



NORTH WALES
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT
2020/21
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NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MAKING NORTH WALES A SAFER PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT

Welcome to North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's progress and self-assessment report for 2020/21. In March 2020, the Authority published its Improvement and Well-being Plan for 2020/21 that confirmed its long-term objectives and explained its plans for the year in order to achieve these objectives.

Despite challenging circumstances because of the pandemic, good progress was made in completing planned actions, thereby demonstrating progress against the seven long term Improvement and Well-being Objectives. The section entitled 'Progress against Improvement and Well-being Objectives' details evidence in support of the achievement of these actions.

Since 23rd March 2020, Wales has experienced several periods of lockdown in response to COVID-19. The primary concern of the Authority from the outset was the safety of staff and the public.

It was acknowledged immediately that by reducing contact the Authority could help to reduce the spread of coronavirus infections. Throughout March and into the new financial year the Authority responded positively to the Welsh Government request for people to stay at home in order to protect lives

This meant that many North Wales Fire and Rescue Service staff immediately commenced working from home, travelling only when necessary and maintaining social distancing regulations. Working from home and continued social distancing measures remained at North Wales Fire and Rescue Service sites throughout 2020/21.

As the Service finds new ways of working, it is clear that many of these developments could extend beyond the current crisis, especially technological advances. Further information about how the Authority has responded to the pandemic is available on page 3.

It is hoped that this year's account is interesting and informative. More emphasis has been placed in this year's report on including examples of collaboration and how the Service compares with others. As always, feedback is welcome on how improvements on reporting could be made in the future.

Comments or suggestions for improvement can be made using the contact details available on page 63.

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COVID-19 – IMPACT ON THE AUTHORITY

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority ‘the Authority’ have been unprecedented and far-reaching. By reflecting on the changes that have come about during this period of adversity, the Authority has been able to introduce new thinking into its future planning.

The pandemic presented North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) or ‘the Service’ with numerous challenges to established procedures. Staff responded with ingenuity and resilience, demonstrating the potential for change that can be carried forward into future ways of working:

Home Safety - Although home visits to provide Safe and Well Checks (SAWC) had to be put on hold initially, an alternative process was quickly established to provide advice and guidance by telephone, with doorstep delivery of smoke detectors to residents or their carers if required. For households assessed as being at particularly high risk from fire, visits by the Service in person were recommenced only once appropriate control measures were put in place to protect staff and residents.

Business Fire Safety – Visits to commercial premises to audit their fire safety arrangements were adapted by focusing more on higher risk premises and by making greater use of remote checking of management arrangements.

Working with Young People – Prior to the impact of the pandemic the Service would regularly organise community events including open days at regional fire stations where front-line staff could engage and build relationships with the local community, in order to promote career opportunities. There would also be fire cadets’ programmes and apprenticeship schemes. The first virtual open day was carried out at the end of 2020 as a pilot event and this was successful and very well received. The Service’s engagement with school pupils, fire cadets and participants in the Phoenix Project were all adapted to on-line delivery.

Emergency Response – Control staff normally based in a joint control room with North Wales Police (NWP) moved out of the shared premises and relocated to a ‘fall-back’ site where the infrastructure already existed for handling 999 calls and mobilising fire appliances. This supported social distancing of Control staff, although some benefits of co-location with the Police were lost. Firefighting crews continued throughout to respond to emergency incidents but a range of additional controls and risk reduction measures needed to be quickly introduced to protect against the transmission of COVID-19. Emergency response was supported throughout by ensuring full and substantial risk assessments were not only immediately undertaken but also reviewed as and when information became apparent.

Corporate Functions – Staff working in corporate and managerial roles were enabled to work from home. Despite the obvious impact on the Service’s ICT capacity, staff quickly adapted to communicating and holding meetings through video conferencing. Consequently, staff visits to work premises have been undertaken only very occasionally and for specific reasons.

Other Services (in person) – Some functions, such as staff training, fleet maintenance, stores and estates management rely more heavily on staff being present in person. However, even in these roles alternative ways of working have increased (e.g. e-learning, live classroom sessions delivered virtually and online assessments for training), indicating the potential for working and operating differently in future.

During 2020/21 a report entitled ‘Learning from COVID-19’, was compiled which identified four key emerging themes; the importance of good communication, being well-prepared, maintaining flexibility and agility and gathering a better understanding of cause and effect impacts. This will be used to inform working practices.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING

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

Each year the Authority is required to publish an assessment of its performance in accordance with the legislation below:

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Its aim is to make public bodies think more about the long-term aims, work better with people, communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach¹. The Act requires the Authority to set and publish well-being objectives. These long-term objectives are improvements that the Authority wants to help bring about in North Wales that will contribute to improving local well-being and to moving Wales closer to achieving its well-being goals.



Having identified these long-term objectives, the Authority has a duty to take all reasonable steps to pursue them in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle and the five ways of working and to publish a progress report after the end of each financial year.

Five ways of working;



Balancing short term needs with long term needs



Preventing problems from occurring or getting worse



Taking an integrated approach, balancing social, economic and environmental needs



Remembering the rich diversity of people in North Wales and encouraging them to get involved in decisions that affect them



Collaborative working to meet the well-being objectives.

¹ Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Essentials <https://futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf>

Fire and rescue authorities in Wales are also classed as ‘Welsh Improvement Authorities’ and are subject to the requirements of the Local Government Measure 2009 and therefore must follow an annual process of setting and achieving local improvement objectives.

In addition to the duties placed on individual public bodies, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also requires each local authority area to form a Public Services Board (PSB).

With the area covered by North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, four Public Services Boards have been established:

- Anglesey and Gwynedd
- Conwy and Denbighshire
- Flintshire
- Wrexham.

Each Public Services Board published a ‘Well-being Plan’ to identify its priorities and how it is working to achieve those priorities in its areas.

The Equality Act 2010



Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector equality duty that requires public sector bodies, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.


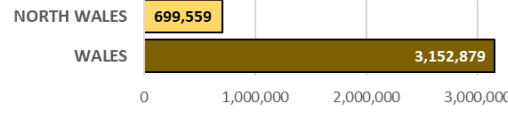

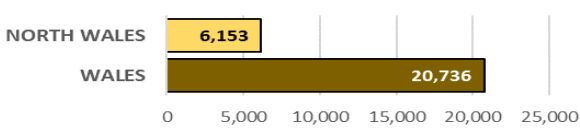

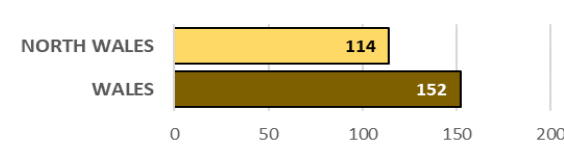

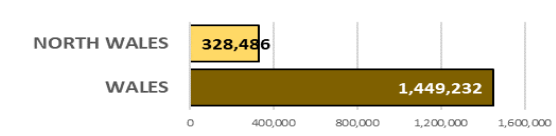

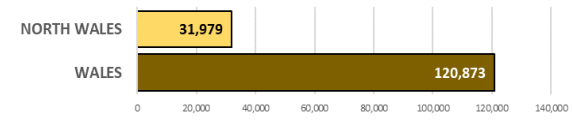

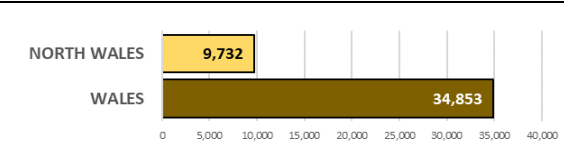

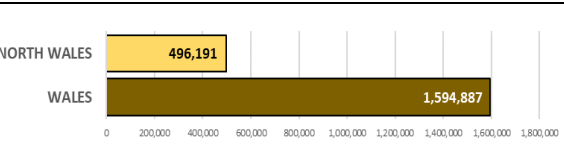

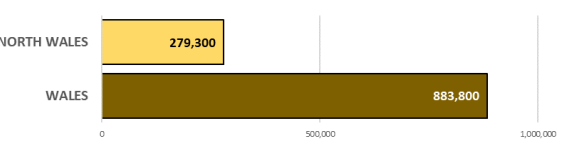
Welsh Language Standards 2016

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued fire and rescue authorities with their Compliance Notices on 30 September 2016. This document lists which of the Welsh Language Standards (as listed in full in the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No.5); 2016) an organisation must comply with, along with any exemptions and their implementation dates.



ABOUT NORTH WALES

Knowing about North Wales today helps the Authority plan to make positive changes for the future:

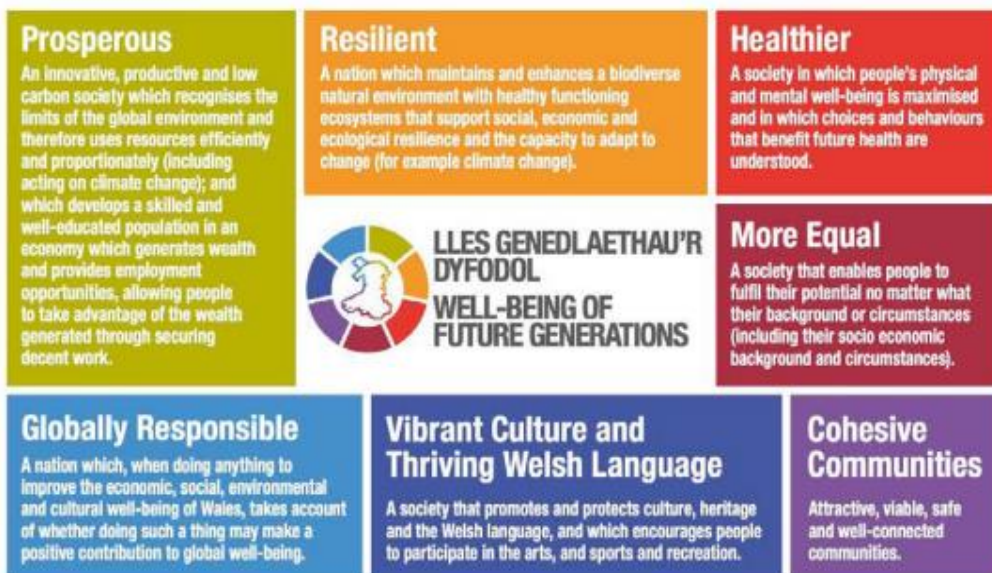
Population:			
	 <p>NORTH WALES 699,559 WALES 3,152,879</p>	22.2% of Wales	Source: Welsh Government
Area KM²:			
	 <p>NORTH WALES 6,153 WALES 20,736</p>	29.7% of Wales	Source: Welsh Government
Population Density:			
	 <p>NORTH WALES 114 WALES 152</p>	114 The Welsh average is 152	Source: Welsh Government
Dwellings:			
	 <p>NORTH WALES 328,486 WALES 1,449,232</p>	22.7% of Wales	Source: Welsh Government
Non Domestic Properties:			
	 <p>NORTH WALES 31,979 WALES 120,873</p>	26.5% of Wales	Source: Welsh Government
Road Length KM:			
	 <p>NORTH WALES 9,732 WALES 34,853</p>	27.9% of Wales	Source: Welsh Government
Agricultural Area KM²:			
	 <p>NORTH WALES 496,191 WALES 1,594,887</p>	31.1% of Wales	Source: Welsh Government
Welsh Speakers:			
	 <p>NORTH WALES 279,300 WALES 883,800</p>	31.6% of Wales	Source: Welsh Government

FUTURE TRENDS IN WALES

The Future Generations Commissioner is required to publish a ‘[Future generations](#)’ report every five years in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. These reports have been used to help shape the Authority’s planning by understanding how Wales may change over the coming years and also serves as a reminder of the Wales that everyone should be striving to achieve for future generations.



The Well-being of Future Generations Act provides a guiding framework for how we should seek to respond to anticipated pressures and changes in the short, medium and long term. The Act allows us to make the right decisions, to help us shift towards a broader term preventative outlook on how we run our society and public services.



“The COVID-19 pandemic has shown what can be achieved when public bodies work closely with community-help initiatives in their areas, particularly concerning vulnerable and isolated people, and this should continue beyond the pandemic to help connect communities in Wales.”

“Fortunately the future is not fixed. The actions we take, or don’t take, today, make a difference to the future we see tomorrow.”

Growth of the population:

Understanding the demography of communities in North Wales, and how it is likely to change in the future, will help the Authority to plan and resource itself appropriately. Fewer children are being born and people are living longer. As a result, the average age of the population is increasing. This has significant implications for the whole of society.

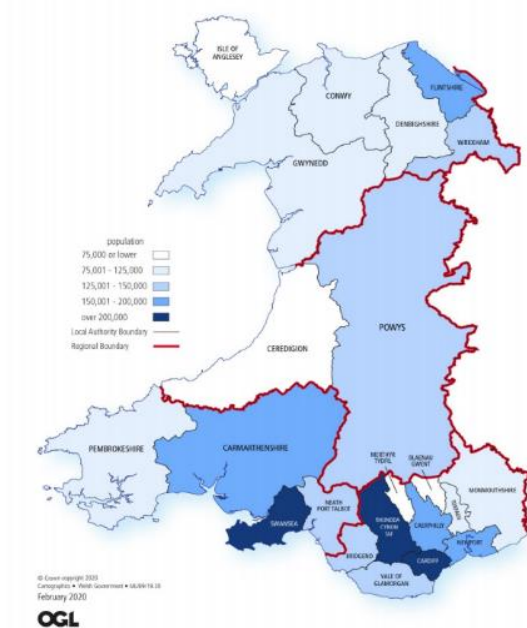
Responding to this demographic shift will require adaptations across many aspects of people's lives: how they work; are cared for; how they communicate and interact with one other; the infrastructure and how they learn and use technology.

The Authority will need to understand the nature and implications of these demographic changes in order to adapt successfully and deliver its mission statement.

In 2018, the population of Wales was just over 3 million, but projection figures suggest that by 2043 the population will have increased to over 3,350,000.

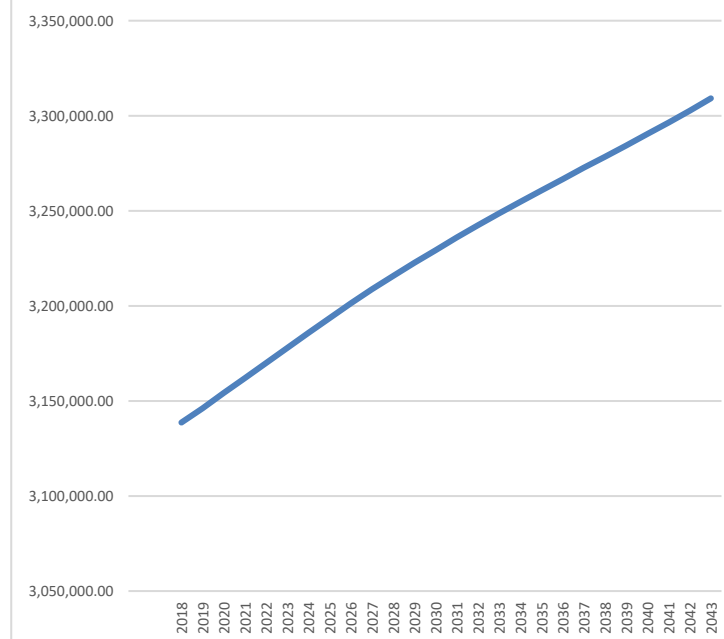
According to the Strategy for Older People in Wales (2013-2023): Living Longer, Ageing Well - *“The population of Wales is set to get older. Although people are living longer, they are not necessarily living in good health: at 65, most people in Wales can expect to spend just over half their remaining life in good health, and by 2025 there could be 50,000 people in this age group living with dementia.”*

Figure 1: Population, by local authority, 2018



Source: Mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics

Population Projections



Source: Welsh Government

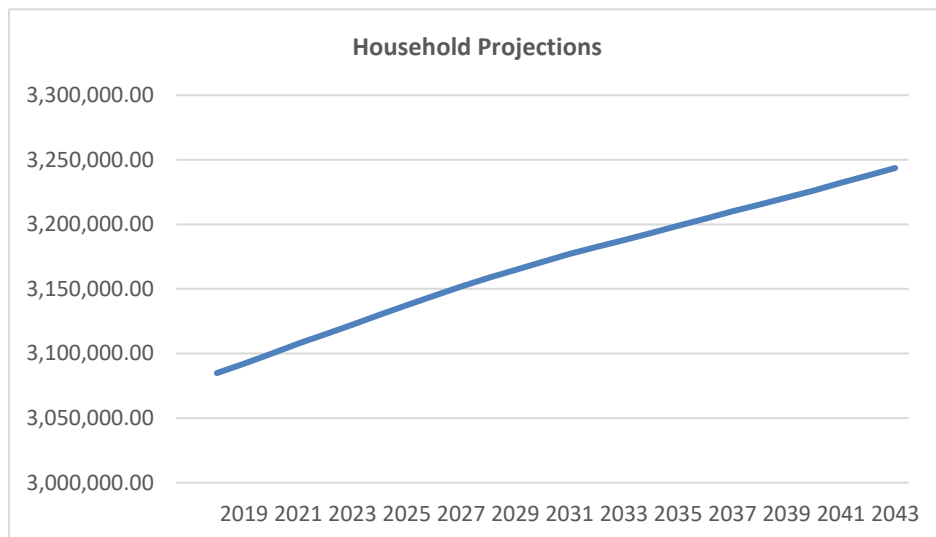
The Authority is interested in this because, it needs to:

- tailor the Service provided in accordance with projected increases in elderly residents and continue to be mindful of the shifting demographics;
- continue with education activities by working with schools and youth clubs;
- keep safety messages relevant, informative and interesting;

- monitor health trends that may involve adapting to new ways of working;
- monitor how changes in the way that people live at home may affect services. For example:
 - changes to lifestyle and cooking behaviours.
 - more people working from home
 - more people working shifts

Increases in the number of households:

The Commissioner’s report states that - *“The number of households in Wales is projected to steadily increase over the next 20 years”*.



“The number of households in Wales is projected to grow faster than the population between 2016 and 2039, with more people wanting to live alone or in smaller family groups. To meet this increased demand for homes, Welsh Government predict Wales will need an average of 8,300 new homes every year until 2023 and then 4,000 a year until the mid-2030s.”

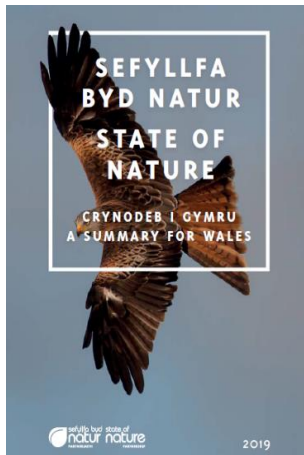
[Source: Welsh Government](#)

The Authority is interested in this because, it needs to:

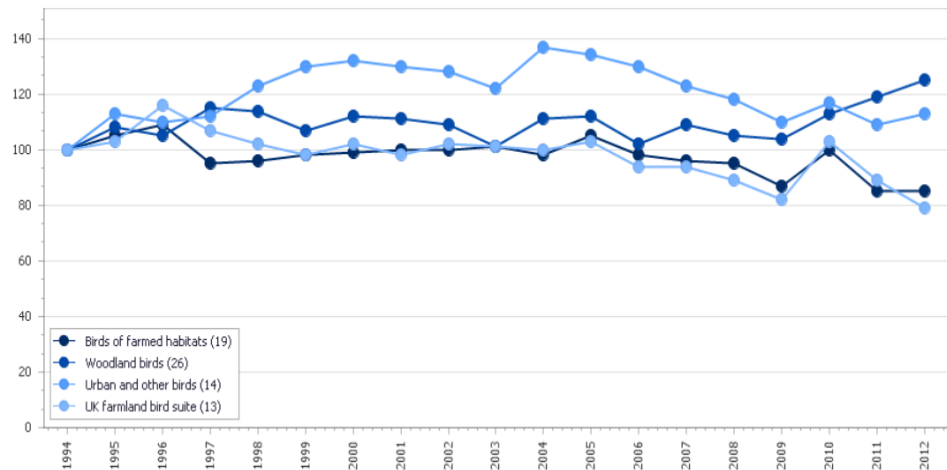
- stay informed of the locations of new buildings and housing estates so it can continue to attend quickly when needed;
- keep up to date with potential changes to building materials and understand how they may effect fire when it does occur;
- ensure that fire regulations are adhered to and that legislation is enforced where needed;
- continue to engage with local communities to reiterate the importance of fire safety, keeping up to date with technology and social media to help deliver safety messages

Global Species Decline

The future generations report states that - "On average, 25% of species in assessed animal and plant groups are threatened globally with numbers across species groups either decreasing or staying stable since 1990. Around 1 million species face extinction without actions to reduce biodiversity loss, with several being at risk within decades."



[Source: State of Nature](#)



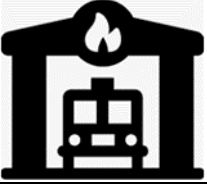







[Source: Welsh Government](#)

The Authority is interested in this because, it needs to:

- continue to build on the collaboration work already taking place with land owners to reduce risk of wild fires that could harm vital habitats;
- continue to work with partner agencies to assist with flood prevention and response as and when they occur;
- be able to calculate its own carbon foot print and work towards reducing it;
- reduce the number of fires, and reduce the level of harmful pollutants that are released into the atmosphere

ABOUT NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Below is a snapshot of the Authority’s resources and activity levels during 2020/21.

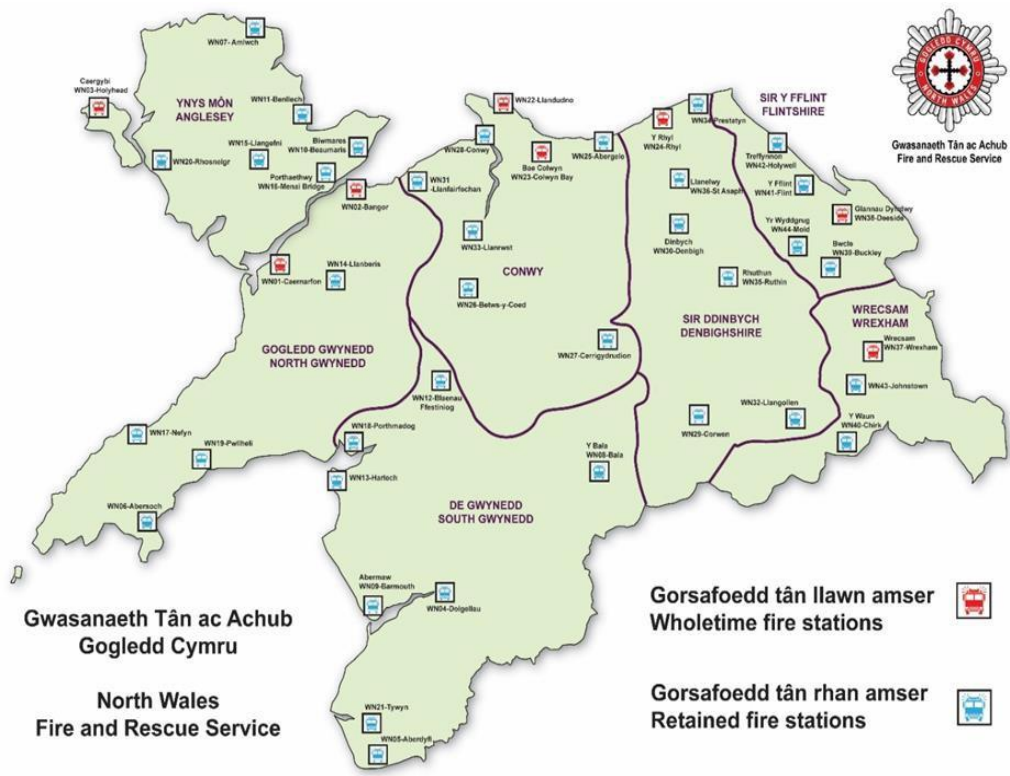
Fire Stations	Fire Engines	999 Calls Handled	Fire Service Staff
			
44	54	10,715	857
Emergency Incidents Attended	Fires	False Alarms	Non-Fire Emergencies
			
4,699	1,770	2,315	614

Fire Stations

The Service operates from 44 fire stations across the service area.

Whole-time Fire Stations - There are three fire stations that remain open around the clock. Five fire stations are crewed between midday and 10:00pm, and operate as on-call stations outside those hours.

Retained/on-call Fire Stations – There are 36 fire stations that operate an on-call system. The deployment of fire appliances and crews to emergency incidents is managed centrally by control room staff who are based in St Asaph.

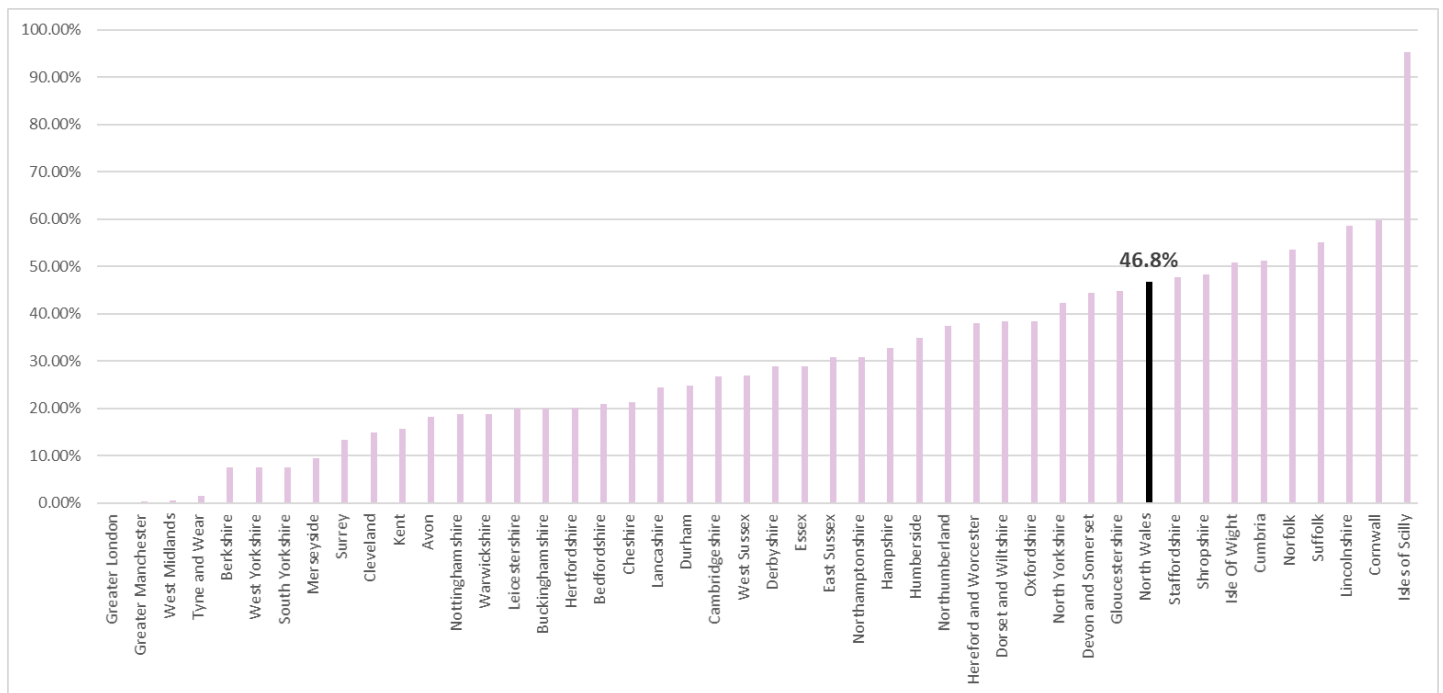


Staffing

As at 31 March 2021	Full time equivalent strength	Headcount of individual staff
Wholetime Operational (WDS)	260.00	260
Retained Operational (RDS/on-call)	352.75	422
Support and Prevention	134.39	143
Control	31.25	32
Totals	778.39	857

Nearly half of the personnel employed by the Authority are categorised as on-call firefighters; this is amongst the highest proportion when compared with fire and rescue authorities in England.

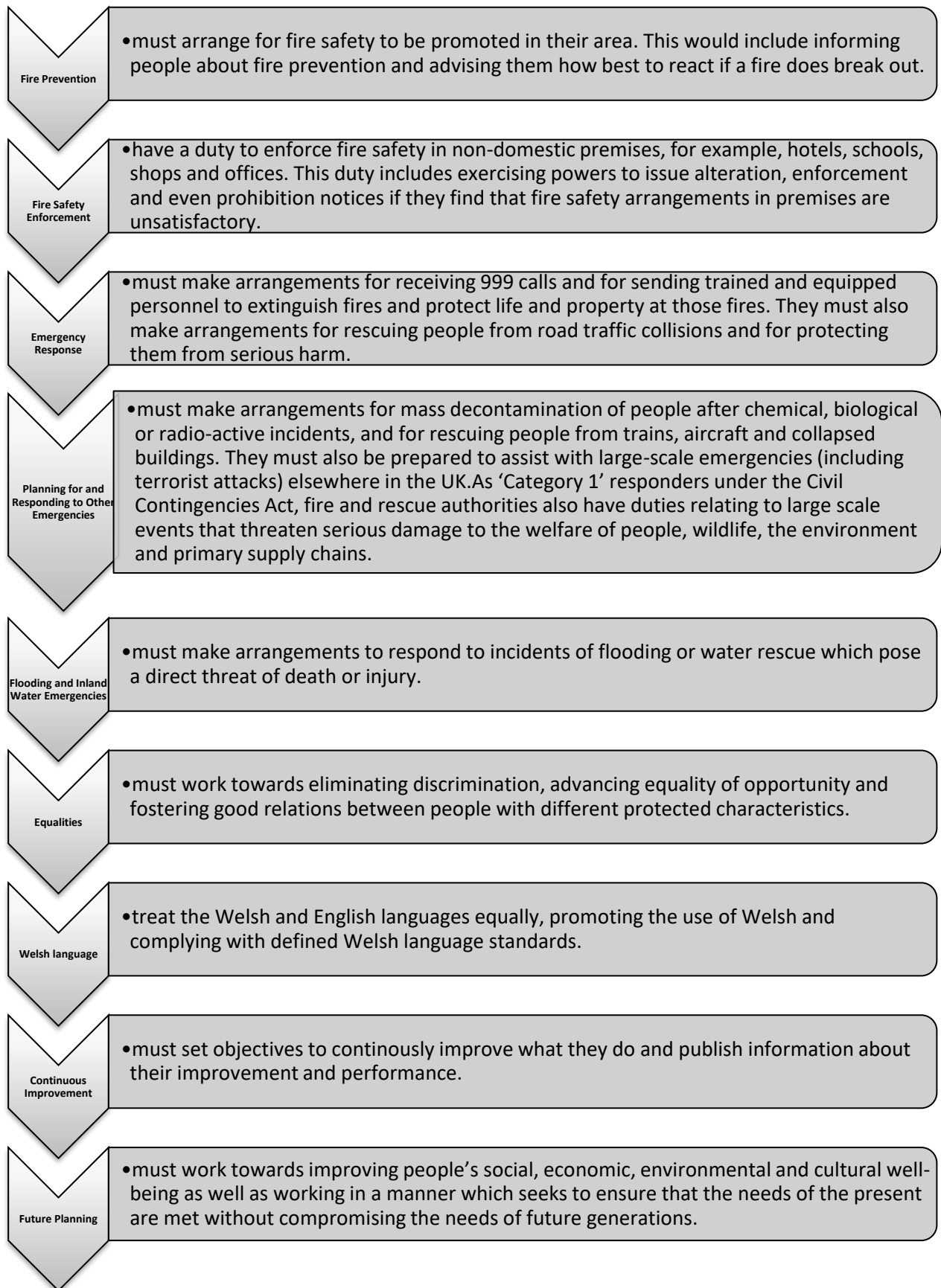
Graph showing the total number of on-call firefighters (by strength) as a percentage of the total workforce, by fire and rescue authorities in England and North Wales.



Source: [Fire statistics data tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-data-tables)

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales:



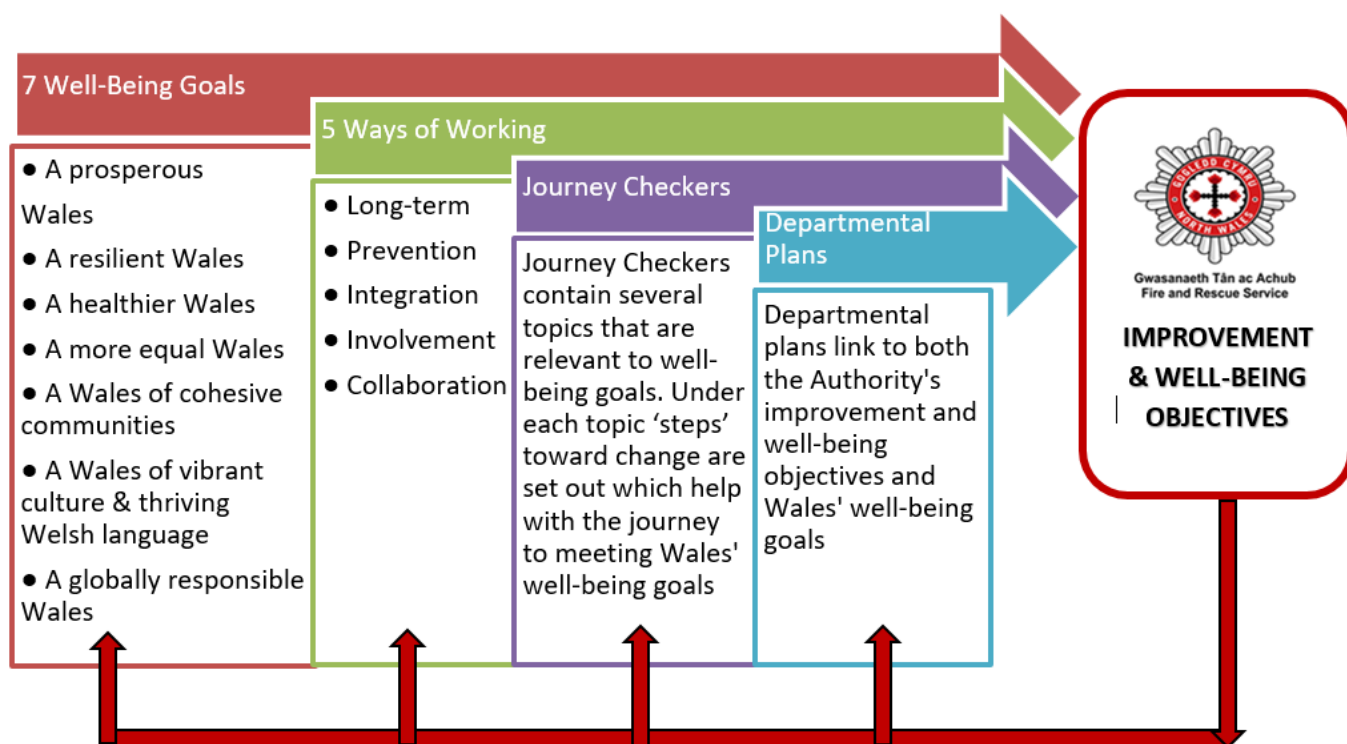
PROGRESS AGAINST IMPROVEMENT AND WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES

This section describes the progress the Authority has made towards meeting its improvement and well-being objectives for 2020/21. The Authority is required to publish this assessment of its own performance for 2020/21 and the statutory performance indicators for the same year by 31st October 2021.

Feedback from the Well-Being of Future Generations Commissioner in 2018/19 recommended that the Authority increase the number of objectives that it was pursuing to better comply with section 3(2) (a) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. This states that a public body must set and publish objectives “...that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals”.

In response, the Authority approved a review of its improvement and well-being objectives for 2020/21. A new set of objectives was drafted in accordance with the sustainable development principle using a variety of resources on the Commissioner’s [website](#) such as ‘journey checkers’ that helped identify opportunities for the Authority to improve its contribution to Wales’ well-being goals.

Following a series of meetings with heads of departments, workshops with Authority Members, and using feedback from the public consultation in 2019, the Authority approved a final suite of seven revised and expanded improvement and well-being objectives. The diagram below illustrates the links between these.



Where possible, comparisons have been made with the other two Welsh fire and rescue services along with English fire and rescue services similar to North Wales in terms of geography, demography, and population size; Cumbria, North Yorkshire, Hereford and Worcester, Devon and Somerset, and Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Services. Where possible, comparisons are made with other public bodies in the region, such as Natural Resources Wales. Comparative data was not available for the year 2020/21, at the time of producing this report and therefore 2019/20 data has been used.

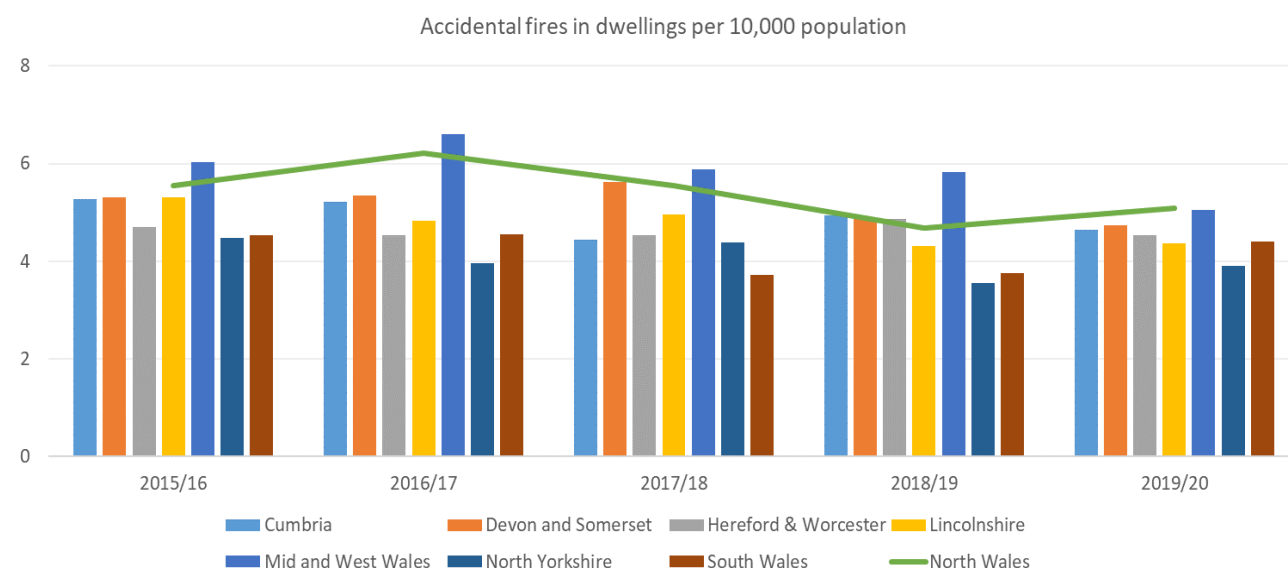
Objective 1: To work towards making improvements to the health, safety and well-being of people in North Wales



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

Individuals and communities who know how to prevent fires and stay safe when they do occur will not only be safer and healthier but economically, socially and culturally more resilient. The polluting effect of fires contributes to a less healthy environment, which in turn deters people from outdoor activities and can negatively impact on physical and mental well-being. Throughout 2020/21 the Authority continued to focus its efforts on helping people stay safe whether at home, in work, on the roads or out in the community.

Action: support people to prevent accidental dwelling fires and stay safe if they do occur



The Service attended a total of 360 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) in 2020/21, with 96 people injured or killed. The graph above highlights the comparative five-year trend observed from 2015/16 to 2019/20 between the similar English Fire and Rescue Services and other two Welsh Fire and Rescue Services. It shows that there were approximately 5 ADFs attended per 10,000 population in 2019/20 which represents a slight decrease from the 6 per 10,000 in 2016/17. Whilst the number of ADFs per 10,000 population in North Wales has reduced overall since 2015/16, 2019/20 saw a slight increase. When compared nationally, the number of ADFs per 10,000 population in 2019/20 in North Wales remained lower than South Wales and more in line with Mid and West Wales.

During the year, the Service released a number of targeted safety messages, appealing to people to take extra care and urging responsible behaviour during the lockdown. This included reinforcing messages around the dangers of burning garden and household waste.



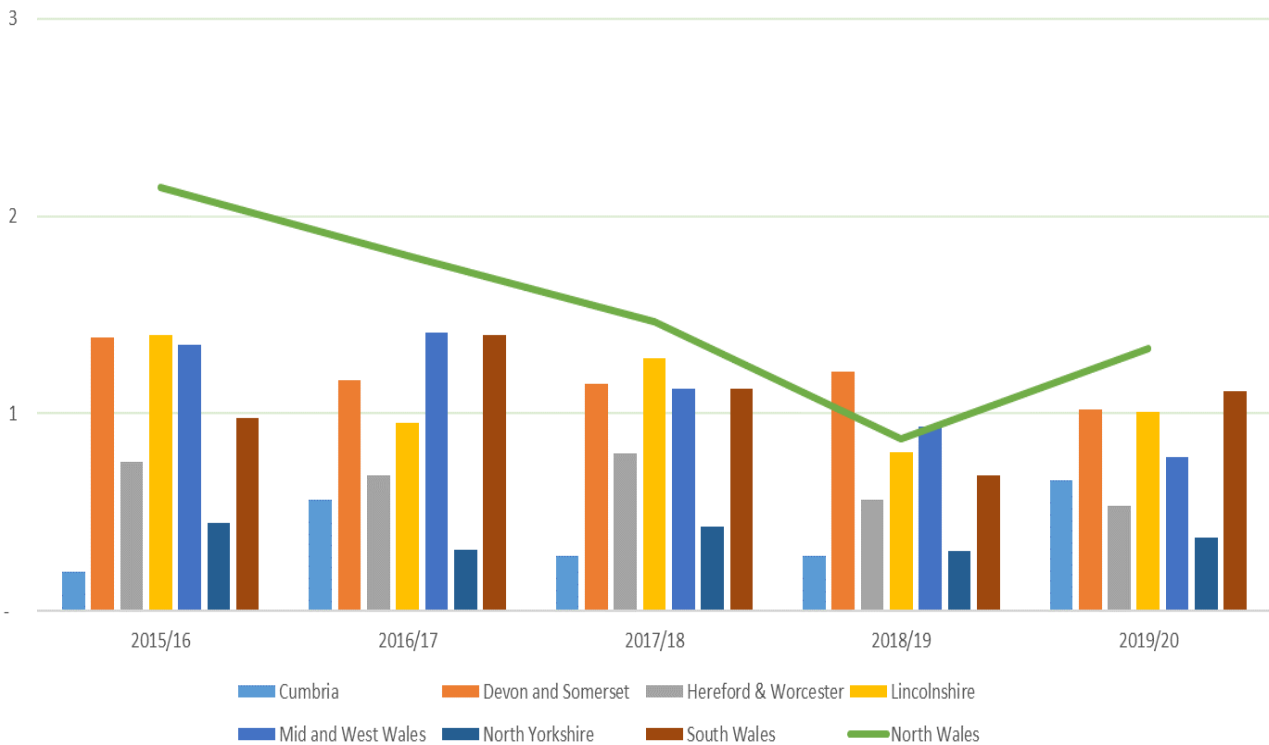
The 2020 Christmas ‘Electrical Safety First’ campaign focused on raising awareness of counterfeit smart technology and promoted the purchase of genuine smart technology from reputable manufacturers or high street names.

A new partnership trial was developed with NHS teams in North Wales to help protect vulnerable residents. This expanded existing links with members of Service staff working closely with NHS colleagues to distribute 'safety packs' of information, including smoke alarms left with patients by NHS staff. Contact details for NWFRS were included as well as fire safety leaflets.

The Service continued to deliver SAWCs either Welsh or English, depending on the language choice of the occupant.

The graph below illustrates the overall reduction in casualties at ADFs over the five years 2015/16 to 2019/20. However between 2018/19 and 2019/20 there was an increase in ADF casualties per 10,000 of the population and this has been observed to continue into 2020/21 The Service is working to understand and improve preventative action where necessary.

Accidental dwelling fire casualties per 10,000 population



Action: develop knowledge and understand factors that contribute to a person's vulnerability to dwelling fires and utilise this to provide well-timed, targeted messaging to build awareness of risk and consequences and try to influence and change behaviours

During the lockdown in 2020, campaigning focused on encouraging the public not to burn garden or household waste and on ways to avoid having cooking fires.



The Service released safety messages to help explain to the public that unknowingly, people were contributing to the problem of fly tipping by using non-registered waste operators, with some then illegally dumping collected household/garden waste that became a target for arson. The Service made an appeal on the television channel 'S4C' in July 2020 with the aim of reducing demand on firefighting resources and reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

A report was published following the first phase of the Grenfell Tower inquiry, this included addressing recommendations in relation to procedures for control room and firefighting staff. The Service remained committed to implementing the findings and recommendations of the report and further phases of inquiry.

Action: deliver 20,000 SAWCs in either English or Welsh with at least 25% of those being delivered to households referred to the Service by another agency

The Service continued offering free SAWCs to residents across North Wales. The checks are undertaken by fully trained staff and involve the provision and installation of smoke detectors (or ensuring those already installed are in working order), advice on making homes safe from fire, assistance preparing an escape plan in the event of fire, and assessment of whether someone is of high risk and could benefit from specialist safety equipment.

As part of its commitment to working towards a healthier Wales, the Service focused on delivering timely SAWCs during 2020/21. The Authority has consistently had a target of 20,000 SAWCs per year with 5,000 of those coming from agency referrals. However, lockdown restrictions affected this during the year amid concerns about the safety of staff and members of the public. The Service limited face-to-face SAWCs to high-risk individuals, with others delivered through telephone contact.

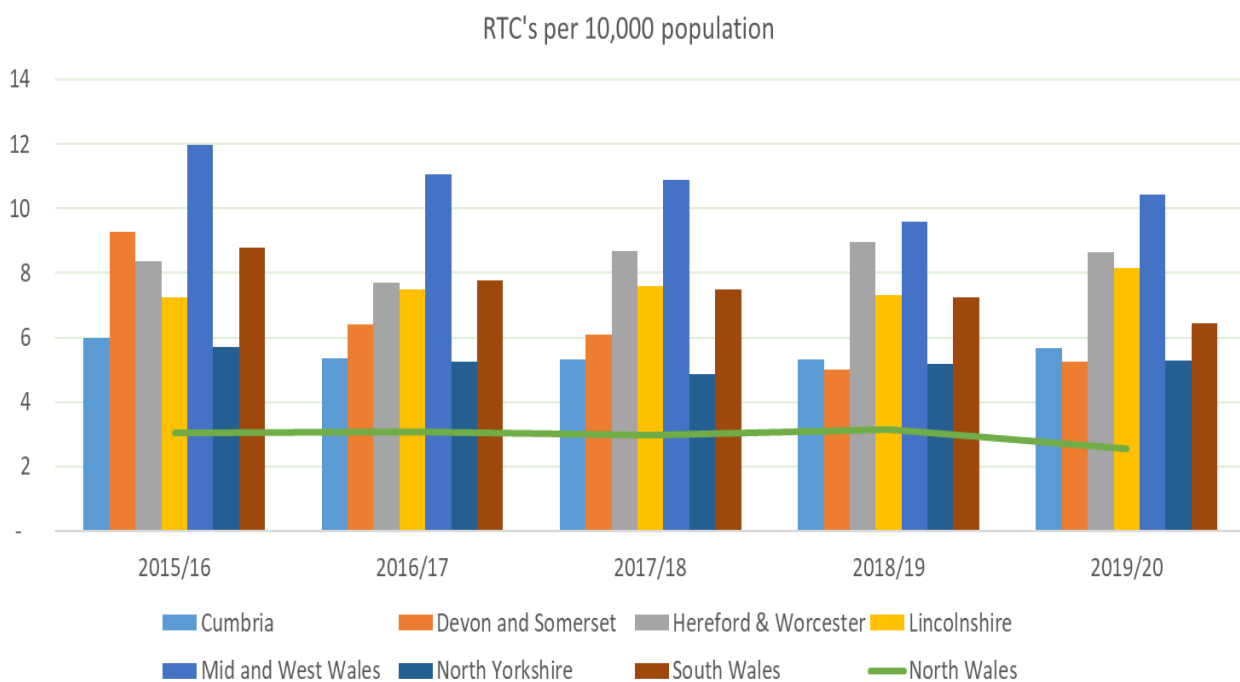
In June 2020, in line with the easing of restrictions by the Government on work, schools and social activity, more fire safety interventions were reintroduced albeit with changes to delivery methods. In total 11,334 SAWCs were completed with 3,908 coming from partner agency referrals. As a result of limitations imposed by the pandemic 1,795 SAWCs were completed face-to-face and 9,539 were completed via telephone. Unfortunately, the limitations imposed by the pandemic meant the target of 20,000 SAWCs could not safely be met.

The Service was reassured by similar issues regarding the delivery of SAWCs being raised elsewhere in the UK. In its half-year performance report 2020/2021, Devon and Somerset FRS reported that the number of home fire safety visits (equivalent to SAWCs) reduced because of the pandemic. Its approach focused on ensuring that only the most essential visits were undertaken, for the safety of both staff and the public. Like NWFRS, the number of visits has gradually increased with the easing of restrictions.

Action: support other agencies in reducing the number of road traffic collisions and associated deaths and injuries

Fire and rescue services are responsible for rescuing people in the event of road traffic collisions (RTCs). The graph below shows that North Wales attended a total of 3 RTCs per 10,000 of the population in the 2019/20 financial year. Of those, 42 required the use of equipment to rescue those trapped; approximately 3 attendances per 10,000 of the population.

Whilst the number of RTCs attended in North Wales stayed relatively consistent over the five-year period from 2015/16 to 2019/20, there was a reduction in RTCs attended in the financial year 2020/21 from 179 in 2019/20, to 105. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service also saw a reduction in the number of RTCs attended in 2020/21 when compared with the year before. It is likely that other fire and rescue services witnessed a similar reduction due to pandemic restrictions which resulted in there being fewer vehicles on the roads.



In September 2020, the Service provided support to 'Project EDWARD' (Every Day Without A Road Death) and the Association for Road Risks Management's efforts to keep roads safe and reduce deaths and serious injury. Service personnel engaged with NWP and created a video promoting road safety, which was shared across various social media platforms.



DutchReach

When exiting a vehicle check your mirrors and open the door as follows:

- Reach for the handle with your far hand
- Swivel your upper body
- Check over your shoulder to the rear
- Open the door slightly and check again before exiting the vehicle

In November, the Service promoted a strategy as part of Road Safety Week aimed at reducing cycling accidents; the 'Dutch Reach' manoeuvre is a technique used to help prevent 'dooring' cyclists when suddenly opening a vehicle door.

Action: embed safeguarding practices into day-to-day activities and ensuring these are aligned with national policy and guidance

The Service supported National Safeguarding week in November 2020, developing and launching a mandatory safeguarding module aimed at raising awareness of the importance of community safety among staff. Colleagues also attended online North Wales Safeguarding Board meetings and collaborated with counterparts in Mid & West and South Wales Fire and Rescue Services.

The Service also worked closely with partners as part of the local resilience forum throughout the coronavirus pandemic, with multi-agency plans in place for ensuring the ongoing safety of the public. This forum allowed key emergency workers to consult, collaborate and disclose information with each other and facilitate responses to emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action: continue to develop and deliver interventions and engagement with children and young people through targeted activities

The three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services promoted the new fire safety mascot, 'Sbarc', which helped to communicate key fire safety messages to children across Wales. The character has captured the imagination of children in order to educate, with a focus on messages of prevention, detection, escape and arson reduction.



During the latter half of the financial year, modified fire safety interventions were gradually reintroduced after restriction during lockdown had affected service delivery. Fire Cadets branches continued meeting remotely and the Phoenix and arson reduction teams began considering different ways of delivering interventions to young people, in smaller groups.

Work was undertaken virtually with schools to promote fire safety. Staff at NWFRS worked in partnership with colleagues in the other two Welsh fire and rescue services to fine tune the new approach and virtual presentations and schools were very receptive to this new approach to fire safety learning.

During the autumn, work was undertaken to target younger audiences with regard to bonfire and firework safety. A campaign coordinated by the arson reduction team and educationalists working with schools was developed to ensure vital messaging was communicated to young people despite the restrictions on face-to-face presenting. An online safety quiz was also developed and received excellent feedback from schools, as did the poster competition encouraging youngsters to consider fire safety messaging.

The Service also committed to involvement with the 'Be a Nice Guy' (BANG) campaign after an appeal from NWP for people to consider how they celebrated Halloween. There was a focus on reminding parents to protect their children from the fire risk posed by some fancy dress costumes.

Action: work with organisations that support vulnerable people

The Service helped develop an agreement with the British Red Cross (BRC) in relation to its 'Prepare, Respond, Recover' assistance programme. The agreement allows the BRC to provide aid in the form of practical and emotional support to individuals affected by emergency incidents. Those affected may have experienced emotional trauma, required immediate practical support (money, hygiene packs, clothes etc.) as well as assistance in finding temporary accommodation in the event their home was uninhabitable after a fire.

The Service further developed its links with NWP on the 'Safer Street' initiative in Rhyl. This initiative provides the means to fast track the progress of SAWCs where specific vulnerabilities are identified and require intervention. Safeguarding training was delivered across all stations in North Wales, this 'Ask & Act' training reinforced the referral process for vulnerable individuals. The Service also continued working with Cartrefi Conwy and Care and Repair Conwy & Denbighshire to deliver SAWCs to vulnerable tenants.

Staff were represented on working groups at local and regional levels to promote the continued value of the Falls Risk Assessment Tool (FRAT) as part of SAWCs. These are offered to people who are at a higher risk of suffering a fall at home, along with offers of arranging or sign-posting to people who wish to change part(s) of their lifestyle, such as quitting smoking or beginning to exercise.

The Service also continued to work in partnership with NWP and the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) to support two areas of work. Firstly, a partnership to help find vulnerable people who may have gone missing from home and secondly, a means of gaining entry to premises on behalf of WAST, where ambulance crews require urgent entry if someone is unable to answer.

Action: deliver the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) training to all staff with enhanced training for frontline community safety staff

As part of its commitment to safeguarding and preventing domestic abuse, the Service extended the roll-out of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) training to all staff, with advanced training for frontline community safety staff. The training was developed in response to a reported 25% increase in the number of calls and online requests to the National Domestic Abuse helpline since the first lockdown, as reported by the charity 'Refuge'.

In November 2020, the Service showed its support for [White Ribbon Day](#) by sending out a message on social media channels in support of the global initiative, raising awareness and encouraging support for people to work together and create a future without male violence against women.

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

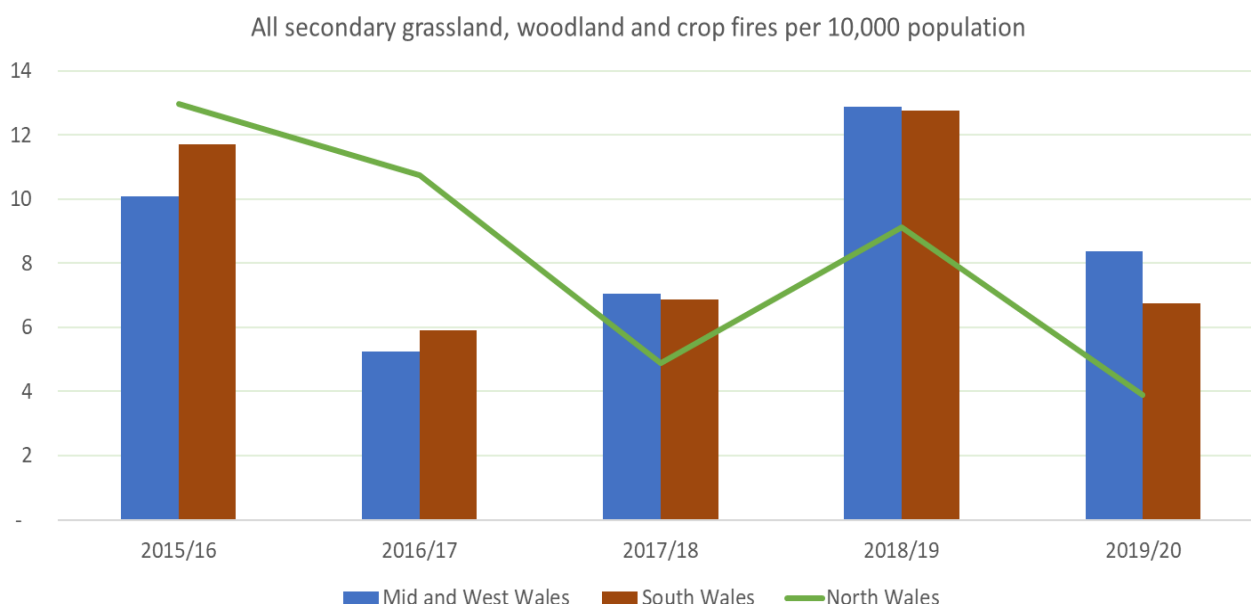


Working with local communities is extremely important to improve safety and help communities become more resilient. The Authority worked closely with partner agencies throughout 2020/21 around targeted areas to assist communities and local businesses with pre-planning and education, enabling them to become more resilient to emergencies.

The risks faced by communities are ongoing, and the Authority remained committed in 2020/21 to working with and supporting people to become more resilient. Working in close collaboration with partners the Authority continued to ensure that a joined up message was communicated, not only about safety but also about a range of other initiatives designed to improve the well-being of the whole community.

Action: work with partners and stakeholders such as Natural Resources Wales and farmers/graziers, to identify locations in North Wales which are at greater risk of outdoor/grassland fires and help to develop emergency response plans

The Service deals with various different types of deliberate fire setting ranging from grassland fires as a result of anti-social behaviour, the burning of household/garden refuse, and farmers and landowners burning grassland which is permitted during winter months. Operation 'Dawns Glaw' is an all-Wales multi-agency taskforce to raise awareness of the impact of environmental destruction and threat to lives and property through the deliberate setting of grass fires.



The Service attended a total of 809 secondary fires in 2020/21 (45.7% of all 1,770 fires attended), with 276 started deliberately. The graph above shows that the number of secondary grassland, woodland and crop fires attended in North Wales has declined since 2015/16 from 13 per 10,000 population to 4 per 10,000 in 2019/20.



In April 2020, three new bespoke vehicles were purchased, designed specifically for tackling wildfires across the Service area. The vehicles provide a large water capacity allowing them to stay on scene for extended periods of time and deliver water over a wider area. At the beginning of the controlled burning season in October, staff made contact with farmers, landowners and residents across North Wales urging them to take extra care if undertaking controlled burning and to notify the Service when doing so. The appeal was intended to minimise the impact on NWFRS resources during the pandemic.

Action: continue to contribute to the development of a multi-agency regional wildfire plan



The wildfires in Llantysilio in 2018, burned for 68 days and involved 328 appliances, 135 officers and resulted in 9 square kilometres of land being burned. Following this incident, a debrief was undertaken with stakeholders and amongst the recommendations was the creation of a multi-agency fire plan. Positive steps were taken through the development of an action plan that was produced by the North Wales Environment Group, with NWFRS taking the lead. The plan is a document that can be used by responding agencies and has information on:

- command, control and coordination;
- gateway control and cordons;
- communication;
- information cards with details of partners resources that may be considered during a wildfire incident;
- proposed agendas for tactical/strategic coordination groups during wildfire incidents

The wildfire plan will be practised during a multi-agency workshop, planned for July 2021.

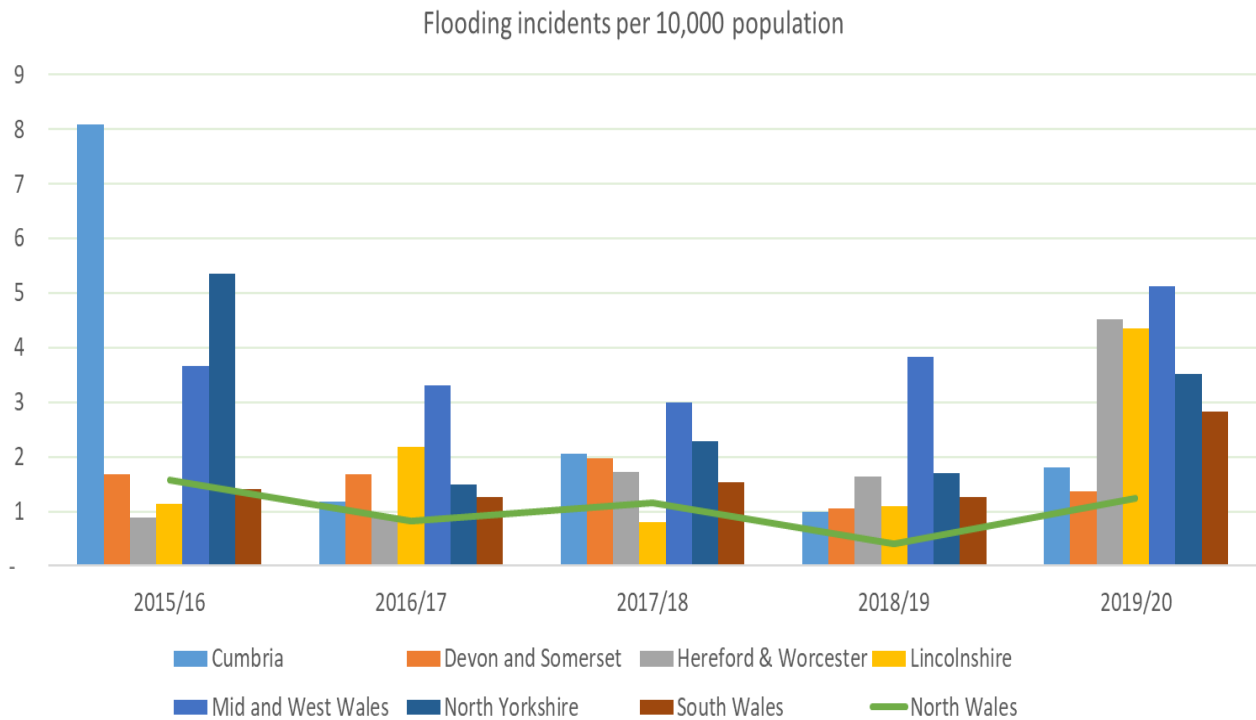
The Service continued to be an active partner of the Denbighshire Moorland Project Board. The board was established to assist in running the Denbighshire Moorland Management and Wildfire Prevention Project. The aims of the board are to manage the risk and impact of wildfires by identifying areas at high risk of wildfire and implementing practical land management solutions.

Action: build relationships with partners such as Natural Resources Wales, Local Resilience Forums, the Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG) and inland flood and water rescue groups to improve the joint capabilities of agencies to help those affected by flooding

In February 2020, colleagues from Mid and West Wales FRS joined crews from North Wales for a Swift Water Rescue Boat Operator (SWBRO) course, held in Menai Bridge. In August 2020, these skills were put to the test as crews responded to protect and rescue residents impacted by Storm Francis. Areas affected included Beddgelert, Abergwyngregyn, Bethesda and Llandygai. In total, crews undertook 80 evacuations and rescues.



The Service continued to work in partnership, on an all-Wales basis, to promote water safety messaging and to support interventions that educate the public as to the dangers open water and activities such as ‘tomb stoning’ where people jump from elevated positions into water.



The number of flooding incidents per 10,000 population, has remained relatively consistent in North Wales over the five year period 2015/16 to 2019/20, temporarily dropping below 1 incident per 10,000 population in 2018/19.

The most currently available data places North Wales alongside Devon and Somerset as the Fire and Rescue Services with the fewest flooding related incidents per 10,000 population in 2019/20. The other two Fire and Rescue Services in Wales experienced considerable increases in flooding incidents attended in both 2018/19 and 2019/20, with increases in the later period due to the severe weather and flooding that hit Wales during February 2020.

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



Given the backdrop of financial uncertainty, amplified by the pandemic, and the potential increase in demand for services across the public sector, it is inevitable that the Authority will be faced with challenges to being able to sustain its services over the coming decades. The pressure on fire and rescue services is likely to come from several different directions including being able to recruit and retain sufficient operational firefighters who meet the requisite fitness standards, as well as the potential expansion of the firefighter role that could increase pay significantly.

Rationalising the Authority’s own costs and finding a balanced way of funding the Service over the next few years will help sustain fire and rescue services into the future, making the area more resilient to demographic and other changes.

Action: deliver fire and rescue services in North Wales within the agreed budget

The Authority remained committed to playing its part in building stronger and safer communities. It recognises that in order to prepare for the future financial challenges whilst being able to sustain service delivery requires flexibility and innovation.

The initial planning assessment for 2020/21 identified a net budget requirement of £35.9m compared to £35.4m for 2019/20; developed using current service provision, whilst being mindful of the need to keep the increase to constituent authorities as low as possible. The draft revenue budget was approved by the Authority at its meeting on 16 December 2019, a year on year increase of 2% or £0.5m in net expenditure and an increase in contributions from constituent local authorities of £0.7m.

Authority	2019/20 Contribution £	Population	Population %	2020/21 Contribution £	Increase in contributions £	Increase %
Conwy County Borough Council	5,875,914	118,001	17%	6,005,505	112,607	2.2%
Anglesey County Council	3,522,798	69,879	10%	3,592,944	70,146	2.0%
Gwynedd Council	6,226,618	124,936	18%	6,363,944	137,376	2.2%
Denbighshire County Council	4,805,681	95,836	14%	4,898,654	92,973	1.9%
Flintshire County Council	7,790,476	156,862	22%	7,968,197	177,721	2.3%
Wrexham County Borough Council	7,015,625	136,642	20%	7,112,560	96,935	1.4%
Total	35,237,112	702,156	100%	35,941,854	704,742	2%

During the year, significant work was undertaken to identify and review all expenditure, in particular costs in relation to fleet management and training delivery. This enabled the Service to report an underspend of £0.06m for 2020/21 as well as maintaining earmarked reserves of £3.46m, for future known pressures.

The detailed annual statement of accounts summarising the financial performance of the Authority for year ending 31 March 2021 is available [here](#) link will be updated when available.

In summary, the Authority’s financial position in relation to its revenue budget for 2020/21 was:

	2020/21 Budget £000	2020/21 Outturn £000	2020/2021 Variance £000
Employee Costs	27,069	25,198	-1871
Premises	2,475	2,641	166
Transport	1,004	924	-80
Supplies and Third Party Payments	5,145	5,656	511
Income	-2,587	-2,666	-79
Capital Financing and Interest Charges	2,836	2,484	-352
Transfers to/from Reserves	0	1,642	1,642
Total Revenue	35,942	35,879	-63

Action: continue to pursue ongoing internal efficiencies

Various cost-saving efficiencies were implemented during 2020/21 which included;

- bringing in-house the testing of equipment such as fire hoses
- a review of the white fleet provision of approximately 120 vehicles to try and reduce the number of journeys, running costs and carbon footprint implications
- extending bilingual in-house media training to more staff to reduce the need for external resources

As well as ensuring the careful management of its revenue budget, the Authority continued to scrutinise its capital programme in order to ensure that best value was achieved. The Authority remained committed to ensuring that its assets are utilised efficiently and effectively and continued to analyse the capital programme against possible negative revenue implications.

Action: build on existing measures to monitor operational performance by fire crews before, during and after incidents

The Service continued to build on existing measures for monitoring all aspects of operational performance, including the provision of risk based audits, operational assurance and the sharing of best practice. Work also progressed on developing the Covid Workplace Audit (CWA) programme in response to the restrictions imposed during lockdown which ensured that social distancing requirements were adhered to, with a total of 21 CWA’s being completed by the end of 2020/21.

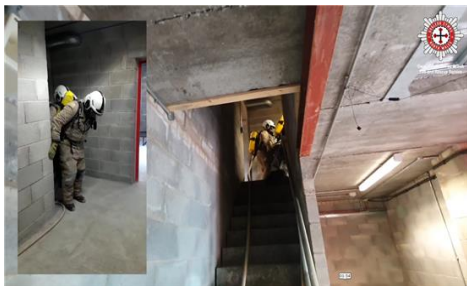
Throughout the pandemic, the Service continued undertaking safety event investigations in order to promote a safer workforce and work environment. A new system for recording safety events was developed during the second half of the financial year, which will make it easier to access information for recording and reporting purposes.

During emergency incidents, the Incident Commander (IC) has overall responsibility for managing the incident by establishing objectives, planning strategies, and implementing tactics. The Service continued to develop both its IC training and assurance programmes during the pandemic, to ensure that these continued taking into account social distancing regulations and utilising online platforms where appropriate.

Action: develop a more flexible model for the delivery of training and development including providing training more locally to support the needs of retained/on-call firefighters

Innovative approaches to training and development were introduced during the lockdown to continue with essential activities. Safeguarding training for staff was adapted to an online platform to enable access to the VAWDASV training as a temporary alternative to face to face delivery.

NWFRS made the most out of utilising new technology to better adapt to remote working, such as the use of Skype for incident command training. It also proved a good opportunity to share experiences of remote working with other services.



Two new breathing apparatus core skills training videos were introduced in July to aid the continued development of firefighters across the region during lockdown.

Action: focus on improving the effectiveness of cover provided through the Retained/on-call Duty System (on call firefighters)

In 2016, the 20/38 model was introduced by the Authority to better balance its resources to correspond to risk. The model allowed for a new way of planning that ensured there are at least 20 strategically located fire crews available in North Wales at times of relatively low risk, and at least 38 available at times of higher risk. Across the Service operational managers reviewed local factors affecting specific stations to determine whether there were barriers to recruitment. For stations identified as critical to support the 20/38 model, dedicated selection days were held and applicants were progressed more rapidly than those applying for lower priority stations.

The Service sought to further enhance the effectiveness of on-call firefighter recruitment during 2020/21. The 'Need More' on-call recruitment campaign ran for a third year in March in support of the national campaign to recruit more on-call firefighters across the whole of the UK. Press statements were placed on the Service's social media platforms and banners and posters were supplied to on-call stations to be distributed in the local areas to attract the attention of potential recruits or willing employers.

Prior to the first lockdown, the Service held targeted open days in areas of high priority and applicants could visit stations to find out more information about the on-call role and observe a drill night. This is an aspect of the recruitment process that is anticipated to resume in the future.

Action: review Business Continuity Management and enhancing the Service's capability to deal with large-scale incidents

Firefighters across Wales were praised during April 2020 by the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government who expressed her sincere gratitude to staff for their hard work, selflessness, resilience and ability to adapt to the challenges posed by the pandemic, continuing to respond to incidents as and when required.



New ways of working were introduced for Service staff in May whilst continuing to provide a service to communities and maintaining staff safety. New measures included introducing a flexible shift pattern for control room staff to support the resilience of control operations, introducing two metre social distancing restrictions, and ensuring staff used the same workstations day to day.

Business continuity was the area of highest focus throughout 2020/21, with the Service smoothly transitioning to new pandemic-oriented continuity plans, new ways of working, and introducing home working arrangements.

The transition cell was introduced in May as a means of facilitating a co-ordinated response towards a 'new normal'. The transition cell ensured a consistent approach was taken across common areas and agreement made with regard to priorities. This approach aided better understanding of departmental and external partner inter-dependencies.



In March it was announced that the Service would gradually phase in rapid lateral flow testing as part of the Welsh Government's COVID-19 testing strategy for supporting and maintaining key public services.

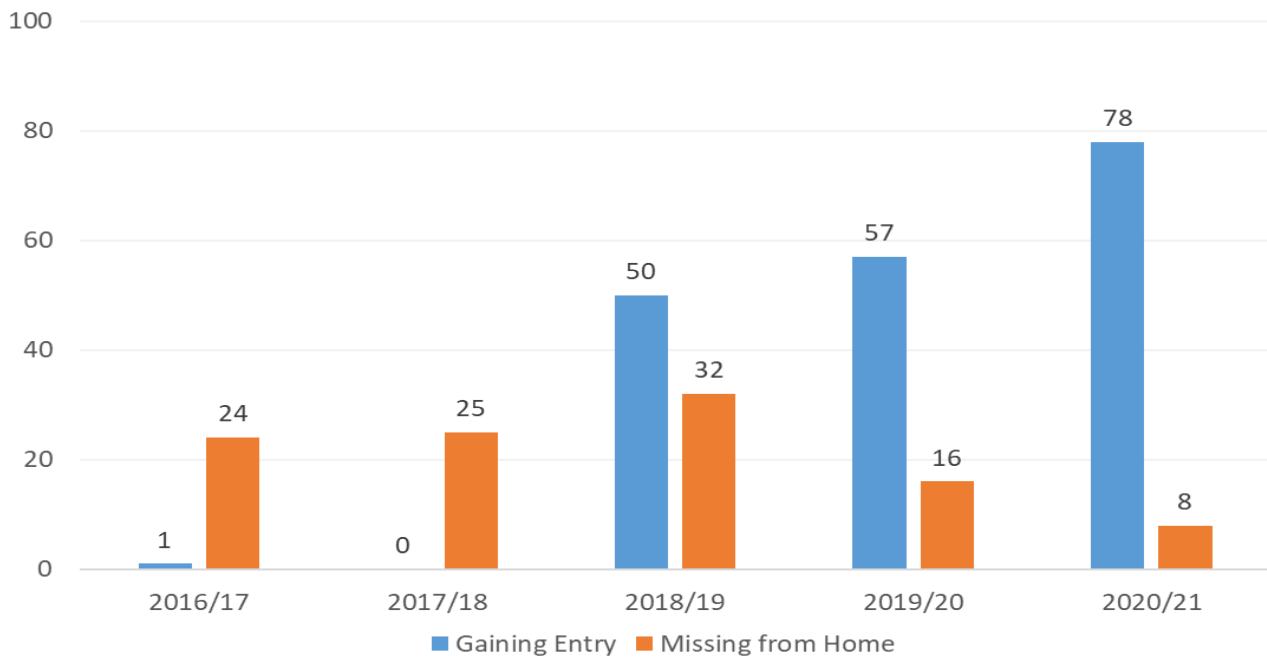
Action: continue to monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of programmes undertaken in partnership with other organisations

Statistics from NWP suggest that 3,000 people are reported missing from home every year. Early deployment of resources can help to improve the chances of finding people who may have gone missing for a variety of reasons. The Service continued to support NWP with the 'Missing From Home' scheme where Service personnel assist in the vital early stages of a search for missing persons. Crews remain on call for fire service incidents, but respond to assist NWP to locate people who are missing from home (as and when required). Staff use their first aid training to assist prior to the arrival of colleagues from the WAST.

The scheme was expanded in 2018/19 to include staff from each of the 44 fire stations who can now be called upon to provide assistance, and as a formally coordinated arrangement, is a national first.

The 'Gaining Entry' scheme introduced in 2018/19 continued through 2020/21, which meant that operational crews could continue to support the WAST to gain entry into properties for people requiring medical care and to those unable to assist themselves. The scheme allows crews to gain entry in a timely manner with reduced damage to the property with the additional ability to replace door locks to secure a property before departure. This specialist training is organised through the Emergency Services Collaboration Board and has been provided to all whole-time staff.

The graph below shows the number of call outs when assisting with ‘Missing from Home’ and ‘Gaining Entry’ incidents. The Service has attended increasing numbers of ‘Gaining Entry’ incidents every year from 2018/19. The spike in ‘Gaining Entry’ incidents attended and the decline in ‘Missing from Home’ incidents in 2020/21 is likely to have been a result of pandemic restrictions on movement.



Every year around 8,000 people in Wales experience a sudden cardiac arrest. A defibrillator is a lifesaving device which can be used to give a shock to the heart during a cardiac arrest. In February 2021, the Service joined WAST in supporting the annual ‘Defibrbruary’ campaign, through awareness raising on social media platforms. It also registered all of its defibrillators located at Service premises on a national defibrillator network.

Staff from a variety of NWFRS departments volunteered to be available to provide assistance to the COVID-19 vaccination programme. In February 2021, a number of staff commenced secondments providing managerial and administrative assistance to colleagues from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board at shared locations in Llandudno and St Asaph. Their work included contacting members of the public to rearrange appointments via telephone and e-mail.

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



During 2020/21 the Authority continued to improve the way it communicates and engages with communities about the services it delivers.

The pandemic resulted in unprecedented challenges, including the ability to communicate with people in order to ensure that the Authority’s messages continued to reach everyone especially harder to reach groups and communities.

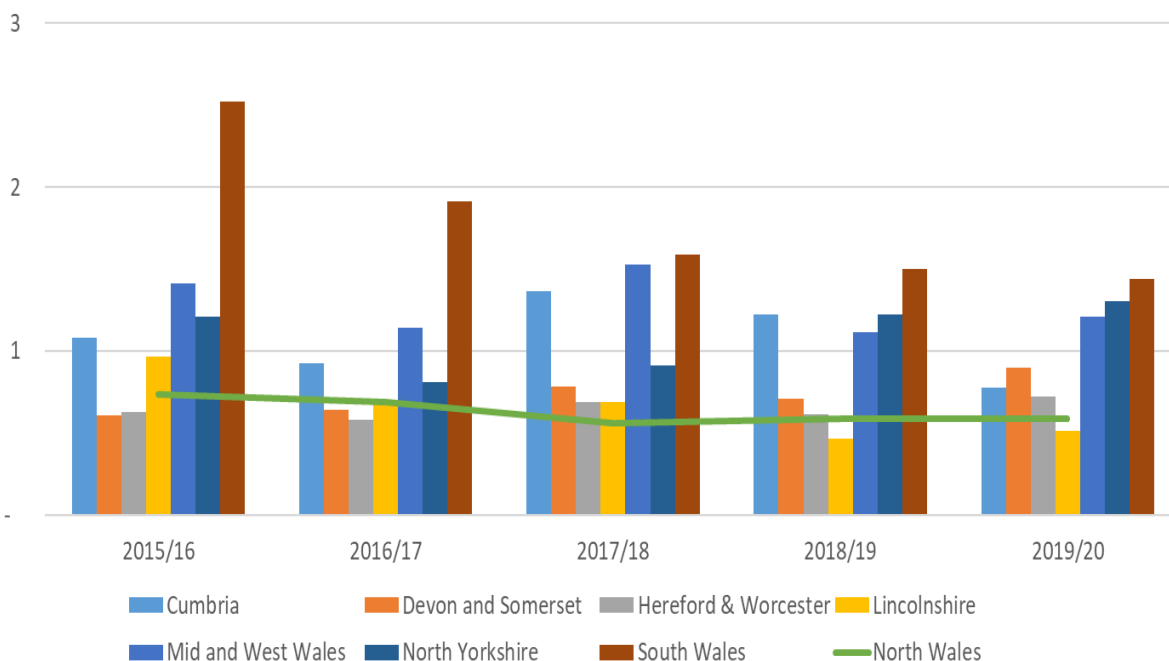
A collaborative approach with local authorities, public services boards and other stakeholders ensured the consistent and widespread promotion of safety messages, throughout the challenging conditions experienced during 2020/21.

Action: raise awareness of, and helping to prevent arson attacks and reduce the number of deliberate fires and false alarms

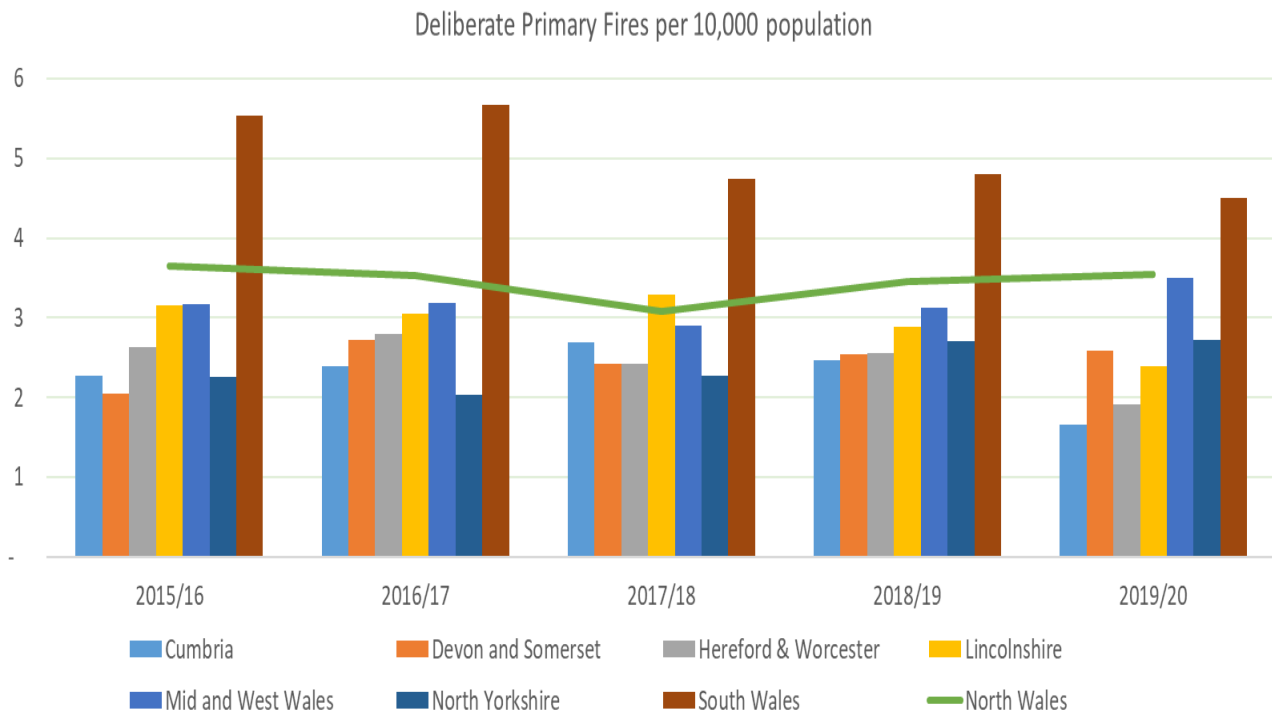
Arson prevention was more difficult during 2020/21 due to limited physical contact that was possible with communities, because of the lockdown. A business continuity plan was successfully implemented however that enabled the continuous delivery of services remotely with minimal disruption to services. The Service attended a total of 2,314 false alarms during 2020/21, with 1,214 coming from automated fire alarm systems.

Malicious false alarms present a significant risk to local communities, and unnecessarily compromise the resources available to tackle genuine emergencies. Throughout the five year period 2015/16 to 2019/20, NWFRS has consistently responded to less than 1 malicious false alarm per 10,000 population. Targeted campaigning and education around the impacts that malicious false alarms have may have contributed positively to low numbers. More broadly, however, it is encouraging to observe a general steady decline in malicious false alarms in the other Fire and Rescue Services over the five year period, particularly South Wales.

Malicious Fire False Alarms per 10,000 population



In 2020/21, the Service attended 1,770 fires with 446 determined to have been started deliberately. The number of deliberate primary fires attended by the Service remained relatively stable between 2015/16 and 2019/20, ranging between 3 and 4 per 10,000 population, highlighting the importance of ongoing arson prevention strategies to prevent future increases. The Service also delivered training for 54 new NWP recruits, consisting of Community Support Officers and Police Officers. The training focused on raising awareness of the issues regarding deliberate fires and the work that the Service does to reduce such instances.



The Service continued working in partnership with HMP Berwyn to reduce the number of deliberate prison fires, a challenge faced by many prisons around the UK. It was agreed with the Governor of HMP Berwyn that members of prison staff would be trained by the NWFRS arson reduction team, in the adult intervention scheme, aimed at reducing the number of deliberate prison fires by raising awareness of the consequences of deliberate fire starting. The adult intervention scheme focuses on convicted arsonists, new inmates and those who commit offences whilst in prison.

During 2020/21, the North Wales Children and Young People’s (CYP) group delivered a pre-recorded session to a virtual school assembly via Microsoft Teams following a request from a school concerned about issues of anti-social behaviour and deliberate fire starting. The assembly was delivered bilingually and incorporated a lesson plan which was cross-referenced with the Welsh school curriculum. The session was attended by 540 pupils.

Action: engage with local employers, communities and those directly affected by fire and other emergency incidents to develop prevention activities and campaigns

In April fire and rescue colleagues across Wales worked with local authorities to issue messages regarding controlled burning, highlighting the dangers of rubbish fires to discourage the public from burning waste in their gardens.

The arson reduction team were also ‘hands on’ working in partnership with NWP to help identify deliberate fire starters to prevent extra strain on the Service during the pandemic.



In July the Service worked collaboratively with NWP, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Flintshire County Council as part of ‘Operation Blue Sword’, an operation to tackle drug trafficking in the area. This proved to be a prime example of the benefits of partnership and collaboration, offering support and sharing information to protect communities.

The annual bonfire and firework safety campaign commenced towards the end of October 2020 and reiterated key messages encouraging residents to attend organised community displays rather than purchasing fireworks. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions however, Welsh Government advice prevented any organised bonfire or firework displays.



In their ‘Creating Safer Communities Plan 2017-2022’ Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service outline their focus on community-safety services which they believe has helped reduce the number of incidents in their communities. Their community-safety activities are similar to those that have been undertaken by NWFRS, and include home fire safety checks and visits (SAWCs), education packages for children and young people, a targeted approach to supporting those most at risk, and working in partnership with other organisations to best support local communities.

Action: promote national and local safety campaigns, ensuring that areas of greatest risk are prioritised, for example, fires caused by cooking

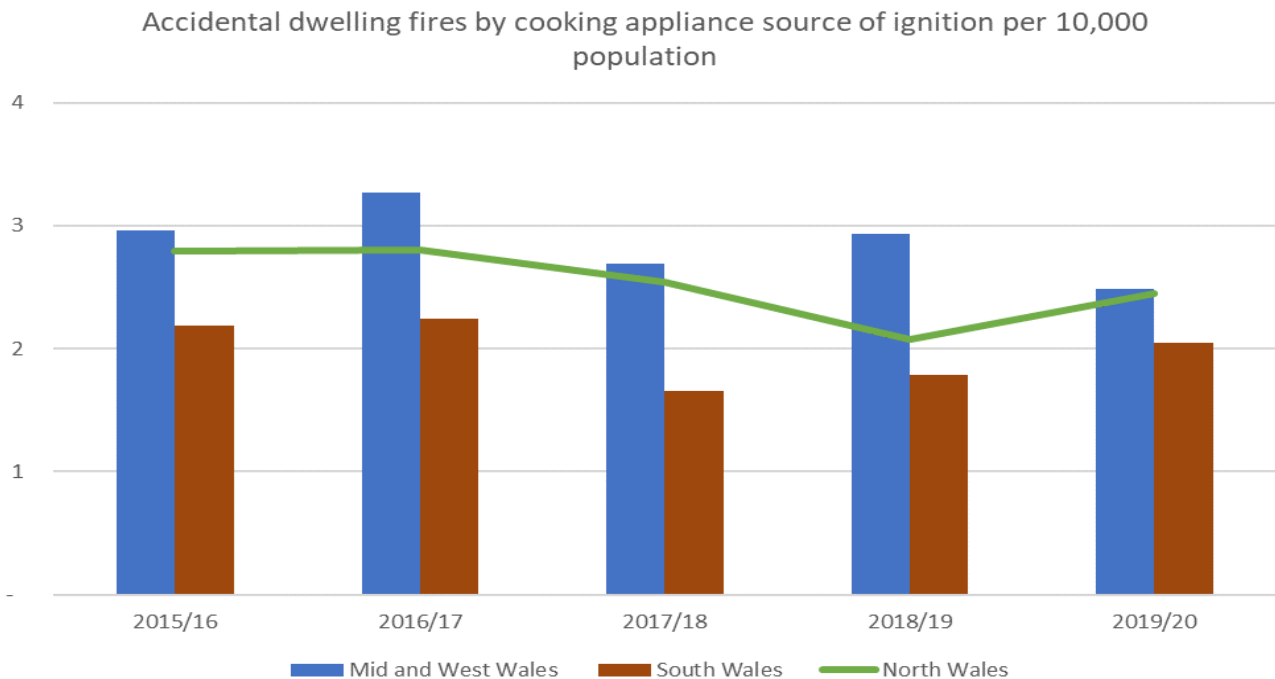
In July 2020, the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services launched the #just1 campaign to help raise awareness of the dangers of cooking fires. When people spend more time at home the risk of fire can increase and distraction can lead to a potentially devastating fire.

Research shows that being distracted or falling asleep whilst cooking is the biggest human factor responsible for kitchen fires in Wales. Food left cooking can result in a smoke logged kitchen, damaged equipment or in the worst case, serious damage, injury or harm. Other causes involve material left on the hob or too near the cooker, dirty ovens or overheated chip pans.



Over 40% of all fires in the home start in the kitchen, however during the pandemic that figure rose even higher as people spent more time than usual cooking in their kitchens.

The #just1 campaign included videos featuring staff from the Service, hard-hitting graphics and a social media competition that aimed to raise awareness of distractions and reduce their potentially harmful impact.



The Service also worked to ensure that targeted campaigning continued during 2020/21, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic. The 'Dawns Glaw' and 'Controlled Burning' campaigns were coordinated by the Campaigns Steering Group (CSG) and led by members of the Arson Reduction Team (ART). A member of the CSG also photographed themselves testing a smoke alarm on top of each of the 15 peaks in Snowdonia over 3,000 feet over 17 hours to raise awareness of the importance of testing smoke alarms regularly. The video clip resulted in over 2,000 views on social media, and can be viewed [here](#).

The Service continued to support Child Safety Week, an annual campaign by the Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) aimed at raising awareness of the risks of child accidents and how they can be prevented. During the awareness week, staff visited the children's wards of Ysbyty Gwynedd Hospital, Ysbyty Glan Clwyd Hospital and Ysbyty Wrexham Maelor Hospital as well as local schools to talk to young people about how to stay safe at home. Safety messages included emphasising the importance of:

- fitting a smoke alarm and involving children in testing it regularly
- nominating a child to be the 'Escape champion' because role-playing escape routes helps to improve the chance of escaping safely
- warning about the dangers of candles, lighters and matches
- discussing how to call 999 to make sure children know which number to call in an emergency and ensuring they follow guidance to 'get out, stay out and call 999'

Action: maintain the currency of existing information-sharing agreements, and seeking to establish new agreements where appropriate

The Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) supports organisations directly concerned with the health, education, safety, crime prevention and social well-being of people in Wales. The consistent approach promoted by WASPI has helped the Service to develop effective ways of sharing personal information effectively and lawfully.

The Community Safety Department has been reviewing and, where necessary, updating its Data Disclosure Agreements (DDAs) with a view once complete to transferring to a central Service register.

Action: conduct a health and well-being survey of all staff and promoting activities throughout the Service

The Service took a number of actions during lockdown to ensure fitness, health and wellbeing was actively promoted during 2020/21, ensuring that employees were encouraged to maintain a fit and healthy lifestyle. A health and well-being survey was carried out to assist in highlighting the self-perceived well-being of employees.

A new specialist welfare team was formed to help provide support to staff and their managers. Their work also included ensuring that staff who fell ill from COVID-19 received the necessary support when needed.



The promotion of physical fitness as a means of boosting health and wellbeing amongst staff was a focus throughout the pandemic, providing ideas and new ways of maintaining physical fitness under difficult circumstances.

A proactive approach to improving the well-being of staff was also taken by other fire and rescue services during 2020/21. Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, for example, set aims to implement practical means of mining, collating and acting on feedback and ideas from all staff to develop and promote a learning culture.

Action: complete a review of the Corporate Communication Strategy

The Service is committed to conducting a full review into its Corporate Communication Strategy, with the current strategy coming to an end. This review had been planned for the 2020/21 financial year, however, due to the pandemic this was deferred and will be undertaken in 2021/22. As a result of the delay, the review will be extended to also include a review of internal communications.

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



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

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

Action: review and reinvigorating the Health, Safety and Well-being strategy

Progress continued in 2020/21 to develop a health, safety and well-being strategy. Whilst this has yet to be completed, it continues to be supported by all Service departments.

Health and fitness assessments, which had been halted because of the pandemic, resumed in December 2020 with appropriate safety precautions in place. This ensured that operational employees remained physically fit and was integral in making sure firefighters, and the communities they served, continued to be safe.

During the pandemic amendments were also made to the variable working hours policy (flexi time) to assist staff with caring responsibilities to enable more flexible working practices.

In order to support staff directly affected by COVID-19 a welfare cell was established with the main focus being a communication link between the family of the staff member and the Service. Support was provided by the Cell as required, such as providing support for the family when dealing with the media in the event of hospitalisation of a staff member. The Service established an Advice Line for staff who had any additional queries regarding the outbreak of COVID-19. A comprehensive frequently asked questions document was produced and was updated regularly to ensure staff were updated with relevant information.

The Service promoted world mental health awareness week in May 2020. It was recognised that due to the challenges associated with the pandemic it was more important than ever to be aware of the importance of mental health. Staff were encouraged to take part in various tasks which contribute to the five ways of improving wellbeing whilst incorporating kindness, whether that be to themselves or someone else.

Action: improve ways of raising awareness of the revised core values through recruitment processes, retention and progression opportunities and internal communications

The Service's revised core values have been included in all new recruitment information packs, such as the finance apprenticeship. The new promotion process interview packs for operational employees now also includes the core values. The drafted standards of conduct, associated policies document, and revised induction booklet all incorporate the core values (the latter forming part of the on-boarding process for staff recruited during lockdown).

Global protests against racism in May were a fitting period to reaffirm the work of the Inclusive Fire Service Group, set up in 2019 to champion equality, diversity, behavioural and cultural issues in the workplace. The Group had recently refreshed the Service's core values but had been unable to meet normally as a result of the pandemic. The work of the group, and the core values, served to cement the commitment to embrace inclusion, reject racism and challenge discrimination.



The Service worked on ensuring that the coordination and delivery of recruitment and selection provided suitable resilience at all levels, with the core values at the forefront of the design. A focus on striving for excellence and well-rounded service to the community involved the rotation of new apprentices via specialist department placements, to ensure a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of all service functions, and the development of bespoke progression plans for 'high potential' candidates. Participants were exposed to a range of development and enrichment opportunities in order to support their progression such as a range of masterclasses in order to enhance and develop their skill-sets.

The importance of the core values, revised by the Service sub-group, were highlighted during the pandemic to reaffirm the Service's commitment to embrace inclusion particularly as the virus risked increasing certain inequalities, demonstrating the need to stand together in the name of fairness and equality.

Action: develop employment practices aimed at increasing the employment prospects of people who might otherwise find it difficult to gain access to work and prioritise action to promote gender equality

The UK-wide National Joint Council Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) was established in 2015 in order to consider matters relating to equality, diversity and cultural issues such as bullying and harassment. A cross-cutting Service sub-group consisting of staff, representative bodies and senior management, chaired by a Councillor was established at local level. Work of the sub-group continued with a forward work plan to reaffirm and embed the Service's commitment to embrace inclusion. Work included promotion of the group as a response to global protests against racism, reminding staff to embrace inclusion and reject racism. An online event, 'Pride Inside' was promoted to encourage staff participation and support 'Pride' month.

The Service's health and well-being team continued to be involved in the recruitment process and provided virtual fitness assessments and online positive action days/events to support under-represented groups. 'Get Fire Fit' was an opportunity to develop females interested in joining the Service which included engagement and support leading up to recruitment.

Equality statistics, updated at each stage of the recruitment process, include the number of applicants from their initial registration and through each of the recruitment stages. These statistics are broken down by gender, age, sensitive information, Welsh language skills and fallout rates from each stage of the process.

In March, international women's day was celebrated by the Service. The theme for the year was #ChooseToChallenge and reflected that everyone is responsible for his or her own thoughts and actions, and that gender bias and inequality can be challenged.

Like NWFRS, Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board re-emphasised the importance of Welsh language skills to the people of Gwynedd and Anglesey in their Annual Report (2020-2021). The board reaffirmed its commitment to promoting Welsh as the language of choice for communication amongst public organisations across the two counties.

Action: continue to seek out new opportunities to develop apprenticeship schemes within the Service

After an unavoidable pause was placed on apprentice recruitment at the onset of the pandemic, in August the Operational Resourcing Practitioners Working Group (ORPWG) was able to recommence the recruitment process. Practical assessments restarted, with strict safety protocols in place, in order to select those who were suitable for the next stage of selection. The Service offered firefighter and future leader apprenticeships which followed a structured 'Skills for Justice' training programme and provided a clear pathway for the role of a modern firefighter and manager. The future leader apprenticeship framework incorporates the firefighter apprentice training modules but with additional scope for development to prepare for the role of supervisory manager and above.

In a similar way to NWFRS, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service sought to adapt recruitment opportunities with an expansion of their apprenticeship offering to enhance the scope of routes into the role of fire fighter.

Action: deliver training to fire cadets to raise awareness of programmes like the 'White Ribbon Youth Advocate Programme' aimed at enabling young people to be role models amongst friends to help end male violence against women

The ['White Ribbon Youth Advocate Programme'](#) provides projects for schools, youth groups and young people. Once again the Service promoted the programme which encourages people aged 14-18, to act as role models among their friends and support White Ribbon UK's work to end male violence against women.

The Fire Safety team adapted during the pandemic by making use of online facilities as a means of continuing to inspire fire cadets and school pupils. Staff from the Phoenix team along with other supporting staff received glowing praise from pupils and staff at Rhyl High School in February after delivering innovative online sessions. Since the beginning of lockdown, the Phoenix team has had over 1,000 engagements with young people through online sessions.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service committed to a focus on firefighter and staff safety and training, outlined in their 'Creating Safer Communities Plan 2017-2022'. In a similar way to NWFRS, their approach was to ensure that best practice was followed when recruiting and retaining the right people, providing a joint approach to career development and succession planning, and ensuring safety was at the centre of all decisions and actions.

Action: renew certification of the Gold Corporate Health Award

Prior to lockdown, external assessors from Public Health Wales visited to discover more about the work being done to promote health, safety and wellbeing to staff and the wider community. Positive feedback was received highlighting the progressive attitude towards health and well-being. The Gold Corporate Health Award certification was renewed in February.



Work was also ongoing in respect of the Service's submission for the Platinum Corporate Health Standard. The Platinum level recognises employers who demonstrate an organisational commitment to support environmental well-being to achieve a better quality of life for future generations. The Service was required to demonstrate a commitment to reducing its impact on the environment and reducing environmental harm through strategic level work. The assessment day had to be postponed due to COVID-19, and an alternative on-line assessment was scheduled for May 2021.

Action: continue to contribute to the All-Wales 'People and Organisational Development Strategy'

Work continued on implementing the all-Wales People and Organisational Development Strategy 2018/21. The key elements of the strategy included; resourcing, health and wellbeing, fitness, inclusive workplaces (equality and diversity), reward and recognition, management information systems and training and development. The strategy underpinned the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services' commitment to lifelong learning and workplace competence, supporting new ways of working for the benefit of the public in Wales.

Action: improve ways of supporting staff to become future leaders

During 2020/21 the Service continued to develop its recruitment and selection process to ensure resilience at all levels. New apprentice fire-fighters were moved around Service departments to help them obtain a comprehensive understanding of all functions and their responsibilities.

Bespoke progression plans were developed for candidates on the Service's 'high potential' programme, designed to help fast track talented candidates. Candidates were exposed to a range of development and enrichment opportunities, such as masterclasses, in order to support progression and build on their skillsets.

Action: publish a strategic equality plan for 2021-2024

In North Wales, a Public Sector Equality Network (NWPSSEN) comprising the Fire and Rescue Service, NHS Trust, Local Authorities, NWP, WAST and Snowdonia National Park Authority helps to share best practice and knowledge, and collaborates to support a range of stakeholder events.

The Authority's Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2021-2024 was developed in consultation with departments across the Service and supported by the findings of a consultation event coordinated by NWPSSEN in May 2019, where a large number of local groups and individuals were invited to share experiences. The [Strategic Equality Plan](#) approved by the Authority was published in 2020.

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



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

In 2020/21 the Authority reaffirmed its commitment to improving environmental performance and considering it in all areas of its work from fire prevention to making sure that it considers environmentally friendly technology. The Authority also committed to renewing its environmental vision to become a more environmentally conscious and responsible organisation.

Action: establish a Strategic Board with responsibility for developing an Environment Strategy for the Authority

The Service remains committed to establishing a Strategic Board with responsibility for developing a robust Environment Strategy. The unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19 delayed the progress in developing the strategy during 2020/21, however, the Service recognises the significant threats that climate change presents and is fully committed to developing the strategy. The Authority did continue to pursue its current sustainable development action plan with planned maintenance aimed at reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions. A number of premises received replacement boilers/equipment and upgrades to the fabric of the buildings during 2020/21.

Action: work with Public Services Boards across North Wales to understand climate change from a regional perspective

In January 2020 the North Wales Regional Leadership Board (NWRLB) agreed to establish a Climate Change Task and Finish Group. This was in response to the Welsh Government ambition referred to above supported by a report commissioned by NRW and supported by North Wales PSBs: - North Wales Climate Mitigation: Developing a Regional Response to the Climate Emergency.



The report presented to the NWRLB in November 2020 made recommendations aimed at moving the North Wales region towards a transformative approach to a climate emergency. It identified three priority areas where regional collaboration could be developed. Working collaboratively in these areas could enhance existing approaches and address gaps unlikely to be addressed by individual PSBs or public bodies:

- Priority 1 - 2030 carbon neutral public sector
- Priority 2 - land & greenhouse gas emissions
- Priority 3 - Climate Risk and Adaptation

The NWRLB supported the creation of regional leadership structures for climate change to build on the positive experience and learning from the Covid-19 pandemic and to lead action on the development and implementation of strategies to deliver response to the climate emergency. Whilst work was delayed due to the impact of the pandemic, it is anticipated that this will be reinvigorated once PSB Well-being assessments and plans are reviewed during 2021/22.

Action: explore opportunities to reduce plastic packaging on goods brought in to the Service



The Service currently has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the North Wales Police's (NWP) Procurement Department to deliver all major tenders therefore all higher valued tenders include social value and sustainable procurement principles as per NWP's tender requirements.

During 2020/21 a joint (NWP and NWFRS) procurement exercise was undertaken to purchase footwear. Each supplier who submitted a bid was required to answer questions relating to single use plastic packaging and what they were doing to reduce or eliminate this from the supply chain. This question will now be included in all joint NWFRS and NWP frameworks, relating to the supply of products.

Recyclable goods were actively sourced by the Service, for example the purchase of wooden pencils in cardboard tubes for use by community safety staff when delivering intervention and engagement sessions as well as new refill spray and hand gel bottles in response to the global shortage of spray bottles. The Service plans to retain these into the future as a means of reducing plastic waste.



During the pandemic, the Service introduced telephone SAWCs to low and medium risk households deemed capable of installing their own smoke detectors. Safety advice was provided to the occupier via telephone and the smoke detector was then posted to them. The packaging selected to transport the detector was carefully selected to ensure that it was recyclable in order to reduce the environmental impact. Fuel consumption by NWFRS vehicles was also reduced as a result of the new approach to delivering SAWCs which brought its own environmental benefits.

Action: identify ways to use water supplies as responsibly as possible

Rain water harvesting systems (RWHS) have been installed at Nefyn and Tywyn fire stations as part of new-build schemes (in 2014 and 2015 respectively). Rain water from the RWHS is used to supply all non-potable water at both stations and helps to reduce the demand on incoming mains water supplies.

All Service buildings have undergone assessments relating to their accessibility in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. During the past decade the majority of sites have had their urinals removed and replaced with low-flush WCs and have also had percussion taps installed in washrooms and changing rooms.

These combined measures have led to a reduction in mains water demand at the sites in question from not having urinals flushing regularly (irrespective of building occupancy levels) and taps being unintentionally left running.

Action: work with external partners such as the Welsh Government Energy Service to explore opportunities to reduce energy consumption and fuel usage

During 2020/21 the Authority participated in the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon testing phase to assist in the development of a reporting guide for public bodies. Testing the draft documentation was considered by Welsh Government to be an essential stage of developing the final guidance document and was aimed at:

- Ensuring the guidance produced was accessible, usable and functional in line with its intended purpose.
- Engaging with the users of the guidance and gather feedback for improvement

Following the testing phase the data and feedback was used to produce a footprint to inform the final guidance document which was published in May 2021 due to delays as a result of the pandemic.

During 2020/21 the Service placed an order for updated and more fuel-efficient vehicles. The selection of vehicles was based on cost, performance and efficiency. Improved fuel efficiency will result in reduced engine emissions and fewer harmful pollutants being released into the atmosphere. Further to this, the Service monitored and continued to evaluate the impacts of the existing fully electric and hybrid vehicles with the possibility of adding more into the light vehicle fleet.

In 2020/2021 Natural Resources Wales reduced its overall carbon footprint by 35.4% and reduced mains electricity usage in buildings and depots for the seventh consecutive year. Overall business miles declined by 52.6% compared with the previous year. The reductions in energy, travel, waste and water usage were amplified by the operational adaptations introduced due to the pandemic. The Service will continue to look towards these examples of good practice to help shape its environmental strategy.

Action: seek opportunities to reduce the amount of waste the Authority sends to landfill

The Service consistently tries to re-use and re-purpose items as an alternative to throwing them away. During the summer 2020 the Service arranged for the donation of obsolete equipment to aid emergency services projects in the Philippines, as part of ‘Operation Florian’ a UK Fire Service humanitarian charity established in 1995 which works to promote the protection of life amongst communities worldwide.



Delivery boxes received by the Service are re-used to transport goods to stations and offices across the region. Metal dry-cleaning coat hangers provided by the uniform cleaning company are returned for re-use, and the cardboard they use to support the shape of jackets is recycled. Personal and protective equipment that cannot be repurposed is sent to recycling containers held at the NWP HQ in Colwyn Bay. Uniform such as t-shirts, trousers and firefighter gloves are repurposed for use in the Service training centre in Dolgellau by attendees, and as back-up uniform should it be required. The cardboard boxes and printer cartridges that are distributed to Service premises are recycled once returned after use. Retention of the original packaging allows individuals to return the cartridges to a central site, and a free collection is arranged on a monthly basis.

Action: identify ways to increase biodiversity on premises



The Authority continued to pursue its biodiversity action plan, published in December 2019. A contract to ensure grounds maintenance and biodiversity enhancement commenced in May to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act, 2016. As a result, grounds maintenance commenced at all sites and continued throughout the year.

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



Social value is the value that people place on the changes they experience in their lives. During 2020/21 the Authority continued developing its social value and ensured that social, economic and environmental issues were considered as part of its activities including support for the local Young Firefighters Association (YFAs) and the Phoenix Project.

Action: continue to seek out opportunities to add social value to communities

The Service continued to focus on reducing the incidence of arson as part of its drive towards delivering social value in 2020/21. The FACE (Fire Awareness Child Education) Intervention was designed to help stop children aged 3-11 who have developed known bad habits of setting deliberate fires. There are various reasons for this including a way of expressing their emotional distress and anger and education is delivered through a structured programme with the support of the child's parent/guardian.



The 'FireSafe' Intervention is a cognitive behavioural programme designed for young people aged 12-17 who have been known to set fires. The programme focuses on consequential thinking and victim awareness. The Service also provides a programme aimed at adult intervention, reinforcing the consequences of deliberate fire setting and the cost impacts on the emergency services.

The Service worked closely with schools and other agencies to determine alternative delivery methods of the Phoenix project, diversifying into virtual delivery and the production of recorded material for guided use as a temporary solution. This adaptation meant that during a period when young people were restricted in many ways, the Service managed to maintain and build relationships, and enabled over 800 young people to engage with Phoenix Project educational and awareness resources. This was achieved at a time when most were prevented from attending school or socialising in the usual way, whilst needing to use their time constructively.

In response to COVID-19, officers worked on planning and preparing new field hospitals in partnership with colleagues from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and local authorities to ensure new facilities were as safe as possible. Officers provided expertise and made sure that fire safety was considered in the build of the field hospitals.

Service staff provided assistance to the Welsh Ambulance Service during the worst of the pandemic to help deal with the immense pressures being faced. Assistance particularly involved the driving of ambulances and supporting ambulance staff.





To support resilience across North Wales during the pandemic, a mass decontamination unit was repurposed by Service staff and relocated at Ysbyty Gwynedd for use as a triage facility. Training exercises for familiarisation with the facility took place in April and similar preparations were undertaken across all main hospital sites.

Action: develop a Social Value and Sustainable Procurement Strategy

Whilst progress towards agreeing a Social Value and Sustainable Procurement Strategy for the Authority was delayed by the challenges presented by the pandemic, the Service recognises the importance of developing a sustainable and ethical procurement strategy. Despite limited progress, sustainability still played a key part in decisions around procurement and purchasing as evidenced in this objective and objective six.

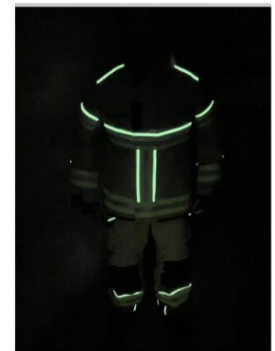


As part of the planning process for adding more fuel-efficient vehicles to the fleet, any tendering process routinely considers the benefit of local suppliers who meet Service requirements.

Action: explore options for local procurement to be delivered via national/regional collaboration both within the fire and rescue sector and across other blue light agencies

The Service actively works with the other two Welsh Fire and Rescue Services when purchasing equipment such as smoke detectors, vehicles and personal and protective equipment (PPE).

New all Wales fire kit was introduced in 2020 and following extensive and rigorous testing of various kits from a number of suppliers, the Xenon model Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) fire kit was selected due to its lightweight design. The fire kit provides maximum protection, aiming to minimise the risk of heat stress reducing the physiological load on the wearer. This has given Service firefighters higher levels of comfort, breathability and freedom of movement, whilst being quick drying and providing excellent thermal protection and water-resistance.



New breathing apparatus core skills training videos were introduced to aid the continued development of firefighters across North Wales.

In addition, the Service conducts joint tender processes with the other Welsh Fire and Rescue Services in relation to securing legal advice services and employment law solicitors.

Action: ensure procurement frameworks and contracts measure social value and sustainability during tendering processes

The Service currently has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with NWP's procurement department to deliver all major tenders therefore all higher valued tenders include social value and sustainable procurement principles in accordance with NWP's tender requirements.

The majority of items procured by the Service are done through frameworks, quotes from established and ethical suppliers, and local retailers. The Service focuses on sustainability, reliability and value for money when procuring items. An example of such procurement is the Service-wide use of 'Vegan Action' verified glass cleaner and antibacterial surface cleaner.

Action: further develop opportunities to work with 'Fire Aid' to ensure that equipment is recycled where possible

During the summer, the Service arranged for the donation of obsolete equipment to aid emergency service projects in the Philippines, as part of Operation Florian. Equipment including gas tight suits (used to protect emergency responders from dangerous and toxic chemicals), high-pressure air bags (used for rescues from small spaces after building collapse), Personal Protective Equipment and rescue equipment were all donated.



Action: develop a procurement awareness training package

Work is ongoing to draw together examples of good practice in relation to the procurement of sustainable products and the reuse of equipment to demonstrate good practice in relation to the sustainable procurement of goods and services. This will be used to develop a training package for departments for purchasing goods and supplies.

What the Measure requires North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to do

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993 and as part of this legislation, the Welsh language has equal legal status with English in Wales and must not be treated any less favourably. The Authority no longer needs to develop and implement Welsh Language Schemes, however, it must instead comply with a set of Welsh Language Standards.

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued fire and rescue authorities with their Compliance Notice on 30th September 2016. This document lists which of the Standards (as listed in full in the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No.5) 2016) North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority must comply with, along with any exemptions and their implementation dates.

The Authority is required to publish its Welsh Language Standards annual report for 2020/21 by 30th September 2021 and to publicise this appropriately.

The Authority is committed to ensuring that, in conducting public business in Wales, the English and Welsh languages should be treated on the basis of equality in order to recognise and value the rich diversity of communities, against a backdrop of significant natural and cultural heritage.

The Authority also acknowledges its duty towards its staff, most of whom are residents of North Wales, and who themselves reflect the linguistic and cultural make-up of their own communities. By acknowledging its moral and legal duties to protect the cultural heritage of the area, and meet the expectations of the local community, the Authority continues to work towards ensuring that it conducts its public business in both languages.

The Authority's Implementation Plan is available to view using the link below;

<http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/media/337605/welsh-language-standards-implementation-plan-nwfrs.pdf>

During 2020/21 the Authority continued to comply with the set of Welsh Language Standards issued in its Compliance Notice on 30 September 2016. It also continues to work collaboratively with the other two Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales and share information and best practice as part of the All Wales Grŵp Iaith.

Standard 147: The number of employees who have Welsh skills:

As at 31st March 2021, 705 employees (83%) were able to demonstrate that they had Welsh language skills (Level 1 and above), 326 of whom (38%) were classed as fluent speakers (Level 4 and 5).

Standard 148: The number of staff members who attended specific training that must be provided in Welsh if it is available in English (namely training on recruitment and interviewing, performance management, complaints, induction, dealing with the public and health and safety):

None of the training listed in Operational Standards Number 125 was provided this year. Had any of the training itemised in this Standard been delivered, it would have been facilitated in both Welsh and English.

Standard 151: The number of new and vacant posts categorised as ones where Welsh language skills are essential, desirable, not necessary or need to be learnt:

All posts require some level of Welsh with the minimum requirement being Level 2 speaking and listening. During this period, 19 new and vacant posts were advertised, 7 of which were classed as Welsh essential (Level 4) and 12 as Welsh desirable (Level 2).

During this period 23 RDS (On-Call) Firefighters were recruited as well as 15 WDS Firefighters

(Whole Time) - all newly employed firefighters are required to attain a minimum requirement of Level 2 Welsh, either on entry or within their probation period.

Standard 143: The number of complaints received by the organisation about each class of standards:

Complaints are monitored and dealt with by the Professional and Service Standards Department. Complaints and letters of appreciation are reported annually to the Fire and Rescue Authority. No complaints were received in 2020/21 in relation to the Welsh language. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has published a complaints procedure on its website and also has an internal policy for staff on how to raise a concern or complaint.

Promoting the Welsh Language:

Promotion of the Welsh language is maintained internally in a variety of different ways including: through the Welsh Champions Scheme; a regular Welsh Column in the internal magazine 'Y Fflam'; within weekly staff bulletins; a Welsh Wednesday campaign; and through Workplace Facebook which has sub-groups for Learners and Welsh Champions. There is also a 'Welsh Learner of the Year' / 'Commitment to the Welsh Language' award but due to the current restrictions, the Awards Ceremony was postponed in 2020.

The Human Resources (HR) Department ascertains the language choice of prospective employees at the first point of contact and records this information for future use. It keeps a record of all members of staff who have requested to receive correspondence through the medium of Welsh and this can be reviewed at any stage. All HR policies and forms relating to an individual's employment have been translated and published internally. Complaints and disciplinary procedures are also facilitated through the medium of Welsh on request, with the language choice of the individual being respected at all times.

Guidance is provided to employees on the importance of offering language choice to all, whether face-to-face or over the phone, regardless of location, accent, ethnicity etc. This message is reiterated during the mandatory Welsh Awareness Module that has been produced for employees, during the face-to-face sessions for new starters and during the initial firefighter training course. Guidance is also available concerning issuing correspondence to the public and all email signatures and letter-headed paper includes a statement welcoming correspondence in Welsh or English. 'Siarad Cymraeg' and 'Dysgu Cymraeg' logos have also been incorporated into standard e-mail signatures.

New and revised policies are published internally in both English and Welsh and each policy is required to have an associated integrated impact assessment to ascertain its impact on the Welsh language and to identify and promote ways of creating a positive impact, and avoiding negative impact. As with the previous Welsh Language Scheme, work continues to proactively offer language choice to all service users as this has always been seen as beneficial and a gateway to improved engagement with all members of the community. All promotional materials, posters and leaflets are bilingual with the Welsh language appearing first at all times.

The Authority recognises the value and benefit of offering language choice and as such has continued to operate a fully bilingual Control Room / Joint Communications Centre, despite there being no statutory requirement to answer 999 calls bilingually. The Authority recognises that in addition to its statutory responsibility, it has a moral and ethical duty to deal effectively with people when they are involved in an emergency situation and therefore goes above and beyond the requirements of the Standards in order to deal with incidents effectively in the caller's language of choice.

The North Wales Fire and Rescue Service website is fully bilingual and this includes the ReciteMe accessibility feature that allows users to listen to the content of the website in Welsh. Enquiries through the website are dealt with in the language choice of the enquirer.

The Training and Development Department maintains a record of all the Welsh courses attended and assessments undertaken by employees, and records the results on its internal recording system. The Department also facilitates internal Welsh courses provided by Coleg Cambria and members of staff are encouraged to request courses during their annual appraisal.

Distance learning has become the norm over the past year and a pilot project was set up to trial the innovative course, 'Say Something in Welsh' with 12 members of staff. New starters were also given the opportunity to attend Introduction to Welsh sessions held by Coleg Cambria, once again virtually this year, in order to provide an insight into the content of the Level 1-3 self-learning courses provided by the Service. The end goal is to provide a variety of learning methods to suit the needs of different learners as well as continuing to provide face-to-face courses as and when the current coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

A Welsh Language Champions scheme exists whereby Welsh speaking members of staff volunteer to support colleagues to improve their Welsh language skills. During 2020/21 the Champions continued to support staff despite the fact that the vast majority of them were working remotely from home. Meetings and chatting sessions were arranged over Zoom and Skype to continue to mentor staff. In order to develop the skills of the Welsh Language Champions an on-line session dealing with changing attitudes and the barriers facing Welsh speakers was arranged in an attempt to change behaviours. The session was overseen by psychologist Dr Nia Williams, who gave an insight during the half day session into the principle of NUDGE economics to improve the use of Welsh and change workplace behaviours.

An annual Saint David's Day Quiz was held to raise awareness of the commitment towards the language – this was well received with the winner receiving afternoon tea for two from a local company delivered to their doorstep.

This year the Authority has proactively sought to promote the Service as a bilingual organisation by promoting positive messages on Twitter using the hash tag #yagym as part of the 'Awr Gymraeg' initiative and during recruitment campaigns, Welsh speakers were targeted on social media and through Welsh language recruitment websites. The Operational Resourcing Group, responsible for overseeing firefighter recruitment, continues to monitor recruitment processes to ensure the Welsh language is included in all aspects of recruitment. This year the Group approved recruitment guidance for Welsh 'desirable' and Welsh 'essential' posts, including best practice for advertising vacancies, interviewing and appointing.

During the Welsh Language Commissioner's week long initiative, 'Mae gen i hawl' the rights of service users to make contact with North Wales Fire and Rescue Service in Welsh was highlighted. The Service also took part in the 'Diwrnod Su'mae Shwmae' initiative by changing the profile picture on Facebook and Twitter for the day and by posting a video to promote the use of Welsh and sharing resources internally. Virtual 'Paned a Sgwrs' sessions were also arranged.

The Authority is fully aware that it relies on the support of its staff to promote and use the Welsh language in the workplace and therefore this year a Welsh Language Academy course was commissioned through Cwmni Iaith Cyf for staff. The course was tailored to the needs of the organisation in the hope that the attendees could then utilise those skills in the workplace to increase their use of Welsh as well as supporting Welsh speakers.

The course was held over Zoom and included seven modules introduced over seven half days. The course looked at changing attitudes towards the Welsh language, increasing awareness of language technologies, becoming confident public speakers, chairing bilingual meetings and interviewing through the medium of Welsh.

The Authority is represented on the Gwynedd and Môn Public Services Board and as part of the Board's work it is involved in a project to increase the use of Welsh in reception areas. Due to the current situation the work was postponed during 2020/21 but will recommence in 2021 to consider the technological changes that have happened over the past year. The aim of the project is to use the reception areas part of the public services that are part of Board to encourage individuals to speak Welsh face to face, either over the phone or digitally. The Authority will continue to look at new ways of engaging with its communities to highlight the Welsh language services on offer and emphasise that Welsh is a valued skill in the workplace.

PROGRESS AGAINST STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES



What the Act requires the Authority to do

The Equality Act (2010) requires the Authority to write an equality plan every four years. The Authority's Strategic Equality Plan 2020/2024 identifies six equality objectives that the Authority wants to help bring about to make Wales a fairer place to live. The aim of the Equality Act is to ensure that everyone has the right to:

- be treated fairly;
- have the same chances as others;
- be free from discrimination.

The categories for the objectives are based on the area headings in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's "How Fair is Wales" document. These headings also align with the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network Strategic Equality Plan; this enables joint objectives to be included in individual public sector organisations' strategic equality plans.

Having identified these objectives, the Authority has a duty to take all reasonable steps to pursue them and to report publicly after the end of each financial year on the progress it has made. The Equality Act lists a number of characteristics which must be taken into consideration when determining the actions to be undertaken. These are the 'protected characteristics':

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or belief/non-belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

A number of sources have been used to develop the Authority's strategic equality objectives:

- equality impact assessments;
- combined improvement and risk reduction planning objectives;
- business plans from heads of departments;
- existing strategies and plans;
- outcome of engagement activities.

Legislation allows for the objectives to be changed at any time, therefore ongoing engagement is undertaken to ensure objectives remain current. The Authority continuously examines the most effective methods of engagement via existing links with community groups and organisations, and endeavours to establish relationships with new groups and local communities. The Authority is required to publish this assessment of its own performance for 2020/2021 by 31 March 2022.

Equality Objective 1 – Life and Health

Reduce dwelling fires and associated casualties through a comprehensive strategy that specifically targets people who can be shown to be at greater risk because of their particular characteristics and/or circumstances.

Working to achieve this objective, the Service has:

- worked with relevant partner agencies that have access to high-risk individuals and families and who can refer the most at risk in society to NWFRS for a SAWC so that they can be prioritised. COVID-19 has created challenges for NWFRS, including a reduction in referrals from other agencies. A programme of re-engagement with all partner agencies is underway.
- continued to engage with the business community through social media, making them aware of the language option facility on the NWFRS website.
- planned targeted campaigns and events throughout the year through the Service's Campaign Steering Group. These campaigns bring the Service into direct contact with the targeted groups through a wide range of planned activities from face to face activities to print and electronic media. The campaigns seek to include those who are more at risk from fire, and those who have contact or caring responsibility for them.

Equality Objective 2 – Employment

Through the Service's own employment practices, programmes and schemes increase the employment prospects of people who might otherwise find it difficult to gain access to the world of work.

Working to achieve this objective, the Service has:

- placed face to face positive action events on hold during COVID-19. Virtual recruitment days/events have been undertaken which have incorporated positive action.
- advertised all posts offering agile working to ensure it attracts candidates from a broader pool and improve the diversity within the workforce.
- produced a short bilingual video outlining the careers and roles within the Service. The video will be used during online recruitment and at virtual recruitment fairs to promote the different career options available within the Service.
- experienced some difficulties engaging with local colleges, and attending recruitment events due to lockdown and the COVID-19 restrictions. It is likely that any future events may be undertaken on a virtual basis.
- sort alternative ways to conduct interviews and online assessments using Skype and WebEx. Video-conferencing and Facebook live events have been used to engage with potential applicants, and to assist with positive action.
- monitored the equality data gathered as part of recruitment processes, this data helps to advise and direct activities for future campaigns if trends are identified.

- produced the Strategic Equality Plan's Employment Monitoring Report 2020-2021. This report includes all employment data broken down by age, disability, race, religion sex and sexual orientation and reported by contract type - permanent, fixed-term, full-time, part-time and other flexible working arrangements. This report assists in identifying underrepresentation amongst staff, and forms the basis for continuity planning.
- undertaken the Gender Pay Gap analysis and action plan, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Government suspended enforcement of the Gender Pay Gap reporting deadline for 2020.
- actively supported a work placement programme for young persons who otherwise would not have engaged with employment, education or training. The programme is delivered in partnership with an education provider. NWFRS have seen young people go on to complete apprenticeship programmes, and find full-time employment in a range of different fields.
- created two electronic equality learning packages, these have been added to the Service's learning Management System. The packages contain interactive multimedia elements and specifically cover "challenging inappropriate behaviour" and "equality, diversity and inclusion".
- aligned the organisation's core values to the selection and development processes. The assessment centre scenarios include the measurement of behaviours aligned to equality, diversity and integrity, through one to one and group role-plays.
- arranged coaching and mentoring development days for FDS and Station Support Officers.
- reviewed the Integrated Impact Assessments for Supervisory and Middle Manager Technical Tests and Assessment Development Centres. A draft promotion panel process is presently in development, and a revised integrated impact assessment has been created.

Equality Objective 3 – Education

Through a comprehensive programme of tailored education and advice provided singly and in collaboration, to empower people living, working and visiting North Wales to continue to reduce their own level of risk from fire and other hazards throughout the different stages of their lives.

Working to achieve this objective, the Service has:

- developed a regular programme of engagement with specific communities' schools and colleges, this programme is delivered by the Services Educationalists, however this year's activity has ceased due to COVID-19 restrictions. Schools presentations over the past 12 months have been delivered virtually.
- ensured all residential landlords are aware of the requirement to provide evacuation information and in particular a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEPs). These PEEPs are provided for individuals who are more at risk from fire due to their protected characteristics.
- a Campaigns Steering Group that meets regularly and comprises of key individuals from a cross section of FRS functions. The group create a campaign calendar of events based around the causes of fire. In 2021 the category of 'inclusivity, diversity, cultural and religious events' was added to the calendar. A series of Equality Information Leaflets have been placed on the website to offer advice around specific religious and cultural events and activities.

- ensured all staff have received awareness training covering safeguarding and 'Ask and Act', this incorporates modern slavery. Staff have been made aware of the referral mechanism should they have occasion to report a safeguarding issue.
- had to reduce the number of fire safety face to face visits it conducts with local businesses due to the COVID-19 restrictions. However engagement has continued through social media, with a number of remote audits being conducted on premises.

Equality Objective 5 – Participation and Communication

By being open and accountable about what the Service does and what the Service's plans are, encourage more people to involve themselves in the process of determining the way fire and rescue services are delivered in North Wales, and aim to increase the range of representative voices that contribute to that process.

Working to achieve this objective, the Service has:

- recently started to use 'Recite Me' an accessibility add-on to the Service's website which further improves accessibility e.g. more languages. The Services website recently underwent an accessibility review in line with statutory requirements, this has led to further accessibility improvements being adopted.
- continued to engage with the business community through social media making them aware of the language option facility available on NWFRS's website.
- attended regular meetings of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network who meet bi-monthly via Teams. The group have identified engagement with underrepresented groups as one of their key objectives for the coming year.
- arranged the Services first Virtual Open Day it was held at the end of 2020 as a pilot event, it was successful and very well received. The Service is currently planning a further event to encourage firefighter recruitment.
- public procurement routes in place via Frameworks as well as working collaboratively with the other Fire and Rescue Services across Wales who have specialist procurement staff to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted.
- Adapted time scales with the delay of the Socio-Economic Duty implementation date due to COVID-19. The Service will consider the duty against strategic organisational decisions, and this has now been incorporated into the Services Integrated Impact Assessment template.

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

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



STATUTORY INDICATORS:		2019/20		2020/21	
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate
RRC/S/001i	Fires attended	1,950	27.92	1,770	25.34
RRC/S/001ii	False alarms attended	2,273	32.56	2,314	33.13
RRC/S/001iii	Road traffic collisions	179	2.56	105	1.50
RRC/S/001iv	Other emergency incidents attended	469	6.72	509	7.29
Where the rate is based on 10,000 population					
RRC/S/002i	Fire deaths and injuries	50	7.16	47	6.73
RRC/S/002ii	Deaths and injuries arising from fires started accidentally	46	6.59	45	6.44
Where the rate is based on 100,000 population					
RRC/S/002iii	Dwelling fires confined to room of origin	339	88.51	339	87.6
As a percentage of the number of dwelling fires attended					

SECTOR INDICATORS:		2019/20		2020/21	
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate
SEC/FI/001i	Deliberate fires	653	9.34	446	6.39
SEC/FI/001ii	Accidental fires (or motive not known)	1,297	18.59	1324	18.96
Where the rate is based on 10,000 population					
SEC/IN/002i	Fire related fatalities	4	0.72	5	0.72
SEC/IN/002ii	Injuries caused by fires	44	6.44	42	6.01
SEC/IN/002iii	Fire related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires	4	0.57	4	0.57
SEC/IN/002iv	Fire related fatalities in deliberate dwelling fires	0	0.00	0	0
SEC/IN/002v	Fire related injuries in accidental dwelling fires	29	4.30	31	4.44
SEC/IN/002vi	Fire related injuries in deliberate dwelling fires	2	0.29	1	0.14
Where the rate is based on 100,000 population					
SEC/FI/001iii	Dwelling fires	383	11.71	387	5.54
SEC/FI/001iv	Accidental fires in dwellings	356	10.88	360	5.15
SEC/FI/001v	Deliberate fires in dwellings	27	0.83	27	0.39
SEC/FA/003ii	AFA false alarms in dwellings	951	29.08	940	28.74
Where the rate is based on 10,000 dwellings					
SEC/FI/001vi	Fires in non-domestic premises	213	6.93	145	0.21
SEC/FA/003i	AFA false alarms in non-domestic premises	262	8.41	273	8.76
Where the rate is based on 1,000 non-domestic premises					
SEC/SA/004i	Dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm was not fitted	49	12.79	61	15.76
As a percentage of the number of dwelling fires attended					

THE DWELLING FIRES RESPONSE CHARTER IN 2020/21

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

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

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

The following pages provide information about our compliance with these commitments during 2020/21.

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

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



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

In 2020/21 we provided advice and encouragement to people on how they can prevent fires from starting in their home and how they can keep themselves safe from fire. Our prevention activity included delivering 11,334 SAWCs to householders, and 2,589 children and young people at key stages 1 - 4 received a fire safety talk.

During 2020/21 we attended 360 accidental dwelling fires. As a consequence of those fires, five people lost their lives and a further 32 people sustained injuries.

Also during 2020/21 we attended 27 dwelling fires that had been started deliberately, resulting in no deaths but one person being injured.

The trend in the number of dwelling fires in the FRA area over the past five years is showing an overall steady decline.



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

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

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

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

In 2020/21, we handled a total of 10,715 emergency 999/112 calls. We were able to obtain enough information about dwelling fire incidents to alert the appropriate initial response within 90 seconds on 90.3% of occasions and between 91 and 120 seconds on 5.7% of occasions.

However, we know that the speed of call handling – although important - is not the only relevant yardstick. Knowing where our services are needed requires specialist skills to effectively glean information from callers who may, for example, be unfamiliar with the area they are in, be frightened or in distress, be very young, or have communication or language difficulties.

Another important skill is recognising when a caller is abusing the 999/112 system by falsely claiming that there is an emergency when, in fact, there is not. It is a criminal offence to knowingly make false calls to the emergency services. Sadly, that does not seem to deter a minority of people who tie up the 999 lines and divert services away from people who may be in a genuinely life-threatening situation. Every time we turn out to one of these malicious false alarms it wastes both time and money and places the rest of the community at higher risk.

In 2020/21, we received 73 malicious false alarms. In 45% of cases, we were able to establish that these calls were not genuine and so avoided needlessly mobilising resources to attend.

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

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



In 2020/21 we responded to 9% of dwelling fires within 1-5 minutes, 54% within 5-10 minutes, 23% within 10-15 minutes and 14% in over 15 minutes. These times include the time it takes for personnel to turn in to the fire station as well as the travel time, so a number of things can affect the speed of response figures, including the urban/rural geography and the nature of road networks in the area.

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

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

We take the safety of our firefighters very seriously, given the nature of the work that they undertake. In 2020/21, our crews attended 1,770 fires in a variety of different types of premises and at outdoor locations. Whilst fighting those fires, ten operational staff received an injury. For some, the injury was slight, but for others the injury was sufficiently serious that it meant that they had to take time off to recover. It is rare that firefighters sustain serious injuries; of the total above, two were classed as 'specified' injuries under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

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

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



In 2020/21, of all the dwelling fires that we attended, 88.4% were successfully contained within the room of origin, without spreading any further. Although a number of factors could contribute to this statistic that would be outside the control of the attending crews such as how long it took for someone to discover the fire in the first instance, whether or not internal doors had been shut to help prevent the spread of the fire, and how far away from a fire station the dwelling was located, we still consider this to be a reasonable indicator of our firefighting success.

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

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

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



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

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

A fire in the home can leave people feeling extremely vulnerable. When people have lost their possessions, they will have need for practical as well as emotional support. When people have been

injured or killed in the fire, the experience can affect whole communities as well as the individual and his or her immediate friends and family. For this reason, the fire and rescue service's role in supporting communities does not end when the fire has been extinguished and everyone has been accounted for.

In all cases, the cause of the fire will be investigated and carefully recorded. Every detail of how and where the fire started, how far it spread, any special circumstances, any particular factors that contributed to the fire will be recorded as a source of future learning, research and monitoring.

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

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

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

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



We always investigate the causes of dwelling fires. In many cases the cause and origin of a fire will be very clear and straightforward, but in others a more in-depth, forensic investigation will be required to ascertain the most likely cause of the fire. In 2020/21, only 13 dwelling fires were recorded as having an unknown cause.

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

In 2020/21, we attended 387 fires in dwellings, of which 27 were found to have been started deliberately.

In some residential premises, such as flats and houses of multiple occupation, the communal and shared areas are covered by regulations that require whoever is responsible for those premises (such as the landlord or the premises manager) to have good fire safety arrangements in place. Failure to do so can lead to the closure of the premises and prosecution of the responsible person with the prospect of imprisonment and/or unlimited fine.

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

In 2020/21 one enforcement notice was served, however no formal prohibition notices were issued. No prosecutions were concluded during the year.



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

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

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

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

Examples of improvement activities that go on include:

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

WHAT OTHERS SAID ABOUT US

[Audit Wales – Review of Involvement 2019/20](#)

The 2019/20 report by Wales Audit focused on the Authority's approach and management of involving stakeholders when proposing service and policy changes, and in the design of activities. The report concluded that the Authority has pockets of good engagement activity but is yet to shift to an integrated strategic approach to involvement.

Audit Wales - Corporate Resilience 2020/21

The most recent report by Wales Audit reviewed the Authority's approach to corporate resilience in order to provide assurance on how well it is addressing the financial and capacity challenges facing public bodies. The report found that the Authority has demonstrated its short-term resilience but needs to take some major decisions to remain resilient in the future:

- Finance: The Authority has managed budgets well, but some key risks need to be addressed to remain financially sustainable;
- Governance: The Authority has an appropriate governance framework but Members need to play a more central role in addressing the big risks facing the Fire and Rescue Service;
- Workforce: The Authority has a resilient workforce and has dealt well with immediate challenges, but there are some medium-term risks that need to be managed to ensure services are sustainable;
- Assets: The Authority has good examples of how it is integrating assets and developing its use of technology but there are some long standing challenges that need to be addressed to help support future resilience; and
- Business continuity: The Authority's business continuity plans helped maintain corporate and operational resilience in responding to the pandemic.

OTHER INFORMATION

The **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004** clarifies the Authority's duties and powers to:

- promote fire safety;
- fight fires;
- protect people and property from fires;
- rescue people from road traffic accidents;
- respond to other specified risks, such as chemical incidents;
- respond to large scale emergencies such as terrorist attacks.

The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (Wales) Order 2007 and (Amendment) Order 2017 place duties on the Authority in connection with emergencies involving chemical, biological or radioactive contaminants; structural collapse; trains, trams or aircrafts; and flooding and inland water emergencies when they present a risk of death, serious injury or illness.

The **Civil Contingencies Act 2004** requires the Authority to plan for and respond to large scale emergencies that threaten serious damage to human welfare, the environment or to security.

The **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** requires the Authority to enforce fire safety in non-domestic premises, including the communal parts of blocks of flats and houses in multiple occupation.

Under the **Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009** the Authority must set objectives to continuously improve what it does and publish information about its improvement and performance.

The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** requires the Authority to work towards improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of future generations of people in Wales, both individually and as a statutory member of Public Services Boards in North Wales.

The **Equality Act 2010** places duties on the Authority to have due regard to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with different protected characteristics.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993 and as part of the new legislation in Wales the Welsh language has equal legal status with English and must not be treated any less favourably. Public bodies no longer need to develop and implement Welsh Language Schemes and must comply with a set of national Welsh Language Standards instead.

The UK Data Protection Act 2018 was introduced to modernise data protection laws and meet the needs of an increasingly digital economy and society. It provides a legal framework for data protection, implements GDPR standards across all general data processing and ensures that the UK continues to have appropriate data protection legislation in place after it leaves the EU.

Welsh Government – People and Communities

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/safety/fire/?lang=en>

Audit Wales

Audit Wales publishes reports on behalf of the Auditor General who is required to assess the likelihood that the Authority will continue to improve and whether the Authority is discharging its duties and acting in accordance with relevant issued guidance. Auditors also work with fire and rescue authorities across Wales to deliver a programme of financial and value-for-money audits.

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External information sources used in compiling this document

Wales Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics: [Fire incidents \(gov.wales\)](#)

England Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics:

[Fire statistics data tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Welsh Government Future Trends Report 2017:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2018-12/170505-future-trends-report-2017-en.pdf>

INTERVENTION IN THE EVENT OF FAILURE OR POTENTIAL FAILURE TO COMPLY:

The Welsh Government has powers of intervention:

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

CONSULTATIONS:

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

Recent consultations are listed below:

Title	Consultation	Publication	For year
Improvement and Well-Being Objectives for 2020/21 onwards (new Environmental Strategy)	Autumn/Winter 2019	March 2020	2020/21
Improvement and Well-Being Objectives for 2019/20 onwards	Summer/Autumn 2018	March 2019	2019/20
Improvement and Well-Being Objectives for 2018/19 onwards	Autumn 2017	March 2018	2018/19
Improvement and Well-Being Objectives for 2017/18 onwards	Autumn 2016	March 2017	2017/18
Improvement Objectives for 2016/17	Autumn 2015	March 2016	2016/17
Improvement Objectives for 2015/16	Autumn 2014	March 2015	2015/16
Improvement Objectives for 2014/15 including new financial strategy	Autumn 2013	March 2014	2014/15

GLOSSARY / DEFINITIONS

- **Fires**

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

- **Primary Fires**

These are fires that are not chimney fires, and which are in any type of building (except if derelict), vehicles, caravans and trailers, outdoor storage, plant and machinery, agricultural and forestry property, and other outdoor structures such as bridges, post boxes, tunnels, etc.

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

- **Secondary Fires**

Secondary fires are fires that are neither chimney fires nor primary fires. Secondary fires are those that would normally occur on open land, in single trees, fences, telegraph poles, refuse and refuse containers (but not paper banks, which would be considered in the same way as agricultural and forestry property to be primary fires), outdoor furniture, traffic lights.

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

- **Chimney Fires**

These are fires in occupied buildings where the fire is confined within the chimney structure, even if heat or smoke damage extends beyond the chimney itself.

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

- **Special Service Incidents (other emergency incidents)**

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

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

- **Fire Deaths (fire related)**

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

- **Fire Injuries**

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

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

- **False Alarm (general guidance)**

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

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

- **False Alarms – Malicious**

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

- **False Alarms – Good Intent**

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

- **False Alarms – Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA)**

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

ALTERNATIVE VERSIONS AND HOW TO CONTACT US

Other versions of this document are available:

- in paper and electronic formats;
- in Welsh and English;
- as a short summary leaflet of the key points;
- in accessible formats through our website.

Contact Details:



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www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk

You can also follow us on:



@northwalesfire



www.facebook.com/northwalesfireservice

AN INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING OUR SERVICES

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is constantly looking for ways to improve its operations and delivery of services. By regularly publishing information that is meaningful we hope to attract an increasing level of engagement with the people and communities who rely on our services.

So, if you have any comments about this assessment, or how we might improve our future annual performance assessments we would very much like to hear from you.