



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru

Mid and West Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Social Partnership Duty Annual Report 2024/2025 – Appendix 1





Introduction

The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 (SPPP Act) which came into force on 01 April 2024, requires the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (MAWWFRA), as a public body, to produce an annual report to evidence how they have complied with the Social Partnership Duty.

The annual report summarises how the Authority has complied with the duty which must be submitted to the Social Partnership Council ("SPC") for scrutiny. Section 18 of the SPPP Act states:

Social Partnership reports:

- (1) A public body must prepare, in respect of each financial year, a report of what it has done to comply with the duty.
- (2) The report must be agreed with the public body's recognised trade unions or (where there is no recognised trade union) other representatives of its staff or contain a statement explaining why it was not agreed.
- (3) The public body must publish the report, and submit it to the SPC, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year.

The SPPP Act seeks to improve the economic, social, cultural, and environmental well-being of people in Wales by strengthening the role of social partnership within strategic decision-making, through collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, promoting fair work and socially responsible public procurement. It is intended to complement other legislation, including the Socio-economic Duty and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFGA 2015).

The WBFGA places a well-being duty upon listed public bodies across Wales to carry out sustainable development. In doing so, public bodies must set and publish well-being objectives that are designed to maximise contribution toward the national well-being goals and take all reasonable steps to deliver those objectives set.

In carrying out sustainable development, public bodies listed under section 6(1) of the WBFGA, will be required, in so far as is reasonable, to seek consensus or compromise with their recognised trade unions, when setting their well-being objectives and making decisions of a strategic nature about the reasonable steps they intend to take to deliver those objectives set.

Section 16(2) of the Act sets out several specific requirements relating to the Duty, which MAWWFRA must comply with when 'seeking consensus or compromise'. The requirements are intended to ensure that trade unions are fully and properly involved when a public body sets its well-being objectives, or when making strategic decisions.

The Act states that in order to seek consensus or compromise, a public body must include its recognised trade unions or other representatives of its staff in the process of setting objectives or making decisions, by (in particular): -



- a) Consulting them at a formative stage of the process, and
- b) Otherwise involving them throughout the process by:
 - (i) Providing sufficient information to enable them to properly consider what is proposed, and
 - (ii) Providing sufficient time to enable them to adequately consider what is proposed and respond.

Supporting evidence of how Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has complied with the Social Partnership Duty.

It is worth noting that MAWWFRAs role is to deliver proactive preventative services; and reactive fire and rescue services to the people of mid and west Wales in an open, transparent and cost-effective way; acting in the best interests of mid and west Wales and its communities.

In discharging its role MAWWFRA seeks to act for the greater good of all its Constituent Authorities and their communities. Operating within a framework laid down by the UK National and Welsh Government legislation, the Fire Authority discharges its functions by means of partnership working with the Fire Authority, its Members and Officers, operating under the guidance of the Chief Fire Officer.

The delegated day to day management and delivery of the Fire Service's functions is carried out by Officers under the overall control and guidance of the Chief Fire Officer, who discharges these functions in accordance with the policy framework and the determinations of the Fire Authority and its Committees. In so doing, the Chief Fire Officer is assisted by the Executive Leadership Team.

The Mid and West Wales Fire Service (MAWWFRS) is the operational arm responsible for delivering firefighting, rescue, and fire prevention services across the region. It is the body that carries out the day-to-day work of responding to emergencies, conducting fire safety inspections, and engaging in community safety initiatives.

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2040

Recognising the need to plan for the longer term, the Service revised its planning arrangements which resulted in the introduction of a longer-term Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP 2040). As part of the development of the CRMP 2040, trade unions were identified as key stakeholders and were invited to attend Corporate Budget Planning days, during which an overview of the draft CRMP 2040 and its associated Improvement and Well-being Objectives, was presented by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, for their consideration and feedback. Trade Union representatives were also invited to attend the Fire Authority meeting which took place on the 25 March 2024 where the CRMP 2040 was presented for final approval, prior to publication.

Corporate Budget Planning meetings for this reporting period, took place on Monday, 29 July 2024, Monday, 09 September 2024 and Monday, 21 October 2024.

A comprehensive consultation and engagement exercise was undertaken to help develop the



CRMP, which trade union representatives were invited to participate in and provide feedback on during the 10-week consultation which took place between November 2023 and January 2024. The responses were considered fully, and each Improvement and Well-being Objective was reviewed and amended accordingly to reflect the feedback received before final publication.

As part of Improvement and Well-being Objective 6, to engage and consult with communities to understand their expectations, an action was included to engage with trade unions in alignment with Social Partnership duties regarding organisational change. The progress of which is reported quarterly.

Following the introduction of the CRMP 2040, a new approach to performance monitoring was established through the creation of Performance Monitoring Groups, one for each Improvement and Well-being Objective. These groups aim to ensure continuous improvement, monitor progress and provide scrutiny against the delivery of the Improvement and Well-being Objective actions. The groups meet on a quarterly basis and trade union representatives are invited to attend all meetings.

In addition to the CRMP 2040 Performance Monitoring Groups, a Community Risk Management Delivery Board (CRMDB) Chaired by the Chief Fire Officer has been established. The CRMDB monitors the delivery of the performance made against each of the Improvement and Well-being Objectives, ensuring that:

- All activities are executed in alignment with the CRMP 2040.
- Monitoring and scrutinising performance and making decisions on escalated issues.
- Resources are allocated efficiently and effectively.
- Risks and issues are identified and mitigated, ensuring corrective actions are taken when necessary
- Stakeholder expectations are managed and identified key performance indicators (KPIs) are met.
- Providing strategic oversight and governance.
- Identification of any cross-cutting themes and interdependencies with other objectives are considered.

Trade union representatives are invited to attend CRMDB meetings, allowing them to receive updates on the progress being made regarding the delivery of CRMP 2040 and its associated Improvement and Well-being Objectives. CRMDB meetings for this reporting period, took place on Wednesday, 19 June 2024, Wednesday, 18 September 2024 and Wednesday, 18 December 2024, with the next one scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 19 March 2025. Furthermore, the livestreaming and recording of CRMDB meeting has been introduced, therefore, allowing for the information to be accessed, if needed outside of the meeting.

Joint Consultative Forum

The Joint Consultative Forum (JCF) is an internal forum, made up of representation from the Fire Authority, namely the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority, 2 Members of the Resource Management Committee, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, as head of Workforce



negotiation, 2 Principal Officers, Corporate Head of Resources, Head of Human Resources, 3 Fire Brigades Union (FBU) representatives, 1 Unison representative, 1 General and Municipal Boiler Makers (GMB) representative, the Chair and Secretary of the Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA) and the Chair and Secretary of the Fire Officers Association (FOA).

The JCF meets biannually and provides a mechanism for the communication of information and ideas between Fire Authority Members, Officers and representatives of all employee sectors. Furthermore, the JCF provides employees with an opportunity through their representatives to express their views on proposals which may affect them and acts as a dispute resolution body in this regard.

The forum also acts as a dispute Resolution Body; provides a forum for the clarification of policies and procedures, provides a framework to ensure common standards are applied and gives employees an opportunity through their representatives to express their views on proposals which may affect them.

JCF meetings for the reporting period were held on Monday, 23 September 2024 and Monday, 10 February 2025.

Service Management and Trade Union meetings

Meetings between Service Management and FBU representatives take place on a quarterly basis, for negotiation and consultation. Ad-hoc meetings are also arranged, in agreement with both parties, to discuss significant matters.

The FBU roles of (Chair, Secretary and Organiser) are fulfilled by individuals from within the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MAWWFRS) as additional elements over and above their day-to-day role. Recognising the commitment required to undertake these roles, a secondment opportunity was afforded to the individual undertaking the role of FBU secretary, allowing them to focus solely on union matters. There were two reasons for this, it was highlighted that there were vacancies within the positions of Chair and Organiser and the Service were conscious of the workload on one individual. Negotiations around shift changes were also in the process of being held and the Service wanted to ensure the FBU were afforded sufficient time to speak with their members about the planned change.

Meetings between Service management and the FBU for the reporting period, took place on 17 May 2024, 30 August 2024 and 04 November 2024. Ad-hoc meetings were also held on 09 December 2024, 06 January 2025 and 21 January 2025

Meetings between Service Management and the FRSA are held on a 6 monthly basis. Due to the retirement of the FRSA representative, there hasn't been a meeting since March 2024, however, following the recent appointment of a new representative, the next meeting is scheduled to take place on 18 March 2025.

The most prevalent trade unions within the Service Support Staff sector (Corporate Staff) are UNISON and GMB. Meetings between management and these trade unions occur on a scheduled 3 monthly basis with invitations for Agenda discussion points issued to all meeting members a week before a meeting takes place. All meetings are held at Service



Headquarters and minutes of meetings are jointly agreed upon and signed by both trade unions and the Service.

Meetings between Service Management, Unison and GMB for the reporting period, took place on 15 May 2024, 16 September 2024 and 18 November 2024.

Project Boards and Working Groups

Culture and Inclusion Working Group (C&IWG)

Trade union representatives are invited to attend the Culture and Inclusion Working Group (C&IWG) meetings, as ad-hoc attendees. The purpose of the C&IWG is to provide a safe and inclusive space for staff to develop and implement a Culture and Inclusion Action Plan, which supports and improves the culture and organisational development of the Service.

Representatives from Unison, FBU and GMB were also present at the away day in Botanic Gardens, on 20 February 2024, where discussions took place in relation to the current position concerning culture and inclusion and the direction of travel.

C&IWG meetings for the reporting period, took place on 11 April 2024, 13 June 2024, 13 September 2024, 06 November 2024 and 18 December 2024

Health, Safety and Welfare Committee (HSWCC)

Trade union representatives are invited to attend quarterly Health, Safety and Welfare Committee (HSWCC) meetings. HSWCC meetings for the reporting period, took place on 17 April 2024, 24 July 2024 and 16 October 2024.

One of the main objectives of the Committee is to ensure a positive culture of Health, Safety and Welfare across MAWWFRS by promoting cooperation between the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), as an employer, and its employees, trade unions and contractors in instigating, developing and carrying out measures to ensure the health, safety, welfare and well-being at work.

Contaminants Project

Trade union representatives were included as part of the membership for the Contaminants Project Board and the Working Group. Representatives from Unison and the FBU regularly attended project board meetings, playing an active role.

The FBU has been involved with the working group since its inception and continues to play an active role in shaping the Service's response to contaminants. In addition, FBU members were sent a questionnaire seeking ideas on contaminants, which was then fed back into the working group.



The overarching aim of the Contaminants Project is to research, review, develop, implement and evaluate procedures and policies so that contamination from fire and the effects of fire can be reduced and managed.

The purpose of the Contaminants Working Group is to determine technical, procedural and cultural solutions required to mitigate the risk to Service personnel and any others who may be affected by the actions of Service personnel, being exposed to contaminants from fire and the effects of fire which may impact on the well-being of those involved.

Mobilisation Project

FBU and FRSA representatives are members of the recently established mobilisation project board. Project board meetings for the reporting period, took place on 11 October 2024, 14 November 2024, 14 January 2025 and 05 February 2025.

Procurement and Contracting

In readiness for the requirement to report on the procurement-related duties, as outlined by the SPPP Duty, preparations are underway with the Procurement and Contracting department to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place.

Some of the areas to be reported, once the reporting deadlines have been confirmed by the Welsh Government, will include the following.

- The publication of the Contract Register for any contracts worth £30,000 or over.
- Annual summary of procurement and contracting work, including an evaluation summary of what has worked well and what could be improved upon.
- Qualitative and quantitative information, including case studies, to demonstrate procurement-related duties.
- Publication of 2-year forward pipeline report.
- Report on Fair Work Metrics.

Comments from the Trade Unions in response to the Social Partnership Duty report.

Unison and General and Municipal Boiler Makers (GMB)

Approval was received from Unison and General and Municipal Boiler Makers (GMB) representatives.

Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA).

Feedback was received from the Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA), providing comments in relation to the report and emphasizing their future engagement approach in building a positive and proactive relationship between Management and the FRSA.

Fire Brigades Union (FBU)



The below comments were received from the FBU

On behalf of FBU committee for MAWWFRS, we have reviewed “The Social Partnership Duty Annual Report 2024/2025”. After careful evaluation and discussion, we are in a position to formally disagree with the report and the Service’s position that it has fulfilled its responsibilities under the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023.

It is our view that over the period detailed in the report MAWWFRS has failed to properly follow the principles of Social Partnership.

We believe that the statements outlined in the report do not align with “The Grey Book, Part C: Local Consultation and Negotiation”

“These procedures are intended to establish relationships and interactions that promote joint solution seeking to resolve differences between management and recognised trade unions that may arise from time to time.”

Our concerns in the approach by the Service in relation to this include, but are not limited to:

- The current ongoing negotiations around proposed 224 shift changes. Including the use of Equality Impact Assessments in the proposals.
- The ongoing Community Risk Management Plan 2040.
- Lack of policy relating to Professional Standards, and “Speak-Up”.

We also believe that the Service has failed to properly follow the “Regulations, Codes of Practice and guidance relating to the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.”

The FBU Health and Safety representative for MAWW has not been consulted on matters which might affect the health and safety of members. E.g:

- Provision new equipment and technology
- Injuries
- Risk Assessments

Conclusion

The Service remains committed to fostering close working relationships with Trade Unions regarding strategic decision-making and will continue to ensure its ongoing commitment to maintaining regular and transparent communication channels, via an array of already established consultation and negotiation mechanisms.



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Mid and West Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

EIN GWELEDIGAETH

I ddarparu'r gwasanaeth gorau posibl i
gymunedau Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru.

OUR VISION

To deliver the best possible service for
the communities of Mid and West Wales.

#EichGTACGC

#YourMAWWFRS

