

Fire verification report

July 2004

North Wales Fire Authority

Fire Service Pay and Conditions Agreement: Local Verification Report Phase 2

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Introduction

- 1 The National Agreement on Fire Service Pay and Conditions which was finalised on 13 June 2003 included a condition that:
“the pay award at stages 2 and 3 are subject to:...
b) verification by the Audit Commission...that the intended benefits (including savings) of the various national changes are being delivered locally”.
- 2 Following formal consultation, the Audit Commission agreed to carry out a study under Section 33 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 to assess progress in implementing the modernisation of the Fire Service in line with the changes outlined in the National Pay Agreement and the subsequent White Paper, ‘Our Fire and Rescue Service’. The study has been undertaken in two phases corresponding to stages 2 and 3 of the pay award. The results from Phase 1 were reported to the Authority in February 2004. This report sets out the results from Phase 2 of our work.
- 3 The Commission will not be making a recommendation as to whether the stage 3 pay award should be made. This remains a matter for fire authorities to consider individually and collectively. However the national report will be available to the employers to assist them in reaching their decision.

Aims and objectives of Phase 2 of the study

- 4 Phase 2 of the Commission’s study has assessed the further progress made in implementing the national changes set out in the pay agreement and subsequent White Paper in accordance with prescribed guidance and timetables, following up the key issues identified in Phase 1 and focusing on the changes that have taken place since January. We have followed the approach adopted in Phase 1 in order to ensure consistency, focusing on those changes that have taken place since January 2004.
- 5 The objectives of Phase 2 of the local fieldwork were to:
 - ◆ assess compliance with prescribed guidance and timetables, in particular in relation to IRMP and IPDS;
 - ◆ assess the systems and processes for identifying, gathering and reviewing evidence as a basis for the risk identification and prioritisation that has taken place;
 - ◆ assess the extent to which progress on implementation plans has been made in accordance with organisational aims and objectives and in line with the published IRMP;
 - ◆ assess the progress in introducing IPDS and completing the move from rank to role;
 - ◆ assess the impact of changes introduced as a result of amendments to overtime and duty systems agreed as part of the pay agreement;
 - ◆ assess the financial impact of the changes made and in particular the extent to which planned efficiency savings are being, or are likely to be, realised;
 - ◆ support fire authorities in making progress on the modernisation agenda; and
 - ◆ enable the Commission to alert the ODPM to issues which require further clarification or new guidance.
- 6 The Audit Commission in Wales (ACiW) has taken a number of significant elements into consideration when approaching this work in Wales. These are:
 - ◆ the significant restructuring of the Welsh Fire Service as a result of the amalgamation of Brigades in 1996;

- ◆ the future devolution of responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service in Wales from the ODPM to Welsh Assembly Government; and
 - ◆ the need to recognise that Comprehensive Performance Assessment does not apply to Wales and to take into account the emerging Wales Programme for Improvement Frameworks.
- 7 A separate briefing paper will be produced summarising Wales specific issues arising from the studies. This will be shared with fire authorities, the Welsh Assembly Government and the WLGA.
- 8 The report sets out the overall progress that has been made by the Authority and summarises the results for the individual diagnostic areas providing details of the key messages, any areas of good practice and barriers to progress that have been identified. A detailed analysis of the individual diagnostics is included in the appendices.

Format of the assessment

- 9 The review has provided an assessment focused around the level of progress made by the Authority in implementing the national changes set out in the pay agreement and subsequent White Paper in accordance with Government prescribed guidance and timetables. The same approach as used at Phase 1 has been followed for each of the key issues and the diagnostic assessments. However, for the overall assessment the following scale has been used:

The intended benefits (and savings) of the various national changes are being delivered locally	
Little or no progress	<p>Prescribed guidance and timetables not met. No plans in place.</p> <p>No intent = no evidence, either formal or implied, of plans that could influence practice on the ground.</p>
Some progress	<p>Prescribed guidance and timetables met. Most plans in place and some progress on delivery. Some evidence available to support either compliance with guidance or progress on delivery.</p> <p>Some intent = informal, implied evidence or plans at a higher level that could influence practice on the ground.</p>
Reasonable progress	<p>Prescribed guidance and timetables met. All plans in place and some progress on delivery. Strong evidence available to support either compliance with guidance or progress on delivery.</p> <p>Moderate intent = formal, implied evidence or plans at a higher level that could influence practice on the ground and are starting to be implemented.</p>
Good progress	<p>Prescribed guidance and timetables met. Plans in place and being delivered. Evidence available to support both compliance with guidance and progress on delivery.</p> <p>Clear intent = comprehensive, formal evidenced examples that have changed working practices/approach on the ground.</p>

Management summary

Overall assessment for North Wales Fire Authority

- 10 Using the results of each of the elements of our baseline review, we have made the following overall assessment of the Authority’s current progress at this stage of the implementation of the modernisation agenda:

Figure 1 - Overall assessment

Overall Assessment	2	plus	IRMP	3	↗
			Rank to Role	3	↗
	↗		IPDS	3	↗
			Overtime	2	↗
			Duty Systems	2	→
			Part-time working	2	↗
			Modernisation Agenda	3	↗
			Financial Diagnostic	2	

- 11 On the basis of the results of the verification study fieldwork, an assessment of **reasonable progress** has been made for North Wales Fire Authority (NWFA) and there **has** been progress since January 2004. This is summarised in the chart above, which also sets out the assessment of progress against each of the key diagnostic areas along with a direction of travel indicator. A high level summary of the main messages is set out below. Further details with regard to individual diagnostics are then addressed. Full details of our findings in respect of each of the key issues for all eight diagnostics are included in the appendices.

Overall key messages

- 12 North Wales Fire Authority have made good progress in developing their IRMP, Rank to Role, IPDS and the general modernisation agenda. It has established appropriate management arrangements to implement, monitor and review the effectiveness of the plans that it has in place.
- 13 The Authority have sought to implement changes to the current day crewed duty system but at present awaits the outcome of guidance from the Technical Advisory Panel of NJC in relation to issues raised by staff-side representatives.
- 14 The Authority has made some progress in relation to part-time working and considered the potential costs and benefits of overtime working.

Diagnostic summary

Figure 2 - Diagnostic Summary

			key issue							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
IRMP	3	↗								
	2		3	2	3	2	3	3	2	3
Rank to Role	3	↗								
	2		2	2	2					3
IPDS	3	↗								
	2		3	3	3	3	2	3		
Overtime	2	↗								
	0		2	2						1
Duty Systems	2	→								
	2		2	2						
Part-time	2	↗								
	1		2	1						1
Modernisation Agenda	3	↗								
	2		3	3	2	3				
Financial Diagnostic	2	N/A								
	2		2	N/A						

Phase 1 results in small boxes

Diagnostic key messages

15 Included in the Table below are a summary of the key conclusions drawn from the detailed findings contained within the appendices.

Theme	Phase 1 assessment	Phase 2 assessment	Key conclusions
IRMP	Some Progress	Good Progress	The NWFA have demonstrated its continued commitment to the IRMP. Appropriate management arrangements are in place to identify risks to the community that it serves and the implementation of the IRMP. It continues to monitor and review the effectiveness of its preventative, protective and response arrangements.
Rank to Role	Some Progress	Good Progress	The NWFA has continued to develop its rank to role strategy in line with national guidance. Initial proposals with regard to the Skills, Learning and Development Centre required amendment following representations.
IPDS	Some Progress	Good Progress	The NWFA has continued to develop its response to IPDS and is well placed to implement workplace assessments. The NWFA continues to work well with other fire authorities and keep employees fully aware of plans and processes.

Theme	Phase 1 assessment	Phase 2 assessment	Key conclusions
Overtime	Little Progress	Some Progress	The NWFA currently makes limited use of overtime. Having considered the issue, it has concluded that, in the current circumstances, the costs exceed the benefits of expanding the use of overtime.
Duty Systems	Some Progress	Some Progress	The NWFA IRMP process identified benefits from changes to the current day crewed duty system. Implementation of the proposed changes has been delayed due to the representative body referring the proposals to the Technical and Advisory Panel.
Part-time working	Little Progress	Some Progress	The NWFA has recently put in place new and revised policies on job sharing, career breaks, part-time working, paternity and parental support. However, a timetable for reviewing the conditions of service will not be put in place until there is a final and definitive Grey Book.
Modernisation Agenda	Some Progress	Good Progress	The NWFA provides a clear and demonstrable vision of what it is trying to achieve in its IRMP. Action has been taken to deliver on a number of its key early priorities. Some elements of the plans require further action.
Financial Diagnostic	No comment	Some Progress	The NWFA has costed key elements of its IRMP. Some cost elements remain undefined. The NWFA has not yet received any transitional funding, although it has anticipated receiving £382,000. Plans to repay the funding will be made as soon as the requirements are known.

- 16 An action plan is attached to this report which sets out the recommendations made to assist the Authority in making further progress in implementing the modernisation agenda.

Appendix 1 - Findings of IRMP Diagnostic

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
1 Management arrangements for integrated risk management planning are now embedded within the Fire Authority.	Completely	Completely	<p>The NWFA has established appropriate management arrangements in relation to integrated risk management planning.</p> <p>There is an officer IRMP group, led by the ACO (Service Delivery), responsible for developing and monitoring progress.</p> <p>A (member) executive panel is also in place to receive reports and provide guidance as required.</p> <p>Progress on all matters related to the IRMP is reported at every Brigade Management Team (BMT) and are relayed to the rest of the Service via the minutes and papers which are accessible via the intranet.</p> <p>Matters arising from progress are scheduled for reporting via the Executive Panel Working Group. These reports are also provided for the Best Value Working Group to ensure consistency of response.</p> <p>The full Fire Authority receives quarterly reports on progress with IRMP implementation.</p> <p>The ongoing effects of the national pay dispute have meant that the ability to implement some changes has been restricted. However, during the period from February to May the members have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adopted the revised IRMP after a robust debate; • adopted the 2004/2005 budget with provision for costs and savings included in the IRMP; and • supported the proposed changes in duty systems. <p>The Fire Authority Chair remains confident that there is continued momentum in the modernisation process. Further training support for new and existing members has been arranged for July and August 2004 to support work on the next IRMP.</p>

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
2 The Fire Authority continues to identify and review existing and potential risks to the communities it serves.	Partly	Partly	<p>NWFA have continued to utilise available information to identify existing and potential risks. NWFA have made progress in introducing FSEC software.</p> <p>NWFA have extended the use of pin mapping at each station. The Authority has continued to incorporate local knowledge of potential risk factors into overall plans. In particular, an assessment has been made of vulnerable rural properties and prioritisation has been given to preventative CFS interventions.</p> <p>NWFA have arrangements in place to share data with other public bodies.</p> <p>The quality of data included in the FSEC model when it was received from the ODPM was poor. It is estimated that it will take the two staff that the Authority has working on this project approximately six months to cleanse and input data for 1999-2002.</p> <p>At present it is difficult to be definite about the extent of use of the FSEC model in the short-term. In the long-term NWFA is committed to achieving the maximum advantage from the FSEC model but have yet to determine the resourcing and financial consequences.</p>
3 The Fire Authority is now reassessing the effectiveness of its current preventative, protective and response arrangements with the benefit of the risk analysis reported in the published IRMP.	Partly	Completely	<p>The NWFA continues to assess the effectiveness of its preventative, protective and response arrangements.</p> <p>The NWFA has seen a general decline in the number of injuries and accidental dwelling fires over the past year.</p> <p>The NWFA is using the local risk analysis process to help reassess deployment of resources and has already amended its resource allocation to some 30 core incident types. This includes a new control process identified in the IRMP, phased in on 1 April and 1 May, to manage calls and risk assesses them prior to resource allocation.</p> <p>Changes to preventative work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the identification of at risk groups and the method of collation of data; • the use of retained personnel to deliver community fire safety and the identification of more stations to extend the delivery of this particular service; and • the confirmation of an acceptable job description and person specification for non-operational postholders to undertake community fire safety.

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
<p>4 The Fire Authority has assessed and identified the opportunities for improvement and determined local policies and standards which are being implemented.</p>	Partly	Partly	<p>The NWFA has assessed and identified opportunities for improvement and is developing local policies in response to those opportunities identified. Work is in progress towards developing local standards and targets that will be used to drive improvement.</p> <p>The NWFA has introduced a new policy on dealing with false alarms from automatic detection systems as indicated in the IRMP. The procedures for mobilisation of resources has been updated and amended in line with IRMP proposals.</p> <p>The effect of policy change is being kept under constant review by the senior officer for the particular function related to the change.</p> <p>Progress on all matters related to the IRMP is reported at every BMT and are relayed to the rest of the Service via the minutes and papers which are accessible via the intranet.</p> <p>Matters arising from progress are scheduled for reporting via the Executive Panel Working Group. These reports are also provided for the Best Value Working Group to ensure consistency of response.</p> <p>The full Fire Authority receives quarterly reports on progress with IRMP implementation.</p> <p>IRMP group is constantly identifying opportunities for service improvement through the process of implementing the existing action plan and reassessing its effectiveness. This process is producing supplementary areas for action which add further value to the IRMP.</p> <p>A discussion paper and progress report regarding local standards and targets is to be presented to the BMT in June 2004.</p>

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Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
<p>5 The Fire Authority has assessed and accommodated the resource requirements to implement the recommendations and changes being made.</p>	Completely	Completely	<p>The NWFA has taken into account the resource requirements of the IRMP by ensuring that the 2004/2005 budget included the financial consequences of the projects recommended for the IRMP's first year.</p> <p>Indicative budgets have been prepared for 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 and these will be revised as part of the next budget round to also reflect the requirement of the next IRMP.</p> <p>Action plans have been costed and budget holders identified. As costs/savings materialise these will be reported through the established budgetary reporting system.</p> <p>The initial IRMP reflected a broadly cost neutral position.</p> <p>The long-term resource implications are being kept under review and will be taken into account in the preparation of future budgets.</p>
<p>6 The Fire Authority has demonstrated effective arrangements for implementation, monitoring, audit and review of the intentions expressed in the IRMP.</p>	Completely	Completely	<p>The NWFA have developed effective arrangements for monitoring, auditing and reviewing the intentions expressed in the IRMP.</p> <p>A member executive panel is in place to receive reports and provide guidance as required.</p> <p>The Fire Authority receives regular reports on progress at its quarterly meetings.</p> <p>Progress on the implementation of the IRMP Action Plan is reported at every BMT as a standard item.</p> <p>Any deviations from the Action Plan timescales are discussed and rectified or adjusted with agreement of both the Executive Panel and BMT as deemed appropriate.</p> <p>The reports are also provided for the Best Value Working Group to ensure consistency of response.</p> <p>After the AGM of the NWFA in July, briefing sessions on IRMP will be implemented and the Executive Panel's Working Group will reconvene.</p> <p>NWFA members will participate in all Wales member training in late summer 2004.</p>

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Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
7 The Fire Authority consulted with its partners and the wider community on its IRMP proposals, provided feedback and communicated its final proposals.	Completely	Partly	<p>The NWFA consulted widely with all sectors of the community and all stakeholders including an individual copy for each employee.</p> <p>The consultation process on the draft IRMP raised 278 comments. Every response to the consultation received an acknowledgement.</p> <p>The outcome of the consultation process was collated and discussed extensively at a meeting of the Executive Panel Working Group in February. A full report was subsequently prepared with recommendations for amendments to the draft IRMP. The (amended) IRMP was then adopted, following robust debate, at the Fire Authority meeting in March.</p> <p>The IRMP is available on the website and as an internal document for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. The number of times the website is accessed is monitored. A limited number of copies are currently being printed.</p>
8 The Fire Authority has complied with prescribed or available guidance and timetables.	Completely	Completely	<p>The NWFA has complied with nationally prescribed timetables and standards during the IRMP planning and implementation process.</p> <p>All guidance notes are promulgated to relevant staff within the Authority. The associated timetable to the IRMP process was used as the definitive timetable for the project plan to produce the IRMP and as such was used to set meetings of the Executive Panel and IRMP Working Group.</p> <p>Specific guidance on areas such as fire prevention inspections, working time directives, etc, are directed to the most appropriate senior level officer dealing with the particular topic within the IRMP process.</p> <p>As guidance is received, plans for production of the IRMP are updated and amended as appropriate.</p> <p>Arrangements are being put in place to meet the September 2004 deadline for preparation of the next IRMP.</p>
Overall assessment of progress in this topic area			
Good Progress			

Appendix 2 - Findings of Rank to Role Diagnostic

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
1 The Fire Authority has made progress on its action plan to deliver the move from Rank to Role.	Partly	Partly	<p>The NWFA has made progress in its action plan to deliver the move from Rank to Role.</p> <p>The IRMP sets out the Service's commitment to introducing a management restructure. This restructure will shift the Service from its current rank based system to one where individual employees are clear about their role in delivering the Service's aims and objectives and their contribution to the Authority's success.</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Officer Service Delivery reports to BMT, via an action plan, the progress being made in the Service's shift from Rank to Role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRMP produced; • restructure process planned; • job descriptions/person specs produced; • progress reports to BMT; and • staff consultation underway. <p>Job descriptions developed for roles in the new structure are no longer based on rank, so that applications can be accepted based on the applicant's eligibility for the role rather than on their previous or existing rank. Those job descriptions already completed include Brigade Manager roles, Area Manager roles and newly designed roles within the Skills, Learning and Development Centre.</p> <p>There has been a delay in the provision of national guidance in some areas which has meant that this process has not been fully completed.</p> <p>The all Wales IPDS Hub is co-ordinating training and additional guidance on the changes from Rank to Role and the development of all Wales standards.</p>
2 The Fire Authority has fully assessed and provided for the resource implications of the move from Rank to Role.	Partly	Completely	<p>The NWFA has fully assessed and provided for the resource implications of the move from Rank to Role.</p> <p>The 2004/2005 budget has been approved and has taken account of the cost of this shift from Rank to Role. There are reductions in management positions and this has released monies in order to keep budgetary increases within lines of Government targets.</p>

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
(Continued)			<p>All uniformed personnel have been assimilated into their new roles for pay purposes.</p> <p>An all Wales approach to a new style of uniform is in the process of being trialled, based on a determination to see less emphasis on the old style of designating rank. It is also anticipated that this approach will release savings in the coming years.</p> <p>The recent Dear Chief Officer Letter 5/2004 has signified changes in designation markings on personal protective equipment during operational incidents. Implementation of these recommendations has been costed at £8,000 for the organisation.</p>
<p>3 Employees and other key stakeholders continue to be kept fully aware of the plans and processes involved and the role they have to play.</p>	Partly	Completely	<p>The NWFA has continued to keep employees and other stakeholders fully aware of the plans and processes involved in Rank to Role. The initial proposed changes to roles in the Skills, Learning and Development Centre were rejected by the Executive Panel but local managers have sought to maintain overall progress.</p> <p>The Chief Officers Advisory Team (COAT) undertake a programme of station visits, which provides opportunities for updating personnel about the shift from Rank to Role.</p> <p>All members of staff were issued with a personal copy of the IPDS Hub's handbook on IPDS, 'It's all about you', which explains the changes and their effects on the individual.</p> <p>Station visits confirmed that staff had an understanding of Rank to Role and the broader IPDS issues.</p> <p>The BMT are updated by the Assistant Chief Officer Service Delivery on the progress of the IRMP which is the ultimate driver of the management restructure.</p> <p>A range of senior positions – including Brigade Manager (Deputy Chief Officer) and Area Manager (Senior Fire Safety Officer) – are in the process of being filled.</p> <p>The NWFA, in trying to implement change, has had constant dialogue with the representative bodies.</p>
Overall assessment of progress in this topic area			
Good Progress			

Appendix 3 - Findings of IPDS Diagnostic

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
<p>1 The Fire Authority has fully embedded and functioning management structures to support the implementation of IPDS.</p>	<p>Completely</p>	<p>Completely</p>	<p>The NWFA has fully embedded and functioning management structures in place to support the implementation of IPDS.</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Officer Service Support (ACO SS) is the project sponsor of IPDS for the Welsh region. He produces information papers and makes recommendations to the three Welsh Chiefs. He sits on the National Personal and Organisational Development Group for CFOA and feeds Welsh views and issues into this forum.</p> <p>The ACO SS presents CFA papers on IPDS and ensures that this group is kept abreast of IPDS issues.</p> <p>The NWFA continues to support the funding of a Welsh IPDS project co-ordinator. This arrangement has seen an all Wales agreement being reached on Phase 1 Firefighter development, Phase 1 Control Operator development, Phase 2 development for staff along the NVQ route, the introduction and trial of Personal Development Records (PDR) and the introduction of the Personal Development Review process.</p> <p>An all Wales draft 'Attraction' document has been written and is being considered by all three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services. When agreed, this document will both challenge and complement the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services' IPDS processes.</p> <p>Despite rejection of the initial management proposals, the Skills, Learning and Development Centre is being developed in accordance with the IPDS implementation plan.</p> <p>For an organisation such as North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, these changes are of major significance and the Fire Authority members and the BMT believe that this will serve as a firm foundation stone for not only the introduction of IPDS but also its long-term support.</p>

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
<p>2 Employees and other key stakeholders continue to be kept fully aware of the plans and processes involved and the role they have to play.</p>	Partly	Completely	<p>The NWFA has kept employees and other key stakeholders aware of its plans and processes. On 14, 15 and 16 January of this year the Welsh IPDS teams met and agreed a draft PDR at the Fire Service College and agreed a way forward for Phase 1, 2 and 3 development.</p> <p>NWFA Control staff have been involved in a national workshop run by Interactive Skills at the IPDS Hub at the Fire Service College. Here they assisted in the design of the Personal Quality and Attributes (PQA) for Control staff. This event took place on 6 and 7 April.</p> <p>Control staff within NWFA have been operating to the IPDS role map process for in excess of two years and have adjusted and modified their approach to their system in order to both align and trial the newly designed and proposed PDR.</p> <p>Following the feedback from the Phase 1 audit the Service drafted an IPDS communication strategy.</p> <p>The members of both COAT and BMT visit stations regularly and it is part of their communication process to cover IPDS updates.</p> <p>The Service has issued the central guidance booklet 'It's all about you' to every employee.</p> <p>An IPDS newsletter is to be sent out in June 2004.</p> <p>Prior to this, the Service's routine orders were used as a communication process. This was recently used to inform the non-uniformed staff about the proposed developments in designing National Occupational Standards for the roles they play within the Fire Service.</p> <p>At an all Wales IPDS meeting in Newtown on 3 March 2004 three members of the Service from whole time and retained attended in order that they could be updated on the IPD system and to trial the PDRs.</p> <p>A meeting was held with the North Wales FBU Secretary on 14 April and agreement reached on trialling the PDRs at three stations in line with the Welsh CFOA agreement reached on 25 March 2004.</p> <p>The stations selected for this trial are Rhyl, Colwyn Bay, and Holywell, thus including a whole time shift station, a day crewed station and a retained station.</p> <p>Firefighters at the stations visited during the audit were aware of the implications of IPDS.</p> <p>Early feedback from pilot sites had been positive.</p>

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
3 The Fire Authority has complied with prescribed guidance and timetables.	Partly	Completely	<p>NWFA has complied with prescribed guidance throughout the IPDS introduction process. Examples of this are the design of the PDR, the awarding of the Accredited Centre status by Edexcel in order to underpin the workplace assessment process and the participation and support by staff in many national developments and issues.</p> <p>The PDR has been evaluated and approved by members of the IPDS Hub and is being trialled by the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services. All three Fire and Rescue Services are attending the Assessment and Development Centre process being run on an all Wales basis in South Wales. This is unique from a regional approach and demonstrates forward planning and thinking by all three Services.</p> <p>NWFA has sought and obtained partnerships with Further Education providers as proposed in the draft Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for Wales.</p> <p>The Welsh IPDS Regional Co-ordinator meets with regional co-ordinators from all over the country and best practices are shared and disseminated.</p> <p>The National Project Manager for IPDS provides updates on progress of the project, ensuring that NWFRS is well placed to avoid slippage with deadlines.</p>
4 The Fire Authority continues to implement the Action Plan drawn up on the basis of the IPDS gap analysis undertaken.	Completely	Completely	<p>NWFA continues to implement the introduction of IPDS in line with our implementation plan. The Wales region gap analysis is being worked to and targets met.</p> <p>In addition to the above, NWFA has already started identifying Further Education partners in order to offer alternative management development through the Institute of Leadership and Management Programmes being offered by Llandrillo College which is aligned to the University of Glamorgan. This College is also developing HNC programmes for Fire Safety staff.</p> <p>NWFA is investigating the possibility of joining the Public Sector Management Initiative Scheme being developed by the Welsh Assembly Government.</p>

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
(Continued)			<p>The restructure of the SLDC has been delayed. Once this restructure is achieved the Service will have strong support mechanisms in place to deliver workplace development and IPDS issues.</p> <p>NWFA has completed a submission to the HSE in order for the SLDC to become a first aid training centre. This would enable the Service to meet its IPDS needs in first aid and community safety.</p> <p>The Service has also evaluated three HR/Training IT tenders which would allow the Service to enhance its functional capabilities in these two very important areas. A system has been chosen and this will be capable of recording and monitoring each individual's role map and competencies.</p> <p>These are all in addition to the already planned IPDS implementation programme but are seen as essential paths to take in order to meet and introduce alternative development needs within the organisation and have management tools available to improve data recording and sharing.</p>
5 The Fire Authority is fully prepared for and introducing workplace assessments on a programmed basis.	Not at all	Partly	<p>The NWFA is fully prepared for the introduction of workplace assessments.</p> <p>NWFA has achieved Accredited Centre status with Edexcel. It will soon have in place a dedicated manager with responsibility for NVQs. This manager will have eight full-time people and four part-time people available 'in the field', aligned to fire stations and departments, who will be responsible for supporting all managers at watch management level achieve A1 and A2 vocational assessor awards.</p> <p>NWFA currently has in excess of 30 workplace assessors, three internal verifiers and two people working towards V1 award.</p> <p>A strong structure will be in place to support this whole process and NWFA follows the guidance checklist in 14/2003.</p> <p>NWFA is working closely with SWFA in order to emulate their best practice approach to NVQs, A1, A2 and V1 processes in order that its proposed Phase 2 NVQ and its workplace assessment programmes are extremely well underpinned.</p>

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
(Continued)			NWFA has trained and developed 10 new first aid instructors and assessors through Merseyside Regional Ambulance Service. These people, with their qualifications, will be aligned to this system of assessment. In order for the Service to be able to offer its own in-house first aid training, it will be closely audited by the HSE. This process will also ensure that NWFA has a robust system in place of instruction and assessment of competence within first aid and it will add value to the IPDS assessment process.
6 The Fire Authority has fully assessed and provided for the resource implications of IPDS in 2004/2005.	Not at all	Completely	NWFA has secured sufficient funding for introducing IPDS within this financial year. The Service can demonstrate its dynamic approach to constantly seeking out alternative and more cost effective arrangements in the field of staff development. This has been realised through a partnership approach with Colleges of Further Education. This approach is ensuring that development programmes are available to all staff throughout the organisation with less disruption to business continuity.
Overall assessment of progress in this topic area			
Good Progress			

Appendix 4 - Findings of Overtime Diagnostic

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
1 The Fire Authority has reviewed and revised its policies on the use of overtime.	Partly	Partly	<p>The NWFA has revisited its use of overtime, because of the limited benefit to be gained from using overtime it has not undertaken a fundamental review. At present limited overtime is worked.</p> <p>With the current guidance that overtime cannot be used to make up for a shortfall in operational posts, the use of overtime can only ever represent a cost to the Authority.</p> <p>Where overtime is used to alleviate short-term problems such as crewing difficulties owing to sickness or training commitments, the NWFA has benefited from increased flexibility in overtime use and has given guidance to senior managers on its use.</p> <p>Based on its limited applicability the changes are not reflected in the IRMP.</p>
2 The Fire Authority has communicated its revised policies on the use of overtime and action plans are in place to implement any changes in line with key priorities.	Not at all	Partly	<p>The NWFA has adjusted its use of overtime in line with the willingness of the representative body to allow a more flexible use of overtime to maintain crewing levels and maintain fire cover for local communities. Overtime is only utilised when all other crewing options not involving additional costs have been explored.</p> <p>Staff are aware of the parameters within which overtime is operated and the representative bodies are fully aware of the Authority's view.</p> <p>It is the Authority's view that as long as the caveat of not allowing overtime to cover a reduction of staffing levels is in place, a costing exercise will only conclude that overtime is an additional expense to the Authority.</p>
Overall assessment of progress in this topic area			
Some Progress			

Appendix 5 - Findings of Duty Systems Diagnostic

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
1 The Fire Authority has comprehensively reviewed its duty systems and considered alternative approaches.	Partly	Partly	<p>The NWFA reviewed duty systems as part of the IRMP process and identified potential changes at day crewed stations.</p> <p>The NWFA has agreed proposals to amend the existing shift system at day crewed stations. These proposals have been challenged by the representative bodies and have been referred to the Technical Advisory Panel.</p> <p>Subject to a response from the Technical and Advisory Panel it is intended to introduce the changes with effect from September 2004.</p>
2 The Fire Authority has made/planned changes that are in accordance with the outcome of the IRMP and/or objectives of the organisation.	Partly	Partly	<p>The timetable for the introduction of changes to the day crewing arrangements have been set back by referral from the representative body to the NJC's Technical Advisory Panel as a dispute.</p> <p>The current monitoring of activity and outcomes relating to both intervention and prevention will be able to gauge the effectiveness of the planned changes.</p> <p>The impact of the proposed changes is anticipated to be an increased efficiency in attendance at incidents with a cost reduction in staff payments. This was costed as part of the IRMP process.</p> <p>The Authority believes that the new working systems proposed will improve family friendly working policies by limiting the disruption that is currently experienced by operational personnel working the day crewing system.</p>
Overall assessment of progress in this topic area			
Some Progress			

Appendix 6 - Findings of Part-time Working Diagnostic

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
<p>1 The Fire Authority has comprehensively reviewed its part-time working and other conditions of service and considered alternative approaches.</p>	Not at all	Partly	<p>The NWFA has recently put in place new and revised policies on job sharing, career breaks, part-time working, paternity and parental support.</p> <p>The NWFA reviews applications for part-time working on a case by case basis. Part-time working is open to both operational and non-operational support personnel alike.</p> <p>With reference to conditions of service the NWFA has been awaiting the outcome of national negotiations on the Grey Book conditions of service and once these general parameters are finalised will undertake a review of local practices to make any required amendments.</p> <p>Management periodically review all human resources policies and procedures.</p> <p>Part-time working is currently undertaken by support personnel. As yet no requests have been received from operational personnel.</p> <p>When a request is received, the Authority as part of its considerations, will review the circumstances of the individual with a focus on family friendly policies as well as ensuring the variation of work patterns will continue to meet the strategic aims and objectives of the Authority. This process has allowed job sharing within the fire control of the Authority.</p> <p>The Authority is looking at best practice in other authorities and constantly monitors what is happening on a UK basis and on a national Welsh basis to develop policies and procedures through professional bodies such as CFOA. Attendance at seminars and conferences provides officers with the opportunity to compare and contrast practices and adopt innovative ideas.</p>

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
2 The Fire Authority has made/planned changes that are in accordance with the outcome of the IRMP and/or objectives of the organisation.	Not at all	Not at all	<p>The timetable for reviewing the conditions of service will not be put in place until there is a final and definitive Grey Book.</p> <p>The NWFA believes that any new policy and procedure related to human resources should improve family friendly working policies. Family friendly working is a major consideration in the Authority's aspirations for its human resources.</p> <p>The IRMP process did identify some opportunities relating to part-time working.</p> <p>The opportunity to apply for part-time working is open to both operational and non-operational staff. All applications are considered on a case by case basis and take account of relevant HR policies.</p>
Overall assessment of progress in this topic area			
Some Progress			

Appendix 7 - Findings on Financial Diagnostic

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
1 The Fire Authority has properly costed all major action plans.	N/A	Partly	<p>The NWFA has costed key elements of its IRMP. Certain cost elements remain undefined.</p> <p>In the IRMP for 2003, many of the proposed actions were costed and built into the 2004/2005 budget. Those not costed at the time were subject to further reviews and policy development. The financial implications will be costed and built into the budget cycle for 2005/2006.</p> <p>Once the management structure review is complete and persons allocated to posts, the costs/savings including salary protection will be completed.</p>
2 The Fire Authority has plans in place to both use and repay the transitional funding that are consistent with the delivery of the modernisation agenda.	N/A	N/A	<p>The NWFA has anticipated receiving, but has yet to receive, £382,000 in transitional funding. This will be used to offset the budget increase for 2004/2005 and will impact upon Council Tax bills in accordance with direction from ODPM.</p> <p>Responsibility for this area has been delegated to the Welsh Assembly Government. The Welsh Assembly Government has indicated that it will be developing an infrastructure necessary to ensure progress against the objectives set out in the National Framework for Wales. This will incorporate the application of the Wales Programme for Improvement instead of CPA as developed in England.</p> <p>NWFA will finalise plans to repay the transitional funding when appropriate guidance is received. It has, however, already identified potential savings which could be available to fund repayment.</p>
Overall assessment of progress in this topic area			
Some Progress			

Appendix 8 - Findings of Modernisation Agenda Diagnostic

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
<p>1 The Fire Authority has a clear and well communicated vision of what it is trying to achieve in respect of modernisation updated for recent changes.</p>	Completely	Completely	<p>The NWFA is able to show a clear and demonstrable vision of what it is trying to achieve in its IRMP.</p> <p>The emphasis on fire prevention rather than fire fighting is an ethos that permeates throughout the NWFA. This is evidenced by the focus of resource utilisation away from intervention and continual training for operations to prevention and the use of training time to undertake community safety and fire safety initiatives.</p> <p>The Authority's statement of intent in recent publications is an indication of priorities and objectives for the Authority.</p> <p>Management have sought to deliver the local vision and priorities through a commitment to engage personnel in dialogue and debate in every aspect of their day to day work.</p> <p>This is a process of interaction to raise the profile of the modernisation agenda.</p>
<p>2 The Fire Authority has taken effective action to deliver its key early priorities on the wider modernisation agenda.</p>	Partly	Completely	<p>The NWFA has taken action to deliver on a number of its key early priorities.</p> <p>These are detailed below in Section 3.</p> <p>The NWFA through its long-term plans in the IRMP has shown its intent to develop more fully the prevention side of the Service. Its plans show a thoughtful approach to the release of resources on the protection side of the Service while not diminishing the protection to the local communities. Plans such as IRMP and IPDS have long made explicit that a major factor for their introduction was to ensure the correct prevention/intervention balance.</p> <p>The NWFA has grasped the opportunity of responding to the Welsh Assembly Government on the Welsh National Framework document. The response has been constructive and forward looking.</p> <p>The Authority believes that its existing proactiveness in many of the areas shows the continuing commitment to deliver on the modernising agenda within Wales.</p> <p>The Authority has had a long standing collaborative relationship with both of the other fire authorities in Wales and looks forward to continued joint working and partnership.</p>

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
(Continued)			<p>The Authority contributes widely to the general agendas of social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal and crime reduction. It is an active participatory member of the North Wales Community Safety Chief Officers Group, its subsidiary practitioners forum and associated working groups and the local community groups within each unitary authority area dealing with crime, drug and alcohol abuse, Communities First and social inclusion. This can be seen exemplified at the local area in any of the current divisions within the Authority.</p> <p>The strategic approach for working in partnership is based on the overriding principle that providing the objectives of the partnership are consistent with the aims and objectives of the Fire Authority and will assist in meeting locally identifiable needs, then local managers are permitted to assist and commit to the partnership on behalf of the Authority.</p> <p>Management's contribution to the ethnic diversity agenda is limited by the make up of the local population and the very small numbers within the minority ethnic community. However, all policies and procedures are scrutinised to ensure they are complementary to the Authority's Race Equalities Scheme and promote the diversity agenda.</p>
3 The Fire Authority has made good progress to date in delivering on some key aspects of modernisation.	Completely	Partly	<p>Since Phase 1 the major element of the NWFA modernisation proposals has been the focus on prevention and the continued development of community fire safety with local initiatives.</p> <p>Progress has been made towards the implementation of a new management restructure and the production of job descriptions, person specifications and the advertising of senior posts has developed. The NWFA are on track to complete the change by the end of 2004.</p> <p>The current divisional structure is changing to the unitary authority boundaries on a gradual basis by introducing teams that deliver services for those specific areas.</p> <p>The revised provision for resource deployment is already having an impact on service delivery. These initiatives are consistent with the Authority's vision and are stated objectives of the IRMP.</p> <p>The areas that have not yet been implemented as yet include the changes to the day crewing system and the structure change to SLDC. Both have become subject to local disputes initiated by the representative body.</p>

Key Issue	Assessment		Findings
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
4 The Fire Authority has set in place effective plans to further deliver its (revised) priorities, aims and objectives.	Partly	Completely	<p>The NWFA has action plans in place to deliver its IRMP. Progress on all matters is reported to every BMT and is communicated to the Service via the minutes and papers which are accessible on the intranet.</p> <p>Matters arising from progress are reported to the Executive Panel Working Group. These reports are also provided to the Best Value Working Group to ensure consistency of response. The full Fire Authority receives quarterly reports on progress with the IRMP implementation.</p>
Overall assessment of progress in this topic area			
Good Progress			

Fire verification report

July 2004



Fire Service Pay and Conditions Agreement: Local Verification Report Phase 2

North Wales Fire Authority

Action Plan

July 2004

Version: 1.0

Page	Issue to be addressed/ Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
<i>IRMP</i>						
9	Determine the resources required to complete FSEC exercise.	3				
9	Complete validation of FSEC data for 1999-2002 and establish a timetable for input of FSEC data for 2003/2004.	3				
11	Adopt local standards and targets.					
<i>Rank to role</i>						
15	Complete effective transfer from Rank to Role once national guidance is available.	3				
<i>Overtime</i>						
23	Continue to explore the potential for the further use of overtime.	1				
23	Continue to review the costs and benefits of the use of overtime.	1				

Page	Issue to be addressed/ Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
<i>Duty Systems</i>						
24	Implement proposed changes to duty systems and monitor effectiveness of changes in terms of service delivery.	3				
24	Continue to monitor implications of duty system changes within broader agenda for 'family friendliness'.	3				
<i>Part-time Working</i>						
25	Implement review of conditions of service once definitive agreement is reached on Grey Book.	2				
<i>Financial Diagnostic</i>						
27	Complete the financial evaluation of all action plans.					
27	Develop detailed plans for repayment of transitional funding in line with requirements when guidance is issued.	2				