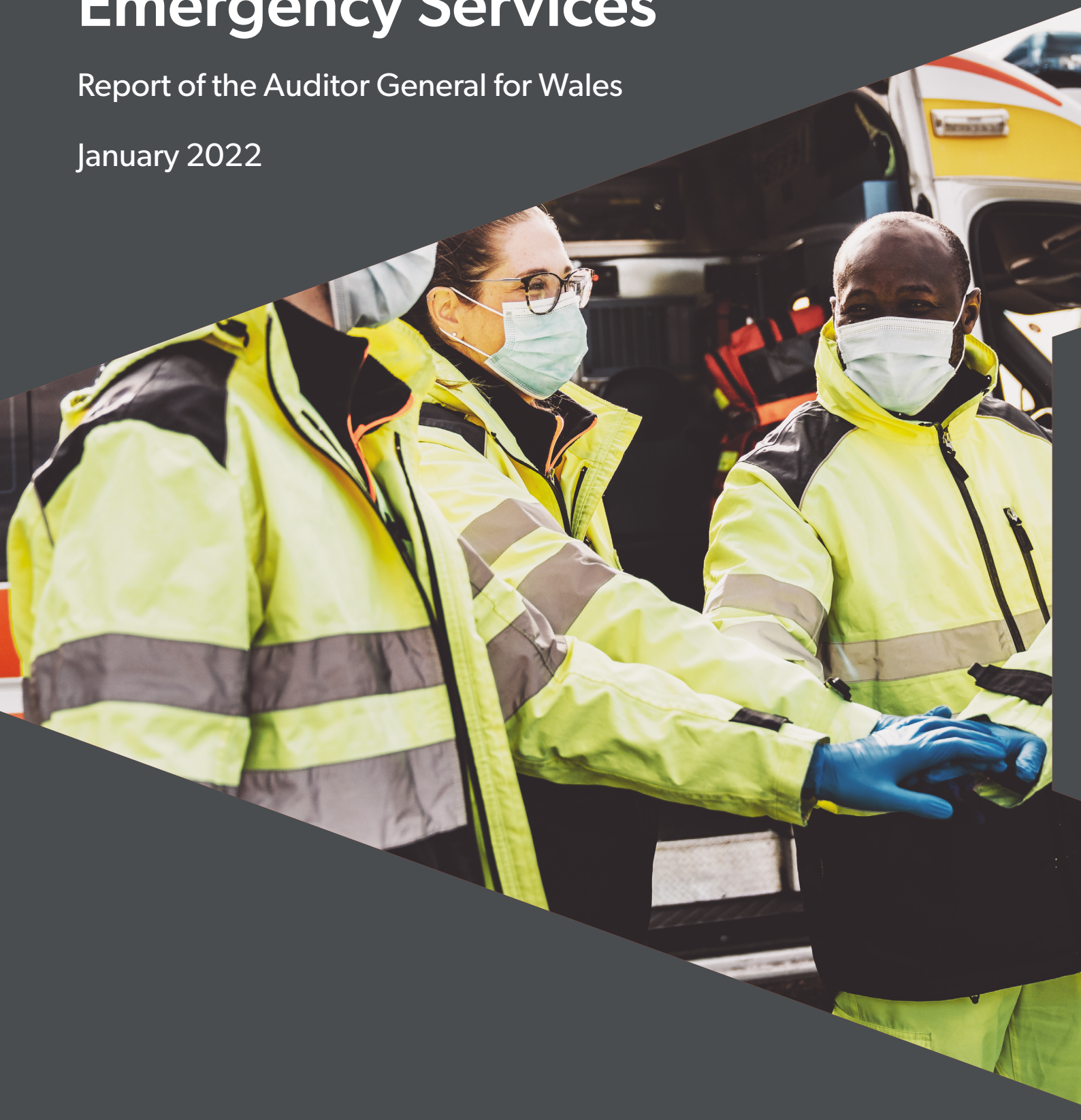
Archwilio Cymru
Audit Wales

Joint Working Between Emergency Services

Report of the Auditor General for Wales

January 2022



This report has been prepared for presentation to the Senedd under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

The Auditor General is independent of the National Assembly and government. He examines and certifies the accounts of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, including NHS bodies. He also has the power to report to the National Assembly on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which those organisations have used, and may improve the use of, their resources in discharging their functions.

The Auditor General also audits local government bodies in Wales, conducts local government value for money studies and inspects for compliance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

The Auditor General undertakes his work using staff and other resources provided by the Wales Audit Office, which is a statutory board established for that purpose and to monitor and advise the Auditor General.

© Auditor General for Wales 2022

Audit Wales is the umbrella brand of the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office, which are each separate legal entities with their own legal functions. Audit Wales is not itself a legal entity. While the Auditor General has the auditing and reporting functions described above, the Wales Audit Office's main functions are to providing staff and other resources for the exercise of the Auditor General's functions, and to monitoring and advise the Auditor General.

You may re-use this publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium. If you re-use it, your re-use must be accurate and must not be in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Auditor General for Wales copyright and you must give the title of this publication. Where we have identified any third party copyright material you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned before re-use.

For further information, or if you require any of our publications in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us by telephone on 029 2032 0500, or email info@audit.wales. We welcome telephone calls in Welsh and English. You can also write to us in either Welsh or English and we will respond in the language you have used. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

Contents

Summary report

Background 4

Key findings 6

Key facts 8

Recommendations 9

1 Emergency services are expected to work collaboratively to make better use of resources 11

2 How well emergency services are currently working together 17

3 How emergency services plan to collaborate in the future 29

Appendices

1 Audit methods and approach 41

2 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and responding to disasters in Wales 43

3 Examples of emergency services and responders collaborations elsewhere in Great Britain 45

4 Positive characteristics of emergency services who collaborate effectively 49

Summary report

Background

1 The 'blue light' emergency services[1] in Wales consist of the four police services, three fire and rescue services and the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (**Exhibit 1**). The Welsh Government oversees the fire and rescue services and Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, and the UK Government Home Office oversees the four police forces. When we refer in this report to 'emergency services' we mean these eight organisations.

Exhibit 1: the eight Welsh 'blue light' emergency service organisations

Police	Fire and Rescue	Ambulance
Dyfed Powys Police	Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service	Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust
Gwent Police	North Wales Fire and Rescue Service	
North Wales Police	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service	
South Wales Police		

Source: Audit Wales

1 'Blue light' is a popular term for those services that, in case of an emergency, are allowed to turn on flashing blue lights indicating traffic priority over other motorists.

2 In addition to the 'blue light' services, a range of other organisations are classed as 'emergency responders'; organisations with specialist knowledge and skills who act in an emergency. These include search and rescue services[2], the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Her Majesty's Coastguard, local authority emergency planning teams and voluntary sector bodies like St John Ambulance Cymru and the British Red Cross.

3 The potential benefits of emergency services collaborating and integrating services broadly fall under two key areas:

- firstly, joint working to ensure emergency services plan for and effectively respond to emergencies and disasters when delivering their responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (**Appendix 2**); and
- secondly, collaborating and integrating emergency services by removing duplication of effort in the design, commissioning, operation and delivery of activity that helps bodies make better use of resources and deliver seamless services.

4 This report looks at the second of these two areas of work, examining whether emergency services in Wales are working more closely together to make better use of resources. **Appendix 1** provides more detail about our audit approach and methods.

5 We acknowledge the significant pressures emergency services have been under responding to the pandemic in the last 18 months. COVID-19 has generated huge demands on frontline workers who have had to respond creatively and over extended periods of time to keep people in Wales safe and well.

2 For example, the Central Beacons Mountain Rescue Team and the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association.

Key findings

6 Our overall conclusion is that blue light emergency service collaboration is slowly growing but requires a step change in activity to maximise impact and make best use of resources.

7 Joint working across emergency services to make best use of resources is not a new concept. Emergency services have been working closely together to provide a better service to the public for many years. Innovative partnership initiatives have saved money, reduced local response times and have contributed to protecting the public.

8 Despite this, there are growing expectations from government policy and legislation that collaboration needs to happen more deeply and quickly to ensure front line services can meet the challenges facing 21st century Wales. While there are areas where services do not need to collaborate with each other, different lines of accountability and other practical issues can also influence the extent and pace of joint working.

9 The Joint Emergency Services Group, which brings together senior leaders from 'blue light' services, is leading the collaboration agenda. Although collaborating better is acknowledged as essential, fully integrating services is not a priority at this time.

10 In key areas – such as estates and co-location of services, fleet management and workforce – there are examples where collaborative activity is happening, but the overall scale of activity has been limited. In addition, while emergency services effectively share and use data to improve response times and vehicle utilisation, they do not have an effective approach to managing vulnerable people.

11 The Joint Emergency Services Group has established a Strategic Collaboration Board to identify and deliver future joint working opportunities, giving a clear signal that a step change is required. Plans for collaboration are developing but some of these are limited in coverage and not supported by consistent project management arrangements. Clear priorities are still to be identified and project work has not yet been fully costed. The Group have also yet to agree how they will judge the impact and value for money of collaboration.

12 As the Strategic Collaboration Board arrangements develop, there are opportunities to learn from some of the critical factors that support examples of emergency service collaboration elsewhere in Great Britain. Nevertheless, integrated services are not widespread elsewhere and no 'blue light' collaboration board appears to have fully cracked the secret of collaboration.

> The emergency services have a long history of working collaboratively and they continue to help keep people in Wales safe. Their innovative partnership initiatives have saved money, reduced local response times, and have contributed to protecting the public. Despite this, the growing expectations of public policy and legislation mean they need to work together even more to make better use of their resources and truly maximise their impact.
>
> **Adrian Crompton**
> Auditor General for Wales

Key facts

13 The infographic below summarises key facts from our report and supporting data tool about emergency services in Wales.

The budget to run the emergency services in Wales is over **£1 billion annually**.

In 2020-21, the emergency services spent **£71 million** improving assets and upgrading equipment.

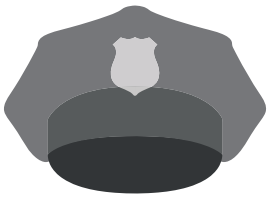
Emergency services in Wales had **£151 million** in reserves at the end of March 2021.

In 2020-21, the police had **£658 million** for services, the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust £211 million and the fire and rescue services £156 million.

In 2020-21, the police employed **13,147 people**, the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust 3,274 and the fire and rescue services 3,969.

Roughly **11,500** of the emergency service workforces are 'uniformed'.

The emergency services employ over **20,000 people**.



Welsh emergency services used **3,917 vehicles** to deliver their services at the end of March 2020.

Welsh emergency services and emergency responders operate from 684 different buildings.

Of this number:

47 (7%) are co-located – where two or more organisations share facilities.

541 (79%) are stations, where an organisation mobilises from to respond to an incident.

In 2019-20, they spent just under **£11 million** maintaining their fleet.

In 2019-20, emergency services travelled over **41.6 million miles**.

4 Recommendations

14 Our recommendations are intended to help support the Joint Emergency Services Group to maximise the opportunities for greater collaboration to both make better use of resources but also continue to protect people and communities throughout Wales.

Recommendations

In **Part 2** we note that while it is important that emergency services comply with relevant data protection legislation, they also need to share data to ensure citizens receive efficient and effective services. While these two things are not mutually exclusive, uncertainty on data protection responsibilities is resulting in some officers not sharing data, even where there is agreement to provide partners with information.

R1 We recommend that the Joint Emergency Services Group provide refresher training to service managers to ensure they know when and what data they can and cannot share.

R2 We recommend that the Joint Emergency Services Group review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities.

In **Part 3** we review future plans for collaboration between emergency services and identify opportunities to improve project planning and management to maximise the benefit and impact of improved joint working on citizens.

R3 We recommend that the Strategic Collaboration Board review workstream plans to ensure they are SMART and are focused on delivering the right outcomes.

R4 We recommend that the Strategic Collaboration Board introduce and adequately resource project management arrangements for delivery of workstream plans to be able to effectively track performance but also identify where corrective action is required.

Recommendations

In **Part 3** we consider how emergency services are measuring and evaluating their collaborative work, but found systems and data used to judge impact and benefit are yet to be established.

R5 We recommend that the Joint Emergency Services Group agree baselines which show the extent of current joint working and collective spend on collaborative activity.

R6 We recommend that the Joint Emergency Services Group establish targets for future activity to be able to demonstrate delivery of planned savings and improvements in the future.

R7 We recommend that the Joint Emergency Services Group report performance against planned activity to demonstrate the savings and improvements that are being achieved and report this publicly to provide assurance to people in Wales on its work.

In **Part 3** we conclude that much of the good joint working between emergency services is not promoted and broadcast widely and the Joint Emergency Services Group does not have a strong public visibility.

R8 We recommend that the Joint Emergency Services Group undertake a publicity and awareness raising campaign to promote its past work and future plans.

In **Part 3** we highlight critical success factors drawn from a review of emergency service collaborations across Great Britain that can strengthen approaches in Wales.

R9 We recommend that the Strategic Collaboration Board workstreams use our self-reflection tool to evaluate their work programmes and identify where activity needs to improve (the tool is set out in **Appendix 4**).

Emergency services are expected to work collaboratively to make better use of resources

01

15 In this part of the report, we set out expectations and recommendations from recent reviews and government policy that promote collaboration between emergency services. We also highlight the scale of joint working and the limitations on where collaboration and integration can take place.

Joint working across Welsh emergency services to make best use of resources is not a new concept and is growing in importance

16 Emergency services have been working closely together to provide a better service to the public for many years. Innovative partnership initiatives have saved money, reduced local response times and have contributed to protecting the public. Fundamentally, it is only through effective joint working when planning and/or responding to an emergency that blue light services can effectively discharge their statutory responsibilities.

17 The Knight Review[3] published by the UK Government in 2013 and the UK-wide Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group[4] report from 2016 both outlined much of the good work of emergency services in working together. While primarily focused on England, many of the findings relate to Wales. However, they also identified opportunities for improvement to increase efficiency and make better use of resources.

18 The expectation of emergency services in England working more closely together is partly a reflection of the duty to collaborate introduced by the Policing and Crime Act 2017 in England. Under sections 1 – 5 of the Act the police, fire and rescue and ambulance services are required to work together in discharging their functions, and this has encouraged a growth in joint working between emergency services.

19 Similarly, the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016[5] states that the Welsh Government will promote collaboration between fire and rescue services and other agencies in the interests of improving safety. More recently, in March 2021[6] and December 2021[7] the Welsh Government published written statements on broadening the role of firefighters, both as a means of better utilising the skills and capabilities that firefighters have to secure better health outcomes but also to make more efficient and effective use of resources. Ministers have been clear that they want to see collaboration between the emergency services go further and faster.

3 Findings from the review of efficiencies and operations in fire and rescue authorities in England, UK Government Department for Communities and Local Government, May 2013

4 Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group National Overview, 2016

5 Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016, Welsh Government, November 2015

6 Written statement on broadening the role of firefighters, Welsh Government, March 2021.

7 On 6 December 2021 the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor for Wales published his in-depth review of broadening of the role of firefighters in Wales and the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership published a written statement on broadening the role of firefighters.

20 These and other past reviews and statements have identified several benefits of increasing joint working between emergency services, namely:

- improving communications, emergency response and scheduling of personnel, including reciprocal arrangements for operational support, training, emergency cover and control rooms;
- facilitating the specialisation of skills, services and strengthening capacity in back-office functions and creating opportunities to make better use of and share specialised services or equipment;
- increasing spending power and opportunities to make savings through the joint commissioning and procurement of goods, services and equipment; and
- assisting with 'master-planning' for a wider geographical region and opportunities for making better use of current assets, rationalising bases, planning new joint facilities and modernising communication and ICT systems.

21 The need for better co-ordination and integration stems from some fundamental challenges, such as:

- growing demand driven by demographic change;
- the proliferation of 'wicked issues' where public bodies need to work collectively to address complex needs;
- the fragmentation of public service responsibilities with the growth of local, regional and national planning and delivery bodies;
- limited financial resources; and
- growing public expectations.

22 These changes bring common challenges which in turn means a common response is necessary if better outcomes for people and communities across Wales are to be delivered.

23 In addition, legislation introduced by the Welsh Parliament requires or encourages blue light services to work better together and with other public bodies to address some of the big challenges facing the country. For instance, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014. Such legislation emphasises the key role of emergency services in Welsh public life and their essential contribution to meeting need and keeping people safe.

24 While the Future Generations Act includes Fire and Rescue Authorities as responsible bodies, this is not extended to other emergency services. The police and Police and Crime Commissioners are statutory invitees to Public Service Boards, but not the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. Meanwhile, the Social Services and Well-being Act does not include fire and rescue services within its remit. Despite these anomalies, all bodies are committed to working to deliver the ambitions of the legislation.

Emergency services have different responsibilities and accountabilities which influences the extent and pace of joint working

25 While collaboration can help resolve some of the challenges facing 21st century public services, achieving such benefits is not easy because of the associated problems of securing accountability, managing complexity, coping with shifting demands and the difficulties of measuring success. In addition, despite coming under the broad umbrella of 'blue light services', the police, ambulance and fire and rescue service are culturally distinct and have different governance models, responsibilities and ways of working.

26 Consequently, we would not expect to see collaboration on everything 'blue light' services do. There are things that they should not work together on as well as things they should. We call this the 'Joint Working Continuum' (**Exhibit 2**).

Exhibit 2: the 'Joint Working Continuum' for emergency services

Independent working	Activity specific to a body which has no bearing on or influence from another emergency service partner. Decisions on how to deliver these functions are determined by the individual organisation. Examples include patient transfer, policing patrols and home fire safety visits.
Dependent working	Recognises the importance of emergency services exchanging information for mutual benefit and working in ways to achieve a common purpose. For instance, in responding to road traffic collisions and incidents of arson.
Collaboration	Where organisations share resources – money, staff and buildings – to help strengthen capacity and for mutual benefit. For example, the creation of joint control rooms, co-located services and operating joint fleet maintenance contracts. While collaborative working brings together different disciplines, professional boundaries, identification and autonomy is maintained. Good collaborative working is often a necessary precondition to integration.
Integration	Where two or more emergency services have been formally combined and work together as part of a single entity under a single governance, management and delivery structure. Consequently, integration will see a deliberate blurring of roles and responsibilities and the creation of common organisational support structures such as management, payments, protocols, policies and support.

Source: Audit Wales

27 There are also some fundamental structural issues which can reduce the potential for joint working. The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust is a commissioned organisation overseen by the Welsh Government and which responds primarily to the requirements of the NHS in Wales and local health boards. This can limit the potential scope and scale of joint working because of differing priorities, funding and commissioning arrangements within the health service. Fire and rescue services are accountable to the Welsh Government and respond to its policy priorities. However, criminal justice and policing is not devolved, and the police services respond to the agenda set by the Home Office which is not always aligned with Welsh Government.

28 In practical terms, the three 'blue light' services:

- operate to different footprints – the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust is an all-Wales body, but the police and fire and rescue services work to regional footprints. Only in North Wales is the boundary for both the police and fire and rescue services the same. While the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust has regional hubs, these do not map neatly onto the footprints for police and fire and rescue services; and
- have different governance models – each police service reports to a Police and Crime Commissioner, the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust has a Board made up of a Chair, Non-Executive Directors, the Chief Executive and four Executive Directors; and the fire and rescue services each have an Authority made up of representatives from their constituent local authorities.

How well emergency services are currently working together

02

29 In this part of the report, we briefly set out the important leadership role of the Joint Emergency Services Group which is providing direction and setting priorities for future collaboration. We review how emergency services in Wales are currently working together to make better use of their resources. We summarise progress to date and highlight where collaboration is taking place in respect of making better use of estates, fleet, joint posts, co-located services and better information sharing. These are the 'big ticket' items that offer the greatest opportunities to realise savings and make best use of resources.

The Joint Emergency Services Group is providing leadership for collaboration, but there is no priority to move towards more fully integrated services

30 The Joint Emergency Services Group brings together the most senior leaders in the emergency services in Wales. The Group consider their contribution to civil contingencies, counterterrorism and focus on addressing the wider cross-service issues of joint interest. The Group consists of key decision makers: the four Chief Constables, the three Chief Fire Officers and the Chief Executive of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. Attending in an observer capacity are the Chief Executive of the NHS in Wales, senior Welsh Government officials and senior military leaders in Wales.

31 The Joint Emergency Services Group continues to play a key role in coordinating emergency service responses to the pandemic, and the cooperation between members has helped forge closer working relationships. The importance of strong relationships between senior leaders is evident with the success to date in developing ideas into campaigns in short timescales that have had the buy-in of individual organisations and achieved significant impact. This has been most recently seen with the launch of a joint information campaign in respect of violence against emergency services personnel[8]. Within two months of issues being highlighted, the campaign was set up and introduced to coincide with the reopening of pubs following previous relaxation of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. The campaign received interest from partners in England.

8 'Work with us, not against us' campaign, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust Article, May 2021.

32 Members of the Joint Emergency Services Group we spoke to also recognise the importance of leadership in making collaboration and integration a reality, and they see the group as fundamental to delivering these ambitions and expectations. It is with this in mind that the Joint Emergency Services Group has recently developed a Joint Strategic Collaboration Plan and has appointed an officer to coordinate the group's civil contingencies and collaboration work. Part 3 of our report considers the work of the Joint Emergency Services Group in more detail.

33 Although there are many benefits to joint working between emergency services, it also comes with challenges, and these cannot be underestimated. It is also clear that the while there is a commitment to strengthen partnerships and deliver more collaborative working, the Joint Emergency Services Group is not pursuing integration at this time.

34 Staff we interviewed from emergency services in Wales, the Welsh Government and other stakeholders highlighted some potential risks of integrating services with different responsibilities and diverting organisations from their core purpose during the pandemic. Several blue light service staff we spoke to also felt that the cost of pursuing integration would not result in meaningful benefits in terms of saving money, nor improving the quality and responsiveness of services to deliver better outcomes for people in Wales.

Emergency Services are collaborating to make better use of their estate, but the scale of collaboration has been limited

35 Sharing offices and buildings is an area often identified as the starting point for better collaboration. It offers emergency services greater flexibility in terms of their estate, the costs associated with managing and running buildings and in organising service delivery. Shared offices also provide the chance for networking, mingling and learning and provides organisations with enhanced access to key partners who can help support your work. There are greater opportunities for information sharing to strengthen resilience in services.

36 In total, there are 597 building owned by the blue light services in Wales and a further 87 by the named emergency responders[9]. Of these buildings, 541 (79%) are stations, where an organisation mobilises from to respond to an incident. Overall, just under 7% of these 684 buildings are currently shared between two or more emergency services and/or emergency responders (**Exhibit 3**). There are opportunities for emergency services and responders to make better use of real estate through greater co-location.

9 This is not an exhaustive list and other bodies who can respond to an emergency will have buildings they operate from. These are the ones identified by blue light services in use of estate.

Exhibit 3: the number of buildings owned, leased and shared by emergency services and emergency responders in Wales at 31 March 2021

Emergency services and emergency responders manage a large number of buildings across Wales, but the level of co-location is limited to date

Organisation	Number of buildings owned	Number of buildings owned or leased by named organisation with one or more other emergency service or responder working from them	Proportion of owned buildings that are shared
Dyfed Powys Police	53	1	1.9%
Gwent Police	52	1	1.9%
North Wales Police	58	6	10.3%
South Wales Police	103	1	1.0%
Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service	122	3	2.5%
North Wales Fire and Rescue Service	49	8	16.3%
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service	50	8	16%
Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust	110	15	13.6%
RNLI	30	0	0%
Search and rescue	14	2	14.3%
Coastguard	43	2	4.7%
TOTAL	**684**	**47**	**6.9%**

Source: Audit Wales data tool

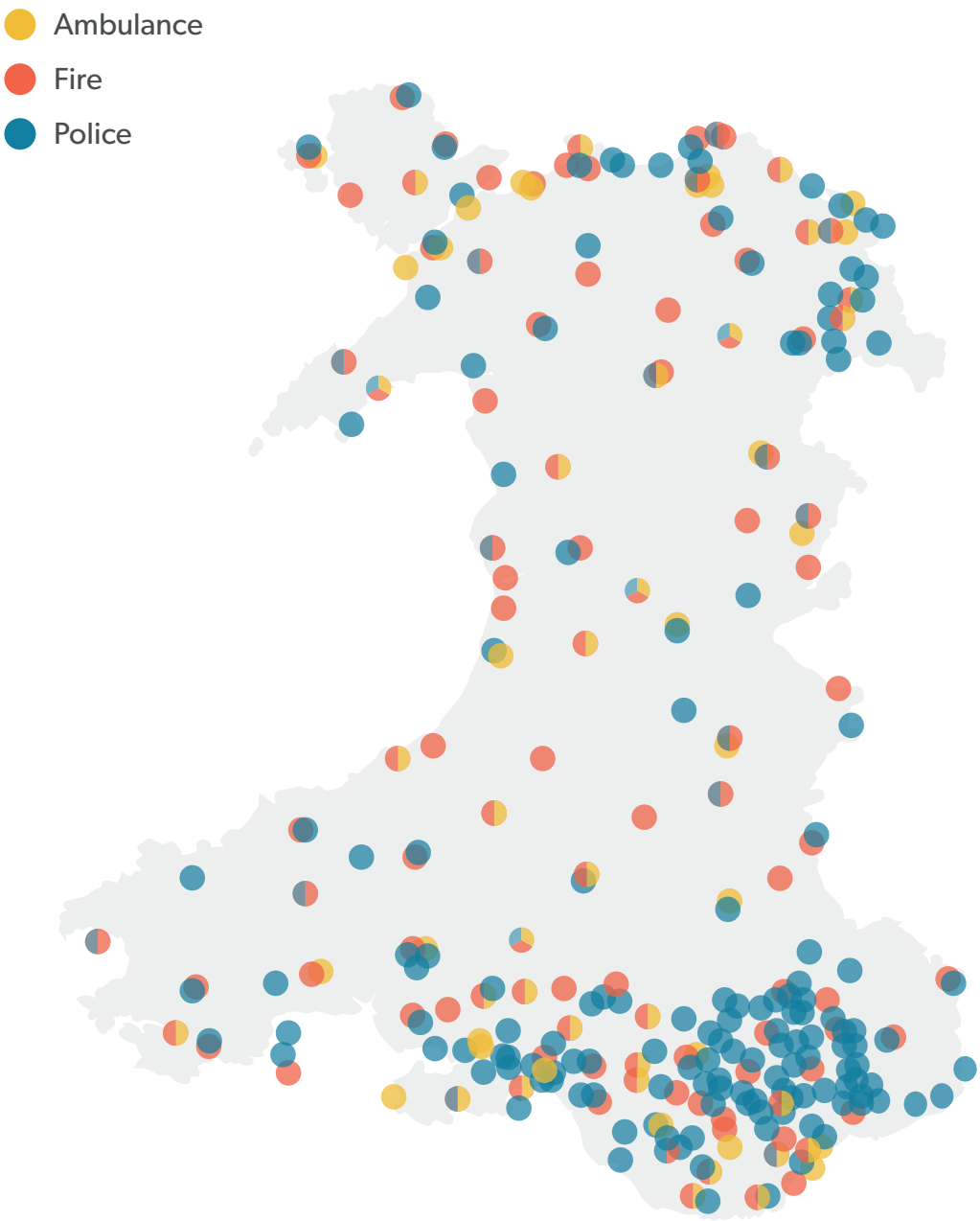
37 There are several examples of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust co-locating at fire stations using these bases as they would an ambulance station because they offer space to park, fuel and rest areas for crew. For instance, in North Wales the Trust shares fire stations in Wrexham, Bangor, Llandudno and Colwyn; and in South Wales in Maesteg, Pontyclun, Caerphilly, Barry and various locations in Cardiff. A smaller number of co-locations include the police service, which can be vital in rural areas in keeping a local presence. For example, North Wales Police and North Wales Fire and Rescue service share buildings in Tywyn, Nefyn, Deeside and Prestatyn.

38 Similarly, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service share a facility with Dyfed Powys Police and the Ministry of Justice in Llandrindod Wells and also share facilities with the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust in several locations in Swansea. There are also some good examples of emergency services and responders sharing buildings. The Llantwit Major Joint Emergency Services Station co-locates the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, South Wales Police and HM Coastguard.

39 Through our geo-mapping tool we have plotted the location of all emergency service buildings in Wales. This shows that in many locations emergency services site buildings are in close proximity to each other. For example, there are 72 emergency service buildings within 10 miles of Pontypridd town centre, 51 within 10 miles of Swansea city centre, 24 within 10 miles of Bangor and 20 within 10 miles of the centre of Wrexham[10]. **Exhibit 4** provides a geographical snapshot of emergency service buildings across Wales.

10 Our analysis is measured as the shortest distance between two points - ‘as the crow flies’.

Exhibit 4: emergency services buildings at 31 March 2021



Source: Audit Wales data tool

40 Not all sites will be suitable for co-location and the positioning of stations should always be driven by operational and risk planning, but opportunities to co-locate emergency services need to become central to these considerations. In addition, the sale of surplus buildings to generate funding for reinvestment needs to be considered as part of this decision making. We believe there are clear opportunities to make better use of the collective emergency services and emergency responders estate going forward.

Joint work on fleet is limited and there are opportunities to make better use of resources

41 Emergency services are responsible for massive fleets of vehicles. As fleet managers modernise their fleets, there are opportunities to work together to share resources and reduce costs. **Exhibit 5** highlights that emergency services were using 3,917 vehicles at 31 March 2020 and collectively spent almost £11 million on maintaining fleet in 2019-20[11]. Of this figure, roughly 50% of the spend is by the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, but it is not immediately clear from our fieldwork why they are spending significantly higher sums than other emergency services.

11 How emergency services calculate total vehicle maintenance costs and mileage varies. Some exclude the cost of parts, overheads, internal staffing costs and accident repair (due to some of the work being outsourced). Similarly, some emergency services exclude some specialist vehicles, and on occasions estimate mileages due to software limitations.

Exhibit 5: emergency services' fleet, maintenance costs and mileage at 31 March 2020

Emergency services manage a large number of vehicles and invest a significant sum of money annually on maintaining fleet.

Organisation	Total number of vehicles	Total vehicle maintenance cost (annual)	Average annual maintenance cost per vehicle	Total mileage at year end
Dyfed Powys Police	465	£1,352,255	£2,908	5,276,328
Gwent Police	400	£744,405	£1,861	5,695,410
North Wales Police	595	£551,750	£927	10,364,506
South Wales Police	867	£1,625,000	£1,874	10,235,034
Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service	378	£527,011	£1,394	1,990,779
North Wales Fire and Rescue Service	223	£201,726	£905	1,870,533
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service	408	£504,025	£1,235	2,373,689
Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust	581	£5,482,775	£9,437	3,814,605
Total	**3,917**	**£10,988,947**	**£2,805**	**41,620,884**

Source: Audit Wales data tool.

42 Collaboration offers benefits beyond achieving financial efficiencies. For instance, sharing knowledge and skills with partners will enhance capability and capacity, and can help drive innovation across emergency services to ensure the fleet is prepared for the future. Joint working on maintenance increases economies of scale and allows for better access to specialists and more comprehensive training and support. Reducing duplication between procurement functions and agreeing common specifications on fleet is one way to save money and improve resilience, particularly given that outside of specialist fleet such as ambulances and fire appliances, services overwhelmingly use the same type of vehicles – cars and vans for instance

43 To date collaborative work between blue light services on fleet has been limited. While the work of the joint fleet group between the three fire and rescue services is progressing well and bulk fuel purchasing is delivering estimated annual savings of between £70,000 and £80,000 for the four police forces, there remain opportunities for emergency services to develop joint approaches to procurement, maintenance, standardised specifications, training and apprenticeships.

There are few joint emergency service posts, and they are not a major feature of service delivery

44 Joint posts and teams can help build a collaborative culture by enabling shared decision-making, regular team building and working towards a common goal. Working together in this way can strengthen the flow of information between organisations, help improve communication and share learning from one another.

45 Overall, there are just over 20,000 emergency service personnel in Wales (**Exhibit 6**). Rather than create joint posts, emergency services have focussed on creating co-located services where teams work together from a single base. For example, the Joint Public Service Centre control room with joint staff operated between South Wales Police, Mid and West and South Wales fire and rescue services based at police headquarters in Bridgend. There, services work together but retain operational independence and report to their respective organisations. The co-location on a single site has allowed partners to reduce call handling duplication and improve intelligence sharing.

Exhibit 6: emergency services' workforce at 31 March 2020

Organisation	Police Special Constables	On call	Support staff	Police Constable Support Officers	Uniformed	Total
Dyfed Powys Police	93		724	139	1,182	2,138
Gwent Police	86		706	163	1,362	2,317
North Wales Police	156		998	185	1,591	2,930
South Wales Police	163		2,037	387	3,174	5,761
Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service		723	214		386	1,323
North Wales Fire and Rescue Service		438	147		297	882
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service		593	325		846	1,764
Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust			531		2,743	3,274
Total	**498**	**1,754**	**5,682**	**874**	**11,581**	**20,389**

Source: Audit Wales data tool

46 Similarly, Dyfed Powys Police have created an Operational Planning and Civil Contingencies Unit with its key partners including emergency services. The Unit is co-located with three Local Resilience Forum co-ordinators in the Strategic Co-ordination Centre at police headquarters in Carmarthen. Other joint staffing responses include seconded police officers working in fire crime units and medical response training for firefighters provided by the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. There is also some good inter-service working taking place. For instance, the joint police firearms teams, the joint police forensic services and counter terrorism activity, and fire and rescue services' joint fire investigation teams. Also, joint work on personal protective equipment, uniform, fleet design and procurement.

Emergency services effectively share and use data to improve response times and vehicle utilisation but do not have an effective approach to managing vulnerable people

47 Reacting to requests for help from citizens often results in a combined intervention by different emergency services. To ensure responders have a full understanding of needs and requests it is essential that emergency services share data appropriately and efficiently. Meaningful and effective communication between responders and responder agencies underpins effective joint working. Sharing information aids understanding and awareness, which is fundamental to good decision making.

48 To do this well requires blue light services to have good systems in place to exchange reliable and accurate information about risks and threats. This information should be jargon free to avoid confusion and misinterpretation, and clarified using terminology that is common to all. Effective data sharing is also essential to support vehicle utilisation[12] and to optimise responses to ensure the right people and organisations attend incidents.

12 The vehicle utilisation rate highlights an emergency services fleet's capacity against logistical needs. Whereas you may not achieve 100% vehicle utilisation, the vehicle use rate will let you identify the excess fleet capacity. Using such data highlights where there are opportunities to widen existing roles for emergency services to do more.

49 Several people we interviewed noted the positive impact of the JIGSO[13] and Multi Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT) initiatives. JIGSO is a digital solution designed to assist the resilience community to plan and respond to a major incident or public health emergency. MAIT is a service which provides emergency services with a robust, virtually instantaneous, secure inter-agency messaging solution. JIGSO and MAIT have helped reduce operational response times by more than three minutes per emergency and reduce the risk of errors and delays, enabling frontline staff to focus on the task at hand, saving time, cost and lives. Both initiatives use address data provided by Geoplace[14] as the recognised definitive source of addressing in the UK.

50 The current arrangements are a vast improvement to the old method of different branches of the emergency services physically dialling 999 to share incident information with other emergency services and has contributed to improved data and information sharing to help improve response times. Within Wales, over 300,000 calls are made per annum across the three emergency services and the use of MAIT is estimated as potentially saving over 18,000 hours of emergency service control room staff time spent telephoning other agencies[15].

51 We also identified some continuing challenges. Data protection legislation is seen as often stopping organisations from undertaking projects that involve the use of personal and sensitive data, especially where it requires sharing information with partners. Most importantly, concern over data protection is encouraging risk-aversion and stifling innovation in using data, because of the fear of being penalised. There remains an enduring cultural resistance to sharing information. Developing joint protocols to share information on vulnerable people is seen as a key priority for the future.

13 'JIGSO' is the Welsh word for 'Jigsaw' and is the name given to this initiative.

14 Geoplace uses standardised Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) address to underpin command and control systems for emergency services in Wales.

15 See The UPRN underpinning the Multi Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT) standard | GeoPlace LLP for further detail.

How emergency services plan to collaborate in the future

03

52 This part of our report considers emergency services' future plans for collaboration through a new Strategic Collaboration Board. It also sets out some opportunities to strengthen this work, including drawing on lessons from collaborative initiatives elsewhere in Great Britain.

The Joint Emergency Services Group has established a Strategic Collaboration Board to identify and deliver future joint working opportunities

53 The Joint Emergency Services Group has agreed an appropriate focus in its strategic collaboration plan to develop, plan and coordinate delivery of actions to make best use of resources through collaboration – **Exhibit 7**. To encourage wider and deeper collaboration, the Joint Emergency Services Group has also created a Strategic Collaboration Board, giving a clear signal that a step change is required to fully realise the benefits of cross-service collaboration. Established in November 2020, the Strategic Collaboration Board consists of senior leaders from across police, fire and ambulance services in Wales.

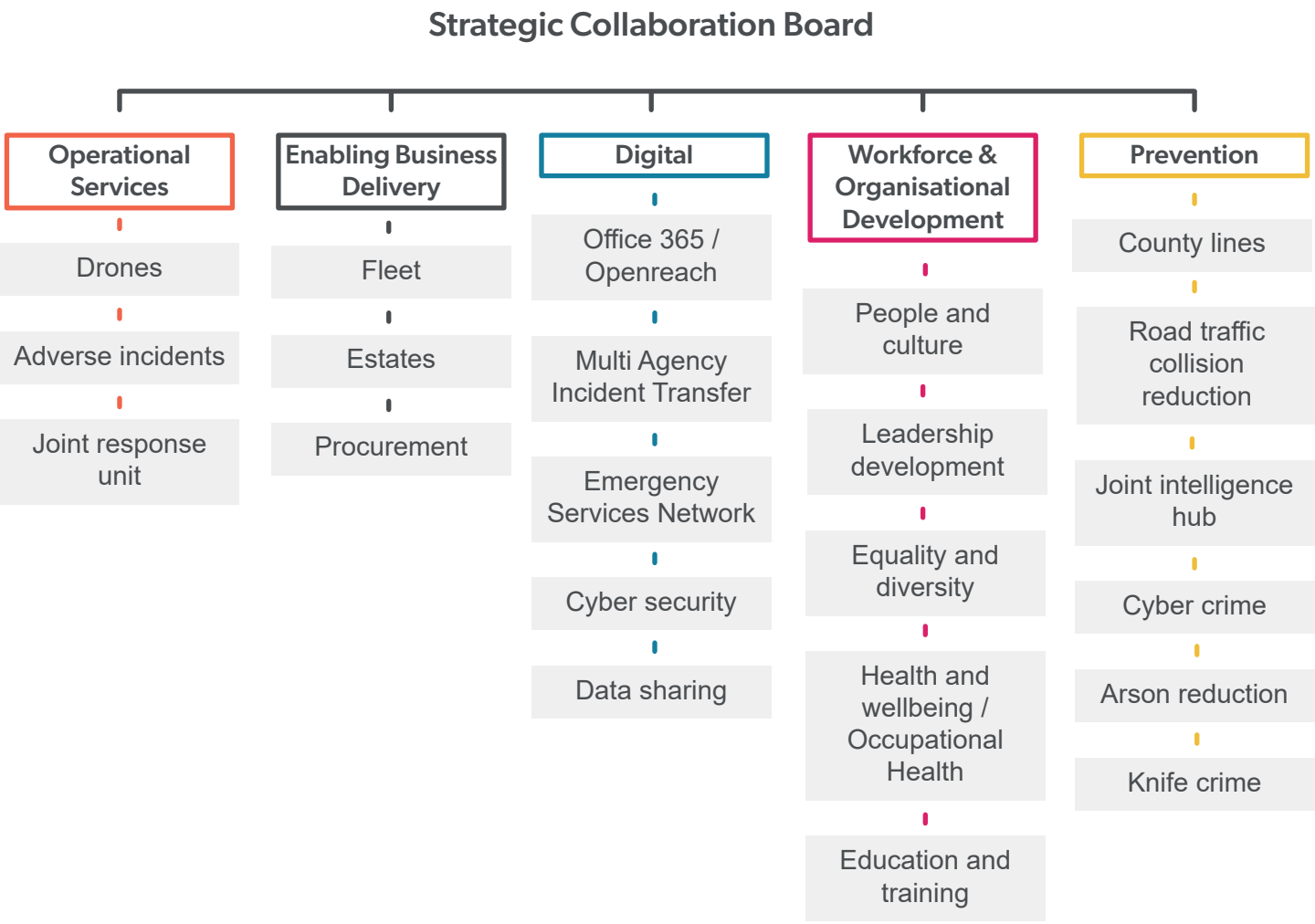
Exhibit 7: Joint Emergency Services Group Strategic Collaboration Plan objectives

- Consider issues of mutual interest and develop joint initiatives which, through collaborative working, enhances the delivery of services across Wales
- Improve co-operation and co-ordination between emergency services
- Exploit opportunities to collaborate and support enhanced emergency services delivery
- Develop new ways of working together
- Promote proactive collaboration initiatives to ensure the public of Wales receive the most appropriate emergency service response
- Reduce the volume and seriousness of adverse incident reporting between emergency services in Wales
- Deliver value for money to the Welsh taxpayer through implementation of cost-effective collaborative initiatives

Source: Joint Emergency Services Group, Joint Strategic Collaboration Plan, Version 1.0, July 2021

54 The Strategic Collaboration Board has also agreed three key principles for successful collaboration that will underpin prioritisation of future activities. These are: reduce risk and harm to our communities; enable service delivery improvement; and provide better value for money. The Board has also agreed and mapped its priorities for the future under five broad workstreams (**Exhibit 8**). Each of these five areas – operational services; enabling business delivery; digital; workforce and organisational development; and prevention – is led by a senior officer from one of the emergency services partners.

Exhibit 8: Strategic Collaboration Board workstreams and key priority areas



Source: Joint Emergency Services Group, Joint Strategic Collaboration Plan, Version 1.0, July 2021

55 The five Strategic Collaboration Board portfolios are in line with national thinking, in particular in the desire to broaden the role of firefighters and for all partners to develop digital services. In addition, important 'big ticket' items of expenditure such as fleet and assets have been prioritised. These are the most likely to yield the biggest benefits. In addition, the five workstreams are building on current practice and are not intending to join up with other national committees and working groups. The priority is to use groups and relationships that are already established and working. Some workstreams will continue to prioritise work within services, while others plan to deliver pan emergency service collaborations.

Plans for collaboration are developing but some of these are limited in coverage and not supported by consistent project management arrangements

56 Each of the five workstreams has been identifying and agreeing potential short-, medium- and long-term areas for action, which in themselves can be small scale adjustments, as well as more significant pan-organisation changes. Some of the activity also builds on, and seeks to strengthen, well-established joint working – for example, the joint work on arson reduction and road safety prevention work – while others are entirely new collaborative opportunities such as joint vehicle maintenance contracts.

57 In principle, the Strategic Collaboration Board is looking to deliver three projects under each workstream per year. Although each of the workstreams is progressing, and some have made good progress, most are still identifying, mapping out and agreeing their priorities for the future. In July 2021:

- the Operational Services workstream had identified potential topics and agreed leads for different activities and actions but was yet to agree a plan of activity or a timeline to deliver against.
- in comparison, Enabling Business Delivery had agreed draft programmes highlighting potential areas for collaboration in relation to fleet, estates and procurement, although timelines are not in place for all activities.
- both the digital and prevention workstreams were scoping baselines and agreeing work to finalise their future collaboration plans.
- while the workforce and organisational development group had identified several potential areas for collaboration, concerns had been raised that progress will be limited without specific resources being dedicated to support activity.

58 The agenda set by the Strategic Collaboration Board is appropriate and is focussed on ensuring 'togetherness', but it needs more robust and consistent project management support and could be more ambitious in some areas. For example, some of the activity is focussed on identifying whether there is a case for collaboration with actions described as 'mapping activity'; 'sharing information'; 'creating a baseline'; 'obtaining advice'; 'benchmarking'; 'explore opportunities'; 'assess competencies'; and 'produce a list'. These read as a plan to create a plan for collaboration, not delivering improvement through actual collaboration.

59 Consequently, some workstreams are still narrowing down potential actions and have yet to finalise their priorities. While the type of activities appears sound, it is not always clear what outcome is being aimed at. This raises questions as to whether actions will result in meaningful improvements, particularly as much of the detail needed to measure success and evaluate progress have yet to be agreed.

60 While the five workstreams are broadly focussed on the right things they have no consistent, resourced and agreed approach to project management. Establishing a consistent resourced approach is therefore critical because it:

- brings leadership and direction to projects and supports the creation of a proper plan for executing on strategic goals;
- ensures proper expectations are set around what can be delivered, by when, for how much and ensures the quality of whatever is being delivered, consistently hits the mark;
- ensures proper project management processes are followed throughout the project life cycle and enables the right people do the right things, at the right time; and
- enables risks to be properly managed and mitigated against to avoid them becoming issues and supports effective tracking and reporting of a project's progress.

61 Currently, much of the coordination work falls to the Joint Emergency Services Group coordinator but this is not sufficient to support such a wide and ambitious programme. Overall, workstream capacity is limited with no dedicated staff resource to support Strategic Collaboration Board activity with everyone doing their 'day job+'. In addition, some important recent inter-agency collaborations such as the fire and rescue services co-responding to medical emergencies and joint response units with the police have not progressed in recent years because of uncertainties in funding.

62 Without a consistent project management approach and ensuring there are adequate resources in place, the ambitions of the Strategic Collaboration Board are unlikely to be realised. This is a major risk to future success.

The Joint Emergency Services Group have yet to agree how they will judge the impact and value for money of collaboration

63 Establishing clear outcomes for collaboration is important to enable partners to understand the impact and value of joint working. However, developing 'whole system' outcomes is complex, especially in a multi-disciplinary environment. Integrating the outcomes and outputs from different services can be as complicated as delivering the collaboration itself. And it can be difficult to know where to start without a clear baseline, or where particular measures are not already in place, and without them, it is impossible to evaluate how well you are doing. It is essential therefore that partners identify outcomes at an early stage of the collaboration process rather than retrospectively fitting them to already agreed and funded activities or interventions to ensure they can undertake a proper evaluation.

64 Importantly, the strategic collaboration plan includes an objective to deliver value for money to the Welsh taxpayer through implementation of cost-effective collaborative initiatives. However, beyond this ambition, there is little information currently reported to judge whether existing and planned future collaborations between 'blue light' services is and will deliver better value for money.

65 For instance, there is no baseline data which shows collectively what organisations currently spend; no information on collaborative activities highlighting the savings that have been made to date; and no agreed targets on improvements that are planned to be delivered in the future. Existing collaborations are yet to be mapped or assessed for impact.

66 In addition, much of the good joint working between emergency services is not promoted and broadcast widely and the Joint Emergency Services Group does not have a strong public visibility. This is a missed opportunity given the Group's positive work in the last 18 months steering their way through the pandemic.

There are opportunities to learn from what is happening elsewhere in Great Britain

67 Nationally, emergency services benefit from being part of service-based networks that operate on a wider basis and have a good track record of encouraging within-sector collaboration. They include the National Fire Chiefs Council, National Police Chiefs Council and the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives. In addition to service specific networks, there are several other national, regional and local 'blue light' strategic collaboration boards in other parts of Great Britain.

The Scottish Emergency Services National Collaboration Strategy 2018-2023 is heavily focused on policy and service integration

68 In 2014, a Reform Collaboration Group was established in Scotland. It comprises the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Police Service of Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service. In addition to the chairs of the fire and rescue and ambulance services, the chair of the Scottish Police Authority, the Chief Fire Officer, the Chief Executive of the Scottish Ambulance Service and the Chief Constable of Police Scotland also sit on a separate governance group. The Reform Collaboration Group vision is "working together for a safe and successful Scotland" and they have agreed seven areas for action:

- improve outcomes for people;
- transform by rebalancing how we deploy resources towards prevention activities;
- enhance the skills of our workforce;
- improve how we work in partnership and collaborate with others;
- further build and strengthen community resilience;
- exploit new technology in redesigning our services; and
- develop more flexible service models.

69 Importantly, in January 2018 the Group published the Scottish Emergency Services National Collaboration Strategy[16]. The strategy sets out the collective vision, strategic direction, objectives and working principles which will guide the ongoing development of collaborative working across the three emergency services in Scotland. A joint vision has been agreed, that "through ever closer working and through empowering our staff and communities we will improve the safety and resilience of communities and improve the wellbeing of the people of Scotland".

16 The partners have also developed a separate plan for improving use of data. This supports delivery of the overall National Collaboration Strategy.

70 The strategy includes a brief analysis of the demands that are being placed on emergency services and other public services and makes the case for why collaboration is important. Demographic change, social inequality, reductions in resources and political uncertainty highlight the need for a robust response to enable emergency services to be able to continue to deliver their responsibilities.

71 The strategy takes a logical step by step approach focussing on quick wins and easy choices that build up to longer term benefits focussing on four priority areas: co-location of services; co-responding; policy and data integration; and integration and shared services. They are focussing on these four areas because “Co-location helps us to co-respond which can lead to better sharing of knowledge and information which can help us to integrate services”. The Reform Collaboration Group is also developing a Collaborative Improvement Model to inform future collaborative work and to maximise opportunities, efficiencies and effectiveness.

The Thames Valley Emergency Services Steering Group is overseeing a focused programme of sharing resources and enhancing joint capabilities

72 The Thames Valley Emergency Services Steering Group brings together senior officers from the emergency services. The main differences with the Joint Emergency Services Group in Wales are the inclusion of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner and local authorities as members. There is a Programme Support officer, and a triage mechanism for focusing and reducing workstreams so they remain achievable and realistic. The Thames Valley Emergency Services Steering Group provides overall guidance, challenge, and direction on the implementation of the Collaboration Programme. Strategic priorities are focused on:

- demand analysis and reduction;
- enabling services through joint procurement;
- sharing specialist capabilities;
- identifying and collaborating on workforce recruitment and development; and
- operational integration.

73 Significant progress has been made including Buckinghamshire Fire

Authority, South Central Ambulance Trust and Thames Valley Police co-locating in a new purpose built 'Hub' with all three services operating from one site. Other developments include the joint procurement of standardised fire appliances and using a single supplier for personal protective equipment across the three fire and rescue services in the region. A collaboration register and monitoring report has been developed and is used to track progress[17].

Emergency services in the East of England are starting to quantify the return on investment from collaborations

74 An evaluation report of current collaborative activity between Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the East of England Ambulance Service Trust estimated a total return on investment of £5.09 million in social value, or £7 for every £1 invested[18]. This includes:

- the return on investment and social value of the Fire and Rescue Service's support during the pandemic from firefighter secondments into Ambulance Service Trust of £0.448 million;
- the social value of the Fire and Rescue Service's falls team in 2020-21 of £1.053 million;
- bariatric complex patient rescue service with an added social value to Bedfordshire of £0.384 million;
- co-responding with an added social value to Bedfordshire of £2.244 million; and
- effecting entry[19] has added social value to Bedfordshire of £0.960 million.

75 Due to collaborative efforts, the evaluation highlights that COVID-19 has been less impactful on the Ambulance Service Trust and since April 2020 the support of the Fire and Rescue Service has enabled an extra 600 emergency ambulances to be available and more than 22,332 patient-facing hours have been provided. As a result, in 2020-21 the Ambulance Service Trust met all its category 1 life threatening incident response standards[20] in the Bedfordshire area for the first time since 2010. The Trust have since reported the third best performance in England within their 7-minute target during 2020-21.

17 Thames Valley Collaboration Report

18 BFRS and EEAST Collaboration Evaluation 2021.

19 Effecting entry is where the fire and rescue service break into a property where there is a concern for the life of a patient in a premises and ambulance or police crews are unable to make entry.

20 In 2017, NHS England implemented new ambulance standards across the country. This was to ensure the sickest patients get the fastest response and that all patients get the right response first time. A set of pre-triage questions were introduced to identify those patients in need of the fastest response. There are four categories of call and Category 1 covers calls from people with life-threatening illnesses or injuries and requires a response within 7 minutes.

What can Wales learn from this?

76 From the examples we have reviewed in other parts of Great Britain, we conclude that collaboration is mostly operationally focused, prioritised locally not nationally and is often a tactical response to address a problem or circumstance. Activity is also often invisible to the public. Integrated services are not widespread elsewhere and no 'blue light' collaboration board appears to have fully cracked the secret of collaboration.

77 Drawing from the examples above and others – **Appendix 3** provides a summary of some additional partnerships – there are clearly some key principles that can help make 'blue light' collaboration work. In taking this agenda forward in Wales, **Exhibit 9** highlights some likely critical factors of success. Building on this, **Appendix 4** provides a self-evaluation checklist.

Exhibit 9: making collaboration work – critical success factors

- Visible leadership that prioritises the importance of collaboration.
- Being clear how collaboration contributes in a meaningful way to taking forward each agencies vision and strategy.
- Contextualising the reasons for change – how demographic, societal, financial and political issues require different responses from services in the 21st Century.
- Being open about the potential areas of conflict and confronting these head on by openly discussing, assessing and managing them.
- Establishing clear protocols around behaviours, regularity of meetings, information and data sharing, finances, and accountabilities.
- Establishing a shared understanding, and an appreciation, of the remit and limitations of collaboration.
- Ability to commit time, energy and resource (including senior leaders time) to sustain momentum and delivery.
- Appreciating the service user's perspective and involving them in identifying where collaboration can improve their experience.
- Promoting the importance and benefits of collaborative working at the 'front line' and communicating/explaining why it is important.
- Creating measures of success that enable you to demonstrate impact and value for money, and regularly evaluating and reporting performance against these.

Source: Audit Wales

Appendices

1 Audit methods and approach

2 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and responding to disasters in Wales

3 Examples of emergency services and responders collaborations elsewhere in Great Britain

4 Positive characteristics of emergency services who collaborate effectively

1 Audit methods and approach

Methods

We completed our review between March 2020 and October 2021 and used a range of methods in delivering the review:

- **document review:** we reviewed Welsh Government documentation, guidance and announcements, a range of materials on approaches in other parts of Great Britain and reports and information published by the UK Government;
- **interviews:** we interviewed senior leaders from each of the emergency services, officers with responsibility for delivering collaboration initiatives in Welsh emergency services, staff of the Welsh Government and a small number of people working in emergency services in England; and
- **data analysis:** we undertook a detailed data collection and analysis exercise drawing on information included in published accounts and data held by each of the emergency services. The data requested covered the following:
  - stations/bases, control rooms and location of each organisations buildings – we had all of this information.
  - workforce by role - uniformed and non-uniformed – we had all of this information.
  - revenue and capital spend – we had all of this information.
  - reserves – we had all of this information.
  - number of vehicles, annual mileage and spend on maintaining fleet – we had most of this information.
  - spend on overtime – we had most of this information.
  - sickness absence levels – we had some of this information.
  - board remuneration – we had all of this information.

We have only drawn on data sets which are fully or mostly complete in our analysis and have checked the validity and accuracy of the information with each body. Because of these differences in data, the analysis in the report varies between financial years.

Approach

Following previous local audit work on collaboration between police forces in Wales, we launched this review looking more widely at all Welsh 'blue light' services in March 2020. We originally planned this work as a '2 stage' audit:

- Stage 1 desktop review of resources, budgets, fleet and assets, to identify from where and how services currently work together.
- Stage 2 opportunities to improve resilience through better collaboration, integration and use of resources.

We revised our plans to take account of the challenges facing emergency services in dealing with the impact of COVID-19. We reduced the scope and coverage of our fieldwork. For instance, we did not process map how each emergency service responds to emergency 999 calls, including resolution and recovery at the Bridgend Joint Emergency Services Centre; we did not hold focus groups of frontline emergency workers; and we did not review risk registers and risk management arrangements. We also completed the review as a single stage audit.

2 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and responding to disasters in Wales

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and accompanying non-legislative measures, provides a single framework for civil protection in Wales[21]. Part 1 of the Act and supporting regulations and statutory guidance establish a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparation and response at the local level. We reported on the operation of the Act in 2012[22].

The Act divides local responders into 2 categories, imposing a different set of duties on each. Those in Category 1 are organisations at the core of the response to most emergencies (the emergency services, local authorities and NHS bodies). Category 1 responders are subject to the full set of civil protection duties. They will be required to:

- assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning;
- put in place emergency plans;
- put in place business continuity management arrangements;
- put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency;
- share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination;
- co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency; and
- provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (local authorities only).

21 Under Section 41 of the Transfer of Functions Order in 2018, key provisions of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 ('the Act') were transferred to Welsh Ministers.

22 Civil Emergencies in Wales, Auditor General for Wales, December 2012.

Category 2 organisations (the Health and Safety Executive, transport and utility companies) are ‘co-operating bodies’. They are less likely to be involved in the heart of planning work, but will be heavily involved in incidents that affect their own sector. Category 2 responders have a lesser set of duties - co-operating and sharing relevant information with other Category 1 and 2 responders. Category 1 and 2 organisations come together to form ‘local resilience forums’ (based on police areas) which help co-ordination and co-operation between responders at the local level.

Emergency services in Wales have taken the lead in keeping people and property safe in response to a wide variety of incidents. For instance, severe storms and floods as well as transportation accidents, riots, civil protests, massive fires and oil pollution.

3 Examples of emergency services and responders collaborations elsewhere in Great Britain

Joint working between emergency services is growing in importance across Great Britain and there are numerous approaches in place or under development. For further information on the work of the Reform Collaboration Group in Scotland, Thames Valley Collaboration Steering Group and Bedfordshire Blue Light Collaboration Strategic Board see paragraphs 67 to 75 in the main body of this report.

Collaboration	Wider Membership	Performance management framework in place	Evaluation of existing joint working arrangements	Work programme prioritised	Additional and separate Tri Service strategies and approaches developed
Scotland Reform Collaboration Group	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Data
Thames Valley Collaboration Steering Group	Police and Crime Commissioner County Councils Local Resilience Forum Local Economic Partnership NHS CCG	Yes	Yes	Yes	Estates Fleet Procurement Emergency Services Hubs Operational rotas Apprentices

Collaboration	Wider Membership	Performance management framework in place	Evaluation of existing joint working arrangements	Work programme prioritised	Additional and separate Tri Service strategies and approaches developed
Bedfordshire Blue Light Collaboration Strategic Board	Police and Crime Commissioner Local Resilience Forum	Yes	Yes	Yes	Estates Fleet Procurement Workshops
Southwest Emergency Services Collaboration Group	Cornwall Council Local Resilience Forum	Yes	Yes	Yes	Tri Force Specialist Operations Digital Storage and Management Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP)
Warwickshire Blue Light Collaboration Joint Advisory Board	Police and Crime Commissioner County Council	Yes	No	Yes	Fire crime scene investigation Real Time Demand Management

Collaboration	Wider Membership	Performance management framework in place	Evaluation of existing joint working arrangements	Work programme prioritised	Additional and separate Tri Service strategies and approaches developed
Cheshire	Air ambulance	Yes	No	No	People Development professional elements Facilities and Estates Strategic Change Improvement Courier Services Legal Services Print Services Corporate Communications
Cumbria Blue Light Executive Leaders Board	County Council Mountain Rescue	Yes	No	Yes	Data sharing District level Local Focus Hubs Strategy Joint Command and Control Centre Mobile working strategy

Collaboration	Wider Membership	Performance management framework in place	Evaluation of existing joint working arrangements	Work programme prioritised	Additional and separate Tri Service strategies and approaches developed
Essex Strategic Board	Thurrock Council Southend on Sea Council	Yes	Yes	Yes	Estates Fleet Procurement Safer Essex Roads Strategy
Merseyside Blue Light Collaboration Board	Local Resilience Forum Liverpool City Council	Yes	No	Yes	Joint training for commanders and control room supervisor Common debrief process

Source: Audit Wales

We have developed this self-assessment checklist drawing on our review of

4 Positive characteristics of emergency services who collaborate effectively

emergency service collaborations across Great Britain. We have recommended that it is used by the emergency services in Wales to evaluate and strengthen their collaborative work programmes.

Characteristic	Always	Sometimes	Never
We have visible leadership that prioritises the importance of collaboration			
I trust others within the collaboration, and others trust me			
We are clear how collaboration contributes in a meaningful way to taking forward each agencies vision and strategy			
We know why and can contextualise the reasons for change – how demographic, societal, financial and political issues require different responses from services in the 21st Century			
We are open about the potential for conflict and confront these head on by openly discussing, assessing and managing them			
We know who will hold the partners together during challenging times			
Individuals are taking specific actions to move the collaboration forward			
The most difficult issues are being addressed			
We have clear and effective protocols around behaviours, regularity of meetings, information and data sharing, finances, and accountabilities			
Responsibility for coordinating the collaboration process is clear and partners are committed to sharing responsibility for the collaboration			
We have a shared understanding, and an appreciation, of the remit and limitations of collaboration			
We can commit sufficient time, energy and resource (including senior leaders time) to sustain momentum and delivery of our collaborative work			

Characteristic	Always	Sometimes	Never
I and my organisation is prepared to create and sustain capacity, and all other partners are committed to doing the same			
We value the service user's perspective and involve them in identifying where collaboration can improve their experience			
We promote the importance and benefits of collaborative working at the 'front line' and communicate and explain why this is important			
We have measures of success that enable us to demonstrate impact and value for money, and regularly evaluate and report performance against these			

Source: Audit Wales

Archwilio Cymru
Audit Wales

Audit Wales

24 Cathedral Road

Cardiff

CF11 9LJ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

We welcome telephone calls in
Welsh and English.

E-mail: info@audit.wales

Website: www.audit.wales