

Report to	<b>North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority</b>
Date	<b>21 July 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>Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector for Wales's Inspection Report</b>



## PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This report presents an update following the publication of the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector for Wales (CFRAIW) inspection report, entitled 'Inspection of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service to consider the effectiveness of its response to domestic dwelling fires'

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 The CFRAIW completed thematic inspections of operational effectiveness of South Wales and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Services in 2024 and published inspection reports in October 2024 and January 2025 respectively. He undertook a similar inspection of North Wales Fire and Service (the Service) early in 2025.
- 3 These three inspections resulted in recommendations for each service and the recommendations broadly map across three categories: the need to implement the CFRAIW previous thematic review recommendations, the services' need to review operational guidance and training programmes in relation to responding to dwelling fires, and the services' operational assurances policy and processes.

## OBSERVATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE PANEL/AUDIT COMMITTEE

- 4 The Inspection Report was presented to Executive Panel on 16 June 2025, where the CFRAIW Dan Stephens presented his findings in person.

## RECOMMENDATION

- 5 It is recommended that Members:
  - i) **Note the content of the report; and**
  - ii) **Note that the action plan has been put in place to consider the recommendations of the CFRAIW's inspection.**

## **BACKGROUND**

- 6 In January 2025 the CFRAIW commenced the inspection of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) by completing a desk top review of the Service's firefighting and operational assurance policies, standard operating procedures and training packages.
- 7 Furthermore, the CFRAIW completed a detailed review of dwelling fire incident logs, between the period of 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2023, conducting interviews with relevant officers, crews across all duty systems and focus groups consisting of key stakeholders.
- 8 The Service's inspection report was published in May 2025 presenting a total of six recommendations. Each recommendation was timebound.
- 9 The recommendations will be included in an action plan that will be considered and managed through the Service's Organisational Learning Committee, chaired by ACFO Justin Evans.
- 10 The CFRAIW made particular note that the observations made in the report are not intended, and should not be taken, as a criticism of North Wales Firefighters, Officers or their training instructors.

## **INFORMATION**

- 11 The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016, includes the provision for the CFRAIW to undertake reviews and provide information and findings to Welsh Ministers, Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and the Auditor General for Wales.
- 12 The CFRAIW commenced a series of inspections commencing in South Wales Fire and Rescue Service in July and August 2024 following a request of the Commissioners appointed by Welsh Ministers. The South Wales FRS inspection report was published in October 2024 presenting a total of six recommendations to the Service.
- 13 The recommendations, broadly map across three categories: the need to implement the CFRAIW previous thematic review recommendations, South Wales FRS's need to review its operational guidance and training programmes in relation to responding to dwelling fires, and its need to review its Operational Assurances policy and processes. Each recommendation was timebound.

- 14 The CFRAIW then proceeded to undertake an Inspection of Mid and West Wales FRS in October and November 2024 following the same methodology. The Mid and West Wales FRS inspection report was published in January 2025 presenting a total of six recommendations. Each recommendation was timebound.
- 15 The CFRAIW highlighted that similarities were found to the South Wales FRS inspection report, and the recommendations are similarly broadly mapped across three categories: the need to implement the CFRAIW previous thematic review recommendations, Mid and West Wales FRS's need to review its operational guidance and training programmes in relation to responding to dwelling fires, and the need for it to review its operational assurance policy and processes.
- 16 The CFRAIW makes early narrative that all three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services should look to address the similarities within the two inspections reports published at that time, without predicating the outcome of the inspection report of the Service.
- 17 In response to this and ahead of our own inspection, the Service undertook several early actions.
- 18 The Head of the Organisational Learning Group visited the Netherlands Fire Service as part of a National Fire Chiefs Council review team. The purpose of the visit was to look at how the Netherlands have reviewed their firefighting tactics in line with the evolution of building materials, and the fire-fighting research identified in the previous reports.
- 19 The Service commenced a review of its overarching firefighting tactics strategy on an "All Wales" basis. Meeting with the other two Welsh FRS, to reduce duplication of effort and ensure an integrated "All Wales" approach to sharing training materials and strategy documents.
- 20 The Service has instigated that flowmeters are fitted on all new fire appliances, and that a program for retrofitting and increase from 19 to 22ml hose reel bore on existing appliances is implemented in line with the recommendations.
- 21 On 10 December 2024, the CFRAIW wrote to the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) informing her of his intention to complete a thematic Inspection of Operational Effectiveness in early 2025, following the same methodology as the previous two inspections.

22 The CFRAIW inspection report of the Service was published on 20 May 2025.

Appendix A - Inspection of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service to consider the effectiveness of its response to domestic dwelling fires report, May 2025.

## IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	This paper is aligned to the Principles of Response and People within the Community Risk Management Plan 2024 -2029 as it includes firefighter safety, support of operational preparedness and ensures sustainability over the longer term.
Budget	Any budget requirements, linked to the management of the recommendations, will be evaluated through the existing budget management processes.
Legal	The role of the CFRA is included in chapter 7, points 7.12 and 7.13 of the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016 and Section 28 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
Staffing	N/A
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	N/A
Risks	All risks associated with the recommendations will be included in an action plan managed by the members of the Service's Organisational Learning Committee.