



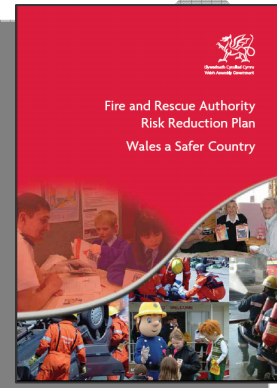
PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

RISK REDUCTION DRAFT ACTION PLAN FOR 2008-09 CONSULTATION SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION TO RISK REDUCTION PLANNING

In 2006, the Welsh Assembly Government issued statutory guidance to support Welsh fire and rescue authorities in managing their corporate and community risks in a holistic way. Each year, all three fire and rescue authorities in Wales develop either a full Risk Reduction Plan or a simpler annual action plan for the forthcoming financial year, with the primary aim of reducing risk.

As part of the process of developing their Plan, fire and rescue authorities are expected to have consulted with their stakeholders on their proposals, and to have taken their views into account before finalizing their Plan.



Wales a Safer Country, issued by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2006 provided strategic direction for Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales to address risk in a structured way whilst embracing the increased emphasis on prevention.

OBJECTIVES OF RISK REDUCTION PLANNING

The Welsh Assembly Government guidance lists seven objectives that fire and rescue authorities must incorporate into their overall risk reduction strategy:

- Reducing the number of fires and other emergency incidents;
- Reducing the loss of life in fires and other emergency incidents;
- Reducing the number and severity of injuries in fires and other emergency incidents;
- Reducing the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents;
- Safeguarding the environment and heritage, both built and natural;
- Providing services that represent value for money;
- Integrating the activities of their fire and rescue service within the wider social justice agenda.

“Each Authority’s Risk Reduction Plan will clearly identify priorities for their Fire and Rescue Service.

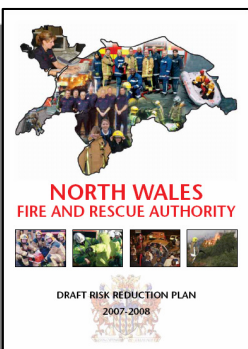
Fire and Rescue Authorities need the freedom to deliver innovative solutions in their quest to manage and reduce risk.”

HOW COULD RISKS AFFECT THE AUTHORITY?

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to making North Wales a safer place to live, work and visit. Anything that could prevent it from being able to fulfill that commitment could be considered to be a ‘risk’.

In more specific terms, effective Risk Reduction Planning is used to mitigate any risks to the Authority being able to deliver its stated aims and objectives, which are:

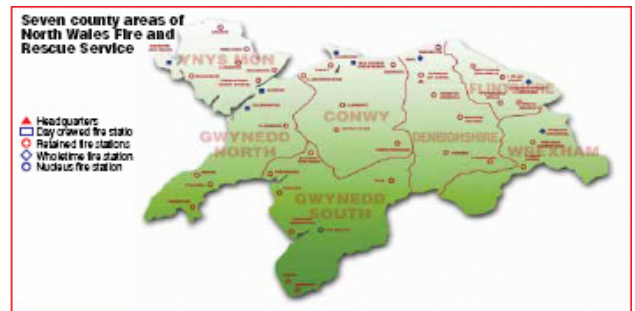
- To prevent accidental and malicious fires;
- To protect people from being killed or injured by fire and other hazards;
- To protect the Community, businesses and the Environment from being harmed by fire and other hazards;
- To find ways to improve in order to meet the expectations of the Community;
- To operate as effectively and efficiently as possible, making the best use of available resources.



North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority’s Risk Reduction Plan for 2007-08 was finalized in October 2006, and is starting to be rolled out during 2007-08. This consultation now seeks your views on the Annual Action Plan for 2008-09.

WHAT WERE THE RISKS THAT WERE IDENTIFIED?

Following a process of risk assessment undertaken in 2006, the following risks were identified as the main priorities for North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to address:



COMMUNITY RISKS

Deaths and Injuries

- Fire related deaths and injuries
- Road traffic collisions causing deaths and injuries
- Properties and their remoteness from resources
- Lives at risk in the community

Fire and Emergency Incidents

- Performance
- Automatic Fire Alarms
- Children and young people with a fascination for fire
- Deliberate fire setting
- Properties and their remoteness from resources
- Service standards

Community Resilience

- Preparedness
- Identification of community risks
- Multi-agency planning
- Protecting local communities using UK resources

Environmental Impact

- Climate change
- Spate conditions
- Intervention techniques
- Economic & social impact

Community Engagement

- CFS education and prevention
- Communications
- Welsh Language
- Equality and diversity

CORPORATE RISKS

Capacity to Deliver Services

- Modernising the Fire and Rescue Service
- Sustaining partnership working
- Performance management
- Employee health and development
- Funding arrangements

Resilience in Service Delivery

- Human resources
- Business continuity
- Call handling and dispatch
- Communications
- Information Technology
- Assurance of operational intervention
- Resilience of suppliers
- Reputation

Governance

- Developing the Fire and Rescue Authority
- Financial controls
- Legal services
- Procurement of goods and services
- Corporate social responsibility
- Legal compliance

OUR PROPOSALS FOR 2008-09

You will have seen on page one that at the top of both the Welsh Assembly's list of objectives and the Fire and Rescue Authority's list of aims for the Service, the primary focus is on achieving a reduction in the number of emergency incidents occurring. 'Prevention is better than cure' has been the principal theme running through all our risk reduction strategies from the outset. Although we have been successful in reducing the number of accidental dwelling fires in our region, the incidence of fire deaths in North Wales is currently running at an unacceptably high level. The primary strategy for reducing this is to increase our fire prevention activity in the Community.

We also recognise that to do this will require a large investment of resources. Where possible these resources should be found from within our existing budget. Efficiencies will need to be made in order to release resources from one service area to contribute to those needed by another service area, but without adversely affecting the delivery of front-line services to the communities of North Wales.

1. Our main proposal for 2008-09, therefore, is to place renewed and additional emphasis on preventing fires, particularly those that present the greatest risk to life.

This will entail conducting significantly more Home Fire Safety Checks in homes in North Wales, fitting more smoke alarms and other protective equipment as necessary.

For the Service to achieve its aim of fitting 30,000 smoke detectors in homes across North Wales per year, we will need to make additional investment in areas such as:

- generating requests and referrals for free home visits, particularly for the most vulnerable people;
- making sure that there is an effective business and computer system for delivering and recording information about home visits;
- making sure that we have sufficient trained personnel to undertake the challenging programme of home visits.

2. We are seeking to introducing a more robust policy to reduce the number of times we are called to attend false alarms generated by automatic fire alarms installed in buildings.

Apart from wasting time and money, the risk to the public is increased because crews are unavailable to undertake prevention work or to respond to genuine emergencies. We therefore propose to initiate a consultation to progressively introduce a registration programme for automatic fire alarm systems, so that we can identify and stop the worst offenders from generating repeat false alarms.

3. Finding enough money to pay for additional prevention activity from within existing budgets will require making more efficient use of staff time. Early analysis suggests that resources can be released whilst maintaining - or even improving - front line services. We propose to do this by carefully introducing two major changes over the next few months:

a) by introducing a different way of rostering. This is the way wholetime firefighters are allocated to each team ('watch'), and by changing the pattern by which each team comes on and off duty. This would not reduce the number of firefighters that arrive at an emergency incident, nor would it increase the number of hours that wholetime firefighters are expected to work in a year¹. In fact, by being better organized in the way we cover for staff absences and recruitment difficulties in areas covered by retained firefighters, this change should also make sure that fire engines are never out of action because of a lack of a full crew.

b) by developing a 'Dedicated Response Option'. Analysis has shown that although we pay a premium to a number of middle and senior managers to be available to attend and oversee crews at emergency incidents, it is almost unheard of that we would actually need to call them all simultaneously. We simply don't need that many to be on duty at the same time. Senior managers would still attend every incident where they were required (exactly as happens now), but we would be reducing the number that we pay to be on standby knowing that there is realistically no chance of them actually being called out.

¹ Changes to rostering arrangements would be implemented in line with the agreed Conditions of Service Framework relating to firefighters' hours of duty and duty systems, and (subject to any changes to these) will be based on :

(1) An average 42 hour basic working week (for full-time), including meal breaks

(2) At least two periods of 24 hours free from duty each week.

(3) Compliance with relevant United Kingdom and European law, including the Working Time Regulations 1998, and Health, Safety and Welfare at Work legislation.

(4) Having regard to the special circumstances of individual employees and being family friendly.

4. To operate effectively, up to date performance management and risk management relies on having effective and up-to-date internal systems and arrangements. We therefore propose to invest in strengthening performance management arrangements, improving the availability of high quality information, clarifying responsibility for improvement, increasingly taking timely action in response to actual or anticipated performance to make service outcomes better than they would otherwise be.

FUNDING IMPROVED SERVICES

	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	POSSIBLE RESOURCES FOR REINVESTMENT DUE TO CHANGE IN ROSTERING AND A DEDICATED RESPONSE TEAM
2008-09	£750,000	
2009-10	£765,000	15 firefighter posts
2010-11	£780,000	15 + 14 firefighter posts and a number of yet to be determined officer posts

HOW DO I RESPOND TO THESE PROPOSALS?

Please return your comments by the deadline of September 7th 2007

By post to:

Risk Reduction Plan Consultation
 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
 Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
 Ffordd Salesbury
 St. Asaph Business Park
 St. Asaph
 Denbighshire
 LL17 0JJ

By e-mail to:

RRP0809@nwales-fireservice.org.uk

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This consultation forms part of an annual cycle of planning stages. Each year, at this time, we conduct a 12 week public consultation on the draft Risk Reduction Plan or the annual Action Plan only.

After the closing date, responses to this consultation will be considered by the Fire and Rescue Authority before the Risk Reduction Action Plan 2008-09 is confirmed and published as a definite action plan by 31st October 2007.

Budgets will be agreed over the winter, ready to start putting the plan into action from 1st April 2008.

Data Protection Act 1998

The information you supply with your response will be processed by North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority for the purpose of administering this consultation.

For organisations, authorities and corporate bodies, we will assume that you have no objection to having details of your response included in a public report, unless you stipulate to the contrary.

For individuals, all responses will be treated as confidential. We will keep your personal details secure and will not disclose them to other organisations or third parties without your consent, unless we are legally required to do so.

The substance of your comments may be incorporated within a report, but will not be attributed to you without your prior consent.

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