

## ATISN 27232 – FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

Item 1. Copies of all progress or monitoring reports, including any appendices, annexes and attachments, submitted by the Commissioners to the Welsh Ministers pursuant to the Directions, from February 2024 to the date of this request.

Item 2. Copies of any formal responses, feedback, correspondence, or directions, including any appendices, annexes and attachments, given by Welsh Ministers to the Commissioners in respect of the reports at item 1.

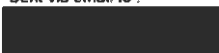
### 13 June 2024 - Letter from Commissioners to CSHLGP



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
De Cymru  
South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service

Julie James MS  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning

Sent via email to :



13 June 2024

Dear Julie James MS,

#### SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BENCHMARK INSPECTION

We would like to acknowledge the publication of Welsh Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee's report, *Sound the Alarm: The Governance of Fire and Rescue Services*.

We accept the importance placed on robust inspection regimes and the role they play in providing assurance regarding the performance of Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) to the public.

We believe that it is important to provide the public and their elected representatives with independent assessments of the efficiency and effectiveness of our service. It is important for us to understand where improvement is needed.

We have addressed this matter of inspection and providing a baseline for our work as Commissioners and have discussed this with your officials. We have presented solutions, but this would require a wider involvement than can currently be provided by your team.

We believe that we could commission His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) who assess and report on the efficiency, effectiveness and people of all FRS in England. HMICFRS also inspects and monitors the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales. They have developed their FRS inspection programme in consultation with the fire sector. The inspection programme is designed to promote improvements across FRSs and provides a benchmark against which we can monitor progress.

As noted, we can pilot this approach within South Wales through commissioning of HMICFRS, review the mechanism and can then possibly extend this across Wales, ensuring our Public are provided with a consistent evaluation of their services.

Comisiynyddwr i'r Gŵlad Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Ffôn 0117 925 1234

+ Ffôn

0117 925 1234

Byddwn yn darparu gwasanaethau yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg. Byddwn yn parhau yn gyfeiriedig i ddilysu ac yn atgynhybu i'r iaith Gymraeg.

Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Telephone 0117 925 1234

+ Fax

0117 925 1234

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English - we will respond equally in both and will reply in your language of choice without delay.



**Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
De Cymru**  
South Wales  
**Fire and Rescue Service**

We believe that other elements of public services in Wales are already delivered through a contracted approach, and this would be a further example of how an effective system of inspection could be achieved without setting up a separate body.

We very much believe that the opportunity for a baseline assessment within quarter four will play a key role in service improvement and ultimately make communities safer. This will provide a more detailed overview of service performance and assurance of service performance. It would also ensure that the issues surrounding the failures within the service would be recognised at a much earlier stage and this prevent further unprecedented measures as those surrounding our appointment.

We look forward to further discussions with you on this matter and as already mentioned to your team we will have achieved the three outcomes set out for us in the Equality and Social Justice Committee's Report by July which is five months ahead of the schedule set out by the committee.

Yours sincerely



**Baroness Wilcox of Newport**  
On behalf of the Commissioners of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Comarynnwr y Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru

Comarynnwr y Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru

Ffôn

Ffôn

Teleffôn

Ffôn

**21 June 2024 - Letter from Commissioners to CSHLGP**



**Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
De Cymru**

**South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service**

21 June 2024

Julie James MS  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

Sent via email:

Dear Julie James MS

## South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Benchmark Inspection

Following on from our last letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> June concerning a baseline review of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), we have now had a meeting (17<sup>th</sup> June) with HMICFRS.

Commissioners were joined by [REDACTED] - all from HMICFRS

Building on previous meetings with them to gain a sense of how they could assist, we discussed in more detail the feasibility and scope for a baseline review. We are now in a position to suggest a way forward and have attached their proposal as Appendix A.

HMICFRS carry out commissioned reviews for fire and rescue services around the world, not just in the UK. Conducting a review requires considerable preparation and orientation for the HMICFRS team and SWFRS, and they have indicated that a review could begin as soon as September 2024.

This work will give the Commissioners, the Service, and indeed Welsh Government a comprehensive understanding and supporting data about the performance of the organisation.

Comitê, mirt at g'iet Gronoaneth 23n as Actub De C, mru

Friday, July 24 • 11:00 a.m.

[illegible]

Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Telephone 01452 824400 • fax 01452 824401

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English: we will respond equally to both and will reply in your language of choice without delay.

That would build on the Morris Review by adding further context and insight into the people elements, as well as contributing to the research arising from the three thematic reviews. This richer picture will enable the Service to fully understand its capability, performance, and outcomes in a structured and measured way.

Inspections, on which this review would be modelled, are routine and regular in FRSs across the UK, and are part of the ongoing context to support performance improvement for the sector and to deliver better outcomes for the public.

At the Culture in Public Service conference held in Newport on 20<sup>th</sup> June, which Carl Foulkes attended with officers from SWFRS and Welsh Government officials, the point was made repeatedly from the platform that effective culture change is enabled and supported by a regular and routine inspection process.

We are not commenting on the wider application of the process within Wales. We would like to commission a baseline review of SWFRS as a pilot that will provide an evidence base for next steps. Such a pilot review would provide a benchmark that will greatly enhance understanding on current levels of performance, areas of good practice, and areas that require improvement.

Such a review will cost circa £250,000 plus costs such as accommodation, travelling etc. The Home Office bear that costs for all English Fire Services. Whilst we accept this is a cost pressure, it is significantly less than the cost of the Morris Review (£467,527).

We would like to undertake this as a collaborative review, co-commissioned by Welsh Government and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, with potential for support from WLGA.

We look forward to receiving your feedback on our proposal, as we begin the preparatory work for the review.

Yours sincerely



**Baroness Wilcox of Newport**  
**On behalf of the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service**

## 27 June 2024 - CSHLGP Response to Commissioners

Julie James AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol, Tai a Chynllunio  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyfl/Our ref JJ/05483/24

Commissioners  
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service



27 June 2024

Dear Commissioners

Thank you for your letters of 14 and 21 June setting out your proposal to commission an inspection of SWFRS from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

I agree with you that independent evaluation of SWFRS will be critical to demonstrating the progress towards recovery that SWFRS makes under your stewardship, and to informing a decision to bring the intervention to an end. While the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector (CFRAI) is also independent of Welsh Government I recognise that he is not resourced to undertake an inspection of this scale. I therefore agree that HMICFRS is well placed to provide this as regards most of the elements of your terms of reference. On that basis I am happy to support your proposal in principle.

My main concern is timing. An inspection beginning in September and reporting in February next year would provide an interim evaluation of progress to date, rather than a baseline from the start of the intervention. More importantly, it would also leave only limited time for further progress to be made in light of the inspection before the end of the Senedd term, especially if we wished HMICFRS to reinspect SWFRS prior to that. I would therefore ask you to discuss with HMICFRS the potential for accelerating this timetable. There is cross over between the areas of the broad inspection being proposed by HMICFRS and the inspection and review work of the CFRAI and Fenella Morris KC. It is important that any work undertaken by HMICFRS compliments rather than duplicates this work, and takes into account the findings and recommendations already made. Doing so could also bring forward the completion of an HMICFRS report.

In general, bodies subject to intervention meet the costs of their own recovery, as this provides a strong incentive to complete the process swiftly. You are right that the Home

Canolfan Cyswll Cynllaf / First Point of Contact Centre

Boe Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in replying.

Office funds routine HMICFRS inspections in England, but the funding model for fire services there is different from ours. Therefore, I would be grateful if you would consider how much of the cost of the inspection SWFRS could bear, and also to discuss the possibility of support from the WLGA. If, following this, some Welsh Government funding would still be necessary to allow the inspection to proceed, I will consider that positively.

Finally, as you are aware, the CFRAI will shortly commence a separate and more focused inspection on the efficiency and effectiveness of firefighting, with particular regard to dwelling fires. This will cover all three FRSs in Wales, starting with SWFRS, and flows from his previous thematic reviews. It will complement any HMICFRS inspection and provide useful insights to improve operational performance and to keep firefighters and the public safe, and taking it into account could again accelerate the completion of HMICFRS's work. I am sure you and SWFRS staff will provide the CFRAI with all necessary support.

I am copying this letter to [REDACTED] the WLGA.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

**Julie James AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol, Tai a Chynllunio  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning

## 10 July 2024 - Letter from Commissioners to CSHLGP



**Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
De Cymru**  
South Wales  
**Fire and Rescue Service**

10 July 2024

Julie James MS  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning  
Welsh Government

Sent via email to:

Dear Julie James MS,

### Appointment of new Chief Fire Officer

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Air Vice-Marshal Fin Monahan OBE DFC PhD as the new Chief Fire Officer for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

Throughout this recruitment process, the Commissioners have been acutely aware of the importance of finding an exceptional leader to guide the Service through the cultural and organisational changes we are facing.

The Morris Review published in January called on the Service to broaden its approach to recruitment for senior level posts, which is why we extended the search outside the fire and rescue sector.

We worked with an executive search consultancy called GatenbySanderson to ensure the openness and independence of the process. At the end of five days of exercises, staff and stakeholder panels, and interviews, Fin Monahan stood out as the best and right person for the role, and we are delighted that he has accepted the invitation to join and lead the Service.

Air Vice-Marshal Monahan joins us from a distinguished and decorated career as a fast jet fighter pilot and senior leader in the Royal Air Force and MOD. He is currently director of 'Defence Futures', the MOD's think tank at Defence Academy Shrivenham.

He holds Masters degrees from both University of Nottingham and University of Madras, and was awarded a Doctorate PhD on Organisational Culture from University of Birmingham in 2018. He is a published writer and has extensively researched culture and how to build courage, morale, respect and cohesion in uniformed organisations.

He will take up his post as Chief Fire Officer after all the necessary background and security checks have been completed.

Comunidade e Gestão da Paisagem das Áreas de Cerrado

ffan 1122      • #foxs 1122

[illegible]

presented in graphical form below in the order you can use each tool and

Commissioner for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ • Fax \_\_\_\_\_

© 2000 Blackwell Science Ltd, *Journal of Internal Medicine* 247: 399–406

usually to both and will reply in your language of choice without delay.

In the meantime, [REDACTED] has agreed to continue as interim Chief Fire Officer to ensure a smooth handover process with Air Vice-Marshal Monahan. The Commissioners have met with [REDACTED] to thank him for his ongoing commitment and to express their confidence in him as he continues to lead the Service on an interim basis.

The Commissioners and Air Vice-Marshal Monahan will be in close contact from now on and begin the process of appointing a permanent Executive Leadership Team.

Please drop me an email at [REDACTED] if you have any questions.

Cofion cynnes.



**Carl Foulkes**  
**Commissioner and Chair, Appointment Panel**  
**On behalf of the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority**

Cc: [REDACTED]

## 4 September 2024 - Letter from CSHLGP to Commissioners

Jayne Bryant AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol, Tai a  
Chynllunio  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and  
Planning



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA/JB/10070/24

Commissioners  
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

4 September 2024

Dear Commissioners

My predecessor wrote to you on 27 June regarding your plans to commission His Majesty's Inspectorate for the Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to undertake an assessment of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS). The then Cabinet Secretary supported the proposal in principle but raised a number of issues with you including timing and the need for the work of the HMICFRS to compliment rather than duplicate the work that has already been undertaken by the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and Fennella Morris KC.

Following your request for financial support for the assessment process, the letter also asked you to consider SWFRS's capacity to meet the costs of the assessment prior to any further consideration of Welsh Government funding. Your Director of Finance has since shared the details of your budget for 2024-25, including unfunded commitments and also your usable reserves. I should point out that there are no reserves at all available within my portfolio or the Welsh Government more widely; indeed, I am already carrying significant unfunded pressures. As a result, I could not sustain funding the costs of the inspection on an equal basis with yourselves. However, in light of the broader purpose of the assessment process to support demonstrable and sustainable change in SWFRS, I am willing to provide a contribution towards the HMICFRS element of the costs of £81,250 for the interim assessment process in 2024-25 and £25,000 for any re-inspection in 2025-26, a total of £106,250 overall. My officials will contact you shortly to confirm the terms of the grant offer, and I am happy to discuss this with you further when we meet.

Yours sincerely

On behalf of Jayne Bryant AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol, Tai a Chynllunio  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at ordi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

30 December 2024 - Update from Commissioners to CSHLGP

Changes to Fire and Rescue Service Governance in Wales - Commissioners' Views - December 2024.pdf

From: Commissioners [redacted]  
Sent: 30 December 2024 08:42  
To: [redacted]  
Cc: [redacted]  
Subject: Commissioners' Views - December 2024 - Changes to Fire and Rescue Service Governance in Wales

Dear all

The Commissioners has provided their insights into governance of a Fire and Rescue Service to support the development of future governance arrangements.

Please find attached a document from the Commissioners with their views on the governance reform which has been sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government. Our Chief Fire Officer has also had sight of this prior to circulation.

Kind regards

[redacted signature]



Change to Fire and Rescue Service Governance in Wales

Views of Commissioners of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

## **Introduction**

Following the publication on 3 January 2024 of the independent report by Fenella Morris KC on the culture and values of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, which exposed widespread discriminatory and abusive behaviour at all level and serious underlying failures of leadership and management, the Welsh Government under the direction of the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership used powers under Section 29(5) and (6) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to remove the governance functions of the Fire Authority and transfer them to four appointed Commissioners. This was in the form of [The South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority \(Exercise of Functions\) \(Wales\) Directions 2024](#).

The four Commissioners appointed were:

- Baroness Wilcox of Newport – former Leader of Newport City Council
- Kirsty Williams – former Member of the Senedd and Minister of Education
- Carl Foulkes – former Chief Constable of North Wales Police
- Vij Randeniya – former Chief Fire Officer for the West Midlands

This paper provides a summary of the views of Commissioners of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service on the future of Fire and Rescue Governance in Wales.

Commissioners' views are grouped into three broad categories:

- Local;
- National; and
- External Assurance.

## **Local**

Commissioners consider local democratic representation to be key to any future governance arrangements for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales. However, Commissioners are of the view that whilst the Morris Review identified failures of leadership and management that there were also structural failures in the governance arrangements that led to this.

Commissioners are of the view that the membership size of Fire and Rescue Authorities should be reduced, streamlined, and be composed of a split of local democratic representation and independent / non-executive roles. In forming this view Commissioners considered the composition of National Park Authorities, WJEC Board, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board, and Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board.

Commissioners recognise that further discussion maybe required to determine the exact number of members, to ensure that there are enough members and capacity to

undertake and fulfil the duties required of them - particularly dependent on the internal structures that Fire and Rescue Authorities might have.

However, Commissioners consider that a 50 / 50 split in membership between local democratic representation and independent / non-executive roles with an additional independent / non-executive chairperson might be appropriate. For example, using the number of local authorities within a Service area as the basis for the size of the Authority would result in South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority consisting of 10 members, plus an independent / non-executive chair.

Commissioners consider that independent / non-executive roles would provide Fire and Rescue Authorities the skills, knowledge, experience, and diversity of thought required to support improved scrutiny and challenge.

Commissioners consider that it would be appropriate for local democratic representation to be nominated from Local Authority Cabinets, preferably Leaders/Deputy Leaders.

Commissioners consider that it would be appropriate for independent / non-executive members to be appointed through a public appointments process.

It is recognised though that having a 50/50 split would mean that not all local authorities within a Service area being directly represented on Authorities at all times. However, whilst Commissioners consider local democratic representation to be key to any future governance arrangements, maintaining a bridge between the Service and local authorities, it is important to note that that when they act in the capacity of members of the Fire and Rescue Authorities that they must act in the interests of their entire Service areas.

Nevertheless, Commissioners recognise that Local Authorities are the most significant funder of the work of Fire and Rescue Services in Wales and therefore it would be important to maintain a relationship between Fire and Rescue Authorities and constituent Local Authorities. To that end, Commissioners would consider that it might be appropriate for the local democratic representation on Fire and Rescue Authorities to rotate between constituent Local Authorities. Continuing the example stated above, 5 Local Authorities could be a member of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority in years 1 and 2 and a different 5 Local Authorities in years 3 and 4.

Commissioners note the importance of ensuring that Fire and Rescue Authorities have access to appropriate and independent (of the Service) advice and support to assist them in undertaking their governance and scrutiny roles.

Commissioners are establishing an Independent Advisory Group, which will have the role of a critical friend rather than a scrutiny group whose aim is to provide the Service with additional viewpoints and considerations.

Additionally, Commissioners note that during their time within South Wales Fire and Rescue Service that they have benefitted from the support of an Advisor, a role separate to that of Monitoring Officer and Treasurer.

### **National**

In addition to local governance and scrutiny, Commissioners are of the view that constituting a formal Welsh National Fire and Rescue Services Committee consisting of the Cabinet Secretary, Chief Fire Officers, and Chairs would promote more collaborative working and support greater innovation across the sector in Wales. Commissioners are of the view that such a National Committee could consider matters such as considering standards, commissioning research and taking a more collaborative and consistent approach in areas such as procurement, allowing Fire and Rescue Services to achieve greater value for money.

### **External Assurance**

Commissioners are of the view that as public bodies, Fire and Rescue Services have a responsibility to maintain high standards, to improve service quality by innovating and considering best practice from elsewhere. It is also important for Services to provide reassurance to the public regard the service that they provide.

As such as part of reviewing Fire and Rescue governance in Wales, Commissioners consider that it is essential that Services are inspected on a routine basis to allow the public to see how well Services are performing and improving year on year.

Whilst Wales does have its own Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and Inspector, it does not have an equivalent inspectorate body for Fire and Rescue Services as in England. South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, with approval of Commissioners, engaged His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to undertake a baseline assessment of the Service. The rationale for this would be that this work would give Commissioners, the Service, Welsh Government, and the public a comprehensive understanding and assessment of the Service. Commissioners consider that this might be an example of how an improved inspection regime for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales might look like.

### **Conclusion**

Commissioners recognise that reform of Fire and Rescue Service governance is a major policy initiative being led by Welsh Government. Commissioners will continue to work closely with Welsh Government, in accordance with their terms of reference and bringing their insight into governance of a Fire and Rescue Service, to support the development of future governance arrangements.

**December 2024**

## 14 January 25 – e-mail from Commissioners

20250113 - Service Improvement SAFRS.docx  
2025-1-13

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 14 January 2025 09:42  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Cabinet Secretary Oral Statement - Contribution from Commissioners  
Importance: High

Hi [REDACTED]

Please find attached the briefing from SWFRS. We do apologise that we had to take it right to the deadline, we tried to get this sent over as soon as possible but due to availability it was later than we expected.

Would you be aware if there are any templates or specific guidance around briefing notes for the Cabinet Secretary that we could have for future reports like this so we could have guidance to follow?

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

**PROGRESS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT CULTURE**

**Governance and Strategy:** The service have reviewed and improved its internal governance arrangements to provide effective scrutiny. This includes a new governance framework, introduction of an internal improvement board, the development of a Culture and Connection board to support social partnership and staff voice, the development of a Strategic Change and Culture Committee and independent advisory group.

We have also developed a comprehensive reporting process through a service maturity model ensuring Welsh Government have oversight of the successful progress since the intervention.

**Transformation Programme:** The service recruited a Director of Strategic Change and Transformation; this was supported by the recruitment of a Culture Programme Manager. We subsequently developed an ambitious transformation programme including cultural improvement.

Within this programme nine key programmes of work were identified and formed under three key priorities: Leadership, Communication and Engagement and Positivity (which focuses on our serving the 1.5m people in South Wales through operational excellence and wider community work such as youth engagement).

The nine key programmes are Governance and Strategy, Communication and Engagement, Leadership, Ethics, Values and Behaviours, Safe and Positive Environments, Talent Management, Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity, Policies and Procedures and Digital Transformation. We are now consulting with the public on our annual improvement plan, which includes this programme of improvement.

The service is developing a programme management office and has recruited two further transformation programme managers to improve the way we manage projects and improvement now and in the future.

**Leadership:** The service has appointed a new CFO, who took post in early November 2024. Subsequently, we have appointed two permanent Assistant Chief Fire Officers and a temporary ACFO who joins the Director of People, Director of Strategic Change and Transformation and Treasurer as our new Executive Leadership Team (ELT). These appointments were overseen by the Commissioners and included wider stakeholder panels.

The service also recruited two temporary Leadership and Improvement managers, who have been developing a leadership academy which will support our approach to Leadership, Management and Command training. This links to our development of our staff and our approach to talent management.

The CFO has an ambitious schedule of visits to meet with every team in service and has completed over 70% since joining in November. This is in addition to our programme of strategic officer visits which now include our corporate staff and visits from Commissioners.

OFFICIAL

**Communication and Engagement:** We recruited a new Head of Communications and Engagement which recognises our ambition in improving our communication and engagement both with staff and the public. We have held numerous staff engagement sessions including manager engagement and input on key areas such as ethics, culture, service improvement and strategy. We held a number of transformation road shows with staff. We continue to seek feedback through dedicated workshops including digital transformation, EDI and leadership.

**His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS):** The service commissioned an assessment of its performance, which includes how efficient and effective the service is and how well it looks after its people. This included self – assessment as staff engagement and has already led to improvements captured within our annual improvement plan. Examples include the development of our new strategy, vision and mission as well as our approach to Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP). This assessment provides the service with a comprehensive review of its performance and early feedback has already been considered in developing our service priorities and objectives moving forward.

**Cultural Review:** Recommendations from the Cultural Review are being addressed alongside actions and recommendations from other reports, including HMICFRS, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Welsh Government. A long-term strategy that will incorporate the Step Forward programme of projects which maps all actions along with the Service's own strategic plans, drawing in areas beyond the scope of the culture review to achieve foundational transformation.

We recognise the importance of embedding lasting cultural change and improvement, and that this is felt by our staff. The development of our ambitious programme of change means that many of the recommendations have been enhanced to include more staff engagement and wider best practice. As an example, the service launched its review of its values which has included over 150 team sessions, led by managers and provided staff with training on the Core Code of Ethics, the opportunity to show how we demonstrated these behaviours and wider feedback into our new strategy, including our vision and mission.

All recommendations are progressing, with many forming part of wider changes and improvements.

The new CFO is taking the approach assessing the progress of recommendations before considering these complete. We plan to sign them off through our new governance structure which will include social partnership, staff voice, Commissioner oversight and external scrutiny. We are considering the metrics and evidence required to evaluate these improvements noting that we have not yet reached the 18-month point. We have widened the scope of many of these recommendations.

All recommendations have been started with two on hold pending final recruitment of SLT.

39 have been completed (48%) 41 in progress.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Phase one recommendations are 65% complete (19 out of 29)  
Phase two recommendations are 48% complete. (20 out of 42)  
Phase three recommendations are in progress.  
Four are in progress for annual action.

Completed recommendations are embedded within the wider transformation project and will be subject to scrutiny, evaluation and monitoring. With the new Chief Fire Officer, we are reviewing the completed and in progress recommendations to ensure that whilst the Service might meet the expectations of the cultural review, we aspire to be the best and, in some cases, stretch ourselves above what Fenella Morris KC intended.

The service has developed a cultural statement supported by Commissioners, the CFO and SLT and this forms an important commitment to improving our culture and sets a clear behavioural standard.

 Director of Strategic Change and Transformation

OFFICIAL

**PROGRESS HISTORIC GRIEVANCE CASES**

**Historic Grievance Cases Progress**

1. Dedicated independent resource has been recruited and appointed.
2. A structure/approach has been established and terms of reference agreed.
3. Although a similar process is being followed for each review, as they vary in nature and complexity, information included in each report varies as required.
4. Initial desk top review and engagement with individuals resulted in a requirement to review 14 historic grievance cases.
5. A further three cases that fall outside of the original Terms of Reference received by ex-employees who contacted the Commissioners via their local Member of the Senedd.
6. This project has helped to establish recommendations for the review of the Services Data Retention Schedule which is currently in progress.
7. One case from 2023 has been completed and outcome communicated as no process failings identified. (any identified organisational learning/improvement has already been enacted).
8. Nine cases are currently in progress at different stages.
9. Seven cases to commence.
10. Status updates being issued to all involved.
11. Wellbeing support offered to all involved.

**Behaviour Training:** The Service has developed a programme of behaviour change that is being rolled out to all staff, commencing mid-Jan 2025. The workshops will include content on the following areas:

1. How did we get here?
2. Why are we here?
3. Core Code of Ethics
4. Changes to Legislation
5. Psychological safety

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

6. DICE - Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity (to include the launch of DICE Champions on every Station)
7. Bystander and negative behaviours
8. Wellbeing in the Workplace

**Diverse Workforce:** To support a diverse workforce, we are creating talent pipelines, through a range of mechanisms including the following structured programmes

1. Internships
2. Work Experience placement
3. Apprenticeships

 Director of People

OFFICIAL

**PROGRESS THEMATIC REVIEWS**

**Broadening the Role of Firefighters in Wales**

We are making positive progress around addressing Recommendations 1, 3, and 4 of the Thematic Review on Broadening the Role of Firefighters in Wales. Recommendation 2 remains under review, pending insights from the ongoing Operation Reset trial. Operation Reset, developed through extensive consultation with focus groups across the service, aims to evaluate the proposed changes' operational and strategic impact. A critical meeting with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) is scheduled for 14 Jan 2025, to present the programme and secure their endorsement. If successful, we will begin the phased rollout of Operation Reset across selected Wholetime Duty System stations, advancing our shared commitment to an enhanced firefighter role and operational excellence.

Progress has been made in advancing Recommendations 1, 3, and 4 of the Thematic Review for Broadening the Role of Firefighters in Wales.

Recommendation 2 will be subject to further review following the completion of the six-month trial of Operation Reset. This trial has been designed to evaluate the operational and strategic benefits of the proposed changes and will provide essential insights to inform our approach.

Operation Reset has already been the subject of extensive consultation, including engagement with focus groups representing a cross-section of the service. These discussions have been instrumental in refining the proposal and ensuring it reflects both operational needs and workforce perspectives. As part of this collaborative approach, a key meeting with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has been scheduled for 14 Jan 25, to present the programme and gain their formal support.

Subject to successful engagement and agreement at this meeting, we anticipate commencing the phased rollout of Operation Reset across selected Wholetime Duty System (WDS) stations shortly thereafter. This deliberate and strategic approach ensures that we address the thematic review recommendations effectively, adopting a shared commitment to enhancing the role of firefighters while maintaining operational excellence.

**Thematic Review of Operational Training**

The service is making good progress towards the completion of the seven recommendations outlined in the Welsh Government Fire & Rescue Service Advisor & Inspector's Oct 2022 publication.

**Recommendation 1:** The Operational Training Department is currently reviewing the training needs analysis of all its work locations to ensure that all training is regularly aligned to the hazards, risks and threats that are found in each of their respective response area. This will ensure that all operational firefighters spend more time training towards the emergencies that they encounter more frequently and less on the ones that they seldomly encounter, thus improving our operational effectiveness.

**Recommendation 2a & 2b:** An unconstrained analysis of SWFRS' training program to maintain competence in the NFCC core and additional competencies of a firefighter role

OFFICIAL

## OFFICIAL

(this includes firefighter, crew manager & watch manager), is nearing completion. This publication will outline the total amount of time that is required for these roles to train on and be assessed against to maintain competency.

**Recommendation 3:** Work will fully commence on this recommendation once the report of recommendation 2a & 2b is published. However, some work that supports this recommendation has already been undertaken during the completion of recommendation 1.

**Recommendation 4:** A comprehensive suite of micro-teaches is currently being developed to support students to acquire, develop and maintain their operational skills. This explainer video format supports most learning styles and is positively received by crews.

**Recommendation 5:** Throughout Nov & Dec the training department undertook equipment trials to support the development of new control measure tactics for deployment during firefighting activity. The outcome of the trials will shape the future training syllabus and the firefighting tactics that SWFRS deploys at compartment fires.

**Recommendation 6:** SWFRS is currently linking in with international experts in compartment firefighting tactics through attendance at seminars, workshops and online training events. The information gained from attending these events will shape our future training syllabus, service delivery, and aspirations to achieve operational excellence and to become the highest performing FRS in the UK.

### **Effectiveness of its Response to Domestic Dwelling Fires**

Extensive work and progress have been made to improving the effectiveness of SWFRS operations to domestic dwelling fires. Dedicated resources have been allocated to work expediently through the 6 recommendations contained within the CFRAI's review. This has included the development of scientifically accurate and accessible guidance for building firefighting tactics, and is due for publication in Apr 25, following the acquisition of the new skills and training packages for firefighters. It is anticipated that all 6 recommendations will be complete by Jul 26. The net effect of this work will have a significantly positive impact on the education, training, safety and response of crews to dwelling and building fires in South Wales, improving the operational effectiveness of our response to such fires.

**Recommendation 1:** Essentially recommendation 1 (shift changes) will be out of scope of the work commenced, as that will sit with the extant 'Broadening the role of Firefighters'. The rest will form a new 'thematic work-stream' strand and sit with ACFO Thompson as the strategic lead.

**Recommendation 2:** In the initial phase, the work undertaken to meet recommendation 2 will be the key focus. This is partly due to the short timeframe to which this recommendation needs to be achieved, but mainly due to the impact it will have on operational effectiveness. The goal is to produce a guidance document for building firefighting that is scientifically correct, reflects the most current research and is clearly and unambiguously expressed in one piece of guidance that is easily accessible to all firefighters. The aim of the guidance is to improve firefighting hazard knowledge and control measure tactics.

## OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

A guidance document has been produced called *Building Firefighting Tactics for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service*. This document has had an initial review and is currently being edited by the multimedia development team. Following this final edit the document will be distributed waded for a full review before the planned service publication in April 25.

This document will form the basis for recommendation 3 it will highlight what areas need training packages produced. These training packages will then support the identified control measure tactics.

**Recommendation 3:** Work will commence on this recommendation in January 2025, on completion of building firefighting guidance document. There is a phased approach to this recommendation.

**Phase 1** – this is the initial rollout of the guidance document and the associated training. The training schedule will cover all tactical officers and all operational crew. It is programmed for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2025 and will utilise the dates of this periods quarterly exercise program. The training will cover all aspects of the guidance document along with practical exercises/demonstrations of tactics. It is anticipated that the phase is completed by Apr 25.

**Phase 2** - Work will commence on this recommendation in Apr 25, with research work already ongoing. The aim of this phase is the production of station-based training packages to be used by operational crew for continuation training, these training packages are to develop the understanding of identified control measure tactics. The work will follow an ongoing review cycle this will be outline in recommendations 4 and 5.

A cross-mapping exercise has taken place to identify training shortfalls in practices outline in the *Building Firefighting Tactics for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service* guidance document. This exercise has identified several areas when training packages will need to be produced. These training areas have been assigned to individual SME to produce the outlined training packages.

**Phase 3** – Development of new training practices for building firefighting, this will involve reviewing other fire and rescue services and their approach to building firefighting training. It will look at training research and what different training facilities could support SWFRS. Research work has already started in this area, a research trip has been planned for 04 Feb. This trip will involve a small team from SWFRS visiting the Netherlands to review the research work undertaken by The Netherlands Institute for Safety NIFV. The team will be joined on the research visit by 10 members of the NFCC.

**Recommendation 4:** Work will commence on this recommendation following the review of the team tasked with leading on this objective. When the initial aspects of recommendation 5 are completed, the resulting identified team will work to meet the objectives outlined in recommendation 4.

**Recommendation 5:** Work will commence on this recommendation following the completion of the guidance outline in recommendation 2 and following the start of recommendation 3 phase 1. It will involve the potential centralising of the operational assurance process to single function/team with a clear recording and feedback process.

OFFICIAL

## OFFICIAL

**Recommendation 6:** Recommendation 6 to be reviewed with the new CFO as outlined in the report.

### **Grenfell Thematic Review**

SWFRS have established a dedicated high-rise team to ensure that the more effective assessment of the recommendations from the learning from Grenfell thematic review and the phase 1&2 Grenfell enquiry recommendations are achieved and embedded as quickly as possible. The service's strategic focus has been centred on the creation of a comprehensive action plan underpinned by a detailed business plan, prioritising the achievement of all the Grenfell recommendations. It is anticipated that all recommendations will be achieved by 31 Dec 25 and will be evident in the planned integration of new technological solutions, procedures, training, and education for firefighters and Control, ensuring the Service remains prepared to address high-rise emergencies more effectively.

The new High-rise Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been amended and is currently out for consultation. A new evacuation SOP is current in draft form and will be released for consultation following the full publication of the High-rise SOP.

A meeting has been scheduled with London Fire Brigade (LFB) High-rise lead in Jan 25. LFB has recently enhanced their incident ground to Fire Control evacuation App. We are exploring the feasibility of integrating this app our Vision system while Joint Fire Control (JFC) continue to explore a integrated, dedicated system. Currently, there are no UK Fire Service with a dedicated electronic solution integrated into their mobilisation system. The LFB App may provide a short-term solution until a system that links to our mobilisation system is available.

All Wholetime crews completed their year-one evacuation training in December. Year two training will focus on evacuation exercises, forming part of the Operations department's exercise programme. This training will include the use of an evacuation alert system. Additionally, our On-Call staff will be provided with an introduction to the new procedures as part of this development cycle.

The High-Rise Working Group has arranged for a National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) evacuation alert training package to be made available on the Service's online training portal.

The Operational Development and Support Team has amended its incident monitoring forms to capture the lessons from the Grenfell recommendations.

Following the approval of a dedicated High-Rise team, a business case has been written, which includes an action plan to address all outstanding recommendations.

### **Automatic Fire Alarms Response Change**

One of the Commissioners terms of reference set by WG was to make arrangements for a significant and sustained reduction in SWFRS's attendance at false alarms. This work was commissioned in April 24 with an ambitious deadline for a new automatic fire alarm response strategy set for 6 Jan 25. A new response strategy was conceptualised and

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

following a programme of extensive scrutiny, education and engagement with all relevant internal and external stakeholders, an agreed plan was implemented on the 6 Jan 25. This new response strategy has now entered a 'review' cycle phase and lessons and improvements that can be made from the data and feedback that emerges over the next 3 months will be considered. The successful achievement of the new AFA response change will see a significant reduction in the number of false alarms that SWFRS attends. The data shows that there will be a likely 45% reduction in calls. This capacity will then be reinvested into the wider thematic review work of training for firefighters, the broadening of the role as well as wider community education and prevention work.

A substantial amount of work has been accomplished to fulfil all necessary tasks which resulted in the Service achieving the go-live date of 6 Jan 25.

While the communication and engagement period has concluded, the AFA webpage continues to provide ongoing information and guidance on the changes. Throughout the process, we have provided stakeholders with the opportunity to raise any questions and ensured that a response was provided to all enquiries.

This period of engagement resulted in changes to our response model. The new AFA response model removes the night-time response strategy, as we will now be attending all residential premises, including specialised housing such as sheltered accommodation and extra care facilities, both during the day and night-time. This aligns with Mid and West Wales Fire and Fire Service (MWWFRS). Additionally, we will also be attending schools, including education facilities and heritage sites, at all hours. Following this change, our media campaign was updated to reflect our revised response strategy, which included a radio advertising campaign which was aired in Dec 24.

In Dec 24 members of Business Fire Safety delivered training for Fire Control Operators in preparation for the go-live date. This training has been simplified with the move towards the MWWFRS model.

The go-live date for NHS premises will be delayed until the 07 April 25. This is to allow sufficient time for these premises to revise policies and review their fire response procedures.

Following this change, our media campaign was updated to reflect our revised response strategy, which included a radio advertising campaign which was aired in Dec 24.

In Dec 24 members of Business Fire Safety delivered training for Fire Control Operators in preparation for the go-live date. This training has been simplified with the move towards the MWWFRS model.

The go-live date for NHS premises will be 07 Apr 25. This is to allow sufficient time for these premises to revise policies and review their fire response procedures.

██████████ ACFO Director of Service Delivery

██████████ - ACFO Director of Technical Services

OFFICIAL

### 3 February 2025 - Letter from CSHLGP to Commissioners

Jayne Bryant AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JB/00069/25

Commissioners  
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service



03 February 2025

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for your letter of 30 December setting out your views on Fire and Rescue Services Governance in Wales.

Your written views will be considered as part of the wider approach to FRS governance reform. You will be aware that FRS Governance reform has been placed on the agenda of the Social Partnership Forum meeting on 3 February. This will provide an opportunity for the Welsh Government, the FRS's and the employee representatives to collaboratively consider and contribute their views on a potential new, clearer and more effective governance model for the future.

My officials will undertake further engagement with key stakeholders during the Summer, which will provide another opportunity to address any additional thoughts or suggestions before any potential legislative change and implementation in 2026.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you personally for your work as Commissioners and your commitment to securing long term and sustainable change in South Wales FRS. I am sure you share my aim of ensuring employees have a safe and fair workplace and that firefighters can operate safely when protecting the communities they serve.

Yours sincerely,



Jayne Bryant AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

Canolfan Cyswilt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:

Bae Caerdydd - Cardiff Bay  
Coerdydd - Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Source: *Improvement Strategies and Governance* (2004), p. 149.

**OFFICIAL**

Best Wishes,

**Ministerial Briefing Note**

**From: Chief Fire Officer, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service**

**Subject: South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Improvements: Culture and Governance.**

**Strategy:** The Service has developed a new Strategy with an ambitious new vision with revised mission and values and a new motto. This strategy has identified 60 work strands that have been prioritised to assure delivery. Of note, the strategy has paved the way to the Strategic Plan, including new Strategic Themes that better align with effective delivery of our Prevention, Protection and Response strategies. A Performance Management Framework has been and has resulted in significant progress in developing effective Community Risk Management Planning processes. The strategy also prioritises workload against resource to deliver on the Step Forward Transformation Programme and Fenella Morris KC, Thematic Review and HMICFRS recommendations. All recommendations are progressing, with many forming part of wider changes and improvements. The Service has introduced a new process to ensure recommendations are supported by evidence and signed off through our governance structure. A major concern of the CFO is the level of bureaucracy that hampers progress in the organisation. Thus Red-tape reduction is an additional thrust of the strategy that will allow the organisation to unlock capacity and accelerate transformation.

**Governance:** The Service has reviewed and improved its internal governance arrangements to provide effective scrutiny. This includes a new governance framework, and introduction of an internal improvement board and development of a Strategic Change and Culture Committee. A Culture and Connection board to support social partnership and staff voice will be launched in June. The Service is also currently recruiting for members of its Independent Advisory Group that will advise at the strategic level.

**Transformation Programme:** The Step Forward Transformation Programme lies within the strategy. This is a major piece of work that will deliver on 9 key areas, with a particular focus on changing the culture in the organisation. As part of this work, the Service is developing a Portfolio Management Office and has recruited two further transformation programme managers to improve the way we manage projects and improvement now and in the future. This approach was proven to be effective in Gloucester Fire and Rescue Service.

**Leadership:** The CFO has conducted an ambitious schedule of visits as part of his visible leadership approach and has met with circa 95% of all members of the Service since joining in November. He also undertook a Core Skills firefighter course at the Cardiff Gate Training Centre to engage with the instructor and recruit communities. These CFO visits are co-ordinated with a programme of strategic officer visits which now include our corporate staff and visits from Commissioners. The CFO introduced a direct confidential inbox. In conjunction with the establishment of a mediation package, 10 previously intractable issues are being resolved in a new way that is providing confidence and trust in the transformation of the Service.

**Significant appointments.**

**Area Manager.** The Service has appointed a new Area Manager. This appointment was overseen by the Commissioners and included wider stakeholder panels.

**Head of Leadership and Personal Development Academy.** The Service recruited Firefighter [REDACTED] to lead the Leadership and Personal Development Academy as part of its launch on 28 April 2025. This Academy is a key plank of the Strategy and will play a major role in culture.

transformation. This appointment saw her transfer from an operational to a corporate role with a significant increase in rank based on her external leadership experience. This represents a new paradigm in terms of talent management in the Service.

- **Communication and Engagement:** Since the recruitment of our new Head of Communications and Engagement we have engaged with staff to develop a new Communication and Engagement Strategy and improved both our internal and external communication. The drumbeat of engagement has increased dramatically, and the Service is engaging with traditional and social media to a much greater extent than previously. Internally, the Service has held numerous staff engagement sessions including manager engagement and input on key areas such as ethics, culture, service improvement and strategy. 5 posters campaigns, 28 internal updates and 12 Commissioner updates have been delivered on culture related subjects.

**His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS):** The HMICFRS assessment of SWFRS performance, including how efficient and effective the Service is and how it looks after its people, was completed in November 2024. A draft report was presented to SWFRS to check factual accuracy. The final report, when released, will identify many areas that need addressing and will be difficult reading for many in the Service and will, doubtless, cause a dip in morale that is already fragile. However, the self-assessment led by the Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, who previously served as an HMICFRS inspector, has already identified many of the areas for improvement and action plans that will address these are already incorporated in the strategy, transformation program and strategic plan.

**Ethics Values and Behaviours Review:** This review was led by managers across the Service and included input on the Core Code of Ethics (CCoE). Over 175 team sessions were conducted, resulting with the engagement of 1326 staff including operational staff, corporate staff, volunteers and fire cadets. Further staff feedback has since been conducted to work with our staff to test the proposed Vision, Mission and Values with staff. This includes ongoing conversation about the CCoE and development of our new strategy. 33 sessions have been completed including all-staff communication and a survey.

Additionally, the Service's culture statement asserts that unacceptable behaviours, including harassment, will not be tolerated and rollout of the Taking Care of Behaviours programme will promote and embed behaviour standards. Led by the CFO we have also engaged with managers on 'Just Culture' and continue to develop this and drive change across the organisation.

**Culture focussed delivery.** The Annex provides data on recent delivery of training focussed on cultural transformation aimed at driving out unacceptable behaviours across the Service.

**Chief Fire Officer South Wales Fire and Rescue Service**

## ANNEX

### South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Cultural Training Data

Conflict resolution training – 88 managers completed, 1 session left in June taking us to total 100 trained

#### Taking Care of Behaviours training.

3 pilot sessions validated this innovative product

All new Whole-Time recruits on the last course undertook this training

8 Group Managers complete (x22 due to be trained in total)

All SLT to receive training on 7 May 25 as part of SLT strategic leader development package

On-Call recruit training is being developed as an on-line module

#### Disciplinary & Grievance training

Delivered 20 trained (50 to be trained in total)

Train the trainer underway

By end of July 2025

7 WDS station

2 RDS stations

45 Station Managers/Commanders

By end October the complete workforce will be trained

#### Ongoing Media and Comms

Taking Care of Behaviour Poster Campaign – Bullying & Harassment, Workplace Sexual Harassment, Vexatious allegations, Public Harassment, Reporting Concerns

Developing media video content to reinforce messaging – microteaches (filming due to commence during May)

#### Further training modules:

Bullying Harassment and Victimisation for instructors at Cardiff Gate and Cadets, intent to train all Crew Mgrs, Watch Managers by the end of October 2025

Completed Mandatory training:

70% - Inclusive Language 1,214 (of 1,734)

76% - Unconscious Bias 1,333 (of 1,733)

43% - Inclusive Leadership 329 (of 758)

76% - Safeguarding 1,313 (of 1,727)

DICE Champions network – 35 signed up

88% - Conflict resolution training – 88 (100 by the end June)

Developed 12 mandatory 'leadership behaviours' masterclasses, mandated to qualify for promotion in Promotions Reform project

- Conflict Resolution
- Conducting Personal Reviews (inc difficult conversations)
- Inclusive Language
- Unconscious Bias
- Inclusive Leadership
- Safeguarding
- Just and Fair Culture
- TCoB
- Managing wellbeing and mental health
- Dignity at work
- Coaching and mentoring
- Handling workplace investigations

## 01 July 2025 - Letter from Commissioners to CSHLG

Correspondence on behalf of Commissioners for SWFRS - Ministerial Briefing - CFRA Response



Commissioners

To: Correspondence mail - JB

CC:



20250630\_SWFRS\_Ministerial\_Briefing\_Note-CFRA\_Response\_V1 1-05.pdf

113 kB

Translate message to English Never translate from Welsh [Translation preferences](#)

Reply Reply All Forward

Tue 01/07/2025 15:51

[SWYDDOGOL - SENSITIF] - [OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE]

Dear Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

Please find attached correspondence on behalf of the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service for your attention.

Yours sincerely



**To: Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government**      **From: South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Commissioners**

01 Jul 25

20250630\_SWFRS\_Ministerial\_Briefing\_Note-CFRA\_Response\_V1.1-OS

**SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (SWFRS) NOTE IN RESPONSE TO CFRA LETTER DATED 19 JUN 2025**

**1. Issue:** This ministerial briefing note has been prepared to meet your request for written comment by 2 July 2025 following the Welsh Government Fire Advisor's letter dated 19 June 25 advocating a pause on the next inspection to enable direct intervention to 'allow work with the three FRS under the auspices of the Support and Implementation Protocol to support them in meeting the outstanding recommendations'.

**Timing:** Deadline 2 July 2025.

**Recommendation(s)**

**2. Cabinet Secretary is invited to note that:**

- a. **SWFRS commitment to fire fighter safety and efficiency.** SWFRS has taken the Fire Advisor's advice in the thematic reviews seriously and has diverted significant resource to meet his recommendations since their publication.
- b. **Thematic review completion.** SWFRS will have completed all thematic review recommendations by 31 December 26 except for shift equalisation.
- c. **Equalisation of the shift recommendation.** SWFRS is conducting a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) as recommended by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The findings may indicate a need to re-evaluate the current operating model of our fire and rescue stations and will provide critical insight to shape the development of a future evidence-based shift pattern. Meanwhile, the Service is undergoing a major transformation process to change the culture following the Fenella Morris KC Report. Commissioners are, therefore, of the view that it would not be appropriate to alter the shift systems until the CRMP is complete to ensure that the most appropriate shift pattern is chosen. Of note, this does not mean that SWFRS has discounted shift equalisation. That will be considered alongside other shift patterns when the CRMP data is gathered.
- d. **Fatigue.** The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) has conducted an extensive review into SWFRS fatigue in consultation with HSE, SWFRS lawyers, and SWFRS staff and commissioned the design of a new fatigue management system. This has identified that the Service, Commissioners and Welsh Government are carrying a significant risk, and that the system needs modernisation and regularisation. This research highlighted areas of risk that are of more immediate concern than the shift system.

notably, risks associated with the dual contracts of On-Call and Wholetime shift pattern, secondary employment, tactical officer call out routine, corporate call out routines and other fatigue related issues that were allowed to develop over many years. Fatigue management is the CFO's highest current risk and a new policy is being presented to Commissioners for approval this week. This will be rolled out in three stages. Stage one is already being implemented, stage two will be complete by September 2025 and stage three will take three years to implement. To roll the entire policy immediately, without significant financial investment, would place communities at risk as it would likely cause a breakdown of the On-Call system.

e. **Efficiency.** SWFRS introduced Op RESET in April 2025. This system apportions clear blocks of time to watches to encourage better use of time for training, prevention, protection and preparation activities. Op RESET is on target to be fully implanted by 30 November 25. Of particular note, Op RESET has moved significant amounts of training, protection, prevention work as well as maintenance and administrative duties into the night shift to make the current shift system more efficient. It is also driving more efficient general use of time that can now be closely monitored across the whole shift system.

**3. Summary.** SWFRS has invested significant time and resource into fulfilling the Welsh Government Fire Advisor's thematic review recommendations. SWFRS has become more efficient than it was 6 months ago through the implementation of Op RESET. Commissioners are of the view that shift equalisation should only be considered along with other shift patterns when the CRMP has been conducted.

**Baroness Wilcox  
Kirsty Williams  
Vij Randeniya  
Carl Foulkes**

**Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service**

1 July 2025 - SWFRS Culture update for SPF Meeting

[Redacted]

Reply Reply All Forward \*\*\*  
Tue 01-07-2025 12:13

Follow up Completed on 02 July 2025  
You forwarded this message on 01-07-2025 12:13  
20250701 Social Partnership Forum SWFRS Culture.docx  
2025-07-01  
Translate message to English Never translate from Welsh Translation preferences

Dear [Redacted]

Please find attached the SWFRS Culture Update for the Social Partnership Forum scheduled for 14 July.  
Kind regards

[Redacted]

OFFICIAL

To: Social Partnership Forum

From: CFO Fin Monahan OBE DFC PhD

1 July 25

**SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP FORUM SWFRS: CFO CULTURE UPDATE**

**Governance and Strategy**

1. The new strategy, vision, mission, and values have been launched internally. This includes Service priorities and the Step Forward Transformation Programme. The communication and engagement plan builds on our middle leader briefings with a particular emphasis being placed on leadership visibility. A 'community culture' initiative has been launched asking teams to deliver our new vision, mission, and values with community partners and focus activity on reducing risk.
2. The Service has procured new programme management software and continues to improve its approach to portfolio, programme, and project management through the development of its Portfolio Management Office.
3. The Service now has draft Prevention, Protection, and Response Strategies and a performance framework. This work underpins our strategic approach to performance management and the future development of service-wide performance dashboards.
4. The Service is developing a culture dashboard as part of this work, which includes KPIs and metrics to measure our improvement.
5. A Culture and Connection Board to support social partnership and staff voice will be launched shortly. The Service is also recruiting members of its Independent Advisory Group to advise at the strategic level; the shortlisting is underway.

**Leadership**

6. **New mediation package:** The Service now has three accredited mediators, and five more are undergoing accreditation. We have provided mediation in three cases, and two more are planned.
7. Thirty-five personnel have used the CFO Confidential email. This project has been important for SWFRS personnel to have direct access to the CFO with issues of concern. The Service is reviewing this as part of our wider confidential reporting channels and is considering whether an external ombudsperson should be established.
8. **New Leadership Academy:** Since its launch, the Leadership and Personal Development Academy has progressed with innovative initiatives. It has put 3 instructors from operational and non-operational backgrounds through an instructor and an enhanced instructional techniques course. This has allowed course design to take place to build a common instructor course to be delivered to all SWFRS operational and non-operational instructors. Meanwhile, course design is underway for the delivery of the leadership course aimed at the first levels of leadership in SWFRS. Culture, behaviour and values are golden threads in these courses. SWFRS is on target to deliver full operating capability of the Academy in Dec 25.

## OFFICIAL

9. As part of the SWFRS Leadership and Personal Development work, Academi Wales has developed a course to train the SLT to enhance individuals' skills and behaviours to improve its collective performance. It explicitly focuses on effectively addressing the cultural issues identified in the Fenella Morns report. A final decision on funding of this course is to be made by the end of June.

### Communication and Engagement

10. The Service has developed a new Communication and Engagement Strategy, following extensive staff engagement across the Service with workshops and an online survey. Results showed high agreement that colleagues understood their role in making South Wales safe (96.5%), and 77.8% of people feel proud to work for the Service.

The communication strategy workstreams are internal communications and culture, change communications and engagement, external communications, crisis communications and resilience, stakeholder and media engagement, team development and collaboration, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

11. The Service is developing an annual staff survey, as recommended by HMI-CFRS. This will provide further data for our culture dashboard and ensure we can measure improvement and staff sentiment.
12. Internally, the Service has shared updates with colleagues on progress on key areas of work from the recommendations of the culture review, the recruitment for the Community and Culture Board, learning from the Red Arrows on their culture journey and embedding change, and an integrated internal and external campaign to share our response to the HMI-CFRS report.

### Reward and Recognition

13. The Service is re-evaluating its approach to staff recognition as part of the Ethics, Values, and Behaviours Programme. This includes expressing gratitude and recognising employees who exemplify our new values: compassion, courage, respect, integrity, and excellence.
14. This work includes a new reward and recognition framework for internal recognition, external recognition, and state awards. Planning is underway for our new annual staff recognition awards, which will coincide with our SWFRS 30th Anniversary.

### Recruitment and Promotion

15. The Service has improved recruitment processes so that senior leadership roles are more transparent by including external subject matter experts on the panel and opening vacancies to external and internal candidates. Staff stakeholder panels support these to gather thoughts and feedback from our colleagues on candidates as part of the assessment process.
16. A Service-wide consultation and review of promotion process has been concluded and will inform a new framework and process. This is a long-standing subject of dissatisfaction.

### The Spirit of Fire

17. A research project to understand and celebrate the rich culture and subcultures of a fire and rescue Service. The 'Spirit of Fire' project will examine traditions, humour, symbols, language, teamwork, and pride. These elements, across operational, corporate, volunteer, and contractor

OFFICIAL

teams, contribute to a sense of identity, camaraderie, and purpose that is central to operational success as well as employee satisfaction

**Learning from the Red Arrows**

18. The Service welcomed the Red Arrows as part of the SWFRS continued learning and leadership development programme. The session included their approach to teamwork, humility in leadership, resilience under pressure, the power of honest debriefing, and how they consistently deliver world-class performances. They also shared important lessons from their own journey of cultural improvement.

**His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**

19. The final report was published on May 25; it identified many areas that need addressing, including three Causes for Concern. However, the self-assessment, led by the Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, had already identified many of the areas for improvement, and action plans to address these are already incorporated into the strategy, transformation program, and strategic plan. Indeed, following discussions with the much of the foundational work to improve the Service has been underway.
20. The Service has developed a strategic action plan to address these areas, which is supported by detailed action plans and timelines.
21. The communication plan included a pre-brief of middle leaders, internal communications, a representative body meeting prior, a video from the CFO, and an all-staff call. We also engaged with the media including with ITV and BBC before the release of the report and afterwards, to reassure the public that work is underway and improvements have been made.

## **ANNEX**

**Culture-focused delivery.** This Annex provides data on recent delivery of training focused on cultural transformation.

### **South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Cultural Training Data**

**Conflict resolution training SLT now completed** - a train-the-trainer approach is being adopted to roll out role-specific conflict resolution training to Crew Managers and Watch Managers to be completed by end Q3

### **Taking Care of Behaviours training.**

Three pilot sessions validated this innovative product  
All new Wholetime recruits on the last course undertook this training  
All SLTs have received the training as part of the SLT strategic leader development package

On-Call recruit training is being developed as an online module  
As of 19 June 25, 15 sessions delivered training >200 personnel  
Plan to complete 100% of workforce by end of October 25

### **Disciplinary & Grievance training**

SLT and People Services received WG-organised D&G training from Hugh James. A train-the-trainer approach is being adopted to roll out role-specific training to middle leaders.  
Representatives from People Services are attending an all-Wales FRS discipline and grievance session in Newtown on 27 June 25.

### **Ongoing Media and Communications**

**Taking Care of Behaviour Poster Campaign:** Bullying and Harassment, Workplace Sexual Harassment, Vexatious Allegations, Public Harassment, Reporting Concerns.

**Strategy, Vision, Mission and Values launched:** External Values Campaign has been started.

### **Further training modules:**

**Bullying, Harassment, and Victimisation for Instructors at Cardiff Gate and Cadets:** All Crew Managers and Watch Manager instructors to be trained by the end of October 2025. The syllabus has been defined, and training scheduled.



Gwent Fire and Rescue Service  
De Cymru  
South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service

## Chief Fire Officer CULTURE UPDATE

### NEW VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

#### Our Vision

Working together as one team to be an outstanding Fire and Rescue Service protecting South Wales today, ambitiously innovating for tomorrow.

#### Our Mission

To serve our communities by reducing risk and responding to emergencies.

#### Our Values

Compassion, Courage, Respect, Integrity and Excellence.

### LEADERSHIP

#### NEW MEDIATION PACKAGE

3

The Service now has three accredited mediators.

35

Thirty five personnel have used the **CFO Confidential email**.

#### NEW LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

3

Instructions from operational and non-operational backgrounds have been put through an instructor and an enhanced instructional techniques course.

### COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

#### AUDIT RESULTS (All responses)



#### CHANNEL ENGAGEMENT



#### SURVEY



### REWARD AND RECOGNITION

- Improved recruitment processes
- Review of promotion processes

#### SPIRIT OF FIRE PROJECT

- With examples:
- Traditions
  - Humour
  - Symbolism
  - Language
  - Teamwork
  - Pride

### LEARNING FROM THE RED ARROWS

#### Key lessons and takeaways for SWFRS:

- Honest and open debriefing
- Humility in leadership
- Resilience under pressure
- Collaboration and external learning

Moving forward, we'll be looking at ways to incorporate more of these lessons into our daily operations and leadership practices.



### HMICFRS



The final report was published on **May 25**.

SWFRS had already identified many of the areas for improvement, and **action plans** to address these.

The Service has developed a **strategic action plan** to address these areas.



Engagement with the media including with ITV and BBC before the release of the report and afterwards, to reassure the public that work is underway and improvements have been made.

30 October 2025 - SWFRS Culture update for SPF Meeting

SPF FRS Paper - South Wales FRS Culture Progress Update (1) (2).docx  
docx 3 kb

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 30 October 2025 08:44  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: SPF FRS Paper - South Wales FRS Culture Progress Update (1) (2)

[SWYDDOGOL] - [OFFICIAL]

Dear [REDACTED],  
Following on from your discussions with [REDACTED] please find attached the updated SPF Culture Report report. We've added an additional Appendix B containing further detail.  
Kind regards

[REDACTED]

OFFICIAL

**Ministerial Briefing Note**

**From: Chief Fire Officer, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service**

**Subject: South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Improvements: Culture and Governance.**

**Strategy**

The Service has identified and established a set of key strategic workstreams aimed at reducing organisational and operational risk. These priority areas include fatigue management, contaminants, and the Fire Cover Review, all of which form integral components of the broader Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). Together, these initiatives reflect a proactive and evidence-based approach to enhancing safety, resilience, and wellbeing across the Service.

- **Risk Management**  
A formal partnership with an external partner is underway to embed a consistent risk management framework across the Service. Key activities include SLT training, monthly risk reviews, and the adoption of Bow-Tie methodology. A roadmap is being developed to guide implementation, aiming to foster a transparent, resilient and opportunity-driven risk culture.
- **Fatigue Management**  
Progress continues with legal engagement and Occupational Health now screening for fatigue. Fatigue is on the agenda for the next Representative Bodies meeting. Early indicators include positive dialogue with the FBU and integration with the Fire Cover Review. The new software will support incident-related fatigue tracking.
- **Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)**  
The Fire Cover Review is progressing well, with data analysis and scenario modelling underway. Governance is strong, with bi-weekly executive meetings and a dual communication strategy targeting stakeholders. The review aligns with NFCC guidance and will inform future service delivery.
- **Discipline & Grievance**  
Focus remains on establishing a permanent Professional Standards Unit. A draft business case is in development with cost reviews ongoing. Case numbers are down, mediation uptake is increasing and new policies are under union review. Training on updated processes is scheduled for November.
- **Contaminants Programme**  
This programme targets 160 best practice recommendations. Key objectives include safer fire-scene management, improved PPE, contamination training, workplace exposure reduction and health surveillance. Notable progress includes programme launch, station assessments, air quality monitoring and upcoming operational training.

**Governance**

The Director of Service Support/Monitoring Officer to undertake, with external support, a strategic governance review. Following consultation with the Welsh Government and the WLGA, the Monitoring Officer has identified an opportunity to work with two Professors at Cardiff University, who specialise in governance of public sector bodies. This work will entail the design of a new governance model for the new Fire Authority and a new publicly accessible Constitution. Once a business case has been approved and a procurement process followed, it is intended to commission a governance review soon, so that a revised structure and Constitution can be

## OFFICIAL

approved by the Commissioners before the end of their tenure and embedded before the induction of new Fire Authority Members.

### Transformation Programme

The Step Forward Transformation Programme sits at the heart of the Service's strategic direction, driving meaningful change across nine key areas. Central to the programme is a commitment to evolving the organisational culture with a strong emphasis on ethics, values, behaviours and communication.

The programme is well underway, with significant progress made in several priority areas. Notably, the launch of our new Vision, Mission and Values has been met with widespread engagement across the Service.

In parallel, a refreshed Communication Strategy has been rolled out, supporting clearer, more consistent messaging and fostering stronger connections across teams.

Momentum continues to build, and the programme remains focused on delivering long-term, sustainable improvements that align with our strategic ambitions and support a modern, inclusive, and resilient fire and rescue service.

### Digital Transformation

The Service is embarking on a significant digital transformation journey, moving away from a traditional ICT structure towards a modern DDAT (Digital, Data and Technology) operating model. This transition reflects our commitment to building a more agile, innovative and future-ready organisation.

The DDAT model will serve as the digital backbone of the Service, enabling us to better harness technology, data and digital capabilities to support operational excellence, enhance service delivery and improve user experience across all areas.

By adopting this approach, we aim to:

- Modernise our infrastructure and systems to meet evolving organisational needs
- Strengthen data-driven decision-making and performance insight
- Improve digital services for staff and stakeholders
- Foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement

This shift marks a strategic step forward in aligning with best practice across the public sector and ensuring our digital capabilities are fit for purpose in a rapidly changing environment.

### Leadership

The Service continues to strengthen its leadership capability through a series of strategic initiatives aligned with national standards and internal priorities. These efforts are designed to ensure a clear vision, consistent values and effective leadership practices across all levels of the organisation.

A new leadership doctrine has been developed for our Leadership Academy and all members of the Senior Leadership Team are actively participating in an 18 month programme delivered in partnership with external training providers.

A comprehensive review of the Service's Mission, Vision and Values has been completed to ensure alignment with strategic objectives. This work has been supported by MVV workshops and

## OFFICIAL

validated through the Staff Survey, which provided strong evidence of staff understanding and engagement. The launch of the refreshed MVV has been well received, with positive indicators showing that staff are actively living the values in their daily roles.

The Service is currently evaluating its leadership practices against the Fire Standard. Leading the Service Participation in All-Wales Fire Standard Seminars has helped align current workstreams with the standard. A gap analysis will be undertaken once all relevant activities are completed to identify areas for further development.

Progress continues with the implementation of the NFCC Leadership Maturity Model. A self-assessment toolkit has been developed, along with recording mechanisms to track progress. This model provides a structured framework for assessing leadership maturity and identifying opportunities for growth.

The Service has developed a scope document for the 'One Mission, One Team' initiative, which forms a key part of the leadership strategy. This includes the creation of Leadership Standards Advocates, who will champion values-led leadership and support cultural transformation across the organisation.

### Diversity in Recruitment

The Service is in the middle of a full recruitment and promotion process review. A framework has been developed, staff engagement has provided feedback, and we are now in the process of reviewing the feedback with a view to developing framework upon which to build a fair, transparent and sustainable process moving forward.

There will be elements of our current practices we would seek to retain, including blind shortlisting, stakeholder panels and diverse appointment panels. The Service will continue to adopt best practice in these processes, by utilising models such as the NFCC Leadership Framework to ensure it recruits people with the leadership attributes required to lead and embed change and create inclusive environments for all.

We now advertise all recruitment and promotion opportunities externally and have reviewed our eligibility criteria to attract a more diverse recruitment pool. We have had over 110 applicants for our recent strategic leadership roles.

We have increased diversity levels in senior roles (currently 38% of SLT are female an increase of 13% when compared to this time last year) and a recruitment process to fill two Area Manager vacancies is shortly to commence.

We have also developed a suite of metrics to track diversity at senior levels.

Recruitment into the Executive Leadership Team has progressed at pace. These strategic additions bring a wealth of experience and expertise, strengthening our leadership capacity and positioning the organisation for continued success and transformation.

### Significant appointments

All new appointments were overseen by the Commissioners and included wider stakeholder panels.

- Director of Service Support/Monitoring Officer. The Service appointed of Amanda Brown as Director of Service Support and Monitoring Officer [REDACTED]

## OFFICIAL

### organisational improvement

- **Deputy Chief Fire Officer** The Service has appointed Adam Openshaw, currently serving with Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service. [REDACTED]
- **Assistant Chief Fire Officer** Matt Jones was successfully appointed from within SWFRS as ACFO.
- **Assistant Chief Fire Officer** Martin Ward-White was also successful from West Midlands Fire Service.

### His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

The HMICFRS assessment of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's performance, covering efficiency, effectiveness, and how well the Service supports its people was completed in November 2024, with the final report published in May 2025.

In a joint commitment to continuous improvement, the Commissioners and the Service have agreed to undertake a reassessment of the causes for concern. This collaborative review will evaluate whether the Service is making meaningful progress and whether the approaches being taken are appropriate and effective. The reassessment will help ensure that improvement efforts remain focused, evidence-based, and aligned with the expectations set out in the HMICFRS report.

### Rewards and Recognition

The Service has implemented a refreshed, tiered approach to Rewards and Recognition, designed to celebrate achievements at all levels and foster a culture of appreciation and pride.

#### Tiered Recognition Framework

- **Tier 3 – Personal Acknowledgement** Letters or emails of recognition issued by line managers or senior leaders to acknowledge individual contributions.
- **Tier 2 – Local Spotlight Awards** Bi-monthly awards at the local level, highlighting exceptional performance, teamwork, or innovation within departments and stations.
- **Tier 1 – Service-Level Awards Evening** An annual formal event held in April to celebrate outstanding achievements across the Service.

#### Long Service and Good Conduct

A dedicated Long Service and Good Conduct Awards Night will now be held annually at Cardiff Gate, providing a formal and respectful setting to honour those who have served with distinction.

Bi-annual retirement events have been introduced, where the Chief Fire Officer formally thanks retirees for their service and contributions to the organisation.

#### External Awards and Nominations

The Service is actively encouraging nominations for state and national awards, including the Pride of Britain, St David's Awards, and other role-specific honours. Guidance documents have been produced to support staff in preparing nominations and showcasing the exceptional work being carried out across the Service.

### Spirit of Fire

The Spirit of Fire initiative by South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is part of their celebration of 30

## OFFICIAL

years of service, and it serves as a tribute to the people, values and legacy that have shaped the organisation since its formation in 1996.

Here's a summary of what the Spirit of Fire represents:

- **Celebrating Legacy:** Honouring the dedication and bravery of firefighters and staff over the past three decades.
- **Recognising People:** Highlighting the contributions of individuals and teams who have made a lasting impact on the Service and the communities it serves.
- **Embracing Change:** Reflecting on how the Service has evolved, especially in response to cultural reviews and transformation programmes.
- **Inspiring the Future:** Using the lessons of the past to shape a more inclusive, innovative, and community-focused fire and rescue service.

**Chief Fire Officer South Wales Fire and Rescue Service**

Appendix A - Progress against Morris report recommendations

Appendix B - Inclusive Engagement, Recruitment and Community Collaboration Report

## APPENDIX A

### Progress against Morris report recommendations

The Service continues to make strong and transparent progress in delivering the recommendations outlined in the Fenella Morris Review. All recommendations have followed a robust internal sign-off process and have been quality assured by the Commissioners, ensuring accountability and consistency throughout.

We have actively communicated our achievements across the key thematic areas identified in the review, including:

- [Ethics, Values and Standards](#)
- [Leadership](#)
- [Communication and Engagement](#)
- [Speaking Up and Connecting People](#)
- [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion \(EDI\) & Facilities](#)
- [Training](#)

These updates have been shared with staff and stakeholders and we are seeing positive engagement and cultural shifts across the Service. A follow-up communication will shortly be issued regarding progress on Policies and Procedures, acknowledging that this theme contains several longer-term recommendations that remain in active development.

Whilst the majority of recommendations have been signed off, the Commissioners have recognised that certain external factors are influencing the pace of completion. For example:

- **Legal Review:** The volume of procedures requiring legal scrutiny has extended timelines, as solicitors can only review a limited number at a time.
- **Digital Transformation:** Some recommendations involve complex system changes and integrations, requiring longer-term development.
- **Learning and Development:** Several learning packages are designed for delivery over an 18 month period to ensure depth and sustainability in cultural change.

Additionally, four recommendations have been earmarked for reassessment after a 12 month period to confirm their effectiveness before formal sign-off.

We also acknowledge that further work is required in areas such as recruitment and promotions. A comprehensive plan has been developed following a full internal review of our recruitment and promotion process to begin a programme of promotion supported by a new fair and more transparent framework.

The Service remains fully committed to embedding the review's recommendations and driving forward meaningful cultural and operational improvements.

#### Useful Links

[Culture statement](#)  
[Strategic Plan full version](#)  
[Transformation Plans](#)  
[Service Strategy](#)

## APPENDIX B

### **South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) – Inclusive Engagement, Recruitment and Community Collaboration Report**

#### **Community Engagement:**

An internal initiative has seen colleagues form Community Fire Safety and People Services engage with Butetown communities and more specifically L4K – Learning 4 Kids. This initiative reflects a shared commitment between the Service and community leaders.

#### **Service Objectives:**

Promote awareness of fire safety, career opportunities, and community resilience.  
Continue removing barriers to engagement and foster inclusive collaboration.

#### **Community Objectives:**

Secure Service commitment to attend local religious and cultural events  
Create platforms for underrepresented groups to engage with SWFRS and influence future initiatives.

This partnership marks a significant step in building trust and representation within communities historically underrepresented in emergency services and has also resulted in the appointment of 7 cadets from the Somali community.

#### **Recruitment and Promotions Enhancements:**

A four-week engagement programme was launched to gather staff input on the evolving promotions process. The initiative aimed to ensure transparency, fairness, and inclusivity across all operational and support departments.

#### **Engagement Overview:**

|

#### **Formats:**

Online surveys and face-to-face workshops.

#### **Participation:**

145 formal contributions  
65 responses via anonymous online survey  
80 attendees across in-person sessions

#### **Inclusive Outreach:**

Targeted efforts to engage underrepresented groups.  
Consideration of diverse working patterns and roles

**SWFRS has implemented several strategic changes to improve diversity and accessibility in recruitment and promotion:**

#### **Vacancy Advertising:**

All roles are now advertised both internally and externally.  
Use of skills-based job descriptions and personal specifications to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds, that have been developed based on research on other sectors and benchmarking against best practice.

## OFFICIAL

### **Outcomes:**

Successful recruitment of external and non-operational candidates has resulted in increased gender diversity at senior levels

### **Process Ownership:**

People Services now fully own the recruitment, and promotions process an area of uncertainty in the past that created an air of mistrust and unfairness in these processes. In support of talent management and succession planning the Leadership Academy facilitates candidate development in readiness for promotions boards, and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) provide technical expertise, particularly in operational roles for the process itself

### **Policy Development and Staff Support:**

SWFRS continues to lead in inclusive policy development

The Service is currently developing a gender identity procedure to support staff across the gender spectrum. Maternity leave has been extended to 52 weeks, positioning SWFRS as a sector leader in family-friendly employment practices and more attractive to female applicants.

### **Strategic Partnerships and Outreach:**

SWFRS is actively collaborating with key regional partners to strengthen equality and inclusion efforts:

- Public Service equality Boards
- South Wales Police
- University of South Wales (USW)
- Cardiff Museum

These partnerships support the development of stakeholder panels and shared outreach strategies.

### **Cadet Programme and Equal Opportunities Monitoring:**

Diversity within the cadet programme is strong.

A newly introduced equal opportunities form, aligned with census categories, enables:

- Detailed analysis of recruitment engagement success.
- Identification of gaps in outreach to underrepresented groups.
- Targeted engagement strategies to improve representation.

### **Station-Level Community Engagement:**

The introduction of Station Community and Business Plans enables a more localised approach to inclusion.

People Services Advisors are working closely with Station Commanders to:

- Identify underrepresented groups within local communities.
- Understand barriers to entry and develop tailored outreach.

Collaboration with L4K has resulted in seven successful applications from the Somali community.

### **Staff Networks and Internal Inclusion:**

SWFRS has reviewed the effectiveness of its Inclusive Working Group and as a result is moving to a model of having independent staff networks. This change aims to:

- Strengthen inclusion and representation.
- Empower staff to bring passion and commitment to diversity initiatives.
- Promote inclusion through recruitment and engagement activities.
- Improve representation and support across all roles and departments.

OFFICIAL

#### Conclusion

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is making significant strides in building an inclusive, representative and community-focused organisation. Through strategic partnerships, policy innovation, and staff engagement, SWFRS is committed to removing barriers, promoting diversity, and ensuring that all voices are heard and valued.

## 12 December 2025 – letter from CSHLGP to Commissioners

Jayne Bryant AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

JB/PO/650/25

Commissioners  
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service  
Forest View Business Park  
Llantisant CF72 8LX



12 December 2025

Dear Commissioners,

I was sorry not to be able to attend the Social Partnership Forum for Fire and Rescue Services meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November and I am very grateful to Emma Williams for chairing the meeting in my absence. I understand that each Fire and Rescue Authority gave details of the progress made against the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and Inspector's (CFRAI) recommendations. I thought this was an appropriate forum for the discussion as world-leading regionally based fire services with public safety and workforce safety at their core, based on social partnership is a shared ambition by everyone involved in that forum.

I would ask that each of you provide me with a written update early in the new year to confirm the continued progress you are making. I know that the CFRAI is currently working with National Fire Chiefs Council to address the issues highlighted within his inspection reports relating to doctrine and competence. I have asked him to work with you to ensure there is a coordinated pan Wales contribution to this work which I am assured will go a long way to meeting several of the outstanding inspection recommendations. An all-Wales approach on these matters is wholly appropriate to ensure the Fire and Rescue Service across Wales consistently introduce effective response tactics that put public safety and workforce safety at their core. I am aware that the CFRAI is already engaging with your officers on this.

Canolfan Cytwili Cymal / First Point of Contact Centre

Bae Caerdydd a Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd a Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Rydym yn ddiogelwch derbyn gweibaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gweibaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd golobu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not result in a delay in responding.

I am writing in similar terms to Councillor John Davies and Councillor Dylan Rees, and copying this letter to CFO Fin Monahan and Dan Stephens.

Yours sincerely,



**Jayne Bryant AS/MS**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

## 23 January 2026 - SWFRS Culture update for SPF Meeting

20260114-SPF-SRS Paper - SWFRS Progress Update.pdf  
pdf file

**From:** Commissioners <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 23 January 2026 13:14  
**To:** PS Cabinet Secretary Housing & Local Government <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Correspondence from South Wales Fire and Rescue Service ref: JB/PO/650/25

[SWYDDOGOL] - [OFFICIAL]

Dear Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

Please find attached correspondence on behalf of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, following from your letter dated 12 December 2025 reference JB/PO/650/25.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

## OFFICIAL

### Ministerial Briefing Note

To: Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

From: Chief Fire Officer, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

**Subject: South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Improvements.**

### Background

1. This ministerial briefing note provides you with an update on South Wales Fire and Rescue (SWFRS) Service transformation in preparation for the Social Partnership Forum. This note includes reference to progress on thematic review recommendations as you have requested.

### Commissioner Oversight

2. Close scrutiny of the transformation of SWFRS continues following the Welsh Government intervention that led to the appointment of the Commissioners. The Service works closely with Welsh Government officials through the Intervention Oversight Board (IOB), which delivers effective external oversight, challenge, and assurance of the Commissioners' governance and the Service's improvement, ensuring transparency, pace, and alignment with Government expectations.

3. Commissioners, the Chief Fire Officer (CFO), and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) maintain a strong relationship supported by regular CFO meetings, bi-weekly ELT sessions, and routine improvement scrutiny via the quarterly Strategic Change, Transformation and Culture Committee (SCTCC). Commissioners' participation in Service Improvement Boards (SIB) and the Independent Advisory Group (IAG - made up of independent external advisors from a variety of different sectors) further reinforces independent oversight and assurance.

### Governance

4. Governance arrangements are strengthening. A governance review, led by the Director of Corporate Services/Monitoring Officer (MO), with external SME support, will deliver a modern political governance framework, a revised committee structure, and a new public Constitution. This review is needed to ensure that the new Fire Authority aligns with the recent announcement by Welsh Government on the future size and composition of Fire Authorities in Wales and ensures the framework is underpinned by good governance principles, such as accountability, openness, transparency and inclusion. In addition, the MO is introducing Modern gov software to improve the process for report writing, reviewing and publication, which should improve report timelines and quality for a smooth transition to the new Fire Authority.

### Strategy

5. The Service developed a clear strategy in 2025 that includes over 60 work-strands designed to fulfil an ambitious strategic vision: *'to work together as one team to become an outstanding FRS, protecting South Wales today, ambitiously innovating for tomorrow'*. To ensure that the strategy remains relevant in this period of rapid change, the Service is undertaking an annual strategy review that will be complete by the end of the Financial Year 25/26. This will use evidence, data, national guidance, and regular Commissioner oversight to update the strategy. Short and medium-term priorities, aligned with the overall strategic direction, are regularly updated to ensure that progress towards the strategic objectives is measured, manageable and aligned across the Service. Current priorities include: delivery of the Fenella Morris recommendations, development of

## OFFICIAL

a SWFRS Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and Fire Cover Review, completion of thematic review recommendations, fatigue management, sickness management, delivery of HMICFRS recommendations, development of a contaminants programme, a new approach to risk management, delivery of the thematic review recommendations, an external review of People Services, establishment of a Professional Standards Unit (PSU) and delivery of a Target Operating Model (TOM) to modernise our structures, technology and ways of working.

6. The Service continues to improve our understanding of risk through our community risk management planning process. The first draft of the CRMP is due by the end of July 2026. This will enable us to direct our resources to mitigate risks in the most efficient and effective way. The outcomes of the CRMP will be fed into the ongoing development and maintenance of our:

- Risk Registers
- Strategy and Improvement Plans
- Departmental Delivery Plans
- Unitary Authority Business Plans & Risk Profiles
- Fire Cover Review.

7. These documents will better demonstrate to the public where risk exists, how it is changing, and how SWFRS manages it. To provide assurance and accountability, the CRMP will help inform the metrics and target setting as part of the development and maintenance of a performance management framework. The CRMP proposal has been presented to the HMICFRS for their awareness and scrutiny.

### Leadership

8. A permanent Executive Leadership Team (ELT) has now been appointed with a new structure and with clearer responsibilities. This will provide stability and clear accountability for the future. Recent appointments include a new deputy CFO, two new Assistant Chief Fire Officers (ACFOs) and a new Monitoring Officer. A full-time Director of Finance has also been appointed to replace the part-time treasurer. This will strengthen financial governance and strategic planning.

9. Permanent Area Managers have been appointed to the SLT through a transparent recruitment process that included staff engagement and Commissioner oversight. This will aid succession planning and operational resilience.

10. Commissioners have approved the use of reserves to engage specialist external assistance to provide expert advice to design a TOM befitting a modern Fire and Rescue Service. Phase I of this work will focus on information flows, value stream, systems, technology and ways of working in the HQ. Phase I will also examine how the HQ interacts to provide support and governance out to stations and other Service units including Fire Control, Occupational Health and Fleet. Phase II will examine the information flows, value streams, systems, ways of working and assurance within and across fire stations and the wider Service. This second phase will necessarily take place following on the on-going Fire Cover Review, CRMP work and after the current His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services HMICFRS visit and will also examine how SWFRS prioritises development of the estate.

### Performance Management

11. A new Performance Management Framework has been established to strengthen oversight, assurance, and accountability. The framework clearly separates strategic, organisational, and operational measures, ensuring the right information is reviewed at the right level.

## OFFICIAL

12. A suite of Strategic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) has been developed to drive performance management discussions at both the Fire Authority and SLT. A performance dashboard has been created within the Business Management Information System (BMIS). The list of strategic KPIs and links to the prototype dashboard have been shared with SLT. This will facilitate better performance-based analysis of the Service including at the Planning and Performance meetings in which priorities are analysed.

### Thematic Reviews

13. The Service has made the following progress with delivery of the Thematic Review recommendations:

#### Operational Training

a. The Service continues to prioritise key training reforms, and progress is being made despite pressure on delivery. Two core recommendations on training needs analysis and risk-based training alignment are nearing completion, and scheduled for review and assurance despite staff absence and limited capacity. The most complex task, creating digital micro-teaches for all operational tactics, is 80 per cent complete but has moved to amber due to delays in recruiting media specialists and heavy demand from other transformation projects. This is due for completion 31 March 2026 and moving into Business as Usual (BAU). All critical reviews of firefighting tactics and compartment fire behaviour are now complete with new tactics aligned with international research and tested at live incidents and being embedded across the Service. Commissioners continue to monitor progress and support continued engagement with the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and Inspector (CFRAI) to confirm the scope and acceptability of the remaining digital training deliverables.

#### Grenfell Update

a. The Service has established a dedicated High-Rise Team and is managing 71 Grenfell related recommendations through a formal, structured programme. Delivery is monitored through new programme management software that provides clear oversight, assurance, and progress tracking. Robust governance arrangements are in place, with defined planning processes and clear allocation of responsibility.

b. The Service is working towards full compliance with all Grenfell Phase 1 and Phase 2 recommendations, alongside the implementation of the final Grenfell report. The Service is aiming to complete all recommendations by July 2027, except for any remaining actions that are dependent upon national legislative and regulatory change, specifically those linked to the Building Safety (Wales) Bill, due July 2027. This approach appropriately reflects the scale, complexity, and external dependencies associated with the national framework. Training implications have been identified and are on track, with learning being embedded across the Service.

#### Operational Excellence in response to Domestic Dwelling Fires

a. Operational Excellence in response to domestic dwelling fires is now fully embedded across the Service. A single, evidence-based building firefighting guidance document has been produced, rolled out, and linked to training, SOPs and assurance. All crews and tactical officers have completed awareness training, six station-based training packages are live, and a central training course schedule is in place. Joint working with other Welsh, UK and international fire services is now routine, ensuring that tactics reflect the latest science and

## OFFICIAL

best practice. Objectives are on track, meaning the Service now has a consistent, modern, and research-led approach to how firefighters tackle home fires, which directly improves firefighter safety and public protection. Performance continues to be monitored.

### **Broadening the Role of the Firefighter**

a. Through Operation Reset, station-based staff now record activity in structured time blocks, providing clear evidence of prevention, protection, training, and response activity beyond incident attendance. Phase 1 has been completed, and the resulting data demonstrate a broader, more productive use of firefighter time and a clearer articulation of the modern firefighter role.

b. Phase 2 establishes clearer expectations for supervisory and management roles and introduces no-notice audits to support consistency and assurance across stations. At the same time, crews have greater control and ownership of how their working day is structured within agreed parameters.

c. Feedback through formal social partnership arrangements has been positive, and the majority of actions remain on track. The only exception relates to a dependency on the Fire Cover Review, which is also managed through our SIB.

d. The Service's focus is now on embedding Operation Reset as a permanent, evidence-led operating model, ensuring it continues to drive productivity, accountability, and a balanced approach to prevention, protection, response, and training.

### **Transformation Programme**

14. The Step Forward Transformation Programme sits at the heart of the Service's strategic direction, driving change across nine priority areas. Central to the programme is embedding cultural review recommendations to sustain improvements in ethics, values, behaviours, and communication over time. Good progress has been made across the programme. The launch of the new Vision, Mission and Values has been well received, and a refreshed Communication Strategy is supporting clearer and more consistent engagement. Most workstreams are on track, with those under review scheduled for completion by April 2026.

15. Digital transformation is a key enabler of the programme. The Service is moving to a modern Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) operating model, supported by a developing digital strategy. This work focuses on modernising systems, improving data quality, and strengthening performance insight. Robust digital systems are critical to tracking progress, supporting decision-making, and sustaining cultural and organisational change. This digital strategy will be presented to the Board of Commissioners (BOC) on 27 March 2026.

### **People Services**

16. The Service has commissioned an independent review to assess whether the current People Services structure, capacity, and ways of working are fit for a Service operating in sustained change. The review is scheduled to start by early February, with the Discovery, Benchmarking, Analysis and Recommendations phases being completed within 4 weeks. The review examines demand, capability, governance, and the effectiveness of People Services in supporting leaders, staff, and strategic priorities. Findings and recommendations will inform next steps to strengthen resilience, performance, and assurance.

## OFFICIAL

17 In parallel, a PSU is being introduced to improve consistency, timeliness, and confidence in discipline and grievance processes. The interviews for the lead role for the PSU were held on 16 January 2026, and an offer of employment has since been made. Subject to satisfactory employment checks, it is hoped this position will be filled by the end of February 2026.

18 Meanwhile, a revised promotion framework has been developed which is designed to be fair, transparent, values and that will allow long-term succession planning and stability in SWFRS.

### **His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**

19 The HMICFRS inspection of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, covering efficiency, effectiveness, and how the Service supports its people, was completed in November 2024, with the final report published in May 2025. The agreed reassessment of the Causes of Concern (COC) is now underway. This work is ongoing and active, with regular engagement across the Service, Commissioners, and HMICFRS. HMICFRS is testing whether progress is being made, whether actions are effective, and whether improvement activity is properly embedded.

20 Progress is monitored through the SIB, supported by regular briefings to the CFO and Commissioners, and ongoing oversight from HMICFRS. This ensures improvement remains focused, evidence-led, and aligned to expectations.

### **Social Partnership**

21 The Service recognises, in the Strategy, that our people are our greatest asset and that we seek to have a people centred approach in all that we do and to work together as one to achieve our strategic goals. The ELT and SLT recognise the fundamental role that representative bodies play in helping ensure that we deliver on this people centred approach. The Service has been working closely with the representative bodies and has also been exploring new ways of co-operating. For instance, the Service worked in partnership with the FBU using 'Agile' methodology and led by a 'scrum master' to collaboratively develop a mechanism to unlock an issue regarding Public Holiday (PH) leave that has been an issue of discontent for many years. The Service is also bringing representative bodies into discussion early on issues wherever possible.

### **Chief Fire Officer South Wales Fire and Rescue Service**

Appendix A - Progress against Morris report recommendations

Appendix B - Year in Review

Appendix C - Year in Review Road Map

## OFFICIAL

### APPENDIX A

#### Progress against Fenella Morris KC report recommendations

1. The Service continues to make strong and transparent progress in delivering the recommendations outlined in the Fenella Morris Review. All recommendations have followed a robust internal sign-off process and have been quality assured by the Commissioners, ensuring accountability and consistency throughout. We have actively communicated our achievements across the key thematic areas identified in the review, including:

- [Ethics, Values and Standards](#)
- [Leadership](#)
- [Communication and Engagement](#)
- [Speaking Up and Connecting People](#)
- [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion \(EDI\) & Facilities](#)
- [Training](#)

2. These updates have been shared with staff and stakeholders, and we are seeing positive engagement and cultural shifts across the Service. A follow-up communication will shortly be issued regarding progress on Policies and Procedures, acknowledging that this theme contains several longer-term recommendations that remain in active development.

3. Whilst the majority of recommendations have been signed off, the Commissioners have recognised that certain external factors are influencing the pace of completion. For example:

- Legal Review: The volume of procedures requiring legal scrutiny has extended timelines, as solicitors can only review a limited number at a time.
- Digital Transformation: Some recommendations involve complex system changes and integrations, requiring longer-term development.
- Learning and Development: Several learning packages are designed for delivery over an 18-month period to ensure depth and sustainability in cultural change.

4. Additionally, four recommendations have been earmarked for reassessment after a 12-month period to confirm their effectiveness before formal sign-off.

5. We also acknowledge that further work is required in areas such as recruitment and promotions. A comprehensive plan has been developed following a full internal review of our recruitment and promotion process to begin a programme of promotion supported by a now fair and more transparent framework.

The Service remains fully committed to embedding the review's recommendations and driving forward meaningful cultural and operational improvements.

#### Useful Links

[Culture statement](#)

[Strategic Plan full version](#)

[Transformation Plans](#)

[Service Strategy](#)

---

**OFFICIAL**

**APPENDIX B**

**Year in Review**



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Amod  
De Cymru  
Sŵm Amod  
Fire and Rescue Service

## What we are delivering in SWFRS

This November marks a year since Chief Fire Officer, Fin Monahan joined South Wales and Rescue Service, we have taken the opportunity to look back and reflect on the journey and what has been achieved.

With a commitment to delivering exceptional service while transforming how we operate to reflect our values and demonstrate inclusivity, transparency, and accountability, a significant amount of work has been delivered over the last 12 months, ranging from strategic changes to governance, policy and recruitment down to tactical changes to support wellbeing and welfare of frontline teams.

This briefing note provides detailed information supporting the items on the roadmap that outlines key achievements through the year.

### 1. Independent Culture Review

### 2. Step Forward Transformation Programme

### 3. HMICFRS Causes of Concern

### 4. Service Priorities

### 5. Operational Excellence

### 6. Welsh Government Thematic Reviews

Alongside this work sits a range of changes and improvements for overall wellbeing and welfare that were raised by frontline teams across the Service and addressed. They include:

- Fire station business plan and how they engage with the public, along with family and friend events
- The on call project that looks at our approach to on call and how we recruit and attract new colleagues
- Work on fatigue management and how we look after our colleagues
- Conversations with Joint Fire Control to assess what the future could look like
- Discussions on leave and Public Holiday requests
- Discussions and a proposal for changes to the Driver Policy
- Changes to the uniform so it is more comfortable
- The move to a just culture with structured debriefs and learning and a move away from blame
- Introduction of local spotlight awards and retirement ceremonies at stations for colleagues who choose a more informal event with friends and family
- A new long service coin for all colleagues who reach particular milestone years' service
- Making sure we share great people for national awards and UK Honours, so their work is recognised

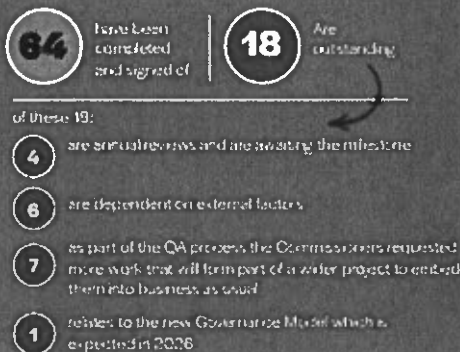


## 1. Independent Cultural Review

Over the last eighteen months, the Service has embedded the Core Code of Ethics, developed and shared its own Culture Statement and consulted on and launched a new vision, mission and set of values, which are being embedding into all that we do.

The 82 recommendations in the report are almost fully delivered and go through a robust quality assurance process with the Commissioners before they are signed as completed. Much of the work to deliver the recommendations goes beyond the specific ask in the report, with the aim of being even better for our future.

## Of the 82 recommendations:



## 2. Transformation Programme

To go beyond the recommendations the Service developed an ambitious Transformation programme including cultural improvement.

Within this programme nine key programmes of work were identified. Governance and Strategy, Communication and Engagement, Leadership, Ethics, Values and Behaviours, Safe and Positive Environments, Talent Management, Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity, Policies and Procedures and Digital Transformation.

Much of the work has been included in the Service Strategy and progress on these projects has been tracked through the Service Improvement Board with oversight from Commissioner in the Strategic Change and Transformation Committee.

### Governance and Strategy:

Recommendations from the Cultural Review are being addressed alongside actions and recommendations from other reports, including HMICFRS, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Welsh Government. There is a long term strategy that incorporates the Step Forward programme of projects and maps all strategic priorities and plans.

The service has reviewed and improved internal governance arrangements to provide effective scrutiny.

This includes:

- a new governance framework
- introduction of an internal improvement board
- development of a Strategic Change and Culture Committee and independent advisory group.

We have also developed a comprehensive reporting process through a service maturity model ensuring Welsh Government have oversight of the successful progress since the intervention.

Work is ongoing to develop new governance model for the Service, working with the Commissioners. This work includes a revised constitution and will align with the outcomes of the Welsh Government consultation on Governance arrangements for the Fire and Rescue Services in Wales.

### Leadership:

This November, it is a year since the Chief Fire Officer Fin Monahan was appointed, and through the year, the Executive Leadership Team has filled vacancies. In June, Sara Halbert was appointed as Treasurer, in August 2025, Amanda Brown joined the team as Director of Support Services/ Monitoring Officer, and in December Adam Openshaw joins as Deputy Chief Fire Officer, from Gloucestershire FRS.

ACFOs Dean Loader and Brian Thompson retire in the New Year, and following an open recruitment process, in December, Martin Ward White joins as Assistant Chief Fire Officer, moving from West Midlands FRS and Matt Jones to Assistant Chief Fire Officer, promoted from his role as Area Manager, Head of Operations in South Wales FRS.

As part of the programme of Senior Officer Visits, the CFO has visited all teams at all stations and offices through the year.

We have introduced a Future Fire Think Tank to embed a new philosophy of empowered leadership.

We have started working with Alacrity, a charity foundation who are collaborating with the Service to identify innovative digital solutions. This will enable us to develop intelligence and new systems to be a leader in fire and rescue service technological change.

## 2. Transformation Programme

### Ethics, Values and Behaviours

An online training course sharing our new values and behaviours with real life scenarios of how we put our ethics and values into action is live and all colleagues have been asked to complete it.

A guidance training document that explains what our ethics, values and standards look and feel like in practice and gives clarity on the expectation we have set for our future has been shared with SLT and Service Improvement board and the Trades Unions.

The way the Service rewards and recognises the service and behaviours of colleagues has been reviewed. Based on feedback from colleagues a new tiered approach to long service events has been introduced, with colleagues having the option of a local event on station

with friends and family, called Spotlight Awards, or joining a more formal event at Fire HQ.

The annual reward and recognition event will take place in April 2026 and be part of the Service 30 year anniversary.

The way we mark people's retirement from the Service has changed and a small, informal ceremony to celebrate their service has been introduced.

### Digital Transformation

Since the summer, the Digital, Data and Technology (formally known as ICT) team has been working with a charity foundation, called Alacrity, to scope the opportunities for a complete digital transformation of the Service. Working together they will create a roadmap of what could be possible with a phased approach,

“

**We have started working with Alacrity, a charity foundation who are collaborating with the Service to identify innovative digital solutions.**

”

including costs and resources needed, for any implementation.

Alongside this the team are moving forward with several key projects that support the Service and colleagues to improve how we use and benefit from technology. They include, intranet development, CFMIS implementation, digital literacy and exploring AI opportunities to be more effective and efficient in our work.

## 3. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

In May, the Service received an assessment of its performance, which includes how efficient and effective the service is and how well it looks after its people. The report shared three causes of concern.

They found:

Concerns about the service's performance in keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks. In particular, there were concerns about the effectiveness of its strategies for making sure its activities consistently identify, prioritise and mitigate risks for the public.

Concerns that it doesn't have effective systems and processes in place to gather and record relevant and up-to-date risk information to help protect firefighters, the public and property during emergencies.

That the service's protection department has some positive aspects, but there are concerns about the way in which it operates – specifically, how it prioritises activity based on risk, and using a systematic approach to reviewing fire safety compliance in non-domestic premises. It also needs to make sure it has the right resources in place to carry out its work.

We are addressing these, and progress is being made and delivery overseen through the Service Improvement Board.

In regard to **keeping people safe from fire and other risks**, our Fire Cover Review is an important piece of work that helps us make sure we're matching our resources to the level of risk in our communities. By working with ORH, who bring a huge amount of experience from other fire and rescue services, we're using their specialist modelling software to help us understand where and when we're needed most.

We're now reaching the end of the first stage, which has been all about collecting data and building a clear picture of our current position. This will help us make well-informed decisions about how we plan for the future as part of our Community Risk Management Plan.

At the same time, we're also introducing a new Dynamic Cover Tool in Fire Control. This will give us real time information about the availability and location of our frontline appliances, helping us respond more efficiently to incidents across South Wales. We're aiming to have this up and running by March 2026.

All of this work comes back to one simple aim: making sure we have the right people, in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills to keep our communities safe.

The development of our prevention, protection, and response strategies form a vital part of how we deliver on our strategic priorities. These strategies ensure that our work remains focused on reducing risk, protecting our communities, and responding effectively when emergencies occur.

The development of the Station Business Plans is complete. Our station plans are linked to our strategic plan and are locally focussed and identify, prioritise and mitigate local risks.

“

**All of this work comes back to one simple aim: making sure we have the right people, in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills to keep our communities safe.**

”

Work to improve systems and processes to gather and record relevant and up to date risk information includes, all stations receiving training that will ensure

crews appropriately risk-rate premises. Operational intelligence teams are currently working with BFS to ensure that all new builds are risk-rated and communicated to the team.

The operational intelligence team currently work Vega and BMIS software systems to host and manage risk information. The Service has recently invested in CFRMIS (Community Fire Risk Management Information System). This will allow SWFRS to host service-wide risk information on a single platform with as friendly end-user experience

The Ops Intel team have started a service-wide training programme in September. The training will take 6 months to complete and it includes: The purpose of operational intelligence; How to use the PORIS framework, and how to successfully process risk information.

A new quality assurance process has been launched and is being delivered as part of the above training. This is a 4-stage process that includes:

1. Minimum of supervisory officer completing the SSRi workbook.
2. Station commander assesses submission.
3. Group manager quality assures a % of submissions.
4. Ops intel team quality assures a % of submissions from GM.

Looking at the prevention based causes of concern, to strengthen our risk based inspection programme, we're assessing workload and capacity within the Protection team and have identified qualification gaps, including the number of staff holding Level 4. A recruitment and training plan is in development, alongside a workforce plan that

includes succession and promotion planning. We're also working to reallocate or justify additional resources to support emerging priorities such as the Primary Authority Scheme.

To support a more efficient, risk-informed inspection programme, we've procured a Gazetteer to provide accurate premises data and validated a risk matrix to prioritise inspections. These tools enable targeted activity and informed decision-making.

To ensure timely responses to statutory building control consultations, we've allocated a dedicated team, established a contingency plan for overflow, and raised internal awareness of statutory timeframes and escalation routes. We're also mapping staff availability against expected consultation volumes to inform future resource planning.

To improve out of-hours access to specialist protection advice, we're reviewing the current informal rota and working to establish a formal, risk-assessed system with trained and authorised personnel. A clear on-call protocol outlining roles, escalation routes, and response expectations is also in development.

To strengthen engagement with local businesses and promote fire safety compliance, we're reviewing our Primary Authority Schemes, establishing a quarterly forum with key stakeholders, and developing a compliance toolkit with practical resources. We've nearly completed work to expand website content and promote compliance channels via social media and are finalising a business engagement strategy that includes briefings and outreach



**Dynamic Cover Tool and On-Call Recruitment Software:** To enhance our operational resilience and improve the management of resources, we have procured new software that will transform the way we plan and deploy across the Service. The Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT) will provide real-time visibility of appliance availability and coverage, helping us to maintain operational effectiveness during periods of high demand or low resource availability.

Key benefits include:

- The ability to visualise risk and coverage dynamically and in real time, led by our Fire Control Teams.
- The capability to test and assess the impact of proposed redeployments before implementing standby moves. Retrospective analysis of how we will deploy resources, supporting evidence-based planning and debriefing.
- This investment will significantly strengthen our decision-making capability, improve resource utilisation, and ultimately enhance our ability to respond effectively to community risk.

#### 4. Service Priorities

##### **Risk Management and Partnership with Resilium UK**

We are moving to transform the way the Service understands and manages risk through our partnership with Resilium UK. Recognising that our historic approach to risk assessment was often compliance-driven and reactive, we are working towards adopting a new, barrier-based "bow tie" methodology that provides a much clearer, evidence-based understanding of operational and strategic risks.

By leading this shift, we will embed a culture of proactive risk management across the organisation. At an operational level, we have begun mapping high risk activities such as high rise firefighting, working at height, and water related incidents. This approach enables us to visualise threats, controls, and recovery measures within each scenario, identifying where systems are strong and where further improvement or investment is required. It also ensures that firefighter safety is managed dynamically, with robust governance and oversight.

##### **Contaminants Programme**

Since its formal approval by the Board of Commissioners in March, the Contaminants Programme has developed from concept to delivery. We now have a dedicated team

of two staff leading this critical work, and although it remains an emerging programme, tangible progress is already evident. We have secured funding for a new, state-of-the-art Breathing Apparatus (BA) maintenance facility, which will enhance the safety and hygiene standards for our operational teams. Health screening is being introduced for everyone in the new year, ensuring early identification of potential health issues.

We are also reviewing safe working arrangements for our Fire Investigation team, aligning their practices with current contaminant reduction guidance. Collectively, these initiatives will improve firefighter health and wellbeing and send a strong signal to our workforce that their safety and long-term health are valued at the highest level.

##### **Uniform Contract Award**

We have successfully awarded the contract for our new Service uniform to Hunter Apparel. The order has been placed, and delivery is expected in Summer 2026. This milestone marks another step forward in making sure our workforce is equipped with professional and comfortable uniform options.

##### **Fatigue**

Significant progress has been achieved in advancing the recommendations. Further discussions have taken place with the Service's solicitors regarding On-Call duty staff, and with the Property team to review and modernise station alerting systems.

Following constructive engagement with representative bodies, agreement has been reached to implement several recommendations that do not affect current contractual arrangements or operational availability.

Occupational Health have now incorporated fatigue-related questions into the Service's routine health screening process, ensuring early identification and monitoring of fatigue risks across the workforce.

##### **Focusing on People**

There has been significant progress made to support our people – from training to policy reviews and introducing an independent Professional Standards Unit, the People Services Team have multiple workstreams to support colleagues and set the standards for behaviours.



### **Encouraging speaking up and feeling heard:**

We've taken steps to encourage speaking up across the Service. The Speak Up Campaign launched in October 2024, encouraging open dialogue and zero tolerance for retaliation. The Crimestoppers FRS Speak Up line continues to provide a safe, anonymous way for staff to raise concerns. It is supported by our whistleblowing procedure and monitored by the Oversight and Ethics Group.

We've revised the exit interview process to offer greater flexibility with anonymised data helping us identify trends and inform improvements. Town hall sessions hosted by the CFO, including one held at HQ in June, another in September and another planned for the end of the year, provide direct opportunities for staff to share their views and concerns.

In 2025, we launched our Taking Care of Behaviours training. These sessions have been delivered across all levels of the Service. Attendance has been strong, and feedback has been positive, with staff recognising the value of clear expectations and shared standards for conduct across the Service.

### **Protecting health and wellbeing:**

The new interim decontamination facility is now operational, enhancing safety in high risk scenarios. We have recently taken a major step forward in protecting the health and wellbeing of our firefighters and staff through our new comprehensive decontamination programme. The programme is more than a set of new policies and procedures; it is a commitment to reducing exposure to harmful fire related contaminants and embedding best practice in everything we do across the Service.

We launched a new Employee Assistance Programme to support

the wellbeing for colleagues and give access to support services.

### **Data and transparency:**

We've improved data collection by encouraging staff to update diversity profiles, improving visibility, and enabling data-driven decision-making. The Gender Pay Gap Review has also been completed and published.

Progress made on phased approach to reviewing all people policies. Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Mediation, Agile Working policies all ready for publication following review and consultation with Trades Unions.

### **Consistent Policies and Procedures**

In relation to the People Services Policies, the team has agreed a phased approach with the Trades Unions.

- The Discipline, Grievance, Anti-Harassment and consultation have concluded, and the external lawyers have provided feedback on the procedures we have shared. The authors are in the process of amending documents and exploring any additional feedback prior to publication.
- Drug and Alcohol procedures are currently with under final consultation with Trades Unions
- Then Absence Management, Medical Redeployment, and Adjusted Duties procedures will be shared with the Trades Unions for consultation.
- Capability procedures have been reviewed by the lawyers, and a few minor tweaks have been made but no major changes recommended.
- Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Mediation, Agile Working, procedures have been finalised and are pending issue.

The People Services team has developed a Conduct Investigation Assurance Framework that embeds Just and FAIR Culture principles and has been shared with SLT for approval.

### **Building networks:**

We have over 30 members of staff, corporate and operational, who are part of our DICE champions' network. Since January 2025, three DICE champions meetings have been held, designed to support inclusion and decision making across the Service.

We launched our armed forces network and achieved the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme gold award and remain dedicated to supporting the Armed Forces community and will continue to develop innovative ways to honour and support those who serve.

We have run awareness campaigns and networking sessions around menopause, Welsh language inclusion, and other key areas, which help to foster understanding and support.

In 2024, we held the first Women in the Fire Service (WIFS) Cymru at Cardiff Gate Operational Training, Leadership and Personal Development Academy. Over 100 delegates of corporate and operational staff participated in the event, championing inclusivity and showing support to our women in the fire service. Nine representatives from SWFRS joined fire and rescue colleagues from across the UK at this year's (WIFS) National Training and Development Event – a weekend of learning, empowerment, and connection.

We've also celebrated our people through the launch of SWFRS Long Service Awards, recognising the dedication and contributions of our workforces.



#### Leadership commitment:

The ELT and SLT have publicly reaffirmed their commitment to our values. CFO and Commissioners set a clear stance on addressing domestic violence. Our leaders have actively participated in values-led sessions and leadership development.

We have set up a Leadership and Personal Development Academy to create a collaborative, future-focused approach to leadership and personal development, one that supports people across the service to lead with confidence, clarity, and care.

We have taken steps to ensure managers are trained on completing Equality Impact Assessments.

#### Promoting positive behaviours:

Our behavioural standards have been reinforced through initiatives like the Speak Up campaign and Taking Care of Behaviours, encouraging safe reporting and respectful communication across the Service. All staff will receive the training, with 440 members of staff already having completed.

We have embedded DICE into our corporate induction sessions, setting

service expectations and our stance on inappropriate behaviour to new staff members.

Staff training and inclusion tools. Staff have engaged in interactive DICE training, including lived-experience sessions and cultural intelligence workshops. We have introduced 'work with me' passports to help staff articulate their needs, particularly around neurodiversity, disability, health, and wellbeing. Our Neurodiversity Partnership Network has supported greater understanding and inclusion across the Service, with over 100 people being referred.

#### Creating safe spaces:

We've made visible commitments to keeping our communities safe, all 47 of our stations now have Safe Haven buttons, offering immediate support to anyone needing emergency assistance.

Fire stations have been designated as Safe Spaces, reinforcing our role as a trusted and welcoming presence. We're modernising how we work with the introduction of a new uniform trial, to offer comfort, professionalism and practicality needed to support everyone in their role.

#### Communication and Engagement:

Following the recruitment of a new Head of Communications and Engagement several improvements have been made to the way the Service shares information with colleagues, the media and people in our communities.

The changes followed feedback gathered from colleagues that informed the new Communications and Engagement Strategy with seven workstreams that outline the changes we will make and our timeline for progress in each area. They include internal communications and culture change, change communications and engagement, external communications, crisis communications and resilience and stakeholder and media engagement.

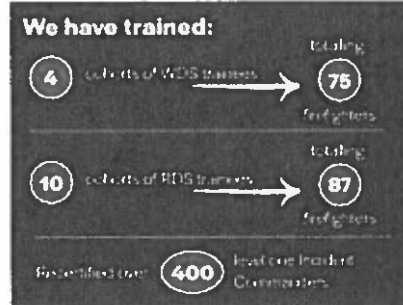
Some practical examples include a refreshed approach to the middle manager sessions and the start of all HQ colleague calls, the start of a clear purpose for Routine Notice and all user emails so we streamline the updates shared.

### 5. Operational Excellence



## Training at Scale

- Over 35 firefighting tactics awareness sessions have been delivered to all operational staff.
- New training packages covering size-up models, flow rates, and tactics are in development, with early data already indicating a positive impact on incident outcomes.
- Existing training packages have been updated.
- Incident Commanders now receive dedicated instruction on building firefighting tactics through both initial training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) modules. These include key concepts such as BE, SAFH, the Dutch Quadrant Model, appropriate flow rates, and tactical control measures.
- Breathing Apparatus (BA) training—both initial and continuation—has been updated to include the new tactics. Tactical officer BAR (Breathing Apparatus Refresher) courses also reflect these changes.



## Equipment Upgrades

- Replacement of older 19mm high pressure hose reels with more efficient 22mm versions to enhance water delivery and firefighter protection.
- All appliances are being fitted with Delta Fire Attack 500 SBC Pro Smooth Bore Branches, aligning the Service with global best practice.

## Hands-On Learning Tools

A new hose stream training rig at Cardiff Gate Training Centre has been commissioned to simulate realistic fire scenarios, including advanced techniques such as hydraulic ventilation, interior/exterior attack strategies, and attic fire suppression.

## Enhanced SOPs and Decision-Making Tools

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) linked to building firefighting have been reviewed and updated.
- New aide memoires and flow rate charts have been created to support rapid, evidence-based decision making.

## National and International Collaboration

- Active collaboration with Welsh fire services, NFCC seminars and UK-wide awareness sessions to advance firefighting tactics.
- A 16 person UK delegation (including three SWFRS representatives) visited the

Netherlands Institute for Safety (NIPV) to study its training methodology.

- In October, we hosted an event for both national and international partners to share key learning and best practices in responding to domestic dwelling fires. A delegation for Australia and the Netherlands came to Wales for a week to share learning with our service.



## 6. Thematic Reviews

### Thematic Review of operational training within the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services - October 2022

Our training team is currently focused on the development of new 'Training Needs Analysis' calendars.

Analysis of the amount of time required for firefighters to train on, and then be assessed against, the underpinning knowledge and range of standard practices and techniques is now with the Board of Commissioners for sign-off.

Initial work is underway on the outcome of the analysis of time required for skills maintenance training to prioritise the control measure tactics and techniques from Operational Risk Assessments that will be utilised by the on-call duty system (OCDS) based on the time available for training.

Multimedia developers are producing micro teach learning resources for control measure tactics not currently covered in the training manual.

We await Board of Commissioners' sign-off on control measures for compartment firefighting and update of the control measure tactics and techniques. This also includes updates to the tactical firefighting equipment and course syllabus based on national and international research.

### Fire and Rescue Services in Wales: Learning from Grenfell - 2021

We established a dedicated High Rise Team in March 2025, focused on delivering Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 and Phase 2 recommendations.

A Commissioner Compliance Charter has been developed, and nine compliance documents have been prepared for sign-off, taking

evidence of compliance to 35%. Key milestones include the completion of High Rise Standard Operating Procedure, the draft Joint Fire Control Life Survival Guidance, and the introduction of new evacuation procedures for high-rise buildings.

Training remains a priority, with Wholetime Duty System Phase 2 Building Construction and Failure now complete. OCDS Phase 1 high-rise training is underway and continuing professional development packages for Incident Commanders are being prepared. High-rise familiarisation has begun at thirteen key stations, and all Hazard Area Response Team crews have been trained in mass evacuation protocols.

Engagement with Welsh Government continues to ensure the recommendations align with the forthcoming Building Safety (Wales) Bill, with assurance from National Fire Chiefs Council that parity with England will be achieved. Looking ahead, priorities include completion of the Evacuation SOP, testing of new Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans and the launch of a dedicated high-rise staff intranet site.

### Inspection of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to consider the effectiveness of its response to domestic dwelling fires - October 2024

The Service's approach to domestic property firefighting has been reviewed, and an overarching guidance document has been published. The Building Firefighting, Breathing Apparatus (BA), and the new Fire Science Standard Operating Procedures have all been reviewed and are currently out for consultation, with the aim of publication by the end of 2025.

Initial awareness training has been delivered to all frontline crews and control room personnel. This

training covered updated firefighting tactics, the introduction of the Be Safe and Dutch Quadrant models, and improvements to incident messaging, which will also support enhanced operational learning. Further training will be released bi-monthly to deliver an annual online learning programme for operational crews.

We have updated BA initial, refresher, tactical officer and incident command training to reflect recent changes. A new training rig is under construction at Cardiff Gate Leadership and Personal Development Academy to further develop internal and external firefighting tactics. New equipment has been procured and is currently being rolled out. To share expertise and best practice we will be hosting an All Wales event with subject matter experts from the UK, Australia, and the Netherlands to exchange learning with our staff.

Significant progress has been made in improving operational assurance. A proposal paper outlining improvements to operational learning has been presented and approved by the Chief Fire Officer and Senior Officers. A draft policy is now in place, and the Operations Audit and Support Team and Operational Development and Review Team teams are being merged to form a central team that will provide operational feedback directly to the CFO.

- Once established, the team will focus on:
- Creating a comprehensive recording system for operational assurance
- Establishing a structured review process
- Training Tactical Officers in the operational assurance process.

In collaboration with Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, we have reviewed high-performing fire services based on His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services inspection results to identify best practice and assess operational assurance systems. Our aim is to fully implement the new system by the end of 2025.

**Broadening of the role of firefighters in Wales - 2021 Thematic Review report by the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector for Wales**

'Operation Reset' was formally established in April 2025 and has since delivered sustained progress in improving operational visibility and activity recording across WDS stations. Operation Reset remains a key driver in embedding a culture of operational readiness, accountability, and leadership across the Service.

We are on track to meet key milestones within recommendations 1,3 and 4. A six-month trial of Operation Reset will be conducted across selected WDS stations. This will be a critical step in evaluating and expanding the scope of operational activities, whilst ensuring the programme's feasibility and alignment with strategic objectives.

All stations are consistently capturing risk based training, assurance, and development activity, with data successfully migrated

into the Business Information Management System (BIMS). This integration now provides Station Commanders with a live dashboard to track performance, identify gaps, and support local assurance.

A review of existing systems is underway to streamline how operational crews record activity types and time allocated to tasks. This improvement will provide robust data to support evidence based decision making and enhance the visibility of firefighter contributions across diverse roles.

In the next phase, the focus will shift to defining and developing role expectations for Station Commanders, Watch Managers, and Crew Managers. This will clarify core responsibilities; support empowered local leadership and provide a foundation for future workforce development and planning.

Feedback and learning from operational crews continue to be addressed through OAST. The recent "You Said, We Listened, We Changed" internal newsletter has been well received by crews, reinforcing the Service's commitment to listening, acting on feedback, and closing the loop on operational learning. Finally, Operation Reset remains a standing agenda item within Social Partnership meetings to ensure all feedback routes are actively captured, discussed, and addressed in collaboration with representative bodies.

**Audit Wales. Fire False Alarm Reduction – South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority – May 2023**

SWFRS introduced its revised Automatic False Alarm (AFA) response model in January 2025. The new approach ensures an emergency response continues for all residential premises, specialised housing, schools, educational facilities, and heritage sites, while reducing unnecessary attendance at other premises. The change closely aligns SWFRS with MAWWFRS' response policies and follows national guidance from NFCC.

The early impact has been significant. Between January and mid-July 2025, AFA attendances fell by 42% (1,854 incidents compared to 3,200 in the same period in 2024), with NHS premises showing a 92% reduction in calls. To date, twenty four exemption requests have been considered, with sixteen approved, based on risk assessment and agreed criteria.

The Service remains in a monitor and review phase, with monthly tracking of incidents and continued engagement with alarm receiving centres to ensure accurate mobilisations. The approach has delivered clear operational and community benefits by reducing unwanted fire signals while safeguarding residents in the highest risk settings.

**COURAGE TO ACT  
COMPASSION TO CARE**



**OFFICIAL**

**APPENDIX C**

**Year in Review Road Map**



2026

## 2 June 2026 - Letter from Commissioners to CMLGHP



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
De Cymru  
South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service

Siân Gwenllïan MS  
Cabinet Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning  
Sent via email to [REDACTED]

2 June 2026

Dear Cabinet Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning

Firstly, may we again congratulate you on your appointment. As the four Independent Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS), we look forward to meeting with you to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the fire service.

We were appointed to our role by the previous government with clear terms of reference which were focused on improving SWFRS. Over the last two years we have worked collaboratively with the leadership team of SWFRS and Welsh Government officials to drive the level of change required to ensure SWFRS delivers the very best service to the communities of South Wales. We are also very clear that our objective within the intervention is to return the SWFRS to locally run democratic control as soon as is practicable.

Whilst there is still work to do and always room for continued improvement, we have been pleased with the progress against our terms of reference and, as such, we have been working with your officials towards an exit and handover to a new fire service governance arrangement for Wales.

To support this exit planning we commissioned Professor Rachel Ashworth and her team of Rebecca David-Knight, Catherine Farrell and Dave McKenna to support the development of a new constitution both for SWFRS and the other two Services in Wales. The team of academics were recommended due to their significant experience of interventions in Wales, and we would say they have added huge value. During their work on the constitution, and with their knowledge of the history of interventions in Wales, they identified that the level of challenge facing SWFRS alongside a new governance arrangement created a series of significant risks which in turn could mean the Service did not continue to improve.

Pencadlys Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru,  
Parc Busnes Forest View, Llantrisant,  
Ynysmaerdy, Port y clun, CF72 8LX

Ffôn 01443 232000

[www.southwalesfrs.gov.uk](http://www.southwalesfrs.gov.uk)

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,  
Forest View Business Park, Llantrisant,  
Ynysmaerdy, Portyclun, CF72 8LX

Telephone 01443 232000

[www.southwalesfrs.gov.uk](http://www.southwalesfrs.gov.uk)

Rydym yn crossway gonebaeth yn y gymraeg a'r saesneg - byddwn yn  
ymateb yn gyfartal i'r ddau ac yn ateb yn eich dewis iaith heb oedi.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English - We will respond  
equally to both and will reply in your language of choice without delay.

The academic team have in turn produced a report which outlines their concerns, evidence why they believe this to be the case, and present options for how governance could move forward. We completely accept that any decision on the future of governance in SWFRS sits with yourself, but we felt it important to state that the Commissioners believe that (option 4 within the academic team's recommendations) retaining us in role with an amended set of deliverables is the correct approach at this time. This will allow a consistent level of governance for SWFRS, the development of the new governance arrangements, certainty that progress is being sustained through the new inspection framework and continued work with Local Authorities and Welsh Government officials to build effective relationships.

We hope our thoughts are helpful when you come to make a decision on the future governance arrangements of SWFRS, and we are available to discuss with you or your officials.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Vij Randeniya, Carl Foulkes, Lady Wilcox and Kirsty Williams  
Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

**10 July 2026 (letter not dated but issued on 10 July) - Letter from CMLGHP to Commissioners**

Siân Gwenllïan AS/MS  
Gweinidog Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol, Tai a Chynllunio  
Cabinet Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref SG/05137/26

Carl Foulkes, Vij Randeniya, Lady Wilcox and Kirsty Williams  
Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority



July 2026

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for your letter of 2 June welcoming me to my new role as Cabinet Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning. I am grateful to you for setting out the concerns that have emerged through your planning for exit and transition to new governance arrangements for South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (SWFRA), particularly in relation to the timing of that transition and the issues raised by Professor Ashworth and her colleagues.

I am grateful for the clarity you have provided on your preferred way forward. Your views, alongside those of other stakeholders, have been important considerations in my deliberations. I recognise that ending the intervention too soon could risk stalling, or even reversing, the progress made over the last two years. Based on the information you and the academics from Cardiff University have provided about the progress achieved, and the organisation's readiness to sustain that progress during the transition back to local arrangements, I consider that risk to be too high.

I have therefore decided that the intervention should remain in place until after next year's local government elections. I am grateful for your hard work and diligence over the last two years, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Carl for his significant contribution to the progress that has been made. I am also grateful for your continued commitment to South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Taking into account your concerns about capacity, I will seek to appoint a fourth Commissioner to replace Carl.

While executive responsibility for the FRA will remain with you, I believe it is important that Fire and Rescue Authority members play a meaningful role in preparing for your eventual withdrawal and the transition back to local control. In the coming weeks, my officials will work with you, local authority leaders and the FRA members currently being appointed to establish the precise nature of that role.

Canolfan Cyswilt Cymraeg / First Point of Contact Centre:

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SH

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn guheblaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb guheblaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn yr iaith honno ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

My officials will now develop new terms of reference for you. These will encompass outstanding matters from your original remit, together with additional improvement targets focused on ensuring the organisation is prepared for transition and addressing the additional risks you have identified since taking up post. These will be reflected in reappointment letters to follow shortly. I will also publish amended Directions to reflect these changes.

I fully appreciate that local authorities have already begun appointing members to sit on a newly constituted SWFRA, and that clarity and certainty on the way forward are important for those new members and for Fire and Rescue Service employees. I will publish a Written Statement and write to local authorities shortly. My officials will share details of the timing with you in due course so that you can prepare to engage with your employees and with SWFRA's constituent local authorities.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet you to discuss these issues, as well as the wider challenges facing the fire and rescue service. My officials will be in touch to make the necessary arrangements.

Yours sincerely,



**Siân Gwenllïan AS/MS**  
Gweinidog Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol, Tai a Chynllunio  
Cabinet Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning