

Jayne Bryant AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Tai
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA-JB-10454-24

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

8 October 2024

Dear Jenny

I have today made a statement in respect of an inspection report published by the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and Inspector for Wales (CFRAI) on the effectiveness of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's (SWFRS) response to domestic dwelling fires. Links to the [Statement](#) and [report](#) are provided here.

In summary the inspection has found that the firefighting tactics and equipment deployed in SWFRS during the review period were not as effective as they could have been in containing and extinguishing fires swiftly and effectively, and in some instances they may have increased the damage to property and risks to life.

I am conscious that the Committee's inquiry into fire and rescue governance, and its subsequent report "Sound the Alarm", was initiated because of the serious issues identified in Fenella Morris KC's review into Culture in SWFRS, and the Welsh Government's subsequent decision to intervene there. The Commissioners requested the CFRAI inspection to help them understand the overall state of the organisation and to give them a benchmark for their work to secure its recovery.

However I thought it was important to draw to your attention that the concerns that the CFRAI has identified regarding firefighting tactics used in SWFRS are not confined to that Service, or associated with the broader failings that led to the Welsh Government intervention. SWFRS uses firefighting tactics that are standard across the whole of the UK. These tactics reflect National Operation Guidance that all FRSs use, and stem from an approach to fighting domestic dwelling fires developed many years ago that is highly questionable in light of published research.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Jayne.Bryant@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jayne.Bryant@gov.Wales

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.

I believe all three of our FRSs need to address these issues as a priority, and I have written to them accordingly. I have also written to my counterparts in the UK and other devolved governments to raise awareness of the issues which the CFRAI has identified.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne Bryant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jayne Bryant AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Tai
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government