

# Annual Improvement Plan 2014-2015



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## At a glance

### Our Improvements for 2014 - 2015

During 2014-15 Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority will work to deliver upon three key improvement objectives which we believe will improve safety whilst delivering excellent services which meet the risks and needs of our communities.

#### Our Improvement objectives are to:

##### Improve Our Internal and External Communication / Engagement

*Our outcome will be Staff, Communities and Stakeholders feel better informed and aware of what we do and how well we do it.*

##### Manage Reduced Budgets to Support Safer Communities

*Our outcome will be to continue making communities safer through minimising risks and maintaining our standards of service delivery within a reduced budget.*

##### Improve Our Evaluation Processes

*Our outcome will be to understand how our actions deliver better outcomes for our communities to inform future planning and improve the services we deliver.*

These improvement objectives will be achieved by actions linked to the 'key improvement areas' detailed in the Authority's Five Year Strategic Plan 2010-2015. The 'key improvement areas' are;

- Managing Risk
- Managing Resources
- Managing Performance
- Managing People
- Working Together
- Managing Communications\*

\* Managing Communication has been added following feedback from staff and stakeholders.

### Our Performance

Through Improvement Planning and Risk Reduction over the past decade the Authority has seen significant reductions in the number of incidents we are called to attend and improvement in the outcomes for those affected and the communities within which they occur.

Indicator	2003 / 2004	Average of Last 3 Years (10/11 to 12/13)	% Reduction Currently Achieved	2014 / 2015 Targets
All Fires	9192	4458	-51%	3554
Primary Fires	3456	1619	-53%	1341
Accidental Dwelling Fires	759	561	-26%	408
Fire Deaths	13	6	-53%	Zero
Fire Injuries	227	61	-73%	44
Hoax Calls attended	711	181	-74%	161
Automatic Fire Alarms**	2001	1771	-11%	1611
Deliberate Fires	6161	2399	-61%	1983

\* Due to the very wet weather in 2012-13 the Service had an extraordinarily low number of grass fires.

\*\* Calls to Automatic Fire Alarms have continued to reduce whilst the number of detector heads within buildings has increased year on year.

Source. Stats Wales

Sickness absence levels are not where we would like them to be. The average days lost is 7.9 per person, where our target is 4.83. Our performance remains better than the Welsh average for Improvement Authorities however, at 8.86 days lost.

More Detailed information on our performance can be found within our Annual Performance Assessment 2012/2013 which was published on our website [www.mawwfire.gov.uk](http://www.mawwfire.gov.uk) on 31st October 2013.

## Introduction

Welcome to the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Annual Improvement Plan for 2014-2015. This plan represents the final year in delivering the improvements identified in our Strategic Plan 2010-2015 which can be accessed via our website [www.mawwfire.gov.uk](http://www.mawwfire.gov.uk).

Our focus for 2014-2015 is centred on continuing to deliver and improve upon our objectives from previous years as well as focussing on specific improvement objectives identified through feedback from our communities, staff, stakeholders and partners, which we believe will enhance the way in which we work and ultimately the services we provide to our communities.

Public Services continue to face unprecedented financial challenges and we know that we need to explore new ways of working and delivering services. Our improvement objectives also reflect that, along with our partners and our communities we have a collective responsibility to deliver real change by working together.

We continue to recognise and acknowledge that our communities and partners have a vital role in helping us improve our service, reduce risk and develop safer communities. There is a national focus on empowering communities to come together and solve problems to build the society they want. This is your Fire and Rescue Service and you can play a part in shaping it. We thank those members of our communities, stakeholders and partners who have taken the time to 'have your say' and influence this improvement plan.

**Chair-Councillor** Roy Llewellyn

**Chief Fire Officer** Richard Smith

## Request a Home Fire Safety Check

You can request a home fire safety checks for yourself or a dependant relative by contacting the Service on 0800 169 1234 or by visiting [www.mawwfire.gov.uk](http://www.mawwfire.gov.uk).

If you would like this information in an alternative language or format such as large print, Braille or audio please contact us on 0370 6060699 or e-mail: [mail@mawwfire.gov.uk](mailto:mail@mawwfire.gov.uk).

## Your Fire and Rescue Service

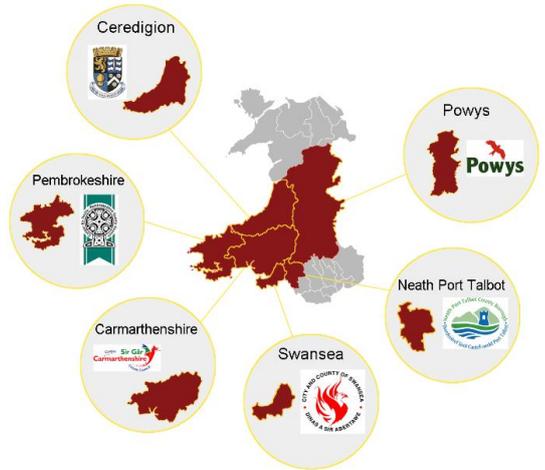
The Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service covers the unitary Authority areas of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys and Swansea. The Service was created in 1996 by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 through the merger of Dyfed, Powys and West Glamorgan fire brigades.

The Service is the largest by area in England and Wales covering a predominantly rural area of 4,500 square miles (11,700 km<sup>2</sup>) and the third largest in the United Kingdom, behind the Scottish and Northern Ireland Fire Services. We have 58 fire stations, and 1,200 staff.

The Service makes up almost two-thirds of Wales. A variety of risks are found within the Service area, ranging from the petrochemical industries in Milford Haven to the risks associated with heavily populated areas such as Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. We have an extensive farming community and many other light industries throughout the area. These, together with an extensive coastline and inland waterways, are some of the specialised risks within the Service.

### Organisational Leadership Team

The Executive Board is the highest management function within the Service and is comprised of the Chief Fire Officer, supported by four other Principal Officers, who are respectively responsible for the Development Directorate, Resources Directorate, Risk Directorate and the Service Delivery Directorate.



#### Chief Fire Officer



**Richard Smith**  
OSTJ, MA, FIFireE

#### Deputy Chief Fire Officer



**Paul Bates**  
MBA, MIFireE

#### Assistant Chief Officer



**Elizabeth Aitken**  
BSc Econ, CPFA  
Director of Resources and Treasurer of the Fire Authority

#### Assistant Chief Fire Officer



**Chris Davies**  
MBA  
Director of Risk

#### Assistant Chief Fire Officer



**Derek Masson**  
MBA Dip/Mgmt MIFireE  
Director of Delivery

Each County Command produces its own Community Plan which details key local priorities to ensure that reducing risk to our communities is at the heart of everything we do. The plans can be accessed via our website [www.mawwfire.gov.uk](http://www.mawwfire.gov.uk).

## Our Planning

Each year the Authority is required to develop and consult on our plans for the following year. When we do this we follow Welsh Government guidelines to ensure that the way in which we develop, consult and agree the areas we are planning to improve are understood by our communities, staff and stakeholders and that they have the chance to share views and comments on the outcomes the Authority is looking to achieve.

For each improvement objective the Authority should, within its improvement plan, tell communities, staff and stakeholders what benefits the outcomes will deliver to them and the services we provide.

### Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

Improvement planning guidance is contained within the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and this guidance applies to all Local Authorities, Fire and Rescue Authorities and National Parks.

In recognition of the role the Service plays within the Community, improvement may be defined in a number of ways and will deliver on at least one of the seven aspects of improvement below:

- Making progress against objectives
- Improving the quality of service
- Improving the availability of our service
- Reducing inequality in accessing or benefiting from services
- Ensuring sustainable development
- Improving efficiency
- Innovation

### Current and Future Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 has set the direction, vision and improvement areas for the last four years. The 2014-15 Annual Improvement Plan represents the final year in delivering the improvements identified in our Five Year Strategic Plan which can be accessed via our website [www.mawwfire.gov.uk](http://www.mawwfire.gov.uk).

#### Our Continuing Strategic Aims

- To save lives and protect communities
- To be trusted and respected by our communities
- To be seen as more than an emergency service
- To match our resources to priorities
- To manage within budgets
- To seek out and utilise alternative resources
- To make efficiencies year on year
- To manage our people effectively
- To fully develop risk reduction planning
- To develop effective partnership working
- To develop our workflow into effective and empowered people

The Authority is currently developing its next Strategic Plan for 2015 onwards. There will be opportunities to contribute to the future of your Fire and Rescue Service through consultation which will take place during the summer of 2014.

## Our Performance Last Year

The Authority sets targets each year for improvement against key performance indicators.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) help us to achieve our objectives through the definition and measurement of progress. The key indicators are agreed by the Welsh Government and the Authority and are indicators which can be measured that will reflect success factors. The KPIs selected reflect the Authority's objectives, are key to our success, are measurable and comparable with the other Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.

The KPIs we use reflect our commitment to making our communities safer and measure the number of;

- Fires (in total)
- Deliberate Fires
- Accidental Dwelling Fires
- Fire Deaths
- Fire Injuries
- Hoax calls
- Unwanted Fire Signals
- Days lost to Sickness

We also use a range of local performance indicators which allows us to measure normal business activities which are important to us such as;

- Number of Home Fire Safety Checks delivered
- Number of Business Fire Safety Audits
- Percentage of Competent Staff
- On Call Appliance Availability
- Number of Operational Exercises

### Performance Targets for 2014-15

The Five Year Strategic Plan 2010-2015 set targets to achieve by 2015.

Indicator	2014 / 2015 Targets	Level of Improvement to be achieved by 2015/2016
All Fires	3554	A 30% Reduction from 5077 in 2009/2010
Primary Fires	1341	A 30% Reduction from 1915 in 2009/2010
Accidental Dwelling Fires	408	A 30% Reduction from 584 in 2009/2010
Fire Deaths	Our ambition is to achieve Zero Fire Deaths	A 30% Reduction from the average number of deaths (7) between 2005/2006 to 2009/2010
Fire Injuries	44	A 30% Reduction from 63 in 2009/2010
Hoax Calls attended	161	A 30% Reduction from 230 in 2009/2010
Automatic Fire Alarms	1611	A 30% Reduction from 2302 in 2009/2010
Deliberate Fires	1983	A 30% Reduction from 2833 in 2009/2010
Shifts/Days lost to Sickness	4.6 shifts/days per full time equivalent employee	A Reduction of 20 % from 5.75 in 2009/10

We have set local targets that will drive improvement in the core business we will undertake during 2014/2015

Local Indicator	2014 - 2015 Targets	
Home Fire Safety Check	Dependant on WG grant funding which is determined in March 2014	
Business Fire Safety	4000	This figure includes High, Medium and Low risk premises
Competent Staff	95%	A maximum of 5% of the total skills within the Service to be out of compliance
On Call Appliance Availability	100%	We strive to have all On Call appliances available 24hrs a day 365 days a year
Operational Exercises	50	We will undertake a minimum of 50 operational exercises to maintain operational competency and to test our plans for responding to emergencies.

We are making good progress against these targets and we are confident that our improvements and community safety activities will continue to reduce the instances of fire, deaths, injuries and false alarms.

More Detailed information on our performance can be found within our Annual Performance Assessment 2012 - 2013 on our website at [www.mawwfire.gov.uk](http://www.mawwfire.gov.uk).

## Performance Targets 2015 onwards

During 2014-15 as part of the new Strategic Plan 2015 onwards we will develop new challenging targets for national and local performance indicators. These targets will be developed in consultation with our communities, staff, stakeholders and partners and will be aligned against the expectations of Welsh Government objectives.

## What we Plan to Improve

During 2014-15 Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority will deliver upon three key improvement objectives which we believe will improve safety whilst delivering excellent services which meet the risks and needs of our communities.

- Improve Internal and External Communication / Engagement
- Manage Reduced Budgets to Support Safer Communities
- Improve Evaluation

These improvement objectives will be achieved by actions linked to the 'key improvement areas' detailed in the Authority's Five Year Strategic Plan 2010-2015.

The 'key improvement areas' which represent all aspects of the services we deliver are;

- Managing Risk
- Managing People
- Working Together
- Managing Resources
- Managing Performance
- Managing Communications\*

In developing this year's plan we have listened to and considered feedback and comments received through last year's consultation, internal and external audit and directly from members of the public and staff.

\* Managing Communication has been added following feedback from staff and stakeholders.

## Request a Home Fire Safety Check

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## Objective 1 - Improve Our Internal and External Communication / Engagement

*Our outcome will be Staff, Communities and Stakeholders feel better informed and aware of what we do and how well we do it.*

The way we share information is key to the Authority being successful and making sure all involved understand the challenges we face, see the benefits and improvements we are looking to achieve and contribute to solving some of the very difficult issues ahead of us.

### **We are improving communication / engagement because feedback told us**

- Communication was perceived to be not as clear as it could be,
- Our plans were more difficult to understand than they needed to be,
- We do not inform others of our successes and the challenges we face as well as we could,
- We do not share information as well as we could.

### **The actions we will take are**

- Increase awareness of our services through more targeted community safety activities,
- Informing our communities of the work we do through open days, engagement events and media releases
- Make our plans clearer, easier to understand and more accessible through the use of social / electronic media and public engagement.
- Engage with staff to communicate key messages and business information and receive feedback.

### **How we will measure and report our achievements**

- Evaluate samples of planned open days, engagement events and media releases
- Measuring the number of people who attend our events and we engage with to raise awareness
- Producing more / target media releases
- By seeking feedback from stakeholders and partners on how we share and use information to ask if it is clearer, easier to understand and more accessible?
- By reviewing the outcomes of staff surveys and engagement events during 2014-15 to gauge the effectiveness of internal communication.
- By utilising satisfaction surveys following community safety and business fire safety activities to inform future activities.
- Measuring the number and quality of consultation responses

### **What this will mean to you**

Our communities, staff, stakeholders and partners will be more aware of the work and high levels of service we deliver. You will be more aware of safety issues and hopefully feel more confident and reassured that your Fire and Rescue Service is working hard to make your community safe.

## Objective 2 - Manage Reduced Budgets to Support Safer Communities

*Our outcome will be to continue making communities safer through minimising risks and maintaining our standards of service delivery within a reduced budget.*

Each year the cost of running the Fire Authority increases with pay awards, inflation and the costs of servicing debt, even if the service levels provided stay the same. In 2014/15, to maintain the same budget level a saving of 2% would have been made. If the Authority is faced with making reductions in budgets therefore, there are even more savings to be made. For 2014/15 the Fire Authority decided that it would reduce the Constituent Authorities' contributions to the Fire Authority's budget by 1.56%. This means that the Fire Authority budget will go down from £43.8M to £43.5M, with more reliance on reserves to support the budget (£605K worth). Real reductions of £1.275M need to be made.

In planning to meet these challenging savings we have listened to and considered what is important to our communities, stakeholders, partners and our staff.

### **We are focusing on our reduced budget because feedback told us that:**

- You do not want a reduction in the services that we provide,
- You do want us to provide value for money,
- You do value the community safety and educational work we undertake,
- Our staff want to deliver the best possible services they can.

### **The actions we will take are**

- To continue discussions with representative bodies around crewing arrangements for Whole-time firefighter crews, with a view to making efficiencies in the future without affecting service delivery
- To refrain from closing fire stations
- To maintain existing crewing arrangements in day crewed stations
- To reduce departmental and management structure budgets
- To initiate selective alerting at on-call stations to reduce costs, whilst maintaining service delivery
- To reduce the utilities, supplies and service budgets to reflect good management and result in reduced costs
- To delay a small part of the capital programme to minimal effect, and thus reduce debt repayment costs
- To increase the use of reserves to support the revenue budget

### **How we will measure and report our achievements**

- Delivering services within the reduced budget
- Review our performance against the All Wales Dwelling Fire Response Charter
- Delivering the agreed outcomes of specific projects implemented to achieve the required budget reductions

### **What this will mean to you**

We are planning to make savings in the way that we do things but there will be no reduction in response to incidents and the services we provide to make communities safer although we may provide them in a different way.

Where changes in the way we deliver services are required we will continue to engage constructively and positively with staff and their representative bodies.

## Objective 3 - Improve Our Evaluation Processes

*Our outcome will be to understand how our actions deliver better outcomes for our communities to inform future planning and improve the services we deliver.*

With increasing expectations on public services and smaller budgets it is important that we understand how the actions we take deliver better outcomes and give value for money, and make better use of our time and effort. To do this we recognise that the way we evaluate and check our achievements needs to be improved.

### **We are focusing on improving how we evaluate our outcomes because feedback told us**

- You do want us to provide value for money,
- We need to demonstrate that our actions do deliver better outcomes,
- We need to learn from our achievements and those of others.

### **The actions we will take are**

- Put in place a coordinated approach and programme for evaluation across the service
- Develop our staff to undertake meaningful evaluations and reviews,
- Work with the other Welsh Fire and Rescue Services to develop a consistent approach to evaluation,
- Undertake evaluations to inform the 2015-2016 Annual Improvement planning process.

### **How we will measure and report our achievements**

- A service wide evaluation programme will be implemented and used for the 2015-16 annual planning process
- We will have better/more information to inform future planning

### **What this will mean to you**

We will be able to tell you how our actions have made communities safer through minimising risks and maintaining our standards of service delivery within a reduced budget whilst achieving value for money.

## Glossary

The following list shows definitions of terms that are found in this document.

<b>Accidental Fires</b>	Includes fires where the cause was not known or unspecified.
<b>Business Fire Safety Audit</b>	Fire Safety staff from the Service visit commercial properties to provide fire safety advice.
<b>Competent Staff</b>	Percentage of staff qualified to carry out their duties.
<b>Days lost to sickness</b>	The number of working days an employee has lost due to illness.
<b>Deliberate Fires</b>	Includes fires where deliberate ignition is suspected.
<b>Evaluation</b>	To evaluate is to judge the value or worth of someone or something and use this outcome to support future planning
<b>Fire Injury</b>	Any injury sustained as a result of exposure to fire.
<b>Hoax Call</b>	A malicious telephone call reporting an incident that has not occurred.
<b>Home Fire Safety Check</b>	Fire Safety staff from the Service visit domestic properties to provide home fire safety advice and supply fire detection devices.
<b>On Call Appliance Availability</b>	Percentage that an appliance is available to carry out its role.
<b>Operational Exercises</b>	A training exercise involving the Service.
<b>Primary Fires</b>	These are reportable fires involving buildings, caravans, vehicles, outdoor storage, machinery, agricultural premises, or any outdoor structures e.g. tunnels, bridges, etc.
<b>Unwanted Fire Signals</b>	An alarm caused but automatic fire detection equipment.