

Hannah Blythyn AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Partneriaeth Gymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Partnership



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1363
Ein cyf/Our ref HB/00214/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair, Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

petitions@senedd.wales

05 October 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 12 September to Jane Hutt about the petition which the Petitions Committee has received about the review of front line emergency cover which North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (NWFRA) is currently undertaking. I am replying as fire and rescue service matters fall within my portfolio.

Like all public bodies, NWFRA is under severe and sustained financial pressure. It also needs to ensure a swift and effective emergency response across the whole of north Wales. At present, that is often not possible in the most rural areas, especially southern Conwy and Denbighshire, central and southern Gwynedd, and the Llŷn peninsula. There are no wholtime fire stations away from the north coast, and the on-call firefighters who serve these areas are becoming hard to recruit and retain. The review is designed to address these financial and operational pressures, although I understand the concerns that have arisen in those communities that might be affected by the proposals.

On the particular issue of Rhyl and Deeside fire stations, NWFRA proposes to convert these to day crewing, under which there is a wholtime presence during the day, with on-call cover at night. This would allow the fire stations at Corwen, Dolgellau and Porthmadog to be upgraded from on-call to day crewing without additional cost. NWFRA needs to satisfy itself that it this proposal would be safe, and to justify its decision to the communities concerned.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Overall, the review is a local and operational matter for NWFRA, not for the Welsh Government. It has some difficult decisions to make, but I have no cause and no power to intervene. I should add that, like all FRAs in Wales, NWFRA sets its own budget without any direct core funding or control from the Welsh Government, so there is no sense in which this review is being driven by budgetary decisions we have made. However, I would urge NWFRA to reach a decision which is sustainable, affordable and fair both to its workforce and to all the communities of north Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hannah Blythyn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small mark at the end.

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