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Reference 645A2013  
Date 27 November 2013  
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Dear Huw

## Improvement Assessment

In my letter of 30 September 2013, I gave my opinion on whether the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) had discharged its statutory duties in respect of improvement planning.

I am also required, under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) to give an opinion on whether South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) has discharged its duties in respect of improvement reporting and met the requirements of the Measure.

**In my opinion, and based on audit work undertaken to date the Authority has discharged its improvement reporting duties under the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance**

I have reached this conclusion because:

- The Authority has published an Assessment of its Performance in 2012-13 (entitled 'How did we do in 2012-13') within the statutory deadline of 31 October 2013.
- 'How did we do in 2012-13' assesses the Authority's performance in the preceding financial year (2012-13) and sets out how it has sought to discharge its duties under the Measure.
- The Assessment evaluates the Authority's success in achieving its improvement objectives and expresses its view clearly.
- The Assessment includes details of performance and comparisons as measured by the national strategic and core indicators, with specific comparisons included against other Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities and performance across the UK.

- The Assessment includes a section outlining the key collaborative activities the Authority is involved in and specifically around the work of the National Issues Committee (NIC) and joint working with Local Authorities and other public services.
- The Authority has made its citizens and partners aware of the existence of the Assessment. It is easily accessible, in English and Welsh on the Authority's website with hard copies, and other formats, available on request. It has used social media to direct citizens to the Assessment and a 'digital story' provides a summary in an innovative format.
- The Assessment makes it clear how people can propose new priorities for improvement.

The Authority has responded positively to our previous proposal for improvement (improvement and assessment letter of 21 December 2012) to produce a short summary which provides a clear and concise update for the public and help the Authority explain its achievement and future challenges. It has also responded positively to our suggestions to make the Assessment more 'user friendly' through clearer signposting, more concise narrative and less technical language.

No proposals for improvement are being suggested in this letter. We will continue to monitor and report on the progress made by the Authority in implementing the proposals set out in my previous reports and letters.

I will undertake more detailed work on the arrangements that support the Authority's performance management and reporting over the following months and report this, as well as summarising all of my work and that of relevant regulators during 2013-14, in an Annual Improvement Report for the Authority that I will publish by the end of March 2014.

Yours sincerely



**HUW VAUGHAN THOMAS**

**Auditor General for Wales**

CC: Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Local Government and Government Business

Lisa Williams – Performance Audit Lead