



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government Integrated Impact Assessment Summary

Title of proposal: Reform of Governance and Funding Arrangements for Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales

Department: Education, Culture & Welsh Language Group

Cabinet Secretary/Minister responsible: Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

Start Date: August 2025

Contact e-mail address: fire@gov.wales

What action is the Welsh Government considering and why?

The Welsh Government is consulting on proposals to improve Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) governance and funding arrangements in Wales.

Fires and casualties resulting from fires have declined significantly since responsibility for fire and rescue services were devolved in 2004. This partly reflects the work of the Fire and Rescue Service to prevent fires and promote fire safety with success in reducing deliberately set grass fires. However, that trend appears now to have bottomed out, and the Service has appeared slow to address performance concerns about, for instance, responses to false alarms and containment of fires in the room of origin. Furthermore, a number of inspections, undertaken by the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and Inspector for Wales, and independent reports of culture in all three Fire and Rescue Services have identified serious concerns relating to culture, leadership and operational delivery of fire and rescue services in Wales.

The three FRAs in Wales are constituted as combinations of (but separate from) the local authorities in the areas they serve. Their members are nominated by those authorities, and almost all their funding comes from charges levied on those same authorities. These arrangements no longer support the changing context of the Service.

The case for change is set out in detail in the consultation document. In summary:-

- Membership is not structured to provide efficient and effective leadership and decision-making.
- FRAs are not accountable to any other tier of government, or to the electorate, for their plans or the delivery of them.
- There is no external accountability, or adequate scrutiny, of FRA budgets.
- The current inspection process does not cover all of an FRA's duties and functions.

Therefore, the consultation explores a range of options to:

- secure broader skills, expertise and diversity in Fire and Rescue Authority membership and improve leadership and reduce complication and delay in effective decision-making,
- Improve scrutiny of FRAs' decision making including the setting of their budgets.
- Introduce a broader inspection programme that forms an integral part of overall governance and accountability arrangements for FRAs.

The FRS needs to ensure that it is able to respond to long-term changes in risk. Such changes arise from, for example, demographic ageing, climate change, technological developments and changes in construction materials and practices. Any and all of these can be expected to require changes in firefighter training, equipment and working practices and procedures. To ensure this, the Service needs to be governed and funded in a modern, accountable and sustainable way.

This impact assessment should be read in conjunction with the consultation document – it sets out the main reasons why reform is needed and explores several options which could achieve it in the short term. The consultation focusses on those proposals for short term change that can deliver improvements quickly through secondary legislation and policy change. The consultation invites alternative options for reform which clearly meet the criteria that the consultation document describes.

Implementing some of the proposals would require subordinate legislation, while other more radical or long-term changes would need primary legislation. Regulatory Impact Assessments will be prepared for any such legislation that is brought forward.

Conclusion

1. How have people most likely to be affected by the proposal been involved in developing it?

The proposals largely affect FRAs in Wales. We have engaged with the three Chief Fire Officers, the Chairs of the FRAs, the Commissioners, relevant Trade Unions and key stakeholders such as the Welsh Local Government Association and Equality and Human Rights Commission in developing the proposed options. This has taken the form of meetings with officials and with the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government through the Social Partnership Forum for Wales.

2. What are the most significant impacts, positive and negative?

The policy proposals are about reforming the current governance and funding arrangements for FRAs in Wales and as such do not affect any particular groups of people including children, Welsh speakers or those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. A full Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment have been undertaken which raised no issues.

The Integrated Impact Assessment has raised no issues associated with the social well-being of people and communities in Wales or on Wales' cultural well-being or on the Welsh Language. Neither has it raised any issues on the economic well-being of businesses and the public, the Environment, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child or the Tackling Poverty agenda.

The policy proposals as set out in the consultation document have no effect on the Well-being of Future Generations goals or ways of working at this stage. They have been developed, however, in line with the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

We will keep the Integrated Impact Assessment under review as part of the ongoing process of developing more detailed proposals.

3. In light of the impacts identified, how will the proposal:

- **maximise contribution to our well-being objectives and the seven well-being goals; and/or,**
- **avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

No impacts have been identified.

4. How will the impact of the proposal be monitored and evaluated as it progresses and when it concludes?

We will keep the integrated impact assessment under review as part of the ongoing process of considering the response to the consultation and the resulting more detailed implementation plans.

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.