



ALL-WALES DWELLING FIRE RESPONSE CHARTER

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

GWASANAETH TÂN AC ACHUB
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru
Mid and West Wales
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



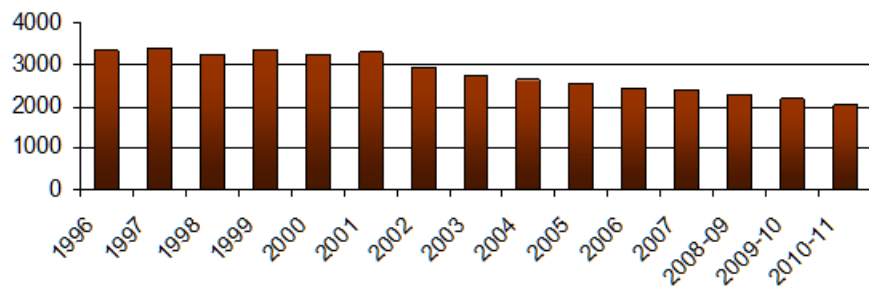
Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
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WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SAFER WALES

Introduction

Driving down the number and severity of fires in dwellings is a key priority for all three Welsh fire and rescue authorities. Their success in achieving this is clearly reflected in the steady decline in the number of dwelling fires that occur each year in Wales. Since 1996 when the current fire and rescue authorities were formed, the number has fallen from over 3,000 to around 2,000 per year.

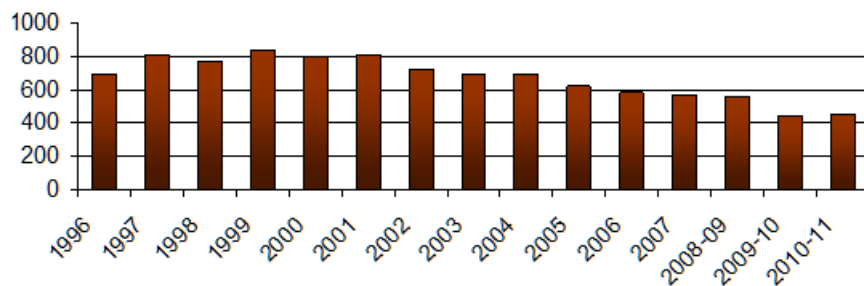
Dwelling fires in Wales



(StatsWales Tables 007328 and 032217)

In the same period, the number of casualties arising from those dwelling fires has also fallen.

Dwelling fire casualties in Wales



(StatsWales Tables 007328 and 032217)

Responding to a Welsh Government expectation that fire and rescue authorities will develop service standards for responding to dwelling fires in their area, this all-Wales Dwelling Fire Response Charter aims to provide a framework by which all three fire and rescue authorities can communicate their specific commitments to their local communities.



The Dwelling Fire Response Charter in Wales

People living in the areas served by the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities of North Wales, Mid & West Wales and South Wales have an expectation that they will be helped and supported to remain safe from fire in their homes. They also have an expectation that if a fire does break out they will receive a prompt, effective and professional emergency response to their call for assistance.

The three Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities have a common aim of maintaining a long term downward trend in the incidence of:

- a) dwelling fires
- b) dwelling fire casualties
- c) serious injuries to fire personnel attending dwelling fires.

How the Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities go about achieving that common aim in their own local areas will be determined through their annual improvement planning processes and will include monitoring, analysing, learning and reporting publicly on the progress they are making.

On the following pages we set out our seven high-level commitments to the residents and communities of Wales as regards preventing and responding to dwelling fires.

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

We will do this by:

- 1.1 Giving advice on home fire safety to the general public and specific audiences, using a range of media and communication methods.
- 1.2 Using relevant information to identify and direct prevention advice at people whose homes may be at relatively higher risk from fire.
- 1.3 Ensuring that people can access home fire safety checks where advice can be tailored to suit their own individual needs.
- 1.4 Engaging with partner organisations to help tailor home fire safety advice to meet the needs of people who require additional support.
- 1.5 Actively promoting the use of smoke alarms and other home fire safety equipment.
- 1.6 Working with communities, community groups and their representatives to help prevent deliberate fire-setting in dwellings.
- 1.7 Working with other agencies to try to deter individual people (including children and young people) who have an identified propensity to start fires deliberately from doing so.
- 1.8 Working with landlords and other people responsible for managing particular types of dwellings to help them meet their legal obligations as regards fire safety in those premises.

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

We will do this by:

- 2.1 Answering every emergency 999 call we receive within seconds of it being put through.
- 2.2 Providing a high quality, professional telephone response that is mindful of callers' language preference and disability needs.
- 2.3 Ensuring that even before a call comes in we have the appropriate arrangements in place to deal effectively with it.
- 2.4 Mobilising the correct response to the correct address as quickly as possible after receiving the call.
- 2.5 Providing life saving advice to callers when it is needed.
- 2.6 Maintaining and updating our electronic communications and mobilising systems.
- 2.7 Routinely updating and improving the information we hold about routes, locations and premises in the area.
- 2.8 Constantly reviewing levels of demand on the service and where appropriate making adjustments to continue to provide the best level of cover available.
- 2.9 Being skilled at identifying hoax calls to avoid tying up valuable resources unnecessarily.
- 2.10 Regularly reviewing our own resilience and performance, taking steps to address deficiencies and finding ways to improve the way we handle calls and mobilise to dwelling fires.



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

We will do this by:

- 3.1 Mobilising the resources that are most likely to reach the dwelling fire soonest (normally the nearest available).
- 3.2 Keeping the time it takes to arrive at the dwelling fire as short as possible, bearing in mind people's safety en route.
- 3.3 Deploying enough resources to the dwelling fire to be able to deal with it effectively in accordance with recognised procedures and safe systems of working.
- 3.4 Ensuring that the fire and rescue personnel deployed to the dwelling fire have attained the appropriate level of operational competence for their respective role.
- 3.5 Ensuring that the fire and rescue personnel deployed to the dwelling fire have the appropriate equipment (including personal protective equipment) to tackle it effectively and safely.
- 3.6 Ensuring that the fire and rescue personnel deployed to the dwelling fire meet defined fitness and health criteria, and that they have access to occupational health services.
- 3.7 Ensuring that the vehicles and equipment provided are fit for purpose and have been properly serviced and maintained.
- 3.8 Regularly reviewing our own resilience and performance, taking steps to address deficiencies and finding ways to improve how we attend dwelling fires.

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

We will do this by:

- 4.1 Regarding the protection of human life as our highest priority.
- 4.2 Ensuring that we always deploy enough suitably trained and equipped fire and rescue personnel to the dwelling fire to tackle it safely and effectively in accordance with recognised procedures and safe systems of working.
- 4.3 Ensuring that fire and rescue personnel attending the dwelling fire have access to the correct level of supervision and management to deal with the incident correctly and safely.
- 4.4 Working well alongside personnel from other agencies (e.g. ambulance and police) according to recognised protocols and procedures.
- 4.5 Providing basic life support and first aid to casualties at the scene pending their transfer to the care of the ambulance service.
- 4.6 Treating people affected by the fire sensitively and with respect.
- 4.7 Keeping the property damage and environmental effects of the fire to a minimum.
- 4.8 Regularly reviewing our own performance, taking steps to address deficiencies and finding ways to improve the way we deal with dwelling fires.

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

We will do this by:

- 5.1 Providing an appropriate level of post-incident advice and reassurance to residents in the vicinity of the dwelling fire, working with other organisations as appropriate.
- 5.2 Working supportively with the people who were directly affected by the fire.
- 5.3 Regularly reviewing our own performance, taking steps to address deficiencies and finding ways to improve how we help communities in the aftermath of dwelling fires.

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

We will do this by:

- 6.1 Investigating and recording the cause of every dwelling fire that we attend.
- 6.2 Assisting with police investigations and working with other organisations as appropriate where a dwelling fire is suspected or is known to have been started deliberately.
- 6.3 Providing a comprehensive and robust enforcement regime to ensure that landlords and managers of relevant living accommodation fulfil their responsibilities in compliance with fire safety legislation.
- 6.4 Regularly reviewing our own performance, taking steps to address deficiencies and finding ways to improve how we investigate dwelling fires, apply our enforcement powers and hold people to account in cases of negligent or criminal behaviour.



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

We will do this by:

- 7.1 Recording relevant information accurately and to a consistently high standard.
- 7.2 Routinely reviewing and assessing our performance and the outcomes that have been achieved, looking for ways to improve.
- 7.3 Reviewing incidents involving loss of life or injury at dwelling fires to find ways of minimising the likelihood of recurrence.
- 7.4 Analysing and examining relevant information with an open mind.
- 7.5 Consulting and engaging with others to help identify how we might improve what we do or the outcomes that are achieved.
- 7.6 Inviting external views and opinions, including through audit and assessment of our performance and activities.
- 7.7 Responding quickly and fairly to complaints according to a published complaints procedure.
- 7.8 Reporting our performance publicly, giving a balanced assessment of the progress made towards a continuing long term downward trend in the incidence of dwelling fires and associated casualties, and explaining what we will do to improve further.
- 7.9 As a minimum we will report against:
 - Welsh Government performance indicators relating to fire deaths, injuries, accidental dwelling fires and home fire safety checks.
 - Local performance indicators relating to operational competence levels of fire and rescue personnel.
 - Local performance indicators relating to any serious injuries sustained by fire fighters at dwelling fires (under RIDDOR criteria).
 - Local performance indicators relating to working time lost as a result of those injuries.
 - Local performance indicators relating to response criteria (including response time) to dwelling fires.



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