



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



# ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

How we did in 2023-2024  
and what we plan to do in 2025-2026



# Welcome to our “quick read” plan

# 2023-2024: Statistics Overview

This document provides an overview of our Annual Improvement Plan. It includes statistics and performance indicators to provide a summary of how we did in 2023-2024 and details our priorities for 2025-2026.

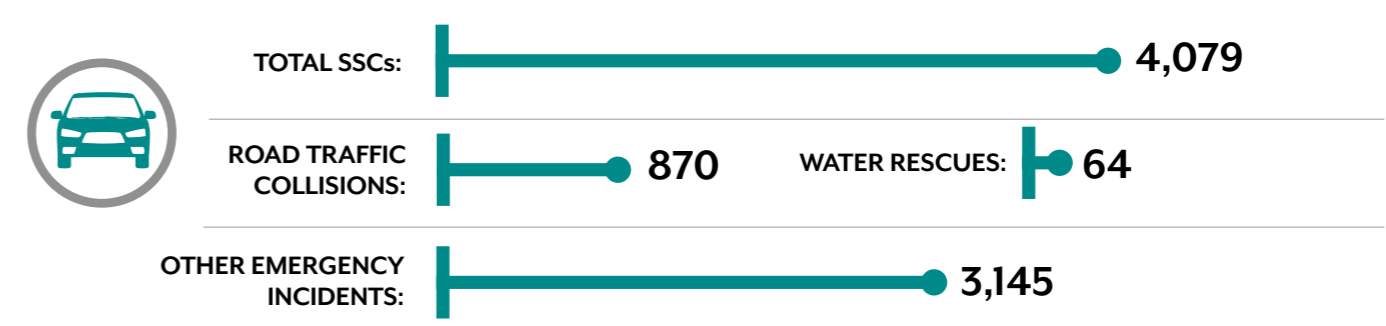
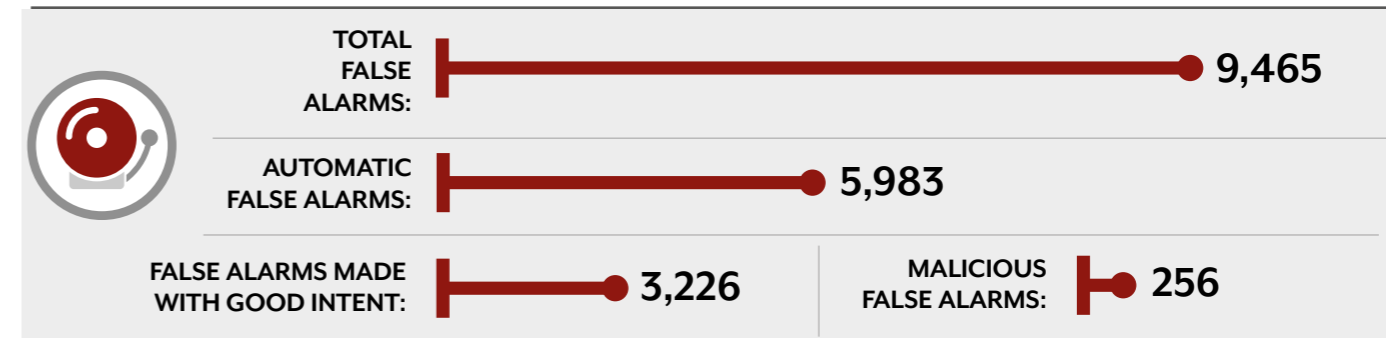
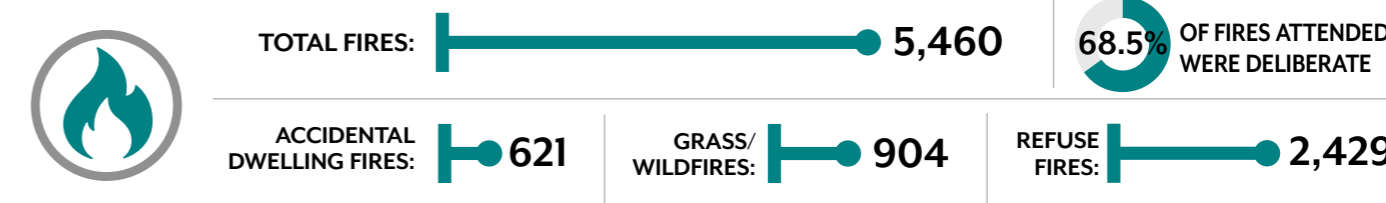
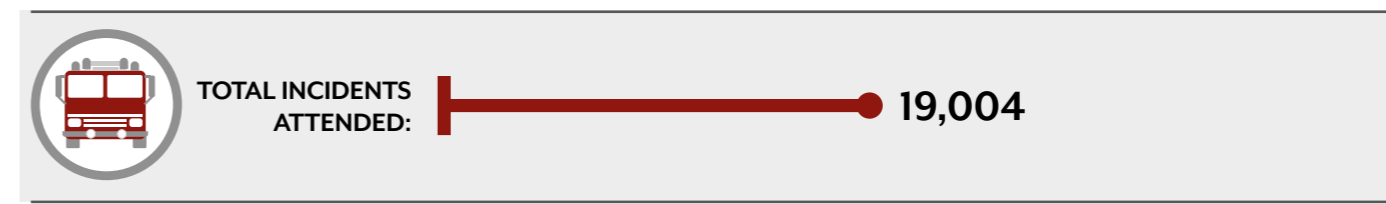
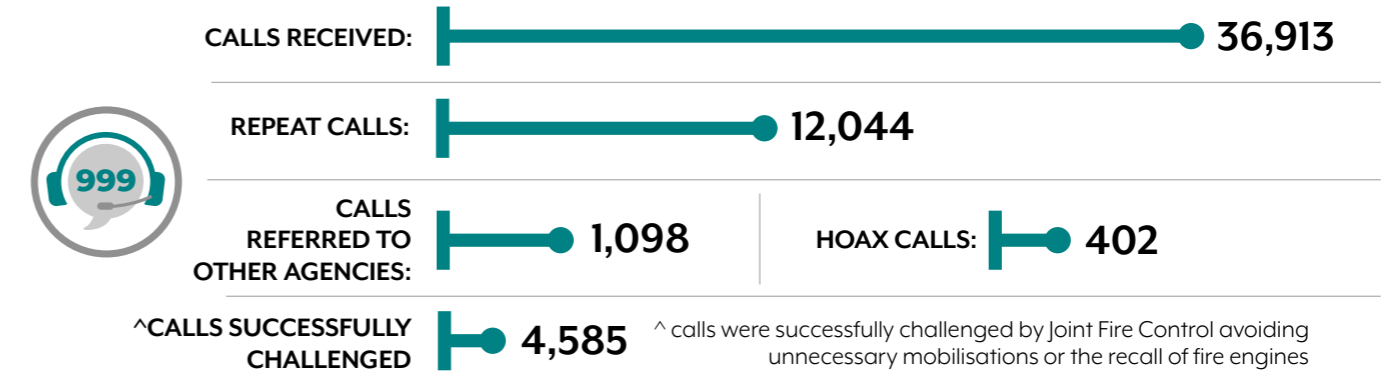
Our priorities help us to achieve our mission “**To make South Wales safer, by reducing risk**” and are based on numerous sources of information and requirements, including:

- ▶ legislation and legal framework
- ▶ previous performance and performance of other fire and rescue services (FRS)
- ▶ global and local needs
- ▶ consultation with staff, stakeholders, and the communities we serve.

We serve 10 unitary authorities, covering an area of approximately 2,800km<sup>2</sup> (1,081 sq miles) in South East Wales. With a resident population of over 1.5 million people, we protect half the population of Wales. Our communities are amongst the most diverse in Wales.

The publication of this plan marks the beginning of a 12-week consultation period about our priorities for 2025-2026. Your thoughts and ideas are essential in making sure we serve our communities most effectively, so please use the details at the end of this document to take part and help shape our future.

If you require further information regarding our planning process, the profile of our communities and specific details of what we did in 2023-2024, you can find our full Annual Improvement Plan [HERE](#)



\*(KEY STAGE 1-4 VISITS TO 36,658 CHILDREN)



# Our performance

The tables below provide an overview of our performance against strategic targets where set or in comparison with the last financial year. We have included a range of measures to reflect our activities and our business operations.

Strategic Performance Indicators (PI)	2023-2024	Target	Actual
Total number of fires attended per 10,000 population	Incident total	5,889	5,460
	PI	38.22	35.37
Total number of false alarms attended per 10,000 population	Incident total	8315	9465
	PI	53.96	61.40
Total number of road traffic collisions attended per 10,000 population	Incident total	858	870
	PI	5.57	5.64
Total number other incidents attended per 10,000 population	Incident total	2,698	3,209
	PI	17.51	20.79
Total number of deaths and injuries from all fires per 100,000 population	Incident total	62	40
	PI	4.02	2.59
Total number of deaths and injuries from accidental fires per 100,000 population	Incident total	52	34
	PI	3.37	2.21
Percentage of dwelling fires which were contained in the room in which they originated	PI	85.00%	84.43%

Response	2022-2023	2023-2024	Change
Calls handled by Joint Fire Control (JFC) for SWFRS service area - including repeat calls and referrals to other agencies	34,682	36,913	+2,231
Dealt with by JFC - no emergency response required	2,548	2,556	+8
Total incidents attended	18,705	19,004	+299
Accidental Dwelling Fires attended	623	621	-2
Deliberate Primary Fires	610	715	+105
Deliberate Secondary Fires	3,672	3,026	-646
Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) generated false alarms not attended	2,375	2,490	+115
AFA generated false alarms attended	5,419	5,983	+564
Average number of appliances on scene at AFA incidents	1.75	1.83	+0.8
Total wildfires attended	1,228	904	-324
Total rescues from water	47	64	+17
On-call availability (Pump 1 and Pump 2)	71.3%	68.7%	-2.6% points

Prevention	2022-2023	2023-2024	Change
Home safety visits completed	12,309	15,003	+2,694
Educational events attended (inc Crucial Crew and Wildfire Talks)	1,331	1,299	-32
Young people engaged via educational events	50,902	49,721	-1,181
Road Safety events held	181	259	+78
Number of people engaged via Road Safety events	6,881	15,770	+8,889

Protection	2022-2023	2023-2024	Change
Known business premises	32,878	34,919	+2,041
Business fire safety audits completed	655	625	-30
Fire safety enforcement notices issued under Article 30	42	82	+40
Prohibition notices issued under Article 31	3	9	+6
Prosecutions for offences under Article 32	3	1	-2

People	2022-2023	2023-2024	Change
Personal Reviews (PRs) Complete (Stage 1)	62%	68%	+6% points
Staff Engagement Levels (reported in PRs - score from 10)	8.0	7.7	-0.3
Total number of RIDDOR reportable accidents	7	20	+13
Attacks on crews	22	25	+3
Shifts/days lost per person - Wholetime uniformed staff	14.58	13.47	-1.11
Shifts/days lost per person - Joint Fire Control staff	44.82	22.06	-22.76
Shifts/days lost per person - Non-operational staff	12.03	15.68	+3.65

Corporate Responsibility	2022-2023	2023-2024	Change
Carbon footprint (tonnes CO <sup>2</sup> e)	10,050.788	9,998.666	-0.52%
Complaints received	66	72	+6
Positive comments received	82	112	+30



# Our Transformation Programme

Recent challenges faced by the Service and the wider fire and rescue sector have prompted significant change, from the transfer of governance responsibilities to a Board of Commissioners appointed by Welsh Government to reflection on and review of key assumptions and practices in our culture and ways of working.



## STEP FORWARD

We have therefore launched an ambitious transformation programme to deliver change. The **Step Forward Programme** will ensure the Service is able to meet the needs of our staff and communities now and is ready for the future. While this is rooted in our response to the Independent Culture Review Report published by Fenella Morris KC, the scope of the programme recognises that wide-reaching culture change needs strong organisational foundations. Alongside these projects, further work relating to the Commissioners' terms of reference continues including projects addressing operational implementation of thematic reviews by the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and Inspector.

We are in regular dialogue with Welsh Government on progress and receiving support from across the sector, including other FRSs, National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the wider public sector. To inform long-term improvement, we have requested an independent assessment of the Service by His Majesty's Inspector of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to supplement the culture review. This will provide the basis for future strategic planning and prioritisation, with the intent:

To create a safe, modern fire and rescue service in South Wales and to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect, free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and inappropriate behaviours.

Our work to achieve this aim is underpinned by the NFCC Core Code of Ethics, a set of five ethical principles that provide a basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour. Everyone in every fire and rescue service is expected to follow the Code and we are embedding its principles in all aspects of our work and interactions.

These principles are echoed in our transformation programme with projects that will promote understanding and accountability. By ensuring that we act in accordance with the Code, we will ensure excellence not only what we do but the way that we do it.

You can find further information on the Step Forward Programme and our response to Thematic Reviews in the full version of the Annual Improvement Plan.



### Keeping you safe

#### This means...

We will keep our communities safe by taking an evidence-led approach to identifying and evaluating risk. We will ascertain and address emerging issues, monitoring our own data and taking regard of evidence from the wider fire and rescue sector and other sources. This will ensure our campaigns, interventions and activities reach those most at risk.

Our programmes will be regularly reviewed and evaluated to ascertain their effectiveness. In these reviews, and when developing new approaches, we will engage with stakeholders to ensure their effectiveness. We recognise the importance of working together, and will seek opportunities to build on our established record of partnership - working to maximise the impact of our safety messages and interventions, from road and water safety, to working with young people and reducing wildfires. Core programmes involving educational visits to schools and home safety visits are continually monitored, recognising their importance in integrating our crews into the communities they serve.

Development of underlying strategies will continue to support our prevention and protection work, including implementation of the change to our automatic fire alarm (AFA) response and tracking high-rise buildings. We will enter the final phase of our water rescue strategy - our overarching aim for which is to ensure that users of South Wales' waterways are safer as a result of our commitment to ensuring we have the highest level of water rescue capability.

#### Our objectives:

Reducing the impact of false alarms on our resources.

Reducing the number of fires in the home and understanding the causes and behaviours of them.

Reducing the number of road traffic collisions (RTCs).

Reducing the number of deliberate fires.

Improving safety in and around water.

Improving fire safety in high-rise buildings in our communities.

#### Our priorities in 2025-2026 will include:

Embedding and assessing the change to our AFA response strategy, due to be implemented in January 2025. This will focus on sleeping risk; reducing our attendance to alarms at commercial premises unless a fire is confirmed. The additional resource available from this change will support training and risk reduction activities.

Evaluate and consider extending our trial of commercial safety checks, offering advice and signposting business owners to appropriate information.

Developing our Risk Based Inspection Programme with procurement and implementation of a new recording system.

Establishing reporting and monitoring channels to assess community-based risk, feeding into local station plans and Service-wide activities. This will utilise a wide range of data to inform our strategic planning.

Implement the final phase of our Water Rescue Strategy so that the people who use our waterways are safer.

“ WE RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING TOGETHER AND WILL SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD ON OUR ESTABLISHED RECORD OF PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO MAXIMISE THE IMPACT OF OUR SAFETY MESSAGES AND INTERVENTIONS. ”

## Responding to your emergency

### This means...

We always seek to provide an efficient and effective response to our communities when needed. This requires us to have highly trained personnel with the right equipment available so that the safety of our communities is never compromised. We will continue to invest in our Firefighters and Joint Fire Control Staff to ensure that they can respond to the wide range of incidents we face now and, in the future, based on assessment of risk. This work will be informed by operational learning which will be directed to improving our response.

We will continue to coordinate and take part in joint training and exercises with other fire and rescue services and multi-agency training to test arrangements for the most complex incidents, taking regard of national guidance for best practice and continuing our support for National Resilience activities.

### Our objectives:

Responding effectively when you need us.

Doing all we can to make sure that our On-Call Duty System (OCDS) crews are available.

Training our Firefighters, Joint Fire Control staff and other staff to respond to current and future risks in our communities.



**WE WILL CONTINUE TO INVEST IN OUR FIREFIGHTERS AND JOINT FIRE CONTROL STAFF TO ENSURE THAT THEY CAN RESPOND TO THE WIDE RANGE OF INCIDENTS**

### Our priorities in 2025-2026 will include:

Increasing use of data to monitor performance, measuring improvement against key metrics.

Reviewing pre-determined attendance (PDA) models to ensure their alignment with community risk.

Creating a structured post-incident review framework that captures learning from incidents and exercises, using data and insights to inform training, improve operational procedures, and share best practices Service-wide.

Ensuring adequate on-call Firefighter availability with a target of all stations maintaining 70% On-Call Firefighter availability.

Ensuring all operational Firefighters have timely access to current risk-based information for every incident they attend, fully aligned with our risk management frameworks.

Completing work to address the recommendations of the thematic reviews:

- Learning from Grenfell
- Broadening the role of Firefighters in Wales
- Fire and Rescue Service operational training

Align our exercise programme to risk, also formalising our cross-border exercise programme.

## Working with our partners

### This means...

We have a well-established and proud history of working with partners to deliver measureable improvements, efficiencies, and meet future demands. This includes contributing to local priorities and assisting in improving community wellbeing. We recognise the benefits of working in partnership with other organisations to deliver best value services for the communities we jointly serve, and that sharing knowledge and skills is at the heart of our Service's future.

We will extend our existing partnership activities, as well as developing new, innovative relationships that will support our improvement journey. From exploring training and development opportunities to working with local community groups, this will ensure we leverage skills and resource and share back with our own knowledge and expertise.

Investment in effective collaboration requires effective governance, so we will be clear on the mutual benefits that can be achieved, from data sharing to opportunities for co-location.

### Our objectives:

Working with Public Service Boards (PSBs) to support our communities.

Working with our partners to deliver our services where they are needed.

Continually reviewing and building on our existing partnerships, embedding principles of social partnership.

### Our priorities in 2025-2026 will include:

Working with the NFCC on embed Fire Standards as a performance tool.

Identifying opportunities to work with partners in support of our leadership development programme.

Working with trade unions to ensure the principles of social partnership are reflected in our processes: cooperation, respect, trust, voice and participation, and mutual gains.



**WE RECOGNISE THE BENEFITS OF WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS TO DELIVER BEST VALUE SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITIES WE JOINTLY SERVE.**



## Involving and communicating

### This means...

We will improve the way we engage with and involve our staff, stakeholders, communities and partners by taking a proactive approach to communication. We will promote and inform on the work we undertake, the challenges we face, and keep stakeholders aware of the ways they can be involved in shaping our services for the future.

We believe that we can effectively deliver our key messages through ensuring a continued focus on education, engagement, and communication. Working as part of a well-connected community can deliver wider improvement than working alone, therefore ensuring greater opportunity to keep residents, businesses and visitors to South Wales safer. We will explore and develop innovative ways to communicate, including working with partners to add value to their channels and bring additional value to our own, and exploring different technologies and means of communication.

### Our objectives:

- Involving our communities, making sure they have their say in what we do.
- Ensuring that we engage with our staff and make sure they are engaged with the Service and have their say in what we do.
- Helping to keep our communities safe by delivering safety education and attending community events.
- Ensuring we develop and promote communication channels within the Service.
- Recognising the role of social partnership, further developing open and transparent relationships with stakeholders.

### Our priorities in 2025-2026 will include:

- Developing a communication and engagement strategy that supports internal and external engagement.
- Developing ways for stakeholders, including staff, partners and communities, to have a say and be involved in our plans for improvement.
- Updating and upgrading the Service's internet and intranet systems to deliver effective platforms for external and internal users to find the information they need.
- Improving transparency by sharing information, explaining our processes and promoting our values.
- Embedding the structure of staff meetings and briefings, building the Shout internal communication brand.
- Evaluating the reach and effectiveness of our communications.



WORKING AS PART OF A WELL-CONNECTED COMMUNITY CAN DELIVER WIDER IMPROVEMENT THAN WORKING ALONE.

## Protecting and enhancing our environment

### This means...

At South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, we, like the rest of the Welsh public sector, are working towards net zero carbon status by 2030. This means that we are reducing carbon emissions within our buildings, fleet, and supply chain - and will then offset emissions that cannot be reduced within operations (invest in carbon sequestration opportunities). - Imagine an equation in balance - that is the place of harmony we want to achieve.

We also work with people on the ground as a trusted presence. We can offer people a voice, and advocate for our communities on issues of safety and fairness, as we adapt to a warming world and its implications, in the name of reducing risk, raising awareness, and protecting the environment.

We know that technology and infrastructure must meet us halfway, but we must also have the support and commitment from people within the organisation. We must understand the challenges we face, and what we personally can do to help.

Our new Carbon Reduction and Biodiversity Action Plans will set out our plans to 2030. We commit to embracing renewable energies to support sustainability and the environmental goals of the WFGA.

### Our objectives:

- Implementing, embedding, and centralising sustainability policies and procedures.
- Decarbonising our fleet and providing sufficient charging infrastructure to staff and visitors.
- Reducing our energy usage and carbon footprint.
- Implementing an accredited Environmental Management System.
- Reducing the amount of waste produced and improving recycling rates.

### Our priorities in 2025-2026 will include:

- Reducing waste produced and increase recycling efficiency.
- Beginning development of our first carbon neutral fire station.
- Implementing an accredited environmental management system and work with partners to protect the environment.
- Climate risk assessing estate, assets and services and develop adaptation strategies.
- Identifying ways to enhance and develop our wellbeing areas and green spaces.
- Preparing for an electrified fleet by improvements to our charging infrastructure.
- Trialling use of biofuels to reduce impact of diesel miles.
- Installing energy generation at appropriate sites.



WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES WE FACE, AND WHAT WE PERSONALLY CAN DO TO HELP - AND THERE WILL BE SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE.





## Using technology well

### This means...

We continuously review our use of technology to improve our processes and systems, as we recognise that this plays a vital role in how well we deliver our services and utilise our resources, including making information as accessible as possible to our staff where and when needed. From our operational firefighting techniques and equipment to our back-office support systems, we intend to maximise technological advances and improve service delivery. Technological development will make a positive contribution to the wider wellbeing of our staff and the communities we serve, ensuring operational resources are best placed to respond effectively to incidents.

A programme of digital transformation will support wider organisational change, from finance and budget management to People Services and workforce development. With changes to governance and scrutiny frameworks, there will be opportunities to gain additional value from the data we hold through evaluation and monitoring. Digital transformation will also support other strategic aims, including improving communication by enhancing our online platforms.

We recognise the need to continually test our systems and have robust business continuity arrangements in place. However, we also recognise security and cyber threats, and continue our work on system assurance.

### Our objectives:

Using the most suitable technology and equipment to improve our services.

Reviewing the standard and use of technology and equipment across the Service via the Digital Transformation Programme.



**DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WILL ALSO SUPPORT OTHER STRATEGIC AIMS, INCLUDING IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BY ENHANCING OUR ONLINE PLATFORMS.**

### Our priorities in 2025-2026 will include:

Developing digital leadership to guide strategic use of our digital assets and new or emerging technologies.

Ensuring digital literacy is incorporated into our training plans, ensuring our staff have skills appropriate to their roles to create, evaluate and share information.

Reviewing existing People Services system considering recent restructure and changing requirements.

Implementing a new Operational Intelligence System, enabling sharing of information between teams and improved reporting.

Exploring the concept of the digital fireground, ensuring effective communications and up to date information are available to our crews and commanders at incidents.

Completing our trial of aerial and water drones to enhance our incident command and rescue capabilities.

Implementing a dynamic cover tool that will improve our availability, supporting us in moving from a static degradation plan.

## Valuing our people

### This means...

We are committed to delivering a programme of change that will ensure our staff feel valued, respected, trusted and recognised for the contributions they make every day. Our workforce should represent the communities we serve, be diverse, equally valued and have access to development and professional opportunities. Our aspiration is to be an employer of choice, and to do this, we will support our people to be their best.

Recent challenges have impacted all of us, bringing significant change to the Service. We expect the HMICFRS assessment of the Service to identify additional opportunities for improvement. In the coming year, we will continue to develop and deliver our Transformation Programme, with our people at the heart of this work. We are committed to improving our culture, values and behaviours which will be supported by better communications, governance and data. While there will be key points of contact to instigate this change, such as initial training and induction sessions, we will ensure every opportunity is used by developing resources and toolkits for use in different approaches, by leaders at every level.

Our provision for mental and physical health is valued, and will be supplemented by a cultural wellbeing strategy and continued focus on health and safety arrangements. We will evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects by establishing and monitoring performance measures.

### Our objectives:

Delivering fundamental change in our culture, responding to the recommendations of the Independent Culture Review.

Attracting a workforce that reflects and represents our communities

Developing our people by identifying training and development opportunities.

Supporting our people to feel well, healthy, and valued at work.

Encouraging and supporting a bilingual culture across the Service.



**WE EXPECT THE HMICFRS ASSESSMENT OF THE SERVICE TO IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT.**

### Our priorities in 2025-2026 will include:

Improving our workforce planning to ensure we have the right skills to deliver our services, with improved resilience and succession planning.

Developing our culture of learning and improving with new training opportunities delivered in a variety of formats, including leadership skills at all levels.

Embedding recent improvements to our recruitment and promotion procedures, using feedback to evaluate future cycles.

Developing robust reporting to inform our DICE (Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity) activities.

Reviewing operational Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and improve our processes for cleaning contaminated PPE to improve the health of our Firefighters and those involved in handling kit, including a long-term infrastructure project.

## Continuing to work effectively

### This means...

We will continue to develop our planning processes, demonstrating the thread from our station plans to our strategic aims, and drawing in improvement goals from across all departments. This work will focus on risk, by using a wide range of data to inform our assessments. We will produce and share strategies that set out our goals as an organisation in the medium and long term, developing new ways of working that provide assurance to our stakeholders.

Recognising the need for improved monitoring and evaluation, we will enhance performance reporting, both internally and externally. This will support greater transparency and accountability. We will continue to act on feedback, including the HMICFRS assessment of the Service, to identify and implement improvements.

We will take guidance from Welsh Government with regard to governance while implementing change to our internal governance model. It is essential that these changes are robust, as we continue to support the Commissioners in their current role and as they evaluate the maturity of the Service in preparation for new arrangements.

We will continue to seek efficiencies and improvements that deliver value for money as part of a programme of effective stewardship of public assets.

### Our objectives:

Being clear and publicly accountable by reviewing the organisation's governance structures.

Maximising value for money while improving our service.

Developing new ways of working.

Undertaking a wholesale review of the organisation's performance.



THIS WORK WILL FOCUS ON RISK BY USING A WIDE RANGE OF DATA TO INFORM OUR ASSESSMENTS

### Our priorities in 2025-2026 will include:

Developing new governance and performance frameworks that will support Service wide improvement.

Ensuring policies and procedures are effective in documenting Service processes and are regularly reviewed.

Implementing effective project management processes and evaluation strategies.

Ensuring all business areas are resilient through business continuity tests and exercises.

Acting on new National Framework and performance indicators expected to be published by Welsh Government ([Sound the Alarm report, Recommendation 4](#)).



## Welsh Language

We are committed to fulfilling our duty to ensure the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language, and support those who choose to communicate in Welsh. In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards 2015, the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority received a Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner setting out the Welsh Language Standards that apply to the Authority. This [Compliance Notice](#) is published on our website, and gives details about what the service's citizens can expect to receive in Welsh. We seek to engage with Welsh speakers and learners to improve the overall standard of our service provision.

### Alternative versions

We publish a "quick read" version of this plan, and both versions will be available on our website with "Speak the website" audio facility which also provides a translation option. If you would like this information in another format, please contact us.

### Have Your Say

We are always looking for ways to improve our services, and to ensure the information we provide is meaningful. All feedback is reviewed and considered as we develop our plans. For regular updates and invitations to take part in consultations and surveys, join our [Stakeholder Register](#).

Consultation on our proposed priorities for 2025-2026 is open for 12 weeks from publication of this document – complete the survey at Have Your Say 2024.

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/HaveYourSay\\_2024](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HaveYourSay_2024)



You can contact us at any time using any of the methods shown.

### Write to us

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