



North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Annual Performance Assessment 2023-24

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Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg

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Welcome to the third and final performance assessment of our 2021–24 Corporate plan.

This assessment report, on our performance against our improvement and well-being objectives, marks the final year of the three-year corporate plan, which commenced shortly prior to both my arrival as Chief Fire Officer and the appointment of the current Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

During the past three years, we have achieved an incredible amount and adapted to challenges such as Covid-19 recovery, increasing cyber threats to our IT infrastructure, and significant financial challenges. However, it is the nature of continuous improvement that ensures public services have to constantly evolve and adapt in order to deliver the best possible value for money.

In my first 100 days, I established priorities for Retained Duty System (RDS) availability, Training, and Corporate capacity, which would be woven into subsequent iterations of the three-year Corporate Plan. These are manifest in the RDS staff experience review, the ongoing Emergency Cover Review work, and the Training Centre Project.

We have increased Corporate capacity to comply with governance and corporate governance responsibilities, while at the same time reducing our overall corporate staff headcount. The appointment of an Environmental and Climate Change Officer, a Risk, Safety, and Claims Manager, and a Procurement Officer, in particular, have strengthened our position.

Operationally, we have continued to deliver an average of 17,000 Safe and Well Checks each year to the people identified as being the most vulnerable to fire in their own home. This has contributed to a 15.75% reduction in accidental dwelling fires over the past three years, and whilst during 2022–23 there were no fire deaths across North Wales, sadly there were six fire deaths last year, highlighting the need to redouble our efforts and become even more intelligence-led in our activity.

Our mission is to make North Wales a safer place for everyone to live, work, and visit across our diverse communities. While this report is a reflection upon our work in the last financial year and the life of the Corporate Plan 2021–24, we have now published a new five-year plan for Keeping our Communities Safe to support our mission, which you can read [here](#).

As always, we welcome your feedback on any suggestions for improving our reporting. Our contact details can be found on the final page of this report.



North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority



Chief Fire Officer



Fire Authority Chair

Making North Wales a safer place to live, work and visit

Legal Requirements For Reporting

The Authority considers public accountability and transparency to be of vital importance in all aspects of its relationships with local communities, partners and organisations and welcomes the opportunity to publish performance information.

Each year the Authority is required to publish an assessment of its performance in accordance with the legislation which can be found [here](#).

About North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

There are 28 elected members of the [North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority](#). The Service, led by the Chief Fire Officer is made up of many different departments which all contribute to the running of the fire service. More information about how the service operates can be found [here](#).









About North Wales

Knowing about North Wales today helps the Authority plan to make positive changes for the future. Information about the area which the Service helps protect can be found [here](#).



Resources and Activity

Below is a summary of activity levels during 2023-24.

Fire Stations	Front Line Fire Engines	999 Calls Handled	Fire Service Staff (as on 31 March 2024)
 44	 54	 12,744	 907 (headcount)
Emergency Incidents Attended	Fires	False Alarms	Non-Fire Emergencies
 5,936	 1,657	 2,901	 1,378

Staffing

At 31 March 2024	Full time equivalent strength	Headcount of individual staff
Wholetime Operational (WDS)	269.00	270
Retained Operational (RDS/on-call)	370.75	466
Corporate Services	137.40	140
Control	31.00	31
Totals	808.15	907

Please note the 907 headcount figure quoted above, equates to 863 people. This is due to individuals who are employed by the Service in more than one role or position.

Over half of the personnel employed by the Authority are categorised as on-call firefighters.

What is Expected of the Fire Authority

Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales

Fire Prevention	must arrange for fire safety to be promoted in their area. This would include informing people about fire prevention and advising them how best to react if a fire does break out.
Fire Safety Enforcement	have a duty to enforce fire safety in non-domestic premises, for example, hotels, schools, shops and offices. This duty includes exercising powers to issue alteration, enforcement and even prohibition notices if they find that fire safety arrangements in premises are unsatisfactory.
Emergency Response	must make arrangements for receiving 999 calls and for sending trained and equipped personnel to extinguish fires and protect life and property at those fires. They must also make arrangements for rescuing people from road traffic collisions and for protecting them from serious harm.
Planning for and Responding to Other Emergencies	must make arrangements for the mass decontamination of people after chemical, biological or radio-active incidents, and for rescuing people from trains, aircrafts and collapsed buildings. They must also be prepared to assist with large-scale emergencies (including terrorist attacks) elsewhere in the UK. As 'Category 1' responders under the Civil Contingencies Act, fire and rescue authorities also have duties relating to large-scale events that threaten serious damage to the welfare of people, wildlife, the environment and primary supply chains.
Flooding and Inland Water Emergencies	must make arrangements to respond to incidents of flooding or water rescue which pose a direct threat of death or injury.
Equalities	must work towards eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people with different protected characteristics.
Welsh Language	treat the Welsh and English languages equally, promoting the use of Welsh and complying with defined Welsh language standards.
Continuous Improvement	must set objectives continuously to improve what they do, and publish information about their improvement and performance.
Future Planning	must work towards improving people's social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being as well as working in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the needs of future generations.

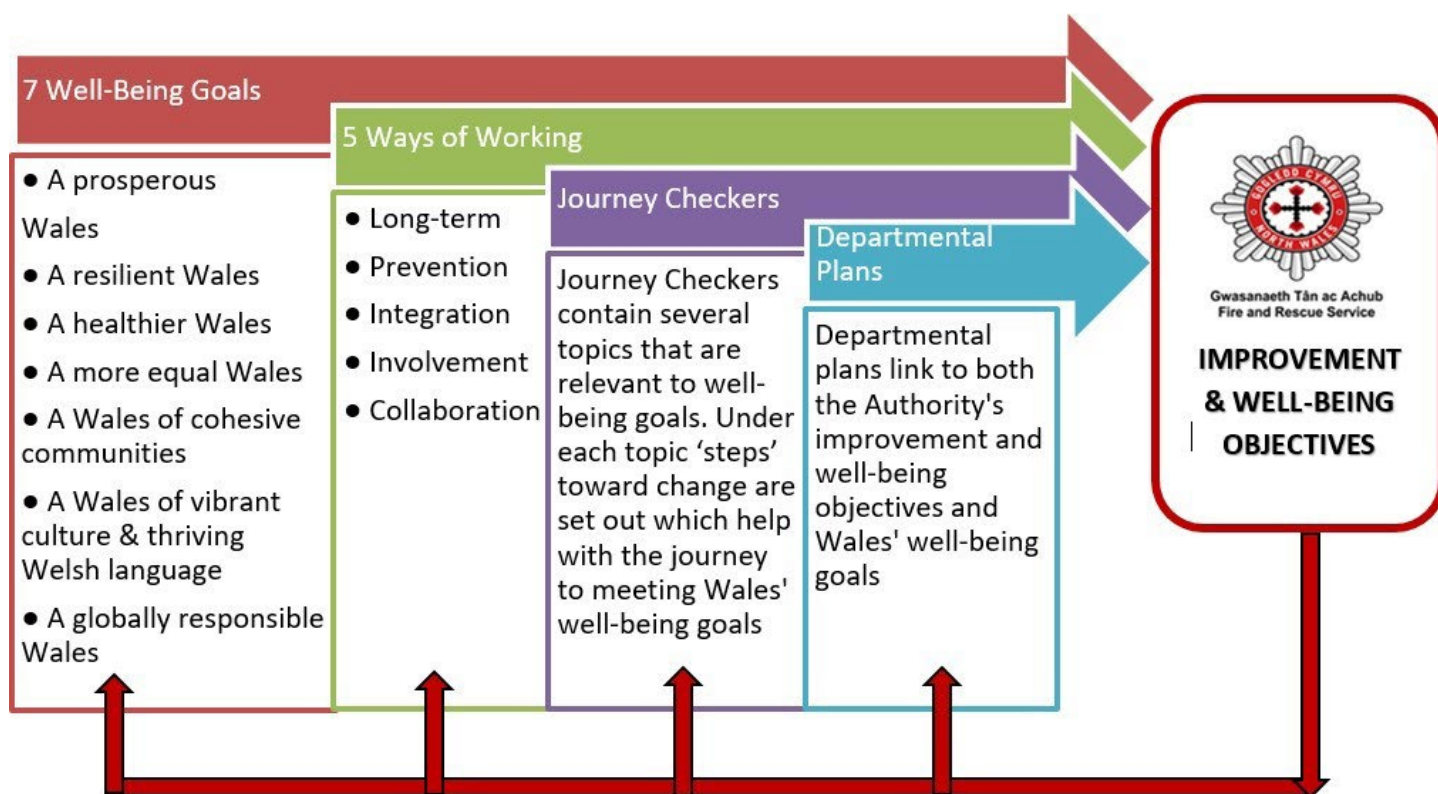
You can read more about our statutory obligations [here](#).

Progress Against Improvement and Well-being Objectives

This section describes the progress the Authority made towards meeting its long-term improvement and well-being objectives during 2023–24. The Authority is required to publish this assessment of its own performance for 2023–24 and the statutory performance indicators for the same year by 31st October 2024.

In 2018–19 the Authority increased the number of objectives that it was pursuing in order better to comply with section 3(2) (a) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, which states that a public body must set and publish objectives “...that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals”.

Using a variety of resources on the Office for the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales website such as ‘journey checkers’, a new set of objectives was developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle that helped to identify opportunities for the Authority to improve its contribution to Wales’ well-being goals.



During 2023–24, work was undertaken to ensure the well-being objectives were embedded throughout all departmental plans where applicable. This work was further underpinned by the development of a set of ‘Building Blocks’ which are a set of measures to support both the well-being objectives and the departmental objectives.

The Annual Governance Statement for 2023–24 is currently awaiting approval from the Authority and it provides an overview of the governance arrangements as well as confirming a work plan for 2024–25.

Once approved and published, performance against the forward work plan will be monitored through the Service Leadership Team’s Performance Board.

Objective 1: To work towards making improvements to the health, safety and well-being of people in North Wales

Well-being goals met: 

A range of factors can place people at an increased risk of accidental fires in the home, for example their age (young children and older adults), having a disability or a limiting medical condition, being alone at the time of the fire, and being affected by alcohol and / or drugs.

Individuals and communities who know how to prevent fires and stay safe when they do occur will not only be safer and healthier, but also economically, socially and culturally more resilient. The polluting effect of fires contributes to a less healthy environment, which in turn deters people from outdoor activities and can negatively impact upon physical and mental well-being. Throughout 2023-24, the Authority continued to focus its efforts on helping people stay safe, whether at home, in work, on the roads, or out in the community.

Summary of achievements against Objective 1

During the first year of our Corporate Plan, everyone was still adhering to strict Welsh Government Covid-19 lockdown rules, yet the Service had to continue to function while keeping all our staff safe. New ways of working, along with finding ways to continue the delivery of safety prevention activities had to be explored, including completing Safe and Well Checks by telephone instead of in person.

A Safe and Well Check is carried out by Service personnel and specially trained employees from other partner agencies. During the check, personnel will identify safety hazards within the home, discuss fire prevention, and assist the occupier in creating an escape plan to use during a fire.

Our target for the number of completed Safe and Well Checks has been reduced from 20,000 (2021-22) to 17,500, but this is a conscious decision to better direct our resources to those individuals identified as being the most at risk from fire in the home.

During the three-year life of this plan we have:	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
• Completed 51,991 Safe and Well Checks	14,080	18,052	19,859
• Completed 15,466 Safe and Well Checks which originated from other agencies	4,895	5,733	4,838
• Attended 1,081 dwelling fires; the number of attendances has decreased slightly each year	400	344	337
• Completed 1,331 Fire Safety Audits	334	575	422

As the Authority responsible for enforcing the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in North Wales, the Service engages in an auditing strategy based on national guidelines. [Our Enforcement Policy](#) Statement sets out the general policy, and the principles that North Wales Fire and Rescue Service expects to follow.

Achievements in 2023-24

Action 1: To deliver 17,500 safe and well checks, with at least 25% of those being delivered to households referred to the Service by another agency.

- A total of 19,859 Safe and Well Checks were completed during the year, of which 24.4% were referred by a partner agency.
- A total of 6,032 Safe and Well Checks were classified as high priority and of these 54.5% were referred from a partner agency.
- 12,500 Safe and Well Checks were completed by operational crews.
- In collaboration with the NHS, performance analysts have undertaken work to identify those individuals within the community who may be more at risk from injury should a fire occur.
- Operational crews are now using this information to ensure a more targeted approach when completing Safe and Well Checks in their local area.
- Partnership Managers continued to foster relationships with external agencies to encourage high-quality referrals.

Action 2: To meet the increasing demand for provision and support of digital communications, including Cyber Security Standards and Accreditation.

- The Service successfully achieved the 'Cyber Essentials' certification.
- All nominated ICT staff undertook cyber training and passed the exam.
- The Service recruited a technical engineer with a specialism in cyber security.

Action 3: To progress our plans for a new immersive training and development centre to offer a wider range of training scenarios, and deliver improvements in training.

- The 'working group', consisting of Fire Authority members and key members of staff, visited the fire training centre at Dolgellau to review the current training facilities.
- Fact-finding visits were undertaken at Cheshire and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue training centres to see the opportunities that modern training facilities can offer.

- The following have now been completed:
 - ◊ Topographical surveys
 - ◊ Site investigation works
 - ◊ Ecology survey
 - ◊ Arboriculture survey
 - ◊ Flood consequence assessment
 - ◊ Design team update and design development
 - ◊ Planning update
 - ◊ Options appraisal
 - ◊ Exclusivity agreement
- New mitigation work is required on site, which can only take place during a single period of the year. Therefore, work will need to proceed from December 2023 up to October 2024 to have the site ready for any potential future development from December 2024.
- Consultation will take place with key stakeholders to develop a design proposal for the new Training and Development Centre, resulting in a final plan being submitted to the Fire Authority for approval.

Action 4: To continue to deliver fire safety audits based on the risk-based inspection programme.

- The Service promoted 'Business Safety Week' during September and offered small and medium businesses a range of fire safety advice.
- Business Fire Safety staff highlighted new legislation that came into force on 1st October, requiring all businesses to record a fire risk assessment and fire safety arrangements in full, regardless of the number of people employed and the size or type of business.
- Business fire safety staff attended a meeting to discuss the fire safety challenges faced by housing providers. Safety advice and best practices were discussed, including managing the risks involved with lithium-ion battery-powered scooters and e-bikes being stored in blocks of flats.
- Recently, the Fire Safety Department has enhanced its monitoring of fires involving 'white goods'.

Action 5: To continue to create an inclusive workplace that enable all staff to perform to the best of their ability, and meet the diverse needs of our communities.

- The Service has a dedicated 'Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion' officer.
- Through the Neurodiversity Staff Network, staff have been supported to attend external development opportunities, including:
 - ◊ Women in the Fire Service Development Weekend
 - ◊ Anti-Racism summit

- Staff attended the Asian Fire Service Association Conference in Leeds which had the theme 'Motivating Movement and Understanding Your Influence'. Attendees reported that this was a reminder that it is the responsibility of everyone to positively support change within the fire service.
- The Service promoted awareness of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion campaigns, including:
 - ◊ Deaf Awareness Week
 - ◊ Pride Month
 - ◊ Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month
- The 'Gender Pay Gap' (GPG) report 2022 was published, which provides a snap shot of the Service pay data for 31st March of each year. The most recent GPG data is 8.29%, which is slightly below the national average of 8.30% for 2022.
- The Training and Development department implemented a reporting service to review candidate learning assessments, which helps to develop skills and identify systemic barriers and biases to enable them to effectively design policies, practices, and services that are fair and inclusive for all.
- The Service contributes to the All Wales People and Organisational Development Group (PODG) to identify opportunities and proactively maintain an overview of all HR, Learning & Development, Equality & Diversity, and Welsh Language activities.
- The All Wales Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Group had been re-established with the intention of establishing baselines against His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire (HMIFRS) Spotlight Report and any other culture and inclusion plans.
- Carers support guidance has been made available for all staff to access. The Service recognises that some people already have, or are likely to take on, caring responsibilities, and that carers will inevitably constitute a part of the workforce. It also appreciates that some employees may have difficulty balancing their work and caring commitments.

Action 6: To improve the health, fitness, and well-being of staff through the provision of advice and information, active monitoring, and education.

- The Service has a dedicated 'Health, Fitness, and Wellbeing' team that provides lifestyle advice. They can support staff with exercise programmes and nutritional support. The team are also Mental Health First Aiders and can assist in a crisis.
- All staff can undertake a lifestyle review with the Physical Fitness team, which includes a fitness assessment.
- Working closely with the dedicated occupational health provider, the Service developed new ways of working to improve and prioritise employee health in the workplace.

- Service staff attended Fire-Fit conferences to keep up-to-date with trends, activities, and innovations.
- The 'Health, Fitness, and Wellbeing' team also provided support to potential new firefighter candidates at firefighter selection days.
- Promotional fitness:
 - ◊ 'Feet on Fire' is designed as a group challenge to encourage staff of any fitness ability to get out walking and track their daily movement.
 - ◊ Park Run events across the North Wales area.
- The Service signed up to the Healthy Wales Travel Charter.
- There has been a positive impact, with the number of days of absence by staff reducing by 7.5% (343 days or shifts) between 2021-22 and 2023-24.
- The HR Specialists are visiting stations and departments (during the day and evening) and providing HR Overview sessions, including recent important updates, to familiarise employees with the services that HR provides and the benefits available to them.
- The continuation of Siop Siarad sessions, which were prompted by the Fire Family Staff Survey. These sessions are aimed at promoting two-way conversations providing the opportunity to speak freely about wider issues, and highlighting views and new ideas from staff at stations and locations across the region. It is an opportunity to network and share new ideas, to be open to new ways of thinking, and to help staff feel included and able to challenge processes in a mutually supportive and positive environment.
- Introduction of a suicide support line. Staff from HR also attended a suicide and self-harm prevention event, which included information about national developments and a draft proposal for a service in North Wales.
- HR staff participated in an Attendance Management Audit where the robustness and effectiveness of controls that support the HR/payroll and sickness absence system(s) to ensure validity, accuracy, and timeliness of payments to employees were evaluated.
- The Service saw the introduction of online exit interviews to monitor and better understand why employees leave the Fire Service, and to identify areas for improvement in employee retention and engagement.
- Introduction of a 12-month Service Feedback Survey to ascertain whether new employees receive enough support during the initial phases of their career at North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is the primary piece of legislation governing workplace health and safety in Great Britain. Work related incidents and near misses are monitored through the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee. Whilst it is not currently mandatory, public bodies are encouraged to include a summary of their health and safety performance in their annual reports.

Health and Safety



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service

Safety event reporting statistics during financial year 2023/24



10% decrease in accidents

307 safety events were reported between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024, which compares with **412** in total for the comparable period in 22/23. This is a **34%** decrease.



149

Near Misses reported



51

injuries reported



24%

of injuries resulted in time off work



32

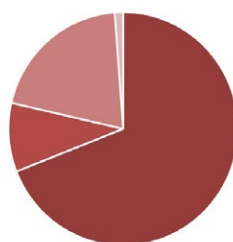
reports of White Fleet vehicle damage



45

reports of Red Fleet vehicle damage

Vehicle Accident Type



Forward: **58%**

Reverse: **25%**

Stationary: **17%**

Objective 2: To continue to work collaboratively to help communities improve their resilience

Well-being goals met: 

Working with local communities is extremely important to improve safety and to help communities become more resilient. The Authority worked closely with partner agencies throughout 2023-24 around targeted areas in order to assist communities and local businesses with pre-planning and education, enabling them to become more resilient in emergencies.

Summary of achievements against Objective 2 of the 2021-24 Corporate Plan.

The Service implemented well-rehearsed Business Continuity plans during the Covid-19 pandemic, and staff quickly adapted to working from home or other premises deemed safe. As a result, there was no disruption to our emergency response.

Technology continued to evolve quickly, with staff transitioning from using Skype to Microsoft Teams. The Service now also uses multi-factor authentication to increase protection from cyber security attacks.

New operational assets were purchased, such as underwater cameras, reach poles, and binoculars, to assist operational crews at flooding events and other emergency incidents.

Social media platforms continue to be routinely used to promote fire safety, and to provide information to local areas that may be affected by on-going or major emergency incidents.

During the three-year life of this plan, we have:

- Completed a planned project to replace all Mobile Data Terminal (MDTs), as the existing technology was approaching 'end of life'.
- The MDT replacement software brought enhancements to performance and information availability, along with an additional improvement to the hardware, which is now a device that can be removed from the fire engine.
- Introduced additional network infrastructure security controls to enhance the protection of the IT system.

Achievements in 2023–24

Action 1: To rollout Microsoft 365 as a means of further improving communication and integration with partners.

- During August, the Service launched its brand-new intranet, 'Hwb Tân'. Each department, area, or station has its own 'hub' (electronic area), with the ability to upload their own information and events to share with colleagues. Through M365, these files and folders are also accessible from personal devices.
- M365 training continued to be cascaded throughout the Service.
- A member of staff was recruited to plan and manage M365 training and respond to M365 queries as required.

Action 2: To continue to comply with Welsh Language Standards, including promotion of activities and learning.

- In May, staff took part in filming in the Welsh language soap drama series 'Rownd a Rownd', with the scenes aired during the autumn. The storyline saw one of the main characters involved in a fire, and our involvement helped ensure a strong emphasis on fire safety messages.
- Blue Watch, Caernarfon were also on camera in May, being filmed as part of S4C's 'Rygbi am byth' programme. The Crew Manager who is part of the Caernarfon Ladies rugby team, was being filmed as part of a docu-series following the team through the rugby season. The series producers were keen to find out more about the work at a fire station, which provided an opportunity to promote career paths within the service.
- The Service supported the campaign 'Defnyddia dy Gymraeg', which was launched by the Welsh Language Commissioner to encourage everyone to use their Welsh every day. New 'dry-wipe' boards were issued for use in workplaces and stations to help support Welsh learners and the Welsh Language Champions.

Action 3: To work collaboratively with our partners and communities to develop plans to reduce and respond to wildfires and climate related emergencies.

- Staff attended a two-day All Wales Wildfire Conference in Merthyr Tydfil in June. The event, hosted by Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, provided colleagues across Wales the chance to connect and develop future strategies when responding to wildfires.
- Staff attended the Royal Welsh Agriculture Show in July to highlight safety messages and draw attention to the dangers of wildfires.
- The All Wales Dawns Glaw initiative, a multi-agency task force aimed at tackling the impact of grass fires, is in the process of transitioning to the All-Wales Wildfire Board. They met at the Royal Welsh showground to launch the new Wildfire Charter.
- During September, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) officers received training from Fire and Rescue Service staff on the capabilities of our Environmental Protection Unit and pollution protective equipment. NRW officers got an insight into the contents of the

environment grab pack and had the opportunity to use some dammit paste to stop a leak. They also got to see a demonstration on how to use a dammit matt, before viewing the equipment carried by the Environmental Protection Unit and receiving an explanation on how the equipment is used.

- The 'Campaign Steering Group' continued to work with the Corporate Communications department to proactively promote safety and Wildfire messaging across all media platforms.

Action 4: To implement recommendations of the wildfire review.

- As part of the ongoing All Wales Wildfire work, the Wildfire Charter was drafted, reviewed, and finalised by all three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services in preparation for its launch and publication at the Royal Welsh Show, Builth Wells, during July. The Wildfire Charter can be viewed [here](#).
- The Wildfire Charter focuses on three key commitments:
 - ◊ Partnership Working
 - ◊ Environmental and Community Resilience
 - ◊ Prevention and Protection
- Senior managers were provided with information on the mobilisation and use of airborne assets, for example, drones and helicopters.
- During March, operational staff from across the Service area were being sized for the FlamePro Wildfire Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which will be issued later in 2024. This is a lightweight kit that will be of great benefit during challenging wildfire conditions.
- The Service continues to engage with the National Fire Chiefs Council regarding wildfire activities, and attend and participate in virtual debrief reviews and training updates.
- Tactical wildfire officers attended MET Office online training events, which covered:
 - ◊ Global and UK weather trends
 - ◊ Fire Science: Wildfire Behaviour
 - ◊ Meteorological factors of wildfires and smoke plumes
 - ◊ Climate change and the effects of wildfires

Objective 3: To operate as effectively and efficiently as possible, making the best use of resources available

Well-being goals met:



Given the backdrop of financial uncertainty, the cost of living crisis, rising inflation and the potential increase in demand for services across the public sector, it is inevitable that the Authority will be faced with challenges in being able to sustain its services over the coming decades. The pressure on fire and rescue services is likely to come from several different directions, including the ability to recruit and retain sufficient on-call firefighters.

Summary of achievements against Objective 3 of the 2021-24 Corporate Plan.

The budget for the Service increased year on year (£37.07m - £39.41m - £44.39m); however, the Service continued to seek out cost saving measures to ensure the public receives value for money services.

To sustain service delivery, several internal reviews were undertaken, including:

- A Wildfire Review (2022-23)
- A Retained Duty System Review (2022-23)
- The Emergency Cover Review (2022-ongoing)
- A Catering Review to look at the role of Station-based cooks (2021-22)
- An Administration Review (2021-22)

On 16th January 2023, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, as part of the Financial Strategy 2023-26, agreed to pilot a maximum response time of 35 minutes. This decision reduces the number of appliances available across North Wales from 20 to 18 fire appliances during the daytime, and to 28 during the night-time. This came into effect on 1st April 2023.

Achievements in 2023-24

Action 1: To conclude the emergency response review and consult the outcomes with relevant stakeholders prior to implementing recommendations.

- The Emergency Cover Response public consultation (ECR) was undertaken between 21st July and 22nd September, which included an extension due to the high level of interest it attracted.
- Over 1,700 responses were received, demonstrating just how important this consultation was to the people of North Wales.

- At the Authority meeting on the 18th December 2023, when considering which option to implement from the ECR, FRA Members requested that “Officers continue to work with all stakeholders to develop a new permanent option, taking into consideration today’s decision and the limits of the proposed budget.”
- An internal appeal was launched asking for members of staff to get involved and be part of the new ‘Emergency Cover Review Task and Finish Group’ to look at alternative options for emergency cover. This group has begun to look afresh at the challenges around the current pre-planning and daily interventions that are needed to support the provision of more equitable emergency cover. This then allows the group to explore how improvements in effectiveness and efficiency can be delivered within the budget.
- February saw the first meeting of the ‘Emergency Cover Review Task and Finish Group’, where presentations were provided by the Service Transformation Team, Finance, and the Availability Manager, to recap the current position and challenges to generate ideas and discussion. The task and finish group continue to meet every two to three weeks to progress this piece of work.

Action 2: To adopt National Operational Guidance for Control rooms as part of a review of our Control Room staffing arrangements and workforce skills aimed at improving our resilience.

- A strategic gap analysis was carried out and completed.
- This analysis identified the work required to implement the National Operational Guidance.
- The work is progressing and should be completed by the end of 2024.

Action 3: To support the delivery of outcomes from the retained duty system staff experience review.

- A full review of the Retained Duty System (RDS) was conducted, with a focus on the experiences of staff working within this duty system. The review investigated issues raised by RDS staff; captured feedback and accounts of the retained duty system, identified the sources of the issues identified, and developed options for potential improvements.
- In total, 10 key lines of inquiry were established:
 - ◊ RDS pay and reward
 - ◊ RDS attraction, selection, recruitment, and onboarding
 - ◊ The RDS promotion process
 - ◊ Local line management and staff retention
 - ◊ Time allocated for training
 - ◊ Time allocated for administration
 - ◊ Utilisation of skills

- ◇ Engaging with primary employers
 - ◇ Recognising contributions and celebrating achievements
 - ◇ Resource requirements
- Considerable progress has been made against many of the recommendations. Supervisory and middle managers watched a presentation on the work completed so far, and the work which remains ongoing to address the recommendations.

Action 4: To refine pensions and payroll processes and implement budget modules.

- Progress for this action was slower than anticipated due to a HM Revenue and Customs review, an external audit, and the implementation of legal requirements for firefighter pensions.
- Work by the software consultants was identified but has yet to be agreed upon.
- A firefighter leaver factsheet has been reviewed and returned for further development.
- Work will continue to complete this action.



Objective 4: To continue to identify opportunities to encourage greater engagement with people, communities, staff and stakeholders

Well-being goals met: 

During 2023-24, the Authority continued to improve the way in which it communicates and engages with communities about the services it delivers.

A collaborative approach working across our own functions and together with our emergency service partners, local authorities, public services boards and other stakeholders ensures the consistent and widespread promotion of safety messages as well as the development of innovative techniques and the sharing of best practices.

A particular focus this year was improving communications with our staff, in particular in relation to those employed under the retained duty system (on-call) and implementing the key findings from our very first Fire Family staff survey.

Summary of achievements against Objective 4 of the 2021-24 Corporate Plan.

The Emergency Cover Review was available for public consultation between July and September 2023. We worked with staff, representative bodies, members of the public, council representatives, and local vulnerable groups to understand what really matters should you, or someone you care for or represent, require our services in an emergency.

The consultation received over 1,700 responses. A new Service working group has been formed to develop a new permanent option, taking into consideration the results of the consultation and the limits of the proposed budget.

During the three-year life of this plan, we have:	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
• Attended 1,457 deliberate fires, where 2023-24 recorded the lowest number attended (466 incidents).	472	519	466
• Provided 40,899 children and young people with a fire safety educational talk.	2,061	18,001	20,837
• Successfully completed and analysed two internal Fire Family Surveys during 2021-22 and 2023-24.			

Achievements in 2023–24

Action 1: To procure and install stowage equipment to reduce the spread of fire contaminants.

- During May, five new appliances, featuring contaminant modifications, were delivered to the Service.
- The modifications were a result of the collaborative work of the 'Contaminants Group', consisting of representatives from the Fleet department, the Technical Operations department, and the Fire Brigades Union.
- The modified appliance stowage, coupled with the introduction of a robust operating procedure, will ensure that firefighter exposure to contaminants is significantly reduced.
- Other appliances in the Service will be modified in the future to increase storage space for kit bags.
- Every firefighter was provided with particulate flash-hoods to assist in reducing their exposure to fire contaminants.
- Every firefighter was provided with a personal issue Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kit bag to ensure their PPE is kept clean and free from fire contaminants.
- Two new industrial washing machines were commissioned to deep clean Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets and associated equipment to remove fire contaminants.

Action 2: To implement the All Wales People and Organisational Development Strategy.

- During the year, work expanded through the All Wales People and Organisational Development Strategy working group, and four new themes were agreed to be taken forward for the 2024–27 Strategy:
 - ◊ Resourcing the Fire and Rescue Service
 - ◊ Health and Well-being
 - ◊ Culture and Inclusion
 - ◊ Innovation and Technology
- However, in January, a decision was made to defer the drafting of the People and Organisational Strategy for 2024–27 due to the publication of the report into the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service culture and values.

Action 3: To continue to support the delivery and review of the fire family staff survey.

- The second 'Fire Family' staff survey was open between 18th September and 16th October, and was managed by an independent company called 'People Insight' to ensure transparency.

- The survey was open to everyone within the Service and aimed at seeking views on a range of subjects.
- A response rate of 43% was recorded, which is lower than the first Fire Family survey, which had a response rate of 50%.
- A Project Group has been created to take the lead in identifying and delivering an action plan.
- Regular updates continue to be communicated to all Service staff internally.

Action 4: To continue our delivery of Children and Young People programmes/activities and interventions introduce the Serious Violence Duty adopted in January 2023 by all strategic partners on the Safer North Wales Partnership Board.

- A new free learning platform '[StayWiseCymru](#)', with resources aimed at children and young people, was launched at the Fire and Rescue Services stand at the Urdd National Eisteddfod.
- StayWiseCymru hosts free downloadable resources on a range of safety themes, with lessons centred around Emergency Services and Safety Charities available. Resources are available for educators, blue light users, and the public.
- In June, staff visited hospitals across the region as part of 'Child Safety Week', connecting with patients and their families through our popular fire safety mascot, [Sbarc](#).
- The Service continued with its programme of [Phoenix Courses](#), which help build confidence in young people.
- Service staff attended Freshers Fairs to promote fire safety advice to university students.

Objective 5: To maintain a suitably resilient, skilled, professional and flexible workforce

Well-being goals met:



The Authority continued to extend its efforts to attract, develop and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity within the communities it serves.

Supporting equality and diversity lies at the heart of the Authority's culture and core values, embracing a commitment to diversity and inclusion, a desire to strive for excellence, protecting communities and valuing its people. A workforce that is appropriately developed and trained to be safe benefits the people of Wales, and a well-developed performance management framework supports managers in meeting the demands of their roles.

Summary of achievements against Objective 5 of the 2021-24 Corporate Plan.

The Grenfell Tower fire during June 2017 put the spotlight on how all Fire and Rescue Services respond and deal with fires, especially in high rise buildings. The Service responded to the Welsh Government's White Paper 'Safer Buildings in Wales'. The Welsh Government also established a Joint Inspection Team, which included a senior member of our Fire safety team.

- Fire Scene Investigators were trained to comply with the new ISO standard 17020 (this covers the activities of inspection bodies), which came into effect in October 2023.
- The Service continued to adopt an Agile Working Policy for all staff (where appropriate for both the Service and the individual).
- Renewed the certification of the Gold Corporate Health Award.
- The Service reviewed and changed the Occupational Health Provider during the period.

Achievements in 2023-24

Action 1: To continue our focus on recruiting, developing and retaining a highly skilled, motivated and bilingual workforce.

- The Service offers five staff networks, which are themed around equality, but anyone can join:
 - ◇ Women in the Fire Service
 - ◇ Firepride Allies
 - ◇ Neurodiversity Staff Network

- ◇ Religion, Ethnicity, and Cultural Heritage (REACH) Staff Network
- ◇ Parents and Carers networks
- Three new welfare vehicles were introduced into the Service. These vehicles have been designed to offer facilities such as toilet amenities, and equipment to heat food during incidents of prolonged attendance.
- Introduction of three yearly DBS checks for all staff. DBS checks are an important part of safeguarding measures and ensure that the Service maintains a safe and secure working environment for both employees and the communities we serve.
- A review of the Wholetime promotion process was undertaken under the Organisational Resourcing Committee's remit to ensure the operational promotion processes are completed fairly and equitably. This has included reviewing the eligibility criteria, application process, shortlisting, and interview process.
- Continuing to work with the Welsh Language Officer to improve the information provided to applicants as part of the recruitment process relating to Welsh language requirements. This allows the Service to improve engagement, and to remove any perceived barriers to applying.
- 'Interviewing skills' training sessions were delivered to station managers to ensure they are skilled and appropriately trained to undertake interviews and professional discussions with employees and prospective candidates for both On-call and Corporate roles.

Action 2: To continue to work towards the revalidation of the Platinum Corporate Health Award.

- The Service successfully achieved gold and platinum status in the 'Healthy Working Wales' Award following an enhanced status check during April. These awards recognise employers who demonstrate policies and actions designed to promote happier and healthier workforces. The awards send a powerful message, internally and externally, that we are committed to creating a better working environment.

Action 3: To develop a talent identification and management process to replace the existing professional development programme.

- April saw the launch of the National Fire Chiefs Council's pioneering direct entry scheme. The scheme enables those with proven leadership skills to apply for Station Manager roles, without needing to have fire service experience or taking the traditional firefighter promotional route.
- The Service has replaced the long-standing internally set and assessed promotional process (ADC) that measured an individual's performance against the old fire service personal qualities and attributes. This has been replaced with an independently set and assessed set of managerial exercises that are marked against the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Leadership Framework. This new system uses trained psychologists to assess the behaviours and performance of our current and prospective supervisory and middle managers, and was recently rolled-out by the NFCC during the national selection process that was used to appoint the new Direct Entry Station Managers. Another benefit of this new approach is that it is suitable for all staff, including operational, control, and corporate services. In addition to this process

that is used for both supervisory and middle managers, our supervisory managers are also required to oversee and provide feedback to crews undertaking a fire service standard drill.

- End-of-Firefighter diploma interviews and presentations for our apprentice firefighter development programme have now been introduced, with these sessions having been designed to identify individuals who exhibit the skills and potential to progress their firefighting careers into leadership roles.
- The NFCC Supervisory Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) has been trialled by staff across the Service, with the first of these now graduating from the programme and receiving a certificate issued by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI). This qualification now forms part of a suite of leadership qualifications that is available to all staff to complete.
- Members of our Training and Development team have worked closely with the NFCC to develop a new Middle Management Leadership Programme (MLP). Four members of staff have recently commenced the programme, and they will work closely with their Line Managers and our Professional Development Coordinator to complete this qualification, as well as provide feedback to inform future leadership training decisions. As with the SLDP, this programme is suitable for staff in all roles, including operational, control, and corporate services.

Action 4: To commence year 1 of the 3-year operational training strategy.

- A training plan was finalised and published internally for operational crews to select and book courses.
- The firefighter module course was redeveloped to better meet the needs of the on-call firefighter.
- A new medical practitioner for driving medical examinations was appointed. This follows significant delays experienced by staff trying to obtain GP appointments.
- Members of staff have attended instructor courses to provide greater capability to deliver core skill training.
- Course feedback forms are being utilised, and their responses are then analysed to identify where improvements can be made.

Action 5: To review and respond accordingly to the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor for Wales Thematic Review recommendations.

- The latest thematic report 'Learning from Grenfell', was published in 2021, with recommendations for each of the three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales.
- An informal response was provided to the Welsh Fire Advisor about the proposal not to enact all the fire safety changes required by the Grenfell Tower inquiry.
- The Service engaged with Welsh Government and PRP consulting engineers and surveyors to identify any issues with buildings over 11 metres.
- Data sharing agreements have been drafted to ensure meaningful information can be shared between PRP and the Service.

Objective 6: To develop ways of becoming more environmentally conscious in order to minimise the impact of our activity on the environment

Well-being goals met:



In 2017, the Welsh Government set the ambition of achieving a net carbon neutral public sector by 2030. In March 2019, it published 'Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales' which aims to support the public sector to baseline, monitor and report progress towards carbon neutrality.

In 2023-24, the Authority reaffirmed its commitment to improving environmental performance and considering it in all areas of its work, from fire prevention to making sure that it considers environmentally- friendly technology. The Authority also committed to renewing its environmental vision so as to become a more environmentally conscious and responsible organisation.

Summary of achievements against Objective 6

Following an Audit Wales review of progress, the Service recruited an 'Environment and Climate Change Manager'.

Service volunteers were sought to get involved with the new 'Environment and Sustainability Working Group' to look at reducing carbon emissions as well as wider environmental issues that could be addressed.

An Environmental Strategy covering the period 2023-30 was drafted in consultation with Authority members, including detailed policies around Fleet, Estates, and Procurement. The Strategy was formally adopted by the full Fire and Rescue Authority on 17th July 2023, and can be found [here](#).

During the three-year life of this plan, we have:	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
• Attended 290 flooding / evacuation from water incidents. These increased sharply over the three-year period.	76	68	146
• Attended 84 wildfire incidents, where firefighters were on scene for a total of 1,750 hours.	35 646 hours	35 628 hours	14 476 hours
• Installed nesting boxes on Service premises to help increase the declining number of swifts.			
• Carried out thermal imaging surveys at stations as part of our insulation upgrade work.			

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carried out an operational trial of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as a sustainable substitute for diesel fuel. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaged with the Welsh Government Energy Service to develop detailed plans to decarbonise our station estate. |

Achievements in 2023-24

Action 1: To support the delivery of the Environmental Strategy 2023-30.

- The Service presented its new Environmental Strategy 2023-30 to Fire and Rescue Authority Members as the latest step in our work to create a greener and more resilient Wales.
- The following planned actions have been completed on schedule:
 - ◇ Fleet decarbonisation plan
 - ◇ Heating decarbonisation plan
 - ◇ Power decarbonisation plan
 - ◇ Beginning supplier engagement to address emissions
- The Waste Reduction Strategy has been completed in draft form and will be finalised once practical arrangements have been made to accommodate the new waste management regulations within Wales. The Service will then reflect any revised practices.

Action 2: To continue to develop our monitoring and reporting of energy consumption and carbon emissions.

- Work was initially delayed due to energy invoicing problems.
- Electricity billing issues were resolved from July through to September.
- Finance and consumption record spreadsheets, as well as the monthly performance for 2023-24 against the 2019-20 baseline, are due to be completed during the first part of the 2024-25 financial year.

Action 3: To develop our reporting of greenhouse gases in line with Welsh Government carbon reporting.

- Work was required to resolve energy invoicing problems before data could be recorded.
- Consumption and usage data was reported for electricity, gas, LPG, water, and waste for the financial year 2022-23.
- Data sheets supplied by the Welsh Government were completed and returned to the Welsh Government.
- This action has been completed, and reported to Welsh Government.

Objective 7: To ensure that social value and sustainability are considered, including during procurement processes

Well-being goals met:



Social value is the value that people place on the changes they experience in their lives. During 2023-24, the Authority continued developing its social value and ensured that social, economic and environmental issues were considered as part of its activities, including support for the local Young Firefighters Association (YFAs) and the Phoenix Project.

Summary of achievements against Objective 7 of the 2021-24 Corporate Plan.

The Service continued its commitment to recycling its own end-of-life products through collaboration with the charity 'Fire Aid'. Expeditions to Gambia took place in March 2022 as part of 'Operation Zephyr', where donations of a fire appliance and a rescue boat were delivered. More recently, staff from the Service participated in another national convoy to Ukraine to help deliver an array of surplus equipment.

Achievements in 2023-24

Action 1: To carry out a procurement review following the appointment of a new Procurement Manager.

- The Procurement and Contracts Manager was appointed in June and has been reviewing the inventory system and making initial configuration plans.
- Work has started to understand new procurement legislation, and external courses have been booked to look at sustainable procurement.
- Work on the 'Procurement Awareness Training Package' has been delayed pending engagement with WRAP Cymru, which will take place during the 2024-25 financial year.

Action 2: To continue with our build programme to replace training towers with new steel tower installations.

- All three steel towers have been installed at:
 - ◊ Barmouth Fire Station
 - ◊ Harlech Fire Station
 - ◊ Rhosneigr Fire Station

- There were some minor design changes noted for each station, and the Facilities department sought funding to complete these.
- All work was completed, subject to some minor adaptations to the towers as requested internally by the Training department.

Action 3: To continue to deliver Safe and Well Checks to the communities of North Wales.

- Community Safety staff connected with people living on canal boats along the Llangollen canal as part of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month.
- Home Safety Support Workers from across the three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales attended the first All-Wales Continuous Professional Development (CPD) event in Llandrindod Wells, which provided opportunities to learn from each other and share best practices.
- A specialist Occupational Therapist spent time on secondment from the Welsh Ambulance Service to find out more about our collaboration work, and to see the work that goes into the 'Hospital to Healthy Homes' referrals.
- During the year, a comprehensive video was produced to refresh the knowledge of all firefighting crews on how to correctly complete a Safe and Well Check. This provided the fire safety prevention team with the opportunity to remind all users of recent changes, including new interventions that are now available.
- Partnership Managers continue to explore new relationships with external partners to identify those most vulnerable to fire and provide them with suitable advice and interventions.
- Work remains ongoing with regional hoarding groups to identify people at risk.

Action 4: To review our health and attendance management arrangements.

- A review of existing policies and procedures took place:
 - ◊ A new 'Anti-Sexual Harassment' policy and procedure has been implemented since June 2023.
 - ◊ The 'Modified Duties, Reasonable Adjustments and Phased Return to Work' policy was updated following staff consultation.
 - ◊ The 'Attendance Management' policy underwent some changes in line with the Service's best practices and to make it more user-friendly.
 - ◊ The 'Disability Retention and Redeployment' policy was reviewed and updated to ensure equal opportunities are provided for those with disabilities, and to also ensure that reasonable adjustments are appropriate.

- A collaborative effort is underway between HR, the Health and Wellbeing team, and the Equality and Diversity Inclusion Officer to create a menopause solution that provides support to all staff members facing symptoms of the menopause. The Legal Compliance and Recruitment HR Specialists participated in a Menopause Champions course in June. They are now actively directing individuals to support resources and additional courses available in the workplace.
- A reporting service has been set up, working in partnership with 'Safecall', which provides a professional, independent, external, and confidential means for employees to report concerns. As a Service, we are committed to ensuring no fraudulent activity or unethical practices take place to create a safe and inclusive place to work.
- A suite of online training sessions has been launched for aspiring managers. These have been delivered monthly by a HR specialist.
- Physiotherapy visits continue to be monitored to establish trends and better support staff.



Performance Information Summary

The Fire and Rescue Authorities (Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2015 introduced three statutory performance indicators that accompany locally collected sector indicators.

STATUTORY INDICATORS:	Year 1 of our Plan		Year 2 of our Plan		Year 3 of our Plan	
	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Fires attended	1,879	26.71	2,011	29.27	1,657	24.08
False alarms attended	2,517	35.79	2,674	38.92	2,901	42.15
Road traffic collisions	207	2.94	234	3.41	251	3.65
Other emergency incidents attended	751	10.68	977	14.22	1,127	16.38
Where the rate is based on 10,000 population						
Fire deaths and injuries	58	8.25	40	5.82	44	6.39
Deaths and injuries arising from fires started accidentally	50	7.11	35	5.09	40	5.81
Where the rate is based on 100,000 population						
Dwelling fires confined to room of origin	375	87.62%	330	86.84%	329	90.88%
As a percentage of the number of dwelling fires attended						

Sector indicators were introduced for 2015 and agreed to be collected and shared by all three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales.

SECTOR INDICATORS:	Year 1 of our Plan		Year 2 of our Plan		Year 3 of our Plan	
	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Deliberate fires	472	6.71	519	7.55	466	6.77
Accidental fires (or motive not known)	1,408	20.02	1,492	21.71	1,191	17.31
Where the rate is based on 10,000 population						
Fire related fatalities	7	1.00	0	0.00	7	1.02
Injuries caused by fires	51	7.25	40	5.82	37	5.38
Fire related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires	5	0.71	0	0.00	6	0.87
Fire related fatalities in deliberate dwelling fires	0	0	0	0.00	1	0.15
Fire related injuries in accidental dwelling fires	39	5.54	26	3.78	26	3.78
Fire related injuries in deliberate dwelling fires	5	0.71	3	0.44	1	0.15
Where the rate is based on 100,000 population						
Dwelling fires	429	13.02	380	11.49	362	10.90
Accidental fires in dwellings	400	12.14	344	10.40	339	10.20
Deliberate fires in dwellings	29	0.88	36	1.09	23	0.69
AFA false alarms in dwellings	1,100	33.40	1,165	35.23	1,387	41.74
Where the rate is based on 10,000 dwellings						
Fires in non-domestic premises	156	4.74	158	4.70	132	3.87
AFA false alarms in non-domestic premises	295	8.95	365	10.86	387	11.35
Where the rate is based on 1,000 non-domestic premises						
Dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm was not fitted	58	13.52%	50	13.16%	54	14.92%
As a percentage of the number of dwelling fires attended						

2023-24 ALL WALES		2023-24				
SECTOR INDICATORS:	North Wales FRS		Mid & West Wales FRS		South Wales FRS	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Deliberate fires	466	6.77	1,169	12.95	3,735	24.24
Accidental fires (or motive not known)	1,191	17.31	1,414	15.67	1,714	11.12
Where the rate is based on 10,000 population						
Fire related fatalities	7	1.02	7	0.78	4	0.26
Injuries caused by fires	37	5.38	28	3.10	36	2.34
Fire related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires	6	0.87	4	0.44	3	0.19
Fire related fatalities in deliberate dwelling fires	1	0.15	0	0.00	0	0.00
Fire related injuries in accidental dwelling fires	26	3.78	16	1.77	27	1.75
Fire related injuries in deliberate dwelling fires	1	0.15	3	0.33	2	0.13
Where the rate is based on 100,000 population						
Dwelling fires	362	10.90	452	10.35	685	9.75
Accidental fires in dwellings	339	10.20	418	9.58	619	8.81
Deliberate fires in dwellings	23	0.69	34	0.78	66	0.94
AFA false alarms in dwellings	1,387	41.74	1,717	39.33	1,956	27.84
Where the rate is based on 10,000 dwellings						
Fires in non-domestic premises	132	3.87	164	3.98	331	6.33
AFA false alarms in non-domestic	387	11.35	1,685	40.87	4,026	76.97
Where the rate is based on 1,000 non-domestic premises						
Dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm was not fitted	54	14.92%	230	50.88%	238	34.74%
As a percentage of the number of dwelling fires attended						



The Dwelling Fire Response Charter in 2023-24

During 2012 the three Welsh fire and Rescue Authorities jointly developed an all-Wales Charter to ensure that wherever people live in Wales, they can expect to be helped and supported to remain safe from fire in their homes. They should also be able to expect that if a fire does break out, they will receive a prompt, effective and professional emergency response to their call for assistance.

The Charter makes seven specific commitments that the Fire and Rescue Authority will:

1. Take the lead in driving down the number of dwelling fires that occur and in reducing their impact on people.
2. React quickly and efficiently every time we receive an emergency 999 call to attend a dwelling fire.
3. Attend dwelling fires swiftly and properly equipped to deal with them.
4. Deal with dwelling fires effectively, efficiently and professionally.
5. Help to restore normality to communities in the aftermath of dwelling fires.
6. Investigate the causes of dwelling fires and hold relevant people to account when appropriate to do so.
7. Strive to maintain high standards and improve aspects of what we do.

The following pages provide information about our compliance with these commitments during 2023-24.

For consistency, we use a standard narrative for reporting against the Charter each year, and only update the figures within the narrative framework.

1. We will take the lead in driving down the number of dwelling fires that occur and in reducing their impact on people.

We are committed to taking the lead in maintaining a downward trend in the incidence of dwelling fires and associated casualties in Wales.

In 2023-24 we provided advice and encouragement to people on how they can prevent fires from starting in their home and how they can keep themselves safe from fire.

Our prevention activity included delivering 19,859 SAWCs to householders, and 20,837 children and young people at key stages 1 - 4 received a fire safety talk.

During 2023-24 we attended 339 accidental dwelling fires. As a consequence of those fires, there were 6 recorded fatalities, but 26 people sustained injuries. The number of accidental dwelling fires in the FRA area has trended downwards with 344 accidental fires attended during 2022-23.

The number of accidental dwelling fires in the FRA area over the past five years, has positively started to trend downwards.

2. We will react quickly and efficiently every time we receive an emergency 999 call to attend a dwelling fire.

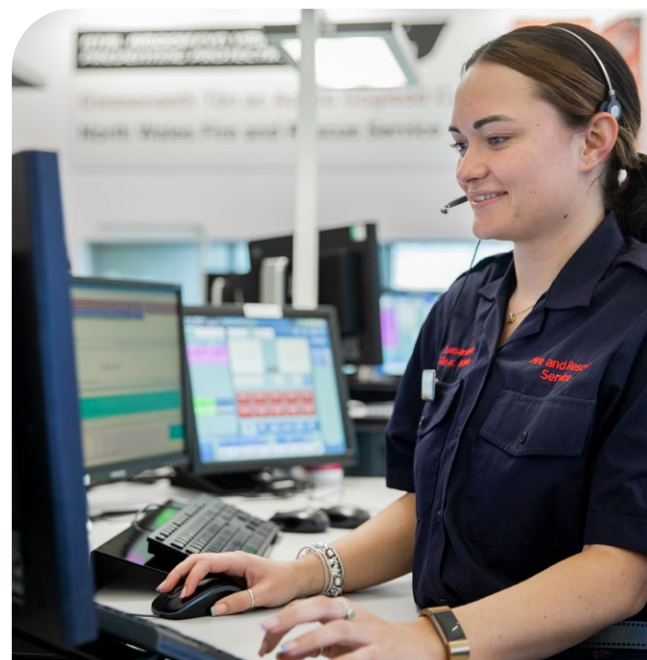
We are committed to reacting quickly and efficiently when emergency 999/112 calls are put through to us by the operator.

Our emergency fire control facility remains available around the clock every day of the year, with special arrangements in place for a seamless transfer of calls from one control facility to another in the event of serious disruption or a surge in the number of calls coming in at the same time.

Sophisticated mapping and electronic systems help us to: a) identify the location of the reported incident and b) send the most appropriate available resource to attend the incident.

In 2023-24, we handled a total of 12,744 emergency 999/112 calls. We were able to obtain enough information about dwelling fire incidents to alert the appropriate initial response within 90 seconds on 80.7% of occasions and between 91 and 120 seconds on 9.1% of occasions.

However, we know that the speed of call handling – although important – is not the only relevant yardstick. Knowing where our services are needed



requires specialist skills to effectively glean information from callers who may, for example, be unfamiliar with the area they are in, be frightened or in distress, be very young, or have communication or language difficulties.

Another important skill is recognising when a caller is abusing the 999/112 system by falsely claiming that there is an emergency when, in fact, there is not. It is a criminal offence

to knowingly make false calls to the emergency services. Sadly, that does not seem to deter a minority of people who tie up the 999 lines and divert services away from people who may be in a genuinely life-threatening situation. Every time we turn out to one of these malicious false alarms, it wastes both time and money, and places the rest of the community at higher risk.

In 2023-24, we received 76 malicious false alarms. In 47% of cases, we were able to establish that these calls were not genuine and so avoided needlessly mobilising resources to attend.

3. We will attend dwelling fires swiftly and properly equipped to deal with them.

Once we have answered the emergency 999/112 call and allocated the most appropriate resources to make up the initial attendance at the incident, our next priority is to get to the incident quickly, safely and properly equipped to deal with it.

In 2022-23 we responded to 8% of dwelling fires within 1-5 minutes, 39% within 5-10 minutes, 30% within 10-15 minutes and 23% in over 15 minutes. These times include the time it takes for personnel to turn in to the fire station as well as the travel time. As a result, a number of things can affect the speed of response figures, including the urban/rural geography and the nature of road networks in the area.

Speed of response to dwelling fires is extremely important, but we cannot over-emphasise the importance of preventing those fires from happening in the first instance, and of having at least one working smoke alarm fitted and a pre-planned escape route in case a fire does occur. However, if a dwelling fire has occurred, we ensure that our firefighting crews are properly equipped to deal with it.

We equip our firefighters with high quality personal protective equipment and firefighting equipment. We require them to be operationally fit and healthy and we make sure that their skills are routinely tested and exercised. We also routinely check that the way our crews dealt with incidents was in accordance with accepted firefighting procedures.

We take the safety of our firefighters very seriously, given the nature of the work that they undertake. In 2023-24, our crews attended 1,657 fires in a variety of different types of premises and at outdoor locations. Whilst fighting those fires, 16 operational staff received an injury.



4. We will deal with dwelling fires effectively, efficiently and professionally.

We are committed to dealing with fires effectively, efficiently and professionally. To this end, we equip our highly trained fire crews with the right skills, knowledge, information, firefighting equipment and command support so that whatever the circumstances of the dwelling fire, they will be correctly prepared to deal with it.



In 2023-24, of all the dwelling fires that we attended, 92% were successfully contained within the room of origin, without spreading any further. Although a number of factors could contribute to this statistic that would be outside the control of the attending crews such as how long it took for someone to discover the fire in the first instance, whether or not internal doors had been shut to help prevent the spread of the fire, and how far away from a fire station the dwelling was located, we still consider this to be a reasonable indicator of our firefighting success.

We recognise the importance of research and equipment improvements, and ensure that we invest time and effort in staying in touch with the latest developments.

We also take very seriously the professional image of the fire and rescue service. We place great emphasis on the personal qualities and attributes of all our operational staff, as well as their physical and psychological fitness and the high standard of their operational and management training.

We encourage all our staff to adhere to a set of core values that was adopted nationally by the UK Fire and Rescue Service. This expresses our commitment to valuing service to the community, people, diversity and improvement.

5. We will help to restore normality to communities in the aftermath of dwelling fires.

We are committed to helping to restore normality to communities in the aftermath of dwelling fires.

A fire in the home can leave people feeling extremely vulnerable.

When people have lost their possessions, they will have need for practical as well as emotional support. When people have been injured or killed in the fire, the experience can affect whole communities as well as the individual and his or her immediate friends and family. For this reason, the fire and rescue service's role in supporting communities does not end when the fire was extinguished and everyone was accounted for.

In all cases, the cause of the fire will be investigated and carefully recorded. Every detail of how and where the fire started, how far it



spread, any special circumstances, and any particular factors that contributed to the fire will be recorded as a source of future learning, research and monitoring.

If there are reasons to believe that a fire was started deliberately in a dwelling, either by someone living there or by someone else, this will be followed up with the police and other relevant agencies.

In some premises, such as blocks of flats or houses occupied by a number of different tenants, the post-incident investigations might indicate that a landlord had failed to ensure the necessary level of fire safety. Our specialist fire investigators might then be involved in a criminal investigation and court proceedings.

If a fire is found to have started accidentally, we might undertake some form of community safety activity or campaign in the vicinity, offering advice and reassurance by way of free SAWCs.

6. We will investigate the causes of dwelling fires and hold relevant people to account when appropriate to do so.

We always investigate the causes of dwelling fires. In many cases the cause and origin of a fire will be very clear and straightforward, but in others a more in-depth, forensic investigation will be required to ascertain the most likely cause of the fire. In 2023-24, 10 dwelling fires were recorded as having an unknown cause.

If a crime is suspected, the investigation of the fire will be conducted with the police. People suspected of deliberately setting fire to a dwelling are likely to face criminal prosecution, although in some cases this may not be the only course of action available, for example if the fire was started by a young child or by a person attempting suicide.

In 2023-24, we attended 362 fires in dwellings, of which 23 were found to have been started deliberately.

In some residential premises, such as flats and houses of multiple occupation, the communal and shared areas are covered by regulations that require whoever is responsible for those premises (such as the landlord or the premises manager) to have good fire safety arrangements in place.

Failure to do so can lead to the closure of the premises and prosecution of the responsible person with the prospect of imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

As an enforcing authority, we ensure that responsible persons fulfil their obligations under this legislation, and can select from a range of enforcement options available to us, depending on the seriousness and risk posed by the contravention.

In 2023-24, we served one Enforcement Notice. No prohibition notices, formal cautions or prosecutions were concluded during the year.



7. We will strive to maintain high standards and improve aspects of what we do.

We continuously strive to maintain high standards and improve aspects of what we do.

Under legislation, Fire and Rescue Authorities are classed as 'Welsh Improvement Authorities' and are expected to routinely review and continuously improve their own performance through a formal process of setting, implementing and reporting against annual improvement objectives.

We do not limit our improvement activity to this formal annual process; high standards and continual improvement form an integral part of our everyday running of the Fire and Rescue Service.

Examples of improvement activities that go on include:

- Responding positively to peer reviews, audits and inspections;
- Responding positively to consultation responses, feedback from stakeholders, complaints and compliments;
- Learning from our experiences, such as from post-incident debriefs, reports of accidents, or 'near misses';
- Contributing to working groups, sharing good practice, and learning from research undertaken;
- Taking opportunities to learn from, and with, other organisations through partnerships, committees, boards and professional associations;
- Planning for potential challenges in order to maintain our operations, such as through business continuity management processes;
- Planning for potential challenges to future service delivery, such as through local resilience forums;
- Continuously developing the technical and professional skills of our staff;
- Maintaining and renewing our physical and computerised assets such as our equipment, vehicles, buildings and technology.



What Others Said About Us

Audit Wales – Governance

Their report can be found [here](#).

Other Information

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External information sources used in compiling this document:

- [Wales Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics](#)
- [Wales Future Trends Report \(2021\)](#)

Intervention in the event of failure or potential failure to comply:

The Welsh Government has powers of intervention:

- under section 22 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 if it considers that a Fire and Rescue Authority is failing, or is likely to fail, to act in accordance with the National Framework. In such cases, section 23 – Intervention Protocol would apply.
- under section 29 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 if it considers that a Fire and Rescue Authority is failing, or is at risk of failing, to comply with the Measure. However, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, Welsh Ministers may only intervene after they have offered voluntary support to the Authority under section 28 of the Measure.

Consultations

Each year the Authority seeks the opinions and views of the North Wales public and other stakeholders as part of its process of developing its strategic plans and objectives.

Public consultations are listed below:

Title	Consultation	Publication	For year
Community Risk Management Plan 2024-29	Spring 2024	Summer 2024	2024-29
Emergency Cover Review	Summer/Autumn 2023	Winter 2023	2023-24
Improvement and Well-Being Objectives for 2020-21 onwards (new Environmental Strategy)	Autumn/Winter 2019	March 2020	2020-21
Improvement and Well-Being Objectives for 2019-20 onwards	Summer/Autumn 2018	March 2019	2019-20
Improvement and Well-Being Objectives for 2018-19 onwards	Autumn 2017	March 2018	2018-19

Recent staff surveys are listed below:

Title	Consultation	
Fire Family Survey	Autumn 2023	18 September – 16 October 2023
Fire Family Survey	Autumn 2021	18 October – 08 November 2021



Glossary and Definitions

Fires

All fires fall into one of three categories – primary, secondary or chimney.

Primary Fires

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.

Fires in any location are categorised as primary fires if they involve casualties, rescues or escapes, as are fires in any location that were attended by five or more fire appliances.

Secondary Fires

Secondary fires are fires that are neither chimney fires nor primary fires. Secondary fires are those that would normally occur on 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.

Secondary fires do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes, and will have been attended by four or fewer fire appliances.

Chimney Fires

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.

Chimney fires do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes and will have been attended by four or fewer fire appliances.

Wildfires

A grassland, woodland and crop fire where the incident was attended by four or more vehicles, or the Service was in attendance for six hours or more, or where there was an estimated fire damage area of over 10,000 square meters.

Special Service Incidents (other emergency incidents)

These are non-fire incidents which require the attendance of an appliance or officer and include:

- Local emergencies e.g. flooding, road traffic incidents, rescue of persons, 'making safe' etc.
- Major disasters.
- Domestic incidents e.g. water leaks, persons locked in or out etc.
- prior arrangements to attend incidents, which may include some provision of advice and inspections.

Fire Deaths (fire related)

This is where a person whose death is attributed to a fire even if the death occurred weeks or months later. There are also occasional cases where it becomes apparent subsequently that the fire was not the cause of the death. These figures are therefore subject to revision.

Fire Injuries

For consistency after April 2009 across the UK, fire casualties are recorded under four categories of severity:

- The victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be serious.
- The victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be slight.
- The victim was given first aid at the scene only, but required no further treatment.
- A precautionary check was recommended – the person was sent to hospital or was advised to see a doctor as a precaution, but having no obvious injury or distress.

False Alarm (general guidance)

Where the Fire and Rescue Service attends a location believing there to be an incident, but on arrival discovers that no such incident exists, or existed.

Note: if the appliance is 'turned around' by Control before arriving at the incident it is not classed as having attended and does not need to be reported.

Malicious

These are calls made with the intention of getting the Fire and Rescue Service to attend a non-existent incident, including deliberate and suspected malicious intentions.

Good Intent

These are calls made in good faith in the belief that the Fire and Rescue Service really would attend a fire or special service incident.

Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA)

These are calls initiated by fire alarm and fire-fighting equipment. They include accidental initiation of alarm equipment or where an alarm operates and a person then routinely calls the Fire and Rescue Service as part of a standing arrangement, with no 'judgement' involved, for example from a security call centre or a nominated person in an organisation.

Have your say

We are always looking for ways to improve our service and to present information that is meaningful. In order to help us to do this we want to ensure your views are considered when delivering our activities and keeping you informed. So, if you have any comments about this assessment, or how we might improve our future annual performance assessments, we would very much like to hear from you.

Other versions of this document are available

- In paper and electronic formats.
- In Welsh and English.
- In accessible formats through our website.

Write to us



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Visit our website



www.northwalesfire.gov.wales

Or follow us on



X (previously Twitter): [@northwalesfire](https://twitter.com/northwalesfire)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/northwalesfireservice

Instagram: [@northwalesfire](https://www.instagram.com/northwalesfire)

Please ring 999 only in an emergency