



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

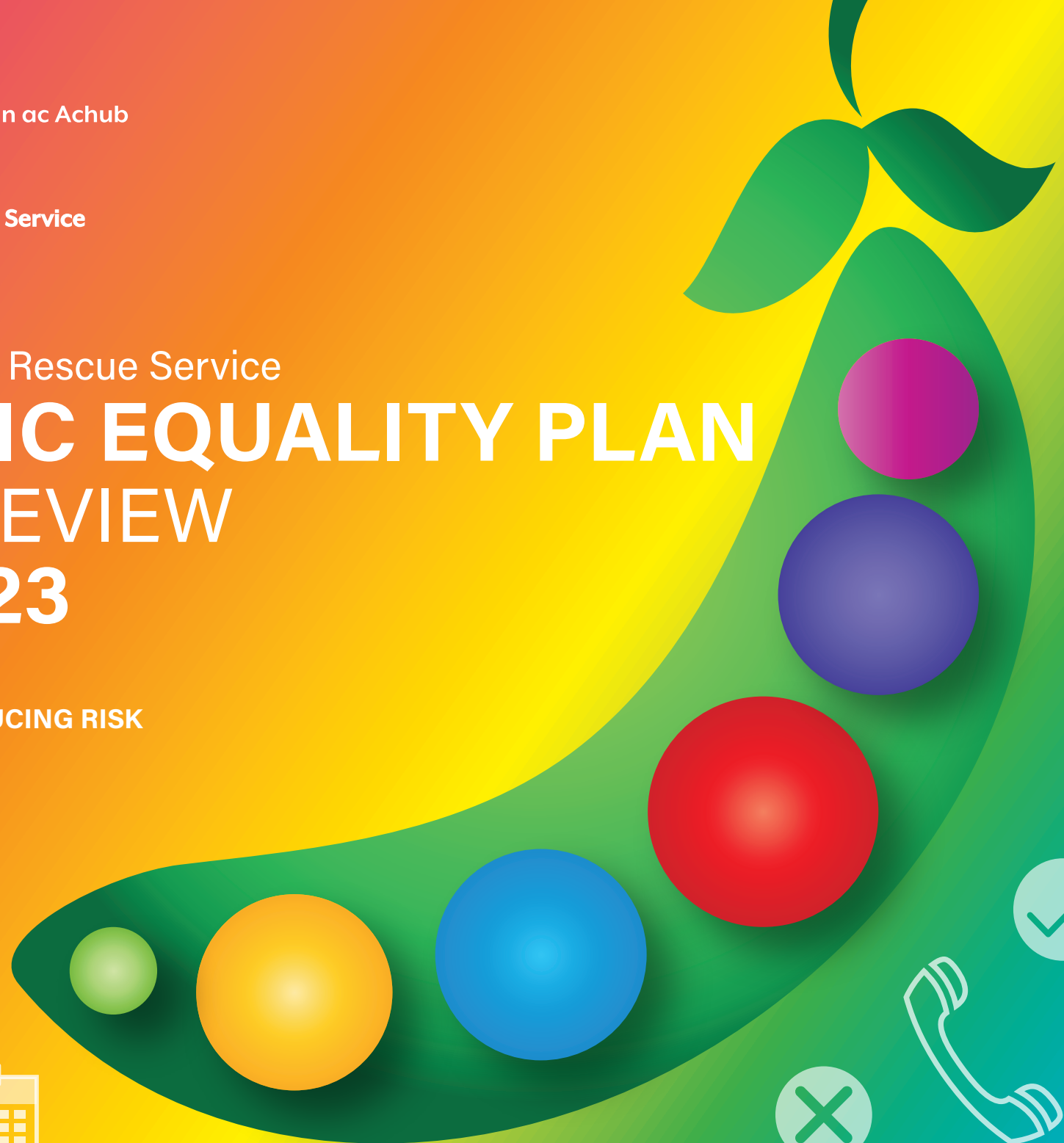
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN

ANNUAL REVIEW

2022 - 2023

RAISING AWARENESS - REDUCING RISK



INTRODUCTION

This is the 2022-2023 review of South Wales Fire Rescue Service's Strategic Equality Plan (the Plan can be found on the website, links below)



SCAN ME

ENGLISH:

<https://bit.ly/StrategicEqualityPlan2020-2025>



SCAN ME

WELSH:

bit.ly/CymllunCydraddoldebStrategol2020-2025

All organisational actions/tasks are mapped to one of the Strategic Equality Plan Outcomes, and this review provides a snapshot of the journey towards achievement.

OVERVIEW

The following Strategic Equality Outcomes are separated into **Services**, **People** and **Infrastructure**. The following pages detail our commitment to each of our five Equality outcomes along with updates as to what has been achieved against the objective during the financial year 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

1. Ensure under-represented groups/marginalised communities are involved at the outset of design and delivery of our services

2a. Becoming an employer that all communities can see themselves becoming part of

2b. Become a place of work where all employees feel valued

3a. Ensure we carry out our legal duties under the Equality Act (2010) and related Welsh Legislation

3b. Improve our infrastructure to better support a 21st Century inclusive employer



EACH OUTCOME

1. Ensure under-represented groups / marginalised communities are involved at the outset of design and delivery of our services

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Exploring new ways of working to improve service delivery;
- Building relationships with external groups and seeking their input into how we can better serve them;
- Working with local authorities, charities, health bodies and other organisations to combine resources to reduce 'consultation fatigue';
- Involving marginalised communities by asking for feedback on what we are doing;
- Communicating with those we serve, letting them know what we are doing and why;
- Collecting and analysing relevant data to make sure we are not accidentally excluding a group (or groups).

WHAT WE HAVE WORKED ON DURING 2022/2023:

- We have created our new Strategic Equality Plan for 2023-2026 to move with the needs of our communities and to reflect the changes in place for a modern-day Fire and Rescue Service. This has since been launched on 1st April 2023.
- We undertook work to reformat our Equality Impact Assessment to ensure all our processes, policies and decisions are not adversely impacting under-represented groups.
- We have reconfigured the Inclusive Workforce Group and grown membership, so that it can provide insight into the experiences of under-represented groups and steer service delivery.
- We continue to be active members of the Public Service Board, collaborating and taking an integrated approach to deliver a service that will help people feel safe and well in their daily lives.
- We have worked with key public sector partners to enhance our understanding of equality issues, working on a Fairplay award with Chwarae Teg and the continuation of discussions with key leaders, stakeholders and visionaries in diverse communities. This has allowed us to shape our services and increase understanding of support mechanisms.
- We have improved the accessibility of our website, Annual Improvement and Strategic Plans so that we can effectively update all communities with information and will continue to monitor this.
- We have appointed a new Partnership Manager within the Community Safety & Partnerships structure to enhance partnership working. As well as encouraging partnership referrals, we will offer awareness training and ensure that our own onward referral process to other agencies is current and meets the needs of our communities.
- Non-digital methods are considered in each major campaign plan and referenced in our Communications and Engagement Strategy. Methods employed, such as for our Christmas safety campaign and Wholetime Firefighter recruitment campaigns, include use of billboard vehicles, leaflets, brochures, newspaper adverts, radio and TV, outdoor banners, and face-to-face engagement events to ensure we reach as many communities as possible.
- We captured data from our inclusivity forms to identify trends which are then presented during task and brief.
- Through our membership in a Primary Authority Scheme with Community Housing Cymru we have conducted engagement activities with Business Fire Safety officers present to provide fire safety advice for social housing, alongside providing assistance in planning and delivering effective and robust protection activities for the most vulnerable that we serve.
- The Business Fire Safety department also ask for feedback on all notices sent out to 'responsible persons' to highlight where our communities think where we can improve.



- 2a. Become an employer that all communities can see themselves becoming part of
- 2b. Be a place of work where all employees feel valued

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Addressing internal and external barriers to us becoming a truly inclusive employer of choice;
- Attracting higher numbers of applications from people in under-represented groups;
- Building trust and valuing all staff;
- Reviewing our current internal culture;
- Listening to feedback from under-represented groups;
- Upskilling current and future employees;
- Enhancing terms and conditions wherever possible;
- Promoting opportunities for progression;
- Supporting and retaining our staff;
- Providing fit for purpose recruitment, selection, and promotional activities;

WHAT WE HAVE WORKED ON DURING 2022/2023:

- We attended events specific to under-represented groups and used diverse imagery in our recruitment material to encourage applications from all areas of our community. Consequently, 2022 saw the biggest increase in female WDS Firefighter applications and the percentage of these that were successful reached 22.6%, compared to 5.2% in 2021.
- The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) instigated an Independent Culture Review.
- We launched initiatives that allow our workforce to develop professional and interpersonal skills, whilst demonstrating our commitment to creating an inclusive working environment and allowing colleagues to progress.
- A range of masterclasses were launched for developing our people to support them in areas such as wellbeing, resilience, equality, change and project management etc, and these are open to all regardless of role or position in the Service.
- March 2023 saw the release of the new Learning Management System (LMS) known as 'e-Hyb'. This LMS is where staff will find e-learning, and a self-service facility to book onto Masterclasses and other events. There are several Service-wide mandatory courses that are implemented at induction stage including 'An Introduction to Unconscious Bias', 'Inclusive Language and Communication' and 'Inclusive Leadership' (for line managers). Statistics suggest that these have been successful with 78% of staff having completed Unconscious Bias training, 72% having completed Inclusive Language and Communication and 83% of line managers having completed Inclusive Leadership training.
- Within the period EDI talks have been part of every induction session and in May 2022 a Middle Leaders' Engagement Day focusing on the topic of inclusion was held and attended by over 100 staff.
- We rolled out the Neurodiversity Awareness Initiative to support colleagues by providing information and making reasonable adjustments where necessary.
- We ran our first full year of our new Personal Review system (appraisals) with a key focus on wellbeing and strengths in role. These were accompanied by one to ones and support mechanisms for individuals on health and wellbeing along with a development perspective.
- We have ensured there is consistency across the Service for recruitment to provide a more equitable process. In December 2022 the recruitment and engagement teams attended Dar-UI-Isra Mosque in Cathays, Cardiff for their first annual Black and Ethnic Minority-focused Job Fair. We continue to identify opportunities to showcase employment opportunities, involving local stations in raising awareness.
- We have promoted and supported key events such as LGBTQ+ and Black History month with events that included promoted across social media, a live Q&A session with Firefighters for lived experiences, updated staff profiles and promotion of these profiles and their stories at 999 Day at Cardiff Bay.

3a. Ensure we carry out our legal duties under the Equality Act (2010) and related Welsh legislation.

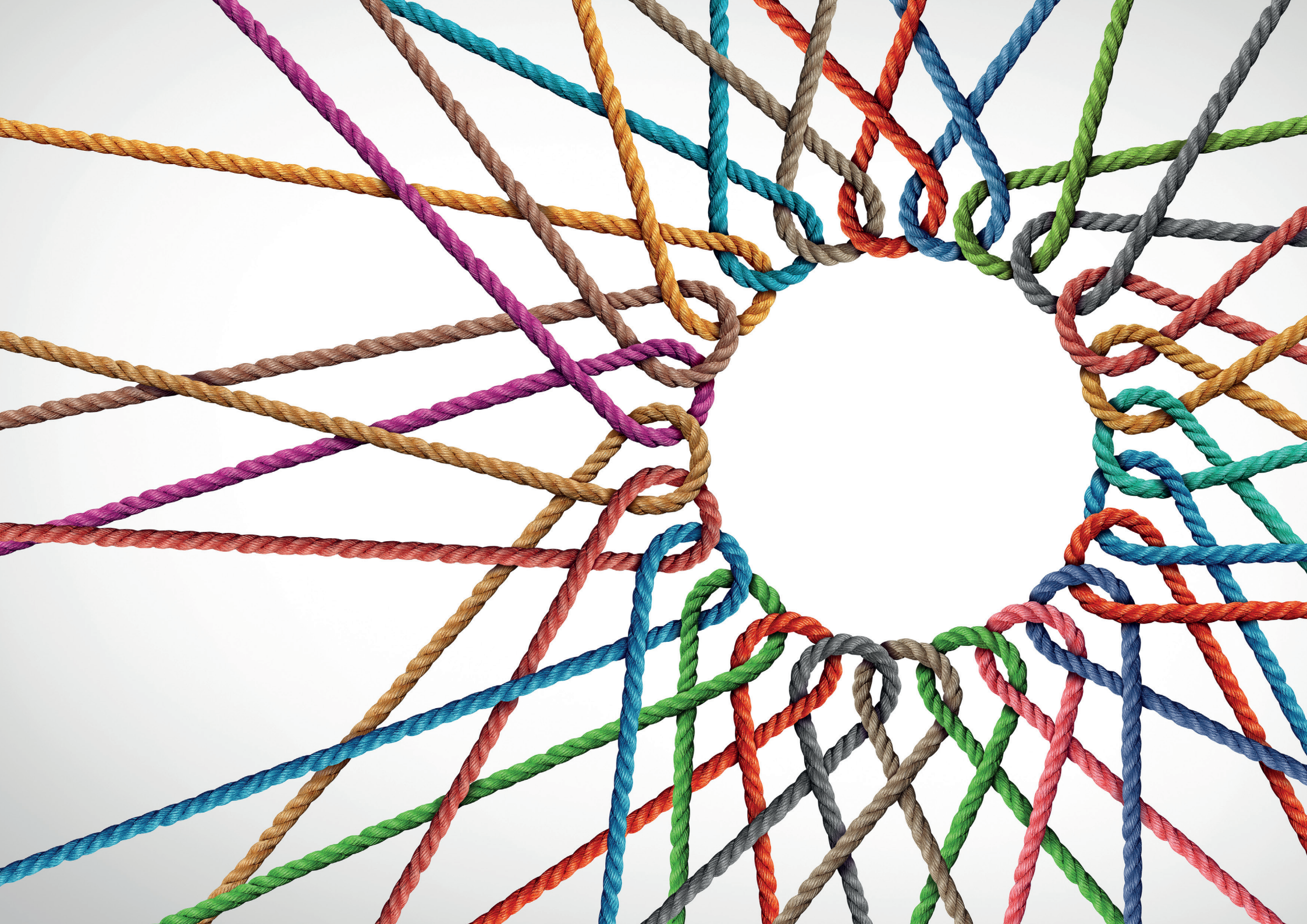
3b. Improve the infrastructure to better support a 21st century inclusive employer

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Publishing reports ahead of their deadlines;
- Working with others to share learning and resources;
- Lobbying for creative solutions to future proof a 21st century Fire Service;
- Researching equipment, working patterns, and technology which support inclusion and enhances what we do;
- Improving compliance with the Equality Act (2010);
- Supporting Welsh businesses/suppliers (where possible);
- Continuing to implement Welsh Language training;

WHAT WE HAVE WORKED ON DURING 2022/2023

- We continue to publish our annual updates with regard to our equality strategic plan and encourage further engagement wherever possible.
- We have launched online training for line managers on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion which can be re-accessed to refresh knowledge and understanding.
- We have offered Welsh language training across the Service through our Additional Learning Fund and supported individuals to take up qualifications where feasible.
- We have continued to be a member of the 'All Wales Continuous Improvement Community'. This supports our commitment to the Well-Being of Future Generations goal of 'a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language' and our statutory obligations under the Welsh Language Standards.
- Accessibility has been improved in Headquarters to assist colleagues move around the building. A ramp has been added at Roath Fire Station to allow greater access to the community room at this station.
- We undertook (and completed in some stations) work to provide individual dormitories and gender-neutral facilities for our operational staff on station. We intend to start construction on numerous stations in the coming period to provide these facilities.
- In 2022 ICT introduced Office 365 into the organisation. Office 365 is a suite of applications that can help improve ICT accessibility for people with disabilities and offers features such as text-to-speech, speech-to-text, magnifier, narrator, dictation, and immersive reader that can assist users with diverse needs and preferences. Additional tools introduced to allow users to access desktop apps and browser plugins to help support neurodiverse colleagues.
- To provide users with more accessible ways of working ICT also provided all users with access to Microsoft Teams. By doing this, people with disabilities can participate more effectively and inclusively in their work or education environments. This also supports those from lower socio-economic backgrounds work without the cost of travel. These ICT changes were backed up with training for groups and individuals.



STATEMENT OF CONTACT

As a public service we are proud to serve our diverse communities in Wales and we encourage you to let us know how we can continue meeting your needs.

If you would like to engage with us around any aspect of this review or wish to receive this information in an alternative format or language, please contact us at:

inclusion@southwales-fire.gov.uk

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Forest View Business Park, Llantrisant, CF72 8LX

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English - we will respond equally to both and will reply in your language of choice without delay

STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

South Wales Fire & Rescue Service has over 1600 employees. The data contained is specific to the number of individual employees within the Service (i.e. focuses on Service headcount as opposed to contracts), therefore within additional Service publications the data may appear differently or disproportionate when reviewing specific organisational or Service groups. All categories within the dataset are voluntarily provided except for 'Age' and 'Gender Identity.' This means that we may not hold as much equality information about our staff as we would like to. The way we gather and capture this information may change over time as we look to improve our internal processes. The following data has been compiled to provide a snapshot of the Service as it stood at 31st March 2023. Counts do not include Members, Agency, Secondments into the Service or Volunteers.



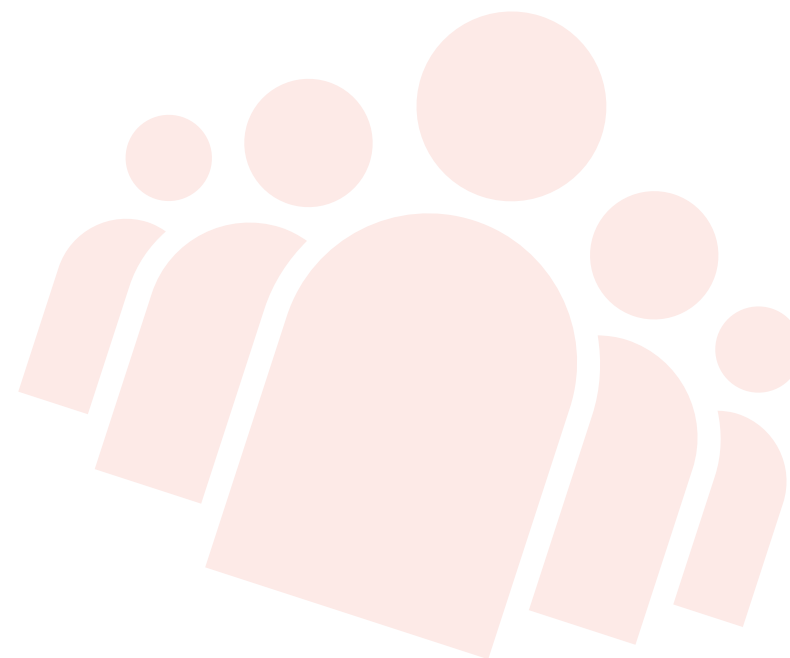
STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

Age

Age Range		
18 - 24	99	6.1%
25 - 34	380	23.4%
35 - 44	480	29.5%
45 - 54	471	28.9%
55 - 64	178	10.9%
65 - 74	17	1.0%
75+	2	0.1%

Disability

Disability		
Yes	9	0.5%
No	877	53.9%
Prefer not to say	8	0.5%
Not answered	733	45.1%





Ethnic Origin

Ethnicity		
Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British	0	0.0%
Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean or African	1	0.1%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	5	0.3%
Other ethnic group	16	1.0%
White	995	61.2%
Prefer not to say	28	1.7%
Not answered	582	35.8%



Gender Identity

Gender		
Different from birth	1	0.1%
Same as at birth	1052	64.7%
Prefer not to say	4	0.2%
Not answered	570	35.0%





Religion

Religion		
Buddhist	3	0.2%
Christian	182	11.2%
Hindu	0	0.0%
Jewish	0	0.0%
Muslim	1	0.1%
Sikh	0	0.0%
No religion	167	10.3%
Other religion	25	1.5%
Prefer not to say	618	38.0%
Not answered	631	38.8%



Sex

Sex		
Female	284	17.5%
Male	1343	82.5%



Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation		
Bisexual	2	0.1%
Gay or Lesbian	8	0.5%
Straight / Heterosexual	498	30.6%
Other sexual orientation	1	0.1%
Prefer not to say	539	33.1%
Not answered	579	35.6%



Welsh Speaking

Welsh - Spoken (Level 1 or above)

Can speak Welsh	96	5.9%
Cannot speak Welsh	199	12.2%
Not answered	1,332	81.9%



Welsh Language Skills

Welsh - Understanding (Level 1 or above for Understanding)

Yes	80	4.9%
No	199	12.2%
Not answered	1,348	82.9%



Welsh Speaking

Skill Level	Reading		Spoken		Understanding		Written	
Level 0	203	12.5%	199	12.2%	199	12.2%	208	12.8%
Level 1	33	2.0%	41	2.5%	33	2.0%	25	1.5%
Level 2	13	0.8%	16	1.0%	14	0.9%	15	0.9%
Level 3	12	0.7%	10	0.6%	5	0.3%	12	0.7%
Level 4	8	0.5%	7	0.4%	8	0.5%	4	0.2%
Level 5	13	0.8%	10	0.6%	13	0.8%	8	0.5%
Not answered	1345	82.7%	1344	82.6%	1355	83.3%	1355	83.3%



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Recruitment and Resourcing Team
Fire Service Headquarters
Forest View Business Park
Llantrisant
CF72 8LX



South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/who-we-are/equality-and-diversity