Flintshire	32	↓ -7	00:12
North Gwynedd	20	↓ -5	00:13
South Gwynedd	3	↓ -5	00:21
Wrexham	25	↓ -4	00:10
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>00:12</b>

County	ADFs	YoY	Avg Response Time
Anglesey	16	↑ 3	00:17
Conwy	28	↑ 2	00:11
Denbighshire	25	↑ 7	00:10
Flintshire	32	↓ -7	00:12
Gwynedd	23	↓ -10	00:14
Wrexham	25	↓ -4	00:10
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>00:12</b>

## 5 Leading Causes of Accidental Dwelling Fires

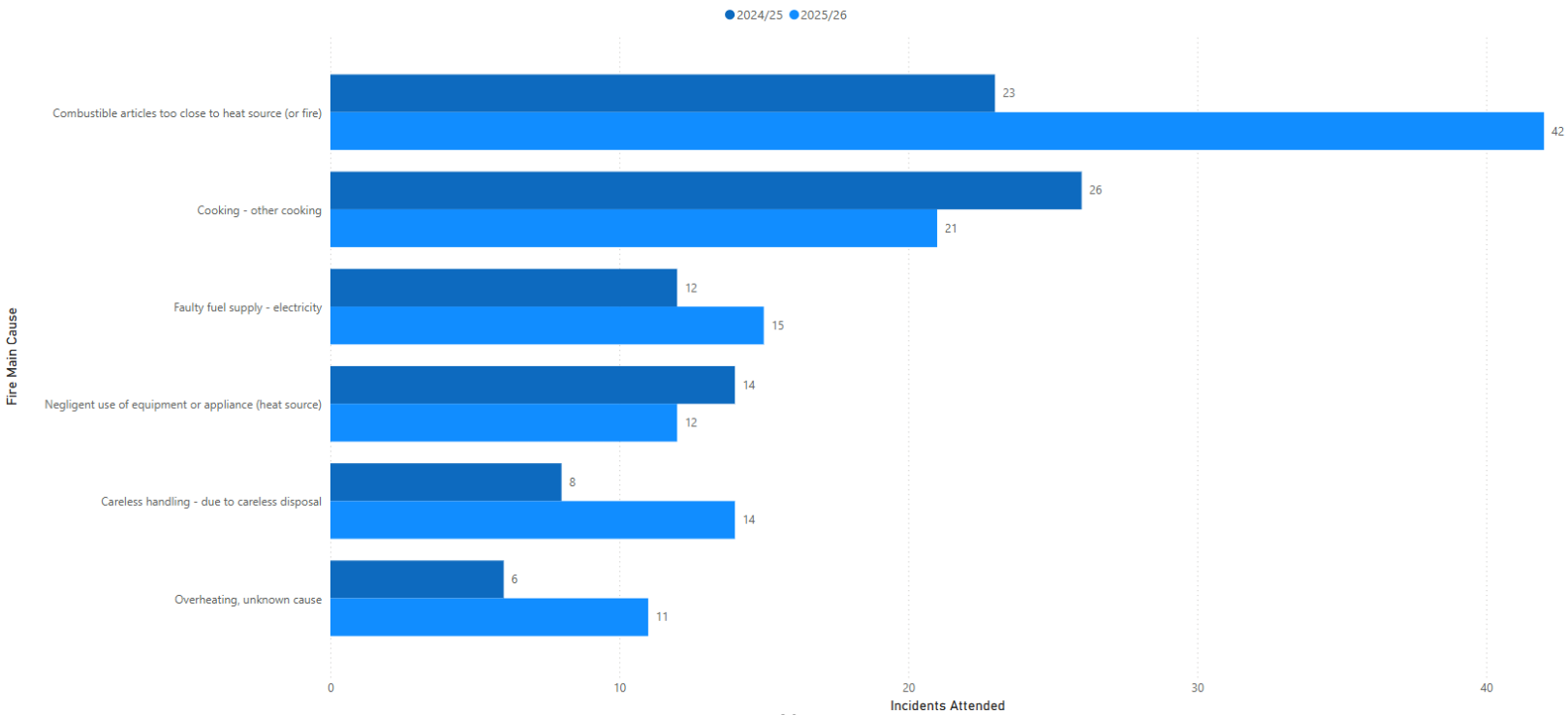
There were numerous main causes of ADFs during the course of the quarter. The most common was 'Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)', which showed an 82.6% increase from 23 to **42**.

Other main causes which saw an increase included:

- 'Faulty fuel supply – electricity', which increased by 25.0% from 12 to **15**.
- 'Careless handling – due to careless disposal', which increased 75.0% from eight to **14**.
- 'Overheating, unknown cause', which increased 83.3% from six to **11**.

Despite this, a few main causes saw a decrease during this quarter. These included:

- 'Cooking – other cooking', which decreased by 19.2% from 26 to **21**.
- 'Negligent use of equipment or appliance (heat source)', which decreased by 14.3% from 14 to **12**.



**Action taken to date:**

The Prevention Team and Campaign Steering Group have been proactive in their approach to dealing with the leading causes of accidental dwelling fires. Several social media messages, Fire Kills and the danger of leaving cooking unattended videos have been shared across all platforms.

The Prevention Team have several hundred multi-agency carers and support workers signed up to receive targeted prevention advice and literature direct their email addresses via 'Gov Delivery'. This has enabled the Prevention Team to share important cooking/kitchen safety information and share our referral information in order to generate high-risk referrals.

Fire crews continue to use Exeter data when carrying out SAWCs, to target those over the age of 65, who statistically are at a higher risk of being involved in a kitchen Fire.

**Further Actions:**

International Day of Older Persons – with the prevention team, partner agencies and various support staff from across the Service conducting Safe and Well Checks, targeting those most vulnerable and highlighting the importance of not leaving cooking unattended and keeping combustible items away from a heat source and cooking appliance.

The Prevention Team are currently working on a week-long kitchen safety campaign to commence 24 November. New digital content is being created, along with new videos and important messages utilising the fire crew at Colwyn Bay.

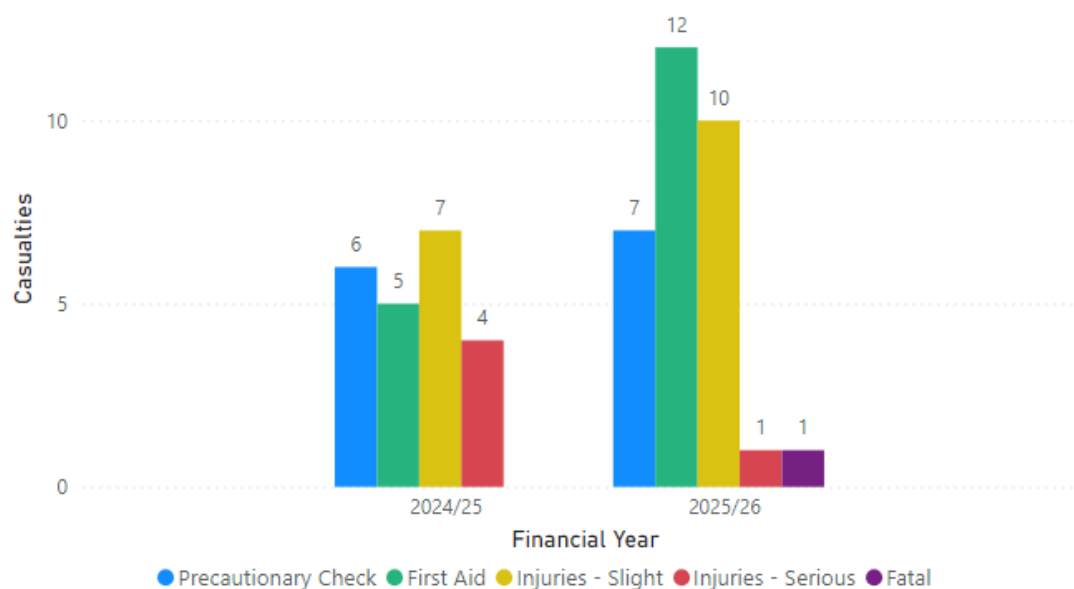
The Prevention Team are currently trialling an innovative cooker safety product called 'Pippa'. The small detection unit, which is located above a cooker, uses AI to detect the early signs of heat and fire, alerting the occupier of a sudden rise in temperature. The unit also has the ability to alert a family member or carer through a mobile phone app.

Plans are underway to add kitchen safety livery to all lockers of Llandudno's fire appliance. This will be launched in the new year with partner agencies and a full press release.

## 6 Fatalities and Casualties from Accidental Fires in Dwellings

**31** people sustained injuries at **26** ADFs. Sadly, **one** person was also recorded as a fatality as a consequence of an ADF during the quarter.

The number of people injured as a consequence of an ADF has increased 40.9%. The number of ADFs where an injury was recorded has also increased by 36.8%.



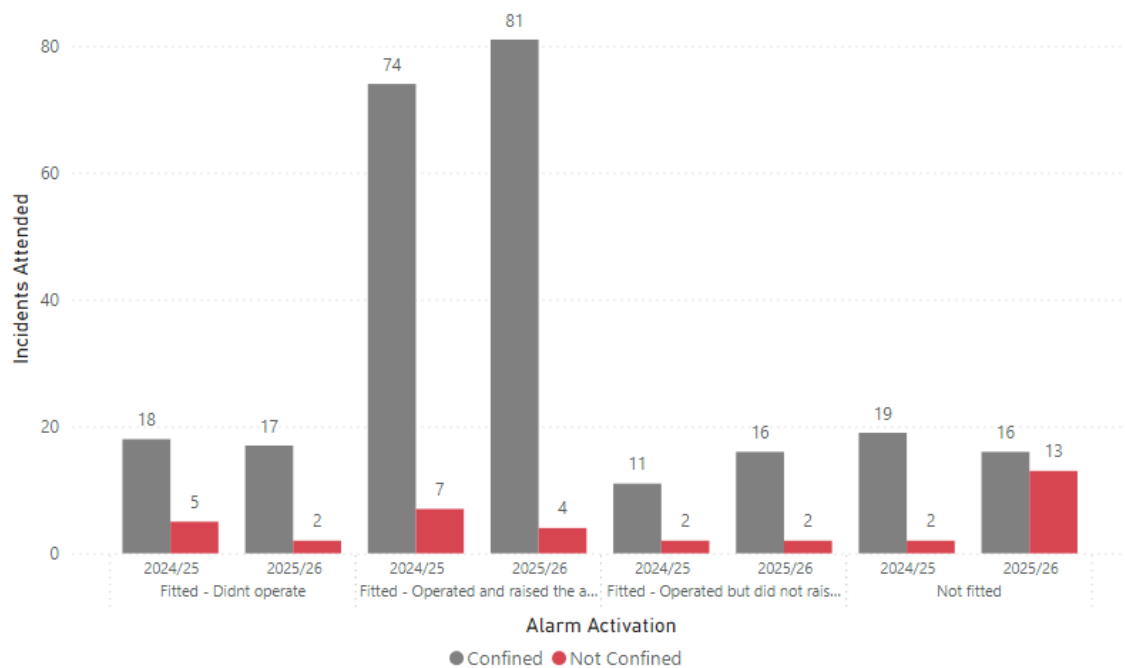
## 7 Smoke Detectors – Accidental Dwelling Fires

**Detectors:** smoke/heat detectors were present at **122** (81.3%) of the accidental dwelling fires attended.

Alarms operated and raised the alarm at **85** (56.7%) ADFs.

Alarms were not fitted at **29** of the ADFs attended.

Of the 150 ADFs attended, **129** were confined to the room of origin, and **21** were not confined.





### **Actions taken to support the most vulnerable to fires in their homes:**

In Q2, WT and DC stations were to undertake prevention activity using Exeter data (data shared by the NHS) to target households where occupiers aged 65+ years live. Different coloured dots on a map indicate 65+, 75+ and 80+ years old. This enables crews to deliver SAWCs to age groups which may be more at risk from fire.

SAWCs were removed off the WT and DC referral waiting lists. All referrals on the waiting list in Q2 were completed by the HSSWs (high/medium risk) and WDSR (low risk).

This procedure is now being reviewed due to the increase in referrals on our waiting list.

Hot spotting activities continue to be undertaken after incidents which results in different levels of post incident response.

The Prevention Team continue to hold tri-weekly meetings and monitor if SAWCs have been carried out and if further engagement and intervention if needed.

The Campaign Steering Group (CSG) continues to work with the Corporate Communications team to proactively promote fire, road, and water safety across all media platforms.

Prevention Team to address the recommendations set out within the recent Audit Wales Report 'Putting out Future Fires'. Prevention Team to review all current risk levels and devise an 'All-Wales' approach with our colleagues at M&WWFRS and SWFRS, ensuring that we target those most at risk, using intelligence-based data.

## **Educational Engagement – Q2:**

### **Phoenix**

Courses delivered	= 4
Participants	= 33
Number completing the course	= 88%
Behaviour Improvement	= 78%
Positive feedback (from referring agencies)	= 100%
Full Agored qual attained	= 70%

### **King's Trust Award**

All policies and procedures for the King's Trust Award are now in place. These have been submitted to the King's Trust for NWFRS to become an accredited centre. Prevention is reviewing activities currently done against the criteria set and contact hours to achieve the Award with Phoenix proving a week's course. Work is ongoing on an all-Wales basis to enable Phoenix to deliver the NFCC Early Interventions Framework.

### **Q2 Educational visits to schools**

Primary Schools Visited	= 4
Pupils	= 225
Crucial Crew	= 2
Pupils	= 270
Cylch Meithrin	= 1
Children	= 20
Deliberate Fires Assembly	= 2
Pupils	= 110

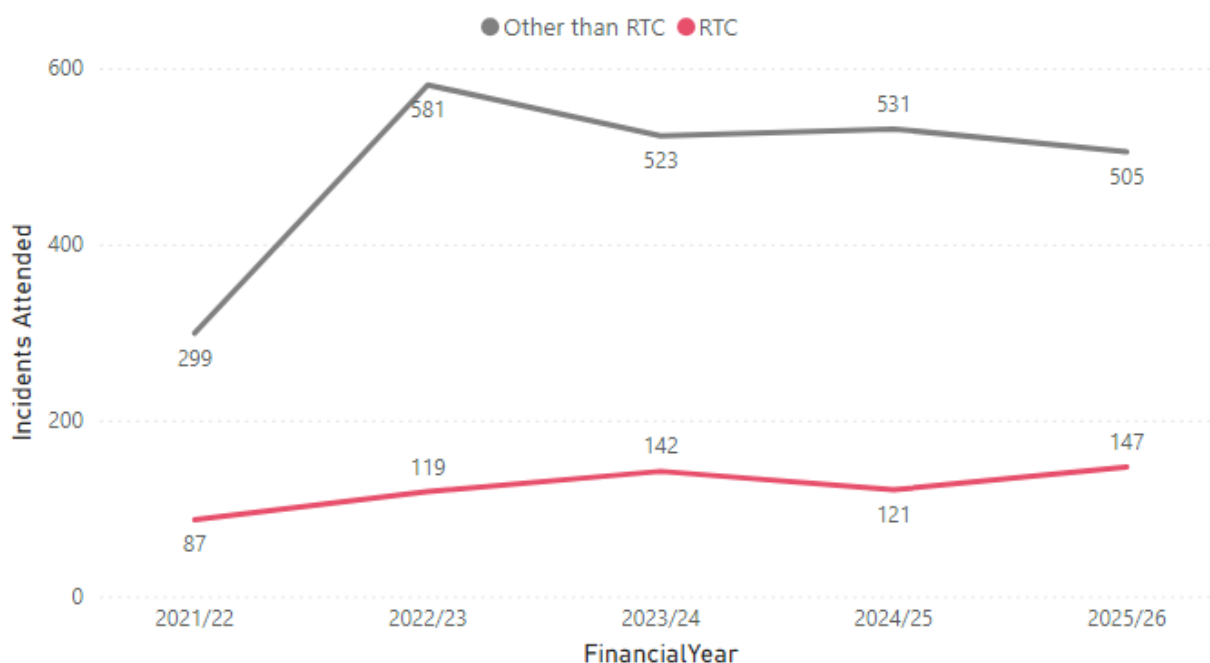
It must be noted that the Education Team currently operating at 50% due to maternity leave.

The summer holiday period always impacts on the number of Prevention activities delivered because the Prevention departmental staff working with children and young people are encouraged to take annual leave during this time, aligning staffing availability with the working periods of schools and referring agencies. Where opportunities arise, engagements and interventions are held.

## 8 Special Service Calls (SSCs)

A total of **652** special service calls (including Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)) were attended. This is the same amount as the previous financial year.

Whilst the number of 'Other than RTC' incidents have decreased by 4.9% with **505** incidents attended, there has been increased attendance at RTCs, which saw a 21.5% increase with **147** incidents attended compared to 121.



Leading SSC categories (other than RTC) included:

- **243** 'Assist other agencies' incidents – an increase of 5.7% from 230.
- **55** 'Other rescue/release of persons' incidents – an increase of 3.8% from 53.
- **47** 'Effecting entry/exit' incidents – an increase of 51.6% from 31.
- **38** 'Lift Release' incidents – an increase of 26.7% from 30.

Despite this, some leading categories did have a **decrease** in the number of incidents attended, such as:

- **21** 'No action (not false alarm)' incidents – a decrease of 30.0% from 30.

## **Actions taken to date:**

### **Road Safety**

#### **Olivia's Story**

Within Q2 Prevention have delivered 9 sessions of Olivia's story engaging with 37 16–25-year-olds. This includes continuing work within Coleg Cambria sites and other further education and partnership opportunities.

It is noted that the summer break has impacted on the number of sessions.

#### **BikerDown**

3 sessions carried out, with 44 attendees over both sessions. These sessions are continuing to be hosted by operational staff members with a keen interest in motorcycles and motorcycle safety.

Op Atal Team (Road safety initiative):

231 roadside driver engagements

33 Traffic Offences reported

Engagement and delivery of Olivia's Story with young people referred by the youth justice system.

It is noted that the team has not had a Police Officer every day and as such their roadside work has only been possible when a Police Officer has been made available.

Sioe Mon: 413 engagements regarding the Fatal 5.

Freshers Week: 220 engagements regarding the Fatal 5.

Phoenix: 45 engagements regarding the Fatal 5.

### **Other Prevention Department Road safety work**

- Working in collaboration with NWP on the launch of Operation Apex. The new PRIME road markings on two roads within North Wales that assist motorbike riders with the best way to handle corners, ultimately making them safer.
- Developing resources for engagement with the older drivers. To be issued during SAWCs.
- Continue to plan delivery and filming of Olivia's story for the new academic year and the film will be used in Road Safety Week.

## **Water Safety Activity**

### **Drowning Prevention Week**

Focusing on year 6 in primary schools. Three schools were visited over the course of the week. Emphasis on not entering the water to help/save someone. Theory presentation in the classroom followed by practical input with throwlines and reach poles on the yard. Messages were Call Tell Throw and Float 2 live.

### **#bewateraware campaign**

Event held on Bangor high street with interaction with the Water Rescue Unit and the Power Boat.

### **National Eisteddfod**

Within the eight days cultural festival in Wrexham. Five days were dedicated to water safety. NWFRS's water safety demonstration flume was utilised as interaction and visual tool. A spot the water hazards/dangers quiz sheets was used with a float to live swim bag being given out as a prize on completing the quiz.

Over 1,200 quiz sheets completed over the eight days.

### **World Drowning Prevention Day**

NWFRS staff joined with partners for awareness raising sessions at both Llyn Tegid Bala and Llyn Padarn Llanberis. The events promoted the National Water Safety Forum's 'Find Your Float' campaign saw staff working with a wide range of organisations to raise awareness about the potential dangers of open water.

The Service's Water Rescue Unit was in attendance at both locations hosting practical demonstrations and water safety activities, while Swim Safe sessions were hosted by partners Byw'n Iach Gwynedd at Llyn Tegid and Plas Menai at Llyn Padarn. Other partners and supporters in attendance at the events included Debbie Ann Turnbull MBE with River and Sea Sense, Water Education, the RNLI, the Coastguard, Mountain Rescue Teams, and Reach and Rescue.

### **Swim Safety Pilot Scheme**

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service staff to play a vital role in delivering a new Water Safety Initiative Pilot Scheme aimed at children aged 9–11 years old. Our vision is to deliver engaging sessions at leisure centre venues, combining classroom-based learning with practical pool-based activities.

Once trained, our staff will be invited to facilitate this three-hour educational package at various locations throughout the service area. Full training and ongoing support will be provided to our staff by Swim Wales instructors to ensure they feel confident and equipped to deliver the programme.

### **Swim Wales Water Safety Collaboration Pilot**

Two initial training days were held at Eirias Park Swimming Pool in Colwyn Bay, resulting in 18 NWFRS team members now fully trained.

Feedback from our staff was overwhelmingly positive with both the course content and the delivery were very well received. Most of the training was classroom based with our staff going on poolside for the last hour to teach two children's classes under the supervision of the swim teacher.

Corporate Comms attended to capture footage of both the classroom and poolside training. They also recorded poolside interviews discussing the initiative and its aims.

The Swim Safe team are undergoing enhanced DBS checks as this is deemed regulated activity with children and young people.

The Campaign Steering Group (CSG) continues to work with the Corporate Communications team to proactively promote fire, road, and water safety across all media platforms.

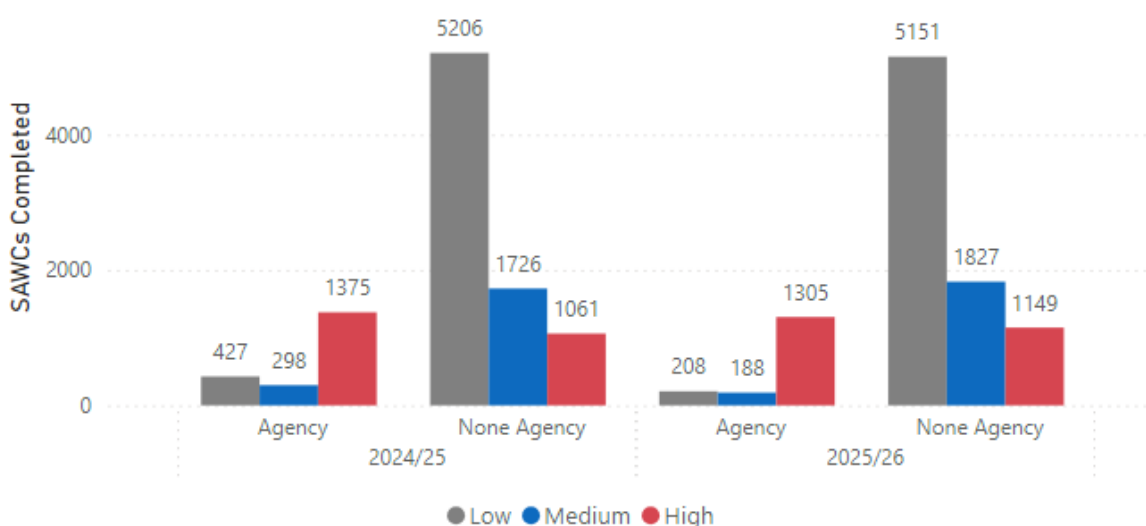
## 9 Safe and Well Checks

A total of **9,828** SAWCs have been completed, of which:

- **2,454** (25.0%) were High priority, with **1,305** (53.2% of high priority checks completed) coming from a partner agency.
- **2,015** (20.5%) were Medium priority, with **188** (9.3% of medium priority checks completed) coming from a partner agency.
- **5,359** (54.5%) were Low priority, with **208** (3.9% of low priority checks completed) coming from a partner agency.

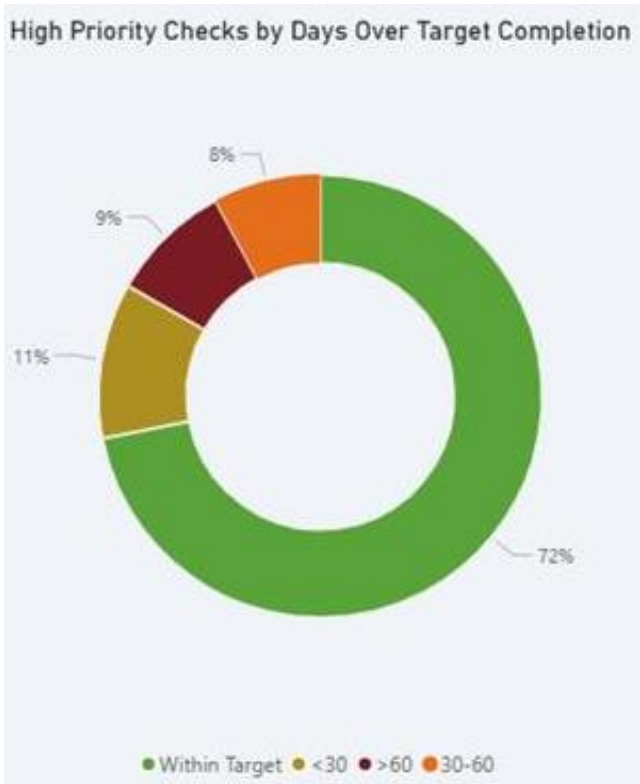
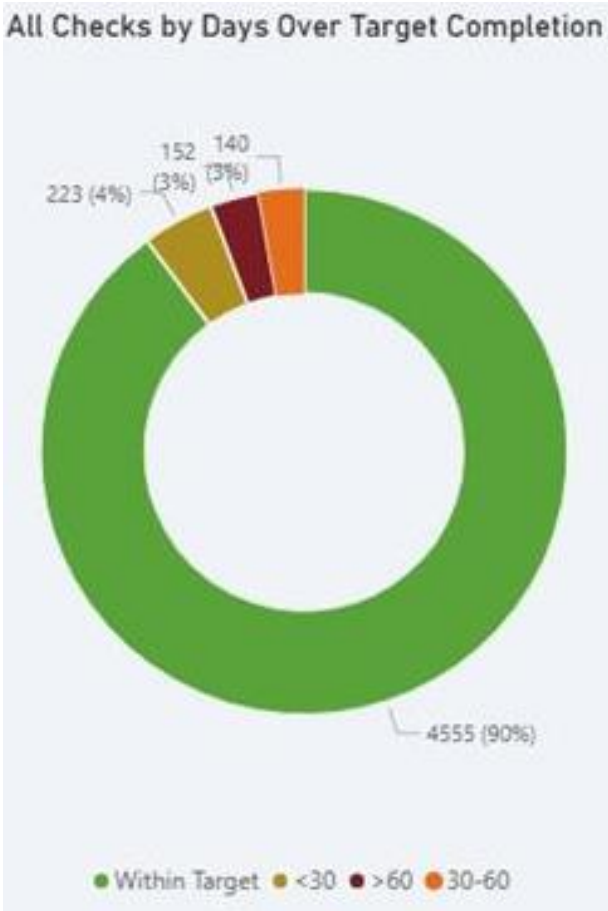
A total of **1,701** SAWCs completed were referred to the Service from an Agency – this equates to 17.3% of SAWCs completed.

There has been a **2.6%** decrease in the number of SAWCs completed compared with the same period last year, however, there has been a **0.7%** increase in the number of high priority SAWCs completed.



A total of 896 (9.1%) SAWCs were conducted in Welsh during the first half of the financial year.

A total of 90% of all SAWCs were completed within their target completion date.





### **Actions taken to date:**

HSSWs to complete a target of 6,000 SAWCs per year. Each HSSW to carry out 545 SAWCs per year which is 136.25 per quarter.

Crews to complete six SAWCs per day which is 24 per four-day tour. This target can be achieved within the two hours set aside for prevention activities, as detailed within the Station Performance Management Framework (SPMF).

In Q2, WT and DC stations were to undertake prevention activity using Exeter data (data shared by the NHS) to target households where occupiers aged 65+ years live. Different coloured dots on a map indicate 65+, 75+ and 80+ years old. This enables crews to deliver SAWCs to age groups which may be more at risk from fire.

SAWCs were removed off the referral waiting list. All referrals on the waiting list in Q2 were completed by the HSSWs (high/medium risk) and WDSR (low risk).

This procedure is being reviewed due to the increase in referrals on our waiting list.

Hot spotting activities continue to be undertaken after incidents which results in different levels of post incident response.

The Prevention Team continue to hold tri-weekly meetings and monitor if SAWCs have been carried out and if further engagement and intervention if needed.

### **Waiting lists Q2**

	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Conwy</b>	214	64	118	396
<b>Denbighshire</b>	114	27	74	215
<b>Flintshire</b>	205	42	108	355
<b>Wrexham</b>	187	43	149	379
<b>Ynys Mon</b>	48	9	32	89
<b>North Gwynedd</b>	68	9	43	120
<b>South Gwynedd</b>	36	6	24	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>1620</b>

This waiting list continues to be a significant risk to the organisation.

In Q2 there are 1,620 referrals on the waiting list which is an increase on Q1.

The waiting list is being managed by HSSWs, WDSR and staff on modified duties.

In Q2 additional payment was offered to On-call and Prevention staff to undertake SAWCs during August/September.

WDSR were encouraged to increase their telephone SAWC output and certain DC/WT watches were asked to undertake medium and high-risk SAWCs from the waiting list.

The Prevention Team are currently reviewing station-based SAWC activity and has recently engaged with the crews, with a view to potentially changing the way they complete SAWCs. The idea being that crews should be working off the current waiting list of medium and high-risk referrals within their station area, rather than generating new SAWCs via the Exeter Data. However, the crews will still use the Exeter Data as the default system for identifying those over a certain age and will be able to use this in conjunction with those on the referral waiting list. The review will conclude within Q3, with a new station-based prevention strategy in-place by January 2026.

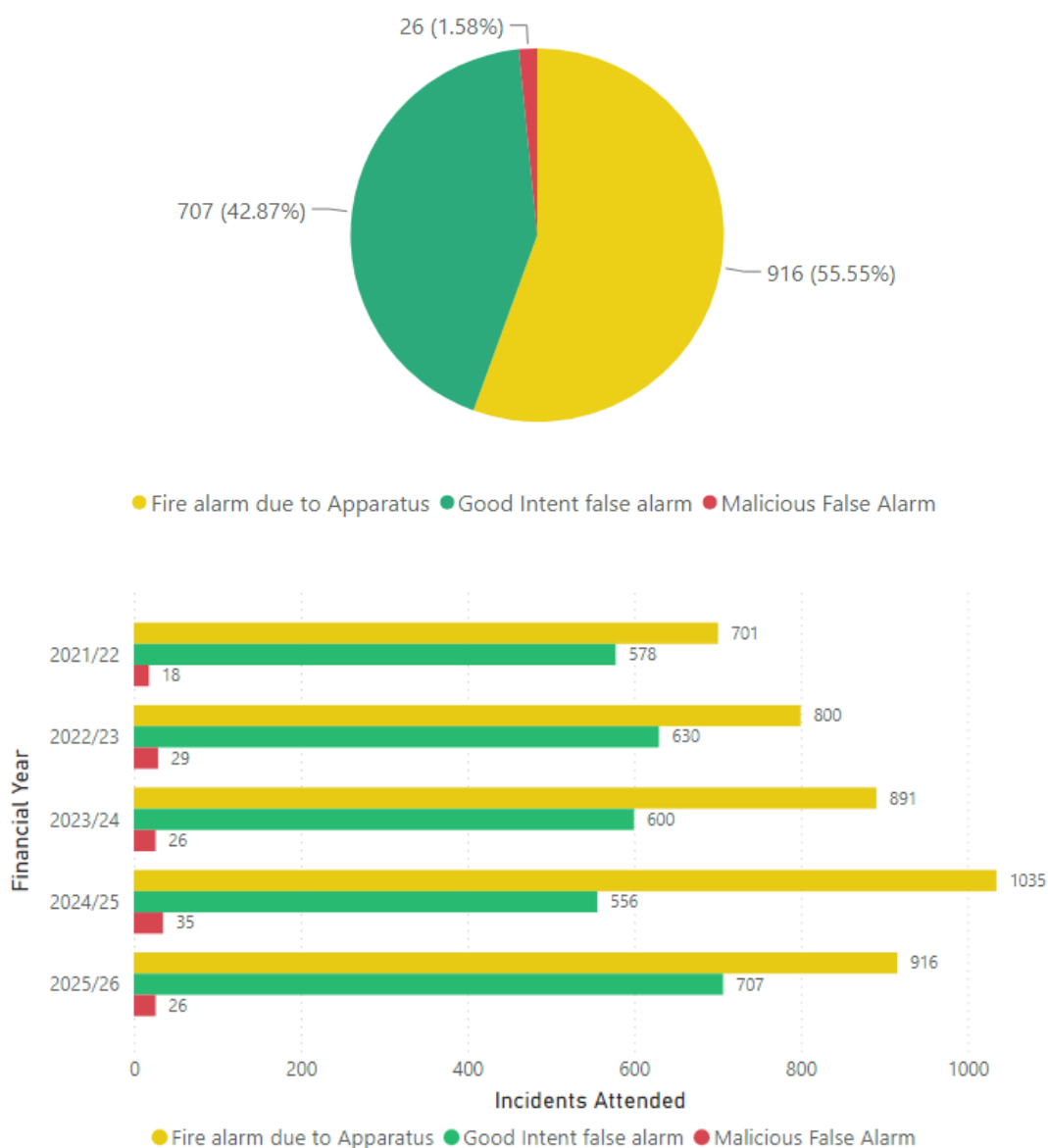
# Our Protection Principle



## 10 False Alarms

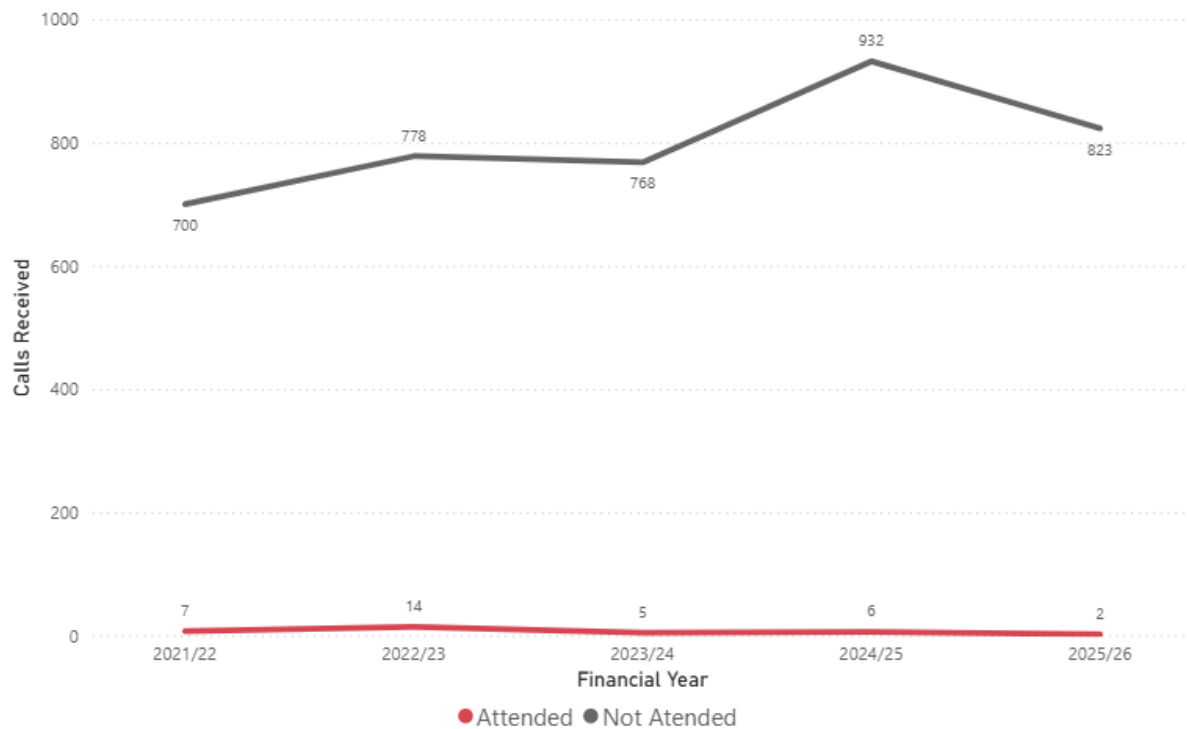
A total of **1,649** false alarms have been attended, which is an increase of 1.4%. This total is inclusive of false alarms attended across all property types.

A rise has been recorded in Good Intent False Alarm incidents attended, with a 27.2% increase recorded from 556 to **707**. Despite this, a reduction can be seen in Malicious false alarms, which decreased 25.7% from 35 to **26**, and also in Fire alarm due to Apparatus incidents, which decreased 11.5% from 1,035 to **916**.



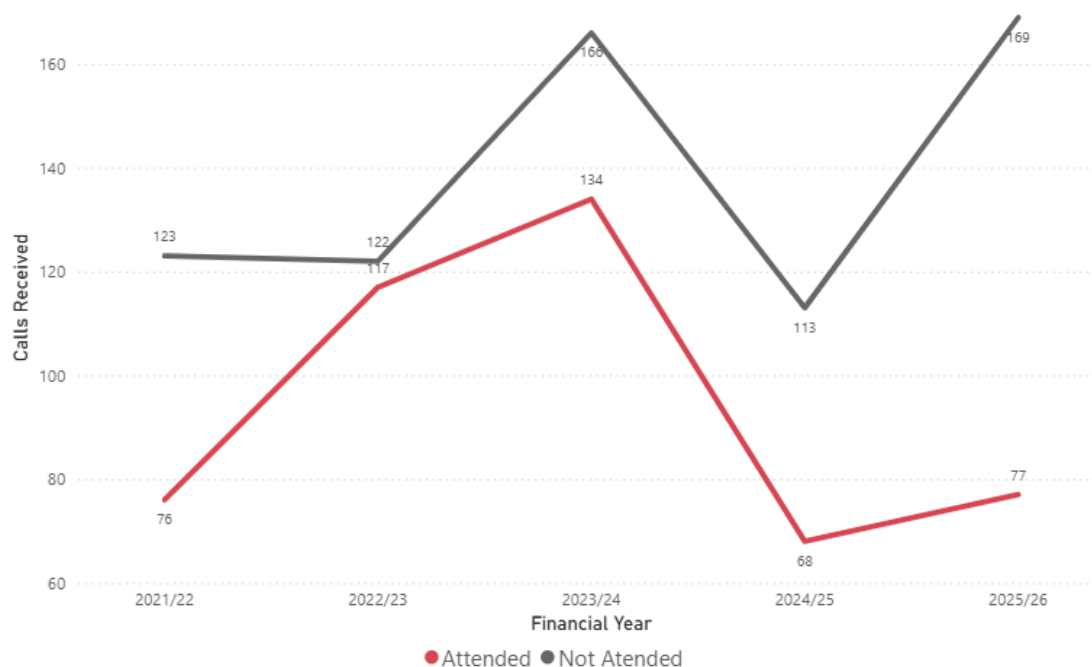
## 11 Commercial AFA calls

**825** Commercial AFA calls were received during the reporting period. All but **two** were incidents that were not attended.



## 12 Hospital AFA calls

**246** Hospital AFA calls were received. Whilst this was not the highest number of calls received during any first half period from the last five financial years, this half did see the highest number of Not Attended incidents.

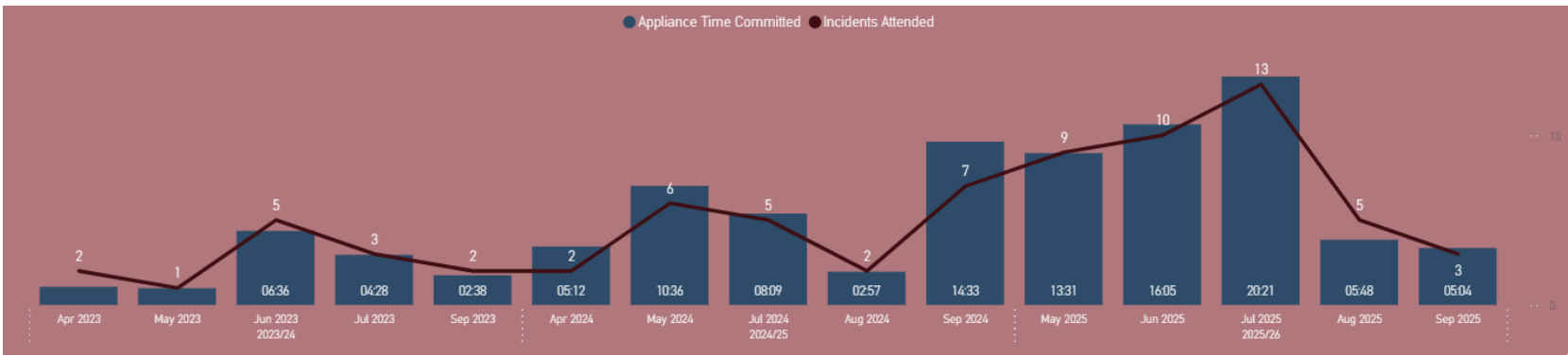
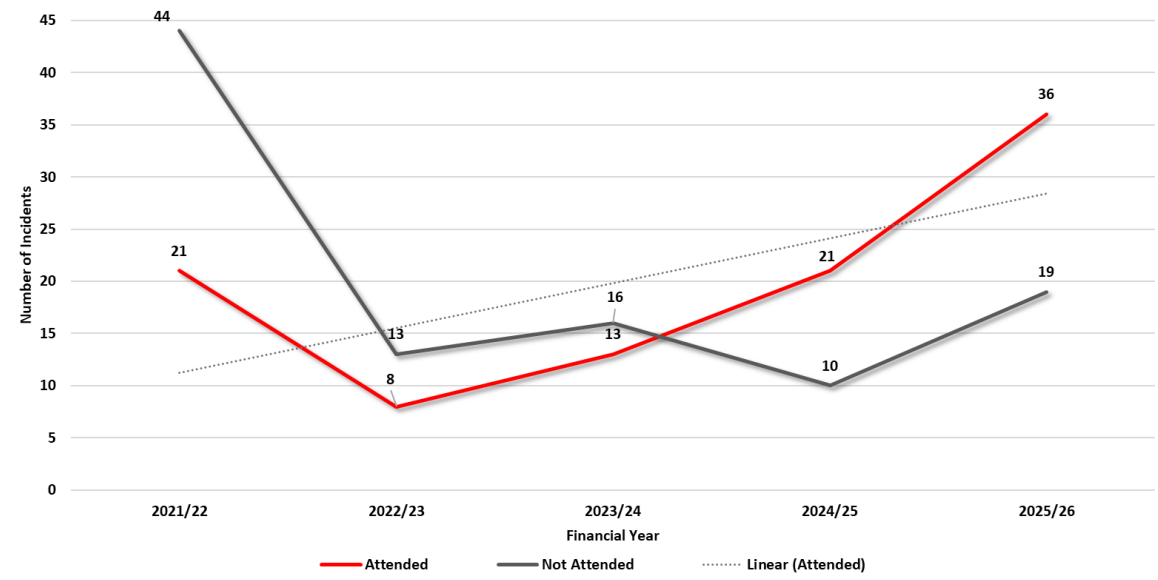


### Actions taken to date – Hospitals:

Incidents attended is still low due to a continued collaboration between NWFRS and BCUHB, with NWFRS now having started a cyclical auditing regime across the estate to solidify working arrangements and to ensure the most high-risk environments are the estates being audited. Continued collaboration and the bi-annual meeting is due to be held in quarter three.

### 13 HMP Berwyn

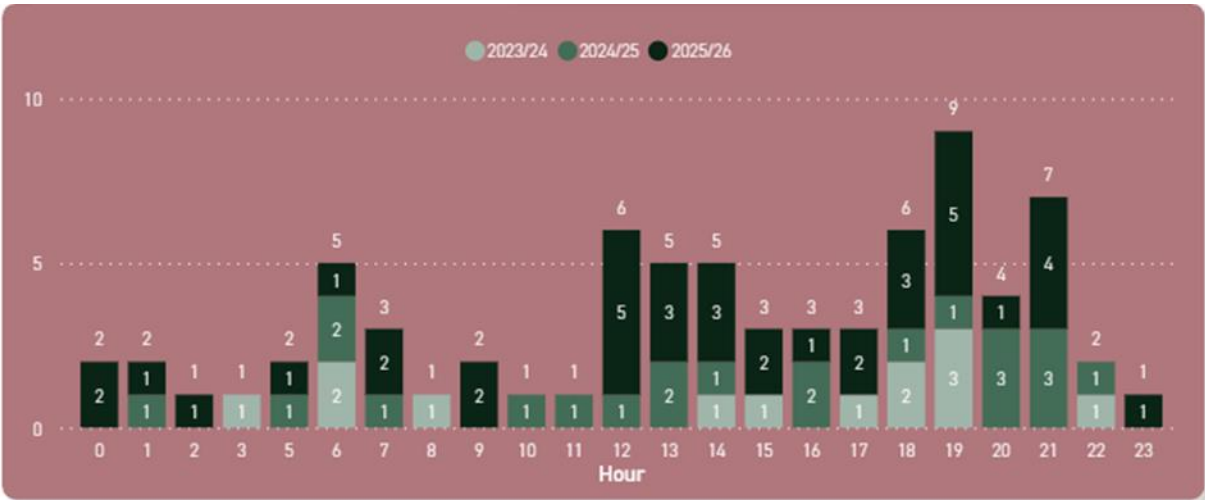
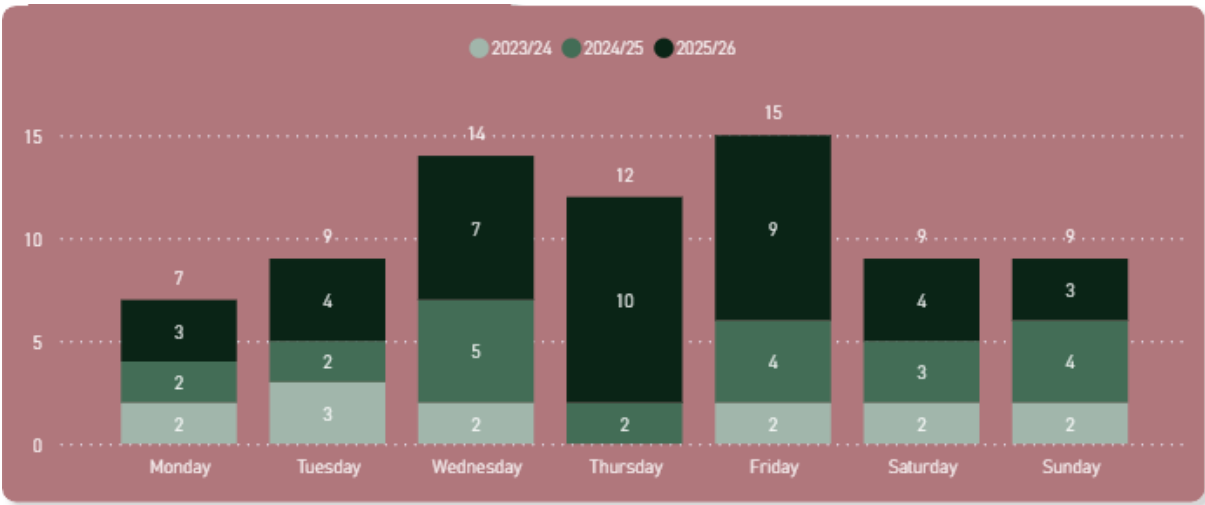
**55** primary fires were started deliberately at HMP Berwyn, and of these **36** were attended - this is 77.4% more than last year.



Actions taken to date – HMP Berwyn

Incidents attended has taken a sharp decline since the introduction of a new vape product, due to the majority of previous incident being caused by the tampering with such devices.

These incidents have also been audited to ascertain any patterns, which do present on certain days of the week. This coincides with days that inmates are paid their wage, and when inmate debt is usually paid immediately afterwards. Inmates start these fires to avoid these debts (usually a Thursday or Friday). Continued collaboration around identifying new methods of ignition is on-going, as the inmates will move onto new ways of starting fires to gain their move from block to block to avoid debt. This will be continual as the incidents peak and trough.



# Our Response Principle



## 14 RDS Station Availability

The below table shows the average pump availability for all RDS Stations between 06:00 and 18:00. The availability is broken down by month, showing the respective weekday and weekend/bank holiday availability.

The table is representative of all RDS watches that are not based at wholtime or day crewed stations.

Average of RDS Stations Availability 06:00-18:00								
Day/Month	April	May	June	Q1	July	August	September	Q2
Weekday	6	6	5	6	6	4	6	5
Weekend (incl. Bank Holiday)	14	14	12	13	11	12	12	12
<b>Overall Average</b>	9	9	7	8	7	7	7	7
<b>2024/25</b>	7	7	6	7	6	7	6	6

Please note that availabilities have been rounded down to the nearest whole number.

The below table reflects the number of RDS starters and leavers during quarter two, compared to the same quarter of last year. Many of the RDS leavers this quarter have become wholtime duty firefighters.

Quarter	Starters	Leavers	Position Headcount at Quarter End	Headcount (single role only)
<b>Jul 2024 - Sept 2024</b>	30	7	487	436
<b>Jul 2025 - Sept 2025</b>	12	29	485	418
<b>+/-</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>+22</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-18</b>

**Starters** – the number of RDS starters from each respective quarter. This does not include secondary contracts.

**Leavers** - the number of RDS leavers from each respective quarter. This does not include secondary contracts, or migrations to the WDS.

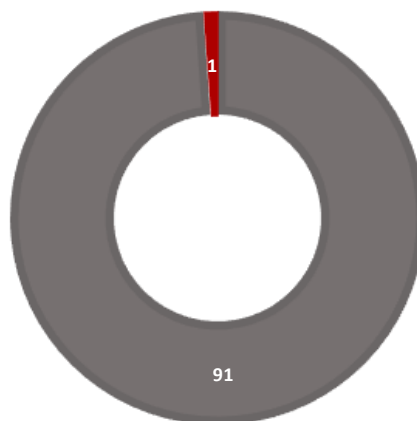
**Position Headcount at Quarter End** – the number of RDS positions that are filled, including those who have more than one role.

**Headcount (single role only)** – the number of individuals who are on the RDS only i.e., those who do not have two roles in the Service.



## 15 Planned 18 Pump Availability

■ 100% Pump Availability Met ■ 100% Pump Availability Not Met



Number of Days Planned Availability Achieved	
100% Pump Availability Met	
Weekday	64
Weekend/Bank Holiday	27
100% Pump Availability Not Met	
Weekday	1

**N.B.** Although 18 pump availability was not achieved during one weekday in August, all groups within the 16 Grouping Plan were still sufficiently covered on that day.

## 16 Emerging Technologies

As technology evolves and our societal reliance upon it increases, it has become apparent that new and complex risks are presented to our Fire Service. Emerging technologies can make up a variety of forms, including things like:

- Electric Vehicles
- Wind Farms
- Devices containing Lithium-Ion Batteries

As many of these technologies are not currently captured within the Home Office's Incident Recording System (IRS), key word searches are conducted on incident logs in order to find the relevant incidents. Following a machinery of government transfer whereby the responsibility for Fire shifted from the Home Office to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), work is currently being undertaken by MHCLG and FRSs across the UK to integrate these technologies into the new incident recording system known as the Fire and Rescue Data Platform (FaRDaP). Incidents recorded before the implementation of FaRDaP will still need to be extracted using key word searches.

The below table summarises attended incidents relating to emerging technologies. This data covers the period of July 2025 to September 2025 and includes all incident categories.

E-Bike, 2	Lithium Ion Batteries / Electric Scooter, 1	Lithium Ion Batteries Charging, 1		Charging, 1	
		EV Charger, 1	Recycling Centre, 1	Hybrid Vehicle, 1	
Electric Scooter, 2	E-Cigarette, 1				

N.B. In some cases, the cause has been assumed rather than confirmed due to the nature of the incident.

# Our Environment Principle



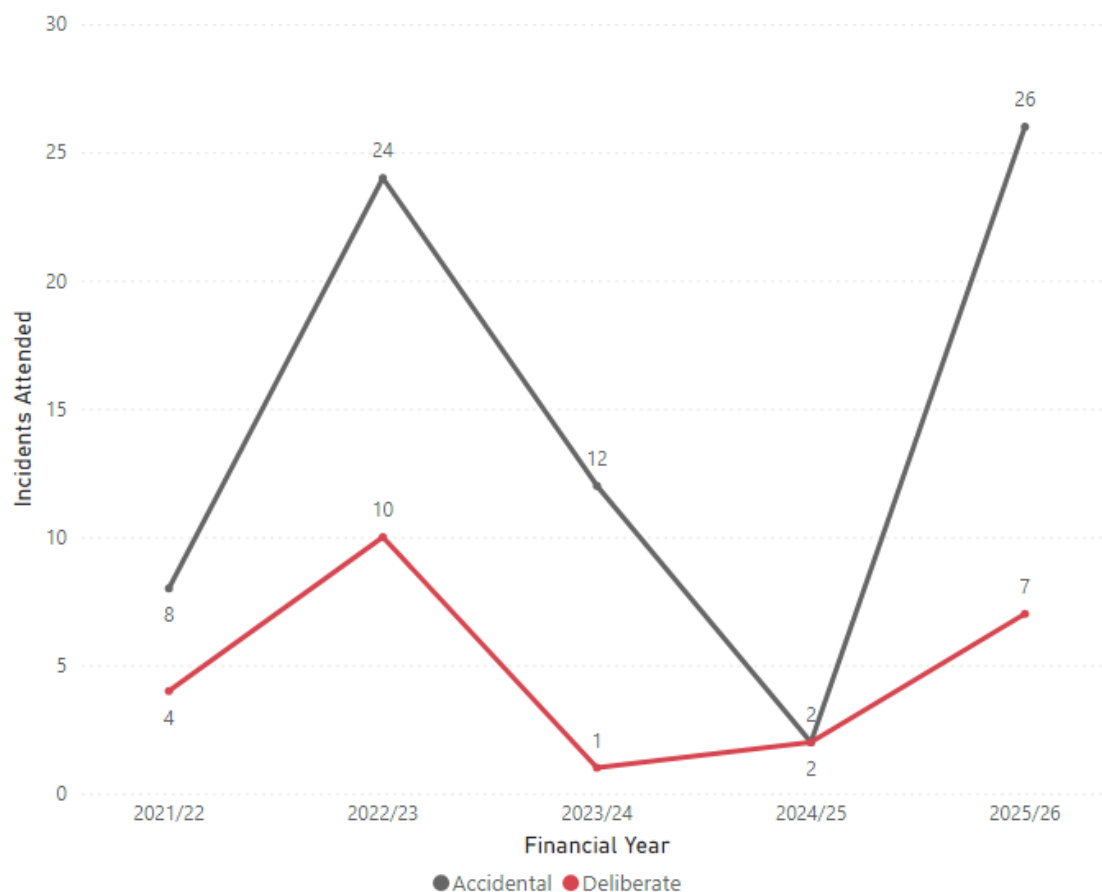
## 16 Grassland, woodland and crop fires

**431** Grassland, woodland and crop fires were recorded, a 214.6% increase from 137. This is 73.1% above the three-year average of 249.



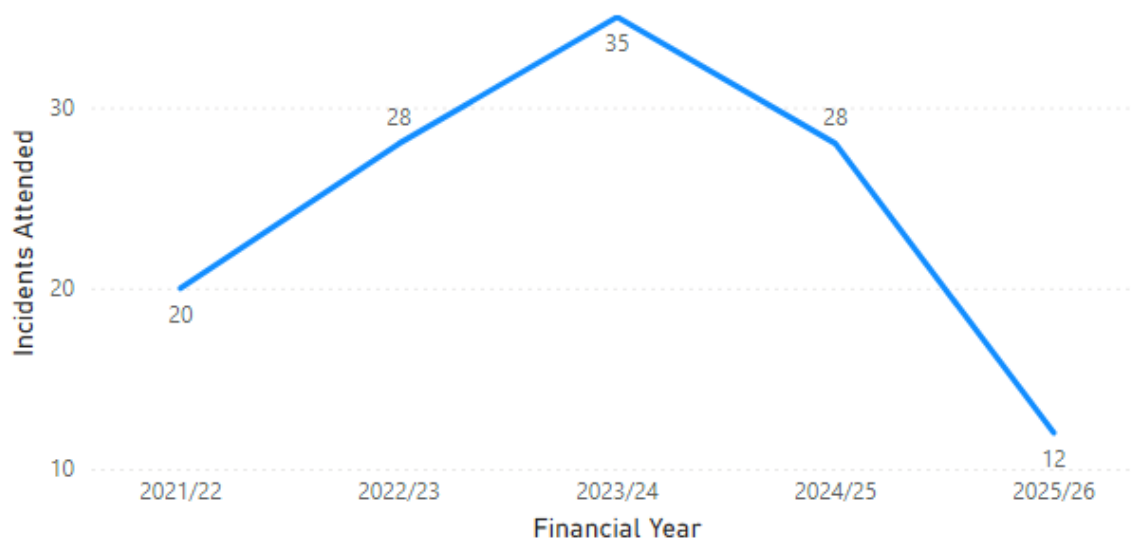
## 17 Wildfires

**33** wildfires were attended. This is an increase of 725.0% and 94.1% above the three-year average of 17. As a result, the time spent monitoring wildfire incidents increased to over **870 hours**, compared with over 229 hours during the same period of the previous year.



## 18 Flooding


There were **12** flooding incidents attended, a 57.1% decrease from 28, and 18 incidents less than the three-year average of 30.



## Glossary

Fires	All fires fall into one of three categories – primary, secondary or chimney.
Primary Fires	<p>These are fires that are not chimney fires, and which are in any type of building (except if derelict), vehicles, caravans and trailers, outdoor storage, plant and machinery, agricultural and forestry property, and other outdoor structures such as bridges, post boxes, tunnels, etc.</p> <p>Fires in any location are categorised as primary fires if they involved casualties, rescues or escapes, as are fires in any location that were attended by five or more fire appliances.</p>
Secondary Fires	<p>Secondary fires are fires that are neither chimney fires nor primary fires.</p> <p>Secondary fires do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes, and will have been attended by four or fewer fire appliances.</p> <p>Secondary fires are those that would normally occur in locations such as open land, in single trees, fences, telegraph poles, refuse and refuse containers (but not paper banks, which would be considered - in the same way as agricultural and forestry property - to be primary fires), outdoor furniture, traffic lights, etc.</p>
Chimney Fires	<p>These are fires in occupied buildings where the fire is confined within the chimney structure, even if heat or smoke damage extends beyond the chimney itself.</p> <p>Chimney fires do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes, and will have been attended by four or fewer fire appliances.</p>
Special Service Incidents	<p>These are non-fire incidents which require the attendance of an appliance or officer and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Local emergencies e.g., flooding, road traffic incidents, rescue of persons, 'making safe' etc;</li> <li>b) Major disasters;</li> <li>c) Domestic incidents e.g., water leaks, persons locked in or out etc;</li> <li>d) Prior arrangements to attend incidents, which may include some provision of advice and inspections.</li> </ul>
False Alarm (general guidance)	<p>Where the FRS attends a location believing there to be an incident, but on arrival discovers that no such incident exists, or existed.</p> <p>Note: if the appliance is 'turned around' by Control before arriving at the incident it is not classed as having been attended and does not need to be reported.</p>
False Alarms - Malicious	These are calls made with the intention of getting the FRS to attend a non-existent incident, including deliberate and suspected malicious intentions.

False Alarms – Good Intent	These are calls made in good faith in the belief that the FRS really would attend a fire or special service incident.
False Alarms - AFA	These are calls initiated by fire alarm and fire-fighting equipment. They include accidental initiation of alarm apparatus or where an alarm operates and a person then routinely calls the FRS as part of a standing arrangement, i.e., with no 'judgement' involved, for example from a security call centre or a nominated person in an organisation.
Building - Dwellings	A property that is a place of residence, i.e., occupied by households, excluding hotels, hostel and residential non-permanent structures.
Building - Non-Residential	Properties such as hospitals, offices, shops, factories, warehouses, restaurants, cinemas, public buildings, religious buildings, agricultural buildings, railway stations, sheds, prisons.
Building - Other Residential	Properties such as hotels, hotels and residential institutions B&Bs, Nursing/care homes, student halls of residence.
Vehicle (Road and Other Transport)	Road vehicle, rail vehicle, aircraft, boat.
Outdoor	Fields, grassland, woodland, refuse containers, post boxes.
Wildfires	A grassland, woodland and crop fire where the incident was attended by 4 or more vehicles, or the Service was in attendance for 6 hours or more, or where there was an estimated fire damage area of over 10,000 square meters.
Short Term Sickness (STS)	Absences 27 calendar days and under.
Long Term Sickness (LTS)	Absences 28 calendar days and over.

Report to	<b>Executive Panel</b>	
Date	<b>15 November 2025</b>	
Lead Officer	<b>Anthony Jones - Assistant Chief Fire Officer</b>	
Contact Officer	<b>Mike Plant - Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation</b>	
Subject	<b>Strategic Risk Management</b>	

## PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To provide Members with an update in relation to the Risk Appetite Statement and an overview of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's (the Authority) Strategic Risk Register.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 Since the review of internal controls by internal auditors, Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA), several changes to how risk is recorded and managed have been implemented to strengthen the risk management process.
- 3 The approved Risk Appetite matrix was reviewed at the recent Strategic Risk Committee on 23 October 2025, and the risk appetite remains unchanged.
- 4 The report provides Members with an update of the content of the Authority's Strategic Risk Register.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5 It is recommended that Members;
  - i) **note the Strategic Risk Register; and**
  - ii) **review and approve the risk appetite in paras 14-21 below**

## BACKGROUND

- 6 The Authority's Strategic Risk Register identifies known risks that could potentially prevent the Authority from achieving its planned outcomes and/or delivering its core functions. Register entries are assigned risk scores that are regularly re-evaluated by officers to reflect the current state and the predicted effect of planned mitigations.



- 7 Under this policy, the Executive Panel receives a summary report on strategic risks at least twice a year. Between meetings, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority can view the full detail of the register with officers.

## **INFORMATION**

- 8 Heads of Department are responsible for identifying and managing the risks they own; however, a Strategic Risk Committee has been added to the Governance Assurance Structure and has met twice since the last report. This committee is responsible, amongst other things, for reviewing those risks that are identified as being 'High' or 'Very High' risk.
- 9 The Strategic Risk Committee is supported in its work by all other Committees in the Governance Assurance Structure, which now all have risk as a standing agenda item for discussion of new and existing risks in the context of their respective workstreams.
- 10 Level 1 and 2 Risk Training E-Learning modules have now been completed and signed off by the chair of the SRC. This work by the Training and Development department completes the provision of training at levels 1-4 identified as needing implementation by the MIAA report. These modules will be assigned to the relevant personnels digital learning accounts imminently and are to be completed on a 3 yearly cycle

## **North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Risk Appetite Statement**

Last reviewed: 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025 at Strategic Risk Committee

- 11 The Authority recognises that its long-term sustainability depends upon optimising risk in relation to the delivery of its strategic objectives, and that the relationship with communities, staff, contractors, the general public and other stakeholders is key to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service)'s success.
- 12 The Authority does not have a single risk appetite, but rather appetites across the range of its activities. We recognise that in pursuit of our wellbeing and improvement objectives we may choose to accept different degrees of risk in different areas.
- 13 Our risk appetite has been defined following consideration of organisational risks, issues and consequences. We will always aim to operate organisational activities at the levels defined below. Where activities are projected to exceed the defined levels, this must be highlighted through appropriate governance mechanisms.

- 14 **Financial risks:** We have adopted a **cautious** stance for financial risks with reference to core running costs, seeking safe delivery options with little residual risk that only yield some upside opportunities. The Authority will receive ongoing assurance through the annual governance statement that policies and procedures are in place in line with Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and SOLACE guidance.
- 15 **Response/Operations risks:** We have adopted a **cautious** stance for risks to our ability to respond to emergencies, seeking to safeguard our ability to reduce risk to the public whilst maximising the safety of our fire fighters.
- 16 **Legal/Regulatory compliance risks:** We have adopted a **minimal** stance for compliance, seeking a preference for adhering to responsibilities, and safe delivery options with little residual risk. The Authority will have annual assurance that compliance regimes are in place, through the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).
- 17 **Reputational risks:** We have adopted an **open** stance for reputational risks, with a preference for safer delivery options, tolerating a cautious degree of residual risk and choosing the option most likely to result in successful delivery, thereby enhancing our reputation for delivering high-quality, cost-effective services to the public.
- 18 **People risks:** We have adopted a **cautious** stance in relation to People risks. We believe strongly in the importance of positive staff engagement and maintaining a values-led culture in support of all our staff. Recruitment and retention of retained firefighters is a particular challenge in some of our more rural communities.
- 19 **Information risks:** We have adopted a **cautious** stance to the management and storage of personal information risk, to reflect the sensitivity and importance of information held on our systems to support our prevention and protection activities as well as staff information processed for the purposes of employment.
- 20 **Technology/Cyber risks:** We have adopted a **minimal** stance for threats to our assets arising from external malicious attacks. To address this risk, we operate strong internal control processes and utilise robust technology solutions.

- 21 **Assets/Estates risks:** We have adopted a **cautious** stance for assets and estates respectively, seeking value for money but with a preference for proven delivery options that have a low residual risk. This means that we use solutions for purchase, rental, disposal, construction, and refurbishment that ensure we protect the taxpayer from as much risk as possible, producing good value for money whilst fully meeting organisational requirements.

## 21 Strategic Risk Register

Theme	Mitigating Actions
<p><b>Response/Operations</b> (Risk Appetite – Cautious)</p> <p>Due to uncertainties in the availability of funding for capital investment, there is a risk that training facilities could be no longer fit-for-purpose if investment in the maintenance and improvement of facilities is not provided in the future.</p>	<p>Investment in training facilities at Dolgellau and Rhyl along with Compartment Fire Behaviour Training facility at Airbus Broughton will allow Breathing Apparatus training to continue in the short to medium term. There is limited capacity to extend/expand these sites to include any other scenario based training due to their locations and planning restrictions. These training facilities are currently supplemented by staff attending external venues however, this comes at a cost that is challenging to predict beyond the current financial year.</p>
<p><b>Technology/Cyber</b> (Risk Appetite – Minimal)</p> <p>Due to the ever-evolving cyber threat landscape, there is a risk that the organisation will be subjected to a cyber attack</p>	<p>Various technologies to help protect us from external threats, internal security settings etc. However, most of these technologies are well known and cyber criminals are adapting their attacks to circumnavigate our controls. Additional software (eg Bullwall) helps lower the consequence, and protocols are being drawn up to help with post attack mitigations</p>

<p><b>Financial risks</b> (Risk appetite – Cautious)</p> <p>There is a risk that the deadlines may not be met due to the complexity of pension rules and the need to address legal challenges. This could be caused by the intricate nature of the regulations and the time required to resolve legal issues.</p>	<p>Member of scheme Advisory Board. Data quality is improving. Cashflows are outside of the pension fund.</p>
<p><b>Response/Operations</b> (Risk Appetite – Cautious)</p> <p>Due to recruitment and retention of sufficient staff there is a risk that we may not be able to maintain pump availability particularly in rural areas.</p>	<p>Dedicated recruitment and availability teams in each area. Dedicated groups and Committee in Assurance Structure focusing on this risk. Officers, staff and representative groups working in social partnership to implement the recently agreed collective agreement to improve rural fire cover and increase resilience. Dedicated daily availability resource maximises appliance availability across North Wales.</p>


**Risk** is defined as a combination of the likelihood and consequences of hazardous events.

**Likelihood:** the chance of something happening. May be described by the probability, frequency or uncertainty of events.

**Consequence:** The outcome of an event. Specifically, the severity or extent of harm caused by an event.

## IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	Maintaining the register and taking action to manage risk increases the likelihood that the Authority's well-being objectives will be achieved.
Budget	Maintaining the register helps prioritise spending decisions that would reduce risk levels.
Legal	Maintaining the register helps to ensure the Authority's compliance with legislation that define its functions and how it operates.
Staffing	No specific implications identified.
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	No specific implications identified.
Risks	Mitigations seek to minimise the likelihood of risk occurring,

Report to	<b>Executive Panel</b>	
Date	<b>15 December 2025</b>	
Lead Officer	<b>Helen MacArthur, Assistant Chief Fire Officer</b>	
Contact Officer	<b>Elgan Roberts, Head of Finance and Procurement</b>	
Subject	<b>Budget Setting 2026/27</b>	

## PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To provide Members with an update on the financial planning assessment to set a balanced budget for 2026/27 and seek endorsement to communicate the indicative levy to constituent local authorities.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is required to provide indicative figures for the 2026/27 financial levy to constituent local authorities by 31 December 2025 and confirm the final figures by 15 February 2026. To achieve this, the Authority will consider the revenue and capital budget for 2026/27 at its meeting on 19 January 2026. The budget planning process has been subject to scrutiny by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group and the current planning assessment of £54.375m has been confirmed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3 It is recommended that Members:
  - i) **Note the findings of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, including the planning assumptions being used to develop the revenue budget for 2026/27;**
  - ii) **Note the current financial planning assessment of a revenue budget requirement of £54.375m and capital budget of £6.661m for 2026/27;**
  - iii) **Note the proposal to utilise £0.271m of reserves for 2026/27; and**
  - iv) **Endorse the communication of the draft financial levy of £54.104m from the constituent local authorities.**

## BACKGROUND

- 4 Each year the Authority is required to set a balanced revenue budget which must be approved by the full Authority. The indicative financial levy must be communicated to constituent local authorities by 31 December each year and the final levy confirmed by the 15 February before the commencement of the financial year. To achieve these timescales, the 2026/27 proposed revenue and capital budgets will be presented to the Authority at its meeting on 19 January 2026.
- 5 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) requires that organisations have financial plans which demonstrate how expenditure will be funded over the short and medium term. The Authority's financial sustainability is, therefore, underpinned by knowledge and understanding of the key cost drivers and evaluation of risks and uncertainties.
- 6 Following the ECR consultation, work is ongoing to improve rural availability; however, savings will not be realised as options involving cash releasing savings were not approved by the Authority. The Nucleus Crewing pilot at Porthmadog and Dolgellau will be monitored during 2026/27.
- 7 The process has been overseen by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group (the Group) which was established to provide scrutiny of the budget setting process.

## INFORMATION

- 8 The Group was established by the Authority with representation from each constituent local authority. It has convened on five occasions to review all aspects of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's (the Service) expenditure. These meetings focused on key areas, including direct pay costs, non-pay expenditure, capital financing, interest, and lease arrangements.
- 9 Detailed budget planning has been conducted in line with the key planning assumptions, risks, and uncertainties outlined in [Appendix 1](#).
- 10 The initial detailed budget planning identified additional unavoidable pressures, which have since been addressed through the efforts of the Group. The final draft assessment establishes a budget requirement of £54.375m. After utilising £0.271m from reserves, the levy requirement for 2026/27 is £54.104m, representing a 4% gross increase in the local authority levy.



- 11 A draft breakdown of the levy requirement of £54.104m by each constituent local authority is set out within [Appendix 2](#).
- 12 The table below confirms reductions of £1.349m in the budget requirement identified through the work of the Group during the year.

£'m	2025/26	2026/27 Draft 1	2026/27 Draft 2	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Changes via Budget Scrutiny
Employees	36.915	39.152	38.844	38.732	0.420
Non-Pay	16.513	17.700	17.167	16.810	0.890
Income	-1.039	-1.128	-1.211	-1.166	0.038
<b>Total</b>	<b>52.389</b>	<b>55.724</b>	<b>54.800</b>	<b>54.375</b>	<b>1.348</b>

- 13 Employee costs are expected to increase from £36.915m in 2025/26 to £38.732m in 2026/27, representing a year-on-year rise of 4.9%. This figure includes an allocation of £0.352m to expand establishment capacity, in accordance with recommendations from the Fire Advisor for Wales and to ensure compliance with legislative requirements. Excluding these additional costs, the underlying year-on-year increase is 4%.
- 14 Provisions have been made to support the continued expansion of the Retained Duty System (RDS), thereby enhancing operational resilience. The annual cost of £0.163m includes funding for the recruitment of 15 additional posts, ensuring that response capacity and resilience are maintained.
- 15 Additional financial pressures resulting from the full-year impact of recruitment in 2025/26, staff progression from development to competent pay, and job evaluation have been mitigated through savings and reductions in employer contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme.



- 16 The budget planning process incorporates key risks and assumptions, most notably that pay awards are based on an assumed inflation rate of 3.8%. Any settlement exceeding this rate will result in additional cost pressures beyond the current budget proposal. In such cases, internal measures will be implemented to mitigate the impact in the short term, including the use of the general fund and relevant earmarked reserves.
- 17 Non-pay costs are projected to increase from £12.012m in 2025/26 to a revised baseline of £12.309m for 2026/27. The utilisation of £0.271m of reserves for one-off expenditure reduces the total levy impact to £12.039m. The in-year increase includes the reclassification of certain capital expenditure as revenue following an internal review to ensure compliance with the CIPFA standards.
- 18 Income is projected to rise from £1.039m in 2025/26 to £1.166m in 2026/27. This additional income offsets pay and non-pay pressures by £0.082m and includes budgets for the sale of vehicles (£0.100m) and interest expected on investments (£0.037m). These gains are partially offset by a reduction of £0.092m in known grant funding and Service Level Agreements (SLAs).
- 19 A capital allocation of £6.661m is proposed for 2026/27; however, schemes will only progress once all associated business cases have been fully developed and subjected to rigorous scrutiny. Capital financing costs are forecast to remain stable at £4.501m, reflecting reductions in the Minimum Revenue Provision (£0.027m) and lease costs (£0.076m). These savings are offset by a £0.060m provision for Capital Expenditure from Revenue Account (CERA) and an increase in interest payable, driven by the reprofiling of the loan book towards longer-term borrowing to provide certainty and continuity.

## **FURTHER WORK**

- 20 Business cases for new capital and non-pay funding will undergo further internal scrutiny to ensure they align with the organisation's strategic objectives, effectively mitigate risks, and comply with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. This process will provide assurance that proposed investments contribute to long-term sustainability, deliver value for money, and support the wider goals of economic, environmental, and social well-being.
- 21 The draft financial planning assessment will be subject to further refinement and updated in the final assessment presented to the Authority at its meeting on 19 January 2026.

- 22 Treasury Management Strategy reports for 2026/27 are currently in development. Following consideration and approval by the Finance and Procurement Committee, these reports will be submitted to the Authority for scrutiny and endorsement at the Audit Committee in March, with final approval scheduled at the Fire Authority meeting on 20 April 2026.

## IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	The proposals support the Authority's Improvement and Wellbeing Objectives by ensuring financial sustainability and service resilience.
Budget	The planning assessment confirms a budget requirement of £54.375m, with £0.271m of reserves applied to reduce the levy impact.
Legal	The Authority must set a balanced budget in compliance with statutory requirements and CIPFA guidance.
Staffing	Staffing costs represent over 70% of total expenditure. Key risks include pay award uncertainty, recruitment challenges for retained duty staff, and maintaining corporate resilience.
Equalities/Human Rights/Welsh Language	These issues will be factored into budget setting proposals.
Risks	Principal risks and uncertainties are detailed in Appendix 1.

## Appendix 1

### Summary of planning assumptions and risks

Heading	Planning assumptions used in budget setting	Risks/Uncertainties
Employee costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffing budgets based on existing service delivery models and outcomes of the Emergency Cover Review (2023).</li> <li>Retained Duty System (RDS) budget assumes headcount continuation, not full establishment (approx. additional £3m if fully resourced). Additional RDS recruitment capped at 15 posts (was 30 in 2024/25).</li> <li>Pay award planning assumption: 3.8% inflation for all staff groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The National Joint Council (NJC) has not yet reached agreement on the firefighter pay award for 2026/27.</li> <li>The budget planning assumes normal levels of activity. If spare conditions occur budget pressures will be experienced. The working assumption is that the General Fund would be utilised in the first instance.</li> <li>Recruitment challenges for RDS and high retirement levels could increase costs.</li> <li>Legal challenges on pension remedy (O'Brien/Matthews 2) may require additional administrative funding.</li> </ul>


Heading	Planning assumptions used in budget setting	Risks/Uncertainties
Non-Pay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budgets formulated using zero-based approach; new expenditure over £10k requires a business case.</li> <li>Inflationary pressures where known are factored into contracts and supply chain costs.</li> <li>Unavoidable costs associated with industry specific health and safety matters have been included within the non-pay budget. These include costs associated with the training of operational firefighters and the management of contaminants.</li> <li>One off non-pay expenditure of £271k allocated to be funded through utilisation of reserves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whilst the Service continues to review non-pay costs and strives to manage cost pressures within the planned budget this remains an area of risk and uncertainty. In particular, it has been noted that delays in the delivery of goods or services have impacted on the time profiles of expenditure.</li> <li>Although cost inflation is generally more manageable than in recent years it is noted that some areas of concern remain. This includes increases in licences associated with software including business critical systems and insurance cost.</li> <li>The cost of gas and electricity has been a known cost pressure since 2022/23 due to global cost pressures. The position appears to have stabilised and the budget for 2026/27 is predicated on best estimates at this time. However, volatility in the market continues and this is carefully managed throughout the financial year with the current contract due to expire during 2026/27.</li> </ul>

Heading	Planning assumptions used in budget setting	Risks/Uncertainties
Capital Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The capital financing requirement for 2026/267 includes the revenue charge for the minimum revenue provision for existing assets and an estimate of the interest charges arising from borrowing. These costs are influenced by historical capital expenditure, the need to borrow for the 2026/27 capital programme and the impact of interest rate increases when re-financing maturing loans.</li> <li>• The initial planning assessment assumes that all future borrowing will be at the prevailing PWLB rate at the time of budget setting, currently estimated at 4.6%. The Authority receives independent advice and guidance on this matter from Arlingclose, a specialist advisory company.</li> <li>• The capital plan includes potential costs associated with business cases submitted by each Head of Department. This includes some provision for initial costs associated with the Training Centre Project to enable a detailed business case and funding model to be developed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increase in interest rates in recent years is a key risk area and is exacerbated as a number of loans require refinancing during the 2026/27 financial year. Financial modelling undertaken to assess the affordability of all proposals during the budget setting process.</li> <li>• The timing of any costs associated with a new training centre are unknown at this stage as the business case has not been considered by the Authority. Although it is not anticipated that the final business case and funding options will not be presented for approval until 2027 provision for costs associated with detailed planning applications will be included in the initial budget estimates.</li> </ul>
Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income budgets have been reviewed and set in line with previous years, subject to inflationary increases.</li> <li>• Welsh Government grant assumes that remaining Welsh Government grant funding will be received at current levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No specific risks have been identified over and above the grant income from the Welsh Government for which inflationary uplifts are not anticipated.</li> <li>• Projected income streams (e.g., asset sales) are not guaranteed.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2

### Draft financial levy by local authority

Authority	ONS Population Estimate	2026/27 Budget £	2026/27 Utilisation of Reserves £	2026/27 Levy £	Increase in Levy %
Anglesey Council	69,097	5,389,578	-26,861	5,362,717	3.41%
Gwynedd Council	120,813	9,423,435	-46,965	9,376,470	5.13%
Conwy County Borough Council	114,891	8,961,518	-44,663	8,916,855	4.14%
Denbighshire County Council	98,202	7,659,773	-38,176	7,621,598	4.82%
Flintshire County Council	155,867	12,157,653	-60,593	12,097,061	3.74%
Wrexham County Borough Council	138,245	10,783,134	-53,742	10,729,392	5.30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>697,115</b>	<b>54,375,092</b>	<b>-271,000</b>	<b>54,104,092</b>	<b>4.47%</b>

Report to	<b>Executive Panel</b>	
Date	<b>15 December 2025</b>	
Lead Officer	<b>Assistant Chief Fire Officer Justin Evans</b>	
Contact Officer		
Subject	<b>Consultation on the Draft National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales</b>	

## PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To inform Members of the Executive Panel of the Welsh Government's consultation on the draft National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales (the Framework) and to seek endorsement of the proposed response from North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 The Welsh Government has published a draft National Framework setting out strategic priorities and expectations for Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) over the coming years. The Framework addresses contemporary challenges including climate change, demographic shifts, technological developments, and cultural change.
- 3 The Service broadly supports the Framework and has prepared a comprehensive response, which includes constructive suggestions to strengthen its focus on:
  - Digital transformation and predictive risk modelling.
  - Workforce sustainability and cultural improvement.
  - Welsh language integration.
  - Environmental accountability and operational realities.
- 4 The response also highlights the Service's ambition to develop a new Training and Development Hub to prepare for future challenges.

## RECOMMENDATION

- 5 That Members:
  - i) **Note the publication of the draft National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales;**
  - ii) **Endorse the proposed NWFRS response to the consultation, as set out in Appendix 1; and**
  - iii) **Authorise the submission of the response to Welsh Government by the consultation deadline of 17 December 2025.**

## BACKGROUND

- 6 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires Welsh ministers to publish a national framework to guide the work of Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). The current draft framework, published on 22 October 2025, replaces the 2016 version and reflects significant changes in the operating environment, including the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire, climate change, and technological advancements.

## INFORMATION

- 7 The draft Framework is structured around four key thematic chapters:
- Strategic Context: Recognises the increasing complexity of the risk environment, including climate change, demographic trends, and global security threats.
  - Resourcing to Risk: Emphasises data-driven, risk-based planning and the need for flexible, locally tailored service delivery.
  - People, Leadership and Culture: Highlights the importance of inclusive leadership, workforce wellbeing, and cultural transformation.
  - Corporate Issues: Focuses on governance, accountability, collaboration, and sustainability.
- 8 The Service welcomes the Framework's alignment with our Community Risk Management Plan and strategic priorities. Our response supports the Framework's core objectives and offers additional insights in the following areas:
- The importance of early recognition of digital transformation and public expectations around transparency.
  - Greater emphasis on predictive modelling and scenario planning.
  - The need for a shared articulation of positive culture across Welsh FRAs.
  - Clarity on environmental accountability for emergency services.
  - Stronger integration of Welsh language considerations throughout the Framework.



## IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	The Framework aligns with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and supports NWFRS's contribution to national well-being goals, particularly in relation to resilient communities, a healthier Wales, and cohesive communities.
Budget	There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report. However, implementation of the Framework will influence future resource planning and investment priorities.
Legal	The Framework is issued under Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. FRAs are required to have due regard to its contents in discharging their statutory functions.
Staffing	The Framework's emphasis on workforce sustainability, leadership development, and cultural change aligns with NWFRS's ongoing organisational development work. Future implementation may require adjustments to training, recruitment, and workforce planning.
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	The response highlights the need for stronger integration of Welsh language considerations and supports the Framework's commitment to inclusion, diversity, and equalities. NWFRS remains committed to the Welsh Language Standards and to promoting linguistic inclusion.
Risks	Failure to engage with the consultation process could result in missed opportunities to shape the strategic direction of fire and rescue provision in Wales. The Framework also introduces expectations that may impact future service delivery models, requiring proactive planning and risk mitigation.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Consultation Response: Draft National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales**

#### **Question 1: Do you agree that the account of the strategic challenges facing the Service is fair and comprehensive?**

Yes, NWFRS agrees that the account of the strategic challenges is broadly fair and comprehensive. The Framework captures the complexity of the environment in which we operate, including the impacts of climate change, demographic shifts, technological developments, and global security threats. These are consistent with many of the key risk factors identified in our Community Risk Management Plan and are already influencing how we plan and deliver services. The recognition of the success in reducing fire-related incidents, alongside the need to adapt to emerging risks, reflects our own journey and strategic direction.

#### **Question 2: Are there other issues that we should include in this chapter?**

The chapter is well-developed and aligns with the broader themes of the Framework. In reviewing the document, we note that areas such as digital transformation, workforce sustainability, and public expectations around transparency and accountability are addressed in later sections. These are increasingly relevant to the strategic context and may benefit from earlier acknowledgement to reflect their influence on long-term service planning.

#### **Question 3: Do you think that the narrative and objectives in the resourcing to risk chapter are appropriate and important?**

Yes, NWFRS supports the narrative and objectives in this chapter. The emphasis on understanding and responding to risk at a local level, supported by data and intelligence, is central to our Community Risk Management Planning. The chapter reflects the need to maintain core services while adapting to seasonal and emerging risks, and it aligns with our approach to resource planning, rural resourcing, and community engagement. NWFRS is actively trialling new crewing models and undertaking frontline cover review activity to strengthen rural availability, whilst maintaining effective response provision within urban areas.

The emphasis on prevention alongside effective response aligns with our five community risk principles (People, Prevention, Protection, Response and Environment) and our wellbeing and improvement objectives.

The focus on aligning capacity and capability with risk is consistent with our statutory duties and organisational priorities.

Being prepared for future risk and being able to respond to a changing and emerging landscape is vitally important to us. Whether that be the physical risks that our crews face when responding to emergencies, or those risks that we face as organisations in terms of our behaviours, inclusivity and organisational culture.

Our ambition to develop a new training and development hub in North Wales will enable us to prepare for and be ready to address existing challenges and those of the future.

**Question 4: Are there any other issues or objectives that we should include in this chapter?**

In the context of our current and future operating environment, there may be further opportunity to reflect the role of predictive modelling and scenario planning in anticipating and preparing for emerging risks. Additionally, while rural service delivery and the sustainability of the Retained Duty System are referenced elsewhere in the Framework, their inclusion within this chapter would provide important context for understanding the operational realities and resourcing challenges faced by Welsh fire and rescue services.

**Question 5: Do you think that the narrative and objectives in the people, leadership and culture chapter are appropriate and important?**

Yes, NWFRS agrees that the chapter appropriately highlights the importance of people, leadership, and culture in delivering effective fire and rescue services. The focus on health, safety, wellbeing, and inclusive leadership aligns with our organisational values and ongoing work to support workforce resilience and cultural improvement. We welcome the recognition of the challenges facing the sector and the need for sustained investment in people and leadership development.

**Question 6: Are there any other issues or objectives that we should include in this chapter?**

While the Framework references a culture of ‘professionalism, openness, inclusion and innovation’, there may be value in further exploring how a shared understanding of culture across Welsh Fire and Rescue Services could be developed. A collective articulation of what positive culture looks like - agreed across the three Services and stakeholders - could support consistency, accountability, and long-term improvement. This would also align with the principles of social partnership and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. A shared understanding could also support the development of consistent leadership behaviours, reinforce sector-wide learning, and enhance public confidence in the values and conduct of fire and rescue services across Wales. This work would build upon and go beyond the principles of public life and National Fire Chief’s Council Core Code of Ethics.

**Question 7: Do you think that the narrative and objectives in the corporate issues chapter are appropriate and important?**

NWFRS agrees that the narrative and objectives in the corporate issues chapter are appropriate and important. The emphasis on governance, strategic leadership, and accountability reflects the responsibilities of Fire and Rescue Authorities and supports effective decision-making. The chapter aligns with our commitment to transparency, value for money, and continuous improvement, and supports our engagement with partners and stakeholders across the public sector.

**Question 8: Are there any other issues or objectives that we should include in this chapter?**

The corporate issues chapter presents a clear and well-considered overview of governance and leadership responsibilities. In the context of a changing operating environment, there may be further opportunity to reflect the increasing relevance of digital transformation, cyber resilience, and longer-term workforce planning in supporting effective and sustainable service delivery. These areas are becoming more central to how fire and rescue services manage risk, maintain public confidence, and adapt to future challenges.

Additionally, the chapter could more clearly acknowledge the value of structured organisational learning and meaningful community engagement in strengthening transparency and accountability. These approaches are important in supporting continuous improvement and ensuring that governance arrangements remain responsive to the needs and expectations of the communities we serve.

**Question 9: What effects do you think the policy proposals would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?**

NWFRS recognises the importance of the Welsh language as a core part of our national identity and is committed to treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English, in line with the Welsh Language Standards.

The draft Framework presents a number of areas where the policy proposals could support the use of Welsh, particularly in prevention and engagement activities. The Framework's emphasis on community engagement and inclusive service delivery also supports bilingual communication, particularly during consultation processes such as those linked to the CRMP.

However, the potential impact on the Welsh language may vary depending on how individual services interpret and implement the proposals. For instance, changes to service distribution — impacting assets within Welsh heartland communities — could have unintended consequences for linguistic continuity. Similarly, while the Framework references inclusion and diversity, it does not explicitly mention linguistic diversity or the Welsh language as a cultural asset.

To increase positive effects and mitigate potential risks, more explicit recognition of the Welsh language within the Framework would help ensure consistent consideration across all services and policy areas.

Encouraging the integration of Welsh language considerations into strategic planning and workforce strategies would support consistency across the Welsh fire and rescue services and help ensure that the language is visible, accessible, and actively promoted in both internal and external service delivery.

**Question 10: Please also explain how you believe the policy proposals could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.**

To strengthen the Framework's impact, it may be helpful to include more direct references to the Welsh language across relevant sections.

Explicitly acknowledging the role of the Welsh language in areas like workforce development, public communication, and engagement with children and older people would help ensure that opportunities to use Welsh are not only protected but actively promoted. This would also support alignment with local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs), particularly in contributing to Outcome 5: increasing opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts.

NWFRS remains committed to promoting the Welsh language through our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and through ongoing investment in staff training, bilingual resources, and inclusive engagement. We welcome the opportunity to work with Welsh Government and partners to ensure that the Framework supports a consistent and proactive approach to linguistic inclusion across all Welsh fire and rescue services.

**Question 11: We have asked a number of specific questions about the proposed new Framework. If you have any related issues or comments which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to record them.**

NWFRS welcomes the overall direction of the draft Framework and its alignment with our statutory duties and strategic priorities. The Framework provides a basis for the continued evolution of fire and rescue services in Wales, particularly in the context of a changing risk landscape and increasing public expectations.

NWFRS recognises the importance of a shared understanding of what constitutes a positive and inclusive culture across Welsh fire and rescue services. While the Framework references professionalism, openness, inclusion, and innovation, there may be value in further exploring how a collective articulation of culture could support consistency, accountability, and sector-wide improvement.

NWFRS also notes the growing significance of digital transformation, data governance, and cyber resilience in shaping modern public services. These areas are increasingly central to how we plan, deliver, and assure our services, and may warrant further consideration in this or future iterations of the Framework.

NWFRS recognises the importance of environmental sustainability and supports the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, including the need to protect biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions. However, we note with some concern how the Framework frames fire prevention and effective firefighting as components of climate change mitigation. While we fully support the intent to reduce the environmental impact of fires, we are mindful of the potential implications of this framing — particularly if it leads to expectations that fire and rescue services could be held accountable for the emissions from incidents they did not cause or could not reasonably prevent.

This concern is heightened by the current development of environmental legislation which, as we understand it, does not make provision for emergency services to be exempt from certain restrictions during emergency response. Coupled with the Framework's reference to scrutiny from regulators, this raises questions about how emergency services will be supported to meet their environmental responsibilities without compromising their ability to respond effectively to incidents.

NWFRS remains committed to reducing our own environmental impact and to supporting national sustainability goals. However, we would welcome further clarity and assurance that the unique role and operational realities of emergency services will be appropriately considered in the implementation of both this Framework and related environmental legislation.