

ATTACHMENT



Awdurdod Tân ac Achrub Gogledd Cymru
North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

D R A F T

**NORTH WALES
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**IMPROVEMENT PLAN
and
ANNUAL RISK REDUCTION PLAN
ACTION PLAN**

2008 - 09

Prepared in October 2008 under section 6 of the Local Government Act 1999 and issued in accordance with guidance issued to Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales by the Welsh Assembly Government

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INTRODUCTION

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's **Annual Improvement Plan** 2008-09 has been prepared in accordance with guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government in November 2007¹. It provides an overview of North Wales Fire and Rescue's performance, both in general terms and in relation to specific issues that affect the running of the Authority and the Service.

This Improvement Plan (previously called a 'Best Value Performance Plan') focuses on three financial years: 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10, reporting on the progress made last year, what faces the Authority this year, and what is anticipated to affect the Authority and the Service next year.

This year, details of the Authority's **Risk Reduction Plan** have been incorporated within this publication. In accordance with the Welsh Assembly Government guidance², progress is reported against the full Risk Reduction Plan compiled in 2006 through to the annual action plan for 2009-10.

We trust that you will find the information provided here both informative and interesting. If you have any comments or wish to respond to any of the issues described in this plan, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact us via the Corporate Planning Manager at the address given at the end of this document.

A summary of this plan will be available after 30th November 2008. The Service's website is also continually being updated and hosts a wealth of information on a range of matters such as audit reports, service strategies, and so on. We encourage you to log on to:

www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk

¹ The Wales Programme for Improvement – Guidance for Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales (November 2007)

² Fire and Rescue Authority Risk Reduction Plan – Wales a Safer Country (February 2006)

SECTION 1

OVERVIEW OF THE AUTHORITY AND SERVICE

This first section presents general information on North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service – why they exist, how they are run and organized, what they achieve, and what they look after.

Our mission is to make North Wales
a safer place to live, work and visit.

CORE DUTIES

The principal duties of the Fire and Rescue Authority, as defined in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, are:

1. To promote fire safety through the provision of information, publicity and encouragement to prevent fires and deaths and injuries by fire;
2. To give advice, on request, about how to prevent fires and restrict their spread in buildings and other property, and on means of escape in the event of fire;
3. To make provision for protecting life and property in the event of fires;
4. To make provision for rescuing and protecting people from serious harm in the event of road traffic accidents;
5. To respond to other emergencies or eventualities as required to protect people, property, or the environment.

CORPORATE AIMS

These five fundamental aims summarise every aspect of what North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority wants to achieve through the day-to-day operations of the Service.

1. To prevent accidental and malicious fires.
2. To protect people from being killed or injured by fire and other hazards.
3. To protect the community, businesses and the environment from being harmed by fire and other hazards.
4. To find ways to improve in order to meet the expectations of the community.
5. To operate as effectively and efficiently as we can, making the best use of the resources we have available.

CORE VALUES

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has a set of core values which drive our organisation and highlights the priorities of how we work.

Our core values are:

Service to the community

We value service to the community by:

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve
- Striving for excellence in all we do

People

We value all our employees by practising and promoting:

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- Personal development
- Co-operative and inclusive working

Diversity

We value diversity in the Service and the community by:

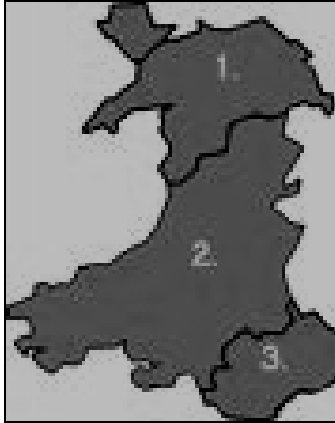
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Providing various solutions for different needs and expectations
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment with progression within the Service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

Improvement

We value improvement at all levels of the Service by accepting responsibility for our performance by:

- Being open-minded
- Considering criticism thoughtfully
- Learning from our experience
- Consulting others

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES



North Wales **Fire and Rescue Authority** is one of just three fire and rescue authorities in Wales. Its role is:

- To perform all the duties and responsibilities of a Fire Authority in accordance with appropriate legislation and regulations, in particular the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) Order 2005 - which came into force on 1 October 2006, and the 1995 Combination Scheme.
- To agree the annual service plans, the revenue and capital budgets and the contribution for the constituent councils.
- To monitor the revenue and capital budgets and deal with any significant variations, including decisions on any supplementary contributions.

The Authority was established in April 1996, and comprises 28 councillors from the six unitary authorities of North Wales: Anglesey County Council (3); Conwy County Borough Council (5); Denbighshire County Council (4); Flintshire County Council (6); Gwynedd Council (5); Wrexham County Borough Council (5). The number of representatives from each constituent authority is determined on a population basis.

North Wales **Fire and Rescue Service** is headed by the Chief Fire Officer, who has overall corporate management and operational responsibility for the Service. He also provides professional advice to the Authority.

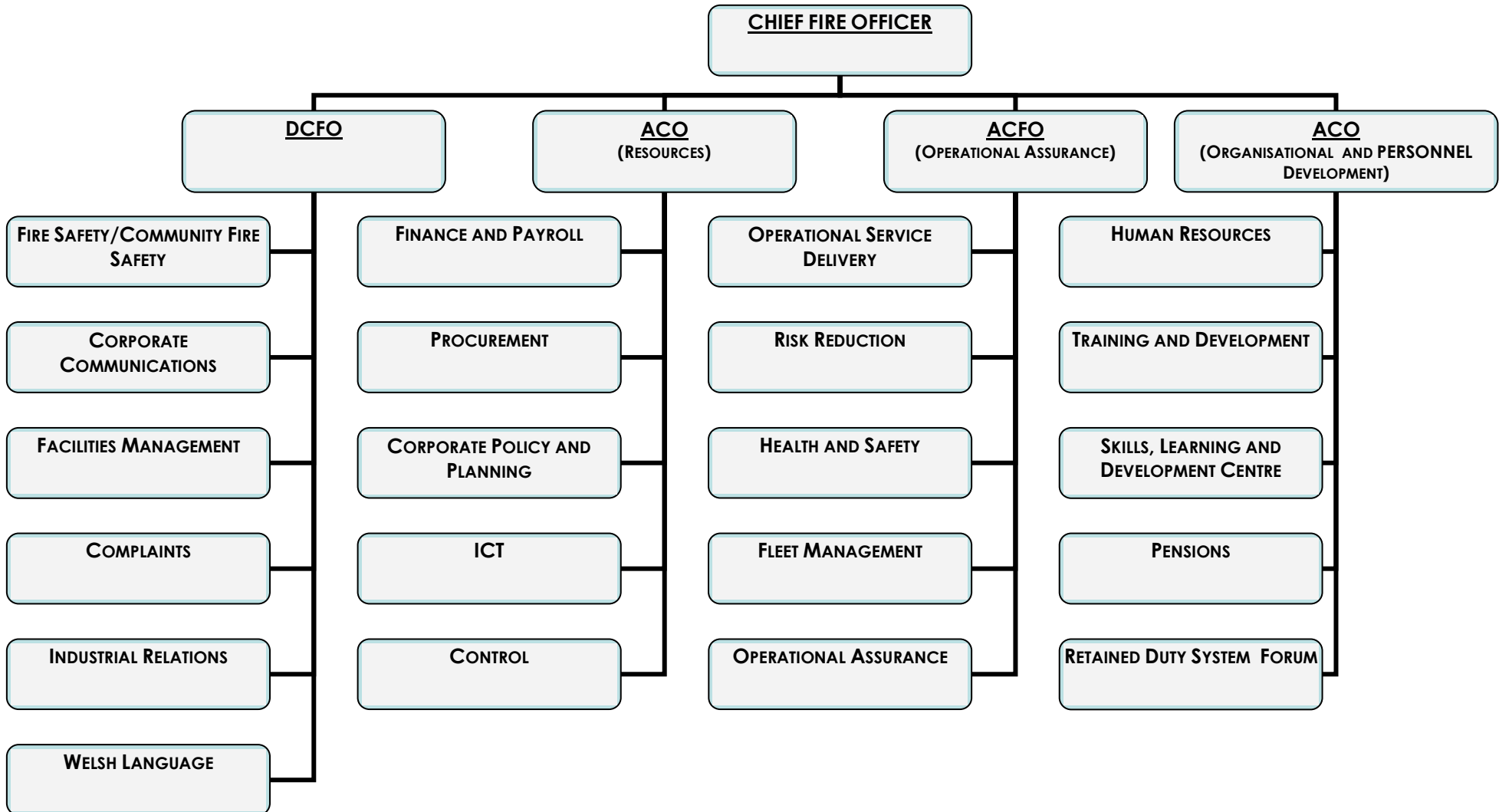
Governmental responsibility for fire and rescue services and the promotion of fire safety in Wales lies with the **Welsh Assembly Government**. The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government heads the Merthyr Tydfil-based *Department for Social Justice and Local Government* which has four divisions relating to: Communities, Local Government Policy, Local Government Finance and Community Safety (which includes fire).

The Welsh Assembly Government's vision is that fire and rescue authorities in Wales should:

- Strive to make communities safer but in doing so be at the heart of the communities they serve, having a transparent decision-making process which involves the communities.
- Work seamlessly with each other, other emergency services, other partners and the community, delivering cohesive services that maximize not only FRAs resources but also those of partner organisations.
- Recognize the impact they can have on the environment (natural and built) and society's social fabric – contributing to meeting Assembly Government sustainability objectives through operational activities, preventative action and by examining the impact of their own organisation.
- Recognize the diversity within their communities, ensure that their staff reflects the diversity in the community and be able to reach their full potential ensuring equality of opportunity for all in delivering services to the public.

(Fire and Rescue National Framework 2008-2011)

SERVICE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



SERVICE WORKFORCE STRUCTURE

This table shows the number of posts funded (not individual people employed) as at 31st March 2008.

		WDS					RDS	Control		Support staff	
	All posts	Central /County functions	Staff development	Fire Safety	Fire Stations	Non-operational	Posts on fire stations as 24 hour units of cover	Control non-watch	Control on watch	Support staff	
Principal Officer	5	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Area Manager	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Group Manager	14	13	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
Station Manager	32	11	1	17	0	3	0	0	0	0	
Watch Manager	109	4	11	14	22	2	46	2	8	0	
Crew Manager	148	0	0	3	48	0	92	1	4	0	
Firefighter	583	0	0	0	143	0	428	0	12	0	
Support Staff	122	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	122	
Totals	1016	35	12	34	213	6	566	4	24	122	
		300						566	26		122

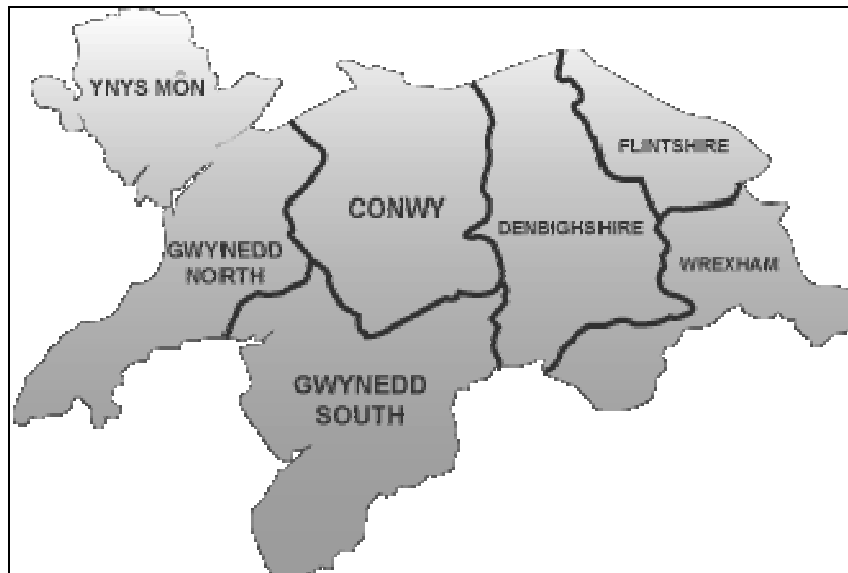
WDS = wholetime duty system

RDS = retained duty system

FACTS AND FIGURES

General

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service operates across the six unitary authority areas of North Wales, helping to protect a population of around 675,563³, 301,065 domestic properties⁴ and 27,050 non-domestic properties⁵. Additionally, it protects visitors, transport network users, the natural environment (including beyond its coastline), businesses and other infrastructures. It supports other fire and rescue services in the UK when required and remains continually prepared to protect in the event of large scale disasters.



Map showing the seven county areas of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

Financial

In 2007-08, the Authority's net expenditure amounted to £29,456,445. The budget for 2008-09 has been set 2.99% higher at £30,338,171.

Employees

On 31st March 2008, a total of 1,063 individual people were employed by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service – 287 men and 13 women as wholetime firefighters/managers, 577 men and 19 women as retained

³ ONS Mid Year Estimates www.statswales.wales.gov.uk

⁴ Council Tax Dwelling Return (CT1) www.statswales.wales.gov.uk

⁵ National Non-Domestic Rates (NDR1) www.statswales.wales.gov.uk

firefighters, 4 men and 28 women as control staff, and 49 men and 86 women in a range of supporting roles⁶.

Staff profiles on the next page give more detail of a workforce that is becoming increasingly diverse.

Assets

In North Wales, there are 44 fire stations, 3 of which (in Wrexham, Queensferry and Rhyl) stay open around the clock; 5 of which are permanently staffed between 12:00 midday and 10:00 p.m. and operate as retained fire stations outside those hours; and 36 which operate wholly as retained fire stations.

Since 2005, the main headquarters function has been run from premises on the St Asaph Business Park, and there are county headquarters offices located within each of the 6 county council areas. Some central functions are run from Rhyl; Fleet Maintenance workshops and Stores are located in purpose-built premises in Llandudno Junction. In addition to the main skills learning and development centre in Rhyl, there are other training facilities in Dolgellau.

The main control room is co-located with the Police Control at the Joint Communications centre in St Asaph, with a secondary fallback control room in Rhyl. Also this year, the first purpose-built Community Fire Station in North Wales opened its doors to the public in Rhyl.

The Service also has a fleet of operational and support vehicles to respond in a range of emergency and non-emergency situations:

- 4 Aerial appliances
- 1 Fire Bike
- 27 cars
- 4 minibuses
- 63 vans
- 66 fire appliances
- 35 special appliances.

⁶ Information supplied in 2007-08 Annual Operational Returns HRFW10-17

WORKFORCE PROFILES AS AT 31ST MARCH 2008

Age Profile:

Part of the modernisation of the fire and rescue service nationally is concerned with creating a workforce that reflects the local communities it serves. By doing so, the service will be better placed to engage with – and therefore to protect - those communities.

The Authority is committed to fairness and equality, and promotes actions that will help to achieve a more diverse workforce.

At the end of March 2008, the majority - over 81% - of the workforce were between 25 and 49 years of age.

Age as at 31 March 2008	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-54	55-59	60+	All
Retained Operational	39	180	313	50	14	0	596
Wholetime Operational	3	68	191	31	7	0	300
Support	12	34	51	21	7	10	135
Control	1	7	20	2	2	0	32
All staff	55	289	575	104	30	10	1063
As a percentage	5.2%	27.2%	54.1%	9.8%	2.8%	0.9%	100%

Gender Profile:

Of the 1,063 people employed, 917 (86%) were men, and 146 (14%) were women. The percentage of operational firefighters who are women fell slightly between 2006-07 and 2007-08 from 3.9% to 3.6%.

The Authority wants to attain a better gender balance in the Service – particularly in the operational sector of the Service that is still predominantly male. Through positive action campaigns when vacancies arise and more general messages that challenge old stereotypes and show that a career in the fire and rescue service is attractive to both women and men, the Authority hopes to persuade more women to apply.

Race Profile:

Of the 1,063 people employed, almost 97% classified their racial origin as white. Only 0.8% of staff came from a minority ethnic background, compared to 1.0% of people aged between 18 and 64 years in North Wales.

Racial origin	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Chinese	Not recorded	All
Retained Operational	567	3	1	3	0	22	596
Wholetime Operational	298	0	1	0	0	1	300
Support	134	0	0	0	0	1	135
Control	32	0	0	0	0	0	32
All staff	1031	3	2	3	0	24	1063
As a percentage	96.9%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0%	2.3%	100%

The Authority is also committed to achieving a workforce that better reflects the ethnic profile of North Wales, recognising the positive impact that a diverse workforce can have in improving safety.

Language Profile:

The Service recognises the importance of the Welsh language for day to day internal and external communication. Policies, action plans and performance indicators are set out in our Welsh Language Scheme 2006-09.

Disability Profile:

16 (1.8%) operational firefighters categorised themselves as having a disability, as did 8 (4.8%) members of control and support staff. This totals 2.3%, compared with 17.6% of people aged between 18 and 64 years in North Wales.

The fire and rescue service has traditionally excluded people with disabilities, but more recent experience nationally has shown that disability need not necessarily be a barrier to a successful career in the service.

Recruitment and employment policies are now in place to ensure that disability does not of itself disqualify people from employment in the fire and rescue service.

Training and Development:

5,817 days/shifts were spent by staff undergoing training and development activities in 2007-08. The Authority is committed to continuing to provide opportunities for staff development, recognising the importance of a highly skilled and highly motivated workforce.

SECTION 2

LOOKING BACK OVER 2007-08

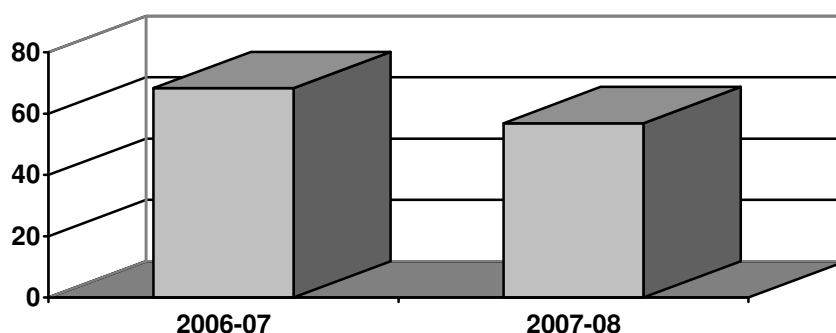
PERFORMANCE

All fires are categorised as being either primary, secondary or chimney fires. Please refer to the glossary for a fuller explanation.

As defined in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Authority's primary function is to promote fire safety in North Wales. It achieves this in a variety of ways, including through general and targeted Community Fire Safety activities and publicity, arranging and participating in special events, leading and contributing to partnerships, delivering school and youth programmes, working with groups of particularly vulnerable people, giving advice to the owners of commercial, public and other non-domestic premises, and reducing the incidence of arson and anti-social behaviour.

All Fires

All Fires per 10,000 population



Between 2006-07 and 2007-08, the overall number of fires attended in North Wales fell by 16.5%. This was mainly as a result of a large reduction in the number of grassland and gorse fires and which are weather-related and in fires in refuse and refuse containers which tend to arise from acts of deliberate fire-setting.

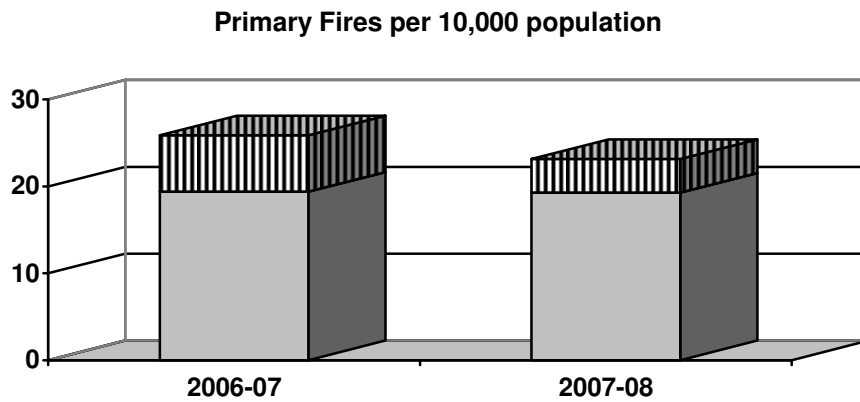
There was also evidence that the work of the Joint Arson Reduction Team had been effective in that the number of deliberate fires fell by almost a quarter. This team comprises staff from both North Wales Police and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service working together to tackle problems of arson and antisocial behaviour than can lead to acts of deliberate fire-setting.

Furthermore, the number of fires in non-domestic premises fell by just under 23% between the two years, coinciding with the introduction of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This new legislation replaced most fire safety legislation with one simple order that requires any person with some level of control in premises other than domestic dwellings to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and to make sure people can escape safely if there is a fire.

Despite having taken a decision during the course of 2007-08 to introduce a new strategy that would greatly increase the number of free Home Fire Safety Checks delivered to people living in North Wales, there was no immediate reduction in the number of accidental dwelling fires attended in that year. However, given that the strategy assures a longer-term increase in safety, we would anticipate both a reduction in the number of these fires as well as the number of fire deaths and injuries over the next decade as more homes are fitted with smoke detectors and people become increasingly aware of the risk of fire.

	Primary Fires	Secondary Fires	Chimney Fires	Total Fires
2006-07	1,743	2,592	268	4,601
Per 10,000 population	25.87	38.48	3.98	68.30
2007-08	1,564	2,000	280	3,844
Per 10,000 population	23.15	29.60	4.14	56.90
Change	- 10.3%	-22.9%	+4.5%	-16.5%

Primary Fires



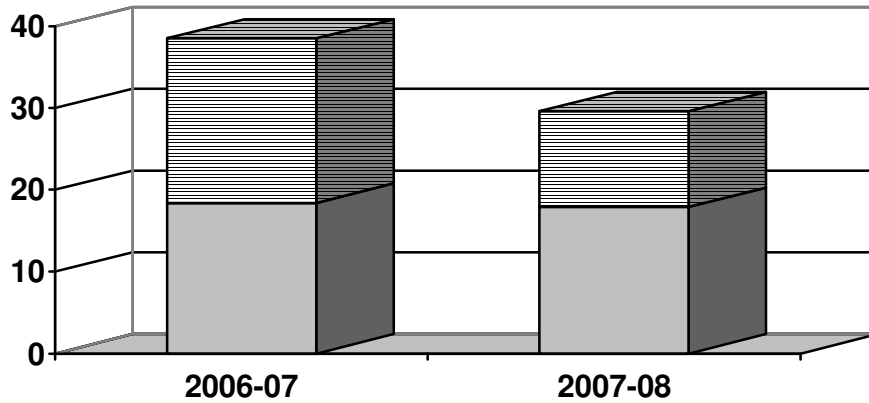
Between 2006-07 and 2007-08, the number of primary fires attended in North Wales fell by 10.3% reflecting the impressive 40% reduction in the number of deliberate primary fires in vehicles (illustrated by the striped areas in the graph above).

A reduction in primary fires is one of the best measures of increased safety, and is therefore at the forefront of reducing risk.

The success of the Service's twin approaches of educating people to avoid accidental fires and taking action to prevent acts of deliberate fire setting is well measured by this indicator.

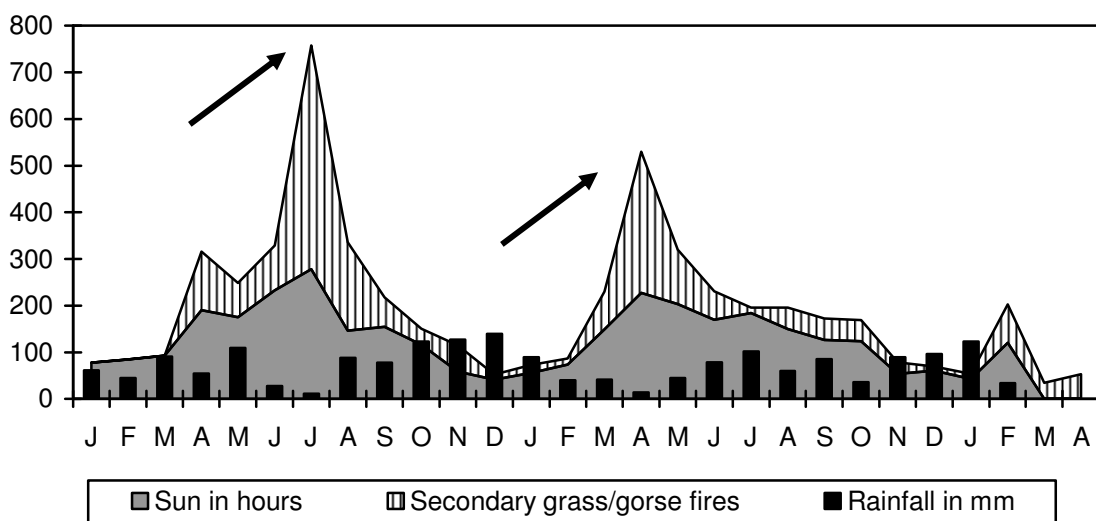
Secondary Fires

Secondary Fires per 10,000 population



In 2007-08 the Service attended almost 23% fewer secondary fires than in the previous year, partly as a result of preventative work and timely reminders, but also probably as a result of different weather conditions that gave rise to fewer grass and gorse fires (as illustrated by the striped area in the graph above).

Comparing sun and rain information and the number of secondary grassland and gorse fires attended between Spring 2006 and Spring 2008 illustrates how peaks in the number of those fires correspond closely to times of high sunlight hours and low levels of rainfall.

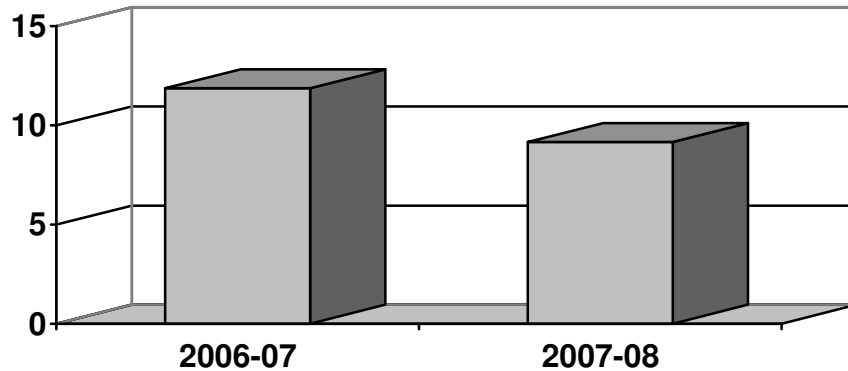


This relationship between North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the fluctuations of the weather has an organizational impact. Two-thirds of the operational workforce are employed on a Retained Duty System where pay is linked to the actual number of calls attended. Financial planning therefore needs to take account of the unpredictability of when periods of high levels of calls will occur, whether as the result of particularly hot dry conditions or of stormy wet conditions.

All three Welsh fire and rescue services are currently working together to review the contractual arrangements for the Retained Duty System to see what, if anything, can be done to improve these arrangements.

Non-domestic Fires

Fires in Non-Domestic Premises per 1,000 Non-Domestic Premises



There are just over 27,000 non-domestic premises in North Wales, most of which are subject to legislation designed to ensure the safety of the people inside them.

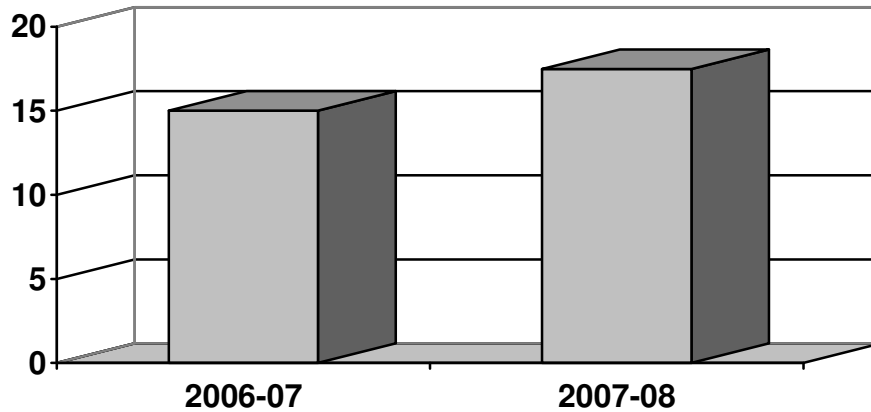
The number of fires attended in these premises in 2007-08 (248) was almost 23% lower than in the previous year (321), possibly as a result of an intensive focus on fire safety by the managers of premises following the introduction of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 that came into force in October 2006. This new order relates to a range of premises including, for example, hospitals, care homes, houses converted into flats, public buildings, schools, shops, licensed premises, offices, factories, hostels and hotels.

The introduction of this order changed the role of the Fire and Rescue Authority to one of enforcement rather than of certification, so the focus for the Service has changed more recently to prioritizing known premises to undergo a formal audit of their fire safety arrangements. In 2007-08, 583 audits of premises were conducted, resulting in 52 enforcement notices and 10 prohibition notices being served where arrangements have not been up to standard.

A minimum Service target of 2,496 completed Fire Safety Audits has been set for 2008-09.

Fires in the Home

Accidental Fires in Dwellings per 10,000 Dwellings



There are around 300,000 dwellings in North Wales. In 2007-08, 526 of those were damaged by accidental fires that necessitated the attendance of at least one fire engine. This was an unwelcome 16.8% increase from the previous year, especially given that a total of 26,504 Home Fire Safety Checks had been provided free of charge to people living in North Wales, compared to 16,176 the previous year.

A maximum Service target of 480 accidental dwelling fires has been set for 2008-09.

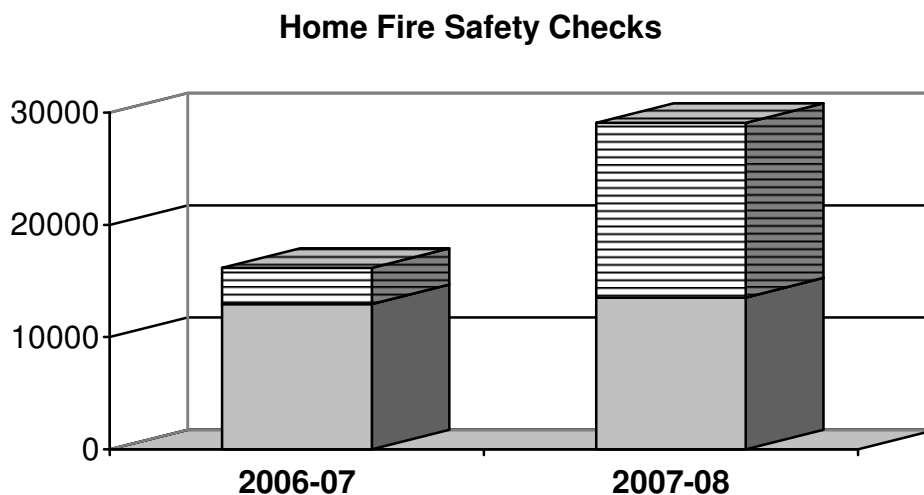
Fires in the home have been shown to be the ones where people are most often killed or injured, and therefore reducing these is a primary objective for the Authority.

Home Fire Safety Checks

Following a peak in the number of fire deaths in North Wales in 2006, the Service embarked on a programme of substantially increased Community Fire Safety activity, which included setting an initial target to deliver 30,000 free Home Fire Safety Checks per year.

Furthermore, the Service focused increasingly on developing ways to receive and respond to referrals and requests for Home Fire Safety Checks by or on behalf of residents, formalized through the Wales Accord for the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI).

The increase in administration time and in face-to-face contact with members of the public in their own homes has increased workloads across the Service. However, the increase in the overall number of Home Fire Safety Checks has largely been achieved using non-operational staff. Specialist posts were created during the year to increase the service's capacity to deliver prevention work without detracting from its operational effectiveness.



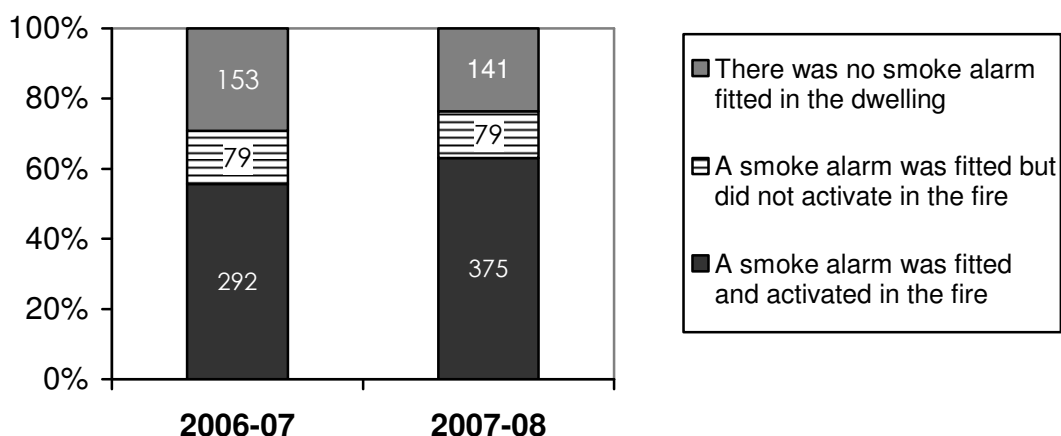
The contribution made by non-operational staff is illustrated by the striped areas in the graph.

Smoke Alarms

Although it is impossible to know precisely how many homes in North Wales have a working smoke detector installed, a proxy indicator relates to the number of domestic fires attended where a smoke alarm activated. A long term target of 100% has therefore been set.

Sometimes people fail to see the importance of a smoke alarm, and either decide not to have one at all, fail to maintain it, fail to replace the batteries when they run out, or even take the batteries out to use them in something else.

Smoke Alarm Ownership



The graph above illustrates how already a higher percentage of working smoke alarms is being seen in the dwellings where the Service attends to deal with a fire.

Smoke alarms have been shown to save lives by providing early warning of a fire starting thereby giving time for people to escape before the fire spreads.

By 2007-08, the percentage of fires attended in dwellings where a working smoke alarm had activated had increased to 63% compared to 56% in 2006-07 – a good indication that the Service's strategy for achieving 100% smoke alarm ownership is effective.

Smoke Alarms

	Accidental dwelling fires attended	Deliberate dwelling fires attended	Number already fitted with a working smoke alarm ⁷	Percentage already fitted with a working smoke alarm
2006-07	450	74	292	55.7%
Per 10,000 dwellings	15.0	2.5		
2007-08	526	69	375	63.0%
Per 10,000 dwellings	17.5	2.3		
Change	+ 16.8%	- 6.8%	83	+ 7.3%

The figures in the table above illustrate the impact that the increased number of Home Fire Safety Checks is having.

The Service's aim is to reach a point whereby all dwellings in North Wales are fitted with a working smoke alarm. The increase from 55.7% to 63% in the right hand column is therefore an encouraging sign of progress towards reaching this target.

⁷ For consistency, fires where a working heat/fire alarm was fitted have been added to this category although the reported % in the now discontinued Best Value Performance Indicator 209 specifically excluded these.

Keeping People Safe

Although one fire per 600 dwellings in North Wales may not initially seem high, national statistics over several years have shown that fires in the home are the deadliest, accounting for the highest number of fire deaths. They are also the most preventable if residents follow guidance that should by now be becoming familiar.

Hard-hitting messages have been issued by the Service over many years about (amongst others) the dangers of:

- using a chip pan
- leaving cooking unattended
- cooking when under the influence of drink or drugs
- not switching off electrical appliances after use
- careless positioning of lit candles
- smoking in bed
- carelessly disposing of cigarette ends
- playing with matches
- failing to use a fire guard in front of open fires
- not ensuring that chimneys are swept regularly
- unsafe electrical wiring and overloaded sockets
- placing clothes to air near heaters and open fires

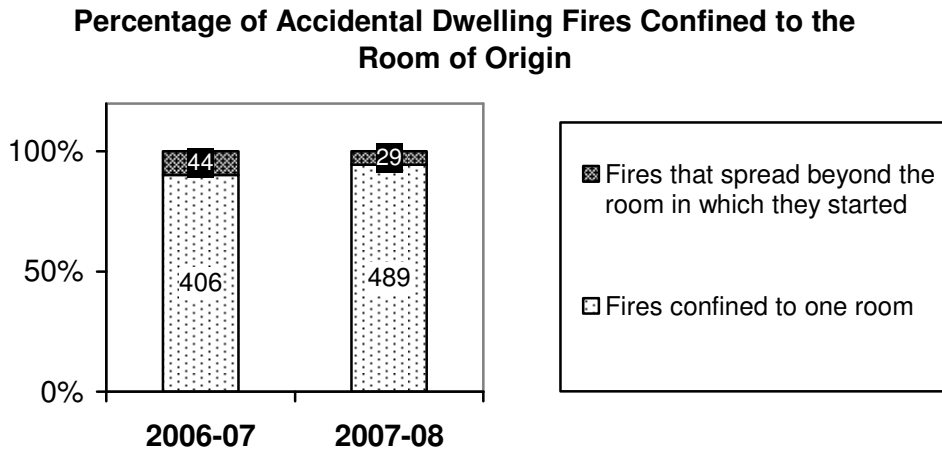
Advice and guidance is freely available on request to anyone living in North Wales, including through referrals from other agencies concerned with the safety and wellbeing of particularly vulnerable individuals.

This free advice and Home Fire Safety Check includes the free supply and fitting of smoke detectors in people's homes, and can include other specialist equipment to help keep them safe. Friendly Fire and Rescue Service staff help residents to consider their escape plans in the event of a fire, which is especially important if residents are very young, frail, or disabled.

Advice is also given on good night-time routines of checking that doors are shut properly, electrical appliances have been switched off, candles and cigarettes safely extinguished, open fires have been made safe, and so on.

Keeping People Safe

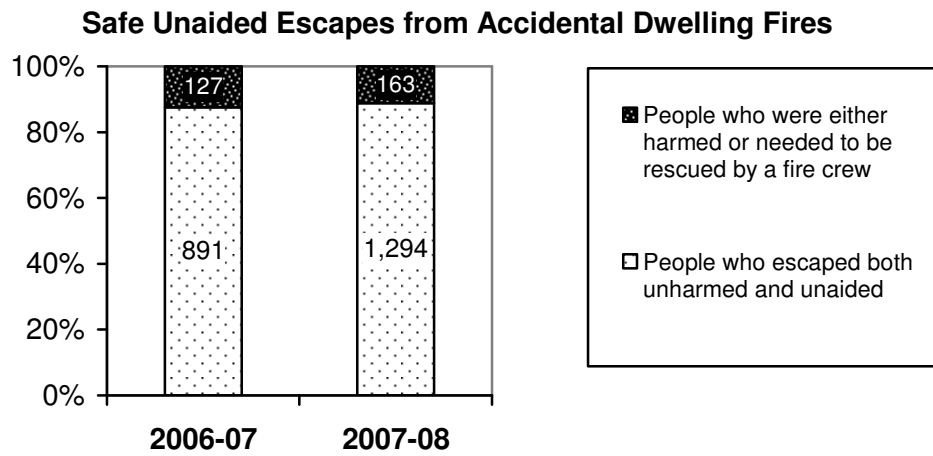
In the majority of cases (94.4% in 2007-08), accidental dwelling fires can be confined to one room. This relies mainly on closing internal doors, but is also partly dependent on how soon a fire engine arrives.



The Service emphasises the need for smoke alarms to give early warning so that people can escape safely before the fire has had time to spread and grow.

The Authority's aim is to reach a position whereby every dwelling is fitted with a properly fitted, working smoke alarm. The smoke alarms fitted by the Service have 10 year batteries that cannot be removed. By adopting a target of providing 30,000 Home Fire Safety Checks per year, the Authority's aim is to have reached the majority of the 300,000 dwellings in North Wales by the time the first smoke alarms fitted need to be replaced.

Keeping People Safe



The majority of people caught up in accidental dwelling fires (88.8% in 2007-08) were able to get out alive and uninjured without waiting for a fire crew to come to rescue them. However, some were not as fortunate.

A minimum Service target of 90% has been set for 2008-09.

The Authority has not reported against National Strategic Indicators FRS/RRC/S/004(i-iv) for 2007-08. These indicators relate to Home Fire Safety Checks provided in areas of higher risk as mapped by the Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) risk modelling software, and to fires occurring in the same premises within two years of having a Home Fire Safety Check.

In the absence of sufficiently accurate historical records of Home Fire Safety Checks and the necessary computerised systems to cross-reference mapped areas, incident data and Home Fire Safety Check addresses, it has not been possible to report against these indicators for 2007-08.

The Authority's target of delivering 30,000 Home Fire Safety Checks per year, extensive changes to mobilising systems, the relocation of primary and secondary control rooms, the development of the Rhyl Community Fire Station and a range of other important changes have meant that the Service's resources have been stretched. However, solutions are being sought to rectify this problem as quickly as possible.

Keeping People Safe

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration stated in 2003 that it was the Assembly Government's target to reduce deaths in fires by between 30% and 50% in the following five years. Since then, the Assembly has clarified that the baseline figures that will be used to assess the progress of Fire and Rescue Authorities against this ambitious target will be the figures for the calendar year 2004 when there were 26 fire deaths in Wales (21 as a result of accidental fires and 5 as a result of deliberate fires).

Although fire deaths happen comparatively infrequently in North Wales, they are nevertheless tragic occurrences that the Authority is determined to do its utmost to reduce even further. The sad truth is that by the time the Service has received a call for assistance in most cases it is already too late to save some people from the danger of fire. Some are not discovered until some time after the fire has burned itself out. Prevention is therefore at the forefront of the Authority's strategy for reducing the number of people killed or injured by fire.

In 2007-08, no fire deaths were recorded as a result of fires in non-domestic premises. However, eight people lost their lives in fires in domestic premises. Seven of those died as a result of a fire that started accidentally.

	Fire deaths from accidental fires	Fire deaths from deliberate fires	All fire deaths
2007-08	8	2	10
Per 100,000 population	1.18	0.30	1.48

In 2007-08, 49 people were injured in accidental dwelling fires. A maximum Service target of 36 injuries in accidental dwelling fires has been set for 2008-09.

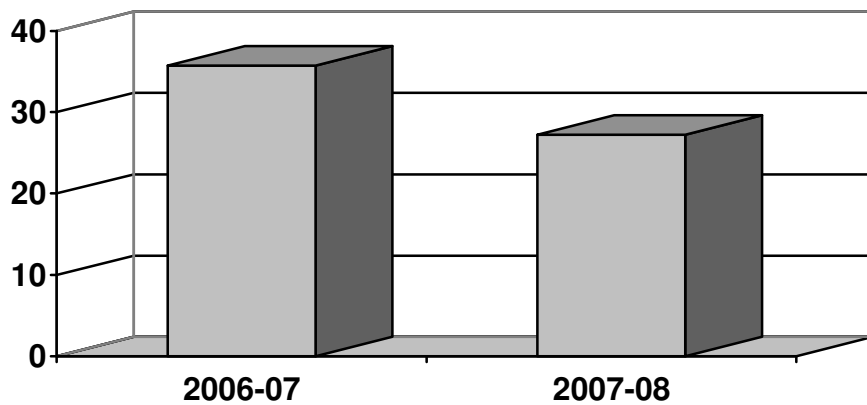
	Fire injuries from accidental fires	Fire injuries from deliberate fires	All fire injuries
2007-08	58	22	80
Per 100,000 population	8.59	3.26	11.84

Fires Started Deliberately

Deliberate fires create significant risk to lives, businesses and the economy, schools and other community activity, the natural environment and heritage sites.

A team from both Police and Fire working together is helping to tackle this issue across North Wales. An all-Wales Arson Reduction Strategy has been developed to co-ordinate and add impetus to the work being undertaken.

Deliberate Fires per 10,000 Population



People have a range of motives for deliberately starting fires including to conceal evidence of criminality or to defraud insurers or to deliberately cause harm to themselves or other people. As such, it makes sense for the Fire and Rescue Service and the Police to work together to reduce the incidence of deliberate fires, whatever the motive behind them.

Fires Started Deliberately

	Deliberate primary fires in vehicles	Deliberate primary fires in other locations	Deliberate secondary fires	All deliberate fires
2006-07	436	290	1680	2406
Per 10,000 population	6.5	4.3	24.94	35.72
2007-08	260	266	1314	1840
Per 10,000 population	3.85	3.94	19.45	27.24
Change	- 40.4%	- 8.3%	- 21.8%	- 23.5%

By working together in a highly effective collaboration, North Wales Police and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service have been able to tackle both serious criminal acts and low level anti-social behaviour that lead to deliberate fire-setting.

Between 2006-07 and 2007-08 there was a reduction of 566 deliberate fires.

False Fire Alarms

Automatic Fire Alarm False Alarms - Repeat and nuisance false alarms from non-domestic premises increase risk and waste fire and rescue service resources.

False Alarms from Automatic Fire Alarms per 1,000 Non-domestic Properties



Between 2006-07 and 2007-08, the number of these false alarms was reduced by 3.4% from 2,092 to 2,020.

The Authority endorses the installation of Automatic Fire Alarms in non-domestic properties in order to warn anyone on the premises of the presence of fire. However, the Service's experience is that almost half of the non-domestic premises attended in response to a system-generated false alarm end up calling the Service out more than once for the same reason.

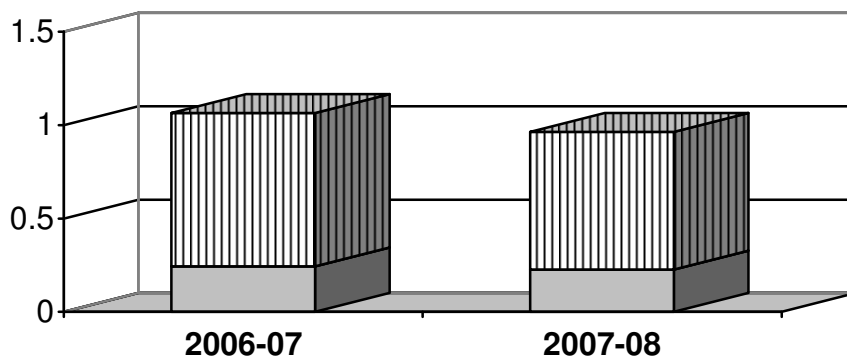
In 2007-08, the Service was called to 815 different premises because their automatic fire alarm sent out a false alarm. 42% (342) of those generated repeat false alarms, creating a total of 1,547 false alarms between them. The percentage was even higher - 46% - in the previous year.

A Service target reduction of 10% is still in effect, and therefore we would expect to see the number of false alarms from automatic fire alarms fall from 2,020 to 1,818 in 2008-09.

False Fire Alarms

Malicious False - Acknowledging the risk-increasing effect of attending malicious false alarms, the Service seeks to reduce the number being received each year, and to recognise the call as being a malicious false alarm before any resources are sent out to it on at least 75% of occasions.

Malicious False Alarms Attended per 1,000 population



In 2006-07, 717 malicious false alarms were received, of which 164 (23%) were attended.

In 2007-08, 652 malicious false alarms were received, of which 154 (24%) were attended.

The striped areas on the graph above illustrate how many malicious false alarms are identified as being false before any fire appliances are mobilised. Steps are taken to identify the source of malicious false alarms and wherever possible, action is taken against people who make these false calls to the fire and rescue service.

Response Times

In addition to preventing fires from starting in dwellings, the Authority acknowledges the need to respond both quickly and safely to any that do start.

Average Time Taken

In 2007-08, the average time taken to attend a dwelling fire in North Wales was **7 minutes 53 seconds**. This was measured from the point at which the Control operator had received enough information to summon the appropriate fire station, to when the first fire engine arrived at the scene of the fire. The calculation includes the time needed for Retained fire crews to turn in to the local fire station having received an alerter message and the travel time from the fire station to the incident.

Response in Under 10, 15 and 20 Minutes

In North Wales in 2007-08, 78.2% of dwelling fires were attended in 10 minutes or less, 95.1% were attended in 15 minutes or less, and 99.3% were attended in 20 minutes or less. The four dwelling fires that did not receive an attendance within 20 minutes were reached after between 23 and 33 minutes.

The Welsh Assembly Government has committed to ensuring that 80% of homes (when measured across the whole of Wales) will be close enough to firefighting resources to enable a fire engine to arrive within 10 minutes. Allowance is made within that time for Retained crews to respond to their fire station, and for donning personal protective equipment before setting out. The distance from a fire station is therefore necessarily going to be fairly short. A 5 minute standard also exists in some particularly densely populated high risk areas of Wales. Given the rurality of large parts of North Wales the distances of dwellings from the closest fire station inevitably mean that in many cases it will take longer than 10 minutes to attend, which is why so much emphasis is placed by the Authority on preventing fires.

The availability of sufficient Retained Duty System firefighters to crew a fire engine at all times is also a key factor in maintaining full coverage of North Wales. A Service target of 100% availability of fully-crewed fire engines at retained fire stations has been set for 2008-09.

Improving Response Times

The Service, of course, responds quickly to all emergency incidents, not just to fires in dwellings. By moving its primary Control room to a purpose built facility with North Wales Police this will help in that both services will be better placed to co-ordinate their response to calls for assistance. An arrangement with the Wales Ambulance Service also ensures that the Fire and Rescue Service gets to know about road traffic collisions sooner than used to be the case, allowing it to respond and arrive quicker, thereby shortening the time until any work to release people trapped in their vehicle can begin.

North Wales has 44 fire stations, 36 of which are crewed by firefighting staff who work on a Retained Duty System whereby they respond in from wherever they might be in the area whenever they are required to attend an emergency incident. The speed of attendance therefore takes this into account.

Other work that has been undertaken in recent years to improve the turnout and attendance times of fire stations includes the use of new technology to assist with selecting the closest fire engine or other vehicle to attend, changing the shift start and finish times at day crewed stations, and continuously updating mobilising, communications and information systems in the Control room.

Any delays in attending are thoroughly investigated, so that lessons may be learned to improve overall performance. Good fleet management and high quality regular servicing of vehicles also play their part, including the careful scheduling of maintenance checks – on the fire station itself, if possible - to shorten the period during which vehicles are unavailable.

The Authority has not reported against National Strategic Indicators FRS/EFR/S/001 and FRS/EFR/S/002 for 2007-08.

The Service Standard was issued through Welsh Assembly Government circular W-FRSC(06) 08 in March 2006. However, as the details of the accepted interpretation and measurement of this complex Standard were not issued until almost two years later (Order 2008 No. 450 (W.40) was issued in February 2008), at the end of the 2007-08 reporting year, information has not been compiled retrospectively for that reporting year.

Sickness Absence

Challenging targets for an average of 6.5 working days/shifts lost per wholetime firefighter were set a few years ago by the UK government. This target that was initially set for achievement by 2005 has been adopted across the whole Service, and remains in force.

Excluding firefighters who work the Retained Duty System, the number of working days or shifts lost to sickness absence by all other staff (as full time equivalents) in 2007-08 totalled 3,594 compared to 3,770 the previous year. At 8.1 days or shifts per person, this is still higher than the target, but is nevertheless a 5% improvement on the previous year, which can be attributed to a closer focus on managing sickness absence, finding alternative duties where appropriate to help bring people back to work as soon as possible.

In April 2008 the Service received a gold level award against the Corporate Standard for Health at Work in recognition of its achievements in workplace health and wellbeing. It is now working towards the platinum level.

A large reduction (almost 53%) has been achieved in the number of days or shifts lost due to work-related sickness.

	Days/Shifts Lost due to Service 2006-07	Days/Shifts Lost due to Service 2007-08	Days/Shifts lost not due to Service 2006-07	Days/Shifts lost not due to Service 2007-08
Wholetime Operational Staff	214	111	1,955	2,199
Support Staff	65	21	1,294	1,114
Control Staff	0	0	142	149
Total	279	132	3,391	3,462

Ill-Health Retirements

As a balance to the target for reducing sickness absence, a national target for ill-health retirements was also set for achievement initially by 2005 to 6.9 retirements per thousand employees.

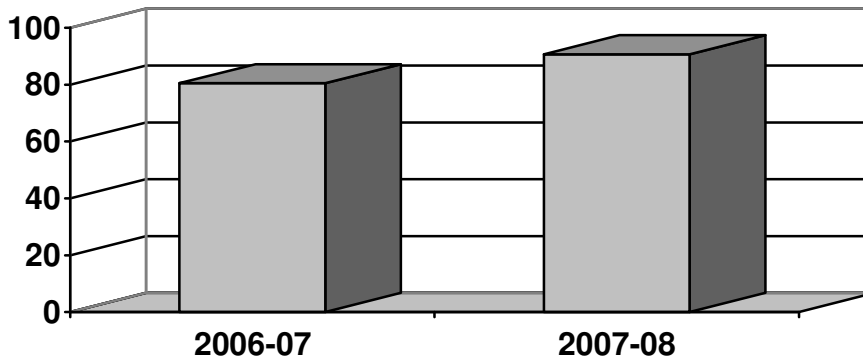
In 2007-08, four people retired from the Service due to ill-health. This represents 0.38% of the total workforce, or 3.8 per thousand employees, which is well within the target.

Prompt Invoice Payment

The Authority aims to be a good organisation to do business with, and one aspect of that is the prompt payment of undisputed invoices for commercial goods and services.

In 2007-08, the Service handled 9,649 invoices that fell into this category – 430 more than in 2006-07. Despite this, the percentage paid in 30 days or sooner increased to 90.7%, compared with 80.5% the previous year.

The Percentage of Undisputed Invoices Paid Within 30 Days



The improvement in this measure of internal efficiency is encouraging.

PERFORMANCE COMPARED

North Wales Performance Compared With Other Areas

Fire and Rescue Services are not all the same – size, population density, population profile and the characteristics of the terrain are just a few examples of the kinds of things that influence the way they operate. Comparing performance against other Services therefore has to be done carefully in order to get a fair and meaningful set of comparisons.

A few years ago, 'family groups' of fire and rescue services were set up by the UK Government to facilitate comparison of performance. North Wales was put in the same group as Cumbria, North Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Hereford and Worcester, Mid and West Wales and Devon. Devon and Somerset fire and rescue services have amalgamated since that time.

The following comparisons are based on provisional data provided from each of the comparator fire and rescue services, and provide an indication of North Wales's relative strengths and areas for improvement.

Better than the Comparator Group Average in 2007-08

	FAMILY GROUP AVERAGE	NORTH WALES
The number of fires in non-domestic properties per 1,000 non-domestic properties.	10.4	9.17
The number of deliberate secondary fires (excluding those in vehicles) per 10,000 population	20.9	19.3
The percentage of accidental fires in dwellings confined to the room of origin	92.3%	94.4%
The number of calls to malicious false alarms attended per 1,000 population	0.3	0.2
The percentage of dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm had activated	50.2%	59.3%

At or Approaching the Comparator Group Average in 2007-08

	FAMILY GROUP AVERAGE	NORTH WALES
The percentage of operational staff who are women	3.96%	3.57%
The number of deliberate primary fires in vehicles per 10,000 population	3.9	3.9
The number of deliberate primary fires (excluding those in vehicles) per 10,000 population	3.4	3.9
The number of false alarms attended that came from Automatic Fire Alarms per 1,000 non-domestic properties	74.3	74.7
The percentage of false alarm calls from automatic fire alarms in non-domestic properties that had more than one attendance during the year	76.2%	76.6%

Not as Good as the Comparator Group Average in 2007-08

	FAMILY GROUP AVERAGE	NORTH WALES
The number of primary fires per 10,000 population	21.2	23.2
The number of accidental fires in dwellings per 10,000 dwellings	15.7	17.5
The number of deaths from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population	0.64	1.03
The number of injuries from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population	5.08	7.25
The percentage of people who escaped unharmed and unaided from accidental dwelling fires	93.0%	88.8%
The number of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per full time equivalent employee	7.8%	8.1%

SECTION 3

RISK

Inspections of Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales falls to the Wales Audit Office. Their inspection takes the form of an operational assessment, undertaken by a Peer Assessment Team observed by Wales Audit Office staff, and a non-operational assessment undertaken by Wales Audit Office staff.

The findings of these two inspection processes are fed into a Joint Risk Assessment agreed by the Wales Audit Office, the Peer Assessment Team and officers of the Fire and Rescue Service. The Joint Risk Assessment is updated each year.

Joint Risk Assessment 2008

The most recent Assessment, published in June 2008 identified that:

The operational assessment identified improvements but also highlighted key risks relating to the high number of accidental fire deaths, risk analysis, spate conditions and operational policies.

The Authority needs to develop and deliver a clear direction of travel to address the challenges - operational, financial and organisational - that it faces.

As well as highlighting a number of areas in which there has been improvement, the updated Joint Risk Assessment highlighted thirteen key priorities that it considered should support the Authority's efforts to reduce the high number of accidental fire deaths, particularly the need to back the strategic vision with actions relating to priorities identified in the Risk Reduction Plan.

Joint Risk Assessment 2008

The thirteen key priority areas for the Authority identified through the Joint Risk Assessment 2008 are:

KEY PRIORITY 1. - RISK ANALYSIS

Being able to analyse risk is extremely important – North Wales Fire and Rescue Service identifies and manages risks to the organisation through its risk reduction forum and by having a clear organisational structure it ensures that risk is identified and managed at an appropriate level.

The Authority has engaged in the process of implementing risk reduction measures, and the Authority's Risk Reduction Plan clearly identifies the Service's priorities in developing Community resilience and more critically the resilience of service delivery.

The Service has developed an approach to managing risks, including a focus on earlier studies and the risks these identified. The approach incorporates the last operational peer review and the Chief Fire Officer's Task Group Report. Senior officers have been allocated specific actions and they report on progress at regular intervals.

KEY PRIORITY 2. - THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER'S TASK GROUP REPORT

In 2006, the Chief Fire Officer set up a Task Group to review the significant increase in the number of accidental fire deaths. This task group was chaired by the Chief Fire Officer and included the Chief Constable of North Wales and the Chief Executive of Flintshire. The potential risk identified in this Joint Risk Assessment was around capacity to deliver on objectives arising from the Chief Fire Officer's Task Group.

Actions identified in last year's Peer Review and the Chief Fire Officer's Task Group report are being implemented. The Chief Fire Officer has taken overall control of this process and receives regular updates from managers.

KEY PRIORITY 3. - OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The health and safety of staff is high on the Authority's agenda – failing to have up to date information regarding specific hazardous locations available to fire crews was therefore identified as a potential risk to the Authority.

Development in this area has been hampered by the absence of a mobile data solution, but given the potential for loss of life, lessons should be learned from past tragedies.

In light of tragic loss of firefighters' lives elsewhere in the UK, and ahead of any formal finding from the Health and Safety Executive, the Service took steps to fully review its systems for collecting and distributing risk information on premises.

KEY PRIORITY 4. - SPATE CONDITIONS POLICY

Spate conditions is the term used to describe an unusually busy period of simultaneous demand on the Service, usually caused by a surge in large scale flooding or grassland fires. Dealing with such conditions evidently puts additional pressure on the Service, and a failure to maintain an effective spate conditions policy could potentially result in the Service failing to maintain operational response during times of peak demand.

There is now a spate conditions policy in place, which has been validated operationally, and through electronic 'risk modelling' of resources. Furthermore, the Service has worked out a key station plan to increase the likelihood that it can continue to respond even under extreme conditions if only a minimal number of stations were available.

KEY PRIORITY 5. - OPERATIONAL POLICIES AT THE INCIDENT GROUND

When attending incidents, crews benefit from having operational policies available for reference. A suite of operational policies is available electronically to all personnel, but some now need to be updated and assessed for their impact on equalities policies. It has been identified that it would be beneficial to introduce a system to ensure that these policies are, in fact, being accessed and understood by personnel.

Although operational aides-memoire are available and kept up to date, more work is being undertaken to update risk-critical data and to have it consistently available at the incident ground

KEY PRIORITY 6. - STRATEGIC VISION

Having a strong, clear strategic vision is vital to the success of the Service. A strong strategic lead is provided by both senior officers and the Authority, and this is well communicated to staff.

A Risk Reduction Plan is in place and is available on the website, as is the Improvement Plan. Wide consultation is held on the Risk Reduction Plan and the final document lays out clear areas for improvement in each key section.

The Improvement Plan and the Risk Reduction Plan are linked by the same vision and objectives. The Improvement Plan gives details of performance on targets compared to all Wales and its own family group.

The consultation period of the 2008-2009 Risk Reduction Plan was completed in 2008. However, the Fire Authority at the time was not able to support all of the four recommendations. In particular, two key changes proposed by the Service, namely those dealing with changes to rostering and a proposed 'dedicated response option' which would have allowed the Service to fund an improved fire prevention actively were not agreed

KEY PRIORITY 7. - PLANS TO DELIVER THE VISION

There is strong leadership in place to embed prevention activities. Community Safety Managers head up the Fire Service in each County Area with strong links to the local Community Safety Partnership and local fire safety priorities. Senior managers are promoting the structure of command adopted by the Fire and Rescue Service and are maintaining this approach through communicating with staff and station visits by senior officers which are programmed corporately.

The Peer Assessment Team noted that: The Service and its County Managers work enthusiastically with partner organisations throughout North Wales to drive down risk. This work could be enhanced by the development of a service wide policy to ensure that there is a consistent approach to managing the varying levels of community risk across the Service area.

Measures and controls to mitigate the potential risk of failing to deliver strategic priorities are that Senior Managers regularly monitor and review current structures to ensure that they reflect external challenges and best practice. Also, key actions from the peer reviews and the Chief Fire Officer's Task Group are reported to the Chief Fire Officer at regular intervals. The reluctance of the Fire Authority in 2007 to support key proposals within the 2008-2009 Risk Reduction Plan may affect the ability of the Service to fully implement its proposals to improve the level of service delivery and community safety initiatives.

Also, the potential for large scale retirements of fire fighters recruited to the service in the late 1970s, and the longer duration of recruitment and training than their notice period, could compromise the workforce capacity to deliver the vision and maintain service to the public.

KEY PRIORITY 8. - MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND SCRUTINY

There are clear Member structures in place within the Fire Authority and meetings of the Authority and its sub committees take place across the Service area. Members have agreed the terms of reference of the Executive Panel and there are Standing Orders in place for the Authority covering the roles of members based on Conwy County Council. However these are being updated by the Council during 2007/2008. The latest Annual Audit Letter did not raise any particular concerns with regard to governance and management structures with the Fire and Rescue Service.

Potentially, the Authority could fail to deliver changes to structures when needed and to provide effective corporate management and support services. To mitigate this possibility, a Members' Charter is to be adopted which includes induction training for new members along with short training sessions to ensure a good level of understanding of the role and responsibilities. The Fire Authority has adopted a series of Members' working groups including a Champions' Group which has proposed that the Fire Authority progress with the adoption of the Members' Charter and has endorsed the work required to achieve the basic level of this Charter.

KEY PRIORITY 9. - FINANCIAL STANDING

The Authority has a good track record of operating within its budget and its overall financial position is sound. However, actual expenditure in 2006/2007 exceeded the approved budget by £121,000. The overspend was funded from the release of money from specific provisions. The latest budget monitoring report estimates expenditure for 2007/2008 will be in line with budget.

Potentially, the authority could fail to ensure that it has robust financial management. Therefore, to mitigate this, the Service is aware of its financial pressures and its need to maintain effective financial standing to ensure the delivery of the Service. Regular internal budget/performance management meetings with heads of departments have been introduced to improve financial management.

KEY PRIORITY 10. - PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

A Performance Management System has been established, and Best Value Performance Indicator data is collected and reported, but it is not linked to Fire Service Emergency Cover modelling data. The Annual Audit Letter reported that the performance management system needs to be strengthened and the last report on the performance management framework concluded that 'although the Authority is making progress and there is a performance management framework in place, it needs to be strengthened. The Authority has recognised what needs to be done but sufficient resources are required to ensure the plans can be fully implemented'.

Potentially, the Authority could fail to meet objectives with the Risk Reduction Plan because of a lack of a robust performance management framework. Therefore, the Service is to adopt the Assembly-provided Ffynnon software, and performance staff training and the population of data is underway.

KEY PRIORITY 11. - E-FIRE AND RESCUE

The development of Information Technology systems needs to be addressed to enable better effectiveness in the approach of the Service. The Service has stated that it has resolved historical problems with software licences. The findings of a major review of ICT services are being progressed.

A Wales Audit Office review has been programmed to establish whether effective arrangements are in place to manage IT risk. The Service recognises that there are still problems with remote infrastructures, and is investing over the next three years to address these difficulties.

KEY PRIORITY 12. - SUSTAINABILITY

Each building in the Authority's estate is being assessed against the latest environmental legislation. The Risk Reduction Plan highlights the environmental impact.

A failure in relation to this risk would mean failing to ensure that sustainability is fully embedded.

To mitigate this risk, therefore, the Service has recognised that there is a level of risk to delivery that is based on its own capacity of resources and budgets. It has set up a Joint Facilities Management Unit with North Wales Police, through which it has instigated recycling procedures in all stations, undertaken an assessment of the main buildings and is progressing towards the first level of the 'Green Dragon' environmental award.

KEY PRIORITY 13. - EQUALITIES

Equalities issues form part of the Authority's Asset Management Plan, with diversity and compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act forming part of the approach to scoring. Diversity is also embedded in the Service's basic training programme. Equalities Impact Assessment guidance has been produced and has been consulted on by the Equality and Diversity Forum, and has now been adopted.

Failure in this regard could mean a failure to meet legislative requirements, and some steps taken to mitigate this risk now include having an equalities assessment as part of staff appraisals and the County Service plans.

Risk Reduction

Guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government lists seven objectives that Fire and Rescue Authorities must incorporate into their overall risk reduction strategy – these are:

- 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 with the wider social justice agenda

As well as following a process of Risk Reduction Planning, the Service participates in the work of the North Wales Local Resilience Forum and the Wales Resilience Forum. As a Category 1 Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Service works with other agencies to ensure that they are prepared to deal effectively with the full range of emergencies from localised incidents through to catastrophic events.

In addition, the Service has implemented a Business Continuity Management process whereby risks are systematically identified and reduced or controlled .

Risk Reduction Planning

A comprehensive review of community risks undertaken by the Authority in 2003 was updated in 2006. The Authority has been working to reduce the level of risk in the following key areas:

Identified 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 and social impact

Community Engagement

- Community fire safety 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

Progress in mitigating these risks has been achieved through a range of annual action plans and Service-level improvements.

A fundamental review of risk is planned for later this year, leading to the next draft Risk Reduction Plan that will be consulted upon over the summer of 2009 and implemented from April 2010.

RISK REDUCTION PLAN 2007-08 and FOLLOW-UP ANNUAL ACTION PLANS

The Authority consulted stakeholders and interested partners over the summer of 2006 on the proposed content of its Risk Reduction Plan. The majority of responses to the consultation were supportive of the Authority, and several were directly complimentary. Some sought additional clarification and explanation on the proposals, while others offered suggestions for additional or alternative measures. Some presented alternative views, but few directly disagreed with the actions the Authority was proposing to take in 2007-08 and beyond, which were to:

	Proposed Actions	Progress Made
1.	Establish and develop closer working relationships and protocols with Unitary Authorities, NHS Trusts, Local Health Boards and other organisations.	The purpose of this action was primarily to improve the rate of referrals being received by the Service so that additional support could be given to particularly vulnerable people. Having successfully forged closer working relationships and secured formal agreement through memorandums of understanding with partner agencies, we are content that this has now started to occur.
2.	Develop a long term strategy and seek to secure the necessary financial resources to deliver Home Fire Risk Assessments to all domestic properties in North Wales.	This formed the Authority's main proposal for the 2008-09 action plan. The number of Home Fire Safety Checks being delivered in North Wales has increased substantially (see performance section), but this level of delivery now needs to be sustained alongside the delivery of other aspects of fire and rescue services.
3.	Redefine and rename the Community Fire Safety function to reflect the true nature of the department's role.	The alternative title of 'Community Safety' was proposed, but was rejected on the basis that it was already used in different contexts of crime

	Proposed Actions	Progress Made
		reduction and emergency planning. It is still the case, however, that the fire and rescue service is engaged in a wider range of safety issues than fire.
4.	Provide the appropriate level of hydraulic rescue equipment capable of extricating casualties to all frontline fire engines.	This is on target to be completed by the end of November 2008.
5.	Develop a co-ordinated strategy for reducing the impact of road traffic collisions through more focused management.	The Service has developed and committed to an all-Wales Fire and Rescue Service Road Safety Strategy that supports both the national road safety strategy for Wales and the Chief Fire Officers Association Road Safety Group Strategy.
6.	Consider the recommendations of the review on the feasibility of adopting co-responding.	This has not been actively pursued, but may be reconsidered as part of future risk reduction plans.
7.	Agree and put into effect the recommendations of the Authority's programme of human resource reviews	These relate to a longer term strategy of securing the highest level of efficiency and effectiveness through the correct configuration of the Service's workforce. Two proposals were made for actions as part of the 2008-09 Action Plan. Proposed changes to rostering arrangements were not pursued. Changes to the use of Officers' time reappeared in the draft 2009-10 Action Plan, alongside proposals to change arrangements for aerial ladder platform drivers.

	Proposed Actions	Progress Made
8.	Implement a policy for the reduction and management of false alarms from automatic fire alarms.	This formed part of the Authority's 2008-09 annual action plan, and is work that is still in progress.
9.	Monitor performance against the Service Standard for attendance at fires in the home.	Information is gathered and recorded for every dwelling fire attended, and mapped information is maintained relating to risk categories. Performance against the new National Strategic Indicators for Effective Response will be reported for 2008-09.
10.	Implement a strategy to provide education and prevention to households outside the 10 minute Service Standard.	Free Home Fire Safety Checks are targeted at particularly vulnerable groups and at dwellings in areas that have had fires in the past or that are particularly remote, as well as being widely advertised to all residents of North Wales. Additional offers of prevention support are made through individual letters to premises further than 20 minutes from a fire station.
11.	Collaborate with Category 1 responders on operational exercising of major plans.	A programme has been developed and introduced, and the Service actively engages in these exercises.
12.	Develop a proactive communications plan to warn and inform local communities.	A communications strategy has been developed, and the Service is an active member of the Wales Warning and Informing Group.
13.	Consider options for providing relevant information at incidents.	A Service policy has been developed relating to Operational Intelligence. Improvements are planned through a three-year plan.

	Proposed Actions	Progress Made
14.	Adopt the Green Dragon Environmental Standard.	A programme of improvements has been achieved in a range of different environmental categories. Formal assessment against the standard is expected in the near future.
15.	Secure the best option for the provision of occupational health services.	This is still being progressed through contract/service level agreement.
16.	Take positive action to secure a more diverse workforce.	By adopting effective recruitment policies and engaging with underrepresented groups the Service continues to strive to attract a more diverse workforce.
17.	Establish a partnership review board to oversee the effectiveness, appropriateness and ethical suitability of partnerships.	This has not yet been implemented, but these elements of partnership working are considered informally as a matter of routine.
18.	Review the effectiveness of current partnership working and monitor and assess Community Fire Safety initiatives to ensure they meet the needs of, and reach all sections of the community.	These are individually assessed for effectiveness.
19.	Support the development of Members.	Members are provided with opportunities to learn about a range of different aspects of their role through seminars, presentations and written documentation. The Member Development Strategy clarifies the aims of equipping members with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to fulfill their role description.

	Proposed Actions	Progress Made
20.	Explore opportunities for collaboration in the use of legal services for enforcement duties.	A source of legal advice has now been engaged to support the Service.
21.	Consider ways to maximise the benefits of Value Wales.	A range of procurement options has been pursued, including seeking additional procurement expertise from North Wales Police.
22.	Review the fire and rescue service's business continuity plans as part of its overarching Corporate Risk Management policy.	These have been reviewed, and are subject to frequent monitoring and updating.
23.	Consider alternative locations for the control room.	The primary control room is relocating to purpose-built premises.
24.	Set up an operational review team to secure operational assurance.	This forms part of the proposals for the Risk Reduction Plan 2009-10.
25.	Develop a new disaster recovery policy for IT.	Work has been progressed towards achieving this policy.
26.	Adopt the Welsh Assembly Government's e-government strategy for Wales.	The Service is continually investing in new technology to improve its engagement in this strategy.
27.	Compile a register of critical suppliers and confirm their level of resilience.	This has been progressed through Business Continuity Management with individual heads of departments.

	Proposed Actions	Progress Made
28.	Strengthen performance management arrangements through improved availability of high quality information and clearer responsibilities to ensure that improvement is both timely and well-targeted.	This formed part of the 2008-09 Action Plan. Specialist roles have been designated and investment in information systems continues.

RISK REDUCTION PLAN ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2009-10

Four outline proposals were consulted upon for action during 2009-10.

Proposal 1: To undertake an Officer Cover Review. By reviewing the way the Service provides supervisory cover by middle and senior managers at emergency incidents the Authority will be able to develop a 'dedicated response option' and provide operational assurance at incidents. Whilst this will ensure that the required number of personnel maintain their operational competencies the Authority will realise efficiencies for investment in other areas of the Service's work.

Having considered the response to this proposal, the Authority decided.....[complete in line with Fire Authority decision 20th October 2008)

Proposal 2: To crew Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs) differently, so that the 12 posts given over to crewing ALPs would be discontinued, and the work transferred to fire crews. The people filling those 12 posts would continue to be employed by the Service as operational firefighters, but would be transferred into the Community Fire Safety (CFS) function to deliver CFS work. They would remain available to be called to undertake operational duties should the need arise.

Having considered the response to this proposal, the Authority decided.....[complete in line with Fire Authority decision 20th October 2008)

Proposal 3: To undertake a review of the existing catering arrangements on fire stations and at other Service establishments. The Authority employs cooks to prepare lunches and evening meals for some members of staff in some locations, but not all. This area of spending has never before undergone a proper review, and it is therefore difficult to know whether or not the arrangements are appropriate. (This is separate from incident ground catering which will continue to be provided when crews are out at operational incidents for extended periods.)

Having considered the response to this proposal, the Authority decided.....[complete in line with Fire Authority decision 20th October 2008)

Proposal 4: To establish a small working group consisting of members, officers and representatives from staff representative bodies to undertake a review into whether the standards of fire cover are right for the risks within the community; and whether the Service has the right resources available in the right places to respond to those risks effectively. The findings of this Working Group will form the basis of the Authority's next full Risk Reduction Plan (2010 – 2011)..

Having considered the response to this proposal, the Authority decided.....[complete in line with Fire Authority decision 20th October 2008)

SECTION 4

SPENDING AND MAKING EFFICIENCIES

The Authority is aware of the increasing pressure to provide high quality fire and rescue services without passing on large increases in its budget to its constituent Authorities to fund revenue expenditure.

The amounts levied on each constituent authority to fund the fire and rescue service are:

	2008/09 £'000	2007/08 £'000	2006/07 £'000
Anglesey County Council	3,093	3,006	2,989
Gwynedd Council	5,311	5,149	5,139
Conwy County Borough Council	4,997	4,865	4,865
Denbighshire County Council	4,314	4,189	4,160
Flintshire County Council	6,739	6,553	6,531
Wrexham County Borough Council	5,881	5,694	5,666
Total Levies	30,338	29,456	29,350

2007-08 Spending

Expenditure	£	% of Total Spend
Employee Costs	23,003,439	78.09
Premises Costs	1,309,435	4.45
Transport	978,461	3.32
Supplies and Services	2,858,145	9.70
Support Services ⁸	143,230	0.49
Capital Financing Costs	1,766,937	6.00
Income		
Sales, Fees and Charges	-605,085	-2.05
Contribution to Control Provision	1,883	0.006
Net Expenditure	29,456,445	100%

⁸ Support Services – e.g. Agency Payments, Support Service Agreements

2008-09 Budget

The budget of £30,338,171 set for 2008-09 equates to £44.91 per head of population for the year, or just over 86 pence per week.

Planned revenue expenditure for the year is:

Expenditure	£	% of Total Spend
Employee Costs	23,903,330	78.79%
Premises Costs	1,181,895	3.90%
Transport	1,363,356	4.49%
Supplies and Services	2,447,750	8.07%
Support Services ⁹	538,000	1.77%
Capital Financing Costs	1,751,000	5.77%
Income		
Sales, Fees and Charges	-334,670	
Other income	-512,490	
Budget	30,338,171	100%

⁹ Support Services – e.g. Agency Payments, Support Service Agreements

Efficiency Gains

Efficiency gains are reported as being either 'cashable' or 'non-cashable'.

Recurring Efficiency Gains

The recurring efficiency gains made by the Authority in 2007-08 relate to:

a) Smarter procurement, specifically through a Fleet Efficiency Programme (£10,000), an Information Technology Efficiency Programme (£15,000), and securing savings from rescheduling leases (£58,000) and additional efficiencies in capital financing (£28,000).

b) Making better use of staff time, skills and expertise, specifically through changing some posts (£142,000) and providing manual handling training to all staff to reduce the number of injuries (£33,000).

Forecast Efficiency Gains

The forecast for 2008-09 adds new recurring efficiency gains of £30,000 of income generated through a collaboration with North Wales Police and £31,000 of additional savings through having less staff sickness and fewer injuries.

Longer term forecasts up to 2009-10 relate to transferring staff costs of £440,000 from one area of the service to another, saving £36,000 by providing in-house training for trainee firefighters and making a further £35,000 of savings through income generation.

SECTION 5

STATEMENT RELATING TO CONTRACTS

Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Public Sector Service Contracts.

This Code of Practice was adopted by the Welsh Assembly in April 2003. North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority states and certifies that no individual contracts have been awarded during the past year involving transfer of staff where the above Code of Practice would apply.

SECTION 6

GLOSSARY AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Population and property figures used in calculations

	Population	Dwellings	Non-Domestic Properties
2006-07	673,639	299,131	26,743
2007-08	675,563	301,063	27,050

All collected from StatsWales.

Categorisation of fires

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

Primary fires 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.

They are fires in any location if they involved casualties, rescues or escapes, or were attended by five or more fire appliances.

Secondary fires are fires that are neither chimney fires nor primary fires (described above). They do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes, and were attended by four or fewer fire appliances.

Secondary fires are those that would normally occur in locations such as 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 a primary fire), outdoor furniture, traffic lights, etc. etc.

Chimney fires 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 were attended by four or fewer fire appliances.

Useful web addresses for further information:

www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk for information relating to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

www.wales.gov.uk for information relating to fire and rescue services in Wales

www.statswales.wales.gov.uk for statistical information on Wales

www.communities.gov.uk for information relating to fire and resilience in England and other parts of the UK

www.scotland.gov.uk for information relating to fire services in Scotland

www.nifrs.org/ for information relating to fire and rescue services in Northern Ireland

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/bulletinindex2008/?lang=en> for an index of statistical bulletins released by the Welsh Assembly's Data Unit

**NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS
FFORDD SALESBURY
ST ASAPH BUSINESS PARK
ST ASAPH
DENBIGHSHIRE
LL17 0JJ
01745 535 250**

APPENDIX

Summary of performance figures

Reference	Definition	2006-07	2007-08	Target 2008-09
	The total number of all fires attended	4,601	3,884	
FRS/RRC/S/001 (i)	per 10,000 population	68.3	56.9	
	The number of primary fires attended	1,743	1,564	
FRS/RRC/S/001 (ii)	per 10,000 population	25.87	23.15	
	The number of accidental fires in dwellings attended	450	526	480
FRS/RRC/S/001 (iii)	per 10,000 dwellings	15.0	17.5	
	The number of deliberate fires attended	2,406	1,840	
FRS/RRC/S/001 (iv)	per 10,000 population	35.7	27.2	
	The number of secondary fires attended	2,592	2,000	
	per 10,000 population	38.5	29.6	
	The number of fires attended in non-domestic premises	321	248	
FRS/RRC/S/003	per 1,000 non-domestic premises	11.9	9.2	
	The number of injuries from accidental dwelling fires	36	49	36 (max.)
FRS/RRC/C/001 (v)	per 100,000 population	5.34	7.25	
	The number of deaths from accidental dwelling fires	10	7	7 (max.)
FRS/RRC/C/001 (i)	per 100,000 population	1.48	1.03	
	The number of deaths caused by fires	...	10	
FRS/RRC/S/002 (i)	per 100,000 population	...	1.48	

Reference	Definition	2006-07	2007-08	Target 2008-09
	The number of deaths caused by accidental fires	...	8	
FRS/RRC/S/002(ii)	per 100,000 population	...	1.18	
	The number of deaths caused by deliberate fires	...	2	
FRS/RRC/S/002(iii)	per 100,000 population	...	0.30	
	The number of injuries caused by fires	...	80	
FRS/RRC/S/002(iv)	per 100,000 population	...	11.84	
	The number of injuries caused by accidental fires	...	58	
FRS/RRC/S/002(v)	per 100,000 population	...	8.59	
	The number of injuries caused by deliberate fires	...	22	
FRS/RRC/S/002(vi)	per 100,000 population	...	3.26	
FRS/RRC/S/004(i)	The number of homes that are within the above average risk category and the well above average risk category (as determined by the FSEC model) that have received, within the reporting year, a home fire safety risk assessment and are within the five minute service standard.	...	-	-
FRS/RRC/S/004(ii)	The number of homes that are within the above average risk category and the well above average risk category (as determined by the FSEC model) that have received, within the reporting year, a home fire safety risk assessment and are within the ten minute service standard.	...	-	-
FRS/RRC/S/004(iii)	The number of homes that are within the above average risk category and the well above average risk category (as determined by the FSEC model) that have received, within the reporting year, a home fire safety risk assessment and are outside the ten minute service standard.	...	-	-
FRS/RRC/S/004(iv)	The total number of fires in homes in which a home fire safety risk assessment and/or associated risk reduction activity had taken place within two years of the fire.	...	-	-
FRS/EFR/S/001	The percentage of fires in dwellings, within the ten minute service standard as identified by each Fire and Rescue Authority, that were attended within ten minutes.	...	-	-

Reference	Definition	2006-07	2007-08	Target 2008-09
FRS/EFR/S/002	The percentage of fires in dwellings, which have been identified by the FSEC model as having a casualty rate greater than six, that were attended within five minutes.	...	-	-
	The percentage of people in accidental dwelling fires who escaped unharmed and unaided by a fire crew	87.5%	88.8%	90.0%
	The number of deliberate primary fires in vehicles	436	260	
BVPI 206ii	per 10,000 population	6.5	3.9	
	The number of deliberate primary fires (excluding those in vehicles)	290	266	
BVPI 206i	per 10,000 population	4.3	3.9	
	The number of deliberate secondary fires	1,680	1,314	
FRS/RRC/C/004ii	per 10,000 population	24.9	19.5	
	The number of false alarms from automatic fire alarms attended in non-domestic properties	2092	2020	1818
FRS/RRC/C/003	per 1,000 population	78.2	74.7	
BVPI 149iii	The percentage of false alarms from automatic fire alarms attended in non-domestic properties that had more than one attendance in the year.	81.4%	76.6%	
	The number of malicious false alarms attended	164	154	
BVPI146ii	per 1,000 population			
FRC/RRC/C/002iii	The percentage of the malicious false alarms received that received an attendance.	23%	24%	25% (max.)
	The number of shifts/days lost due to sickness absence by all staff (excluding those on the Retained Duty System)	3,770	3,594	
FRS/CHR/C/004i	per full time equivalent staff	8.7	8.1	
	The percentage of times that Retained appliances are available.	100%
	The number of ill-health retirements	2	4	
	per 1,000 full time equivalent employees	1.9	3.8	6.9 (max.)

Reference	Definition	2006-07	2007-08	Target 2008-09
FRS/CFH/C/001	The percentage of undisputed invoices for commercial goods and services that were paid within 30 days.	80.5%	90.7%	
FRS/RRC/C/005i	The percentage of dwelling fires where a smoke alarm was fitted and activated	55.7%	63%	Over 63%
FRS/CHR/C/003	The percentage of firefighters who are women.	3.9%	3.57%	
	The number of free Home Fire Safety Checks delivered	16,176	26,504	30,000
BVPI 144	The Percentage Of Dwelling Fires Confined To The Room Of Origin	90.2%	94.4%	
	The number of deliberate primary fires attended	726	526	
FRS/RRC/C/004i	per 10,000 population	10.78	7.79	
	The number of operational staff who categorise themselves as having a disability	...	16	
FRS/CHR/C/001i	as a percentage	...	1.8	
	The number of control and non-operational staff who categorise themselves as having a disability	...	8	
FRS/CHR/C/001ii	as a percentage	...	4.8	
	The number of staff who belong to a minority ethnic group	6	9	
FRS/CHR/C/002i	as a percentage	0.58	0.80	