# WRITTEN STATEMENT

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# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Report on the effectiveness of firefighting** |
| **DATE** | **08 October 2024** |
| **BY** | **Jayne Bryant MS, Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government** |

The Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector (CFRAI) for Wales, Dan Stephens QFSM, has today published a [report](https://www.gov.wales/responding-domestic-dwelling-fires-south-wales-fire-and-rescue-service) on the effectiveness with which South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) fights dwelling fires.

The Commissioners, appointed by Welsh Government to oversee SWFRS, requested the CFRAI to conduct this inspection, to help them assess the operational capability of the organisation and provide a benchmark to support the development of the organisation. The inspection builds on the CFRAI’s previous thematic inspections covering all three FRSs in Wales and CFRAI intends to conduct similar inspections of North Wales and Mid and West Wales FRSs in the future.

The report reflects a detailed review of dwelling fires in South Wales in the two years prior to March 2023, prior to the Commissioners being appointed. It is based on SWFRS’s own records and interviews with frontline crews and senior SWFRS officers.

Its overall finding is that the firefighting tactics and equipment used during this period were not as effective as they could have been in containing and extinguishing fires swiftly and effectively. The CFRAI finds that in some instances these may have increased damage to property and risk to life.

I want to make it clear that there is no criticism in the report of frontline firefighters, who continue to do their utmost to protect life and property. The public can have confidence in that. The issue is about how firefighters are trained, equipped and the tactics employed to fight fires.

This is a problem not confined to SWFRS or to Wales. For around 30 years, this approach has been adopted to fighting fire by FRSs across the UK. It needs to change more widely.

Commissioners and the other two Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales need to act on the CFRAI’s findings. I will also be engaging with the UK and other devolved governments to raise awareness of this issue and encourage a common approach to addressing these findings.

I will keep the Senedd informed as appropriate.