

AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB GOGLEDD CYMRU



NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

A meeting of the **EXECUTIVE PANEL** will be held
MONDAY 16 MARCH 2026 at **14:00 hrs.**
virtually **via Zoom**

Yours faithfully,
Gareth Owens
Clerk

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 December 2025

5. Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor's Inspection of the South and Mid & West Wales Joint Fire Control and North Wales Fire Control in response to Recommendation 31 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2, for information

6. Performance Monitoring Q3 Report 2025/26, for assurance

7. Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2026/27, for recommendation

8. Pay Policy Statement 2026/27, for recommendation

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.

10. The Role of Treasurer (Section 151), for approval

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 December 2025, virtually via Zoom. Meeting commenced at 14.00hrs.

Councillor

Cllr Dylan Rees (Chair)
Cllr Mark Young (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Carol Beard
Cllr Alan Hughes
Cllr John Ifan Jones
Cllr Gareth A Roberts
Cllr Rondo Roberts
Cllr Paul Rogers
Cllr Gareth Williams

Representing

Anglesey County Council
Denbighshire County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Denbighshire County Council
Anglesey County Council
Gwynedd County Council
Wrexham County Council
Wrexham County Council
Gwynedd County Council

Also present:

Dawn Docx	Chief Fire Officer
Helen MacArthur	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Justin Evans	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Anthony Jones	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Mike Plant	Head of Performance, Planning and Transformation
Paul Kay	Head of Prevention and Protection
Llinos Evans	Head of Corporate Communications
Dafydd Edwards	Treasurer
Gareth Owens	Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Matthew Powell	Deputy Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Heledd Davies	Atebol - Translator
Lisa Allington	Executive Assistant

1.0 APOLOGIES

Name

Cllr Charlie McCoubrey
Cllr Paul Cunningham
Cllr Antony Wren

Representing

Conwy County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Flintshire County Council

ABSENT

Name

Cllr Chris Hughes
Cllr Dale Selvester

Representing

Conwy County Borough 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 15 SEPTEMBER 2025

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 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 It was confirmed that an online meeting had been attended with the Cabinet Secretary on the morning of 15 December and she would be making a statement in the Senedd this week in relation to the changes that will be made around governance of fire and rescue authorities (FRAs).

4.3 In relation to the withdrawal of the arson reduction grant, this would be made at the next Social Partnership Forum meeting as the Cabinet Secretary had been absent from the last one.

4.4 **RESOLVED to:**

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

5.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING, APRIL 2025 – SEPTEMBER 2025

5.1 AM Mike Plant presented the Performance Monitoring, April 2025 – September 2025 report which provided Members with an update on performance for the period 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025 (quarter one and two of financial year 2025/26). It was noted 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 include commentary on emerging trends and future actions.

5.2 A Member asked if there were any figures on visits to HMP Berwyn over the last quarter. AM Paul Kay advised that there had been an increase in the number of incidents between May and July 2025; however, collaborative work with the prison had recently seen the introduction of a tamper proof vape for inmates resulting in a significant reduction in incidents. Both a desktop simulation in a non-cell area and a live exercise were planned over the next few months and Members were welcome to observe those should they wish.

- 5.3 A Member asked if Wrexham's second engine was still being moved to Corwen daily to increase availability, and whether this had impacted on the ability to send two engines to HMP Berwyn when a call was received in line with the predetermined attendance (PDA) procedure. It was confirmed that as overall availability throughout the day had improved because of the Nucleus Crewing pilot, the second Wrexham engine was not moved to Corwen as regularly as it had been prior to the implementation of the pilot in September. Confirmed figures around this would be made available following the first quarterly review of the pilot early in the new year.
- 5.4 The Chair asked if the statistics for high priority safe and well checks were improving and whether they could be re-categorised to very high, and high. AM Kay responded that the categorisation of safe and well checks was appropriately aligned with the NFCC Prevention Strategy and that a proportion of the high-risk referrals were carried out by operational crews.
- 5.5 A Member asked if the Service had the capacity and resource to deal with the increase in wildfire and severe weather incidents. AM Plant responded that risk reviews were taking place around this and the Strategic Risk Register amended as required; however, there remained some challenges around capacity following the removal of the Arson Reduction Grant.
- 5.6 CFO Docx further noted that wildfires and severe weather requirements would continue to create a cost pressure for the Service, and a wildfire training session was planned to take place prior to the full Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) meeting in January 2026.
- 5.7 The increase in incidents of fires around narrow-gauge railways was noted, and a discussion was held around this.
- 5.8 It was asked how many call outs were for the application of first aid due to poor availability of ambulances, and CFO Docx responded that whilst crews were trained in immediate medical care, they were not undertaking the work of ambulance crews.

5.9 **RESOLVED to:**

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

6.0 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 ACFO Anthony Jones presented to Members the Strategic Risk Management paper which gave 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.

6.2 It was asked if officers were able to provide reassurance to Members that the relevant investments and security were in place to protect the Service from cyber risks. ACFO MacArthur confirmed that the Service's risk appetite was minimal in relation to cyber threats and that robust arrangements were in place to mitigate this area. Recognised standards were in place and external assurance was provided via the internal auditors.

6.3 The Treasurer noted that minimal meant that the most cautious approach was being adopted by the Service in relation to cyber risks.

6.4 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) Note the Strategic Risk Register; and**
- ii) review and approve the risk appetite in paras 14-21 of the paper.**

7.0 BUDGET SETTING 2026/27

7.1 Elgan Roberts, Head of Finance, provided Members with an update on the financial planning assessment to set a balanced budget for 2026/27 and to seek endorsement to communicate the indicative levy to constituent local authorities.

7.2 It was noted that Members of the Audit Committee had scrutinised the budget setting process in its meeting of 15 December and had endorsed all recommendations.

7.3 Thanks were given to the members of the Budget Scrutiny working Group, the Finance Department and budget holders for their engagement and hard work in setting the budget.

7.4 The Treasurer confirmed that reserves were only utilised for one-off items of expenditure and that local authority finance officers had been kept informed throughout the budget setting process. He concluded that he considered the increase in the levy to be reasonable and appropriate.

7.5 **RESOLVED to:**

- 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.**

8.0 CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES IN WALES

8.1 ACFO Evans delivered the Consultation on the Draft National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales and sought endorsement of the proposed response from North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service).

8.2 RESOLVED to:

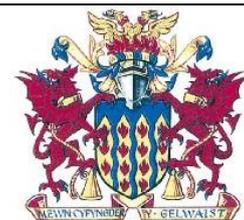
- i) Note the publication of the draft National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales;**
- ii) Endorse the proposed Service response to the consultation, as set out in Appendix 1; and**
- iii) Authorise the submission of the response to Welsh Government by the consultation deadline of 17 December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

9.0 URGENT MATTERS

9.1 There were no urgent matters to discuss.

Meeting closed: 15:00 hrs

Report to	Executive Panel
Date	16 March 2026
Lead Officer	Anthony Jones, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Contact Officer	Ros Thomas, Head of Control
Subject	Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector for Wales's Inspection of the South and Mid & West Wales Joint Fire Control and North Wales Fire Control in response to Recommendation 31 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2



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 the South and Mid & West Wales Joint Fire Control and North Wales Fire Control in response to Recommendation 31 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2".

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 On 19 December 2025 the CFRAIW published the attached report. This report sets out the findings of the inspections of the South and Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service Joint Fire Control and the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Fire Control undertaken in September and October 2025.
- 3 The purpose of the inspections was to meet the commitment of Welsh Government to adopt in full Recommendation 31 from Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. The inspection fieldwork sought to establish the extent to which the respective Fire Controls were integrated within their Fire and Rescue Service from a staff and an operational policy and assurance perspective. It also considered the effectiveness of the skill acquisition and maintenance training programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

BACKGROUND

- 5 Recommendation 31 from Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry was directed to London Fire Brigade. However Welsh Government agreed to adopt in full all the recommendations and commissioned the CFRAIW to evaluate:
 - a) The integration of the control rooms within the Fire and Rescue Services;
 - b) The effectiveness of training for control room staff;
 - c) Its operational effectiveness;
 - d) Its capacity to manage numerous simultaneous requests for assistance during emergencies; and
 - e) The quality of communication between the control rooms and incident commanders.

INFORMATION

- 6 Following field work which was undertaken in both control rooms during September and October 2025, the attached report was published by Welsh Government on 19 December 2025. Pages 28 to 39 relate to North Wales Fire and Police Control, Crud y Dderwen. The report was brought to the attention of Members of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) at the time of publication. The CFRAIW, Dan Stephens, has agreed to attend the Executive Panel to present his findings.
- 7 In relation to North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, the CFRAIW makes three recommendations:
 - Recommendation 1: North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) should ensure shift durations do not exceed 12 hours;
 - Recommendation 2: the Service should increase the Fire Control watch establishment to 28 FTE; and
 - Recommendation 3: the Service should undertake an in-depth analysis of operational demand and Fire Control staff training and development needs with a view to increasing staffing levels on day shifts to deliver greater operational capacity to meet demand and to create greater opportunity for quality training and development activity.
- 8 As part of her departmental objectives for 2026/27 the Head of Control has undertaken to consider the recommendations and to continue to recruit to the additional four posts to provide resilience, flexibility and capacity for training.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	The sustainability and the maintenance of professional skills of the control operators is essential to the provision of fire and rescue services in North Wales
Budget	The cost of four additional control operators is £221,348. This is currently being funded by temporary underspends within other staffing budgets
Legal	None
Staffing	It is recommended that the establishment of control operators is increased from 24 to 28 full time equivalents (FTE)
Equalities/Human Rights/Welsh Language	All control operators are proficient in the Welsh Language to level 4 or above enabling the public to access fire and rescue services in their preferred language
Risks	As set out in the attached full report



Inspection of the South and Mid & West Wales Joint Fire Control and North Wales Fire Control in response to Recommendation 31 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2

December 2025

Inspection of the South and Mid & West Wales Joint Fire Control and North Wales Fire Control in response to Recommendation 31 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2

Dan Stephens, Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector, Welsh Government

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Executive summary

This report sets out the findings of the inspections of the South and Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service Joint Fire Control and the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Fire Control undertaken in September and October 2025.

The purpose of the inspections was to meet the commitment of Welsh Government to adopt in full Recommendation 31 from Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. The inspection fieldwork sought to establish the extent to which the respective Fire Controls were integrated within their Fire and Rescue Service from a staff and an operational policy and assurance perspective. It also considered the effectiveness of the skill acquisition and maintenance training programme.

Fire Control is an essential element of providing fire and rescue services. Fire Control staff receive emergency calls, mobilise resources to incidents, liaise with other responders and provide survival guidance. Without Fire Control, it would simply not be possible to respond to emergencies effectively or at all.

The London Fire Brigade Fire Control came under scrutiny for its role in the response to the Grenfell Tower fire. In both of its reports the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry made recommendations to improve how Fire Control operates and how it interacts with the public, with firefighters at the scene of an incident and with other responders. Those recommendations were mostly addressed to the London fire Brigade but were of wider relevance too. As with the Inquiry's findings more generally, it would be naïve to think that the shortcomings it identified could only exist in London.

This report therefore acts on the recommendations in the Inquiry's second report which called for an inspection of the London Fire Brigade Fire Control. It covers the two Fire Controls in Wales. Both Fire Controls are located within Police facilities. The Joint Fire Control is located within the South Wales Police Public Service Centre at Police Headquarters in Bridgend. The North Wales Fire Control is located within the North Wales Police Joint Communications Centre in St Asaph.

Staff in the Joint Fire Control felt a high level of detachment due to several factors including the working environment and the absence of harmonised terms and conditions. The same concerns over the working environment were not reflected in the North Wales Fire Control despite it also being located within a Police facility.

The positioning of the Joint Fire Control within the dispatch section of the Public Service Centre presents challenges that may hinder the effectiveness of its operational response especially in the dynamic phases of an incident or if live fire survival guidance calls are ongoing. This is less of an issue in the Joint Communications Centre where Fire Control is positioned in the far corner of the building.

Both Fire Controls work long duration night shifts exceeding 12 hours which the Health & Safety Executive state should be avoided. The fatigue and risk implications are exacerbated by the fact that the nighttime rest period afforded to Fire Control staff in the best case is half that of their Firefighter counterparts working the shift system assuming it is not interrupted. Fire Control rest facilities are not of the same standard to those provided on fire stations and may impact on the likelihood of Firefighters (Control) achieving meaningful rest thus increasing the risk of fatigue. Extended rest periods also impact on the amount of time available for on shift training.

There are challenges for Fire Control in undertaking skill maintenance training when on shift. Unlike on a fire station Fire Control watches cannot all train together as a minimum number of Firefighters (Control) are required to staff the telephone, radio and mobilising systems. Staffing levels have a direct impact on the quality of training that can be undertaken on shift. This was reported as an issue for both Fire Controls.

It is a reality that much skill maintenance training for Firefighters (Control) will be undertaken individually in between dealing with emergency and administrative calls. That being so the quality of training materials available to Firefighters (Control) should be of a high standard. This requires addressing in both Fire Controls.

The Development to Competent process for Firefighters (Control) in development was reported as being onerous, overly bureaucratic and in some instances a barrier to retention. Despite this I heard of excellent examples of coaching and mentoring of Firefighters (Control) in development from their Crew and Watch Managers (Control).

Some policies and general instructions were reported as being out of date or no longer relevant. Crew and Watch Managers (Control) complained of a lack of clear organisational policy direction for responding to certain incident types.

The Control Management Teams recognise that there are gaps in policy and other Fire Control guidance. Staffing shortfalls and workload were cited as reasons why these issues are not being addressed as expeditiously as they should be.

There however are examples of emerging good practice around operational assurance processes. The Control Management Teams in both Fire Controls have a clear sense of direction around addressing operational policy, training and assurance issues. I am confident that with the required levels of organisation support and investment they will succeed.

The levels of engagement from all staff during the inspection visits was outstanding. Staff in both Fire Controls demonstrated a commendable commitment to duty and a real desire to contribute to improving their Fire and Rescue Services.

Fire Control is a strategic asset which is fundamental to effective operational response. In almost all circumstances it is the first and often the ongoing point of contact for the public. The Grenfell and Manchester Arena incidents highlighted the importance of Fire Control and the absolute need for it to be effective.

The recommendations in this report are made recognising the uniqueness of Fire Control and with the intention of ensuring Fire Control staff across Wales are as safe, well trained and as effective as they can be.

Introduction

On 7 July 2025 the Welsh Government published its response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry phase two report¹. Within the response the Cabinet Secretaries for Housing and Local Government and Economy, Energy and Planning committed to the adoption in full of Recommendation 31 and set out the actions to be taken by Welsh Government to discharge the recommendation (copied below):

Recommendation 31

That His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (“the Inspectorate”) inspect the London Fire Brigade as soon as reasonably possible to assess and report on:

- *the extent to which the control room is now integrated into the organisation*
- *the effectiveness of the arrangements for identifying the training needs of control room staff, delivering effective training and recording its outcomes*
- *the effectiveness of the control room generally*
- *the ability of the control room to handle a large number of concurrent requests for advice and assistance from people directly affected by fires or other emergencies*
- *the quality and effectiveness of the arrangements for communication between the control room and the incident commander. (113.55)*

What we are committed to doing

The Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector (Wales) (CFRAI (W)) will undertake a targeted inspection of the 3 Welsh Fire and Rescue Services to establish what arrangements are in place for assessing the training of fire control personnel and for considering how effective those arrangements are. Findings and recommendations will be set out in a report from the CFRAI(W).

This report sets out the findings and recommendations from the inspections of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) Fire Control in St Asaph and of the Joint South Wales and Mid & West Wales FRS Fire Control in Bridgend, undertaken in September and October 2025.

Prior to undertaking the inspection fieldwork, I reviewed organisational structures, work routines, and weekly and monthly duties schedules inclusive of skill maintenance programs for both Fire Controls. I also requested call volume data inclusive of administrative calls. Extracting this information presented challenges for Control Management Teams as both Welsh Fire Controls are located within Police facilities and therefore utilise the Police ICT infrastructure.

¹ [Grenfell Tower Inquiry phase 2 report: Welsh Government response \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

The inspection fieldwork included watch visits at the Joint Fire Control in Bridgend and at the secondary Fire Control in Rhyl during fire survival guidance training sessions. I also held several meetings with the Control Management Teams.

The focus of the watch visits was to determine to what extent Firefighters (Control) felt integrated within the organisation and how effective they considered the skill maintenance training regime to be.

The focus of the meetings with the Control Management Teams was to determine the extent to which Fire Control was integrated into the organisation from an operational policy and assurance perspective and what impact this had on overall effectiveness.

The ability of the Welsh Fire Controls to handle large numbers of concurrent requests for advice and assistance from people directly affected by fires or other emergencies and the quality and effectiveness of the arrangements for communication between the control room and the incident commander have been considered previously within the 2021 Thematic Review Fire and Rescue Services in Wales: Learning from Grenfell².

Since the 2021 inspection Operation Willow Beck has been developed in conjunction with Home Office, National Fire Chiefs Council and British Telecom (BT) to establish a more robust way of preventing Fire Controls becoming overwhelmed with emergency calls resulting from large or protracted incidents.

BT now has a predetermined redistribution plan to redirect overflow calls efficiently between FRSs during periods when a single Fire Control has become overwhelmed with 999 calls due to a large, protracted incident or spate conditions.

The system was used initially during the July/August 2022 wildfires with successful outcomes and on numerous occasions since. It is not therefore a primary focus of this report.

The report is split into three sections. The first section provides a generic overview of Fire Control. The second and third sections set out the inspection findings and recommendations for the North Wales FRS Fire Control and the Joint South Wales and Mid & West Wales FRS Fire Control respectively.

² [Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser thematic review: learning from Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations | GOV.WALES](https://www.gov.wales/government/department-for-fire-and-rescue-services/press-releases/2022/04/2022-04-20-1)

Section 1

Fire Control

Sections 7.2(c), 8.2(c) and 9.3(c) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act place a duty on the FRS to '*make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel*'. The FRS discharge this duty through the provision of a Fire Control.

The personnel who staff Fire Control are known as Firefighters (Control). The role structure within Fire Control is identical to that of a wholetime shift fire station. Typically, Fire Control will operate on a four-watch system although this can be supplemented by personnel conditioned to a day duty system to increase staffing during the daytime as this is when call volumes are highest. A watch will consist of at least two supervisory manager roles (Watch Manager A and/or B (Control) and/or Crew Manager (Control) and several Firefighters (Control) dependant on minimum staffing levels. Throughout this report the term Firefighter (Control) is used when referencing Fire Control personnel unless expressly referencing the Crew or Watch Manager (Control) role. When the term Fire Control is used this is a reference to all Fire Control personnel inclusive of watches and the Control Management Teams.

The first point of contact with the FRS for a member of the public in an emergency will often be through Fire Control. The Public Emergency Call Service (PECS) Code of Practice sets out the methods used to pass emergency calls between the call handling agent (BT in the UK) and the FRS. The initial call routed from the call handling agent to the FRS will be received by a Firefighter (Control) via an Integrated Communications Control System (ICCS) which forms part of the overall mobilising system.

The Firefighter (Control) dealing with the initial call will input the details of the emergency into the mobilising system which will identify all the possible locations for the address for triangulation with the location from which the call has originated along with the pre-determined attendance for the incident type selecting the closest appliances and tactical or specialist officers for deployment. Firefighters (Control) will then deploy the selected appliances to the incident and mobilise any Tactical³ or specialist officers as necessary. This is known as computer aided dispatch (CAD).

Throughout the duration of the incident Firefighters (Control) will record all messages from the incident on the incident log and react to and action any requests from the incident. They will also liaise with the other emergency services and partner agencies which can be numerous depending on the nature of the incident.

³ In this report the term Tactical Officer is used to describe Station or Group Managers conditioned to the flexible duty system

At the conclusion of the incident Firefighters (Control) will check the call data and either complete the Incident Recording System report (IRS – as it was known at the time of the inspection but has since transitioned to the Fire and Rescue Data Platform) or will pass on any relevant details to the Incident Commander for them to complete the IRS report.

This is a very simplistic explanation that in no way captures the complexity of many incidents. A single incident can generate multiple repeat calls, all of which need to be answered and recorded. Complex or protracted incidents can result in multiple requests for information, assistance or the attendance of specialist resources from a range of agencies.

Fire Control also acts as the central repository for multiple organisational functions which generate high volumes of administrative calls. Examples of administrative calls include safeguarding referrals, logging of appliance and equipment faults, emergency leave requests and reporting of sickness absence. The volume of administrative calls is far greater than that of emergency calls.

Specific challenges for Control Management Teams

Fire Control is unique within each FRS. There is no FRS in the UK which has more than one Fire Control and several FRS share a Fire Control including South and Mid & West Wales FRS.

This unique environment presents challenges for staffing, training and the management of fatigue.

Staffing

As stated previously Fire Control staffing typically mirrors that for a wholetime shift fire station with four watches (usually red, white, blue and green) working two days, followed by two nights followed by four rota days.

In almost all FRS across the UK there is more than one wholetime shift crewed station. If Red watch at fire station A has a staffing shortfall on a shift which would either be a Firefighter, Driver or Crew/Watch Manager and Red watch at fire station B has a surplus then depending on the shortfall a Firefighter, Driver or Crew/Watch Manager would be detached for the shift from station B to station A to cover the shortfall. This resilience is not available to Fire Control as there is only one Fire Control which must therefore be self-sufficient for staffing purposes. In practical terms this means all

abstractions (annual leave, off shift training, sickness and all other leave) must be covered from within Fire Control.

There are limited options available to Fire Control Management Teams (CMT) to manage abstractions and particularly those of a longer-term nature such as serious illnesses or maternity leave. There is a limit to which overtime can be used as it is totally reliant on the availability and willingness of Firefighters (Control) to volunteer for overtime. Watch balancing (equalising numbers across watches) can be very disruptive to the individuals affected and can negatively affect staff morale. Fixed term contracts are an option but there is a significant front-end recruitment and training requirement assuming there are enough applicants for fixed term roles in the first instance. Retirement and reengagement on part time contracts or bank hours are options but are dependent on policies in operation within individual FRSs.

Training and other developmental activity

The majority of skill maintenance training for Firefighters and Firefighters (Control) takes place on shift. There are some exceptions for example in North Wales FRS mandatory fire survival guidance training is arranged on rota days. Rota day training has been organised at the Joint Fire Control but has had varying success as attendance is voluntary and there are often last minute changes to numbers able to attend.

Firefighters on a fire station can train together as a crew as they can be mobilised via the station turn out system which has an audible alarm to alert the crew to an incident. Firefighters (Control) cannot all relocate together to the training room as a minimum number are required to staff the telephone, radio and mobilising systems. In practical terms the watch must split in half to train with one half in the training room and the other half remaining within Fire Control.

Firefighters can carry out off station training or site-specific risk information gathering visits while remaining available via radio and/or mobile data terminal on the fire appliance. Firefighters can place the appliance on a delayed turnout or make the appliance temporarily unavailable to facilitate training or other development activity. Fire Control can do none of these things.

The opportunities for off shift training are wholly contingent on the staffing model in operation within the FRS for Fire Control and the extent to which provision for off shift training is contemplated or using overtime (when attendance would most likely be voluntary). Unplanned or under anticipated abstractions can have a detrimental effect on the amount of off shift training that can be undertaken by Firefighters (Control).

Fatigue and risk

Where night shifts exceed 12 hours, as is the case within the two Welsh Fire Controls where 13.5 hour/14-hour night shifts are in operation, the fatigue and risk factors for Firefighters (Control) are elevated as the time in between the first- and second-night shift is insufficient for compensatory rest. This also falls outside of HSE guidance contained within HSG 256 to avoid shifts of over 12 hours duration.

Firefighters on the wholetime shift system are afforded a rest period from 0000 – 0700. Beds are provided on fire stations and the whole watch can take the full rest period as a collective as they can be alerted by the station turn out system which in addition to the audible alarm turns all the lights on throughout the rest facilities.

I have raised concerns around fatigue implications when Firefighters are mobilised during the rest period in previous inspection reports. This is particularly acute on the second night shift when Firefighters have had the rest period disturbed on the first night shift. I have also raised concerns around the limitations extended rest periods have on the time available for training and other risk reduction activities. These concerns apply equally to Fire Control.

Firefighters (Control) are in effect only afforded half or a third of the 0000 – 0700 rest period as their Firefighter counterparts due to the requirement to permanently cover the telephone, radio and mobilising systems. In the event of an incident or concurrent incidents that generate significant activity for Fire Control occurring during the rest period a recall is initiated which interrupts the rest period for Firefighters (Control).

In the best-case Firefighters (Control) are afforded a 3.5-hour rest period during a 13.5 hour/14-hour night shift. If the rest period is interrupted, then the risk of fatigue is increased significantly.

Section 2

South and Mid & West Wales Joint Fire Control

South Wales and Mid & West Wales FRS share a Joint Fire Control (JFC) which is located within the Public Service Centre at the South Wales Police (SWP) Headquarters in Bridgend.

There are 4 watches, Red, White, Blue and Green working the wholetime shift system as set out within the National Scheme of Conditions of Service 7th Edition April 2025 (Grey Book). Watches work two 10.5-hour day shifts (0730 – 1800) followed by two 13.5-hour night shifts (1800 – 0730) followed by four rota days.

The approved minimum staffing level within JFC is 8 per shift inclusive of 2 Crew/Watch Managers and 6 Firefighters (Control). The minimum staffing level is the same for day and night shifts. At the time of writing the interim minimum staffing level is 7 due to the number of unfilled posts within JFC.

Each watch has an established staffing level of 12 consisting of a Watch Manager A (Control), 2 Crew Managers (Control) and 9 Firefighters (Control).

There is an agreement in place to recruit 4 Station Manager A non flexi roles. It is intended that these roles, once filled, will be watch based and responsible for operational performance and assurance.

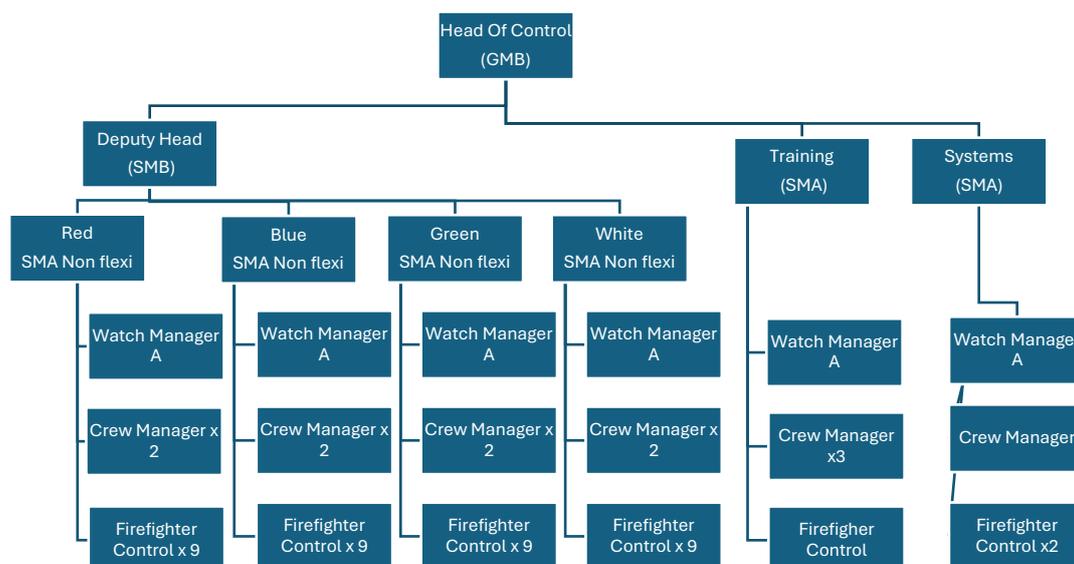
The Head of the CMT is a Group Manager B (Control). The Deputy Head of the CMT is a Station Manager B (Control) who works alongside a Station Manager A (Control) responsible for Training and a Station Manager A (Control) responsible for Systems. All four Officers are conditioned to the Grey Book flexible duty system which means they work core office hours but provide out of hours emergency response cover.

The established staffing level of the CMT is 15 consisting of the 4 flexible duty roles outlined above, a Watch Manager A (Control), 3 Crew Managers (Control), a Firefighter (Control) and a Grade 6 administrator in Training and a Watch Manager A (Control), a Crew Manager (Control), 2 Firefighters (Control) and a Grade 6 administrator in Systems.

At the time of writing the actual CMT staffing level is 10 with 2 Crew Manager (Control), a Firefighter (Control) and the administrator roles vacant in Training and the Firefighter (Control) and administrator roles vacant in Systems. The uniformed vacancies cannot be filled until the watches are up to the established strength.

Current abstractions within JFC are high. A total of 62 JFC staff has exited the organisation since 2017, only 22 of which were on retirement. Staff retention is reported as being a significant challenge for CMT. The reasons given for resignations on exit interviews include terms and conditions, lack of flexibility within the shift system, lack of investment in personal training and development and the Development to Competent process which is explained in more detail below.

Figure 1: JFC Organisation Chart



JFC received 59,300 emergency calls in 2024/25 of which 14,957 were repeat calls. A further 17,755 calls were received to non-emergency incidents such as controlled burning notifications. Between October 2024 and September 2025 JFC received 91,022 administrative calls of which 9,085 were not answered. Emergency and administrative call volumes are substantially higher during the day than overnight.

Table 1: JFC call volumes

Financial Year	MWWFRS Incidents	MWWFRS Other Emergency	MWWFRS Repeat Calls	MWWFRS Total Emergency Calls	MWWFRS – Other Admin (non-emergency)	MWWFRS Grant Total	SWFRS Incidents	SWFRS Other Emergency	SWFRS Repeat Calls	SWFRS Total Emergency Calls	SWFRS – Other Admin (non-emergency)	SWFRS Grant Total	MWWFRS & SWFRS Combined Grand Total
2012/2013	12,746	2,948	4,180	19,874	8,448	28,322	16,842	3,952	8,057	28,851	3,402	32,253	60,575
2013/2014	13,844	3,407	5,157	22,408	10,672	33,080	18,553	3,976	10,894	33,423	3,752	37,175	70,255
2014/2015	12,925	2,912	3,656	19,493	10,179	29,672	17,514	4,231	7,751	29,496	4,598	34,094	63,766
2015/2016	13,559	3,449	4,784	21,792	12,370	34,162	18,416	4,197	12,757	35,370	7,048	42,418	76,580
2016/2017	14,562	3,817	4,219	22,598	11,023	33,621	17,434	5,241	8,951	31,626	8,191	39,817	73,438
2017/2018	13,919	3,640	4,992	22,551	9,758	32,309	17,338	5,534	9,553	32,425	8,230	40,655	72,964
2018/2019	13,710	3,753	6,790	24,253	7,696	31,949	17,950	5,188	15,430	38,568	8,613	47,181	79,130
2019/2020	13,481	4,122	6,289	23,892	8,949	32,841	16,950	5,620	10,474	33,044	9,925	42,969	75,810
2020/2021	11,006	3,505	4,934	19,445	7,986	27,431	16,767	4,820	10,472	32,059	9,493	41,552	68,983
2021/2022	12,133	3,676	5,379	21,188	8,096	29,284	17,532	4,933	9,986	32,451	9,828	42,279	71,563
2022/2023	13,113	3,906	5,097	22,116	7,317	29,433	18,743	5,522	10,413	34,978	10,052	44,730	74,163
2023/2024	13,399	4,297	4,573	22,269	7,400	29,669	19,112	5,757	12,044	36,913	10,329	47,242	76,911
2024/2025	12,758	5,592	4,916	23,266	7,472	30,738	19,411	6,582	10,041	36,034	10,283	46,317	77,055
Grand Total	171,155	49,024	64,966	285,145	117,366	402,511	232,562	65,553	136,823	434,938	103,744	538,682	941,193

When JFC was first established a Protection & Prevention Team (Firefighters (Control) working normal office hours) dealt with administrative calls alongside rota management, general instruction (GI) maintenance and development and provided resilient cover increasing the on duty watch strength to 10 during peak hours of demand. Following a review undertaken taken in 2021 the Protection & Prevention Team was disbanded with team members redeployed across the four watches.

Initial acquisition and skill maintenance training

Initial training for a JFC Firefighter (Control) is delivered by the Training Team. This takes place between the training room in the JFC and the fallback control when available for FRS use. The initial course runs for either 6 or 7 weeks depending on the progress of the trainees. A further 7 weeks training is then undertaken with the trainees allocated to a watch albeit supernumerary (not forming part of the minimum staffing level). A 'fit to ride' competency assessment is undertaken at around 14 weeks again depending on progress after which the trainee is allocated to a watch. After six months consolidation on the watch the trainee commences what is known as the Development to Competent (D2C) process.

The D2C process concludes with the award of an NVQ Level 3 in Emergency Call Management and Mobilising through Skills for Justice (SFJ). South Wales FRS is an accredited centre for SFJ qualifications however the Emergency Call Management and Mobilising Emergency Call Management and Mobilising NVQ is not included in the list of qualifications that South Wales FRS can award. The process is however accredited by SFJ.

The Emergency Call Management and Mobilising syllabus is aligned to National Occupational Standards and consists of five Units each containing one or more Elements:

Unit CO1 Elements	Maintain information on EFS operational resources CO1.1 Monitor the availability of operational resources
Unit CO2 Elements	Take responsibility for effective performance CO2.1 Take responsibility for personal performance

Unit CO3	Co-ordinate response to assist with resolution of event
Elements	CO3.1 Gather information to aid effective response CO3.2 Mobilise resources in response to the needs of an event CO3.3 Support emergency callers CO3.4 Support ongoing needs of an event
Unit CO5	Manage information to support the needs of your community
Elements	CO5.1 Gather required information CO5.2 Inform and advise others

The D2C process is referenced in more detail later in this report.

Issues highlighted during meetings with watches and CMT – Integration

The issues raised relating to integration within the JFC were concerned with two distinct areas. The first was in relation to the extant employment arrangements whereby 60% of JFC staff are employed by South Wales FRS and 40% are employed by Mid & West Wales FRS. This split is to reflect the relative sizes of both organisations but gives rise to two different sets of terms and conditions. The second was in relation to the JFC being located within a Police facility. I consider both separately below.

Employment status, contracts and other internal integration issues

The difference in terms and conditions of employment for South and Mid & West Wales FRS was an overt source of tension although to the credit of all staff I did not get any sense that this caused any personal animosity. To the contrary JFC staff had a commendably strong sense of camaraderie. The evident tension instead was aimed at the respective FRSs.

The most commonly occurring point of tension was the provision of maternity leave which South Wales FRS have recently increased to 12 months, and which is now double that afforded to Mid & West Wales FRS employees. It was however recognised that Mid & West Wales FRS healthcare provision will be superior once adopted. Continual Professional Development payments also differ which results in a variation in overall pay. A concern expressed by JFC staff was that if there was to be a harmonisation of terms and conditions then this would be to the lower rather than higher standard.

It was observed that JFC staff wear the uniform of the employing FRS. Mid & West Wales FRS uniforms have the Service crest on the shirt whereas South Wales FRS uniforms do not. While this is largely symbolic its cultural significance should not be underestimated. It was stated to me that JFC staff take calls and mobilise for both FRS, yet they wear different uniforms and are employed on different terms and conditions.

JFC staff commented that South Wales FRS had recently commenced the practice of deploying the duty Group Manager into Fire Control on weekdays. This was viewed as mostly positive however it was noted that it was often impractical for the Group Manager to dial into routine Teams meetings or to deal with emails relating to their day role owing to the general noise levels in the room and difficulties with Wi-Fi connectivity. This meant that the Group Manager would relocate to offices elsewhere in the Public Service Centre which negated the value of them being in the JFC. It was recognised that travel distances made it impractical for Mid & West Wales FRS to replicate this arrangement but that this increased the sense of isolation for Mid & West Wales FRS staff. A concern was expressed that the presence of the duty Group Manager undermined the role of the Fire Control Officer in Charge and Mobilising Officer. I return to this point later in this section.

It was raised on several occasions that when the Mid & West Wales FRS intranet @Work was replaced by Insight, Fire Control was not recognised as a department alongside Community Safety, Business Fire Safety etc on Insight. It was also raised that media communications often failed to recognise the contribution of Fire Control to the resolution of significant incidents or during spate calls.

There was a feeling amongst Firefighters (Control) that they were not considered for wellbeing support following a critical incident in the same way as the Firefighters attending the incident. Critical incidents are given a wellbeing tag by Fire Control which notifies the Trauma Risk Management Team. This generates emails to the Firefighters involved setting out the support available to them. Fire Control staff stated that there are some incidents that Firefighters on scene may not declare as critical, but that Firefighters (Control) would benefit from the wellbeing tag being applied.

The comment was made that the Fenella Morris KC report published in January 2024 had led to an increase in engagement from the respective FRS but had not substantially alleviated the sense of isolation for both sets of employees.

JFC hosted within a Police facility

There were several common issues raised resulting from the JFC being hosted within a Police facility.

The most commonly occurring concern was in relation to the positioning of the JFC within what is also the South Wales Police Public Service Centre. JFC is positioned in the middle of the Police dispatch area which creates operational challenges.

It was raised on several occasions that Police colleagues shout over their FRS counterparts which is extremely disruptive especially when Firefighters (Control) are taking emergency calls. The situation was described to me as:

“...like trying to run Fire Control from Weatherspoon’s on a match day”

This has the potential to cause significant issues, especially in the dynamic phases of an incident if there are live fire survival guidance calls underway. Conversely, when emergency calls are received by JFC an audible alarm sounds which can be disruptive to Police colleagues especially during spate conditions when multiple concurrent calls are received over extended periods of time.

It is not practical for JFC to have a loudspeaker to monitor the main scheme airwave radio channels as this would be disruptive to Police colleagues. This denies JFC personnel shared situational awareness from developing incidents as only the Firefighter (Control) who is monitoring radio channels via headset can listen in to incident ground messages.

CCTV from across the South Wales Police Force area is visible to JFC staff which can be of operational benefit however I was told of instances where Firefighters (Control) had observed highly distressing events which had left them feeling traumatised.

One of the benefits of the JFC being located within the Public Service Centre is shared situational awareness. I was told of occasions when this benefit has not always been realised. During the Ely riots it was reported that it was only after a Watch Manager (Control) observed vehicles on fire on the CCTV around 2300 and enquired to Police colleagues what was happening that they were briefed as to the extent of the civil disturbances which had been ongoing by that point for several hours. However, liaison appears to be effective for more routine incidents.

JFC staff do not have direct access to either FRS intranet which serves as the gateway to all internally hosted applications. This is because JFC staff have FRS email addresses provided by Mid & West Wales FRS through Microsoft licences but are hosted on the Police ICT system. The outbound gateway to the South and Mid & West

Wales FRS systems is through the Police network which requires multiple log ins. This was reported as being a cause of much frustration as staff are effectively remotely accessing FRS systems which introduces more steps and is slower. A common example raised was what should be a simple task of sending an email was made far more complicated if the email address was for a South Wales FRS recipient as it was not possible to directly access the Outlook Global Address Book for South Wales FRS. Similar examples were raised around not being able to access Teams channels which led to JFC staff employed by Mid & West Wales FRS being excluded from South Wales FRS group chats.

The same challenges were reported when accessing the pdrPro competency recording system and LearnPro learning management system.

The facilities allocated to JFC staff were identified as a cause for concern as were access to the facilities management arrangements which are delivered through the Police. This led to a view that estates faults reported by the FRS are not a priority and remain unresolved for extended periods. I was advised by CMT that faults are generally slow to be repaired for both the FRS and Police.

An issue that was raised several times was the positioning of the JFC directly below the air conditioning vents. It was stated that in winter Firefighters (Control) resorted to wearing hoodies, coats or both and wrapping themselves in blankets with hot water bottles. Similar issues were raised over lighting which affected Firefighters (Control) viewing their display screens and keyboards. The condition of the toilets was also raised as a concern.

The JFC training room is some distance from Fire Control and is also used as a break room by the Police and an Operational Support Room in the event of a significant incident. JFC staff reported multiple occasions when training had been postponed or disrupted through not having access to the room.

Unlike on a fire station operating the wholetime shift system there are no purpose designed or dedicated rest rooms for JFC staff. The rooms that are available to JFC staff are also used by Police colleagues and are adjacent to break rooms and a kitchen. They contain a single sofa bed/reclining chair but are in no way comparable to the beds provided for firefighters on fire stations. I have referenced causes for concern around fatigue identified in previous inspections in the Introduction section of this report. It was reported to me that Firefighters (Control) would sleep in their cars rather than use the rooms provided for them. It was also reported that on occasions when JFC staff had been recalled during a rest period and they had returned to the rest room, they had found it occupied by Police staff with their personal belongings left out on the corridor.

This is a serious cause for concern from a fatigue perspective. HSE publication HSG 256 advises employers to avoid shifts longer than twelve hours. The JFC night shift is thirteen and a half hours which only allows for a ten-and-a-half-hour break between the first- and second-night shift. I am aware that there are JFC staff who have long commutes which will seriously limit their ability to rest in between the first- and second-night shift in addition to the risk of driving while fatigued.

It was stated by several JFC staff that they felt them being allowed to sleep on a night shift caused animosity with the Police. This is a practice unique to the FRS and does prove contentious with other Emergency Services.

There were positive aspects to working within the JFC referenced including charity fund raising, shared catering and social events, particularly with the Training and Systems Teams and Police colleagues. It was noted that Police colleagues help with refreshments during spate conditions and large incidents and during heatwaves when the working environment is warm.

I was told of various joint ventures across Police and Fire teams to develop a sense of one team.

The majority view expressed by JFC staff however was that the working environment left much to be desired and was detrimental to morale and operational effectiveness.

There were two quotes which encapsulate the views expressed in relation to how JFC staff feel over their integration within their respective FRS and the Police facility.

“We are remote, and not part of the Fire and Rescue Service”

“I feel like we are guests, staying in their (the Police’s) living room”

Issues highlighted during meetings with watches and CMT – Training

Initial training is delivered by the Training Team who at the time of the inspection were understaffed and had been for most of the time since the inception of the JFC.

The maximum number of trainees on any initial course is governed by three factors; the number of available training stations (these have the full mobilising system configuration other than the ability to mobilise), the maximum trainee to instructor ratio and the ability of the watches to receive new trainees and effectively integrate them into operations while supporting the D2C process.

There are 6 training stations in the JFC training room. Training courses typically run with 4 trainees. It was attempted to run the most recent training course at the time of the inspection with 6 however this proved unviable due to the practicalities of accommodating 6 new trainees across the watches for the reasons stated previously.

The number of vacancies within JFC and ongoing high attrition rate means that the initial training demand is consistently high. This has and continues to present challenges for the Training Team. These challenges are compounded by the requirement to deliver initial and refresher training to Auxiliary Fire Control staff. These are staff who are deployed in the event of industrial action by JFC staff. Whilst their training is not to the same level as JFC staff it is still resource intensive.

It was reported by the Training Team that in preparing to deliver a course they face challenges in having Trainees set up on the Police systems which they have no direct control over. Issues were also reported over the vetting process which was a common cause of delay in starting courses.

The Training Team is also responsible for skill maintenance training packages for JFC staff inclusive of Fire Survival Guidance. They stated it was a real challenge for them to develop and update training packages due to workload. Practically this can result in outdated training materials available to Fire Control on the most basic platforms, typically action plans or GIs in list format on a Word document. The Training Team acknowledged that there is an absence of quality training material available for on shift training for this reason.

There is no doubting the commitment or professionalism of the Training Team, but they reported real difficulty in meeting their objectives due to their workload and were able to point to substantial evidence in support of this view.

JFC staff raised issues about the currency and quality of training materials and it being spread across multiple platforms. There is also a need to complete mandatory training twice to satisfy both FRS e.g. domestic violence, safeguarding and cultural training. Skill maintenance most often consists of Firefighters (Control) independently reading the Word documents referenced previously in between dealing with emergency and administrative calls. This is far from ideal in any circumstances as the content is subject to the interpretation of the individual Firefighter (Control) when not delivered as part of an instructor led session. The situation is further compounded when the content is outdated.

The best-case training scenario would be for the Training Team or a Crew or Watch Manager (Control) to relocate to the training room with as many Firefighters (Control) as can be abstracted from response duties to deliver what should be consistent and standardised training against a lesson plan with specific learning outcomes developed

by the Training Team. This would however have to be repeated until such time all the watch had received the training simply because as explained previously, when on shift, the whole watch cannot relocate to the training room.

The D2C process was reported as being onerous and overly bureaucratic for trainees and Crew and Watch Managers (Control) alike. I was told of several instances when the D2C process was the reason a trainee exited the organisation.

Crew and Watch Managers (Control) described some excellent examples of how they coached and mentored trainees when dealing with emergency calls, but they expressed understandable frustration as to the difficulties in cross referencing this with elements of the NOS which they described as nothing more than a tick box exercise. These challenges also extend to Crew and Watch Managers (Control) who must also successfully complete a D2C process on promotion.

It was reported to me that there have been shifts when all the on-duty watch are in development. As unavoidable as this might be, it is far from ideal.

The impact of reduced staffing levels on conducting D2C and skill maintenance training was raised at each watch meeting.

The practicalities of on watch training are a challenge for Fire Control for the reasons set out in the introduction to this report. This challenge is compounded when staffing is below minimum for reasons which will be self-evident. Staffing in Fire Control has a direct relationship with the ability to undertake on shift training.

Retention is clearly a challenge. I was told of a Firefighter (Control) that exited JFC as they were unable to reduce their hours. It stands to reason from an organisational perspective that it is preferable to retain an employee that has been invested in heavily for a reduced number of hours rather than to lose them completely.

CMT confirmed that JFC staff can vary their hours, and different shift patterns have been trialled in the past, however this ceased after a review in 2021. JFC staff are now limited to part time day and night shift work (one day, one night) only as night shifts cannot be covered for day only working.

Operational and administrative demand in JFC is greatest between 0800 – 1900. There are FRS throughout the UK that have variable staffing in Fire Control aligned to demand. If JFC staff wish to work reduced hours, then rostering those hours during the day would be organisationally as well as operationally beneficial and may well suit the individual.

Issues highlighted during meetings with watches and CMT – Policy and assurance

An area of frustration for all JFC staff was the absence of standardisation in policy both across the two FRS and with external agencies, most commonly in dealing with requests for assistance from Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST).

The differences in responses to Unwanted Fire Signals between Mid & West and South Wales FRS was raised frequently. An example given was the difficulties for a new trainee in understanding the different and often conflicting mobilising approaches taken by both FRS in addition to everything else they were expected to learn.

Also referenced were the different approaches between the FRS to Assist Ambulance calls. For a bariatric incident occurring in South Wales, Firefighters (Control) must confirm if the WAST Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) are attending, and if they are not attending why not, if they are committed to another incident, what is the incident number and whether the patient is time critical or not. Watch Managers (Control) made the point that even with this information they are still unable to mobilise and must pass the information to the Duty Group Manager for a decision which will often differ from one Group Manager to another. This results in an inconsistent approach as different Group Managers have varying views on attendance.

Another continually reoccurring theme across the watches was when requested to effect entry for WAST to access a casualty, determining who was responsible for securing the premises thereafter. This issue appears to have been compounded by changes to Police policy. The Police would previously have had access to arrangements for premises security but have stepped back from this incident type under the 'Right Care – Right Person' approach.

The fact that these issues were reported as continually recurring reflects the absence of a formalised standalone operational assurance process within Fire Control that provides a mechanism to escalate issues to the appropriate level in the respective FRS where a definitive policy decision can be taken.

An example given was the emerging trend for young people to film videos of themselves in a child's swing to upload to their social media feeds. This had resulted in an increase of calls to the FRS if they subsequently could not extricate themselves or if the intention was to create that impression for the opportunity to then film the FRS extricating them. Firefighters (Control) using their own initiative developed through years of experience dealing with hoax calls challenged callers to extricate themselves or have their friends assist them to prevent the unnecessary mobilisation of a fire

appliance. It was stated that this was escalated within both FRS, but no definitive policy decision was taken as to the approach to adopt.

A view expressed was that “*lip service*” is being paid to operational assurance, debriefs and emergency call audits and that they are nothing more than a tick box exercise.

“Yes, we do them; are they meaningful? No.

Debriefs are almost impossible to achieve.

Call Audits are meaningless - there is no feedback or learning and the tendency is (if we have time to do any) to cherry-pick easy calls; we are, in effect marking our own homework. Debriefs are not Control specific and tend to be a form filling exercise on the back of an Ops debrief that we seldom attend and learn nothing from. Consequently, we repeat the same mistakes time and again at all levels FF to WM”

Call audits were historically undertaken by the Protection & Prevention Team. CMT carry out independent call audits, when possible, but this is acknowledged as being intermittent due to workload. When call audits are undertaken feedback is provided to the Firefighter (Control) and Watch Manager (Control) if there are learning points. CMT have also considered Watch Managers (Control) auditing calls from other watches but there was no appetite to do this when it was proposed.

Debriefs have not been held for at least two years due to staffing levels and low Crew and Watch Manager (Control) numbers.

Having to refer to the duty Group Manager for a mobilising decision is viewed as undermining the role of the Officer in Charge or Mobilising Officer who should be empowered to make mobilising decisions.

Mid & West Wales FRS have recently advertised for expressions of interest from Tactical Officers to act as Fire Force Incident Managers within JFC. The South Wales FRS Duty Group Manager now works from JFC on weekdays. The view expressed by several Watch Managers (Control) was that they (Fire Control) need investment in training rather than diluting their role through transferring responsibility for mobilising decisions to Tactical Officers. It was highlighted that failures of decision making in Fire Control were factors in the Manchester Arena incident. It was felt that, because of what was perceived as a ‘dumbing down’ of the role, alongside an emerging lack of experience at the supervisory and middle management level, the quality of operational decision making in Fire Control was declining resulting in a detrimental impact on operational effectiveness overall.

It was stated on several occasions that GIs and other sources of operational intelligence were out of date or not accessible in Control. It was explained to me that during the move to Bridgend, GIs from the legacy Fire Controls was lost and had to be manually rebuilt from archives. It was stated that the Protection & Prevention Team were tasked with maintaining and developing GIs but spent much of their time covering staff shortages on the watches. There is now no dedicated Team to maintain GIs. As a result, GIs are reported to contain errors, contradictions, inconsistencies and references to policies, documents, appliances and equipment that no longer exist.

A concern expressed to me was that Site Specific Information (SSI) and other flags linked to property or locations are out of date and invalid as the Systems Team are understaffed and cannot keep pace with the workload generated from continual updates while at the same time dealing with challenges arising from being hosted on the Police ICT system.

CMT face challenges in accessing even the most basic call volume data. It is far from ideal that the CMT are reliant on a third party to access call data and makes performance management far more difficult for them than it should be.

Summary of issues raised and findings

The focus of the inspection was to establish the extent to which JFC staff felt integrated within their respective FRS, and to consider to what extent the training and operational assurance regime contributed to the operational effectiveness of Fire Control.

The strong perception of JFC staff is that they do not feel integrated within their respective FRS. There are several reasons for this disconnect that I could establish definitively based on what was said to me during watch visits.

In JFC there are two distinct groups of employees, employed by two separate FRS, wearing different uniforms, employed on different terms and conditions, but performing mostly, but not exactly, the same functions depending on which FRS area the call originates from. Unsurprisingly, this is a cause of tension although to restate, to the credit of all JFC staff, I observed no evidence at all to suggest that this manifested itself through animosity between staff. To the contrary the strong sense of camaraderie was admirable.

These issues may have been alleviated when the JFC was conceived if a standalone employer entity had been created that was neither South Wales or Mid & West Wales FRS and which harmonised terms and conditions for its employees. Such an

arrangement exists within the North West Fire Control⁴. Alternatively, one or other FRS could have taken on the role of Lead Authority to employ all JFC staff to deliver the Fire Control function on behalf of both FRS.

Both options alongside consideration of whether to revert to each FRS having its own Fire Control hosted within Service would address the concerns expressed by JFC staff.

The location of the JFC within the SWP Public Service Centre is clearly a cause of tension, and possibly more so than the lack of harmonisation of terms and conditions.

I observed the location specific challenges faced by JFC staff, which are well documented in this report, first hand during the watch visits at the JFC. It may be that these can be addressed within whatever accommodation options are available to the FRS in the Public Service Centre or SWP HQ site but if not both FRS need to seriously consider the suitability of the Public Service Centre to host the JFC. I say this not least because there is evidence to suggest it is having a detrimental impact on staff retention which has multiple negative knock-on effects throughout the JFC.

However, removing JFC from the Public Service Centre may not in of itself be a panacea, especially if it was into a location that was not designed with the specific needs of Fire Control in mind. That said, I believe it would go some way to addressing the concerns raised.

If the FRS do consider relocating the JFC, then there is a need to consult in detail with Fire Control staff to ensure that any new location meets their needs accounting for the unique circumstances of the role.

Fatigue arising from the long night shift is a cause for concern. The facilities within the JFC are clearly inadequate and do not allow for meaningful rest.

As stated previously night shift rest periods are a practice unique to the FRS and are only necessary, even though they cannot be guaranteed, because of the length of the night shift. There is no suitable and sufficient risk assessment in place to address the risk of excessive fatigue as there is no practical control measure that can be reasonably employed to mitigate against it. The only practical, albeit reactive, control measure would be to grant compensatory rest on the second night shift to any JFC staff who had their rest period disturbed on the first night shift. Given the staffing challenges faced by JFC, allowing staff to start their second night shift later than the scheduled shift change time would reduce staffing levels further at the operationally busiest time of the day and is therefore impractical.

⁴ [Home - NW Fire Control](#)

Equalising the length of the day and night shift maximises the break in between night shifts and removes the need for a rest period. It can be achieved within the parameters of the shift system as set out within the Grey Book. It would also free up more time for on shift training on night shifts during periods of least operational demand and make exchanges of duty between day and night shifts more practical.

Staffing levels is clearly a substantive issue which has wide ranging ramifications not least on the ability of JFC staff to undertake meaningful skill maintenance training and for the Training and Systems Teams to meet their objectives. All these issues cause substantial challenges to the CMT in maintaining the operational effectiveness of the JFC and perpetuate a cycle of negativity.

I recognise the challenges faced by the CMT in recruiting, training and retaining staff. JFC staff are a finite resource who are far less in number than their Firefighter counterparts. CMT staff, up to and including the Head of Fire Control, routinely cover staffing shortfalls. This is commendable and is rightly respected by JFC staff. It does however detract from their core roles and their ability to address the issues identified throughout this report.

That being so, there needs to be significant organisational effort invested to fill all vacant roles within JFC in fast time, exploring all possible options.

Consideration should be given to varying staffing levels on day and night shifts to increase numbers on days. The reasons are twofold, Firstly, to match peak demand and secondly to facilitate a structured skill development and maintenance program which accounts for the unique challenges faced by Fire Control in delivering training and other developmental activities on shift.

It may be that additional staff are required for this purpose and if so, I would consider that to be a legitimate investment. Any additional staff numbers would need to be determined through an in-depth activity audit which was beyond the scope of this inspection but which I saw enough evidence of to suggest is warranted.

Staffing the Training and Systems Teams to established levels would also create the capacity to address the existing deficiencies identified in training materials and GIs identified in this report and allow for the delivery of what would need to be back-to-back initial training courses until all vacancies are filled.

Appointing into the watch-based Station Manager A (Control) roles would assist CMT in improving the deficiencies in operational assurance processes highlighted in this report. It is recognised however that with existing vacancies at Crew and Watch

Manager (Control) it will take time to progress suitably qualified and competent JFC staff into a position whereby they can apply for and be appointed into these positions.

In the interim the FRS should consider training the South Wales FRS duty Group Manager cohort who are routinely deployed into Fire Control during weekdays to undertake the operational assurance elements of the role (acknowledging that this will create an additional burden for the Training Team).

In summary, I have no reason to doubt that the JFC delivers its core functions effectively. I also have no reason to doubt the professionalism and competence of the staff. To the contrary, the attitude and commitment of all JFC staff I met with was exemplary. I do have concerns that the current positioning of Fire Control within the dispatch area of the Public Service Centre could hinder its effectiveness, especially in the dynamic phases of an incident when Firefighters (Control) could be distracted by activity taking place around them.

I am of the view that the full potential of JFC to contribute to improved operational performance is not being realised. JFC is effective despite the environment in which they operate. Addressing the issues highlighted in this report would go a long way to allowing JFC to realise their full potential.

Recommendations

The absence of harmonisation of terms and conditions within JFC is an evident cause of tension and should be addressed as a priority by both FRS.

Recommendation 1: South Wales and Mid & West Wales FRS work together to agree a mechanism by which the terms and conditions of JFC staff are harmonised.

Substantial and evidently longstanding concerns were raised by JFC staff over being located within the Public Service Centre. These concerns should be addressed as a priority by both FRS.

Recommendation 2: South Wales and Mid & West Wales FRS work together with SWP to identify if there are accommodation options available within the SWP Public Service Centre or HQ site to address the concerns identified in this report. If there are no viable accommodation options, then both FRS should identify an alternative location(s) for Fire Control and engage with JFC staff to ensure that any new location(s) meets their individual and operational needs.

Night shift durations in JFC exceed that set out within HSE guidance and do not allow for sufficient rest in between night shifts. The ability for JFC staff to have meaningful rest is limited by the existing accommodation provision and the likelihood of being recalled during the rest period. There is no suitable and sufficient risk assessment in place to address the risk of excessive fatigue as there is no practical control measure that can be reasonably employed to mitigate against it. Extended rest periods impact on the amount of time available for on shift training.

Recommendation 3: South Wales and Mid & West Wales FRS should ensure shift durations do not exceed 12 hours.

JFC is understaffed which has wide ranging implications set out in detail within this report and which undoubtedly have a detrimental impact on operational effectiveness. This should be addressed as a priority by both FRS.

Recommendation 4: South and Mid & West Wales FRS should take all necessary steps to recruit up to establishment in JFC.

Call volumes are higher during the day than overnight. The Training Team are conditioned to a day duty system and therefore are available to deliver structured training to supplement individual skill maintenance training on day shifts. Variable staffing with more Firefighters (Control) on duty during the day is in operation in Fire Controls across the UK. Increasing staffing on day shifts may be able to be achieved by reducing minimum staffing on night shifts however it may require additional roles beyond the current establishment. This would need to be established through in depth analysis of demand and training and development needs. In either event it could be achieved through the adoption of more flexible staffing options including reduced hours and days only contracts.

Recommendation 5: South and Mid & West Wales FRS should undertake an in-depth analysis of operational demand and JFC staff training and development needs with a view to increasing staffing levels on day shifts to deliver greater operational capacity to meet demand and to create greater opportunity for quality training and development activity.

Section 3

North Wales Fire Control

Since 2008 the North Wales FRS Fire Control has been located within the North Wales Joint Communications Centre (JCC) which is a shared facility with North Wales Police (NWP) adjacent to the FRS Headquarters in St Asaph.

There are 4 watches, Red, White, Blue and Green working the wholetime shift system as set out within the National Scheme of Conditions of Service 7th Edition April 2025 (Grey Book). Watches work two 10-hour day shifts (0800 – 1800) followed by two 14-hour night shifts (1800 – 0800) followed by four rota days.

The approved minimum staffing level within Fire Control is 4 per shift inclusive of a Watch Manager and 3 Firefighters (Control). The minimum staffing level is the same for day and night shifts.

Each watch has an established staffing level of 5.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) roles consisting of a Watch Manager B (Control), a Watch Manager A (Control) and 3.5 Firefighters (Control) (FTE). The 0.5 Firefighter (Control) FTE per watch is achieved through 4 Firefighters (Control) working a 21-hour contract of one day shift and one night shift.

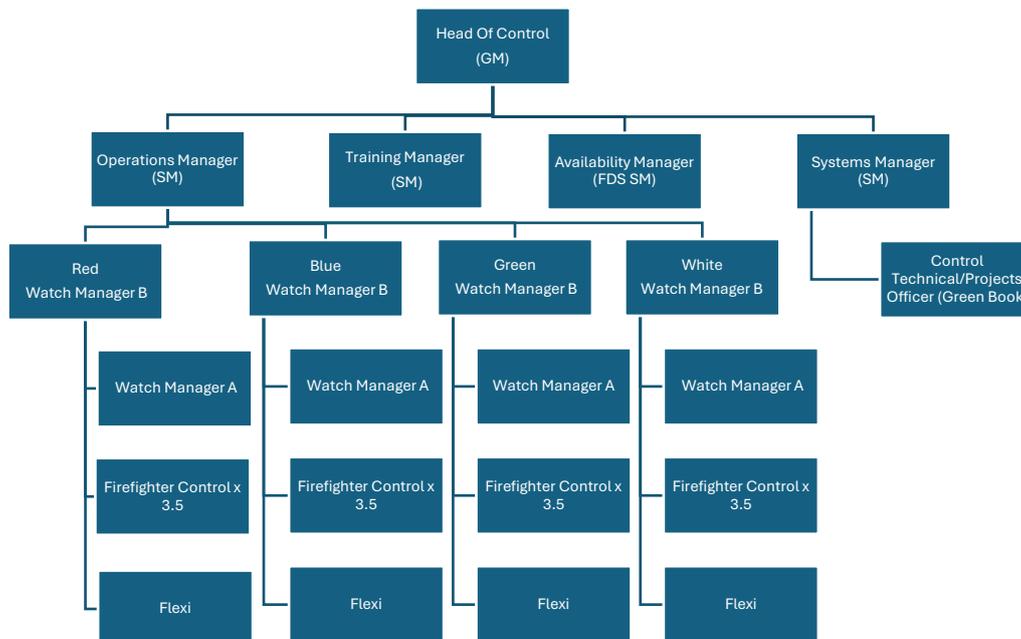
In addition to the four watches there is a flexi team consisting of 2 FTE posts which consisting of a mix of fulltime and part time staff, bringing the total establishment of Control to 24 (fulltime posts). The flexi workers are conditioned to a 12-hour shift pattern which is a combination of early (0800 – 2000) and late (1100 - 2300) shifts to cover the times of highest operational demand as well as covering during meal breaks and training sessions. The flexi team is utilised to backfill watch shortages due to sickness, maternity, detachment etc. to ensure the five and a half FTE across the watches is maintained.

This is supplemented through a temporary arrangement whereby 4 fulltime Firefighters (Control) have been recruited to cover long term sickness, maternity leave, detachment and temporary promotion. Any staff not used for this purpose are used to extend the flexi team to support the delivery of off watch training. This is to cover for absences beyond that contained within the core staffing model and in anticipation of retirements.

The Head of the CMT is a Group Manager B (Control). There are 4 Station Manager B (Control) for Operations, Training, Systems and Availability respectively (the Availability post is temporarily being covered by an operational Station Manager). All

5 Officers are conditioned to the Grey Book flexible duty system which means they work core office hours but provide out of hours emergency response cover. Working alongside the Grey Book Officers is a Fire Control Technical/Projects Officer (Green Book).

Figure 2: North Wales FRS Fire Control Organisation Chart



North Wales FRS Fire Control received 6,479 emergency calls and 3,091 repeat calls in 2024/25. During the same period North Wales FRS Fire Control received 49,439 administrative calls. Emergency and administrative call volumes are substantially higher during the day than overnight.

Table 2: North Wales FRS Fire Control call volumes

Financial year	Incidents attended	Repeat calls
2012/13	6,792	3,125
2013/14	6,364	3,445
2014/15	6,098	2,981
2015/16	4,879	2,587
2016/17	5,344	2,415
2017/18	5,726	2,486
2018/19	5,305	3,991
2019/20	4,866	2,629
2020/21	4,697	2,043
2021/22	5,356	2,660
2022/23	5,884	3,067
2023/24	5,940	2,492
2024/25	6,479	3,091

Initial acquisition and skill maintenance training

Initial training for a North Wales FRS Firefighter (Control) is delivered by the Training Manager supported by other members of CMT and through detachment from watches by Watch Managers (Control) and Firefighters (Control) as a development opportunity. The classroom element of the training mostly takes place at the fallback Fire Control in Rhyl. The initial course runs for 8 weeks. A further 8 weeks training is then undertaken with the trainees allocated to a watch albeit supernumerary (not forming part of the minimum staffing level).

A competency assessment to be counted on the minimum crewing level is undertaken at 16 weeks by the Watch Manager (Control) after which the trainee is substantively allocated to the watch. Phase 1 of the D2C process is undertaken during the 12-month probationary period and involves the completion of one workbook consisting of 4 Units. Over the following 12 to 18 months the trainee is expected to complete the D2C process culminating in the award of the SFJ Emergency Call Management and Mobilising Diploma. The Emergency Call Management and Mobilising Diploma syllabus is aligned to the National Occupational Standard previously listed in the JFC section of this report.

Issues highlighted during meetings with watches and CMT – Integration

The issues raised relating to integration within North Wales FRS Fire Control were concerned with two distinct areas. The first was in relation to being located within the JCC alongside NWP. The second was in relation to staff perceptions as to how well integrated Fire Control was within North Wales FRS.

Fire Control hosted within a Police facility

Fire Control staff were mostly positive about their workplace location within the JCC.

Fire Control is positioned in the corner of the dispatch area adjacent to the Force Incident Managers bank of desks. This allows for a degree of separation and avoids the levels of disruption reported in the JFC. The Fire Control pods are not currently configured in a semi-circle which can aid situational awareness as Firefighters (Control) can maintain visual contact, but this was not identified as being problematic. Following issues raised at incident debriefs and staff feedback changes have been made to the second pod to increase situational awareness during the dynamic phases of incidents.

Fire Control is on the ground floor whereas the training room, rest facilities and CMT offices are on the first floor. This was also not identified as being overly problematic although the location of the training room was recognised as not being ideal due to its distance from Fire Control.

The rest rooms are located away from areas where there would typically be a higher footfall and activity overnight and as a result Firefighters (Control) being disturbed by Police staff when on rest breaks was not reported in the same way as for the JFC. That said the rest provisions within the JCC are not to the same standard available to firefighters on fire stations. The concerns raised in the JFC section of this report over fatigue and risk are the same for the North Wales FRS Fire Control.

Fire Control staff reported good working relationships with Police colleagues. Fire and Police shifts at the JCC are aligned so typically the same supervisory managers will work together and therefore develop close professional relationships. One example as to how Police staff 'looked out' for FRS colleagues was with what was described as the Sunday morning breakfast run when the Police would take, collect and deliver orders for Fire Control as staffing invariably meant they could not leave the JCC. This camaraderie strengthens joint working in the operational environment.

Operationally I was advised of an incident in Llandudno which resulted in multiple calls being received. One of the callers stated that a petrol bomb had been used against the property. The duty Watch Manager (Control) immediately passed this information onto the Force Incident Manager verbally who mobilised Police resources that were able to arrest the offenders at scene. Had the Watch Manager (Control) and Force Incident Manager not been collocated physically it is unlikely this information could have been passed sufficiently quickly to enable the arrest.

Integration within North Wales FRS

The efforts of the CMT and Chief Fire Officer to integrate Fire Control into the Service were recognised by Fire Control staff. There was a strong sense that there had been a tangible improvement in recent years even if it was viewed that there was still work to do.

A view expressed on all the watch visits was that the most significant barrier to greater integration was staffing levels which hindered the ability to undertake detached duties.

Fire Control staff described the value they derived from visiting fire stations to receive input on response capabilities or attending incidents or exercises. An often-repeated complaint was how infrequent this opportunity was afforded to Fire Control staff due to being at minimum staffing.

In considering this, CMT endeavour to bring FRS resources into the JCC to deliver presentations or input on specialist capabilities to Fire Control and to Police colleagues. When staffing allows CMT have actively sought to give the opportunity to Fire Control staff to visit stations. Examples given were opportunities for Firefighters (Control) to attend a Retained Duty System station drill night on the way into a night shift or to accompany CMT members to drill nights where the CMT Officer was the Station Support Officer for the station. CMT reported limited uptake for these opportunities.

The lack of opportunity to attend and be able to contribute to debriefs was also mentioned on multiple occasions. CMT confirmed that if staffing permits, they always offer the opportunity for a member of the watch to attend debriefs.

An issue raised on several occasions was the absence of a dedicated vehicle for Fire Control which meant that if there was sufficient staffing on a shift to allow for a detachment the Firefighter (Control) would have to use their own vehicle to drive to the fire station, incident or exercise location depending on the purpose of the detachment or have to request a Tactical Officer or member of CMT to take them.

It was confirmed to me by CMT that Fire Control no longer has a dedicated vehicle but there is a vehicle at Headquarters which is adjacent to the JCC that should be available on night shifts or at weekends. During a day shift the alternative to a Firefighter (Control) using their own vehicle would be to be transported to and from the detachment by a member of the CMT or a Tactical Officer, several of whom would typically be in Headquarters. I can see the logic for this however I can also see why this is viewed as an issue for Fire Control staff. They may be merit in allocating Fire Control a dedicated vehicle even only for the purposes of no notice evacuations to the secondary Control accepting it may have relatively low usage.

Fire Control do not have a responsibility to staff the Incident Command Unit (ICU). It was recognised that staffing levels mostly precluded this from happening, but it was felt strongly that Firefighters (Control) could add significant operational value if they were able to perform this role. This was acknowledged by CMT who could absolutely see the value and would support this if staffing allowed.

A comment was made that the ICU is dated and requires refresh. It was highlighted that if the ICU was equipped with Starlink internet as with the Hazardous Materials Response Unit it would provide an additional resilient communications channel to Fire Control for video conferencing and Teams meetings, along with the immediate transferring of risk critical information. Furthermore, if the ICU was equipped with smart boards that could capture information such as live fire survival guidance calls, then this would aid the Evacuation Sector Commander who would otherwise be receiving

or relaying information regarding the persons trapped or remaining in situ verbally over the radio. CMT are represented on an Evacuation Sector working group where these issues are being actively considered.

Fire Control staff expressed a very strong connection with the Response function. I heard the phrase *“we are part of Response”* on several occasions. The desire to contribute to improving the Service is commendable but there was a sense of frustration expressed that the views of Fire Control were not always sought or fully considered.

Examples quoted were as follows:

“No Fire Control input has been sought to date in the design of the new Training Centre”.

This was considered to be a *“missed opportunity”*

“Suggestions made by Fire Control aren’t acted upon or considered”

An example given was an increasing number of make ups for additional lengths of hose. With stowage space on appliances at a premium the number of hose lengths have been reduced. As a result, Incident Commanders are making up for additional hose. Appliance availability is an ongoing challenge therefore additional make ups places a strain on resources which is felt most acutely in Fire Control as it is they who must maintain emergency response coverage through strategic cover moves. Another example was the increasing number of occasions replacement fire kit is required due to contamination at structure fires which results in appliance unavailability and Fire Control having to task Tactical Officers to emergency kit stores.

A suggestion from Fire Control was:

“...for the Service to introduce general purpose vehicles (GPVs), containing lengths of hose, perhaps some random sizes of fire kit etc thereby relieving pressure on the service at any large/protracted incidents. It could also keep an otherwise quiet retained station keen and involved as they could crew the GPV”.

This suggestion has much merit and would undoubtedly be effective in maintaining appliance availability through mobilising the most appropriate resource to deliver specific capability to the incident ground. A GPV could be crewed by a Retained Duty System (RDS) crew or alternatively it could be crewed by Firefighters on ‘other duties’ who wished to remain on the shift system.

The Training Manager is on the Training Centre working group however it was acknowledged by CMT that there have been little in the way of updates to the quarterly Watch Manager meetings. In response CMT committed to provide updates at future meetings.

Following a recent incident on another FRS area (post inspection fieldwork) Fire Control staff submitted several observations and recommendations to CMT. In response CMT convened a meeting with relevant officers within the Service and changes to GIs were agreed and implemented. This is good practice and highlights the valuable contribution Fire Control can make to operational response.

Reduced RDS appliance availability and the impact on emergency cover have been rightly identified by the Service as a significant challenge. Fire Control, with their global overview of availability, must manage the impacts of reduced availability dynamically on a shift-by-shift basis. Fire Control are well placed therefore to make informed proposals, and can no doubt contribute positively to improving response performance when they are fully engaged in the operational assurance process. I return to this point under the Summary section below.

Issues highlighted during meetings with watches and CMT – Training

The maximum number of trainees on initial courses is governed the number of available training stations in the fallback control in Rhyl (4) and the ability of the watches to support the initial training needs of the trainee.

North Wales FRS have made a concerted effort to increase staffing in Fire Control through proactive vacancy management and through the recruitment of 4 temporary Firefighters (Control), so initial training demand has been high.

In addition to initial and skill maintenance training the Training Manager also delivers Fire Survival Guidance training which is undertaken off shift.

The majority of skill maintenance training is undertaken on shift. The Watch Manager A on each watch has the training reference so in the best case they and one or more Firefighter (Control) will relocate to the Training Room along with the Training Manager to undertake on shift skill maintenance training. However, it was reported that undertaking training in this way is often not possible due to staffing or is interrupted through operational demand. As a result, the majority of skill maintenance training is undertaken by Firefighters (Control) individually in between operational duties and mostly consists of reading GIs. This is far from ideal for the reasons stated in the JFC section of this report.

It was acknowledged by the Training Manager that there were limited Fire Control specific training packages available on the Learning Management System (LearnPro). This is also true to an extent of Firefighter skill maintenance packages and is something that is in the process of being addressed by the Service.

As with the JFC, the D2C process was reported as being onerous and overly bureaucratic for trainees and Watch Managers (Control) alike.

Another issue raised was the absence of the Crew Manager (Control) role. The view was expressed that it was “*a big jump (from Firefighter (Control) to Watch Manager A (Control)), considering it could happen in as little as 3 years*”. The Crew Manager (Control) role was viewed as providing the opportunity for a Firefighter (Control) to more gradually transition into a supervisory management position in a sequential and ordered way.

The Crew Manager (Control) role was also described as “*a great leadership position that could provide additional resilience to watches*”.

These are valid points to raise. The Service position is that they have defaulted to the higher role with a Watch Manager A (Control) and a Watch Manager B (Control) unlike in the JFC where there are a Watch Manager A (Control) and 2 Crew Managers (Control) on each watch. This is an equally valid position to adopt.

If the Service were to re-introduce the Crew Manager (Control) role in addition to the existing Watch Manager A and B (Control) roles there would be an added, albeit marginal, cost. With a minimum staffing level of 4 there would also be occasions when the duty watch consisted of a Watch Manager B (Control), Watch Manager A (Control), Crew Manager (Control) and only one Firefighter (Control) which would be very rank heavy. As it stands if only one Watch Manager (Control) is on duty a Firefighter (Control) acts up to Crew Manager (Control) for the full shift thus incurring a cost so there may be merit in the Service at least considering the re-introduction of the Crew Manager (Control) role from a training and development perspective. This has however been tried previously but with limited success. CMT have sought expressions of interest from Firefighters (Control) to partake in a Watch Manager development pathway with dedicated and structured training days. This also has merit and may well address the concerns expressed during the watch visits.

Issues highlighted during meetings with watches and CMT – Policy and assurance

Fire Control staff across the watches expressed frustrations over dealing with requests for assistance from WAST often for the purposes of gaining entry. In the discussions

that followed it was recognised and acknowledged that WAST engage with 3 FRS across Wales each with different policy approaches to certain incident types. The concern raised however was the perceived absence of standardised policy guidance for Fire Control and the feeling that Watch Managers (Control) were left to make their own decisions.

This was not limited to calls from WAST. It was stated that Watch Managers (Control) frequently dynamically manage calls, and on any occasion operational discretion is used it is recorded as a decision update on the incident log. The view was however that this is not routinely acted on or results in any change to policy meaning that the same situation can arise again but may be dealt with differently by another Watch Manager (Control).

There has been a concerted effort to integrate Fire Control within the Service operational assurance processes which I have previously observed in my most recent previous inspection of North Wales FRS in January 2025.

The Station Manager (Control) Training attends the monthly Operational Assurance meeting chaired by the Group Manager Response which is an opportunity to raise Fire Control specific issues and to track Fire Control specific actions raised through debriefs and post incident reviews at the organisational level.

This is a positive step and while I would consider the process to be at the 'developing' rather than 'embedded' stage the intent represents good practice.

In discussions with CMT it was acknowledged that there were new working practices that had been developed through testing which are not yet formalised in policy. These now need to be formalised in policy and embedded through training.

CMT confirmed that at 1000 on weekdays a review of the previous 24 hours is undertaken. This is good practice and allows for the identification of issues of significance in fast time. What is also required is the mechanism to act on identified issues in fast time. CMT should not need to wait for the monthly Operational Assurance meeting to escalate issues relating to a change of policy or to establish a definite policy position as appears to be required for example with responses to assist WAST. CMT can change GIs and action plans dynamically. In practice this will be done in conjunction with the Group Manager Response usually through the auspices of the Organisational Learning Group. The Operational Assurance policy should be amended to explicitly reference this process to ensure this good practice is formalised, embedded and future proofed.

There are occasions when for organisational reasons issues raised by Fire Control have not been progressed or only partially addressed. There would be merit in building

in a feedback element to the process in order that progress updates or otherwise along with the rationale can be disseminated back to Fire Control.

A frustration expressed during watch meetings was the requirement to inform multiple Tactical Officers of the same message or pass the same incident information. Fire Control staff confirmed to me that they recorded all significant information relating to the incident on the incident log. I have seen first-hand the quality and depth of the information recorded by Fire Control when I reviewed incident logs for the January 2025 inspection considering the effectiveness of response to domestic dwelling fires.

The view of Fire Control was that after the first notification Tactical Officers should monitor the incident talk group and review the incident log on Cadview (the North Wales FRS mobilising system remote access portal) to avoid duplication of work and unnecessarily burdening Fire Control staff relaying this information.

If this was adopted as policy, it would reduce demand on Fire Control particularly in what is often a dynamic and resource intensive phase of an incident.

Summary of issues raised and findings

The focus of the inspection was to establish the extent to which Fire Control staff felt integrated within North Wales FRS, and to consider to what extent the training and operational assurance regime contributed to the operational effectiveness of Fire Control.

Based on the comments made to me during the watch meetings I believe that Fire Control staff do feel integrated within North Wales FRS and recognise the efforts of CMT and the Chief Fire Officer in this regard, but that they feel there is more work to do.

The concerns raised by JFC staff over being located within a Police facility were not replicated in the North Wales Fire Control.

Fatigue arising from the long night shift is a cause for concern. The rest facilities within the JCC are not at the same standard as on fire stations. The observations I made in the summary of the JFC section of this report apply equally to the North Wales Fire Control in respect of the management of fatigue and risk.

Staffing levels are an issue although the recruitment of 4 temporary staff to bring the staffing level across the 4 watches to 28 FTE has had a positive impact. I am strongly of the view that these roles should be established and make a recommendation to that effect. I believe there is also a case for conducting an in-depth analysis to identify if

the overall number of FTE within Fire Control should be increased further to actively increase numbers on days. The reasons are twofold, Firstly, to match peak demand and secondly to facilitate a structured skill development and maintenance program which accounts for the unique challenges faced by Fire Control in delivering training and other developmental activities on shift. I recognise that this is one of the drivers for recruiting the 2 FTE flexi watch but from what I understood they often cover for unplanned absences to maintain minimum staffing rather than increasing minimum staffing. Increasing the flexi watch by a further 2 FTE (for example) would undoubtedly have a positive impact on day shift staffing levels.

There would be merit in the Service considering the re-introduction of the Crew Manager (Control) role. I do not make a substantive recommendation to that effect, but I do believe it is worthy of consideration to facilitate succession planning and to ease the transition from Firefighter (Control) to Watch Manager (Control). However, the Watch Manager progression pathway has real potential to address the concerns raised equally effectively so is worth the investment in time and effort.

There has clearly been an investment in time and effort from CMT in improving the operational assurance process for Fire Control, but some policy gaps remain. CMT should work with the Group Manager Response to identify policy gaps through recourse to the operational assurance process and to address them as expeditiously as possible. This process should be formally captured within the Operational Assurance policy to ensure it is embedded and future proofed.

Fire Control staff should have confidence in the mechanisms through which they can make suggestions for improvement. CMT are clearly committed to progressing suggestions however implementation is not always within their control. This should not be a barrier to engagement from Fire Control, but consideration should be given to expectation management through regular updates on progress or otherwise.

In summary, as with the JFC, I have no reason to doubt that the North Wales FRS Fire Control delivers its core functions effectively. I also have no reason to doubt the professionalism and competence of the staff. To the contrary, the attitude and commitment of all North Wales FRS Fire Control staff I met with was exemplary.

The Service should continue to fully engage with Fire Control staff to draw on their considerable experience and enthusiasm to improve organisational performance and allow Fire Control to reach its full potential.

Recommendations

Night shift durations in JCC exceed that set out within HSE guidance and do not allow for sufficient rest in between night shifts. The ability for North Wales FRS Fire Control staff to have meaningful rest is limited by the existing accommodation provision and the likelihood of being recalled during the rest period. There is no suitable and sufficient risk assessment in place to address the risk of excessive fatigue as there is no practical proactive control measure that can be reasonably employed. Extended rest periods impact on the amount of time available for on shift training.

Recommendation 1: North Wales FRS should ensure shift durations do not exceed 12 hours.

The recruitment of an additional 4 Firefighter (Control) posts has had a positive impact on staffing levels. These roles should be made permanent.

Recommendation 2: North Wales FRS should increase the Fire Control watch establishment to 28 FTE

Call volumes are higher during the day than overnight. The Training Manager is conditioned to a day duty system and is therefore available to deliver structured training to supplement individual skill maintenance training on day shifts. To maximise the effectiveness of the Training Manager role the flexi team should be deployed on day shifts. Variable staffing with more Firefighters (Control) on duty during the day is in operation in Fire Controls across the UK. Increasing staffing on day shifts may be able to be achieved by reducing minimum staffing on night shifts however it may require additional roles beyond the current establishment and that recommended in the previous recommendation. This would need to be established through in depth analysis of demand and training and development needs. In either event it could be achieved through the increase in FTE on the flexi team.

Recommendation 3: North Wales FRS should undertake an in-depth analysis of operational demand and Fire Control staff training and development needs with a view to increasing staffing levels on day shifts to deliver greater operational capacity to meet demand and to create greater opportunity for quality training and development activity.

Acknowledgements

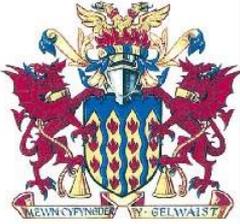
I would like to place on the record my thanks to the following people:

Area Managers Matt Jones, South Wales FRS and Geraint Thomas, Mid & West Wales FRS and Assistant Chief Fire Anthony Jones, North Wales FRS for their support throughout the inspection process.

Group Manager (Control) Natalie Pearce and the JFC Control Management Team for arranging and hosting the inspection fieldwork at the JFC.

Group Manager (Control) Ros Thomas and the North Wales FRS Control Management Team for arranging and hosting the inspection fieldwork at the Rhyl secondary control and subsequent follow up meetings at the JCC.

Robert Scott QFSM, HM Chief Inspector of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, for the peer review of the report.

Report to	Executive Panel	
Date	16 March 2026	
Lead Officer	Anthony Jones, Assistant Chief Fire Officer	
Contact Officer	Mike Plant, Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation	
Subject	Performance Monitoring, April 2025 – December 2025	

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To provide members with an update on performance for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 December 2025 (quarters 1 - 3 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 **1,686 (1,253** in 2024/25). Whilst this represents an overall increase of **34.6%**, the increase for secondary fires is **72.3%**. 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 by 6.5% compared with the same period last year, with a total of **246** incidents attended.
- 4 Attendance at special service calls has shown a reduction from last year, however, the number of RTCs has risen by **29.2%**.
- 5 Work continues to support our communities with a total of 14,935 safe and well checks completed during the period. Although a slight decrease in overall terms of **0.8%** 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 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 – 31 December 2025. Unless otherwise stated, all figures are based on the first three 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

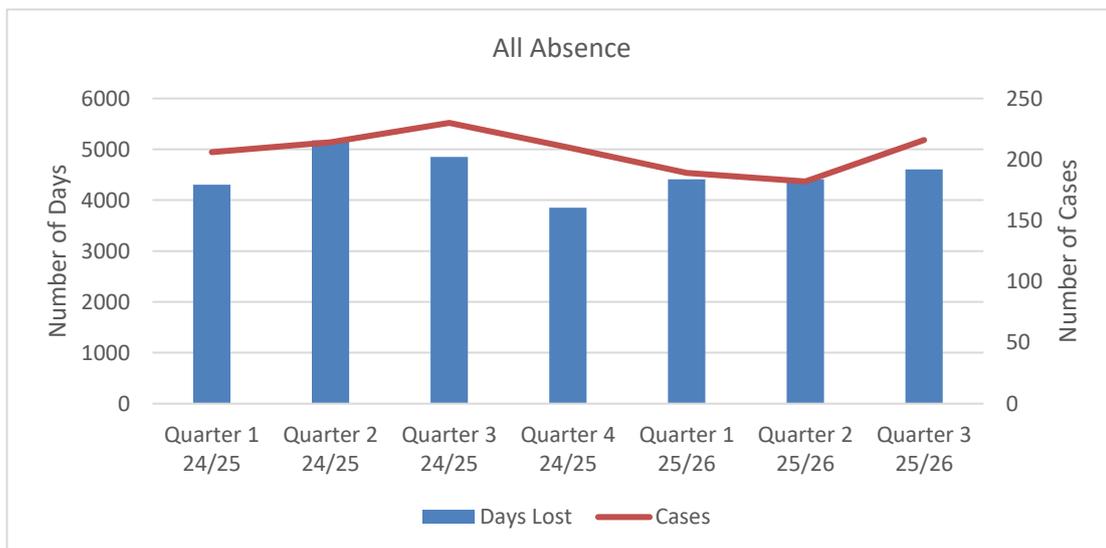
The Service encourages all its employees to maximise their attendance at work while recognising that employees will, from time to time, be unable to come to work because of ill health.

Total time lost, for NWFRS, due to all sickness absence has increased from 4.60% during Quarter 2 to 5.16% during Quarter 3, although this remains lower in terms of days lost and cases than the same period in the previous year.

971 individuals were employed by NWFRS as at 31/12/2025, which is an increase of 31 people from the same period in 2024/25.

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



Days lost and absence cases in quarter 3 2025/26 increased compared with quarter 2 but remained lower than quarter 3 of the previous year. Staff numbers also increased, indicating continued improvement in overall sickness absence levels.

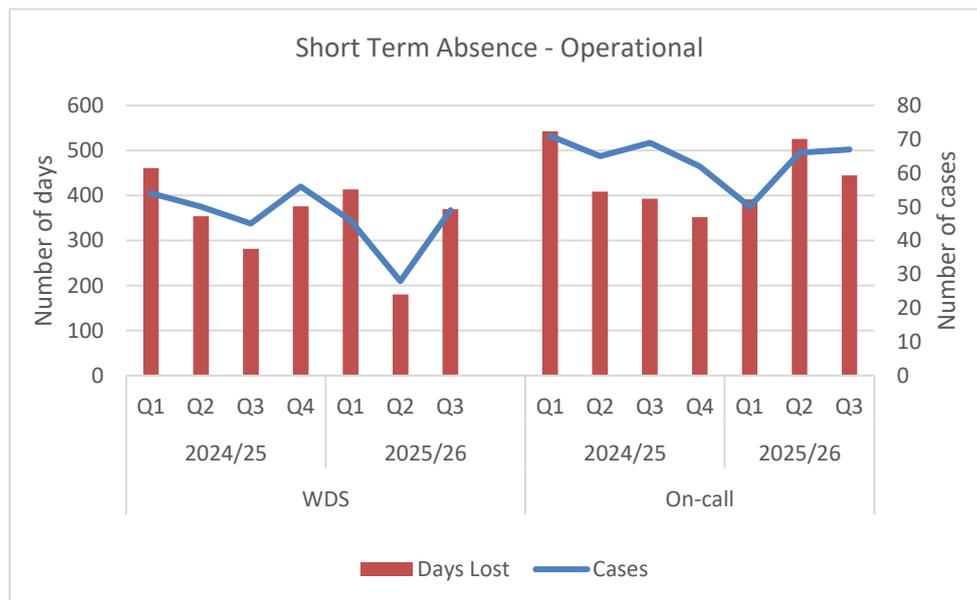
Colds and flu generated the highest number of absence cases but accounted for only 4.82% of total sickness absence. Musculoskeletal absences made up 29.9% of all absence in quarter 3, slightly down from 30.4% in quarter 2 and broadly in line with the National Fire Services Absence Report for April 2024 to March 2025, which reported average of 29%. Mental health absence accounted for 26.4%, a 3% reduction from quarter 2, though still higher than the 19% recorded across 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.

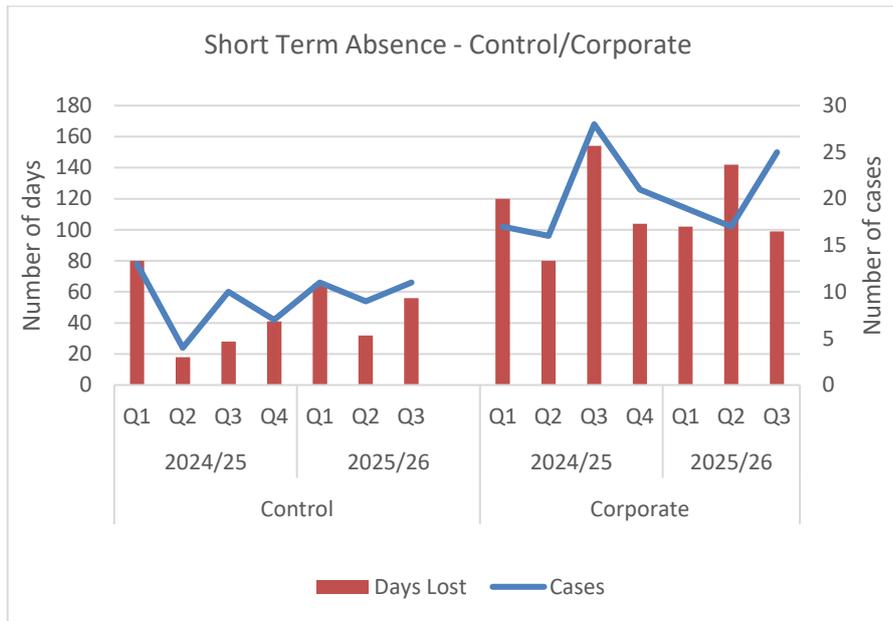
1.2 Short Term Sickness

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 3 of the current year equated to 1.09% of time lost, which is higher (1.0%) than the time lost across all duty types during quarter 3 of the previous year.



(WDS - includes all wholtime 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).



Short-term sickness cases and days lost increased in quarter 3 compared with quarter 2 across both wholetime and control duty systems. Wholetime staff accounted for 38% of days lost in quarter 3, up from 20% in quarter 2, with average absence increasing from 6.4 to 7.5 calendar days per employee.

On-call staff, who make up 51.3% of the workforce, accounted for 45% of short-term absence cases, down from 59.7% in quarter 2. While case numbers remained similar, average absence duration fell from 7.92 to 6.5 calendar days.

Corporate staff short-term absence cases increased to 26.7% in quarter 3, but total days lost decreased, indicating shorter absences. Average absence fell from 8.35 to 3.96 calendar days per employee, with colds and flu the most common cause.

Top 3 Short Term Sickness Absence Reasons (by cases)

	Absence Reason	Cases	Lost time %
1	Cold/Flu	48	22.1%
2	Musculoskeletal - Lower Limb	7	7.11%
3	Musculoskeletal – Upper Limb	4	6.70%

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

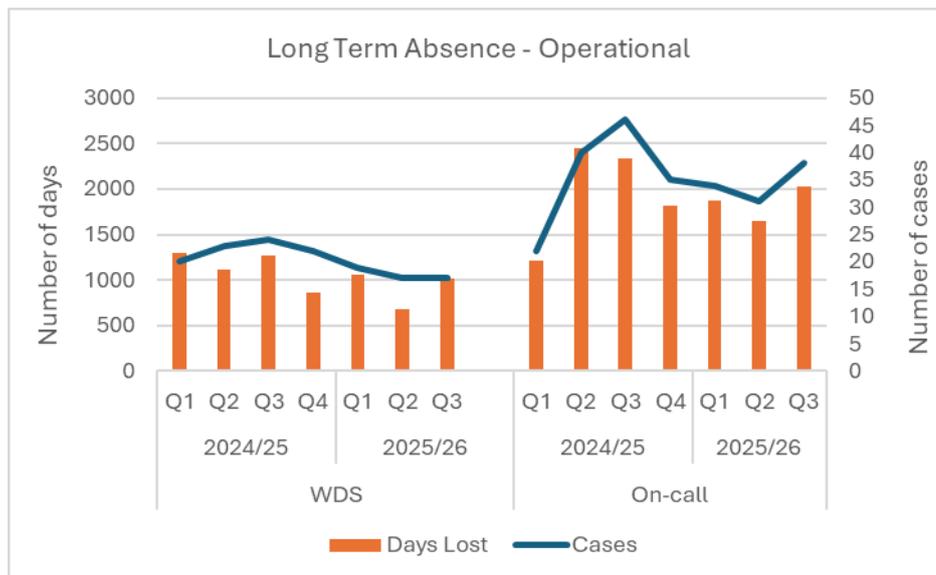
Cold/flu were the most common cause of short-term absence in quarter 3, accounting for 22.1% of time lost, with an average duration of 4.48 days. This is a significant increase from 8.4% in quarter 2.

All Musculoskeletal conditions accounted for 19.1% of short-term absence, with an average duration of 8.8 days, with lower limb cases the most reported from this category (7.11%) followed by upper limb (6.70%). Most cases were among on-call staff (66%), followed by wholetime (23%) and corporate staff (9.5%). Physiotherapy continues to be widely used, particularly for lower limb, shoulder, neck and back conditions, supporting early intervention and absence prevention.

1.3 Long Term Sickness

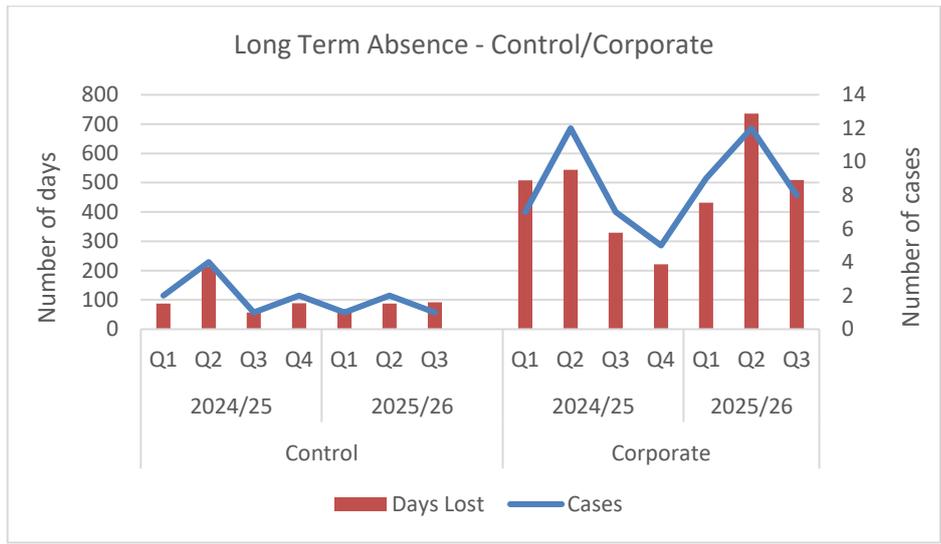
On average over the full year of 2024/25, long term absence has accounted for 4.23% of time lost.

Long term sickness accounted for 4.07% of time lost across all duty types in quarter 2, compared to 3.60% in quarter 2 and 3.99% in quarter 1.



Long-term absence days for wholetime staff increased from 679 days in quarter 2 to 1,015 days in quarter 3, with average duration rising from 39.9 to 50.8 days.

On-call staff accounted for 55% of long-term absence, slightly up from quarter 2. While cases and total days lost increased to 2,020 days, average absence duration fell slightly from 53.1 to 51.7 days.



Long-term absence cases and days lost for Control and Corporate staff decreased in quarter 3 compared with quarter 2. Corporate roles accounted for 13.9% of long-term absence cases, down from 23.3%. While cases and days lost fell, average absence duration increased slightly from 61 to 63 days.

Top 3 Long Term Sickness Absence Reasons (by cases)

	Absence Reason	Cases	Lost Time %
1	Mental Health – Stress	8	13.6%
2	Musculoskeletal - Lower Limb	8	12.3%
3	Failed Medical/Fitness Test	7	9.13%

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

The top three causes of long-term sickness absence remained unchanged in quarter 3. Mental health absence, including stress, anxiety, depression and related conditions, fell to 13.6% of time lost from 15.6% in quarter 2. Average duration also reduced significantly from 64.2 to 50.6 days.

Additional mental health and wellbeing support continues to be rolled out, alongside existing occupational health, employee assistance and physiotherapy services. Training includes Mental Health First Aid, bystander training, suicide awareness and critical incident debriefing.

Musculoskeletal lower limb conditions remained the second highest cause of long-term absence, with eight cases accounting for 447 days lost. These absences often relate to surgery or recovery, requiring full fitness before return. Modified duties and phased returns continue to support earlier and safer returns to work.

Our Prevention Principle



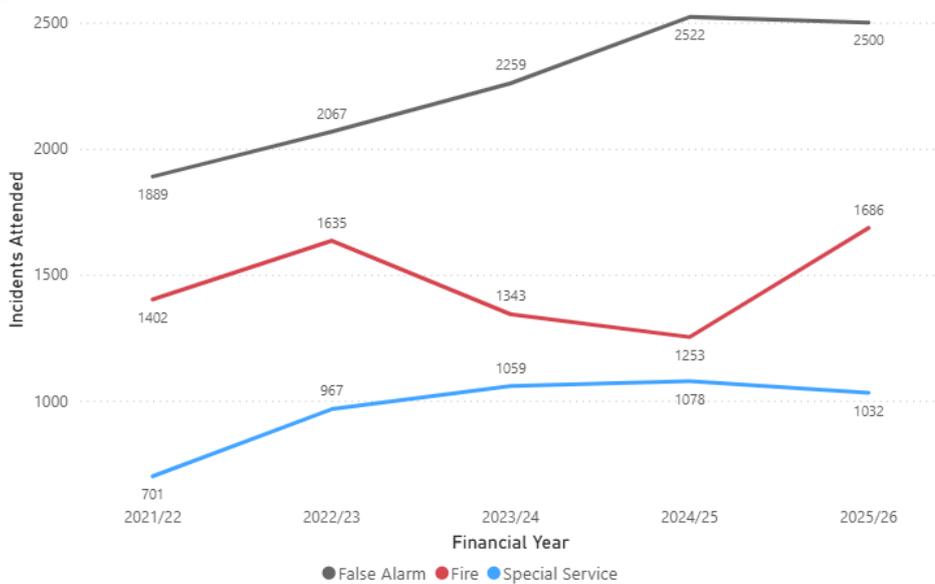
2 All Incidents

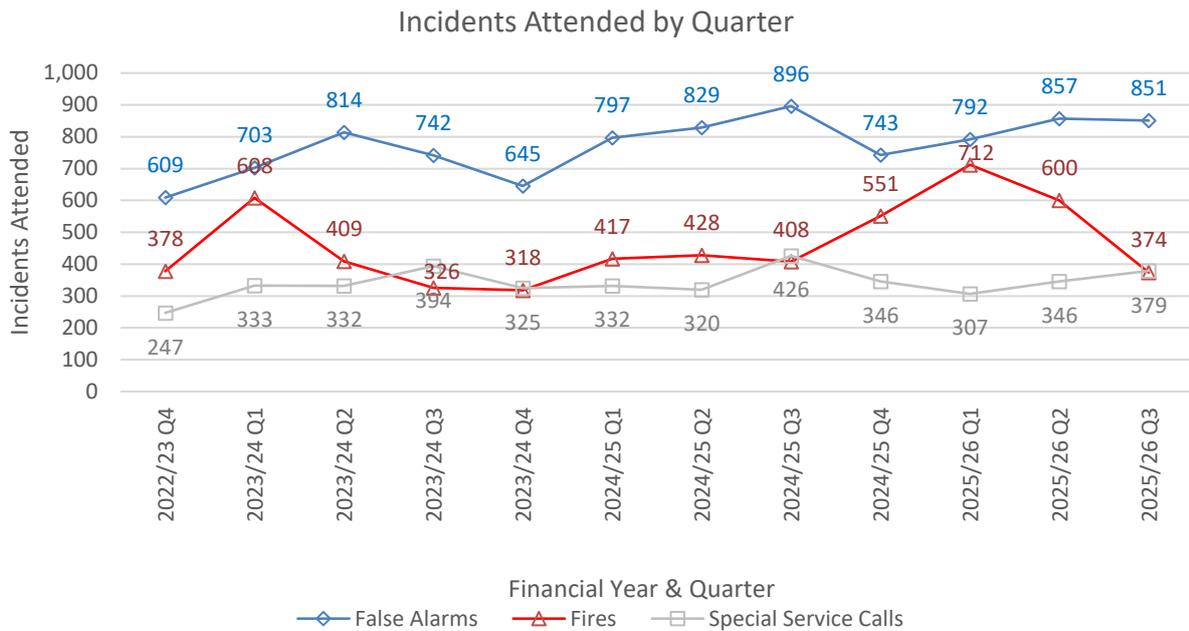
All Incidents – 5,218 incidents were attended during quarters 1-3 of the financial year, which is a 7.5% increase. This is also 10.4% higher than the 3-year average of 4,728.

Fires – 1,686, an increase of 34.6% for quarters 1 to 3 when compared to the same period during the previous year, and 19.6% higher than the three-year average of 1,410. This is due to a notable increase during quarters 1 and 2 of the year, however, quarter 3 has shown a substantial decrease.

False Alarms – 2,500, a decrease of 0.9%, but 9.5% higher than the three-year average of 2,283.

SSCs – 1,032, a decrease of 4.3%, and 0.3% less than the three-year average of 1,035.

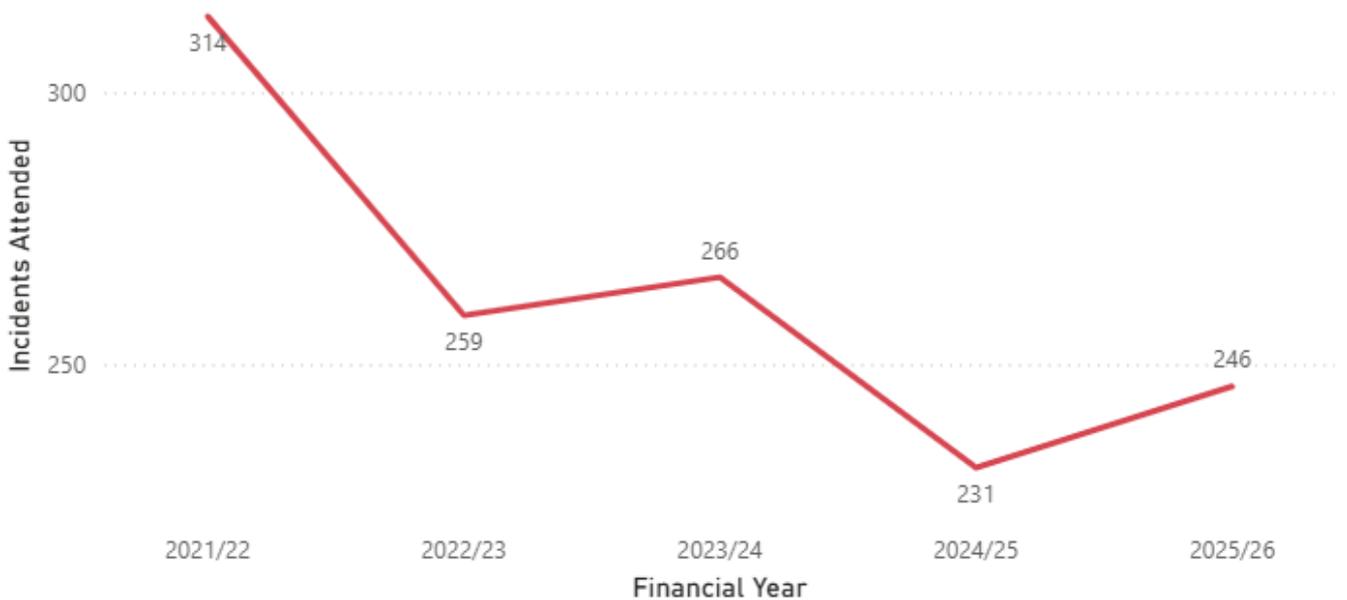


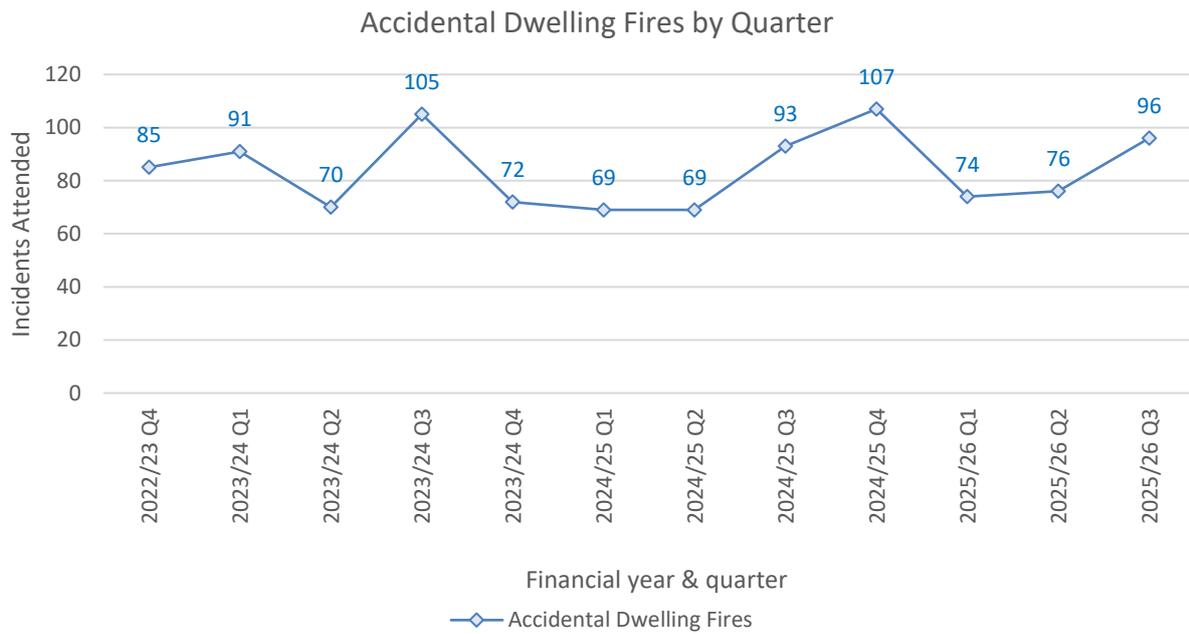


3 Accidental Fires in Dwellings (ADFs)

246 accidental dwelling fires were attended, which is a 6.5% increase from 231.

Whilst this is an increase over the previous financial year, it is important to note that this is still 2.4% less than the three-year average of 252, and is also notably 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.

County	ADFs	YoY	Avg Response Time
Anglesey	28	↑ 1	00:17
Conwy	45	↑ 5	00:11
Denbighshire	41	↑ 3	00:12
Flintshire	48	↓ -5	00:11
Gwynedd	31	↓ -16	00:15
Wrexham	48	↑ 6	00:11
Total	241	-6	00:12

4 Leading Causes of Accidental Dwelling Fires

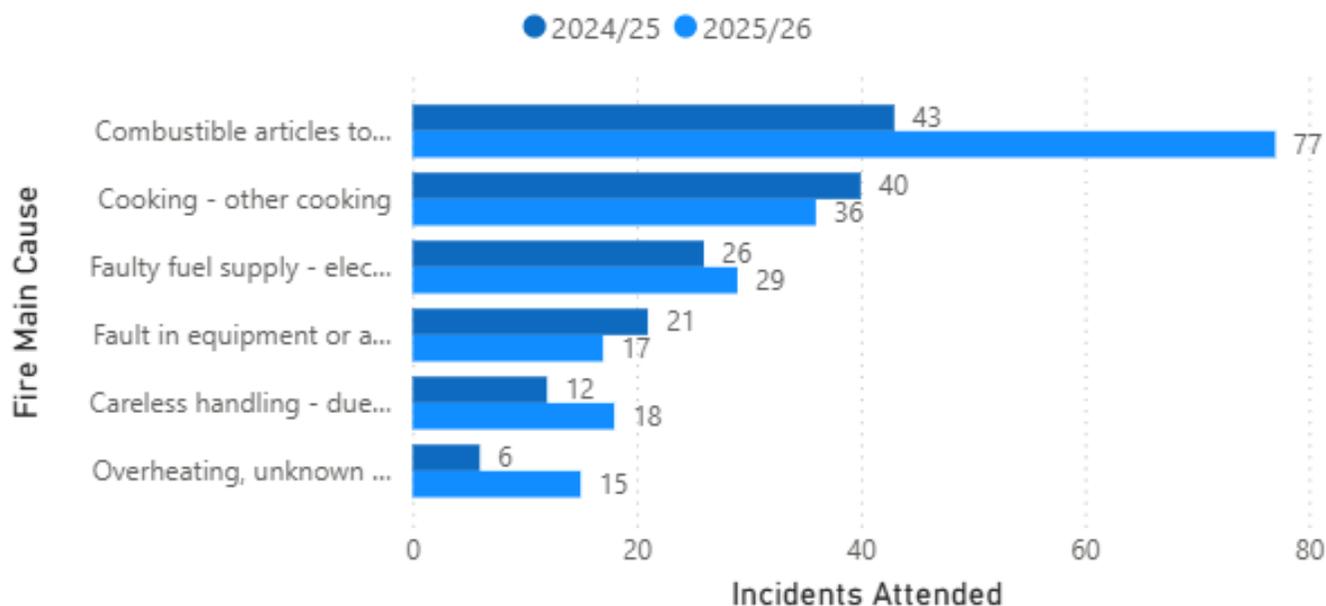
There were numerous main causes of ADFs during the reporting period. The most common was 'Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)', which showed a 79.1% increase from 43 to **77** during the reporting period Q1 – Q3.

Other main causes which saw an increase during the period Q1 – Q3 2025/26 included:

- 'Faulty fuel supply – electricity', which increased by 11.5% from 26 during Q1-Q3 2024/25 to **29**.
- 'Careless handling – due to careless disposal', which increased 50% from 12 during Q1-Q3 2024/25 to **18**.
- 'Overheating, unknown cause', which increased 150% from six during Q1-Q3 2024/25 to **15**.

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

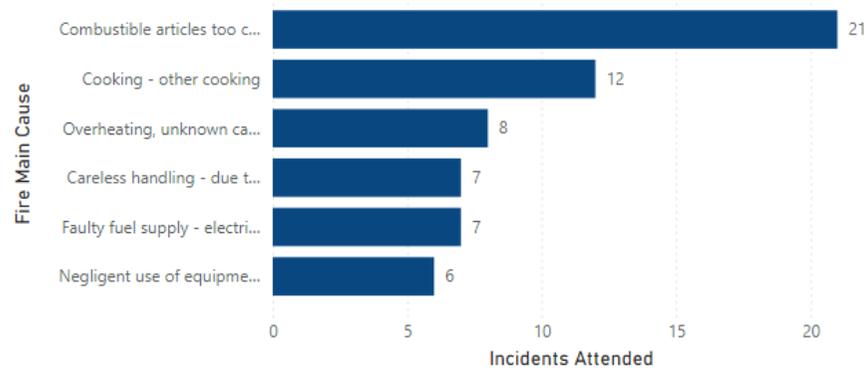
- 'Cooking – other cooking', which decreased by 10% from 40 during Q1-Q3 2024/25 to **36**.
- 'Fault in equipment or appliance', which decreased by 19% from 21 during Q1-Q3 2024/25 to **17**.



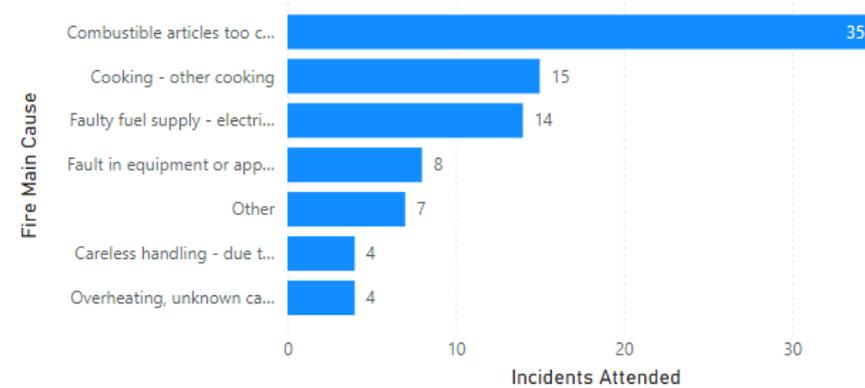
When comparing the leading causes of Accidental Dwelling fires in Q3 2025/26, to those in the previous quarter, **Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)** remained consistently the most common leading cause, responsible for **35** accidental fires in dwellings during Q3, increasing from 21 in Q2 2025/26.

Cooking – other cooking remained as the second most common cause, responsible for **15** accidental fires in dwellings during Q3, increasing from 12 recorded during Q2 2025/26.

Leading causes of ADFs | 2025/26 Q2



Leading causes of ADFs | 2025/26 Q3



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, such as "Fire Kills" and videos on the danger of leaving cooking unattended, have been shared across all platforms.

NWFRS Prevention Team have encourage multi-agency carers and support workers across the region to subscribe 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 referrals for those most at risk.

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.

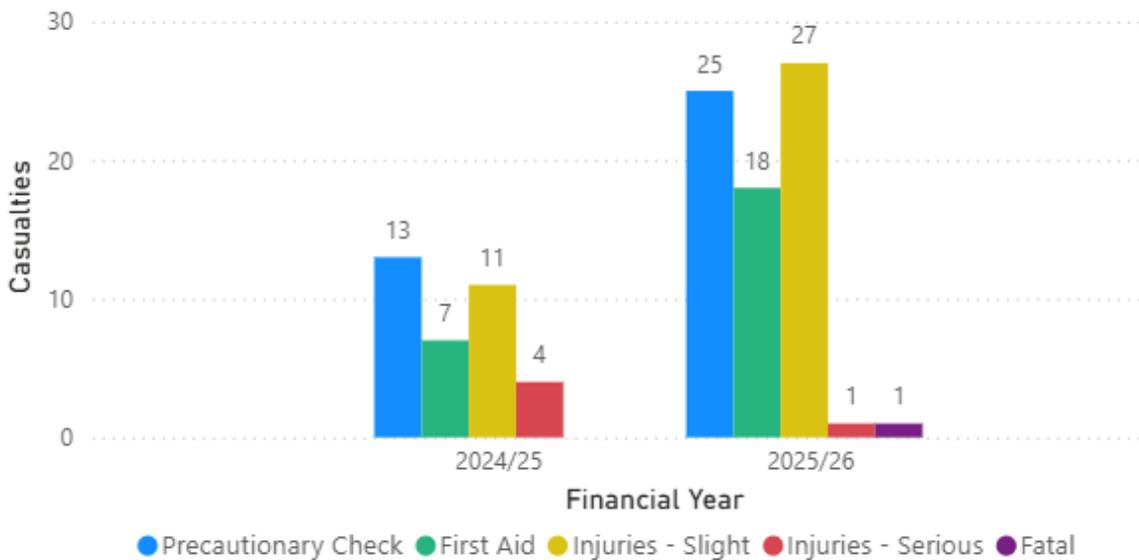
The Prevention Team are currently trialling an innovative cooker safety product called 'Pippa'. The small detection unit, which is located above a cooker, uses AI to detect the early signs of heat and fire, alerting the occupier of a sudden rise in temperature. The unit also has the ability to alert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

5 Fatalities and Casualties from Accidental Fires in Dwellings

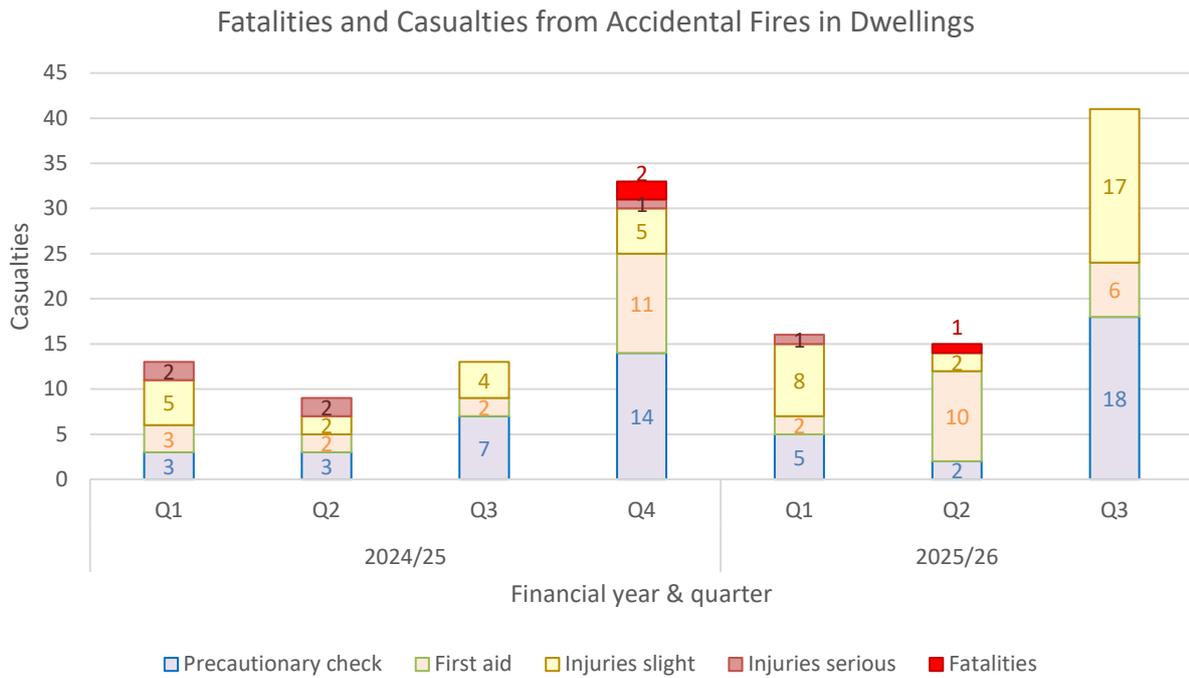
72 people sustained injuries at **47** ADFs during the reporting period 2025/26 Q1 – Q3. Sadly, **one** person was recorded as a fatality as a consequence of an ADF during quarter 2.

The number of people injured as a consequence of an ADF since the start of 2024/25 has shown an increase of 105.7%, when compared to Q1 – Q3 in 2024/25. The number of ADFs where an injury was recorded has also increased by 62.1%.



When reviewing the number of casualties from accidental dwelling fires which were recorded during 2025/26 Q3, a total of **41** casualties were recorded, which is an increase from the previous quarter (Q2) during which 15 casualties were recorded.

It is important to note that although this is a significant increase, the casualties recorded are predominantly precautionary checks (for 18 of the casualties), with 6 casualties requiring first aid and 17 recorded as having slight injuries. There were no serious injuries or fatalities recorded during Q3.



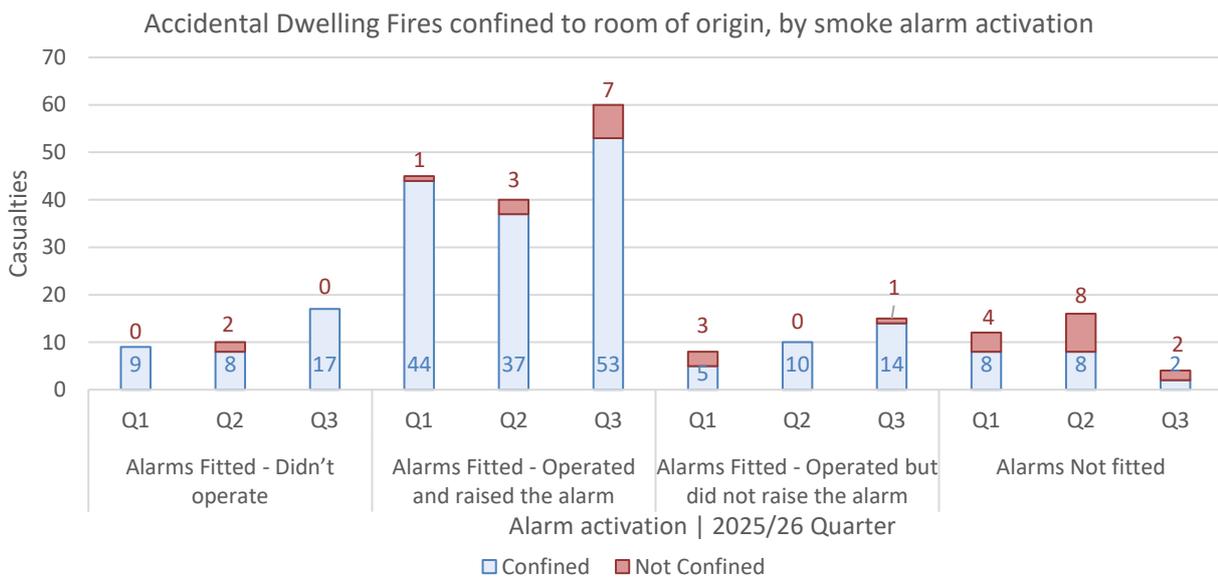
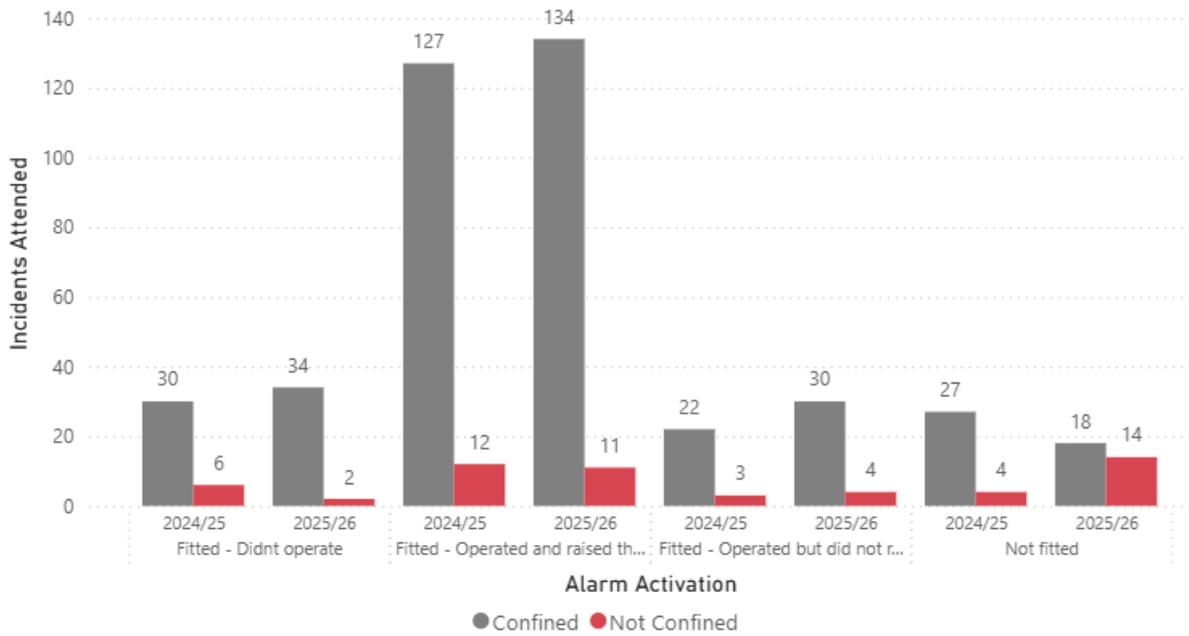
6 Smoke Detectors – Accidental Dwelling Fires

Detectors: smoke/heat detectors were present at **215** (87.4%) of the accidental dwelling fires attended.

Alarms operated and raised the alarm at **145** (58.9%) ADFs.

Alarms were not fitted at **32** (13%) of the ADFs attended.

Of the 246 ADFs attended, **215** were confined to the room of origin, and **31** were not confined.



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

Within the first three quarters of financial year 25/26, we have completed 14,925 SAWCs and remain on target to reach 17,500 by the end of Q4. However, only 3,837 of all checks that were completed during this period were high-risk. This equates to 25.7%. Steps are in place to address this, with crews being asked to prioritise high-risk referrals in Q4.

Throughout quarter 3, Wholetime and Day Crewed stations were asked to undertake prevention activity using Exeter data (data shared by the NHS) to target households where occupiers aged 65+ years live. Crews were provided with geographical information visually indicating where residents were known to be 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 Q3 were completed by the HSSWs (high/medium risk) and WDSR (low risk).

This procedure has been reviewed and will change in Q4, with crews using the referral waiting list in the first instance and using Exeter data as the default/backup, due to the increasing numbers of waiting list referrals – some of which are overdue. The crews will focus on those most at risk within the community, rather than focusing on low risk SAWCs.

It has been noted that the focus should prioritise quality over quantity.

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.

Educational Engagement – Q3:

Phoenix

Courses delivered	= 6
Participants	= 55
Number completing the course	= 67%
Behaviour Improvement	= 66%
Positive feedback (from referring agencies)	= 100%
Full Agored qual attained	= 62%

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.

NWFRS Prevention team is reviewing activities 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.

Q3 Educational visits to schools

Schools Visited	= 17
Pupils	= 1,035

Crucial Crew	= 1
Pupils	= 10

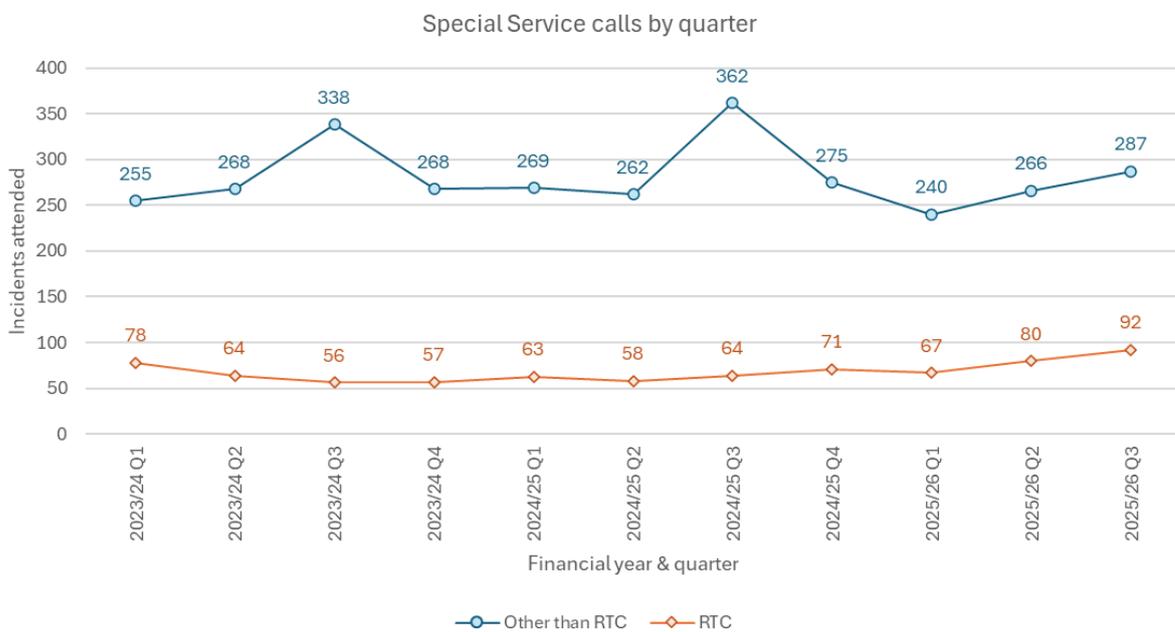
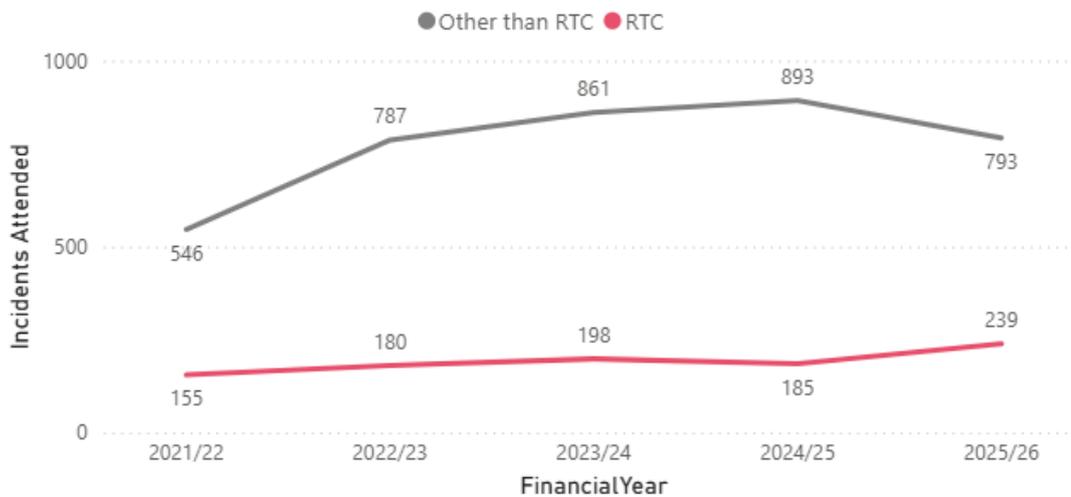
Deliberate Fires Assembly	= 2
Pupils	= 110

It must be noted that the Education Team were operating at 50% due to maternity leave, however, the team member has returned as-of December 2025.

7 Special Service Calls (SSCs)

A total of **1,032** special service calls (including Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)) were attended, which is 4.3% lower than the 1,078 attended in 2024/25.

Whilst the number of 'Other than RTC' incidents have decreased by 11.2% with **793** incidents attended, there has been increased attendance at RTCs, which saw a 29.2% increase with **239** incidents attended compared to 185.



Leading SSC categories for the duration of 2025/26 Q1-Q3 (other than RTC) included:

- **396** 'Assist other agencies' incidents – an increase of 0.5% from 394 recorded during 2024/25 Q1-Q3.
- **69** 'Other rescue/release of persons' incidents – a decrease of 10.4% from 77 recorded during 2024/25 Q1-Q3.
- **73** 'Effecting entry/exit' incidents – an increase of 30.4% from 56 recorded during 2024/25 Q1-Q3.
- **58** 'Lift Release' incidents, which was the same number recorded during 2024/25 Q1-Q3.

Leading SSC categories recorded during 2025/26 Q3 (other than RTC) included:

- **153** 'Assist other agencies' incidents – an increase from 127 recorded during Q2.
- **16** 'Flooding' incidents – an increase from 8 recorded during Q2.
- **26** 'Effecting entry/exit' incidents – a decrease from 29 recorded during Q2.
- **20** 'Lift Release' incidents – a decrease from 22 recorded during Q2.

Actions taken to date:

Road Safety

Olivia's story

Olivia's story was delivered to over 1000 college students for Road Safety Week. This included all Grwp Llandrillo, Menai Site and one Coleg Cambria Site.

NWFRS and NWP staff filmed a short video in collaboration with Grwp Llandrillo Menai which was released on social media. The video explained what NWFRS and NWP aim to achieve through the delivery of Olivia's Story and captured the thoughts and feelings of the students who had received Olivia's Story.

Op Atal Team

Operation Atal team have been out and about on the streets of North Wales working with NWP to educate drivers on the Fatal 5. In Q3, they have conducted 793 roadside presentations with 33 drivers receiving driving fines, including putting to use their Child Car Seat training which resulted in 1 prosecution for incorrect use of a Child Car seat.

Operation Atal team attended Ysgol Llanfawr, Holyhead to promote Road Safety. They ran a competition with the Children having to create a drawing demonstrating what Road Safety meant to them with the best winning Amazon Gift Vouchers. 200 students engaged with.

Ongoing work in booking in Olivia's story for the new year. By the end of January, it is expected that all of Coleg Cabria- Bersham Road site will have received the input and further work with Grwp Llandrillo Menai is ongoing.

It is noted that the Op Atal team have 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.

BikerDown

WM Lee Parsons and WM Paul Ellams attended the MCL Bikeshow in Birmingham to promote Bikerdown and Bike Safe. This attendance resulted in 300 sign-ups to both Bikerdown and Bike Safe.

One Bikerdown session conducted within Q3 with 17 student interactions.

Other on-going NWFRS Road safety work

- Working 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.

Water Safety Activity Q3

Danger point collaboration Meeting. Meeting held with Cat from Danger point at Unit 8B Conwy to demonstrate our water safety flume, how it works and how we could fit it at our inland section. Also discussed expanding the inland water stand at DP to include video footage. Work ongoing in Q4 to improve the inland section at Dangerpoint. Finances have already been set aside to purchase the equipment.

Christmas Water Safety Campaign. Wales meeting to discuss an all-Wales approach. Agreed to share resources for a standardised message. South Wales to share their asset with us so Corp Comms we can brand with NWFRS logo.

Mountain Rescue Meeting. Several mountain rescue teams hosted at Bangor Fire Station. These were introductory meetings where all the local MR teams came together to have an open discussion about how we deal with operational water incidents and how we can help each other.

Following a PowerPoint discussion, we had a 'show and tell' type scenario where everyone demonstrated the equipment they carry on their rescue vehicles. This was to establish a better understanding, better control and improve co working at operational incidents.

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. 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.

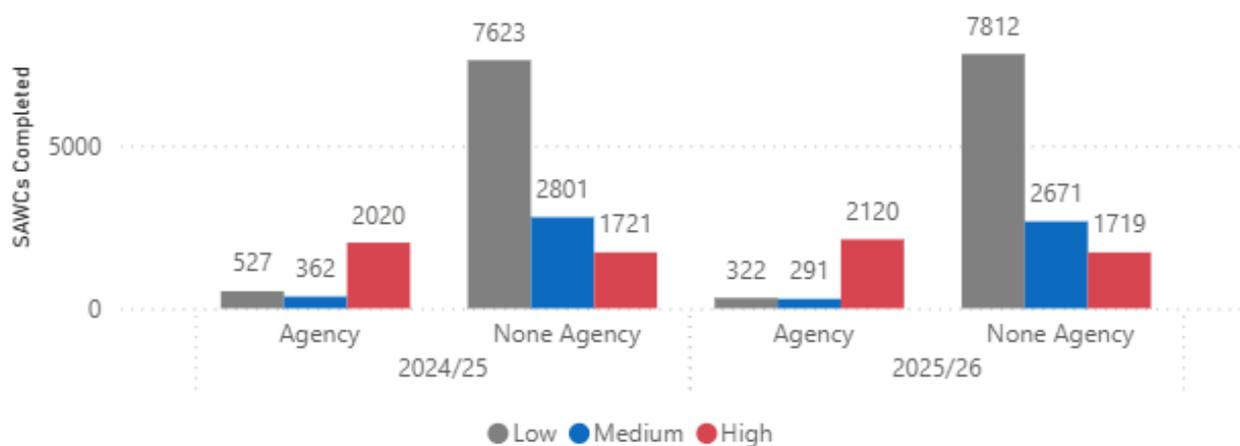
8 Safe and Well Checks

A total of **14,935** SAWCs have been completed across 2025/26 Q1 – Q3, of which:

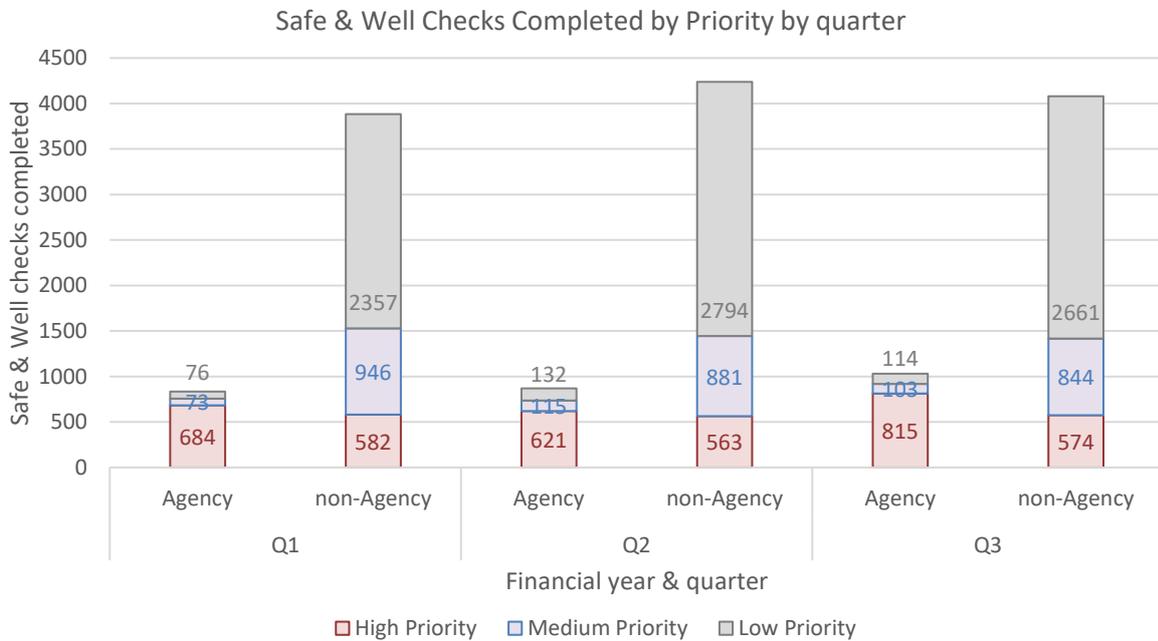
- **3,839** (25.7%) were High priority, with **2,120** (55.2% of high priority checks completed) coming from a partner agency.
- **2,962** (19.8%) were Medium priority, with **291** (9.8% of medium priority checks completed) coming from a partner agency.
- **8,134** (54.5%) were Low priority, with **322** (4% of low priority checks completed) coming from a partner agency.

A total of **2,733** SAWCs completed during this period were referred to the Service from an Agency – this equates to 18.3% of SAWCs completed.

Although there has been a **0.8%** decrease in the number of SAWCs completed compared with the same period last year, there has been a **2.6%** increase in the number of high priority SAWCs completed.

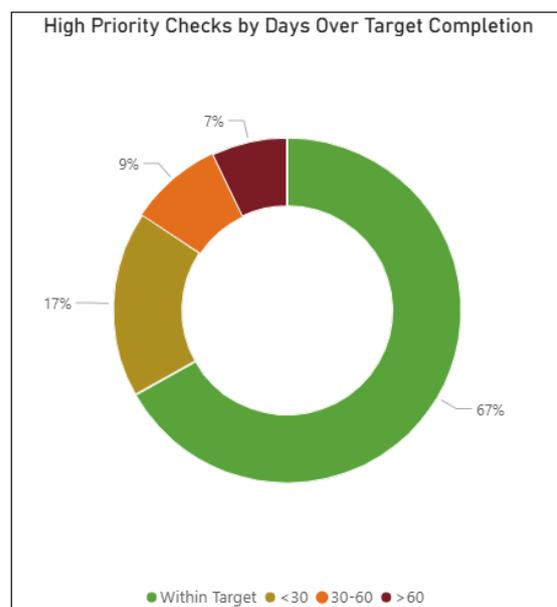
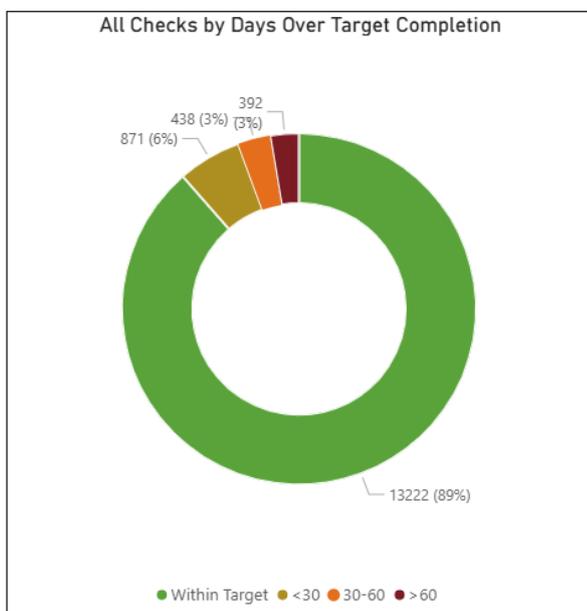


During 2025/26 Q3, a total of **5,111** Safe and Well checks were completed, which is comparable to 5,106 completed during the previous quarter (2025/26 Q2), however, **27.2%** (1,389 out of 5,111) of these were recorded as High priority checks, which is an increase from 23.2% (1,184 out of 5,106) high priority checks completed in 2025/26 Q2.



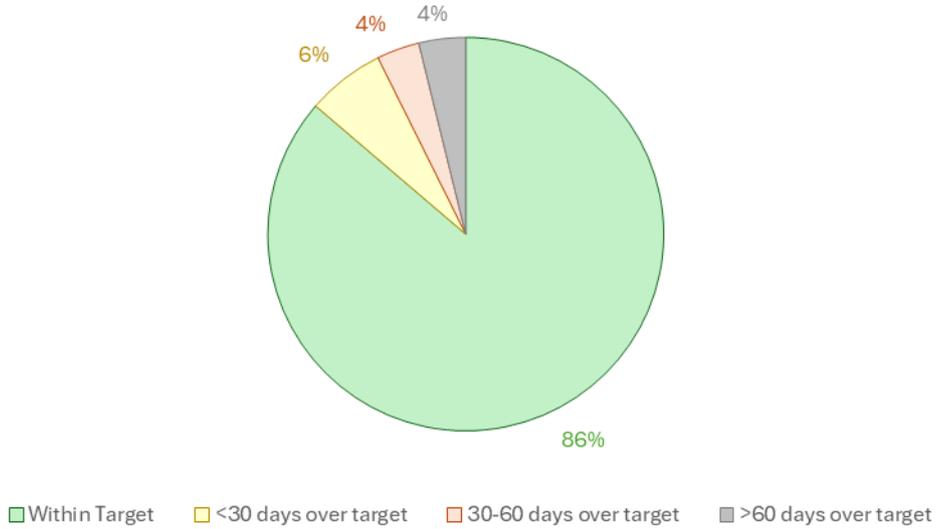
A total of 1,192 (8.0%) SAWCs were conducted in Welsh during quarters 1 – 3.

89% of all SAWCs completed during quarters 1-3, were completed within their target completion date.

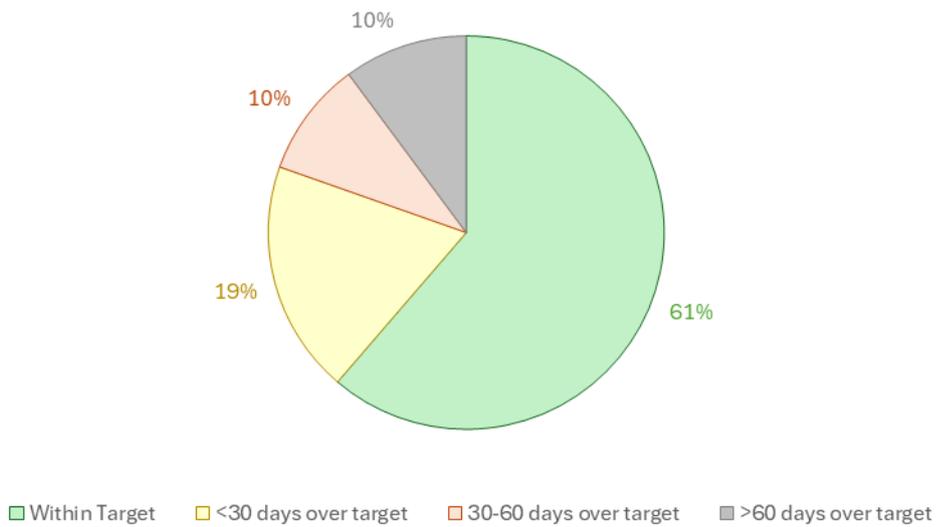


During quarter 3, across all priorities of Safe and Well checks completed, 86% were completed within the target completion date. 61% of the High Priority Safe and Well checks completed in quarter 3, were completed within target.

2025/26 Q3 | Safe & Well checks completed within target | All Priorities



2025/26 Q3 | Safe & Well checks completed within target | High Priority



Actions taken to date:

Home Safety Support Workers (HSSWs) aim to collectively complete 6,000 SAWCs per year. Each HSSW aims to perform 545 SAWCs per year, which is over 136 per quarter.

Crews aim to complete six SAWCs per day which is 24 per four-day tour. It should be noted that this target will be changing in Q4 to three per day and two per night, also incorporating the two newly created Nucleus stations.

All targets can be achieved within the two hours set aside for prevention activities, as detailed within the Station Performance Management Framework (SPMF).

Waiting lists Q3

Priority	Within Target	Outside Target	Total
High	260	654	914
Medium	120	104	224
Low	257	80	337
Total	637	838	1475

This waiting list continues to be a significant risk to the organisation. However, steps are now in place to address this, with the list already reducing from Q2.

As of the end of Q3 there are 1,479 referrals on the waiting list which is a decrease of 141 compared to Q2 (1620). The waiting list is managed by HSSWs, WDSR and staff on modified duties.

It should be noted that one HSSW is successfully achieved a temporary promotion to another role; a new HSSW was employed in August and following training and a period of shadowing other HSSWs has started completing their visits effective from September. The team is, however, still working with reduced resource due to long term sickness absence. In Q3 additional payment was offered to other Prevention staff to undertake SAWCs to reduce the backlog.

WDSR were encouraged to increase their telephone SAWC output, and all Day Crewed (DC)/Wholtime (WT) watches have now been requested to undertake medium and high-risk SAWCs from the waiting list. This will increase during Q4.

A new station-base prevention strategy will be implemented by end of January 2026.

Our Protection Principle

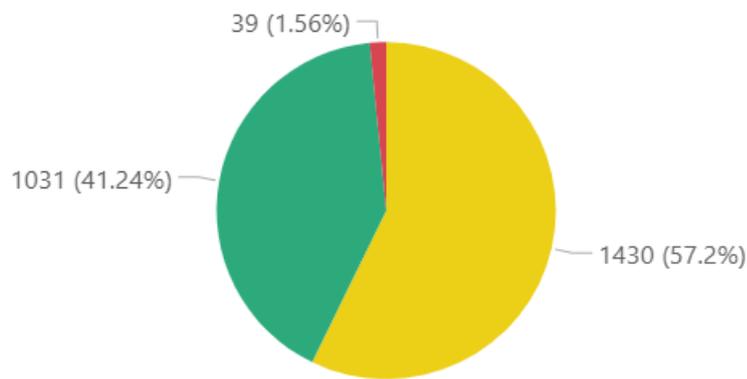


9 False Alarms

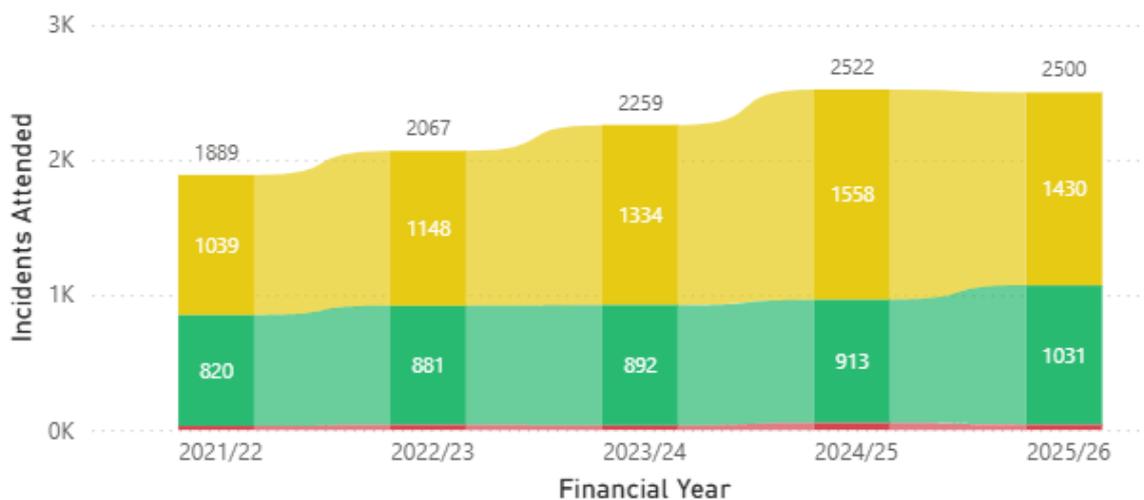
A total of **2,500** false alarms have been attended, which is a decrease of 0.9%. This total is inclusive of false alarms attended across all property types.

A rise has been recorded in Good Intent False Alarm incidents attended, with a 12.9% increase recorded from 913 to **1,031**.

A reduction can be seen in Malicious false alarms, which decreased 23.5% from 51 to **39**, and also in Fire alarm due to Apparatus incidents, which decreased 8.2% from 1,558 to **1,430**.

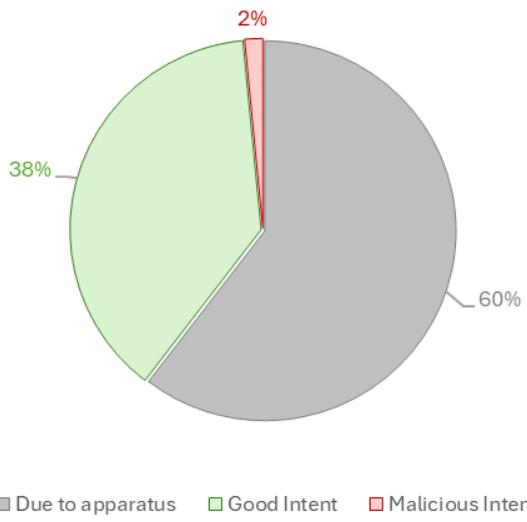


● Fire alarm due to Apparatus ● Good Intent false alarm ● Malicious False Alarm

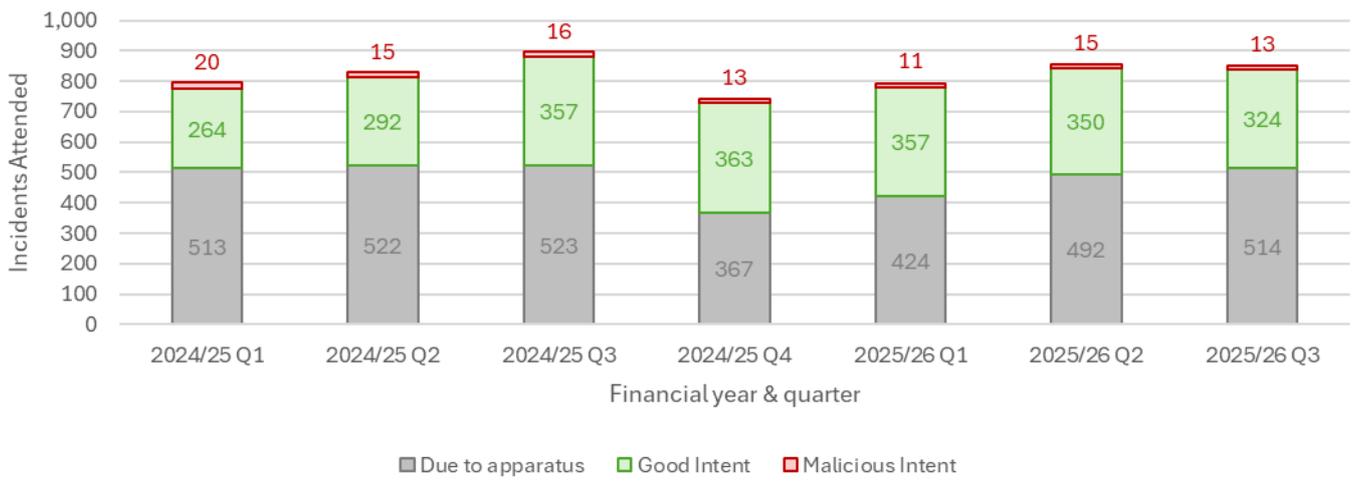


● Fire alarm due to Apparatus ● Good Intent false alarm ● Malicious False Alarm

2025/26 Q3 | False Alarms

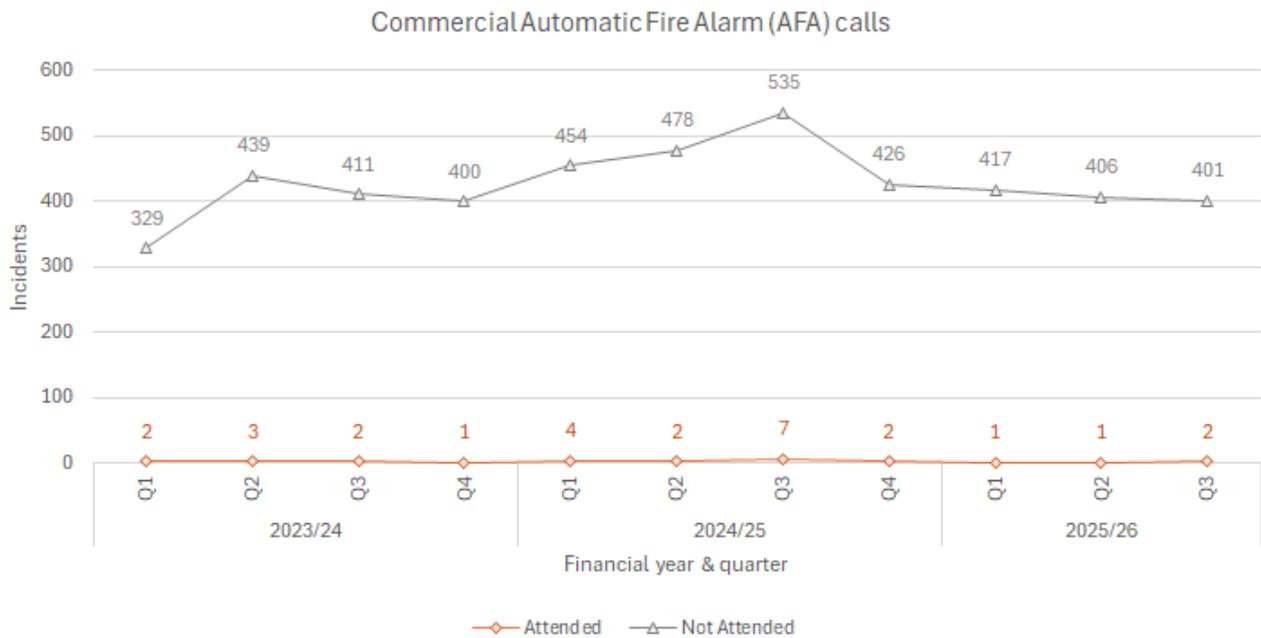
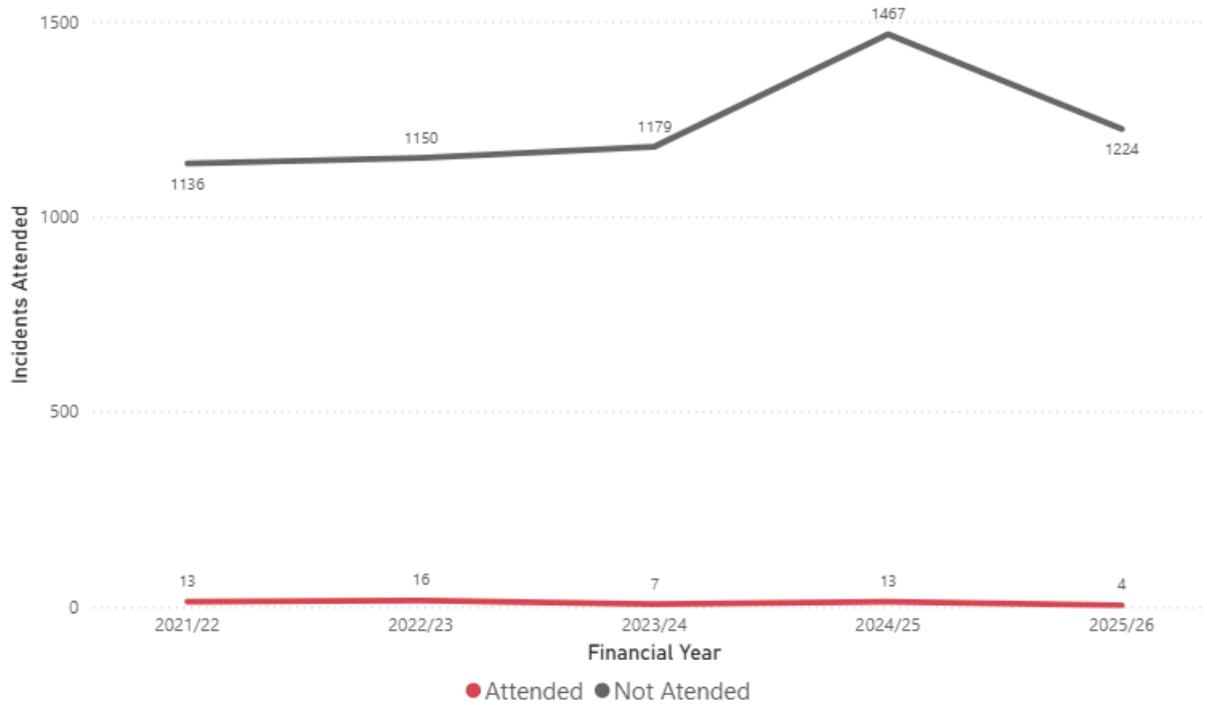


False Alarms by Quarter



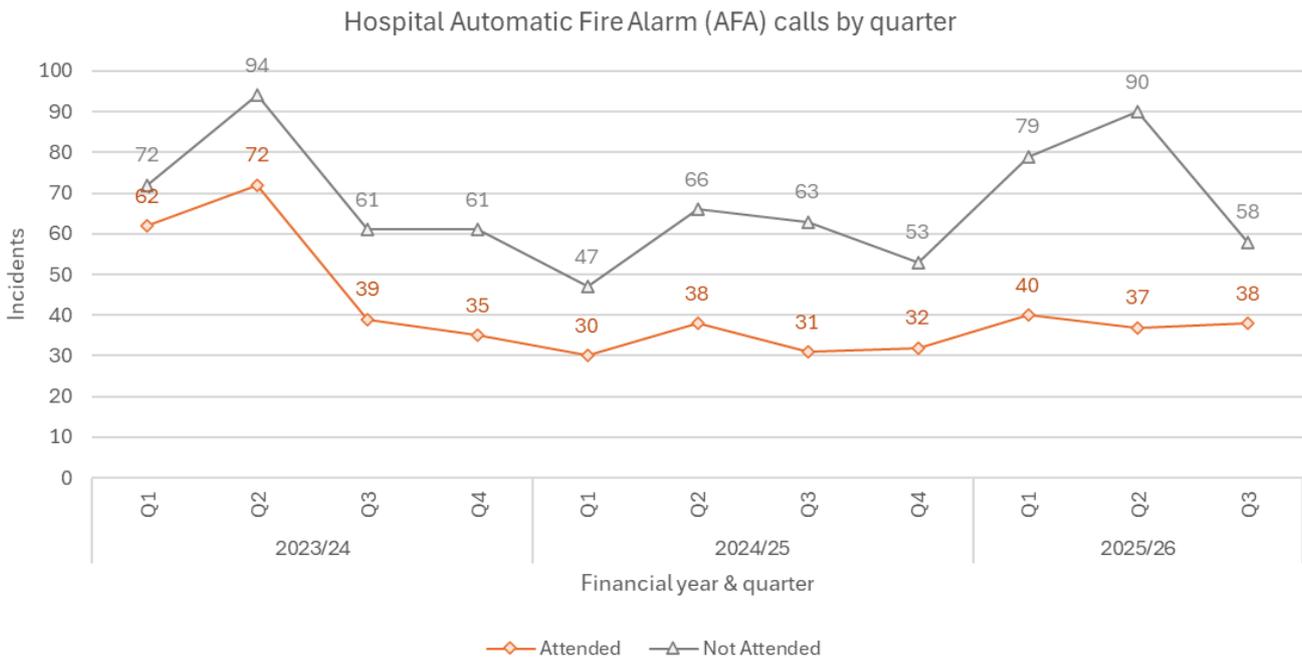
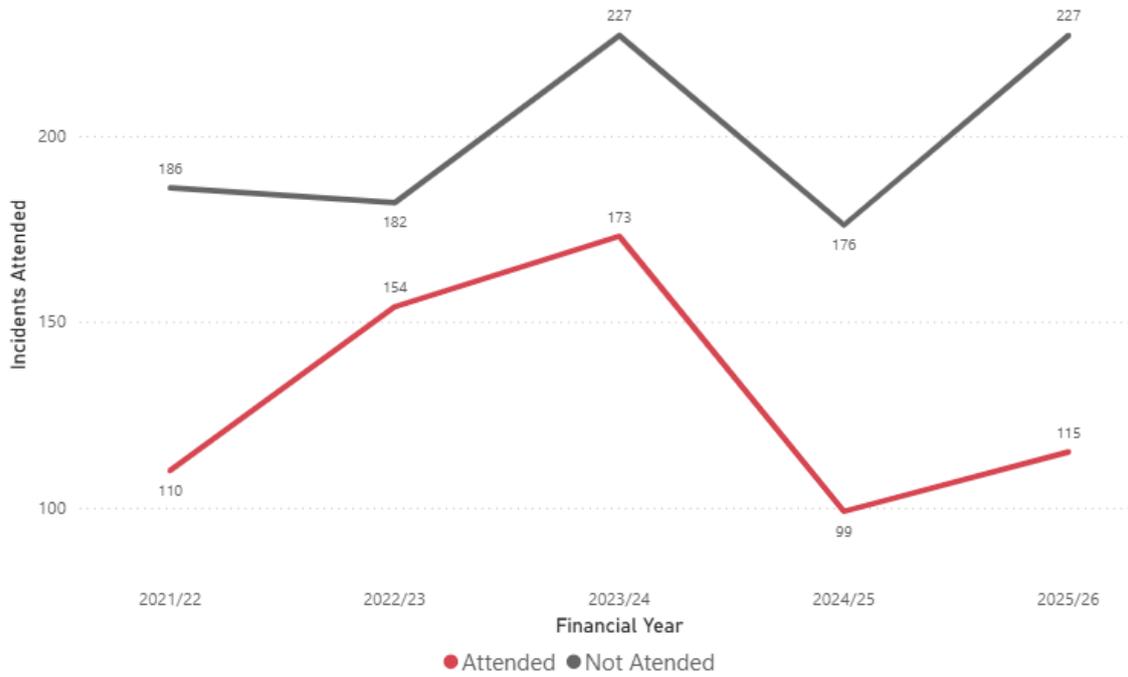
10 Commercial AFA calls

1,228 Commercial AFA calls were received during the reporting period. All but **four** were incidents that were not attended. This has remained at a consistent level throughout quarters 1-3.



11 Hospital AFA calls

342 Hospital AFA calls were received, which represents an increase of 24.4% from 275. Of the AFA calls received in the first 3 quarters of 2025/26, 227 (66.4%) were not attended. Despite the increase in number of calls, the proportion not attended has remained comparable to 64% from the previous year.

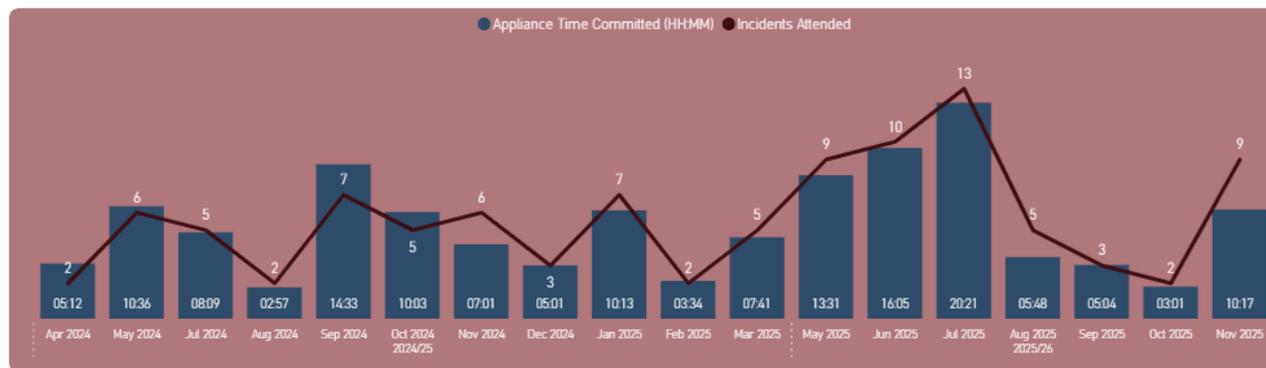
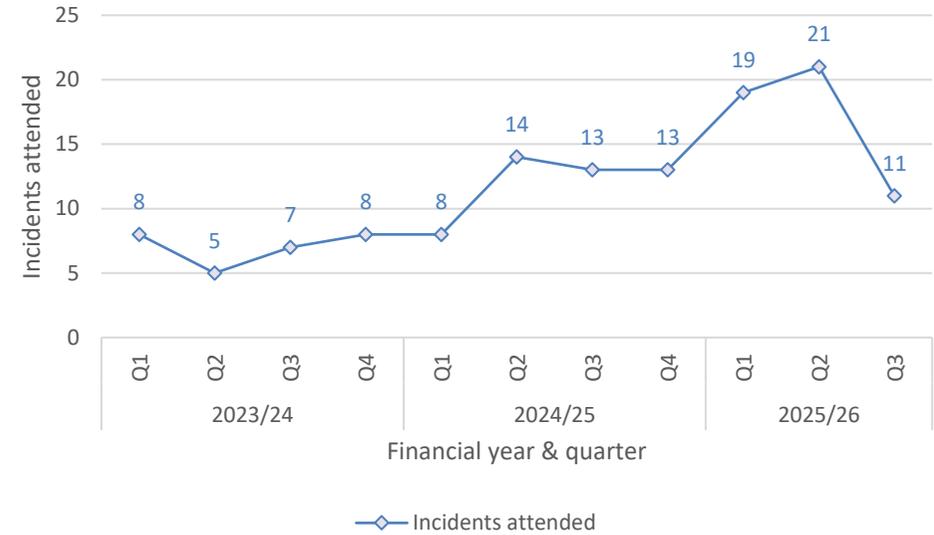
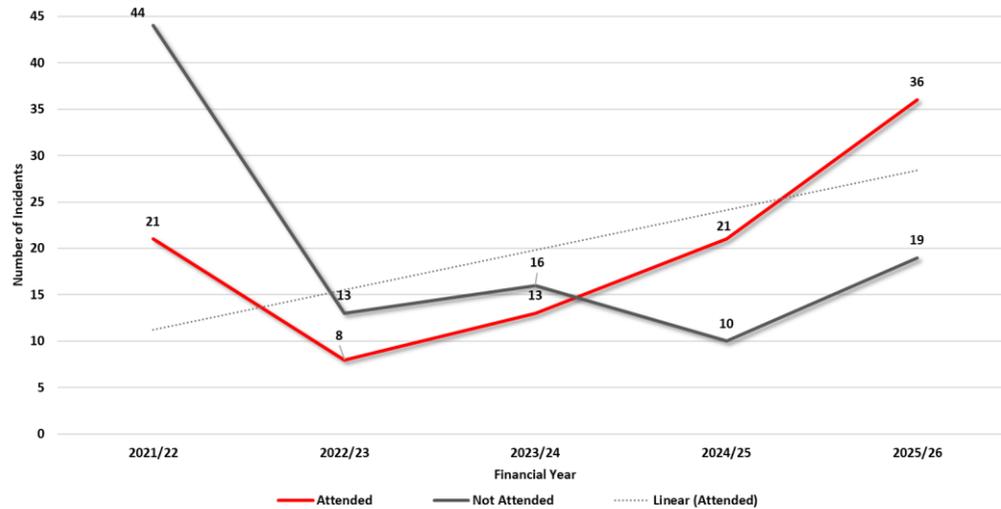


Actions taken to date – Hospitals:

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. Protection has begun a comprehensive and professionally structured audit framework covering documentation related to testing, drills, and maintenance activities. The framework covers regulatory compliance, operational assurance, and evidence-based reporting.

12 HMP Berwyn

55 primary fires were started deliberately at HMP Berwyn in the reporting period, and of these **36** were attended - this is 77.4% more than last year, however, a notable reduction in incidents has been seen during Q3.

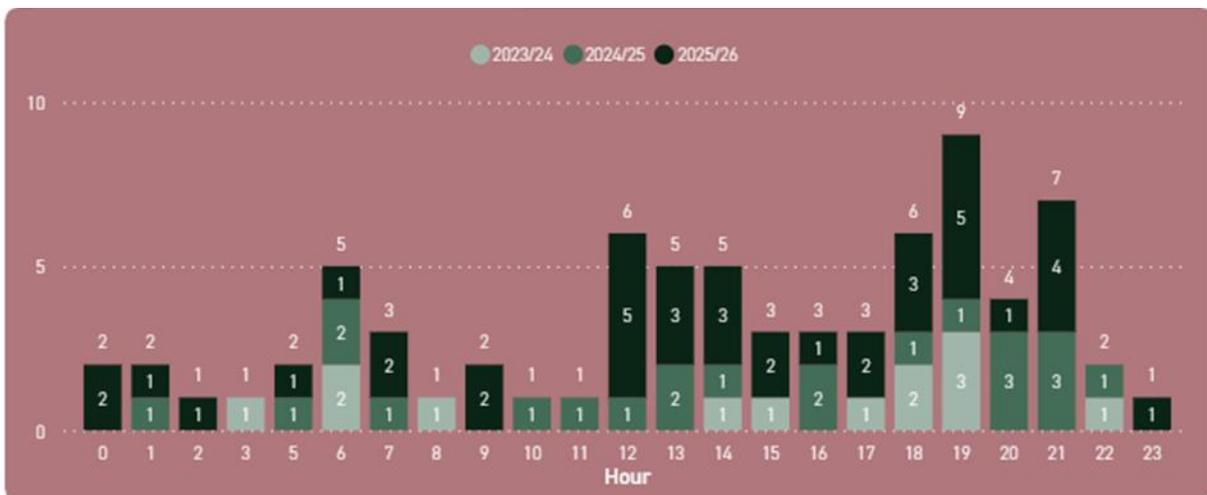
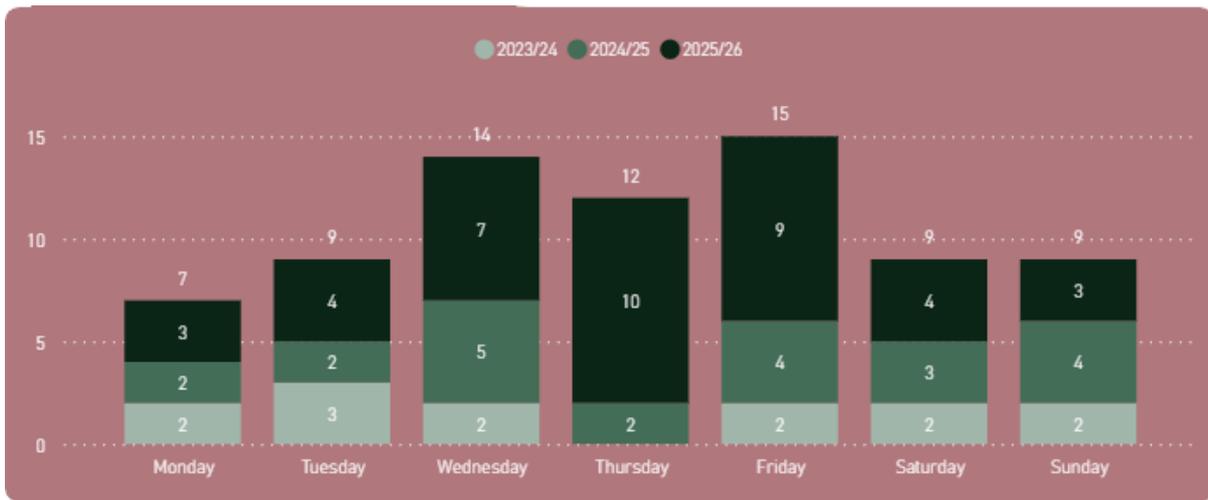


Actions taken to date – HMP Berwyn

Incidents continue to rise and fall, with people constantly finding new ways to tamper with electronic devices so they can use them to start fires. After the sharp drop in incidents when the new vape product was introduced, the types of ignition sources changed. People are continuing to use older vape models and dismantling kettle bases to now figuring out how to break apart the new “tamper-proof” vapes. We have raised this with the manufacturer, who is now working quickly to fix the issue and strengthen the product’s safety features.

We have also reviewed these incidents to see if they relate to specific days of the week. They often occur on the days prisoners are paid and when they immediately have to settle debts—usually Thursdays and Fridays. Prisoners sometimes start fires to avoid paying these debts or to force a move to another block. Because of this, they will continue looking for new ways to start fires as older methods are removed.

We will continue to work together to identify new ignition methods, as these incidents are likely to continue rising and falling over time.



Our Response Principle



13 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 wholetime or day crewed stations.

Average of RDS Stations Availability 06:00-18:00												
Day/Month	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3
Weekday	6	6	5	6	6	4	6	5	6	7	7	6
Weekend (incl. Bank Holiday)	14	14	12	13	11	12	12	12	12	11	9	11
Overall Average	9	9	7	8	7	7	7	7	7	8	8	8
2024/25	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 migrated to the WDS.

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

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

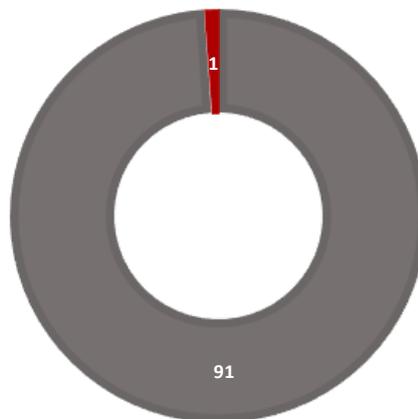
Leavers - the number of RDS leavers from each respective quarter. This does not include secondary contracts, or migrations to the WDS.

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.

14 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.

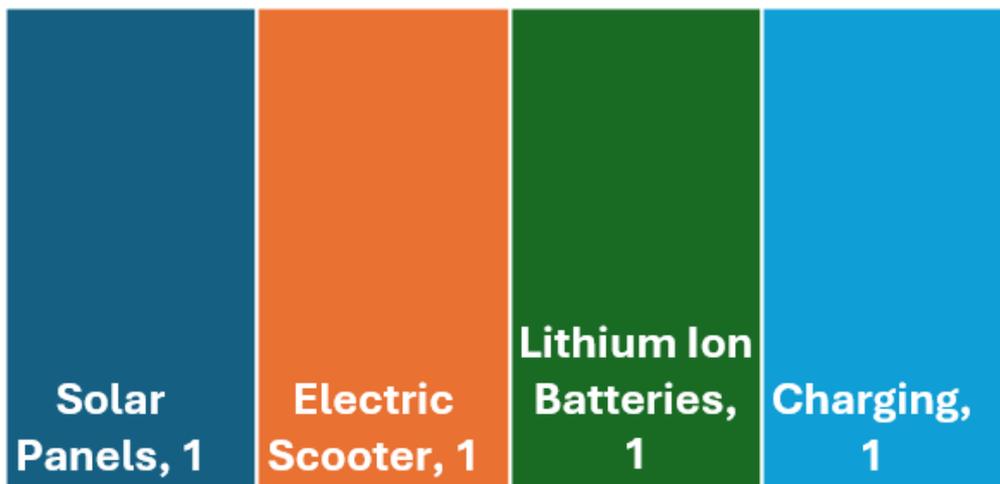
16 Emerging Technologies

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 October 2025 to December 2025 and includes all incident categories.



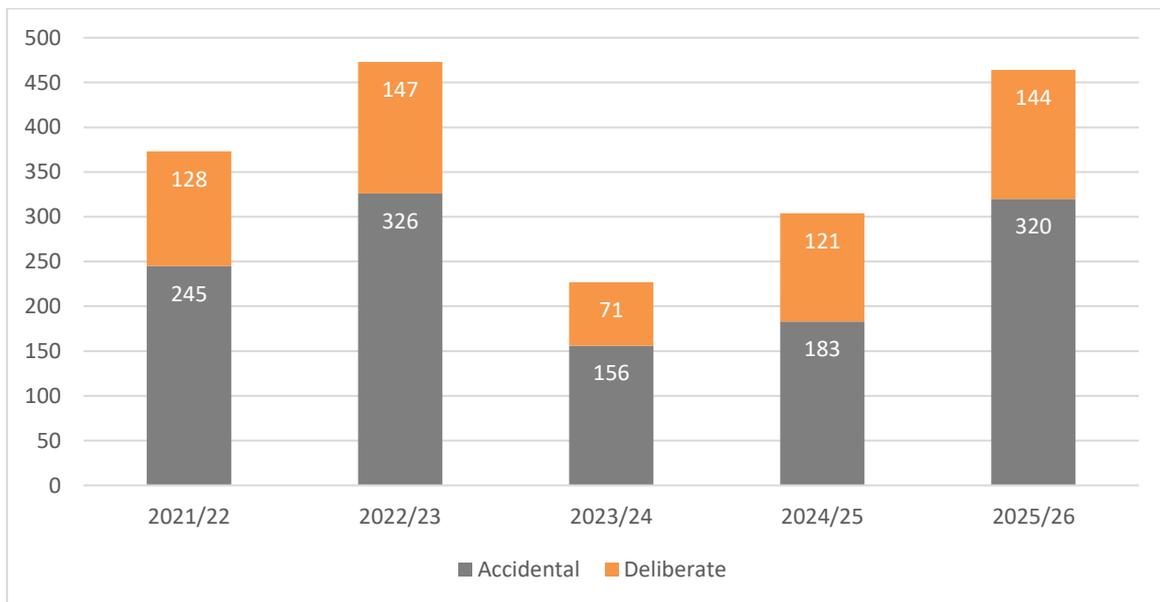
N.B. In some cases, the cause has been assumed rather than confirmed due to the nature of the incident.

Our Environment Principle



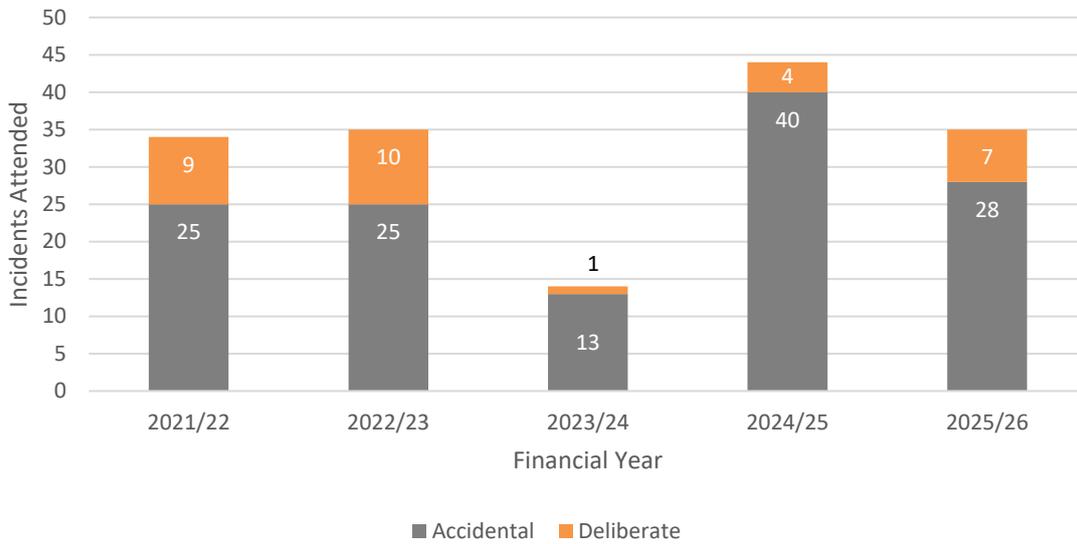
15 Grassland, woodland and crop fires

464 Grassland, woodland and crop fires were recorded, a 186.4% increase from 162. This is 73.1% higher than the three-year average of 268.



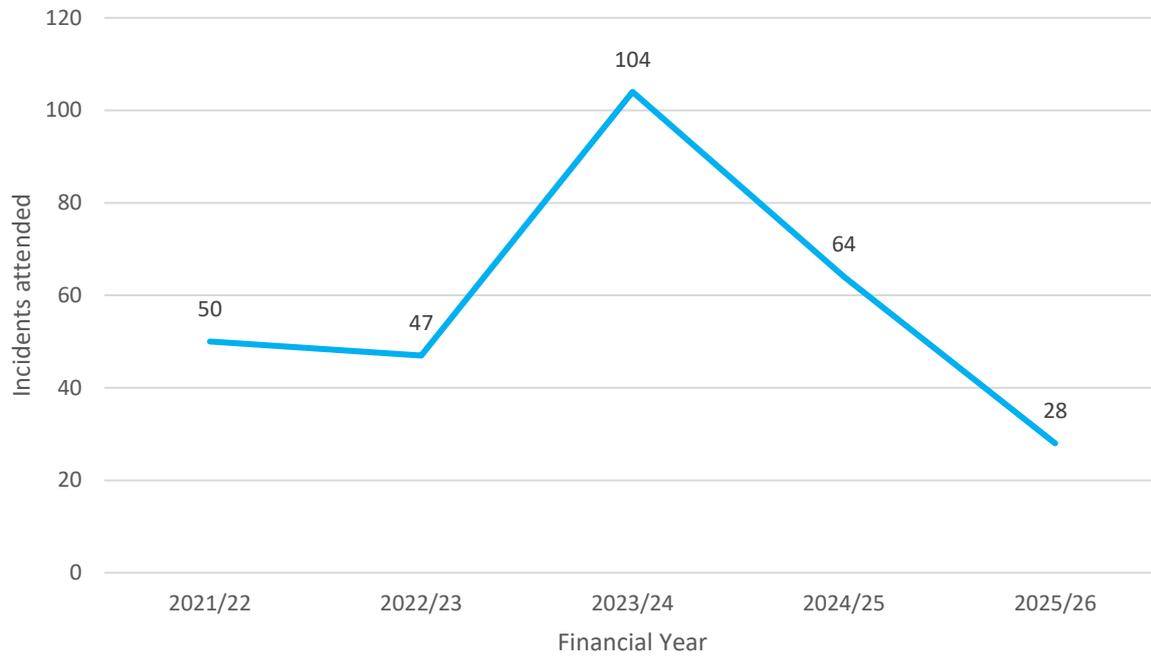
16 Wildfires

35 wildfires were attended. This is an increase of 600% from 5 the previous year, and 94.4% above the three-year average of 18. As a result, the time spent monitoring wildfire incidents increased to over **880 hours**, compared with over 232 hours during the same period of the previous year.



17 Flooding

There were **28** flooding incidents attended, a 56.3% decrease from 64, and 61.1% lower than the three-year average of 72.



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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Local emergencies e.g., flooding, road traffic incidents, rescue of persons, 'making safe' etc; b) Major disasters; c) Domestic incidents e.g., water leaks, persons locked in or out etc; d) Prior arrangements to attend incidents, which may include some provision of advice and inspections.
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	Executive Panel
Date	16 March 2026
Lead Officer	Anthony Jones, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Contact Officer	Mike Plant - Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation
Subject	Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2026/27



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To provide an overview of the feedback received from the public consultation on the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2026-2027 and the associated Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), and to seek approval of the final version of the aforementioned documents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 Under the Welsh Government Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016, one of the key objectives for fire and rescue services in Wales is to continually and sustainably reduce risk and enhance the safety of citizens and communities.
- 3 The North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is required by The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to make arrangements for continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions, by setting itself improvement objectives in each financial year against at least one of seven functions. The public must be consulted on these objectives.
- 4 It is a statutory requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 for Public Bodies to publish annual well-being objectives and to report annually on their progress towards meeting their well-being objectives.
- 5 Welsh Government Fire and Rescue Circular W-FRSC(2024)06 confirms that the duties under the 2009 Measure and the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act (Wales) 2015 can be discharged through the publication of a single report.
- 6 This is the third Community Risk Management Implementation Plan (CRMIP), which has been developed to support the delivery of the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-2029. The CRMP aims to identify risks facing the community and describes how the Authority will manage those risks and continue to prevent and respond to fires and other emergencies. The objectives have been written to take account of the requirements of both aforementioned pieces of legislation.

- 7 The response levels showed a 42% increase (397 this year from 279) from the 2025-26 public consultation, although responses reported as being from staff members remained low.
- 8 Support for the proposed improvement and well-being objectives was consistently high across each of the five principles for keeping communities safe, ranging between 93% to 97%.
- 9 Verbatim comments from consultation respondents were shared with the relevant Heads of Department, or subject matter expert, for review and consideration as to what impact, if any, the feedback has upon their proposed objectives for 2026-27.
- 10 There are no proposed changes to any of the objectives as a consequence of the public consultation.
- 11 Trade unions have been engaged in the development of the well-being objectives as part of the Social Partnership Duty and at the Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee in February 2025 the Trade Union representatives present agreed that consensus on the objectives had been reached.

RECOMMENDATION

12 It is recommended that Members:

- i) **Note the content of the feedback report; and**
- ii) **Approve the attached CRMIP 2025-26 and associated EqIA for publication.**

BACKGROUND

13 The Authority will report upon its progress against the 2026-27 Community Risk Management Plan objectives in its Annual Performance Assessment in the Autumn of 2026.

INFORMATION

14 The consultation was opened for responses between the 23 October and 16 December 2025. The Service undertook a data quality assurance exercise on the available Equality and Diversity Inclusion data to ensure figures quoted were correct. This delayed the planned release of the consultation by two days.

- 15 The draft Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2026-27, and an Easy-Read version was published, in Welsh and English, on the Fire and Rescue Service website. An Equality Impact Assessment of the Plan was also published.
- 16 Respondents were invited to complete a questionnaire indicating whether or not they agreed that the proposed objectives would deliver against 'Our Five Principles for keeping communities safe'. Respondents were invited to add comments in support of their opinion.
- 17 The consultation was publicised online, internally on Hwb Tân, on social media and through paid adverts in the written press.
- 18 Bi-lingual leaflets bearing a QR Code, facilitating immediate and easy access to the online survey questionnaire, were printed and distributed during Safe and Well Check visits and made available during engagement events.
- 19 A dedicated bilingual e-mail address was set up to facilitate requests for additional information or hard copy questionnaires. A dedicated mobile telephone number was established to respond to any queries that could not be submitted by e-mail.
- 20 Letters, in the Chair's name, were sent to everyone on the Stakeholder Register inviting them to participate.
- 21 The Equality and Diversity Officer arranged specific face to face engagement events with different equality interest groups.
- 22 The verbatim comments can be viewed in the appendices of the Consultation Report.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	The Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2026-27 contains a Well-being statement as required by the Act
Budget	Not applicable
Legal	The Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2026-27 has been prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation.
Staffing	None
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and updated following the public consultation.
Risks	The Community Risk Management Plan supports the Authority's risk management arrangements.



North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

Community Risk Management Implementation Plan

Well-being and Improvement Objectives 2026 – 2027



Our five principles for keeping communities safe – have your say

PEOPLE

PREVENTION

PROTECTION

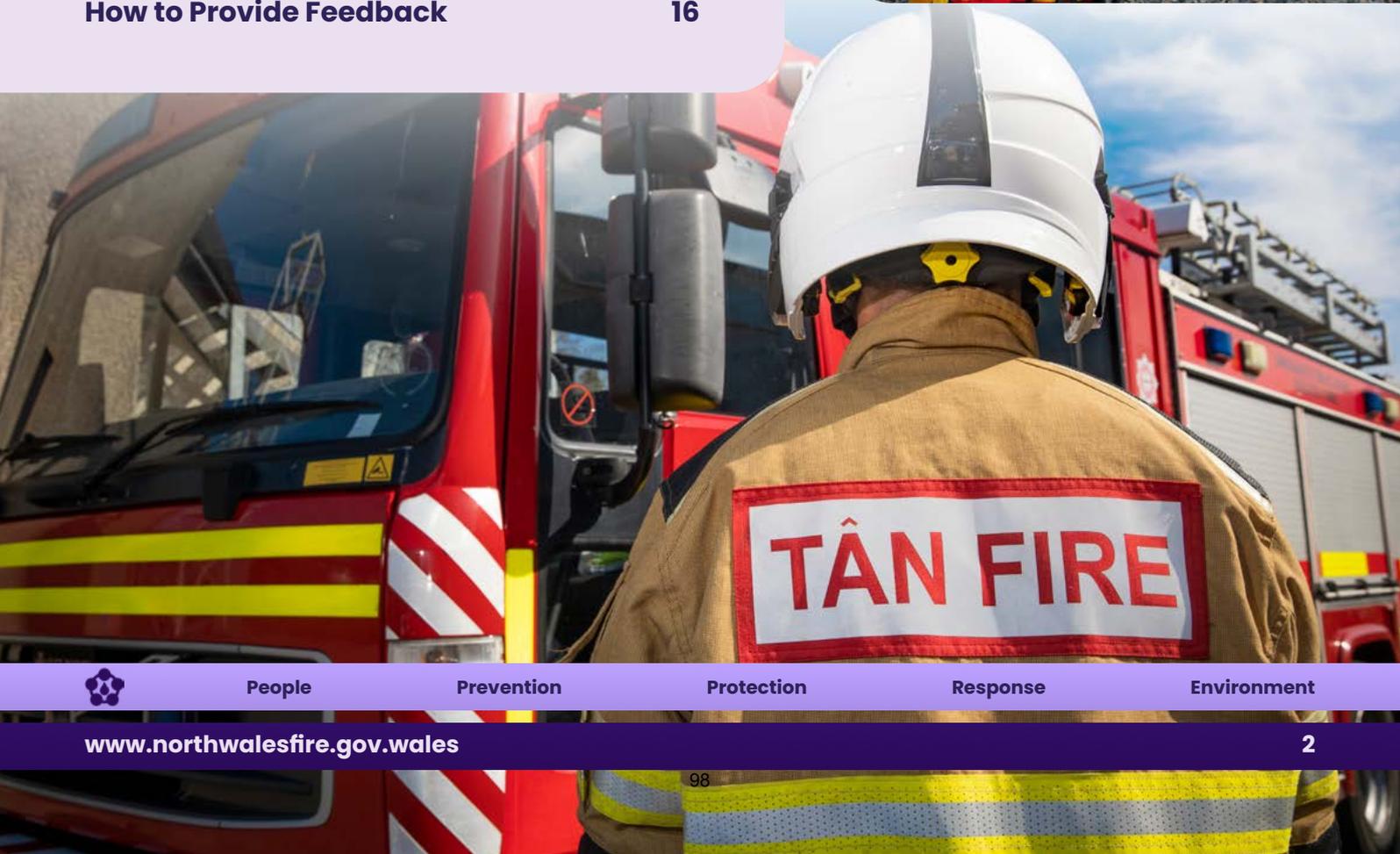
RESPONSE

ENVIRONMENT

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

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People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



Introduction

One of the key objectives for fire and rescue services in Wales is to continually and sustainably reduce risk and enhance the safety of citizens and communities.

A Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) aims to identify risks facing the community and describes how the Fire and Rescue Authority will manage those risks, and continue to prevent and respond to fires and other emergencies.

In July 2024 we published our five-year CRMP following public consultation.

The following annual action plans have now been published, which contain improvement and well-being objectives to enable us to deliver against our long-term objectives. These plans can be accessed [here](#).

- 2024-25 – Published July 2024
- 2025-26 – Published April 2025

This Community Risk Management Implementation Plan, for 2026-27, is the third annual plan containing objectives that will continue to deliver against the 2024-29 CRMP objectives.

Our Service

The Fire and Rescue Authority comprises 28 elected councilors from the six unitary authorities of North Wales, with the number of representatives determined by the population of the area. Our mission is Making North Wales a safer place to live, work and visit. You can read more about our structure and governance arrangements, including the role of the Fire and Rescue Authority [here](#).

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is led by a Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and a Service Leadership Team. This comprises senior officers and managers who are responsible for departments looking after our Service’s key operational and corporate functions.

Our Staff

Our firefighters respond to fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies from 44 fire stations across North Wales. In total we have 53 fire engines. Some of our fire stations have two fire engines. Other stations have specialist vehicles like aerial ladder platforms, incident support vehicles or boats, depending on the risk in their area.

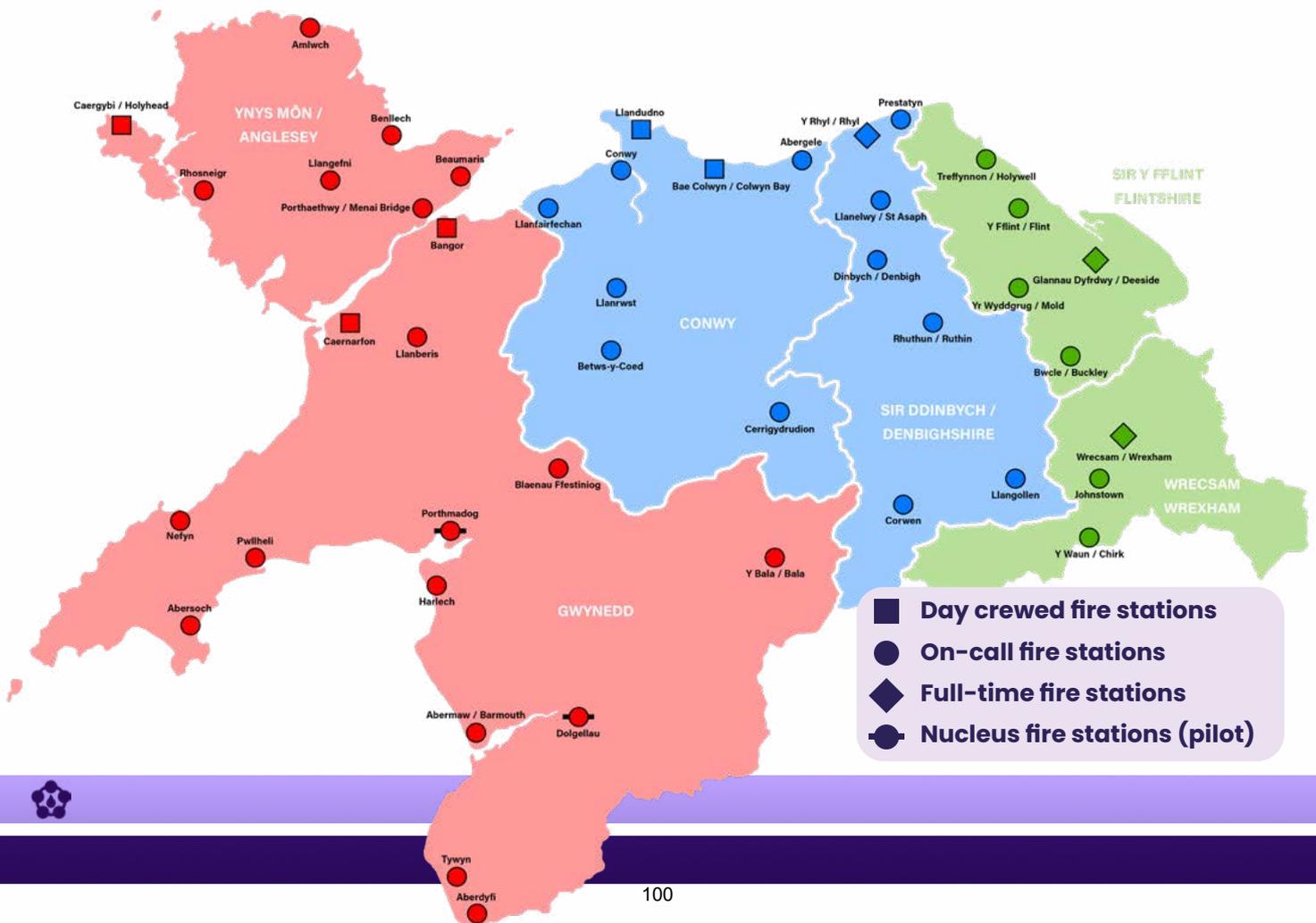
From firefighters to business area specialists, you can read more about the roles of the people that respond to emergencies and the people who keep the Service running [here](#).



Our Service area

Covering an area of 6,172 square kilometres and with a population of 687,000, North Wales encompasses a diverse landscape, including the mountains of Eryri National Park, coastal areas, rural communities and major urban areas.

North Wales comprises six counties, Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham. The A55 runs through five of the six counties and is part of one of the longest European routes, running between Holyhead and eastern Europe. You can read more about our geography and demography [here](#).



Our Governance and Legislation

Like all public-sector bodies, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is required to operate in accordance with numerous pieces of legislation. You can read more about the legislation that governs our Service [here](#).

In line with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority must make arrangements for continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions, by setting itself improvement objectives in each financial year against at least one of seven functions.

Furthermore, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority must consult with the public on its proposed improvement objectives. Details of how you can provide feedback on our proposed objectives can be found [here](#).

You can read about our assessment of our performance against our previous well-being and improvement objectives in our Annual Performance Assessment 2024-25 [here](#).

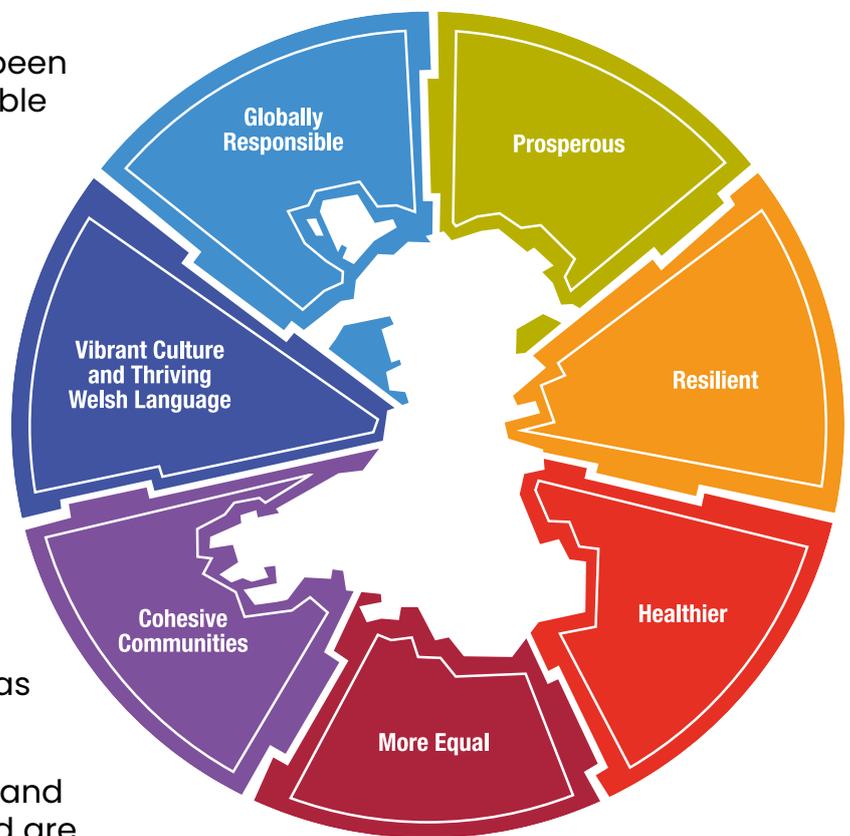
Our 2026-27 objectives have also been developed in line with the sustainable development principle of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Statement

We are committed to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and we have embraced our duties and our role as a statutory partner across three

Public Services Boards. We understand the purpose and aim of the Act and are committed to ensuring that we consider the long-term impact our decisions may have on the communities we serve.

We will therefore ensure that when making decisions, we consider the potential impact these decisions could have on the people living their lives in North Wales both now and in the future. We will also remember to consider the rich diversity of people who live, work and visit North Wales and continue to work collaboratively with others to help the Authority achieve its objectives, and, where relevant, help others to achieve theirs.



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



A Prosperous Wales

Through our **Prevention and Protection Principles** we will work innovatively to keep people safer in their homes and businesses. By reducing the costs associated with fire death, injury damage and disruption we will enhance our support to the local economies of North Wales.



A Resilient Wales

Our **Environment Principle** and underpinning objectives contribute towards a Resilient Wales by adopting eco-friendly practices in our daily operations to cut down on carbon emissions. Through our **Protection Principle**, we will work to reduce wildfires thereby improving air quality and preserving natural habitats and ecosystems.



A More Equal Wales

Through our **People Principle** we will recruit, develop and retain a highly skilled, motivated and bilingual workforce that represents and champions the diversity of the communities we serve. We will also identify and maximise staff potential through effective people management and development, leading to a high-performance culture, where people value and respect each other, thereby contributing to a More Equal Wales. We will continue to consult staff, trades unions and the public on statutory matters and proposals which may have a significant effect upon the services we provide to the public.



A Healthier Wales

We will contribute to a Healthier Wales through our **Prevention Principle** by delivering Safe and Well Checks to our most vulnerable citizens and making every contact count by sharing any health and wellbeing concerns identified with relevant partners.

By delivering intelligence led, multi-agency campaigns targeting those most vulnerable from Road Traffic Collisions and inland drowning incidents, we will reduce the risk of death and serious injury.

Through our **People Principle** we will support our workforce to be physically fit and mentally resilient and through our **Response Principle** we will improve emergency cover in our more rural, less densely populated areas.



A Wales of Cohesive Communities

Through our **Prevention, Protection, Response and Environment Principles** we will contribute to a Wales of Cohesive Communities ensuring fires in homes, businesses or on open land are either prevented or the impact is minimised as far as possible.





A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language

We will contribute to a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, through our **People Principle** by offering access to our services and the ability to communicate with us in Welsh and supporting our staff to speak their preferred language in the workplace and to offer opportunities to staff who wish to learn Welsh.



A Globally Responsible Wales

We will play our part in a Globally Responsible Wales through our **Environment Principle**. We will reduce our own carbon emissions by switching our fleet of diesel fire engines to run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, purchasing only zero or ultralow emissions cars and vans and phasing out gas and Liquid Petroleum Gas heating from our estate.

Through our **Prevention and Protection Principles** we will ensure North Wales is safe through our preventative activities prioritising the most vulnerable in our communities and being prepared to respond to risks identified in the Community Risk Register.

Through our **Protection** work we will seek to avoid or limit the emission of harmful gases into the atmosphere as a result of industrial or environmental waste fires.

Through our **Protection Principle** we will work with local partners to keep heritage sites and buildings safe from fire.

Our Risks and Demand

The delivery of our one-year objectives are designed to mitigate some of the risks identified as part of the development of our Community Risk Management Plan. You can read about how we assess risk and demand [here](#).

Our Principles

Our Core Values have guided us towards adopting five Principles, through which we will deliver innovative and high-quality services to our communities and the people who visit and work in North Wales. Our Principles were developed following internal consultation and they will assist us to mitigate the risks to our communities and help us to focus on improvement within our Service over the next five years. You can read more about our Principles [here](#).



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our 2026–27 Community Risk Management Implementation Plan objectives

Our People Principle



Being in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills.

Ensuring a highly skilled workforce by recruiting, developing and retaining a motivated and bilingual workforce that represents and champions the diversity of the communities we serve.

What do we intend to do during 2026–27?

- Ensure compliance with the Welsh language standards, including providing opportunities for learning Welsh and promotion of activities in line with our commitment to being a bilingual organisation.
- Support the delivery of an internal action plan for improvement following the 2025 Fire Family Staff Survey.
- Undertake Fraud Awareness training for Finance department staff to minimise the potential for financial loss.
- Evaluate the implementation of recommendations from the Crest Cultural review, and continue to deliver against them.
- Explore ways to support and enhance the Health and Well-being of employees as their life circumstances change.
- Enhance and streamline the Human Resources processes.
- Carry out improvements to the Information and Communications Technology Infrastructure and make Cyber Security improvements in line with the Cyber Response Action Plan.
- Review Data Protection and Governance arrangements, create a new asset register and undertake a review of the data retention policy.
- Implement the 2025–30 People and Organisational Strategy.
- Implement an Operations and Control Training Strategy and Training delivery plan.
- Embed The Wellbeing of Future of Generations (Wales) 2015 Act throughout the Service.
- Continue to build on our initial success and embed our commitment to working in Social Partnership across all areas of the Service.

These actions will satisfy the following 2009 Measure Improvement Objectives;

- Strategic Effectiveness, Fairness, Efficiency and Innovation



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our Prevention Principle



Working with partners to help make communities safer.

Reducing risks to our communities, especially for those people who may be more vulnerable, through our established intervention programmes such as Safe and Well Checks and the Phoenix Project.

What do we intend to do during 2026–27?

- Provide quality data to support the Community Fire Safety department in the new risk-based approach to conduct identified high level Safe and Well Checks.
- Deliver intelligence led home safety interventions targeting the most at risk residents in our communities. We will deliver four targeted multi-agency campaigns across North Wales.
- Coordinate a project group to research a replacement for the Farynor Record Management System.
- Reduce water related fatalities and serious incidents through education and community engagement.
- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on North Wales Roads through targeted, evidence-based interventions.
- Implement a comprehensive Arson Reduction Strategy, to reduce deliberate fire setting and safeguard communities.
- Embed safeguarding as a core element of everyday practice, by ensuring staff receive regular and role appropriate training.

These actions will satisfy the following 2009 Measure Improvement Objectives;

- Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Fairness, Efficiency and Innovation



Our Protection Principle



Making businesses safer together.

Providing businesses with expert guidance on fire protection to help ensure the safety of buildings, employees, and customers, thereby supporting businesses to grow. High-risk buildings are prioritised for inspections, contributing to overall public safety.

What do we intend to do during 2026–27?

- Undertake an intelligence led approach to our Risk Based Inspection Programme to reduce injury and death from fire in domestic and non-domestic properties.
- Develop all supervisory and flexi duty system officers to Level 2 Fire Safety and Inspectors to National Fire Chiefs Council competence framework.
- Undertake monthly business fire safety reassurance campaigns to promote fire safety in commercial premises.

These actions will satisfy the following 2009 Measure Improvement Objectives;

- Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Fairness, Efficiency and Innovation



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our Response Principle



Providing an effective emergency response.

Being ready to respond when you need us: to protect what matters to you, to save lives, reduce harm and protect homes and businesses.

What do we intend to do during 2026–27?

- Continue to react to new and national emerging fire risks and attend the Lithium-Ion multi-agency working group.
- Progress with the planned project for a new Training and Development Centre in St. Asaph, which will fulfil the training and development needs of the modern firefighter.
- Continue to deliver the action plan to consider the recommendations from the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector for Wales report into how Fire and Rescue Services 'Respond to Domestic Dwelling Fires'.
- Deliver the next phase of the Training Towers replacement programme.
- Review our On-call firefighter working practices.
- Implement a Business Continuity Management Group, to review the current Business Continuity processes for the Service.
- Implement a program of change to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of availability of response crews across our communities.
- Continue in our planning and preparations for the UK Government led change to the Emergency Services Network.
- Continue to regularly monitor and review the ongoing Nucleus station and Resilience shift system pilot schemes to improve fire cover in our rural areas and increase fire cover resilience service wide.
- Look to replace an Aerial Ladder Platform with a modern turntable ladder.
- Continue to purchase fire appliances with the 'clean cab' principle in mind to reduce exposure from fire contaminants to firefighters.

These actions will satisfy the following 2009 Measure Improvement Objectives;

- Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness, Efficiency and Innovation



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our Environment Principle



Protecting and preserving our natural environment for future generations.

Adopting eco-friendly practices in our daily operations to cut down on carbon emissions and other environmental impacts and raise environmental awareness amongst our staff and our communities.

What do we intend to do during 2026–27?

- Continue to expand the existing Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) network across the Service, and transition to electrical vehicles.
- Continue to progress our transition of existing diesel use vehicles to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) use vehicles.
- Update the Building Management software System.
- Implement the planned new 'Mechanical and Electrical' preventative maintenance strategy.
- Undertake a detailed feasibility study of our buildings to strengthen environmental data monitoring.
- Expand the subject matter advisors' remit to incorporate climate change and technological advancements in site specific risk information gathering and sharing.
- Look to improve our procurement lifecycle reporting and supplier engagement.

These actions will satisfy the following 2009 Measure Improvement Objectives;

- Strategic Effectiveness, Sustainability, Efficiency and Innovation



Wales' Well-being Goals – How we contribute

Examples of how North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority contributes to the seven national Well-being goals includes;



A Prosperous Wales

- Implementation of the Emergency Cover Review aims to improve the provision of emergency cover in rural areas, creating new employment opportunities.
- Increase the on-call establishment across North Wales presenting pathways to full-time employment.
- Training all staff to use Microsoft 365 and to be cyber aware.



A Resilient Wales

- We already ensure that no mowing takes place on our estate between May & September each year.
- We will continue to actively educate landowners in responsible land use including use of natural grazing and other measures which mitigate wildfires.
- We are installing swift nesting boxes at appropriate locations around our estate.
- We aim to transition from Diesel fuel to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) for our heavy vehicle fleet.
- We will be working to transition our estate away from hydrocarbon heating systems.
- We aim to install solar photovoltaic panels at the majority of our sites by 2030.



A More Equal Wales

- We will develop a 2026–29 training and development strategy based on a training needs analysis, enabling our staff to develop the skills and knowledge to be fulfilled.
- We will give people the opportunity to participate in decision making through our public consultations, the Social Partnership Duty and biennial Fire Family Surveys.
- Equality of Health Outcomes – fire and road safety – Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) & Youth interventions.



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



A Healthier Wales

- We will continue to embed positive and supportive processes to improve attendance by providing excellent occupational health and welfare support.
- We will continue to support community green spaces by participating in events such as litter picks, in partnership with housing associations and local councils.
- We will create high-quality analysis to support an enhanced risk-based approach to proactive Safe and Well Checks.
- Work in partnership to understand the evolving threat of Battery Energy Storage Systems and deliver publicity campaigns to inform the public.
- We actively promote the cycle to work scheme and other healthy and active lifestyles campaigns. Our people are encouraged to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle through promoted nutritional plans and allocated time to use our fitness suites.



A Wales of Cohesive Communities

- Internal staff networks and resource groups create safe and inclusive platforms for people to access advice, raise concerns, share ideas and to provide feedback.
- Through inclusive design, our people minimise their environmental footprint by agile, remote and flexible working. Car share initiatives are effective and help our people to minimise fuel costs and reduce the environment impact.
- By the very nature of our prevention work, our service add huge value to the North Wales community through safe and well advice which include safety, health and wellbeing. Through active engagement in the community during 2025-26, our service will deliver programmes, projects and campaigns to promote healthier and safer communities. Advice and information is communicated through a range of communication methodologies to widen access for different stakeholders, particularly those who are most at risk.
- We add significant value to the North Wales community through Safe and Well Checks, positively impacting personal safety, health and wellbeing.
- We are active members of various networks and forums that have been established by community anchor organisations. For example, The North Wales Community Cohesion Team established the North Wales Interfaith Forum.





A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language

- We will continue to provide opportunities for learning Welsh and promotion of activities in line with our commitment to being a bilingual organisation, offering work based Welsh courses to staff at levels 2 and 3.
- We ensure front-line staff, such as our Control room operators and our Home Safety Support Workers, who deal directly with vulnerable people, are all fluent Welsh speakers. This allows us to commit to offering a proactive language choice in line with the values found in the Welsh Government's 'More than Words' framework.
- By promoting the services we provide bilingually, all residents or visitors to North Wales that may need to use them can do so in the language of choice.
- We will continue to collaborate with 'Mentrau Iaith' initiatives across North Wales to ensure we are at the forefront of any cultural celebrations or events that will be happening and that we can engage with as a Service.



A Globally Responsible Wales

- We will review stock items in our Stores and develop working practices to minimise waste.
- We will continue to migrate our light vehicle fleet to hybrid and electric vehicles.
- We will continue supplier analysis on development of Sustainability scoring & development of Carbon intensity scoring.
- There is on-going supplier due diligence checks including; tax and legal compliance, modern slavery & adherence with National or Minimum Living Wage legislation to ensure suppliers are acting in an ethical manner.
- Utilisation of suppliers within frameworks with predetermined ethical and sustainable Key Performance Indicators.
- We have published a Modern Slavery statement.
- We undertake DBS checks on all staff as part of our safeguarding measures, ensuring we maintain a safe and secure working environment for both employees and the communities.



How to Provide Feedback

The draft version of this Community Risk Management Implementation Plan underwent a period of public consultation from 23rd October to 14th December 2025.

Even though the consultation period has closed we are always looking for ways to improve our service and to present information that is meaningful. In order to help us 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 plan, or how we might improve future plans, we would still very much like to hear from you.

Write to us:

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS)
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
Ffordd Salesbury
St Asaph Business Park
St Asaph
Denbighshire
LL17 0JJ

Call us:

07920 084 603

Send us an email:

OurFivePrinciples@northwalesfire.gov.wales

Request a Safe and Well Check

You can request A safe and well check for yourself or on behalf of someone else by contacting the Service on **0800 169 1234**.

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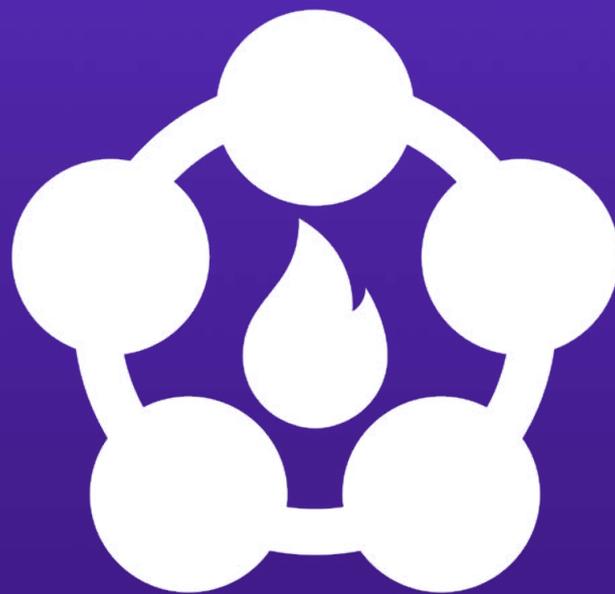
People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



Report to	Executive Panel
Date	16 March 2026
Lead Officer	Helen MacArthur, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Contact Officer	Mark Morgan, Payroll Manager
Subject	Pay Policy Statement 2026/27



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To inform Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) of their responsibilities arising from the Localism Act 2011 (the Act).
- 2 The Act requires the Authority to prepare an annual Pay Policy Statement for approval before the commencement of the financial year to which it relates.
- 3 This paper sets out the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27 which is consistent with previous years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 4 The Authority is required to prepare and approve a Pay Policy Statement on an annual basis in accordance with the Localism Act 2011. The statement must also comply with the Welsh Government guidance issued in 2017, *"Pay Accountability in Local Government in Wales"*

RECOMMENDATION

- 5 It is recommended that Members:
 - i) **Note the requirements of the Localism Act 2011; and**
 - ii) **Endorse the Pay Policy Statement for the 2026/27 financial year**

BACKGROUND

- 6 A Pay Policy Statement must be prepared in accordance with Part 1; Chapter 8 (Sections 38 – 43) of the Localism Act 2011. The guidance issued by the Welsh Government summarises the key elements of the Pay Policy Statement which includes:
 - (a) Information relating to the remuneration of its chief officers;
 - (b) the remuneration of its lowest paid employees; and
 - (c) the relationship between:
 - (i) the remuneration of its chief officers, and
 - (ii) the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers.
- 7 The statement must state:
 - (a) the definition of “lowest-paid employees” adopted by the Authority for the purposes of the statement; and
 - (b) the Authority’s reasons for adopting that definition.
- 8 The statement must also include the Authority’s policies relating to:
 - (i) the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer;
 - (ii) remuneration of chief officers on recruitment;
 - (iii) increases and additions to remuneration for each chief officer;
 - (iv) the use of performance-related pay for chief officers;
 - (v) the use of bonuses for chief officers;
 - (vi) the approach to the payment of chief officers on their ceasing to hold office under or to be employed by the authority; and
 - (vii) the publication of and access to information relating to remuneration of chief officers.
- 9 The Pay Policy Statement must be approved formally by full Authority each year and published on the Authority’s website. The statement may be amended during the year following appropriate approval.

INFORMATION

- 10 The purpose of this Pay Policy Statement is to provide transparency with regard to the Authority’s approach to setting the pay of its employees, in particular, that of chief officers and employees on the lowest pay scale, by identifying the methods by which salaries are determined.

IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	The Pay Policy Statement provides a framework for decision making on pay and in particular decision making on senior pay, contributing to securing the Authority's financial sustainability and to being able to demonstrate the fair and equitable allocation of pay.
Budget	Pay awards agreed and published by the National Joint Councils are taken into consideration when setting the Authority's annual budget.
Legal	Under section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 the Fire and Rescue Authority has a legal duty to produce an annual Pay Policy Statement.
Staffing	The Pay Policy Statement supports the principles of transparency, equal pay and support for staff.
Equalities/ Human Rights/ Welsh Language	Equal treatment in respect of pay is an important part of the FRA Equality objectives.
Risks	Non-compliance with legislation leads to legal and reputational risk.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Pay Policy Statement 2026/27

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's (the Authority) primary role is to:
- perform all the duties and responsibilities of a Fire and Rescue Authority in accordance with appropriate legislation and regulations, in particular the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#), and the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#) (which came into force on 1 October 2006), and the [1995 Combination Scheme](#);
 - agree the annual service plans the revenue and capital budgets and the contribution for the constituent councils; and
 - monitor the revenue and capital budgets and deal with any significant variations, including decisions on any supplementary contributions.
- 1.2 In order to fulfil its role, the Authority appoints staff to undertake duties on its behalf and in doing so must follow all relevant employment legislation. The Authority also follows a number of key principles which ensure affordability, equal pay, transparency and support for low pay.
- 1.3 The purpose of this document is to meet the Authority's legal obligations under the Localism Act 2011 and to provide information regarding the Authority's approach to setting the pay of its employees. It provides information on the remuneration of Chief Officers and employees on the lowest pay scale. It also provides information on the methods by which salaries are determined for all staff.
- 1.4 The document covers the period 1 April 2026 - 31 March 2027 and provides a framework for decision making on pay and in particular decision making on senior pay.
- 1.5 The Pay Policy Statement is an annual document prepared and approved by the Authority prior to the commencement of the financial year to which it relates.

2.0 Legislative framework

- 2.1 Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh Local Authorities to produce a Pay Policy Statement from 2012/13 and for each financial year after that. The Act also requires the Authority to have due regard for any guidance issued by Welsh Ministers. The Welsh Government updated the guidance in November 2021, "Pay Accountability within Local Government in Wales".

- 2.2 The Act defines remuneration widely and includes pay, allowances, benefits in kind, increases in/enhancements of pension entitlements and termination payments.
- 2.3 In determining the pay and remuneration of all its employees, the Authority is required to comply with all relevant legislation. This includes the Equality Act 2010, Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, Agency Workers Regulations 2010 and, where relevant, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006.
- 2.4 The Authority ensures that there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures to meet its obligations under the equal pay requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Job evaluation processes are embedded across the organisation to ensure that pay differentials between employees can be objectively justified and salaries directly relate to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role.

3.0 Decision making including consideration of value for money

- 3.1 This policy applies to all Authority employees.
- 3.2 The Authority advocates collective bargaining arrangements and supports existing national level provisions that govern pay and conditions of service for the following employee groups:
- National Joint Council (NJC) for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services, Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service (Gold Book)
 - Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers of Local Authorities; Constitution, Conditions of Service, Salaries (Blue Book)
 - National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book)
 - National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services (Green Book).
- 3.3 Pay levels are reviewed annually through these collective bargaining arrangements and any “cost of living” award associated with contractual conditions is implemented upon receipt of notification from the relevant negotiating body.
- 3.4 The Authority will consider any contractual ‘cost of living’ award for its chief officers in the context of similar decisions on lower paid employees and in accordance with the outcome of collective bargaining outlined above.

- 3.5 All roles conditioned to the NJC for Local Government Services are subject to the Authority's job evaluation scheme which objectively assesses each role on creation of a new post, changes to existing posts or at periodic intervals to determine a fair remuneration pay grade comparable across this group of staff. On voluntary cessation of their duties no additional payments will be made.
- 3.6 In accordance with the constitution, the Authority is responsible for approving the annual financial budget including the affordability of employee costs.

4.0 Role of the Chief Fire Officer

- 4.1 The Chief Fire Officer is the Head of Paid Service and is responsible for the Service. The role is a full-time appointment and the post holder is appointed on merit and against objective criteria following an open competitive process. The selection process is overseen by an Appointment Panel comprising of members of the Authority.
- 4.2 The Chief Fire Officer works closely with elected members to deliver the strategic aims of the Authority. The organisation has an annual revenue budget of approximately £54.375 million and a capital budget of £6.661 million and is responsible for a wide range of services under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, employing some 900 staff.

5.0 Chief Officers' Pay

- 5.1 The Authority's pay policy for the remuneration of chief officers, including the Chief Fire Officer, is aligned to the National Joint Council arrangements. Under these arrangements, Brigade Manager pay is reviewed annually at national level which provides the minimum salary for chief fire officers.
- 5.2 Remuneration of chief officers on appointment will be to the market-related base pay prevailing at the time of appointment and approved by the full Authority. In addition, a car will be provided in order to carry out the roles.
- 5.3 The remuneration of chief officers is also subject to a pay review undertaken on a periodical basis. This process benchmarks the chief officer salary levels against relevant comparators in other fire and rescue authorities. The pay review process was approved by the Authority during 2021 and the following principles were agreed:

- i. pay scales will be linked to the average basic pay rates collated and published by the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services in order to give appropriate sector-specific comparisons;
- ii. each seniority level will be employed on a three-point scale with progression up the scale to be subject to satisfactory annual appraisal. Each increment in scale will be based upon £1,500 for the CFO; and a relative proportion for the other posts;
- iii. the Authority will pay, at the bottom of the three-point scale, the average basic pay for an authority in Population Band 2, which will be inclusive of all duties;
- iv. the nationally negotiated and agreed annual pay awards will be automatically applied, as currently happens in the case of “grey book” and “green book” employees (subject to an employee choosing to forego any part of it);
- v. the pay relativities between the roles of CFO, DCFO, ACFO and ACO will be restored. The salary of each seniority level will be calculated as a proportion of the Chief Fire Officer's salary as follows:

	Salary relative to CFO
Chief Fire Officer	
Deputy Chief Fire Officer	80%
Assistant Chief Fire Officer	75%
Assistant Chief Officer	60%

- vi. posts will be sized appropriately, relative to their seniority level, and will be of equal size across all at that level in order to ensure that officers receive equal pay for work of equal value; and
- vii. pay will be reviewed at regular intervals in line with the requirements under the ‘two- track’ approach for determining levels of pay for Brigade Managers as prescribed by the National Joint Council. Three years is the accepted interval.

- 5.4 The triannual benchmarking of the Chief Fire Officer's salary was considered by the Executive Panel at its meeting of 16 December 2024. This found that the principles set out above remained valid and confirmed the pay for the Chief Fire Officer was appropriate.
- 5.5 The Authority does not pay any bonuses or additional enhancements such as performance related pay. On voluntary cessation of their duties no additional payments will be made to chief officers.
- 5.6 Following resignation or retirement from their duties no additional payments will be made other than those due for salary purposes or payments made to an individual in line with the appropriate pension scheme on retirement. Such payments may include salary paid in lieu of notice, pension benefit entitlements and holiday pay.
- 5.7 In circumstances where a severance package is being considered upon an agreed cessation of duties other than for the reasons outlined above, the Authority will be offered the opportunity to vote before any severance package is approved for chief officers.
- 5.8 Information on the remuneration of chief officers is published as part of the Authority's annual Statement of Accounts. These are published on the Authority's website.
- 5.9 Business expenses such as for train, car mileage, overnight accommodation and parking are claimed back in accordance with the organisation's travel and subsistence policy which is applicable to all employees.
- 5.10 Chief officers are members of the relevant pension scheme. The Authority does not permit increases or enhancements to the pension outside of standard arrangements.
- 5.11 The notice period for chief officer roles is 3 months.

6.0 Senior Staff

- 6.1 For the purposes of this Pay Policy Statement the term "chief officer" is not limited to Head of Paid Service and includes those who report directly to the Chief Fire Officer. This includes the Monitoring Officer, the Section 151 Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officers and Assistant Chief Officers.

6.2 These posts are covered by a range of terms and conditions:

Employee Group	Terms and Conditions	Other benefits	Pension arrangements
Chief Fire Officer	Gold Book	Car provided	Local Government Pension Scheme
Monitoring Officer	Provided by a named officer from Flintshire County Council under a contracted-out arrangement		
Treasurer (section 151 officer)	Part time contract negotiated outside of national terms and conditions.		
Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Gold Book	Car provided	Local Government Pension Scheme or Firefighters' Pension Scheme
Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Gold Book	Car provided	Local Government Pension Scheme or Firefighters' Pension Scheme
Assistant Chief Officer	Blue Book	Car provided	Local Government Pension Scheme

7.0 Talent management

7.1 The Authority's strategic focus is on supporting and developing the quality of leadership in the Service. This includes increasing the capacity of existing management teams, planning the development of future leaders, championing leadership values throughout the organisation and attracting effective leaders, where appropriate, from other sectors.

8.0 Performance related pay

8.1 There is currently no performance related pay scheme in operation for any role across the Service.

9.0 Remuneration of other staff other than chief officers

9.1 The Authority's pay policy for the remuneration of employees who are not chief officers is aligned to nationally agreed salary rates negotiated through the National Joint Council comprising of national employer and employee representatives.

Employee Group	Terms and Conditions	Other benefits	Pension Arrangements
Officers (Station Managers, Group Managers and Area Managers)	Grey Book	A lease car is provided for staff on the flexi duty rota	Firefighters' Pension Scheme
Head of Corporate Departments	Blue Book	None	Local Government Pension Scheme
Firefighters	Grey Book	None	Firefighters' Pension Scheme
Apprentice Firefighters	Grey Book	None	Firefighters' Pension Scheme
Control Staff	Grey Book	None	Local Government Pension Scheme
Fire Safety and Prevention	Green Book	None	Local Government Pension Scheme
Corporate Services	Green Book	None*	Local Government Pension Scheme
Apprentices	Green Book	None	Local Government Pension Scheme
* A lease car is provided on an optional basis for a small number of posts where significant or frequent travel is undertaken			

- 9.2 The lowest paid employee is engaged on the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services (Green Book) spinal column point 6 which equates to £25,989 per annum from 1 April 2025. The Authority occasionally employs apprentices who are not included within the definition of 'lowest paid employees' as they are not employed under contracts of employment.
- 9.3 The statutory guidance under the Localism Act 2011 recommends the use of pay multiples as a means of measuring the relationship between pay rates across the workforce and that of senior managers, as included within the Hutton 'Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector' (2010).
- 9.4 The 2025/26 pay levels within the Authority define the multiple between the lowest paid (full time equivalent basic pay) employee scale and the Chief Fire Officer as 1:6.27.

- 9.5 The Hutton report on fair pay in the public sector was asked to explore the case for a fixed limit on pay dispersion in the public sector, through a requirement that no public sector manager can earn more than 20 times the lowest paid person in the organisation. The report concluded that the relationship to median earnings was a more relevant measure and the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency recommends the publication of the ratio between highest paid salary and the median salary of the whole of the Authority's workforce. The multiple between the median full time basic equivalent earnings and the Chief Fire Officer is 1:4.19 (excluding RDS). Please note this figure includes full time salaries only and excludes allowances.
- 9.6 The Authority publishes information on the remuneration of Chief Officers, the median earnings of the organisation's workforce, and the ratio between these two figures in their annual financial statement to demonstrate the relationship between the two.

10.0 Support for lower paid staff

- 10.1 All employees of the Service are paid above the statutory National Living Wage. The Authority is committed to fair pay and to supporting lower paid employees and is currently working towards accreditation as a Real Living Wage Employer, in line with the principles promoted by the Living Wage Foundation.
- 10.2 A range of additional support measures are available to employees, including access to the Blue Light Discount Card, which provides discounts across a wide range of retailers and services. Further support includes a Cycle to Work scheme, an Employee Assistance Programme, counselling services, Occupational Health provision and childcare vouchers.
- 10.3 A physiotherapy scheme is also offered to all employees. Employees receive financial assistance to refer themselves for therapy arising from muscular-skeletal injury or other ailments.

11.0 Additions to Salary of Other Employees

- 11.1 Where appropriate, and in line with national conditions of service or local agreement, individuals may receive an allowance in addition to their salary. Examples include, but are not restricted to:
- on-call or out of hours provision
 - continuous availability
 - additional responsibility
 - rent, fuel and light allowance
 - telephone allowance
 - pension employer contributions
 - mileage allowances

12.0 Honoraria

- 12.1 A member of staff who performs duties outside the scope of his or her post over an extended period may be granted a one-off additional payment of an amount dependent upon the circumstances of each case. Examples include:
- where an employee temporarily carries out significant additional work over and above their usual responsibilities; or
 - where an employee carries out a significant amount of work over their normal contracted hours, but is not eligible for overtime payments because of their placing on a salary scale.
- 12.2 Any determination relating to a proposed honoraria for chief officers would require approval by the Authority.
- 12.3 Decisions relating to all other staff will be considered by the appropriate Head of Department in consultation with the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Finance and Resources).

13.0 Exit policy

- 13.1 On voluntary cessation of their duties no additional payments will be made other than those due for salary purposes or payments made to an individual in line with the appropriate pension scheme on retirement. Such payments may include salary paid in lieu of notice, pension benefit entitlements, holiday pay and any fees or allowances paid.
- 13.2 Employees conditioned to the NJC for Local Government Services may, at the Authority's discretion be entitled to added pension and/or redundancy payments upon authority initiated early termination of employment under the Authority's discretions in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended) and the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 (as amended) – generally referred to as the Discretionary Compensation Regulations.
- 13.3 The Service has a policy for severance or exit arrangements.
- 13.4 Former employees are, on occasion, re-employed by the Service. Where the combined earnings and pension exceed the inflation adjusted final salary in the original employment the pension is subject to abatement in accordance with the scheme regulations.

14.0 Off payroll arrangements

14.1 The Authority does not routinely engage with individuals using off payroll arrangements. These are only considered on an exceptional basis for specialist pieces of work for which there is no internal capacity or expertise. The Authority has arrangements in place to ensure that the employment status indicator tool published by HMRC is completed for each supplier before payments are made.

15.0 Appendices

[Appendix 1](#) Chief Officers' salary matrix

[Appendix 2](#) NJC salary rates
[2.1](#) Firefighter Roles
[2.2](#) Retained Duty System
[2.3](#) Control Roles

[Appendix 3](#) NJC for local government services, salary matrix

**North Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Chief Officers Pay Rates (as at Jul 2025)**

Post	Salary	Salary	Salary	% of CFO**
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
CFO*	£159,512	£161,228	£162,945	
DCFO*	£127,919	£129,292	£130,666	80%
ACFO*	£120,022	£121,309	£122,595	75%
ACO	£96,327	£97,356	£98,386	60%

* includes remuneration for continuous duty arrangements

** The nationally agreed NJC pay award effective January 2025, applying a flat-rate uplift of £1,500, has resulted in a marginal variance in pay relativities of approximately 0.002% for the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officers, and 0.003% for the Assistant Chief Officer. These variances do not alter the Authority's agreed pay principles or intended salary relativities and will be realigned to the agreed percentages as part of the next scheduled chief officer pay review in 2027.

External provision of service	Value (per annum)
Monitoring Officer	£ 20,073 (excluding VAT)*
Section 151 Officer	£8,510

*based on last year's cost

FIREFIGHTING ROLES - PAY RATES FROM 1 JULY 2025**(pay award for 1 July 2026 onwards is still subject to national negotiation)**

	Basic annual £	Basic hourly rate £	Overtime rate £
Firefighter			
Development	30,384	13.87	20.81
Competent	38,881	17.75	26.63
Crew Manager			
Development	41,322	18.87	28.31
Competent	43,104	19.68	29.52
Watch Manager			
Development	44,038	20.11	30.17
Competent A	45,260	20.67	31.01
Competent B	48,202	22.01	33.02
Station Manager			
Development	50,135	22.89	34.34
Competent A	51,642	23.58	35.37
Competent B	55,301	25.25	37.88
Group Manager			
Development	57,743	26.37	Not applicable
Competent A	59,476	27.16	Not applicable
Competent B	64,013	29.23	Not applicable
Area Manager			
Development	67,792	30.96	Not applicable
Competent A	69,823	31.88	Not applicable
Competent B	74,360	33.95	Not applicable

APPENDIX 2.2

FIREFIGHTING ROLES – PAY RATES FROM 1 July 2025 (RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM)
 (pay award for 1 July 2026 onwards is still subject to national negotiation)

	(1) £ per Annum	(2) £ per annu m	(3) £ per Hour	(4) £ per occasio n
Firefighter				
Development	4,558	2,279	13.87	5.12
Competent	5,832	2,916	17.75	5.12
Crew Manager				
Development	6,198	3,099	18.87	5.12
Competent	6,466	3,233	19.68	5.12
Watch Manager				
Development	6,606	3,303	20.11	5.12
Competent A	6,789	3,395	20.67	5.12
Competent B	7,230	3,615	22.01	5.12
Station Manager				
Development	7,520	3,760	22.89	5.12
Competent A	7,746	3,873	23.58	5.12
Competent B	9,602	4,801	29.23	5.12
Group Manager				
Development	8,662	4,331	26.37	5.12
Competent A	8,921	4,461	27.16	5.12
Competent B	9,602	4,801	29.23	5.12
Area Manager				
Development	10,169	5,085	30.96	5.12
Competent A	10,473	5,237	31.88	5.12
Competent B	11,154	5,577	33.95	5.12

Column 1 shows the full annual retainer (15% of the full-time basic annual salary, asset out in Appendix A)

Column 2 shows the retainer for employees on the day crewing duty system (7.5% of the full-time basic annual salary, as set out in Appendix A)

Column 3 shows the hourly rate for work undertaken

Column 4 shows the disturbance payment per call-out

CONTROL SPECIFIC ROLES - PAY RATES FROM 1 JULY 2025

(pay award for 1 July 2026 onwards is still subject to national negotiation)

	Basic annual * £	Basic hourly rate £	Overtime rate £
Firefighter (Control)			
Development	28,865	13.18	19.77
Competent	36,937	16.87	25.31
Crew Manager (Control)			
Development	39,256	17.93	26.9
Competent	40,949	18.70	28.05
Watch Manager (Control)			
Development	41,836	19.10	28.65
Competent A	42,997	19.63	29.45
Competent B	45,792	20.91	31.37
Station Manager (Control)			
Development	47,628	21.75	32.63
Competent A	49,060	22.40	33.60
Competent B	52,536	23.99	35.99
Group Manager (Control)			
Development	54,856	25.05	Not applicable
Competent A	56,502	25.80	Not applicable
Competent B	60,812	27.77	Not applicable

*(95% of the respective firefighting role basic annual salary, as set out in AppendixA)

**PAY RATES FROM 1 APRIL 2025 FOR STAFF EMPLOYED ON GREEN BOOK
TERMS AND CONDITIONS (pay negotiations for 26/27 ongoing)**

SCP	01-Apr-25	
	per annum	per hour*
2	£24,413	£12.65
3	£24,796	£12.85
4	£25,185	£13.05
5	£25,583	£13.26
6	£25,989	£13.47
7	£26,403	£13.69
8	£26,824	£13.90
9	£27,254	£14.13
10	£27,694	£14.35
11	£28,142	£14.59
12	£28,598	£14.82
13	£29,064	£15.06
14	£29,540	£15.31
15	£30,024	£15.56
16	£30,518	£15.82
17	£31,022	£16.08
18	£31,537	£16.35
19	£32,061	£16.62
20	£32,597	£16.90
21	£33,143	£17.18
22	£33,699	£17.47
23	£34,434	£17.85
24	£35,412	£18.35
25	£36,363	£18.85
26	£37,280	£19.32
27	£38,220	£19.81
28	£39,152	£20.29
29	£39,862	£20.66
30	£40,777	£21.14
31	£41,771	£21.65
32	£42,839	£22.20
33	£44,075	£22.85
34	£45,091	£23.37
35	£46,142	£23.92
36	£47,181	£24.46
37	£48,226	£25.00
38	£49,282	£25.54
39	£50,269	£26.06
40	£51,356	£26.62
41	£52,413	£27.17
42	£53,460	£27.71
43	£54,495	£28.25

*hourly rate calculated by dividing annual salary by 52.143 weeks (which is 365 days divided by 7) and then divided by 37 hours (the standard working week in the National Agreement 'Green Book')

**PAY RATES FROM 1 APRIL 2025 FOR STAFF EMPLOYED ON BLUE BOOK
TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

(pay negotiations for 26/27 ongoing)

SCP	01-Apr-25	
	per annum	per hour
48	£59,538	£30.86
49	£61,699	£31.98
50	£62,778	£32.54
51	£63,857	£33.10