

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref IM/HB/00061/24

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP
Minister of State for Crime, Policing & Fire
PS.ChrisPhilp@homeoffice.gov.uk

7 March 2024

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your letter of 8 February notifying me of the laying of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels: Fire and Rescue Services) (England) Regulations 2024, which introduce minimum service levels for Fire and Rescue Services in England, only. I note your stated intention to establish a minimum service level for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales through future regulations.

The Welsh Government is opposed to the imposition of minimum service levels, and we have fundamental concerns about the impact of the Act on devolved public services and the social partnership relationships which are at the heart of public service delivery in Wales. This includes our Fire and Rescue services.

Your colleagues have already taken a decision not to apply a minimum service level for the ambulance service in Wales, recognising it is a devolved area, and the same should apply to the Fire and Rescue Services in Wales. In any event, I do not believe that minimum service levels could be practically applied to the Welsh firefighting workforce, which is mostly retained rather than wholetime. Retained firefighters cannot be required to work on any given day in the normal course of business, so cannot be subjected to a work notice. The Act's failure to recognise this further demonstrates that it is an unreasonable and unworkable intrusion into devolved matters. Accordingly, the Welsh Government will not be contributing to a fundamentally flawed, damaging and counter-productive exercise by providing the data you seek, and I will advise the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services to respond to your request in the same way.

I am copying this letter to Chief Fire Officers in Wales and the Fire Brigades Union.

Yours sincerely,

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

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NS

Gohebiaeth.Hannah.Blythyn@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Hannah.Blythyn@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.