



NORTH WALES
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT
2019/20
Published Autumn 2020



NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

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

Welcome to North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's progress and self-assessment report for 2019/20. In March 2019, the Authority published its Improvement and Well-being Plan for 2019/20 that confirmed its long term strategic objectives and explained its plans for the year in order to achieve these objectives.

Good progress was made throughout the year in completing specific actions developed to ensure that the three enabling steps could be achieved, and thereby demonstrating progress against the two long term Improvement and Well-being Objectives. The section entitled 'Progress against Improvement and Well-being Objectives' details evidence in support of the achievement of these actions.

On 11 March 2020, however, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the coronavirus, Covid19 outbreak, a pandemic situation, with the UK Government enforcing a national 'lockdown' from 23 March 2020.

The primary concern of the Authority from the outset was the safety of staff and the public. It was acknowledged immediately that by reducing contact the Authority could help to reduce coronavirus infections. Throughout March and into the new financial year the Authority responded positively to the Welsh Government request for people to stay at home in order to protect lives, so as not to lose any progress made in fighting the coronavirus. This meant that many North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) staff immediately commenced working from home, travelling only when necessary and maintaining social distancing regulations.

As the Service finds new ways of working, it has become widely acknowledged that many of these developments will need to extend beyond the current crisis and it is hoped that technology will facilitate the Service's needs in a post-Covid future.

It is hoped that this year's account is interesting and informative. More emphasis has been placed in this year's report on including examples of how a real difference has been made to people's lives. As always, feedback is welcome on how improvements on reporting could be made in the future.

Comments or suggestions for improvement can be made using the contact details available on page 66.

CONTENTS

Contents

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING	5
ABOUT NORTH WALES	8
ABOUT NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY	19
THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE AUTHORITY	21
PROGRESS AGAINST IMPROVEMENT AND WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES	22
MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS	38
PROGRESS AGAINST STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES	42
HOW DOES NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY COMPARE?.....	47
PERFORMANCE INFORMATION SUMMARY	55
THE DWELLING FIRES RESPONSE CHARTER IN 2019/20.....	56
WHAT OTHERS SAID ABOUT US.....	61
GLOSSARY / DEFINITIONS.....	64
ALTERNATIVE VERSIONS AND HOW TO CONTACT US.....	66

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING

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



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

Five ways of working;



Balancing short term needs with long term needs

Preventing problems from occurring or getting worse

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

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

Collaborative working to meet the well-being objectives.

¹ Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Essentials

<https://futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf>

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

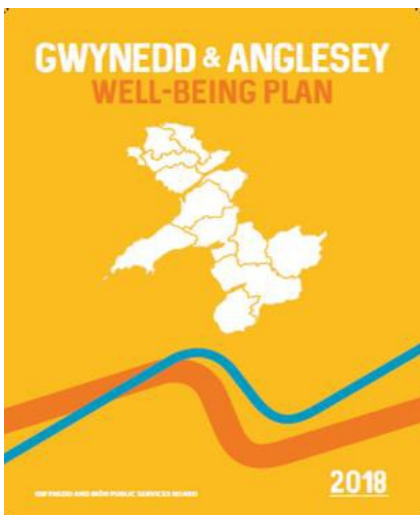
The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also requires each local authority area to form a Public Services Board (PSB).

The North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority area is made up of four Public Services Boards, as follows:

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

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

You can access each Well-being plan by clicking on the images below.



The Equality Act 2010



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

Equality Act 2010

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

Welsh Language Standards 2016

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



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner



ABOUT NORTH WALES





Understanding the demography of communities in North Wales, and how they are likely to change in the future, will help the Authority to plan and resource itself appropriately.





The population of North Wales has undergone a fundamental change in its age structure. Fewer children are being born and people are generally living longer. As a result, the average age of the population is increasing. This has significant implications for the whole of society.

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

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

 Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub Fire and Rescue Service	<h3>Mission Statement</h3> <h2>Making North Wales a safer place to live, work and visit</h2>	 Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub Fire and Rescue Service
---	--	---

Population	Area (KM ²)	Population Density (KM ²)	Welsh Speakers
			
698,369	6,150	113	30.8%

Dwellings	Non-Domestic Properties	Road Length (Km)	Agricultural Area (Hectares)
			
327,075	31,159	9,732	496,192

The population of North Wales

The current estimated population figure for the North Wales area is 698,369 people, which is approximately 23% of the population of Wales. This is an increase of approximately 8% since 1991.

Anglesey	Gwynedd	Conwy	Denbighshire	Flintshire	Wrexham
Mid-Year 1991					
69,123	115,007	107,951	89,395	142,036	124,180
Mid-Year 2018					
69,961	124,178	117,181	95,330	155,593	136,126
Source: Welsh Government					

In 2001, the percentage of people who were of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) was less than 1%. By the end of 2019, this had increased to just under 2.5%. There are over 8,000 more females than males across North Wales. Wrexham is the only county with more males with 50.18% of the population.

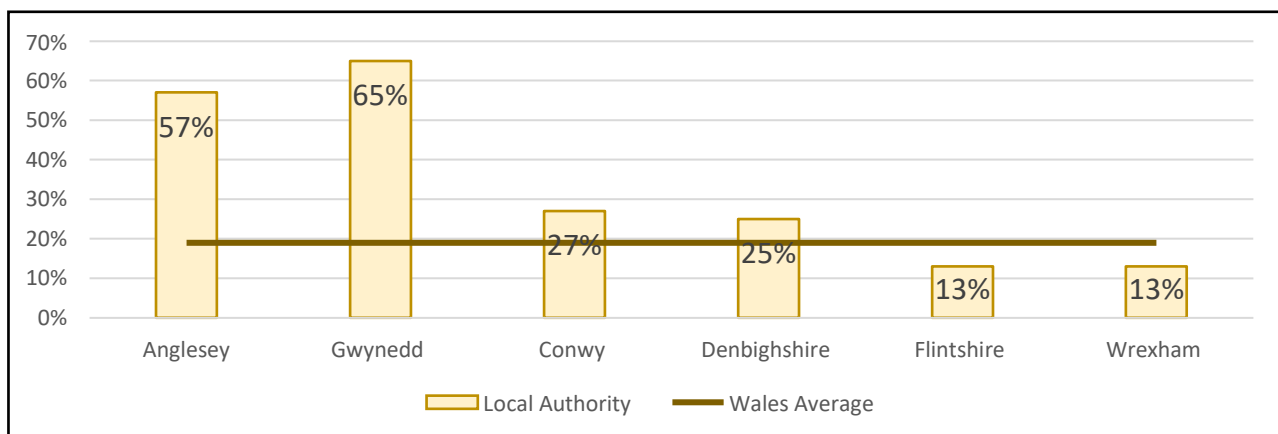
Population Density

The increase in population naturally has an impact on the density of each local authority area. Since 1991, the population density has increased the most in Flintshire from 325 people per km² to 356. Although the population has increased across North Wales, Gwynedd remains the least densely populated area with 49 people per km².

Anglesey	Gwynedd	Conwy	Denbighshire	Flintshire	Wrexham
Mid-Year 1991					
96	45	96	107	325	246
Mid-Year 2018					
98	49	104	114	356	270
Source: Welsh Government					

Welsh Speakers

Data released from the 2011 census indicates that the percentage of Welsh speakers in North Wales local authority areas ranges from 13% to 65%, compared with a Wales average of 19%.



The number of Welsh speakers aged three years and over is projected to increase from 562,000 in 2011 to 666,000 in 2050.

The percentage of people who consider themselves Welsh has changed slightly for each local authority area when compared with ten years ago. During the same period, the national average decreased from 65.0% to 62.9%.

Local Authority	Year ending 30 September 2009	Year ending 30 September 2019	
Anglesey	62.7%	60.8%	↓
Gwynedd	65.9%	67.4%	↑
Conwy	48.4%	48.3%	↔
Denbighshire	51.7%	51.6%	↔
Flintshire	43.1%	35.6%	↓
Wrexham	61.5%	53.7%	↓
SOURCE: Welsh Government			



What did the PSBs say about the population in their areas?

Anglesey – The number of people who live on the island increased by 4.9% between 1981 and 2011. This is lower than the increase seen across the population of Wales (11%) during the same period. Recent figures show that 46% of residents living on Anglesey speak Welsh daily.

Gwynedd - In 20 years, it is expected that there will be an additional 60% of over 80 year olds living in Gwynedd. Recent figures show that 60% of residents living in Gwynedd speak Welsh daily.

Conwy and Denbighshire – 25% of the population are over 65 years of age. This is higher than the Wales average of 20%.

Flintshire – By 2039 residents aged 65 or over will have increased by 35%.

Wrexham – There are more females than males in the county, due mainly to the fact women live longer than men. The 2011 Census estimates that there are 16,659 people aged 3 or over who are able to speak Welsh in Wrexham.



Why is this of interest to the Fire and Rescue Authority?

The Authority has to adapt its community safety campaigns and messages to meet the requirements of an increasing and more diverse population.

The population is ageing, with more people aged 65 and over living in the area, which is why seeking new (and maintaining existing) partnerships with organisations who already assist people in this age group is so important. Providing bespoke fire safety knowledge to all however, regardless of age, can only help reduce the incidence of fire.

The Authority is committed to bilingualism across the service area. All control personnel are bilingual which means that in an emergency, calls can be handled in either language. All staff must reach a minimum of level two Welsh language before the end of their probation period. The annual Welsh language report can be found on pages 38 – 44.

Living in North Wales

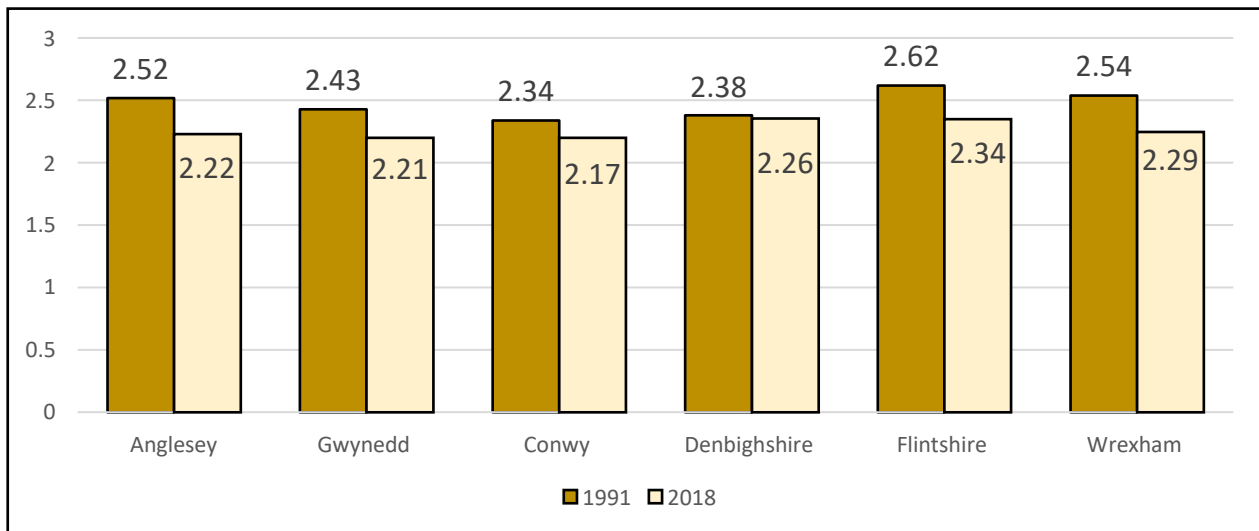
Dwellings

Over the last ten years, the number of dwellings in the North Wales area has increased by 4%.

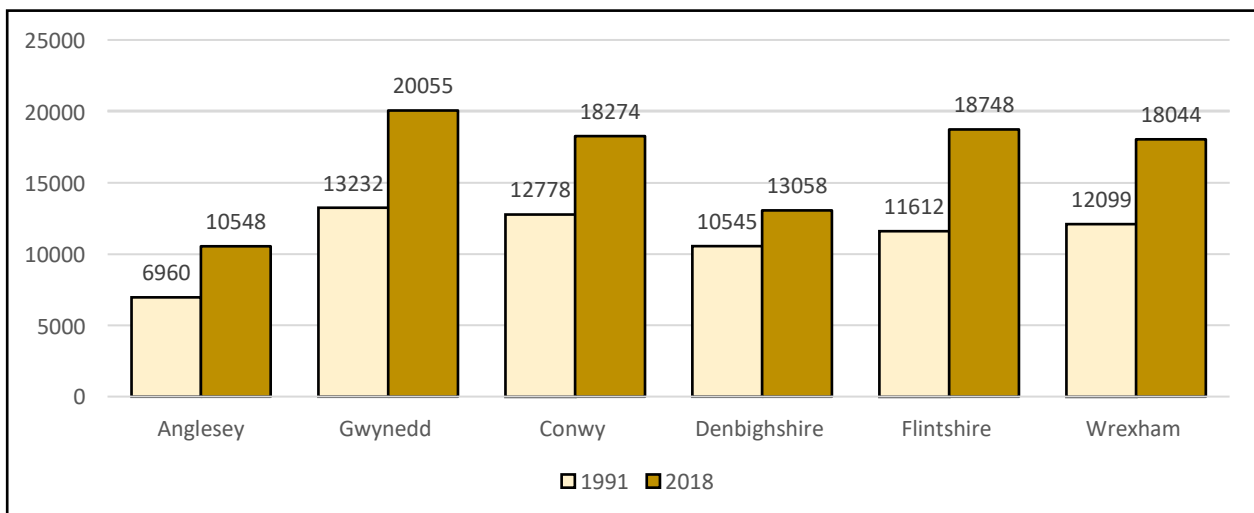
Anglesey	Gwynedd	Conwy	Denbighshire	Flintshire	Wrexham
Mid-Year 2009-10					
33,768	59,615	55,031	43,316	64,764	57,528
Mid-Year 2019-20					
35,236	60,088	56,950	45,184	69,114	60,503
StatsWales Number of Dwellings StatsWales Number of Exempt Dwellings					

Household Occupancy

The graph below shows the average household size (persons) by local authority and year.



During the same period, the number of people living alone has increased.





What did the PSBs say about living in their areas?

Conwy and Denbighshire – one in six households are occupied by a single pensioner. Fuel poverty affects 7,600 households in the region. Life expectancy is increasing, as is the percentage of older people in the community.

Anglesey – The number of people over the age of 80 has increased by 143% in 30 years and in

Gwynedd - The number of people over the age of 80 has increased by 96.2%. 60% of local people are priced out of the housing market, which rises to 64% in Anglesey.

Flintshire – Life expectancy is predicted to continue to improve, and the number of those aged 65 years and over is expected to grow from 31,000 in 2015 to 46,100 by 2039.

Wrexham – Wrexham contains around 59,850 dwellings to support a population of 136,650. In the year ending March 2016 only 199 new homes were built in the area, despite Welsh Government’s 2011-based projections predicting a new dwelling requirement of between 650-700 each year in order to keep pace with population growth. This suggests a significant under provision of new housing, and is in part due to the contraction of the construction industry since the global economic downturn of 2008.



Why is this of interest to the Fire and Rescue Authority?

We know from extensive research that people living alone and the elderly are more likely to be injured or killed in a fire in their home. Therefore, knowing that there are more people living alone means the community fire safety team can target their safety campaigns accordingly.

Living in fuel poverty means people can sometimes attempt to heat their homes with unconventional methods or try to over-utilise what little heating they can afford, leading to a potential increase in the risk of fire.

Data is collected from all fires attended, which means that the causes of fires can be examined to identify trends and issues. This can then be used to highlight awareness through fire safety campaigns, through a variety of sources including the use of social media.

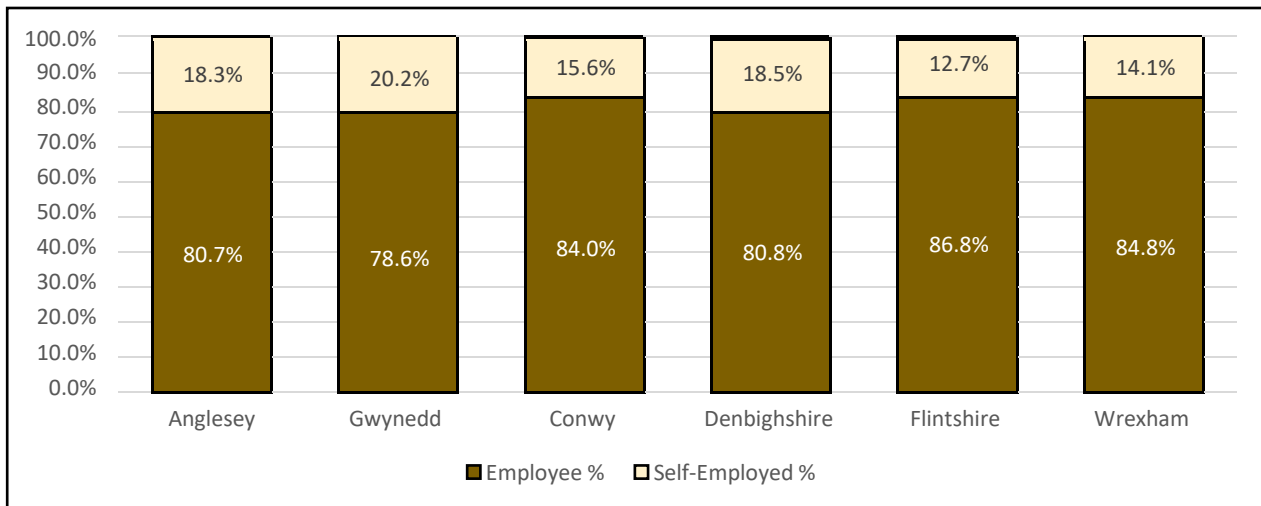
The economy and employment rates in North Wales

There are just over 31,000 non-domestic properties in North Wales. The largest economic sector is Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing.

The table below shows the number of businesses in North Wales within each of the top five economic sectors.

Economic Sectors	Number of Businesses
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	3,910
Construction	3,290
Retail	3,000
Professional, Scientific and Technical	2,985
Accommodation and Food Services	2,800
SOURCE: InfoBase Cymru	

As at 31 December 2019 there were, 329,300 people of working age (16 – 64 years old) employed within the North Wales area.



 **What did the PSBs say about the economy and employment in their areas?**

Conwy and Denbighshire – 75% of the land is agricultural which is predominantly managed by farmers. Agriculture contributes to the rural economy and employs 20% of people in rural Conwy and 15% of people in rural Denbighshire.

Flintshire – There are 4,400 individuals looking for work, which is almost 5% of the working age population. This is the highest performing local economy in North Wales. There are 10,000 people (11%) of the working age population claiming out of work benefits.

Anglesey and Gwynedd – Agriculture is the largest sector for both counties accounting for 19% of employers, compared with 12% for the rest of Wales.

Wrexham – A high proportion of the known businesses operating in the area are relatively small in size. Some 74% of businesses (2,650) employ fewer than four people and a further 14% (500) employ between five and nine people. Around 40% of small businesses operate below the VAT threshold. About 7,700 people or 8.0% of the working population are self-employed. Compared with the national rate, Wrexham has slightly better provision for apprenticeships and work-based learning programmes than the national average for the 16-24 age group.



Why is this of interest to the Fire and Rescue Authority?

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service advertises employment opportunities regularly on its website and participate in apprenticeship schemes to enable younger people to gain experience of the workplace.

Farmers and landowners are reminded during the controlled burning period that they should advise us of any burning, so we can reassure any concerned member of the public who may ring in to report a fire. We also visit livestock markets to enforce safety messages.

The health of the people living in North Wales

Data collected as part of the Annual Population Survey reports that in March 2013 a fifth of the population aged 16 to 64, living in Wales, identified as disabled. A higher proportion of women than men identified as disabled (23.0% compared with 18.8%).

Anglesey	Gwynedd	Conwy	Denbighshire	Flintshire	Wrexham
31 March 2013					
7,900	12,300	12,600	13,000	15,600	14,300
SOURCE: Welsh Government					

The number of patients formally admitted to Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board mental health facilities (detained under a section of the Mental Health Act 1983 or other legislation) has increased by 58% during the five year period 2013/14 to 2017/18 25. The number of informal admissions has in contrast reduced year on year.

Financial Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Formal Admissions	237	324	345	375	376
Informal Admissions	1,598	1,384	1,180	887	928
SOURCE: Welsh Government					

During 2018/19 a total of 1,351 people were assessed for drug misuse and 1,569 people were assessed for alcohol misuse in the North Wales area.



What did the PSBs say about the health of those living in their areas?

Conwy and Denbighshire – About 9.8% of Conwy and 11.6% of Denbighshire’s population report being treated for a mental illness – the Welsh average is about 12.1%. Suicide rates in Conwy and Denbighshire are higher in comparison with other parts of Wales. People living with dementia registered with GP surgeries in Conwy and Denbighshire rose from 1,700 patients in 2011 to 2,050 in 2016.

Flintshire – Statistics show a long-term increase in the percentage of overweight people. In 2014, over 25% of 4-5 year olds and approximately 57.5% of adults were found to be obese or overweight. It is predicted that the number of residents living with dementia will rise by about 1,350 (66%) by 2030.

Anglesey and Gwynedd – Of those aged 16 years or older, 22% (Anglesey) and 22% (Gwynedd) report that they smoke. In Anglesey 38% of people drink more than five small glasses of wine or around three pints of lager, during the week’s average heaviest drinking day; this increases to 42% in Gwynedd.

Wrexham - Data for 2016 shows 850 patients with dementia registered with GP surgeries in Wrexham. The number of people with chronic conditions (e.g. high blood pressure, asthma, diabetes, heart failure and lung diseases) who are registered with GPs in Wrexham increased in the five years between 2011 and 2016.



Why is this of interest to the Fire and Rescue Authority?

In addition to generic home safety advice, safe and well checks also include tailored fire safety advice to the occupier. Contact is made with other care agencies in the community to ensure those most in need are prioritised. The fire and rescue service can be called upon to assist the police and/or ambulance service to recover bodies regardless of cause of death. This is completed with utmost professionalism and sensitivity, but can affect the emotional well-being of the crews.

Transport links in North Wales

Road Network

The A55 expressway extends for approximately 87 miles between Holyhead ferry port, through the local authorities of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire before crossing the border into England and finishing in Chester. These places frequently had average speeds of less than 30mph depending on the time of day and direction of travel.

A55 Eastbound

Chart 1 – Eastbound weekday car speeds on the A55 by junction, April to June 2016 Morning Peak (07:00 to 10:00)



A55 Westbound

Chart 2 – Westbound weekday car speeds on the A55 by junction, April to June 2016 Morning Peak (07:00 to 10:00)



Evening Peak (16:00 to 19:00)



Evening Peak (16:00 to 19:00)



Non-Peak



Non-Peak

























Source: [Welsh Government](http://www.welsh.gov.uk)

Railways

Rail station usage: April 2018 to March 2019

Figures below are based on ticket sales and for some stations may not be an accurate reflection of usage. For example, some tickets are sold to the end of the line or as far as a fare price will allow, and not be the actual journey destination. Consequently, some stations marking the end of lines or fare prices appear busier than they are and other stations along those lines appear less busy than they are.

Of the 20 busiest railway stations in Wales, two are situated in North Wales; Bangor and Rhyl.

Rail Station	2017-18 Entries and Exits	2018-19 Entries and Exits	Percentage Change	
Cardiff Central	12,951,746	14,204,684		9.7
Cardiff Queen Street	2,912,364	3,431,518		17.8
Newport (Gwent)	2,696,620	2,846,440		5.6
Swansea	2,158,886	2,204,216		2.1
Bridgend	1,526,622	1,636,296		7.2
Cardiff Bay	1,302,676	1,720,744		32.1
Cathays	946,274	1,159,088		22.5
Caerphilly	771,930	811,826		5.2
Pontypridd	864,294	934,160		8.1
Barry Island	753,404	867,598		15.2
Trefforest	752,308	790,574		5.1
Neath	816,748	882,106		8.0
Bangor (Gwynedd)	662,060	667,382		0.8
Penarth	626,950	739,030		17.9
Aberdare	571,746	581,388		1.7
Radyr	538,692	735,734		36.6
Barry	533,732	579,554		8.6
Rhyl	520,198	520,124		0.0
Port Talbot Parkway	516,610	547,228		5.9
Merthyr Tydfil	512,754	515,868		0.6
Other Welsh Stations	19,585,590	21,108,366		7.8
All Welsh Stations	52,522,204	57,483,924		9.4
Source: Welsh Government				

Airports and Sea Ports

North Wales' transport infrastructure includes a port and ferry port and one of the two airports in Wales. Holyhead, is the main port for freight and sea passenger transport between the UK and the Irish Republic.



What did the PSBs say about transport in their areas?

Anglesey and Gwynedd – Data shows that 82% of households on Anglesey own at least one car or van, which is slightly more than the percentage in Gwynedd, which is 79%. Improving public transport is an important aspect for both Anglesey and Gwynedd areas.

Flintshire – Will review its own transport policies in order to encourage employees to use public transport for commuting purposes and enable more agile working to help reduce traffic congestion.

Conwy and Denbighshire – 40.9% of private pensioner households do not have a car.

Wrexham - Despite increasing traffic volumes, overall figures suggest road traffic accidents and casualties are both reducing. However, the rise in accidents caused by driver distraction due to mobile phone usage is a concern. Wrexham will look at better transport links around the county borough to help communities thrive again.



Why is this of interest to the Fire and Rescue Authority?



It is vital that our Control staff are kept up to date with road closures and diversions so that they can direct emergency response vehicles through the quickest route available at the time. It is important to maintain staff's skills in order to ensure the safe extrication of people trapped inside vehicles and to keep up to date with modern cutting equipment and methods.

It is not just road vehicles that are involved in emergency incidents; operational personnel will also attend emergency incidents connected to the railway. This could be at the station, level crossings, or rescuing people from a derailed train carriage. These situations could be at any point along the railway track including in tunnels.

The Environment of North Wales

Environment

The Great Orme, North Anglesey Coast, Holyhead Mountain, Aberffraw Bay and Llŷn have all been designated as Heritage Coasts in order to protect them from insensitive developments. There are three world heritage sites of outstanding universal value in Wales, two of these are located in North Wales. Beaumaris, Conwy, Caernarfon and Harlech castles, along with the fortifications surrounding Conwy and Caernarfon have been collectively declared a World Heritage Site.

Castles and Town Walls of King Edward	Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal
	
<p>SOURCE: Welsh Government</p>	

The North Wales coastline is a natural flood risk and in particular the village of Fairbourne in Gwynedd. The Fairbourne Moving Forward Project Board, led by Gwynedd Council has set an intent to defend the village of Fairbourne in Gwynedd for a period of 40 years (from 2014). Many people are concerned about the risk of flooding in their own areas, and as an emergency service it is our duty to respond to flooding or water rescue incidents that pose a risk to life.



What did the PSBs say about the environment in their areas?

Conwy and Denbighshire – There are an estimated 12,500 properties at severe risk from flooding and 21,000 at low or medium risk. Woodlands cover around 13.5% of the two counties, which is similar to the Wales average. It is estimated that about 15 million people visit Conwy and Denbighshire annually.

Flintshire – Some 8,400 properties are at risk of flooding. Newt sites at Dee Estuary, Halkyn Mountain and Deeside and Buckley are intentionally designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). In addition, there are 23 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) which are considered nationally important ecological sites. Despite these designations, many species are in decline primarily due to agricultural intensification, urbanisation, invasive species and climate change.

Anglesey and Gwynedd – Carbon emissions are measured in kilotons (kt) of carbon dioxide CO₂. Emissions per head of population in Anglesey are 35.6.7kt CO₂ and 7.0kt CO₂ for Gwynedd. The Wales average is 6.6 CO₂.

Wrexham - There are 1,610 properties at risk of flooding. A direct warning service is provided to 537 properties in three areas within the extreme flood outline. Around 80,000 tonnes of municipal waste is generated in Wrexham each year. Wrexham currently ranks tenth highest for recycling rates amongst the 22 Welsh authorities.











Why is this of interest to the Fire and Rescue Authority?

Incidents of flooding can result in large call volumes into the control room. During storm 'Ciara', British Telecom activated its 'Flood Filtering Process' where BT operators question 999 callers before connecting to the control room in an effort to filter out non-emergency calls. Control staff have also completed training to handle calls that are received where the caller utilises the 'What3Words' app. This new technology can pinpoint a person's exact location, which can be invaluable when the person is unable to identify their location.

ABOUT NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Below is a snapshot of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority resources and activity levels during 2019/20; these are explained in more detail on pages 47 to 54.

Fire Stations	Fire Engines	999 Calls Handled	Fire Service Staff
			
44	54	12,304	876

Emergency Incidents Attended	Fires	False Alarms	Special Service
			
4,871	1,950	2,274	648

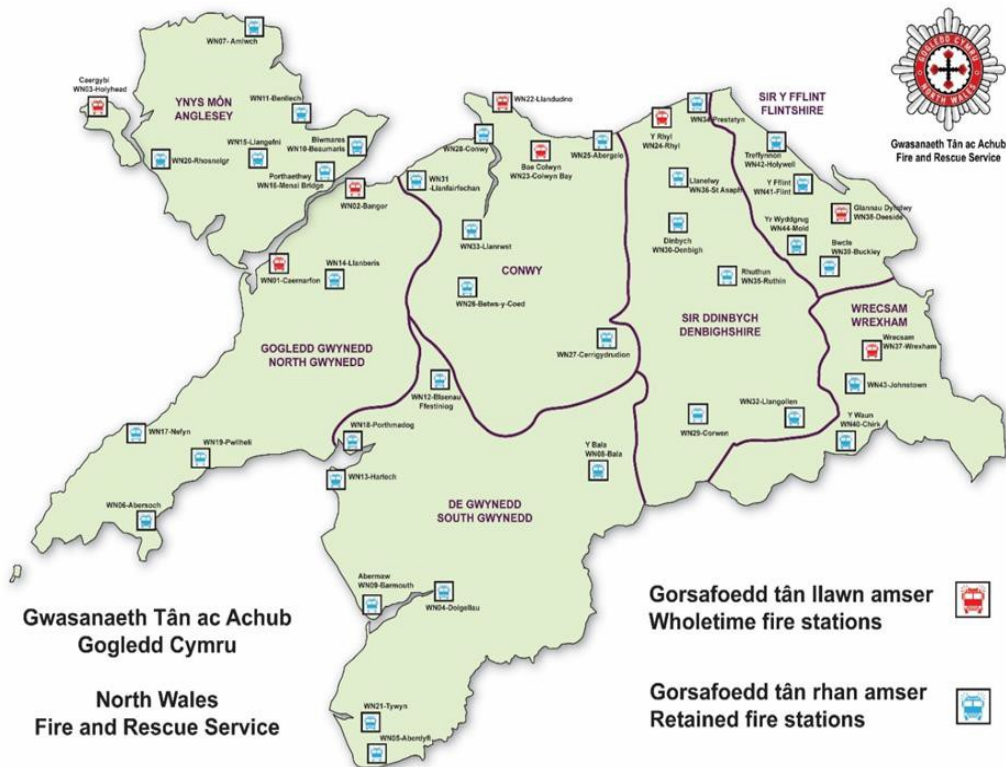
Fire Stations

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service operates from 44 fire stations across the service area.

Wholetime Fire Stations - There are three fire stations that remain open around the clock.

Five fire stations are crewed between midday and 10:00pm, and operate as retained stations outside those hours.

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

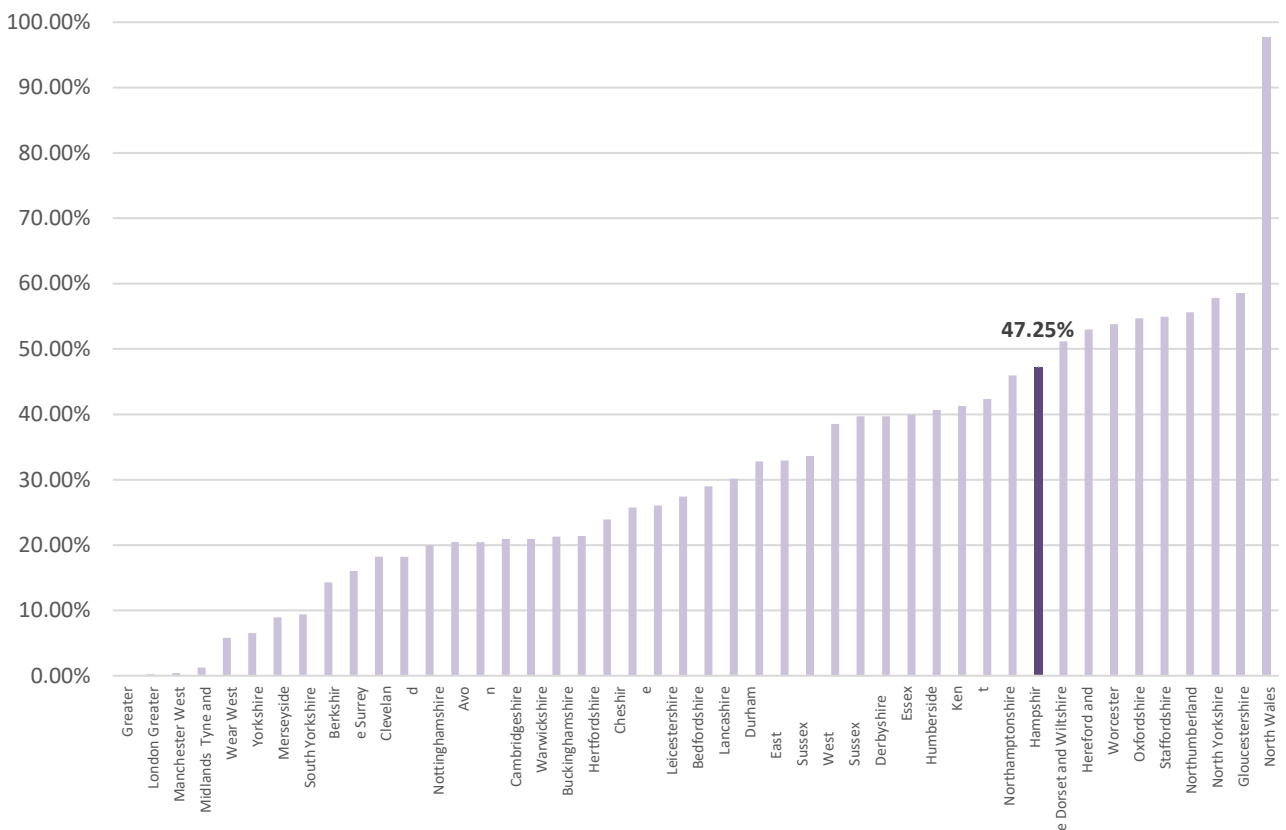


Staffing

As at 31 March 2020	Full time equivalent strength	Headcount of individual staff
Wholetime Operational (WDS)	260.00	260
Retained Operational (RDS/on-call)	364.00	438
Support and Prevention	28.75	31
Control	137.95	147
Totals	790.70	876

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

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



THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE AUTHORITY

Fire Prevention



Under legislation, fire and rescue authorities must arrange for fire safety to be promoted in their area. This would include informing people about fire prevention and advising them how best to react if a fire does break out.

Fire Safety Enforcement



Fire and rescue authorities have a duty to enforce fire safety in non-domestic premises, for example, hotels, schools, shops and offices. This duty includes exercising powers to issue alteration, enforcement and even prohibition notices if they find that fire safety arrangements in premises are unsatisfactory.

Emergency Response



Fire and rescue authorities must make arrangements for receiving 999 calls and for sending trained and equipped personnel to extinguish fires and protect life and property at those fires. They must also make arrangements for rescuing people from road traffic collisions and for protecting them from serious harm.

Planning for and Responding to Other Emergencies



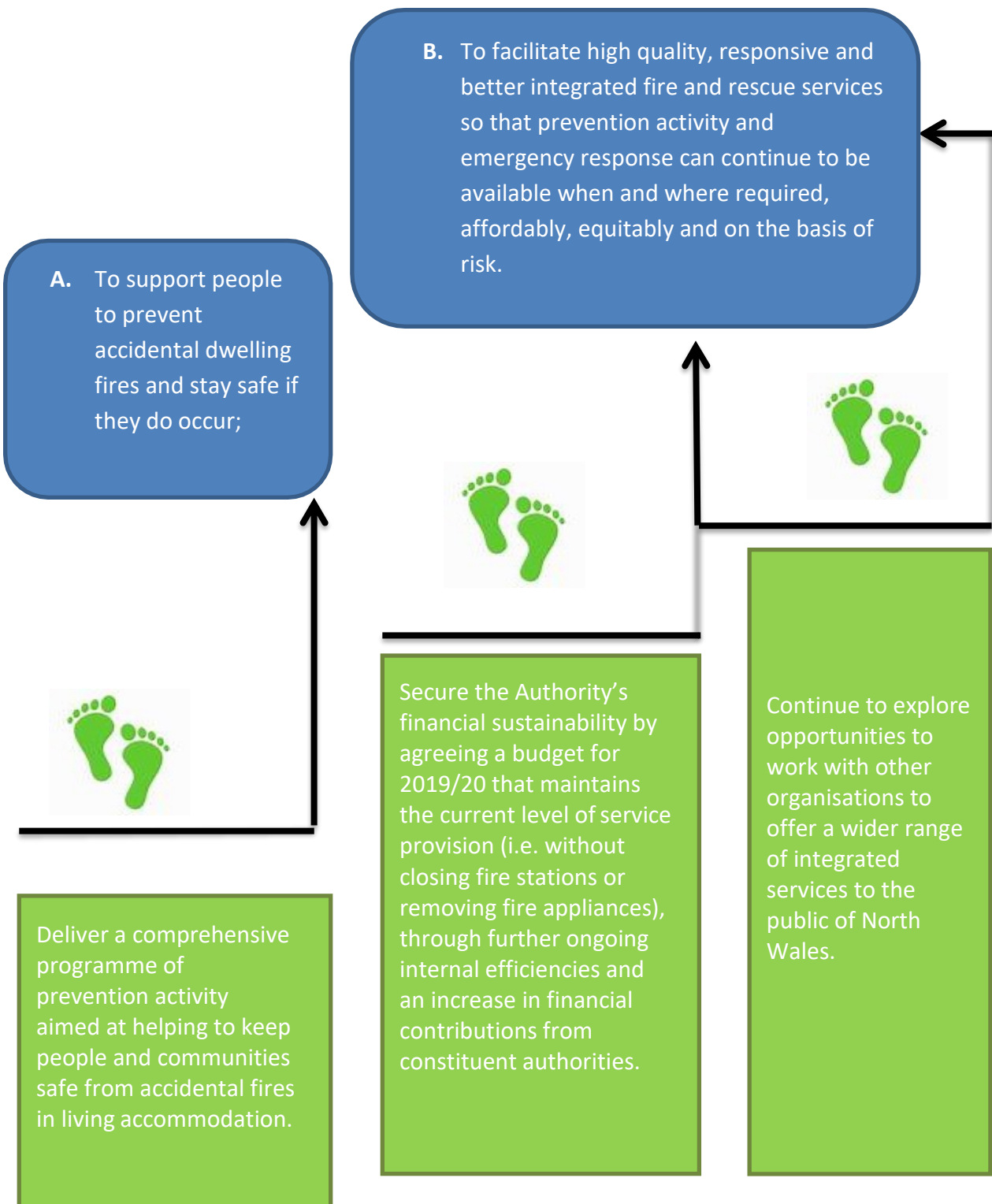
Fire and rescue authorities must make arrangements for mass decontamination of people after chemical, biological or radio-active incidents, and for rescuing people from trains, aircraft and collapsed buildings. They must also be prepared to assist with large-scale emergencies elsewhere in the UK.

As 'Category 1' responders under the Civil Contingencies Act, fire and rescue authorities also have duties relating to large scale events that threaten serious damage to the welfare of people, wildlife, the environment and primary supply chains.

PROGRESS AGAINST IMPROVEMENT AND WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES

This section presents the progress the Authority has made towards meeting its combined improvement and well-being objectives for 2019/20. The Authority is required to publish this assessment of its own performance for 2019/20 and the statutory performance indicators for the same year by 31 October 2020.

In order to meet the Authority's two long-term improvement and well-being objectives, three enabling steps were developed along with a number of specific in year actions to achieve the steps.



Improvement and Well-being Objective A: to support people to prevent accidental dwelling fires and stay safe if they do occur



Step: to deliver a comprehensive programme of prevention activity aimed at helping to keep people and communities safe from accidental fires in living accommodation.



In Year Action: deliver 20,000 safe and well checks, with at least 25% of them being delivered to households referred to the Service by another agency.

19,004 safe and well checks were delivered in 2019/20, of which 5,786 (30.4%) were to households referred by partner agencies. These referrals often come as part of a wider package of support for the most vulnerable members of the community. In addition to making referrals, trained staff from partner agencies completed 127 safe and well checks themselves on behalf of the Authority.

Of the 19,004 completed safe and well checks, 7,676 were from referrals categorised as low risk, 5,595 were categorised as medium risk and 5,733 were categorised as high risk, and were prioritised accordingly.



In Year Action: to improve the effectiveness of safe and well checks by investigating their scope and agreeing safe and well principles across Wales to support a consistent approach to delivery.

'Safe and Well Checks' incorporate traditional fire safety messages (including fitting of fire alarms) but also include advice on health and wellbeing issues around smoking cessation, prevention of slips, trips and falls as well as hoarding assessments and referrals to supporting agencies if required. They are conducted by specialist fire and rescue staff who are trained in supporting people who may have suffered from adverse childhood experiences, mental health issues or have signs of other vulnerabilities. In addition to this, staff are also able to provide general health and fitness advice.

Safe and well checks are offered to residents free of charge in both Welsh and English and are person centred. They have been designed with a holistic approach to reducing the risk of harm from fire, encompassing wider issues that affect the safety of people in their homes. Specialist staff known as 'Home Safety Support Workers' receive regular training to ensure consistency in the delivery of safe and well checks. Regular refresher events are held to capture learning from the experiences of the team. Examples of good practice are shared, including occasions where Home Safety Support Workers attended exceptional events in the course of their duties.

Working in partnership to keep people safe in their homes

During 2019/20, staff based at the Wrexham and Flintshire Community Safety Office welcomed two second year occupational health students from Glyndwr University. The students undertook an eight week work placement as part of the Authority's commitment to helping the wider public health agenda and to protect communities as a whole. This partnership was launched in 2017 and has helped those taking part in the placements, as well as their fellow students learn more about safe and well checks, and be able to refer their patients when needed.

The aim is that those undertaking the placement will take with them all they have learned and apply this in their day-to-day work once in employment, sharing fire safety advice while visiting potentially vulnerable individuals across the region. This opportunity enabled staff to gain a new perspective and learn from those studying another discipline. Cross-pollinating work undertaken in different sectors is key to safeguarding communities. This is another example of how information sharing and working together can help those who may need assistance most.


Launch of new community volunteer champions pilot

During August 2019, a new pilot was launched in Denbighshire to help target loneliness and to work with vulnerable members of the community who make frequent calls to the emergency services.

Loneliness is a significant issue in Wales, with around 17% of the population or 440,000 people believed to be lonely. Loneliness and social isolation can result in a number of physical and psychological problems including premature death, sleep problems, high blood pressure, poor quality of life, increased risk of heart attack and stroke, depression and suicide.

The community volunteer champion scheme is part of the emergency services tri-partnership collaboration and involves individuals from established volunteer groups assisting each emergency service with communicating potentially vital messages, helping to safeguard residents of North Wales.

The aim of the scheme is to tackle the high incidence of emergency calls, which do not require an emergency response. By working with frequent callers to offer reassurance and to ensure their safety by undertaking a safe and well check, a home security check and an assessment of the risk of the person falling in the home, it is hoped that the number of calls being received can be reduced.

 **In Year Action: consider aligning the criteria for risk rating safe and well checks across Wales**

The classification of risk has remained high on the agenda for all three fire and rescue services in Wales.

Contribution towards the development of the community risk programme has continued. This is a national project designed to develop tools to create a national definition of risk and risk assessment methodologies to allow a consistent approach to risk management planning.

Across Wales, the criteria for the rating of risk before completing a safe and well check is broadly aligned with each fire and rescue service deploying its available resources to complete referrals in priority order.

The community safety team continue to learn from previous experiences, identifying the contributory factors that may place people at greater risk of harm from fire. By understanding these factors resources can be focused on activities that can make the greatest impact, reducing risk and vulnerability within communities.

Through the Home Safety Group work continues on the identification of ways to further align practice and standardisation across Wales.



In Year Action: agree on an all Wales basis what community safety messages will be used by the three Welsh FRAs to try and help reduce the number of primary fires

Prevention work focuses on reducing risks in order to save lives and prevent injuries through the delivery of safety education, along with positive interventions that help make North Wales a safer place to live, work and visit.

The Authority has integrated its prevention activities as much as possible with the work of other organisations and agencies that are similarly focussed on community safety. Rather than conduct its own isolated risk analysis, the Authority recognises the benefits of identifying and mitigating risks collaboratively. By working with partners, the Authority is able to identify those who are more at risk from fire and other hazards and deliver targeted safe and well checks in order to aid behavioural change and reduce the number of accidental fires.

Key personnel from North Wales Fire and Rescue Service along with staff from other partnership organisations attend regular meetings of the local campaigns steering group to agree and align safety messages and campaign activity with local and national campaign strategies. This is to ensure that the Authority is delivering its prevention activity as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Using social media to distribute safety messages

Through the use of social media to report on attended incidents, the Authority received a positive response from online communities to the safety messages that were shared during the year. Following an incident in Holyhead, whereby a fire was caused by a laptop charging on the sofa, photographs of the damage caused were shared widely. The images were used to raise awareness of the dangers involved and provided an opportunity to signpost people to some basic fire safety advice on how small changes could help prevent a similar fire from happening.

These posts and photos were shared hundreds of times on Facebook, retweeted on Twitter and liked on Instagram, reaching tens of thousands of social media users. They were also reported by local media.

Raising awareness of the effectiveness of sprinklers

During May 2019, the National Fire Chiefs Council held its annual national sprinkler week focusing on ensuring that the public understand what sprinklers are, their purpose, how they work and their benefits.


The campaign also raised awareness on how sprinkler legislation differs across the UK. In Wales, regulations introduced in April 2014 mean that automatic fire sprinklers must be fitted in new high risk properties such as care homes, converted student halls of residence, boarding houses and certain hostels. In January 2016, it also became compulsory for all new and converted houses and flats to be fitted with sprinklers.

The Authority has supported this campaign across social media channels to help convey a simple message - controlling a fire as it ignites is better than repairing the damage after it has spread.

Launch of new Arson Reduction Strategy

During 2019/20, the Strategic Arson Reduction Board published the fourth generation of the all-Wales [arson reduction strategy](#). The strategy coordinates a delivery plan to further reduce the risk of arson across a number of focus areas.

The Board, which includes partners from the three fire and rescue services and police forces in Wales, the Met Office, National Probation Service, Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales, Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association. The number of deliberately set grass fires in Wales had dramatically reduced since 2015 - with the Board crediting the collaborative approach of its multi-agency task force, Operation Dawns Glow, with the success.

 **In Year Action: through analysis of past occurrence patterns, to identify and seek to reduce the anticipated incidence of specific categories of fires.**

All serious fires are routinely investigated and reviewed in order to check the suitability of response arrangements, and learn lessons for improving community safety in future. The Authority is also represented on national groups that consider emerging trends and risks to the public. In addition, the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Group is an all-Wales Fire and Rescue Service forum, which looks at community safety issues and agrees the direction of all-Wales strategies and safety messages.

National Resilience - Wildfires

In the UK, there is a national resilience programme, which aims to enhance fire and rescue resilience when dealing with a range of catastrophic incidents, both natural and deliberate. In Wales, funding is provided by Welsh Government for the purposes of national resilience on an annual basis.

The programme has provided High Volume Pumps (HVPs), which are strategically positioned around the country and can be used to deal with a number of issues from flooding to wildfires. Where incidents occur on an unprecedented scale, or where several incidents occur simultaneously and affect the volume or pressure of the local water supply, HVPs provide additional resilience and capability to supply water to the fire ground.

Following the spike in wildfires during 2018, the programme identified that in certain operational scenarios the hose from the HVP could be utilised to assist partner agencies with their pumping operations, in particular Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru who currently have a large number of trailer-mounted pumps in their national fleet. These pumps carry a minimal amount of delivery hose, which restricts their ability to pump over long distances. Research was undertaken to explore the feasibility of making it possible to link the equipment to increase the reach of the delivery hose. Funding was then provided by Natural Resources Wales to purchase a coupling that makes the hoses compatible. The picture (right) shows how the coupling can also be utilised to connect into agricultural machinery and utilised to distribute water to large remote areas where fire appliances may not be able to access. This is valuable during large protracted incidents such as wildfires.



Justice for juniors highlights consequences of deliberate fires

In response to concerns about deliberate fire setting, 2019/20 saw the launch of the Junior Justice programme, which has seen the Arson Reduction Team working alongside Theatre Clwyd's Creative Engagement Team to create a two hour interactive workshop aimed at highlighting the consequences of deliberate fires to school pupils.

The Junior Justice programme, sponsored by the Scottish Power Foundation, travelled to primary schools across North Wales over a two week period and featured a short play highlighting a deliberate fire scenario and the process that follows when someone is found responsible. It is hoped that this dynamic approach to education will resonate with young people across the region and help stamp out starting fires deliberately across North Wales.



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

Understanding the factors and risks that contribute to a person's vulnerability allows for tailored communication and advice to the public, focussing resources on specific campaigns to assist in reducing the risk of harm.

It is often necessary to make repeat visits to individuals at higher risk of fire and community safety staff use their experience, knowledge and the range of safety interventions available to try and make the home as safe as possible. Sadly, some individuals who find it difficult to change their behaviours, still experience fires in the home.

Case Study

In December 2019, a crew was mobilised to smoke alarms sounding in a flat in the Conwy area. On arrival, the crews found that there had been a small fire on the sofa in the living room, which had been caused by carelessly discarded cigarettes and combustible materials. The crews noticed a fire-resistant throw on the sofa and records showed that the occupant had been visited twice before and received a safe and well check. The occupier had been deemed high risk due to being elderly, living alone, an oxygen user and heavy smoker and also appeared to have memory issues. This had previously resulted in a cooking incident and there were new and old burn marks on the sofa, on the floor and on and around the bed. A fire-resistant bed pack, a fire-resistant throw and two ashtrays were therefore provided during the visit. Due to the continuing nature of the risk in the property, two misting systems have been installed at the property, one in the bedroom and one for the living room.

Denbighshire Youth Service

Staff from the arson reduction team have been working in partnership with Denbighshire Youth Service to develop a new initiative, designed to engage and educate young people, increasing their awareness of the consequences of deliberate fire setting.

On completion of the course, students are awarded a level one accreditation. By working in partnership with Denbighshire Youth Service, the arson reduction team has been able to enhance the qualification further and continue to engage young people across North Wales, whilst helping them gain a recognised qualification.

National Safeguarding Week

During November 2019, the Authority actively supported National Safeguarding Week, aimed at raising public awareness of safeguarding and how everyone can play a role in supporting vulnerable people.



Safeguarding is about protecting vulnerable children and adults from abuse and neglect and ensuring their wellbeing. Making sure people are supported to live full and happy lives is also an important part of safeguarding.

The Authority is committed to highlighting the importance of safeguarding issues and playing its part to protect those who are vulnerable. Staff have received formal input, which included a presentation and interactive group tasks to develop understanding. Staff also attended a safeguarding conference at Conwy Business Centre, learning from real stories where a multi-agency response has supported those who are most vulnerable living within communities in North Wales.

During the summer months, staff attended various events including Llangollen International Eisteddfod, Royal Welsh Agricultural Show, Eisteddfod Genedlaethol in Llanrwst, Sioe Môn and Denbigh and Flint and Meirionnydd agricultural shows.

The theme for the year's events was electrical safety, with visitors to the Authority's stand being asked to complete an electrical safety quiz focusing on chargers, overloading extension leads and testing smoke alarms.



In Year Action: continue to work with partner organisations and build new partnerships where appropriate.

The Authority promotes the development of partnerships and joined-up working with relevant agencies that have an interest in the creation, promotion and maintenance of safer communities. The Service employs three Partnership Managers to ensure relationships remain current and effective.

Working with Natural Resources Wales

New collaborative working arrangements with Natural Resources Wales, through the national resilience programme outlined above, has enhanced resilience within Wales to deal with wildfires and flooding and will provide each organisation with a number of different business benefits.

In the near future it is hoped that further information will be collated to identify the locations of trailer mounted pumping units owned by Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru in order to add these onto the national resilience reporting tool so that they will be available to be mobilised through current procedures.

Staff from Natural Resources Wales also attended a demonstration hosted at Holyhead Fire Station to learn more about the capabilities of the specialist Environmental Protection Units (EPUs) which provide specialist equipment to contain chemical spillages that could harm the environment and wildlife. As part of their development, newly appointed Natural Resources Wales officers are required to attend a familiarisation day, which includes a practical demonstration of the equipment carried on the units and the theoretical input required to enable them to effectively and efficiently deal with incidents.

Assisting Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

During the spate of flooding experienced by communities in South Yorkshire during 2019, crews from North Wales Fire and Rescue Service were deployed under national resilience arrangements to support the flooding response. Staff from Deeside and Bangor Fire Stations worked alongside colleagues from South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Environment Agency and their partners. They were tasked to support a multi-agency response to ensure the continued operation of a key pumping station located in one of the areas that was significantly affected by floodwater, and were also deployed to Fishlake to provide emergency supplies to residents, and to Doncaster Fire Station to provide a water rescue capability. Partnership working in times of crisis is key, and the response to these incidents serve as a showcase for how agencies across the UK can, and have, come together in times of need to protect and serve communities.

All-Wales' Water Rescue Boat Operators Course

During 2019, the training and development department worked in collaboration with both Mid and West Wales and South Wales Fire and Rescue Services and the RNLI in developing an instructor course for water rescue boat operators. The course was created to upskill current staff to become instructors so that they can deliver training to new boat operators within their respective service. The first course was attended by staff from all three fire and rescue services and assessed by RNLI on the final two days of the course. This is an example of how collaboration work between the three fire and rescue services in Wales has had a positive outcome.

Multi agency exercise to promote partnership working

In 2019, staff came together with representatives from North Wales Police, the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, the Casualty Bureau and Stena Line in earlier this week for a multi-agency exercise to help prepare for the event of an incident at Holyhead Port. Crews from Holyhead, Rhosneigr and Llangefni joined with officers from across the Service and representatives from partner agencies for the exercise, which involved a scenario with reports of an explosion with potential for a terror attack, triggering a heightened security alert incorporating a National Interoperability Liaison Officer (NILO) response.

Be a Santa to a senior

Following on from the success of previous years, the Authority was again involved with the 'Be a Santa to a Senior' initiative in the Conwy area in 2019. The idea behind the initiative is that gifts are donated by members of the public and delivered by the Service at Christmas to an older person living on their own. Partners involved include Cartrefi Conwy, British Red Cross, Contact The Elderly and Age Connect - and for the fifth year, staff helped to deliver the gifts and also carried out safe and well checks whilst doing so. The scheme also encouraged children to make handmade cards which were delivered with the gifts.





In Year Action: maintain the currency of existing information-sharing agreements, and seek to establish new agreements where appropriate.

Information is key to the work of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Being able to share information with other agencies is often extremely helpful, but in order to protect people's privacy it is essential that great care is taken in doing so. It is important that the public have confidence that any exchange of personal data is lawful, safe and effective.

In December 2018, the Chief Fire Officer signed the revised Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) on behalf of the Authority. This Accord is a common set of principles and standards that support the lawful exchange of personal data between organisations that provide services in Wales. Signing the Accord demonstrates a commitment to apply those principles and standards. The Accord has been updated to version 5 (published September 2018) to take account of user feedback and changes to legislation; namely the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The Service is represented on the North Wales Information Governance Group (NWIGG) by its Data Protection Officer. This group is responsible for quality-assuring information-sharing agreements raised by other organisations within North Wales.

An example of a data sharing agreement is the one that exists between the Service and the National Energy Saving Trust (NEST) that offers cavity and loft insulation in buildings. Under this agreement NEST shares information with the Service about consumers living in fuel poverty. The Trust's staff are trained to conduct safe and well checks at properties whilst they conduct surveys for the other part of their business.

To ensure that the existing data sharing agreement was GDPR compliant, discussions took place between the Service (the data controller) and NEST (the data processor) to review the agreement. These meetings ensured that GDPR requirements were being met and that ways of streamlining the service were explored. This process highlighted that many of the referrals that the Service was receiving did not target those most at risk of fire in their homes. Through the updated data sharing agreement, a new referral pathway was implemented which generated referrals based on two contributory factors being present. The referrals generated through the refreshed data sharing agreement with NEST now targets those who are more at risk of fire in the home.

Signing of Armed Forces Covenant

During 2019/20, the Chief Fire Officer officially signed the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the Authority at Rhyl Community Fire Station. The Covenant is a commitment that members of the armed forces community should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of services and that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most.

Representatives from the Ministry of Defence joined the Authority's Service Armed Forces Champions for the signing, which represented a commitment to recognising the value of serving personnel, both regular members and reservists, veterans and military families and their contribution to the nation.

Improvement and Well-being Objective B: To facilitate high quality, responsive and better integrated fire and rescue services so that prevention activity and emergency response continue to be available when and where required, affordably, equitably and on the basis of risk.



Steps:

- 1. deliver fire and rescue services in North Wales within the agreed budget, whilst continuing to pursue ongoing internal efficiencies;**
- 2. continue to explore opportunities to work with other organisations to offer a wider range of integrated services to the public of North Wales.**



In Year Action: deliver services within the agreed revised budget of £35,237,112 which is less than the initial assessment, reflecting measures taken as part of the budget setting process to minimise the impact of an increase in contributions from constituent authorities.

The Authority remains committed to playing its part in building stronger and safer communities, but also acknowledges that for the future the financial situation means that being able to sustain service delivery requires flexibility and innovation.

The initial planning assessment for 2019/20 identified a net budget requirement of £35.4m compared to £34.1m for 2018/19. This represents a year on year increase of £1.3m in net expenditure. During 2018/19, the Authority utilised £0.65m from reserves to fund running costs which is not sustainable. Initial planning therefore indicated that the required increase in contributions from constituent authorities for 2019/20 would be £1.9m.

The public consultation on the budget proposals for 2019/20 ran during the autumn of 2018. Of the respondents, 61% indicated that an increase in council contributions of £1.9m was preferable to a reduction in services. A further 24% indicated that services should be maintained although the Authority should try to reduce the increase. The draft revenue budget was developed using current service provision, mindful of the need to reduce the increase to constituent authorities to less than £1.9m. At its meeting on 17 December 2018, the Authority approved a revenue budget of £35.2m.

During the year, significant work has been undertaken to identify and review all expenditure, in particular costs in relation to overtime and additional hours. This has enabled the Service to report an underspend of £0.01m for 2019/20 as well as increasing the earmarked reserves, for future known pressures.

The detailed annual statement of accounts summarising the financial performance of the Authority for year ending 31 March 2020 is available [here](#).

In summary, the Authority's financial position in relation to its revenue budget for 2019/20 was:

	2019/20 Budget £000	2019/20 Outturn £000	2019/20 Variance £000
Employee Costs	27,060	26,507	-553
Premises	2,190	2,621	431
Variance Transport	994	1,092	98
Supplies and Services	4,139	4,485	346
Third Party Payments	427	412	-15
Income	-2,628	-2,641	-13
Capital Financing and Interest Charges	3,055	2,749	-306
Total Revenue	35,237	35,225	-12



In Year Action: continue to focus on minimising budgetary increases and identifying efficiencies within the Service.

During 2019/20, the financial reporting structure was reviewed to ensure budget holders became accountable for their department's spending. As part of this process a zero based budgeting exercise was completed to realign budgets to departments and a new reporting format implemented. This has ensured that management in the Service is fully aware of the financial position.

In addition, work has been completed to review future cost pressures, due to legislative, environmental and Service changes and action taken to set aside funding to mitigate any significant future budget increases.

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

The Authority's position over the medium term is sound, but careful attention will need to be paid to cost pressures relating to pension and payroll costs and also anticipated changes to the funding mechanism that is used by the Welsh Government for fire and rescue authorities.



In Year Action: remain open to opportunities for multi skilled staff to work beyond organisational boundaries to offer a wider range of services, particularly those that will improve health, safety and wellbeing outcomes as part of a person-centred 'Safe and Well' approach.

The Authority continues to build on well-established practice of working with partners to deliver a better and a more diverse range of services. This ability to build partnerships is key to the future development of a broader range of services with a particular focus on improving health, safety and wellbeing outcomes.

School Holiday Enrichment Programme

This school-based programme provides healthy meals, food and nutrition, education, physical activity and enrichment sessions to children in areas of social deprivation during the summer holidays. It is recognised that some families struggle to afford or access food that provides a healthy diet during the holidays and some children may experience social isolation and a lack of intellectual stimulation normally provided by school or family enrichment activities which may contribute to widening the attainment gap. Employees attend schools in the North Wales area and undertake activities with the children during the holidays to provide them with an insight into the services provided, supporting the emotional wellbeing of school children in the local area.

Let's Get Moving North Wales

Let's Get Moving is a collaborative working group of organisations who are working together to support, influence and advocate the development of environments (natural and built) that enable individuals and communities to move more and be less sedentary in all aspects of their daily lives. The Authority is a lead member of the group and is committed to working to improve the health and wellbeing of North Wales.

Being active provides a range of positive factors for both physical and mental health and wellbeing. The campaign offers support in the following areas:

- promoting the work of the collaborative and the benefits of reducing sedentary behaviour and increasing physical activity
- celebrating good practice and to share learning, and resources
- working with partners to draw in funds and collaborate on new ideas
- reviewing and implementing actions within their own organisation to increase activity and reduce sedentary behaviour within the workforce
- committing to improving the quality of work, through evaluation and research as appropriate.

Promoting Dementia Action Week

Part of the work of the Authority is to work with people in the community who have dementia. The Authority is recognised as a 'Working towards being a Dementia Friendly Organisation' and as such has trained champions in place who encourage others to make a positive difference to people living with dementia in the community.

Partnership working with the dementia support team on Anglesey means that new clients are automatically referred for a safe and well check. As soon as a referral is made to the dementia support team, a member of the team contacts a home safety support worker to plan a joint visit. Arrangements are then made for the home safety support worker to attend alongside a dementia

support worker, thereby reducing the number of repeat visits and ensuring that the visit is completed with someone who often is familiar with, and understands, the complex needs of the client. Dementia support workers are also now aware of the interventions that can be provided. They ensure that when arranging a joint visit for anyone that has a specialist need that specialist equipment such as hard of hearing smoke alarms is requested in advance.

During dementia action week in May 2019, members of staff, alongside other members of the all-Wales blue light dementia group, took the opportunity to promote the 'Herbert Protocol' to residents throughout Wales.

The 'Herbert Protocol' is a national scheme introduced by the police in partnership with other agencies which encourages carers and families to compile information which can be used in the event someone with dementia goes missing. The Herbert Protocol scheme is named after George Herbert, a war veteran of the Normandy landings, who lived with dementia. George Herbert died whilst 'missing', trying to find his childhood home.

Carers, family members and friends can complete forms in advance, recording important details about a person, such as photographs, medical information, mobile numbers, previous addresses, places previously found. In the event of someone going missing, the form can be easily handed to the police to reduce the time taken in gathering this information.

Time to Change Wales

Time to Change Wales is the first national campaign to end the stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems. The Authority has signed the Time to Change employer pledge, which demonstrates its commitment to change how people think and act about mental health in the workplace.

Fire cadets educational youth organisation

The aim of the National Fire Cadets is to create safer, stronger communities through developing an individual's knowledge and awareness of their community and to enhance citizenship skills.

This educational youth organisation is run by fire and rescue services across the United Kingdom in partnership with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). It provides an opportunity for young people aged between 11 and 18 years to achieve vocational certificates of achievement as well as developing personally in so many ways. There are eight Fire Cadet units across the Authority area, undertaking work in the community and charity fundraising as well as meeting weekly on station.



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

Launch of new community volunteer champions pilot

During August 2019, a new pilot project was launched in Denbighshire to help target loneliness and to work with vulnerable members of the community who make frequent calls to the emergency services. Loneliness is a significant issue in Wales, with around 17% of the population or 440,000 people believed to be lonely. Loneliness and social isolation can result in a number of physical and psychological problems including premature death, sleep problems, high blood pressure, poor quality of life, increased risk of heart attack and stroke, depression and suicide.

The community volunteer champion scheme is part of the emergency services tri-partnership collaboration and involves individuals from established volunteer groups assisting each emergency service with communicating potentially vital messages, helping to safeguard residents of North Wales. The aim of the scheme is to tackle the high incidence of emergency calls, which do not require an emergency response. By working with frequent callers to offer reassurance and to ensure their safety by undertaking a safe and well check, a home security check and an assessment of the risk of the person falling in the home, it is hoped that the number of calls being received can be reduced.

This initiative has not only made a really positive difference to communities but is evidence of the strength of the partnership that exists between the three emergency services in North Wales.



In Year Action: consult publicly on proposed steps to be taken towards achieving the well-being objectives during 2020/21 and agree the budget for that year based on known anticipated costs.

Following a series of Planning Working Group meetings in 2019, the Authority decided to consult publicly on the development and adoption of an environmental strategy from April 2020. As part of deliberations, consideration was given to the impact of climate change and extreme weather conditions, and the benefit of developing an environmental strategy comprising, for example:

- resource planning for dealing with extremes of weather-related activity such as widespread flooding and increased grassland fires;
- public education and collaboration to lessen the impact of weather-related incidents on local communities;
- monitoring and managing the Service's own energy and fuel usage and waste management;
- revised procurement policies and accounting arrangements;
- making positive contributions to biodiversity.

The Authority adopted an environmental and energy policy statement several years ago and deemed it appropriate to reinvigorate this work through the development of a new environmental strategy that addresses the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, as well as the work being developed through the Public Services Boards in North Wales. The public consultation ran between September 2019 and January 2020 and comprised a range of engagement materials including:

- an explanatory information document; and
- an online questionnaire, with the option of submitting written responses if preferred.

Communication methods included:

- a press release with a link to the consultation document and information about how to take part;
- letters to stakeholders with a copy of the consultation document and information about how to take part;
- supporting messages on social media directing people to the consultation, maintaining awareness using a short video and highlighting the closing date; and
- articles and reminders in staff publications.

Officers also met with representatives from a number of county councils and town and community councils to explain the consultation and to encourage them to respond in order to suggest proposed content of an environmental strategy for the Authority. The online questionnaire presented three aspects of developing an environmental strategy:

- corporate responsibility including, for example, the impact of the Service's own operations, its use of fuel, heating and lighting, its procurement policies and waste management procedures;
- prevention activity and the challenges of balancing the environmental impact of mileage travelled versus the Service's responsibilities to prevent fires; and
- emergency response and the challenges of dealing with climate change resulting, for example in an increase in flooding incidents during wetter winters and in outdoor fires during hotter, drier summers.

Following the end of the consultation the Authority considered the responses to the consultation and the 2019/20 budget. The budget planning work undertaken identified a net budget requirement of £35.2m.



In Year Action: continue to seek out new opportunities to develop apprenticeship schemes.

The Authority has continued with its commitment to plan for the future by promoting further firefighter apprenticeship opportunities. Modern apprenticeships form a key part of the national employment strategy and can offer support and opportunities to young people of all abilities.

Following previous success with the firefighter apprenticeship scheme, there were two further opportunities for firefighter apprentices during the year. In the first twenty four hours, the vacancies attracted over 200 applications. In addition to the regular three-year apprenticeship scheme, there was also a Future Leaders programme. The firefighter and future leader apprenticeships follow a structured 'Skills for Justice' training programme which provides understanding and a clear pathway for the role of a modern firefighter and manager.

Firefighter apprentices complete a training programme, which results in them becoming a 'competent' firefighter and, just as importantly, achieving exposure to the wide range of functions that contribute to the delivery of a modern fire and rescue service. The Future Leader Apprentice framework incorporates the firefighter apprentice training modules but with additional development to prepare for the role of supervisory manager and above.



A number of other apprenticeship programmes were also offered across a range of functions for example, vehicle technicians, business fire safety, community safety and public relations. National Apprenticeship Week was promoted with a video of one business safety apprentice who talked about how the apprenticeship transformed her self-confidence, see [here](#).

An apprenticeship promotion event was also held at Deeside Sixth Form Centre and included participation from apprentices from partner organisation Cartrefi Conwy, allowing attendees the opportunity to learn more about operations in the Joint Communications Centre (JCC).

National careers platform - BBC Bitesize

Two members of staff were featured on the 'BBC Bitesize' website, a national careers platform used by schools across the UK to provide inspiration to young people researching future careers. The bitesize articles are available [here](#) and [here](#).

Careers event to attract young women into the emergency services

As part of international women's day celebrations, a special event was held at Wrexham's Ambulance and Fire Services Resource Centre to help encourage young women to consider a career in the emergency services.

The event saw year 8 and 9 pupils from schools across Wrexham and Flintshire taking part in activities organised by staff, designed to give them a taste of working in the blue light services. Pupils were split into groups and had the opportunity to take part in sessions on fitness, testing equipment and learning more about what a career in the emergency services would involve. A video of the event is available [here](#).

MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

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

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993 and as part of this legislation, both the Welsh and English languages have equal legal status and neither must be treated any less favourably. The Authority no longer needs to develop and implement Welsh Language Schemes, however, it must instead comply with a set of Welsh Language Standards.

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

The Authority is required to publish its Welsh Language Standards annual report for 2019/20 by 30 September 2020 and to publicise it appropriately.

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

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

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

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

During 2019/20, the Authority continued to comply with the set of Welsh Language Standards issued in the Compliance Notice of 30 September 2016. It also continues to work collaboratively with the other two fire and rescue authorities in Wales with regular meetings held of the Grŵp Iaitn.

The Authority also conducted work in partnership with colleagues at North Wales Police and has attended its Welsh Language Forum meetings in order to share information on best practice.

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

As at 31 March 2020, 717 employees (of 866) were able to demonstrate that they had Welsh language skills (level 1 and above), 340 of whom were classed as fluent speakers (Level 4 and 5).

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

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

A coaching and mentoring course was delivered during the year and 14 participants chose to complete the course in Welsh.

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

All posts require some level of Welsh with the minimum requirement being Level 2 speaking and listening. During this period, 24 new and vacant posts were advertised, 10 of which were classed as Welsh essential (Level 4) and 14 as Welsh desirable (3 at Level 3 and 11 at Level 2).

During this period 47 RDS firefighters (on call) were recruited; all newly employed firefighters are required to attain a minimum requirement of Level 2 Welsh, either on entry or within their probation period. Two firefighter apprenticeship schemes were also advertised, where the minimum requirement by the end of the training period was raised from Level 2 to Level 3.

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

Complaints are monitored and dealt with by the Professional and Service Standards Department. Complaints and letters of appreciation are reported annually to the Fire and Rescue Authority. No complaints were received in 2019/20 in relation to the Welsh language. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has published a complaints procedure on its website and also has an internal policy for staff on how to raise a concern or complaint.

Promoting the Welsh Language:

Promotion of the Welsh language is delivered internally in a variety of different ways including: through the Welsh Champions Scheme; a regular Welsh column in the internal magazine 'Y Fflam'; within weekly staff bulletins; a Welsh Wednesday campaign; and through Workplace Facebook which has sub-groups for Learners and Welsh Champions. There is also a 'Welsh Learner of the Year'/'Commitment to the Welsh Language' award.

A Welsh language champion scheme exists whereby Welsh speaking members of staff volunteer to support colleagues to improve their Welsh language skills. During 2018/19, a new resource pack was created for the champions to utilise with Welsh learners in the workplace. During 2019/20 a further 50 packs were produced to meet the continuing demand for resources. The packs contained A3 place mats, flash cards, games and worksheets designed to assist those learning Welsh. These resources were circulated to all fire stations and area offices. A desk calendar was again produced for staff which includes tips on Welsh grammar and vocabulary. An annual Saint David's Day quiz was held to raise awareness of the commitment towards the language and this was well received with the winner receiving an Amazon voucher worth £30.

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

Guidance is provided to employees on the importance of offering language choice to all, whether face-to-face or over the phone, regardless of location, accent, ethnicity. This message is reiterated during the mandatory Welsh awareness module that has been produced for employees, during the face-to-face sessions for new starters and during the initial firefighter training course. Guidance is also available with regards to issuing correspondence to the public and all email signatures and letter-

headed paper includes a statement welcoming correspondence in Welsh or English. ‘Siarad Cymraeg’ and ‘Dysgu Cymraeg’ logos have also been incorporated into standard e-mail signatures.

The Training department maintains a record of all the Welsh courses attended and assessments undertaken by employees, and records the results on its internal recording system. The Training department also facilitates internal Welsh courses provided by Coleg Cambria and members of staff are encouraged to request courses during their annual appraisal. This year staff have also been encouraged to attend the intermediate, higher and proficiency courses at Nant Gwrtheyrn as part of the Welsh at Work scheme provided by the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

New and revised policies are published internally in both Welsh and English and each policy is required to have an associated integrated impact assessment to ascertain its impact on the Welsh language and to identify and promote ways of creating a positive impact and avoiding negative impact.

As with the previous Welsh Language Scheme, work continues to proactively offer language choice to all service users as this has always been seen as beneficial and a gateway to improved engagement with all members of the community. This year we have proactively sought to promote the Service as a bilingual organisation by promoting positive messages on Twitter using the hashtag #yagym as part of the ‘Yr Awr Gymraeg’ initiative. These messages have been in relation to the Standards, highlighting the rights of Welsh speakers to contact us in Welsh. All promotional materials, posters and leaflets are bilingual with the Welsh language appearing first at all times.

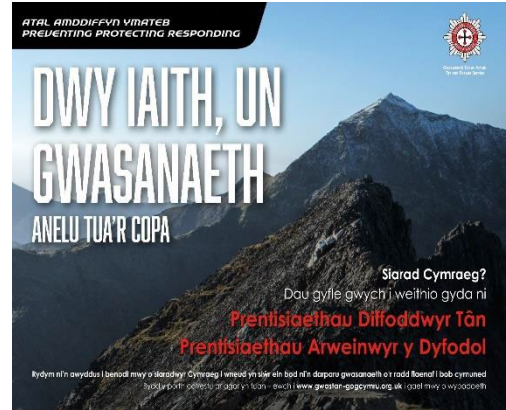
The North Wales Fire and Rescue Service/Authority website is fully bilingual and this includes Readspeak facilities through the medium of Welsh and English. Enquiries through the website are dealt with in the language choice of the enquirer.

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

During 2019/20 the Authority took part in the Welsh Language Commissioner’s initiative, ‘Mae gen i hawl’ by creating a series of short clips that were used on social media sites to promote the rights of service users to make contact in Welsh. It also took part in the Diwrnod Su’mae Shwmae initiative by changing the Service’s profile picture on Facebook and Twitter for the day and by posting a video to promote the use of Welsh and sharing resources internally.



This year the Authority was also keen to reach out to Welsh speakers during its recruitment campaigns to ensure that it had an adequate number of Welsh speakers to operate bilingually, now and in the future, and so a positive action plan was instigated to encourage more Welsh speakers to apply for employment opportunities. During a campaign to recruit firefighter apprentices, Welsh speakers were targeted on social media and through the local ‘papurau bro’, highlighting the Welsh language as a valued and vital skill.



For the first time ever during a campaign to recruit operational staff equal merit was given to a GCSE in English and Welsh in order to ensure equality, and therefore the mandatory requirement to candidates prior to registration was a GCSE grade C or above in either Welsh or English.

The results from the initial sift were encouraging. Out of a total of 492 registrations, 138 disclosed that they were fluent Welsh speakers, with a further 74 disclosing that they were intermediate Welsh speakers, and a further 154 disclosing that they were learners, compared with 122 stating that they were non Welsh speakers and 3 choosing not to disclose this information. In all, 15 people chose to complete their application form in Welsh and 49 requested a Welsh interview. Unfortunately, due to the current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic the process had to be put on hold and so further investigative work into the linguistic makeup of the candidates has not been possible.

The Authority will continue to concentrate its efforts on encouraging more applications from Welsh speakers as well as encouraging people to be confident when noting their linguistic skills.

The Authority also had the exciting opportunity to work alongside Coleg Cambria in the production of a series of videos ‘[Ar Frys](#)’ aimed at encouraging young people to pursue a career in the emergency services. The videos highlighted the importance of Welsh language skills in an emergency.

The Authority will continue to look at new ways of engaging with its communities to highlight the Welsh language services on offer and emphasise that Welsh is a valued skill in its workplace.



PROGRESS AGAINST STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

What the Act requires the Authority to do

The Equality Act (2010) requires the Authority to write an equality plan every four years. The Authority's Strategic Equality Plan 2016/20 identifies six equality objectives that the Authority wants to help bring about to make Wales a fairer place to live. The aim of the Equality Act is to ensure that everyone has the right to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Legislation allows for the objectives to be changed at any time, therefore ongoing engagement is undertaken to ensure objectives remain current. The Authority continuously examines the most effective methods of engagement via existing links with community groups and organisations, and endeavours to establish relationships with new groups and local communities. The Authority is required to publish this assessment of its own performance for 2019/20 by 31 March 2021.

Equality objective 1 – Life and Health

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

Working to achieve this objective, the Authority has:

- updated the equality impact guidance and assessment process to include the Welsh Government's Socio-Economic Duty around strategic decisions;
- continued to develop the well-established relationship with partner agencies to refer high-risk individuals and families, the quality of referrals remains high. In 2019/2020, 30% of all safe and well checks that were carried out were referred to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service by a partner agency. 52.6% of all high priority referrals came from an agency. Agencies are not only key in referring but are also crucial in conveying the Service's key messages when interacting with their clients;
- through the Service's Campaign Steering Group planned targeted campaigns and events throughout the year. This brings the Service into direct contact with the targeted groups through a wide range of planned activities from face to face activities to print and electronic media. The campaigns seek to include not only those who are more at risk from fire, but also those who have an immediate contact or caring responsibility for them.

Equality objective 2 – Employment

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

Working to achieve this objective, the Authority has:

- attended Skills Cymru and a number of other school careers and Communities First 'Help for Work' events in North Wales to raise awareness of firefighter and STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) careers available within the Fire and Rescue Service.
- attended various events to promote upcoming Fire Fit and positive action events. This included attending park runs, half marathons and triathlons across North Wales as well as raising awareness at rural groups, such as young farmers, youth clubs and rugby clubs. Three positive action days were held in 2019 promoting inclusion and 28 women attended interested in understanding what it would be like to be an operational fire-fighter. Three 8-week Fire Fit programmes were held at three venues (Rhyl, Wrexham and Caernarfon) for under-represented groups to help people understand and prepare for the requirements of a fire-fighter role.
- launched a whole-time duty system recruitment campaign in March 2019. 1,100 applications were received. From the outset the emphasis was towards achieving a workforce, which reflects the diversity of our communities. As a result of the success of our positive action work, 166 (15%) of applications were from female candidates. The national average is 5% from female candidates. Following the completion of 256 interviews the Service recruited 20 full-time firefighters consisting of eleven males, nine females, three BAME, five LGBTQ and two with a disability, all achieving the requisite standards.
- appointed ten apprentices from the second cohort of firefighter apprentices who joined the Service in April 2017 and conclude their apprenticeship in April 2020. Three of the cohort who secured a permanent post are female.

- launched Firefighter and Future Leader Apprenticeships in January 2020, the interview process was scheduled to be complete by the end of March 2020 for commencing in July, however the process has been placed on hold due to COVID 19.

The Service has committed to a number of initiatives to support staff:

- The Dying to Work Charter training was undertaken by HR staff dealing with those who are terminally ill, be it employees or supporting employees with a family member.
- A financial wellbeing programme was introduced to the Service. The programme provides education about managing personal finances to support employees to manage their finances in the most efficient way and to deal with financial matters, which is one of the seven wellbeing goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. The Future Generations Minister highlighted that providing debt advice and access to credit unions and other community development initiatives is one of '80 simple changes' public bodies can make towards meeting the goals of the Act.
- Members of the Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) have pledged to be Service Diversity Champions. Each member is encouraged to champion and promote individual protected characteristics.
- During 2019 the IFSG carried out a refresh of the Service's Core Values and consulted with staff across the Service. The refreshed core values were unanimously well received by staff. Executive Group approved the final version and the refreshed core values were implemented in December 2019 supported by an internal communication plan, to support and enable embedding of the new core values.

Equality objective 3 – Education

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

Working to achieve this objective, the Authority has:

- introduced a new appraisal process and aligned it to the new Fire and Rescue Service Leadership Framework
- established the delivery of initial and refresher training courses which are run by a seconded member of staff from Wales Ambulance Service Trust
- created bespoke training plans for the recruitment of whole-time duty system firefighters, and for a variety of different cohorts
- delivered the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) E-learning training package, the current Service personnel completion rate is 93%. We continue to attend VAWDASV training group meetings. The next stage of training, Ask and Act, is ongoing
- created and adapted Assessment Development Centre scenarios that are bespoke to the fire and rescue service in operating environments
- delivered online incident and command assessment, development and familiarisation sessions, as part of the all-Wales Incident Command Strategy.

Equality objective 4 – Personal Safety

Reduce the risk of death or injury from fires in North Wales by the provision of effective prevention and protection services and emergency fire and rescue response.

Working to achieve this objective, the Authority has:

- continued with full workplace audits carried out face to face until the end of 2019. Where knowledge gaps are identified, support and direction is given; Due to Covid-19 restrictions we have developed a new phone based audit system this includes a section relating to safeguarding ensuring we maintain awareness and knowledge across the Service.
- presented Fire RMS risk information in the Command and Control system. During 999 call taking where the addresses are a match, the risk information from RMS is referenced as a back-up for operational crews who can access the same high risk information via the mobile data terminals in fire appliances.

Equality objective 5 – Representation and Voice

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

Working to achieve this objective, the Authority has:

- as a member of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network we held a consultation event in May 2018, members of protected characteristic groups from across North Wales were invited to take part, the comments were collated from the participants during the event, and have been fed into the next Strategic Equality Plan.
- collaborated with local partners who were asked to share and retweet our messages on social media.
- used social media as engagement: with tailored Facebook and Twitter messages and reminders issued, these were linked to the consultation document on our website, and a bespoke video.

Equality objective 6 – Access to Services, Information and Buildings

Improve access to information and communications within NWFRS, and improve physical access to fire and rescue service buildings which the public use or visit.

Working to achieve this objective, the Authority has:

- consulted on the Service's strategic objectives for 2020/2021 this was carried out between September and December 2019.
- developed a bespoke landing page with all consultation details in one place on our website - including the full consultation document, video and details of how to take part in our questionnaire hosted on the consultation Hub.
- issued a press releases that contained a link to the consultation page on our website
- issued a letter from the Authority Chair to participants who signed up for updates on consultation information via our website inviting them to take part in our consultation, with links to the accompanying explanatory document and to the video – all local authorities and town councils were also issued with the information in the same way.

- Following an accessibility audit of the website training has been provided to key staff. We are currently working to introduce ReciteMe which allows for access to the information in multiple languages
- We ensure that the appropriate means and methods of communication are adopted in promoting priority safety messages identified by the Fire Safety department taking into account multi languages, accessibility, collaboration with established representative forums and groups to help ensure NWFRA is accessible to all.
- Analysed of risk factors that were present at our dwelling fires, this confirms that our approach is targeted at the right risk group and that our use of this information in prioritising our delivery is appropriate.
- Focussed on specific campaigns this year, keeping language simple and supporting key messages with supporting visuals.
- Increased the use of social media, with eye catching campaigns with pictures and videos captured from fire scenes that has resulted in widespread positive 'likes' and sharing of our messages.
- Trained a member of the Professional and Service Standards department in Complaints Handling in the Public Sector. This will assist the authority with ensuring we handle complaints with a customer centric approach and improve service user experience.
- During the year 2019 to 2020 the Service received:
 - 25 complaints - received and resolved.
 - 6 complaints - substantiated.
 - 3 relating to - conduct
 - 2 relating to - driving standards
 - 1 business fire safety related

In accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, specified employment information in respect of employees and applicants as at 31 March 2020 will be published on our website as soon as available (no later than 31st March 2021).

HOW DOES NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY COMPARE?

Comparing activity with others can provide useful information on performance and activities. It helps monitor the effectiveness of current policy, and future policy development; helps in assessing the effectiveness of fire safety initiatives and campaigns, as well as aiding the allocation of resources and the provision of community safety projects.

The three fire and rescue authorities in Wales cover varied geographical areas with a wide variety of risks including: fires in homes; outdoor fires; fires in business premises; road traffic collisions; rail or air crashes; chemical spills; building collapses; and trapped people or animals.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority provides cover for a population of almost 700,000 across a geographical area of 2,400 square miles. It employs almost 900 operational and non-operational support staff from its headquarters and its 44 fire stations.

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority covers over half the area of Wales and a population of over 900,000. There are 58 fire stations and over 1,400 employees.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority serves a population of over 1.5 million people covering 1,085 square miles. It employs over 1,700 staff, including over 1,400 fire-fighters, from 47 operating fire stations throughout South Wales



This report looks at activity during the financial year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.


To contribute to the UK emergency and assist the First Minister with decision making, Welsh Government statisticians had to change data gathering and release practices, focussing efforts on priority analysis and statistics.

Due to many regular [statistical releases being postponed](#) (or cancelled) as a result of the impact of Covid 19, Welsh fire and rescue authorities have worked together sharing their provisional data to help in the assessments of comparative performance, provide contextual information to incident activity and, to inform policy decisions. *Occasionally there are small variations between provisional figures and those published by individual FRAs, primarily as a result of further quality assurance.*

During the national pandemic the requirement for people to change their movements, including staying at home as much as possible and limiting travel, has been unprecedented in recent times with only those non-domestic premises providing essential services being permitted to open. Early indications show these changes impacted both the number and type of incidents the Service was called to, for example fewer road traffic collisions. Careful monitoring of incident activity will continue, with the impact expected to be more apparent in the 2020/21 annual figures and assessment of performance.

Whilst the latest information via statistical publications is unavailable, including 'Stats Wales', CIPFA, National Statistics (England), these sources have still been used for historical data. Population figures used are those published by the Office of National Statistics. Links to the external sources are provided in the 'What others said about us/Other information' section at the end of this document.

Incidents Attended

During 2019/20

4,872 emergency incidents attended in North Wales

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority attended a total of 4,872 emergency incidents during 2019/20, which was 13.9% of the total number of all emergency incidents attended in Wales.

All Fires

During 2019/20 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority attended a total of 1,950 fires, 333 fewer than in the previous year. The number of fires attended by Welsh fire and rescue authorities decreased by 18% compared with the previous year. In North Wales this decrease was marginally less at 14.5%.

All fires, Wales
 Annual change in 2019/20

North	Mid and West	South	Wales
-14.5%	-15.5%	-21%	-18%



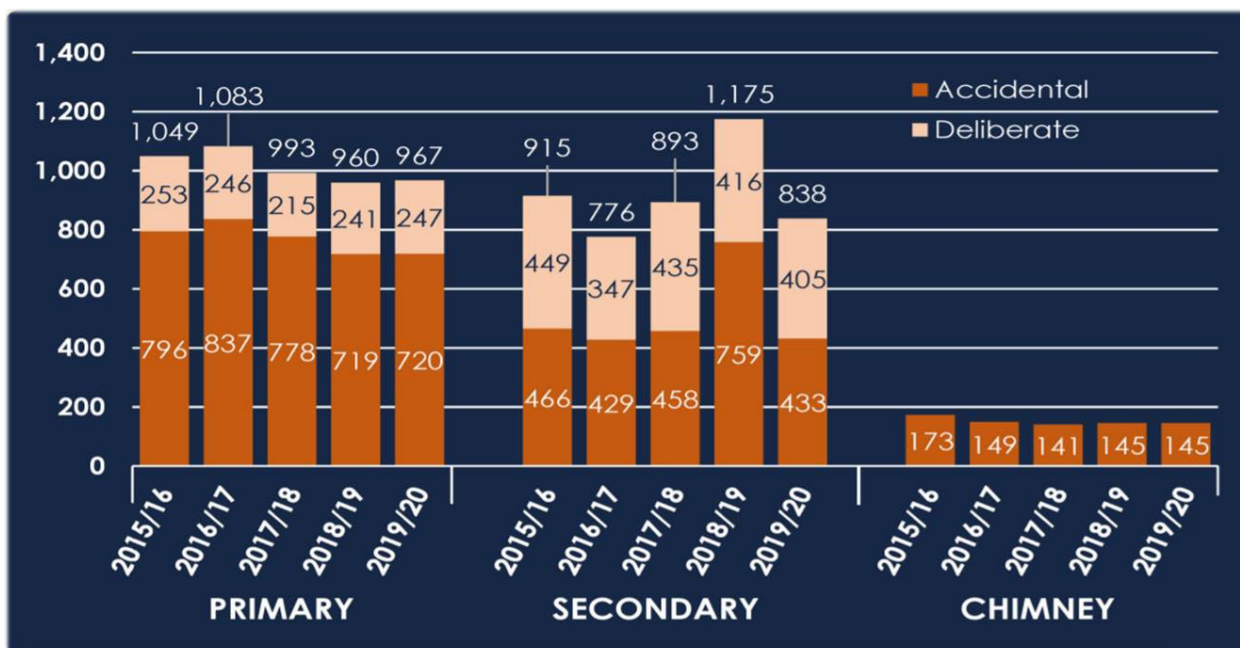
Long-term trend: Since 2001/02 there has been a downward trend in the number of fires for Wales as a whole; the 2019/20 figure is 70% lower than in 2001/02, with the number of fires falling from 35,203 to 10,571.

Types of fires

Primary fires include all fires in non-derelict buildings and vehicles or in outdoor structures, or any fire involving casualties or rescues, or fires attended by five or more appliances.

Secondary fires are the majority of outdoor fires including grassland and refuse fires unless they involve casualties or rescues, property loss or that five or more appliances attend;

All fires: type and motive (North Wales)



The number of primary fires in North Wales increased by 1% over the year from 960 in 2018/19 to 967 in 2019/20. Across Wales however the number of primary fires reduced by 2.9%; 4,276 fires compared with 4,398 in the previous year. Since 2001/02 the number of primary fires in North Wales has fallen by 60.6% whilst both Mid and West Wales and South Wales have seen reductions of just over two-thirds.

In North Wales, secondary fires decreased by 29% over the year from 1,175 in 2018/19 to 838 in 2019/20 and the number of these fires also decreased across Wales by 37.6% compared to the previous year; 2018/19 saw [prolonged periods of dry weather](#) during the summer months, which for North Wales contributed to the highest number of secondary fires since 2011/12 and the largest year on year increase since 2013/14.

Often, weather and consequential environmental conditions are responsible in part for the fluctuations in the numbers of secondary fires. The three Welsh FRAs all conduct targeted fire safety campaigns and community safety work such as school and community visits and collaborate with local police where necessary to help drive down the incidence of secondary fires. In North Wales the Authority also continued to develop its response capability, working to expand the number of specialist wildfires vehicles available to be deployed across the Service area.

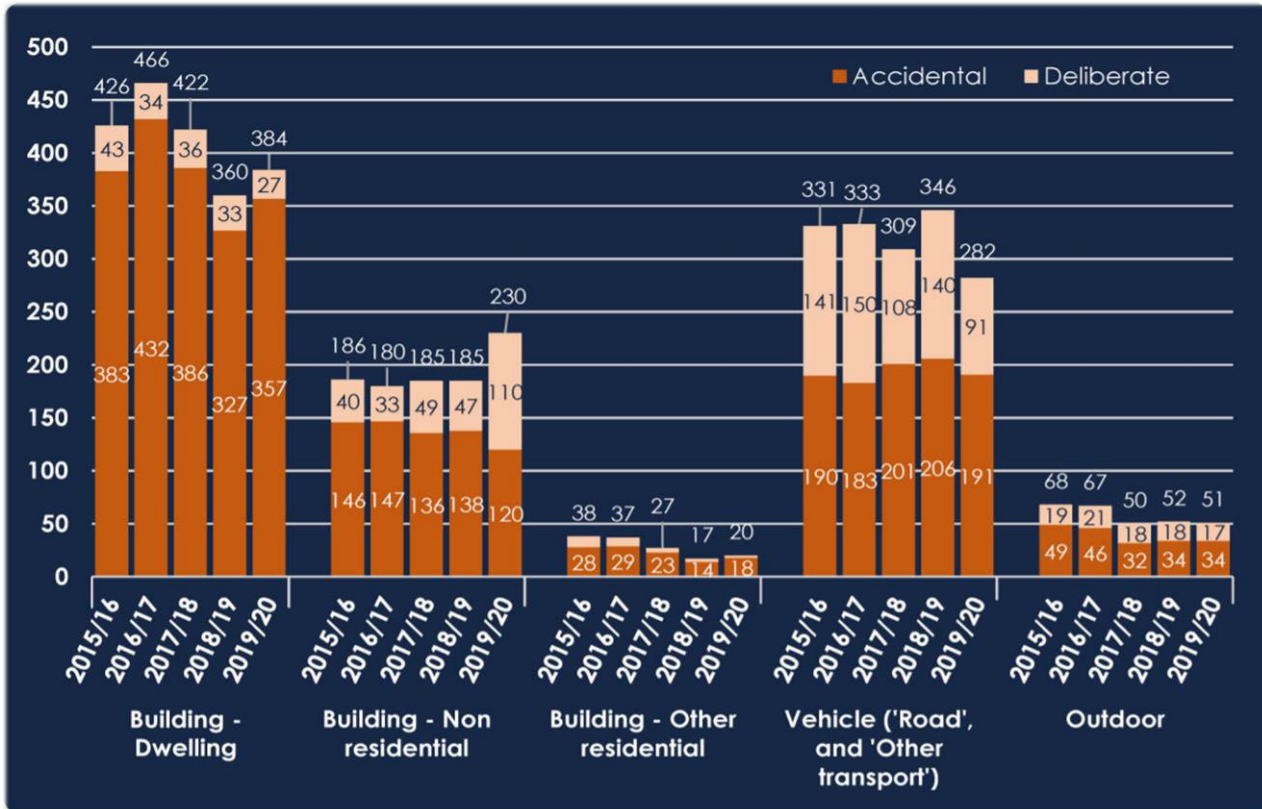
Accidental fires accounted for 75% of all primary fires in North Wales during 2019/20 and 52% of secondary fires. All chimney fires were accidental.

Primary fires and type of property

In 2019/20 the number of vehicle fires decreased by 18% in North Wales compared to the previous year, however, there were increases in numbers of dwelling fires and fires in non-residential buildings. The cumulative effect of targeted fire safety campaigns, such as a tailored Safe and Well Check and Test it Tuesday, have contributed to the long-term reduction in accidental fires in dwellings, decreasing by 42% in North Wales since 2001/02 and by 40% across Wales as a whole.

The number of fires in non-residential buildings increased to 230 during 2019-20 from 185 the previous year. Typically the majority of fires in this category start by accident, however 2019/20 saw an increase in the number of fires started deliberately, partly as a consequence of an increase in incidents within public administration, security and safety premises.

Primary fires: property type and motive (North Wales)



Fire Casualties

There were 17 fatal casualties from fires in Wales in 2019/20. This is three fewer than in the previous year and a similar number to the years prior. The overall trend in fatalities in Wales has been downward since 2001/02 when the fatality rate per million population (pmp) was 13.1 pmp for Wales as a whole and 22.6 pmp for North Wales. In 2019/20 Mid and West Wales had the lowest rate at 3.3 pmp, North Wales had the highest rate in Wales at 7.2 pmp compared to a rate of

11.5 pmp the previous year and only 2.9pmp in 2017/18. Although the numbers are small and prone to fluctuation, the Authority still recognises that any fire death is one too many. Fires in dwellings remain the main cause of fire fatalities, and this is firmly at the forefront of prevention activities for the Authority.

In North Wales the number of non-fatal casualties was 128 during 2019/20, this includes serious and slight injuries, as well as those receiving first aid or advised to have a precautionary check; although this was an increase from 117 in 2018/19, that year saw the lowest number (and rate) since 2001/02.

The numbers and associated rate of non-fatal casualties from fires fluctuates from year to year, however the overall trend since 2001/02 has been downward. In 2018/19 all FRAs saw reductions in the number (and rate) of non-fatal casualties whereas this year there has been an increase both in North Wales and South Wales, but a decrease in Mid and West Wales.

Dwelling Fires

In North Wales, the number of fires in dwellings increased to 383 during 2019/20 from 360 the previous year, which had seen an exceptionally low number of this type of fire. Despite this increase, the number of these fires is similar to numbers in the years prior to 2018/19.

In North Wales 93% of fires in dwellings started accidentally. During 2019/20 both North Wales and South Wales saw an increase in the number of accidental primary fires in dwellings compared with the previous year, whereas Mid and West Wales saw a decrease.

Since 2001/02, there has been a downward trend in the number of accidental fires in dwellings for Wales as a whole. The 2019/20 figure is 40% lower than in 2001/02, with the number of accidental fires in dwellings falling from 2,490 to 1,508 during the year in Wales; over the same time these fires decreased by 42% in North Wales, from 614 to 356 fires.

In 2019/20, the largest single cause of accidental dwelling fires was misuse of equipment or appliances, equating to a third of these fires. This has consistently been the main cause of accidental dwelling fires since 2001/02.

Accidental fires in dwellings (North Wales)



Since coronavirus was declared, a pandemic situation by the World Health Organisation the UK subsequently went into 'lockdown' from the 23rd March 2020 and this meant people spending significantly more time at home, rather than at school or work. In response, the Authority began reiterating key safety messages to the community through a variety of media. Nonetheless, the number of accidental fires in dwellings was slightly inflated during the latter part of March 2020. The Authority will continue to closely monitor and review this situation as the pandemic continues into 2020/21.

Dwelling Fire Fatalities and Casualties

In the 19 years since 2001/02, 77% of fire fatalities occurred in dwellings, equating to a total of 324 out of 423 of all fire fatalities (for example, fires in vehicles, non-domestic premises other types of premises). In 2019/20, 71% of fatalities that occurred were as a result of dwelling fires, a similar proportion to that seen in the previous two years. In North Wales there was one less fatality in 2019/20 than in the previous year.

Dwelling Fire Fatalities

	North Wales		Mid and West Wales		South Wales		Wales	
	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20
Number of fatalities from accidental dwelling fires	5	4	5	2	4	5	14	11
Number of fatalities from deliberate dwelling fires	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1

Source: Sector Performance Indicator FRS/SEC/IN/002iii and FRS/SEC/IN/002iv (2018/19 data)

Non-fatal casualties (excluding precautionary check-ups and first aid) from fires in dwellings

In recent years, around 80% of non-fatal casualties in Wales were from accidental fires and around two thirds were as a result of accidental dwelling fires (ADFs). There were 104 non-fatal casualties from dwelling fires in 2019/20, which was 23 fewer than the previous year and, the number of non-fatal casualties from accidental fires in dwellings (ADFs) was consistently a third in each of the three Welsh FRA areas during the year.

	North Wales		Mid and West Wales		South Wales		Wales	
	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20
Number of casualties from accidental dwelling fires	17	30	37	29	41	30	95	89
Number of casualties from deliberate dwelling fires	17	2	4	3	11	10	32	15

Source: Sector Performance Indicator FRS/SEC/IN/002v and FRS/SEC/IN/002vi (2018/19 data)

In North Wales 71% of non-fatal casualties resulted from accidental fires in dwellings during 2019/20, equating to 32 out of 45 fires; two fewer serious injuries were also recorded in 2019/20 than in the previous year. There were 15 more slight injuries compared to the previous year, but it should be noted that the numbers recorded in 2018/19 were unusually low.

Fatalities and Injuries in ADFs	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Precautionary check	49	32	13	19
First Aid	42	25	27	41
Injuries - slight	25	39	11	26
Injuries - Serious	8	2	6	4
Fatality	4	1	5	4
Total	128	99	62	94

Cooking (not including the number of chip pan fires) continues to be the largest single cause of non-fatal casualties in accidental fires in 2019/20, around a fifth. For this reason, cooking safety campaigning remain one of the top priorities for the North Wales Campaign Steering Group year on year.

False Alarms

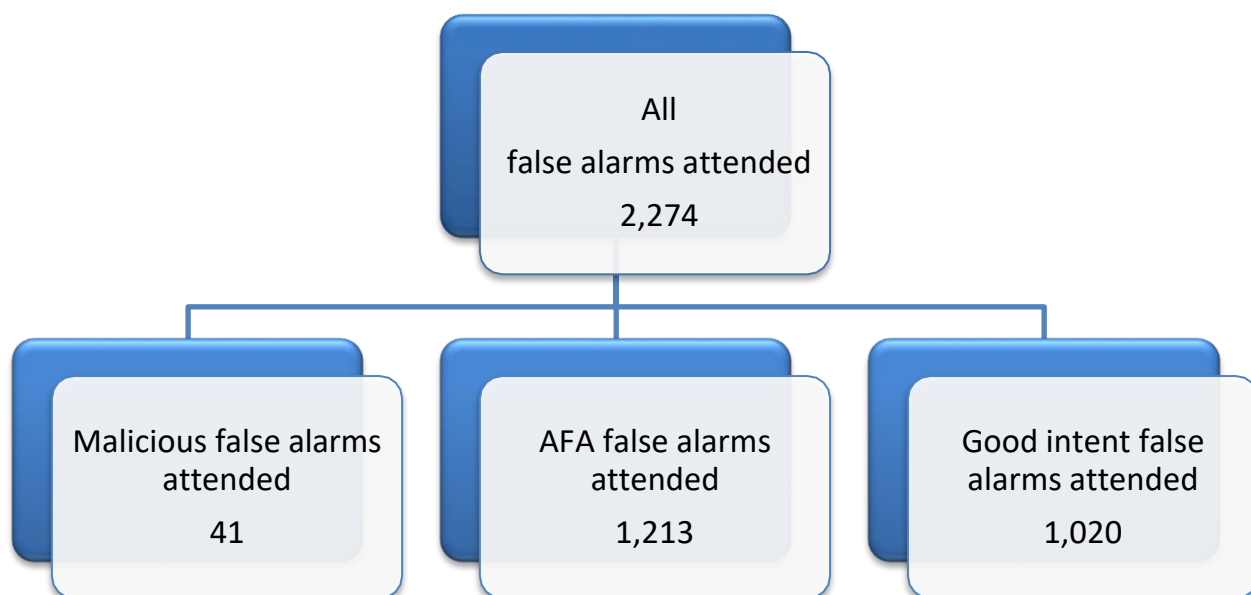
In 2019/20 there were 14,732 fire false alarms attended in Wales, a decrease of 2% from 2018/19 (15,015). Since 2001/02, the number of fire false alarms attended has fallen by 25%. Successful call challenge has been a factor in this long-term fall.

In 2019/20, there were 2,274 false alarms in North Wales, a 0.3% increase from 2,267 the previous year. The number of false alarms made with good intent decreased in 2019/20 compared with the previous year (7%) and malicious false alarms remained consistently low, 41 incidents both in this and the previous year. False alarms due to equipment (AFA false alarms), in which the call was initiated following the operation of a fire alarm and fire-fighting equipment, saw an increase in 2019/20 compared with the previous year (7%).

Prior to a change of policy in April 2015, the Authority would attend around 1,900 AFA calls each year, which later turned out to be false alarms. Typically originating from non-domestic premises, the Authority worked within the business community to encourage the maintenance of fire alarm equipment and to reiterate the importance of having in place clear procedures to raise the alarm in the event of a suspected fire. In 2015/16, there were 966 false alarms due to equipment, decreasing from 1,972 in 2014/15.

However, there has since been an upward trend in the number of false alarms due to equipment, gradually increasing by 26% since 2015/16. Interestingly the number of attendances to non-domestic premises has not changed significantly, instead the increase has resulted from false alarms in dwellings, utilising 24/7 telephone monitoring and response services to assist with independent living. The Authority will continue to monitor and review such incidents.

False alarms incidents, North Wales



Source: Statutory Performance Indicator FRS/RRC/S/001vi and Sector Performance Indicator FRS/SEC/FA/003i and FRS/SEC/FA/003ii

Special Service (non-fire, emergency) Incidents

Incidents of special service accounted for a quarter of all incidents attended by FRAs in Wales. In 2019/20, there were 648 special service incidents in North Wales compared to 755 the previous year, a decrease of 14.2%. Mid and West Wales saw a 12.2% increase in special service incident and South Wales saw an increase of 11.7%.

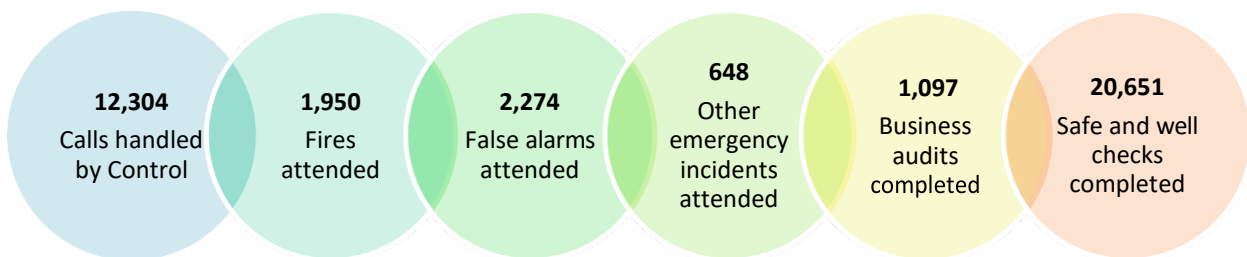
In North Wales, 28% of the special service incidents attended were RTCs during 2019/20. This number decreased from 220 incidents in 2018/19 to 179 incidents in 2019/20, despite an overall increase in total licensed vehicles. Vehicle licensing [statistics](#) from the Department for Transport show that at the end of 2019, there were 38.7 million licensed vehicles in Great Britain, a 1.3% increase compared to the end of 2018.



It should also be noted that travel restrictions as a result of the national COVID-19 pandemic, meant fewer vehicle movements during March 2020. *“A review of more than 15,000 daily cars journeys has established a pattern of travel during the coronavirus lockdown that sees weekday journeys at around 60% lower, falling another 10% on Saturdays and then heading towards the 80% down on Sundays.”* The [AA](#).

During the latter part of March, the number of RTCs was consistently low, which has contributed in part to the decrease in incidents this year. The Authority will continue to closely monitor this as the pandemic continues into 2020/21.

Key Activities during 2019/20:



PERFORMANCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

The Fire and Rescue Authorities (Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2015 was introduced on 1 April 2015 and introduced three statutory performance indicators that accompany locally collected sector indicators.

STATUTORY INDICATORS:		2018/19		2019/20	
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate
RRC/S/001i	Fires attended	2,281	32.78	1,950	27.92
RRC/S/001ii	False alarms attended	2,269	32.61	2,274	32.56
RRC/S/001iii	Road traffic collisions	220	3.16	179	2.56
RRC/S/001iiv	Other emergency incidents attended	535	7.69	469	6.72
Where the rate is based on 10,000 population					
RRC/S/002i	Fire deaths and injuries	48	6.90	50	7.16
RRC/S/002ii	Deaths and injuries arising from fires started accidentally	28	4.02	46	6.59
Where the rate is based on 100,000 population					
RRC/S/002iii	Dwelling fires confined to room of origin	313	86.94	339	88.51
As a percentage of the number of dwelling fires attended					

SECTOR INDICATORS:		2018/19		2019/20	
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate
SEC/FI/001i	Deliberate fires	657	9.44	652	9.34
SEC/FI/001ii	Accidental fires (or motive not known)	1,626	23.35	1,298	18.59
Where the rate is based on 10,000 population					
SEC/IN/002i	Fire related fatalities	8	1.15	5	0.72
SEC/IN/002ii	Injuries caused by fires	40	5.74	45	6.44
SEC/IN/002iii	Fire related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires	5	0.72	4	0.57
SEC/IN/002iv	Fire related fatalities in deliberate dwelling fires	1	0.14	0	0.00
SEC/IN/002v	Fire related injuries in accidental dwelling fires	17	2.44	30	4.30
SEC/IN/002vi	Fire related injuries in deliberate dwelling fires	17	2.44	2	0.29
Where the rate is based on 100,000 population					
SEC/FI/001iii	Dwelling fires	360	11.02	383	11.71
SEC/FI/001iv	Accidental fires in dwellings	327	10.01	356	10.88
SEC/FI/001v	Deliberate fires in dwellings	33	1.01	27	.83
SEC/FA/003ii	AFA false alarms in dwellings	853	26.11	951	29.08
Where the rate is based on 10,000 dwellings					
SEC/FI/001vi	Fires in non-domestic premises	223	7.34	216	6.93
SEC/FA/003i	AFA false alarms in non-domestic premises	279	9.19	262	8.41
Where the rate is based on 1,000 non-domestic premises					
SEC/SA/004i	Dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm was not fitted	47	13.06	49	12.79
As a percentage of the number of dwelling fires attended					

THE DWELLING FIRES RESPONSE CHARTER IN 2019/20

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

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

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

The following pages provide information about our compliance with these commitments during 2019/20.

We propose, for consistency, to use a standard narrative for reporting against the Charter each year, and only updating the figures within that narrative framework.

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



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

In 2019/20 we provided advice and encouragement to people on how they can prevent fires from starting in their home and how they can keep themselves safe from fire. Our prevention activity included delivering 19,004 safe and well checks to householders and 21,251 children and young people at key stages 1 - 4 received a fire safety talk.

During 2019/20 we attended 356 accidental dwelling fires. As a consequence of those fires, four people lost their lives and a further 30 people sustained injuries.

Also during 2019/20 we attended 27 dwelling fires that had been started deliberately, resulting in no deaths but two people being injured.

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



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

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

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

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

In 2019/20, we handled a total of 12,304 emergency 999/112 calls. We were able to obtain enough information about dwelling fire incidents to alert the appropriate initial response within 90 seconds on 90.3% of occasions and between 91 and 120 seconds on 5.7% of occasions.

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

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

In 2019/20, we received 102 malicious false alarms. In 60% of cases, we were able to establish that these calls were not genuine and so avoided needlessly mobilising resources to attend.

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

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



In 2019/20 we responded to *% of dwelling fires within 1-5 minutes, *% within 5-10 minutes, *% within 10-15 minutes and *% in over 15 minutes. These times include the time it takes for personnel to turn in to the fire station as well as the travel time, so a number of things can affect the speed of response figures, including the urban/rural geography and the nature of road networks in the area.

* Awaiting figures from Welsh Government

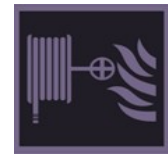
Speed of response to dwelling fires is extremely important, but we cannot over-emphasise the importance of preventing those fires from happening in the first instance, and of having at least one working smoke alarm fitted and a pre-planned escape route in case a fire does occur. However, if a dwelling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

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

We take the safety of our firefighters very seriously, given the nature of the work that they undertake. In 2019/20, our crews attended 1,950 fires in a variety of different types of premises and at outdoor locations. Whilst fighting those fires, eight operational staff received an injury. For some, the injury was slight, but for others the injury was sufficiently serious that it meant that they had to take time off to recover. It is rare that firefighters sustain serious injuries; of the total above, two were classed as 'specified' injuries under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

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

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



In 2019/20, of all the dwelling fires that we attended, 88.5% were successfully contained within the room of origin, without spreading any further. Although a number of factors could contribute to this statistic that would be outside the control of the attending crews such as how long it took for someone to discover the fire in the first instance, whether or not internal doors had been shut to help prevent the spread of the fire, and how far away from a fire station the dwelling was located, we still consider this to be a reasonable indicator of our firefighting success.

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

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

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



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

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

A fire in the home can leave people feeling extremely vulnerable. When people have lost their possessions, they will have need for practical as well as emotional support. When people have been injured or killed in the fire, the experience can affect whole communities as well as the individual and his or her immediate friends and family. For this reason, the fire and rescue service's role in supporting communities does not end when the fire has been extinguished and everyone has been accounted for.

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

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

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

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

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



We always investigate the causes of dwelling fires. In many cases the cause and origin of a fire will be very clear and straightforward, but in others a more in-depth, forensic investigation will be required to ascertain the most likely cause of the fire. In 2019/20, only 12 dwelling fires were recorded as having an unknown cause.

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

In 2019/20, we attended 383 fires in dwellings, of which 27 were found to have been started deliberately.

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

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

In 2019/20 no enforcement notices and no formal cautions were served, however two prohibition notices were issued. No prosecutions were concluded during the year.



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

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

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

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

Examples of improvement activities that go on include:

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

WHAT OTHERS SAID ABOUT US

Audit Wales – Review of Involvement 2019/20

The most recent report by Wales Audit focused on the Authority's approach and management of involving stakeholders when proposing service and policy changes, and in the design of activities. The report concluded that the Authority has pockets of good engagement activity but is yet to shift to an integrated strategic approach to involvement. [The report can be found here.](#)

OTHER INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Duties of Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities

Planning for and responding to large scale emergencies that threaten serious damage to human welfare, the environment, or to security	Enforcing fire safety in non-domestic premises	Promoting fire safety	Fighting fires, and protecting people and property from fires	Rescuing people from road traffic accidents
Responding to large scale emergencies such as terrorist attacks	DUTIES OF WELSH FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES			Responding to specified risks, such as chemical incidents and some types of flooding emergencies
Setting objectives to continuously improve	Eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people with different protected characteristics	Working in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs	Treating the Welsh and English languages equally, promoting the use of Welsh and complying with defined Welsh language standards	Working towards improving people's social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being

Welsh Government – People and Communities

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

Audit Wales

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

Licence to Reproduce Public Sector Information

Crown copyright material is reproduced in this document under Licence No. C2010002320.

External information sources used in compiling this document

Wales Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics 2018/19: <https://gov.wales/fire-and-rescue-incident-statistics-april-2018-march-2019>

Stats Wales: <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue>

Welsh Government Future Trends Report 2017:

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

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

The Welsh Government has powers of intervention:

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

CONSULTATIONS:

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

Recent consultations are listed below:

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

GLOSSARY / DEFINITIONS

- **Fires**

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

- **Primary Fires**

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

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

- **Secondary Fires**

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

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

- **Chimney Fires**

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

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

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

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

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

- **Fire Deaths (fire related)**

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

- **Fire Injuries**

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

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

- **False Alarm (general guidance)**

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

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

- **False Alarms – Malicious**

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

- **False Alarms – Good Intent**

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

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

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

ALTERNATIVE VERSIONS AND HOW TO CONTACT US

Other versions of this document are available:

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

Contact Details:



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



01745 535 250



www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk

You can also follow us on:



@northwalesfire



www.facebook.com/northwalesfireservice

AN INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING OUR SERVICES

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

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