

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru



South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Strategic Equality Plan

2023-2026



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FOREWORD



Huw Jakeway QFSM
Chief Fire Officer

Welcome to South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's (SWFRS) Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026, which sets out our strategic equality objectives for the next three years.

The objectives outlined in this document will be built into all we do and will continue to meet our wider corporate objectives in our [‘Strategic Plan 2020-2030’](#) and our [‘People and Organisational Development Strategy 2021-2024’](#). This way of working allows us to accurately monitor the improvements we make and develop the services we provide to all our communities and stakeholders.

Our communities, stakeholders and employees play a key role in us achieving our vision of **‘To make South Wales safer by reducing risk’**. We are committed to ensuring we continue to shape the way South Wales Fire and Rescue Service operates now and in the future. This could be by influencing what we can do to be a more diverse and inclusive employer, how we can better deliver services that meet everyone's needs, or by engaging and communicating with everyone who matters. This enables us to effectively fulfil our legal obligations within the Equality Act 2010 and The Wellbeing and Future Generations Act Wales 2015.

An ITV investigative news article screened on 12th and 13th December 2022 reported the outcomes of two historic discipline cases previously investigated by the Service. In response to this disturbing news article I, as Chief Fire Officer commissioned an Independent Review of the Service's culture, discipline processes and historic discipline cases. An Independent Panel have appointed Fenella Morris KC as the Independent Chairperson to lead the Service's review. Fenella Morris KC anticipates the review will be completed by the end of this calendar year.

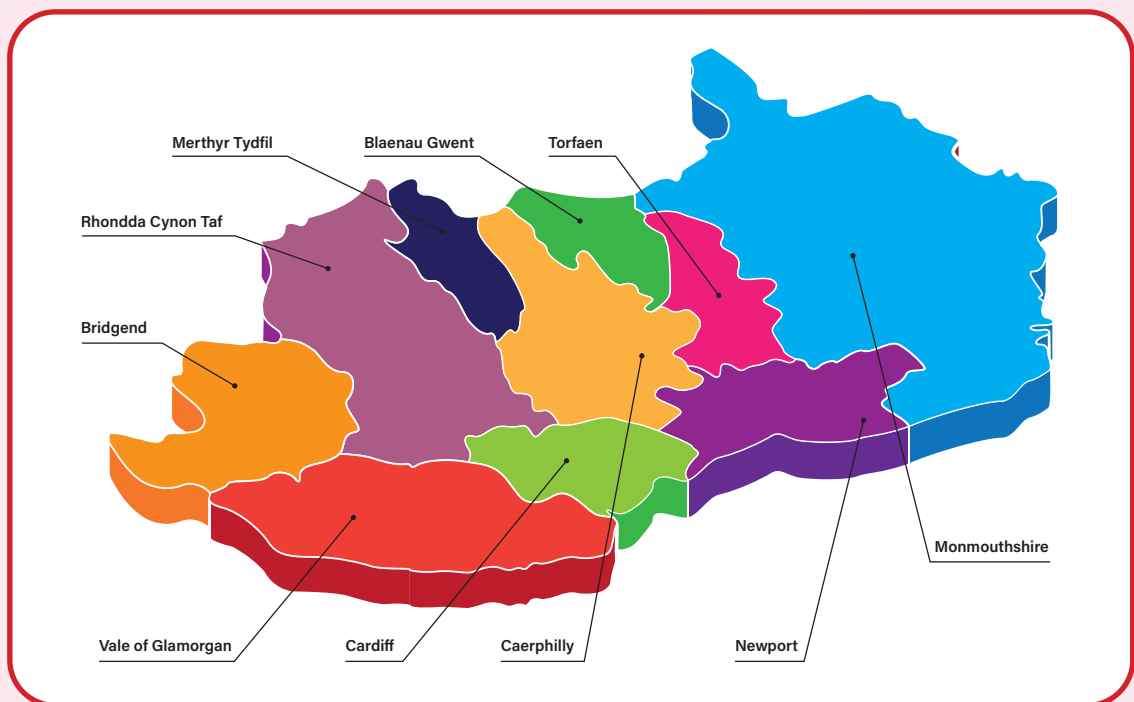
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service recognises a focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is key to us meeting our vision yet we know there will still be more to do to ensure our communities, stakeholders and employees can live free from inequality, discrimination, and harassment. This Strategic Equality Plan will help us make strides towards a more equitable Wales.



WHO WE ARE

South Wales Fire & Rescue Service serves around 1.5 million people across 10 unitary authorities within the South Wales region. We are the one of the largest Fire and Rescue Service's in the UK covering 1,100 square miles, over 650,000 households and are in contact with over 36,000 business premises.

The Service is governed by South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (SWFRA). The SWFRA consists of 24 members representing the 10 Unitary Authorities we serve and its core functions are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.



The Service serves a diverse population within Wales and responds to over 17,000 emergency calls each year. In addition to our emergency response, we focus heavily on the early intervention, education and protection of our wider communities, which also includes a specific focus on supporting our under-represented groups who may be at a higher risk of socio-economic inequality due to multiple disadvantages.

As a Service we recognise the benefits and excellence that a diverse workforce brings. We also recognise how a diverse workforce that reflects our communities can bring positive results for Service Delivery. Currently we are aware that we have more to do in relation to increasing the diversity of our workforce so that we are more representative of our South Wales communities (Please see staff and community data in Appendix 1 and 2 of this document). We continuously aim to reduce the barriers that exist in us creating a more diverse workforce and this plan will help us achieve more equity in relation to recruitment, training, leadership and people processes to ensure that we are seen as an Employer of Choice for all.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service provides cover 24 hours a day over 365 days of the year. We are a dedicated, professional, and caring Service of over 1,600* staff working as: Wholtime Firefighters (806), On-Call Firefighters (528), Joint Fire Control (41), Corporate staff (390), Volunteers (31) and Auxiliary Firefighters (71).

*Approx as of 1st February 2023

OUR VISION, MISSION & VALUES

Our Vision is “**To make South Wales safer by reducing risk.**” We aim to achieve this through:



OUR MISSION

We will achieve this through:

- **S**erving our communities’ needs
- **W**orking with others
- **F**acing challenges through innovation and improvement
- **R**educing risk through education, enforcement and response
- **S**ucceeding in making South Wales safer



OUR VALUES

Define what we stand for:

Our core rules

Whenever you come into contact with the Service, these values should always be evident.

- Caring
- Dedicated
- Disciplined
- Dynamic
- Professional
- Resilient
- Respectful
- Trustworthy

As a Service, we are committed to providing the best outcomes for both our communities and employees through ongoing best practice with regards to equality, diversity and inclusion ensuring this becomes an integral part of our everyday service.





OUR LEGAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service has a desire to put EDI at the heart of everything we do, going beyond meeting our statutory duties. This strategy aims to deliver progress against both our legal and ethical responsibilities. Here we outline our approach to our duties and responsibilities as well as how we intend to report on them.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 applies to all employers and outlines a series of duties seeking to protect communities, stakeholders, and employees against direct and indirect discrimination. The Act promotes equality for the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Under this Act we aim to work towards the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This includes:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

As a Service we also incorporate Welsh specific requirements as part of this duty with a focus on increasing inclusion and equity for socio-economically disadvantaged groups (Socio-Economic Duty). In addition to this we also strive to incorporate the additional duties set out in The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act Wales 2015 such as operating as a bilingual Service to promote a Thriving Welsh Language. This aims to create a more sustainable Wales of the future.

Reporting

As a public body in Wales, we are required to adhere to the UK specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 which include:

- Providing published information on an annual basis which demonstrates our compliance with our equality duties.
- Preparing and publishing our equality objectives which aim to meet the general equality duties.
- Ensuring all objectives are specific, measurable and are published in a way that is accessible to all.

All EDI reports and information relating to activities and objectives will be published on our internal and [external websites](#).

STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

This section contains the new equality objectives we have set out until 2026. The objectives have been split in to three key areas:

'Our Services & Infrastructure'

'Our Culture'

'Our People'

Each objective shows what we will do and how we will know we have achieved the actions that we have set out.

This plan will be delivered across the Service to ensure that our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded into everything we do.





OUR SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Objective 1: Ensure under-represented groups are involved and at the forefront of all design and delivery for services, ensuring equity of access for all.

We will do this through:

- Ensuring new ways of working to improve service delivery.
- Building relationships with external groups seeking input as to how we can better serve them.
- Working with Local Authorities, Charities, Health Boards and other organisations to combine resources to reduce 'consultation fatigue'.
- Asking our communities for feedback on what and how we are doing. Using data to ensure we access all groups by taking our services to them.
- Communicating and engaging with those we serve to let them know what we are doing and why.
- Providing robust Integrated Assessment processes whereby all actions are assessed to ensure they are fit for all.
- Collecting and analysing data to ensure we are inclusive across all groups.
- Linking our communities, stakeholders and employees' feedback and thoughts throughout Senior Management Team discussions.

We will know we have done this when:

- Integrated Assessments are completed across the Service and returned for publishing.
- Senior Management decisions consistently include equality considerations.
- Data from events and consultations portray feedback from partners and communities.
- Results of our engagement processes are shared within our strategic reviews.
- Our collaboration register continues to grow and advance how we manage our services.
- Our community and partner feedback portrays our services are fit for purpose for all members of the community.

OUR SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Objective 2: Align our Service's infrastructure to enable us to meet the demands of being a world class employer

We will do this through:

- Collaborating with others to share learning and resources.
- Identifying and embedding creative solutions and technology that delivers a 21st Century Fire and Rescue service that focuses on inclusion and equity.
- Ensuring our employees have the relevant training and resources to support them in their engagement with diverse Welsh businesses, stakeholders, and communities.
- Continuing our capital development programme in creating accessible, inclusive workplaces and facilities.
- Ensuring our suppliers also meet our values and commitment to EDI, the real living wage and modern slavery.
- Continuing to promote and embed Welsh language both internally and externally to the Service.
- Providing robust Integrated Assessment processes whereby our infrastructure is assessed to ensure it is fit for all.

We will know we have done this when:

- We adopt best practice opportunities that provide equity and inclusion.
- Feedback from community groups and key stakeholders indicates that our services are fit for all (consultation and collaboration).
- Training data to support engagement and work-based activities shows an increase in completion rates.
- Our new capital development initiatives show improvements which create accessible inclusive workplaces of a modern-day Fire and Rescue Service.
- Suppliers provide their code of conduct in relation to EDI and an Integrated Assessment which showcases how their services meet our values and EDI objectives.
- We receive Welsh Government feedback on the use of Welsh language within the Service and training data linked to the upskilling of Welsh language with internal employees.





OUR CULTURE

Objective 3: Embed a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion across SWFRS

We will do this through:

- Maintaining ongoing dialogue around EDI.
- Exploring ways to promote EDI into the future. Enforcing a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, prejudice, harassment, and bullying.
- Challenging behaviours and speech that do not align with either our Service's expected standards of behaviour and values or those of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Leadership Framework.
- Continuously review policies and procedures to promote a safe, equitable and inclusive culture where colleagues feel they can be themselves at work and where all employees feel they have a voice.
- Maintaining networks that champion EDI across the Service. Focusing on best practice advised by the NFCC EDI Network.

We will know we have done this when:

- Our employee interactions demonstrate increased engagement and positive feedback e.g., through our Investors In People (IIP) survey, Shout Forum etc.
- All policies and procedures are forward thinking, whilst adopting best practice, and have an accompanying Integrated Assessment.
- Feedback from internal networks shows policies and procedures are working for all.
- Our networks are proactive in ensuring EDI is at the forefront of all employee considerations, acting as visible champions, challenging non-inclusive behaviour and facilitating important conversations.
- We continue to implement guidance received from the NFCC EDI Network.

OUR CULTURE

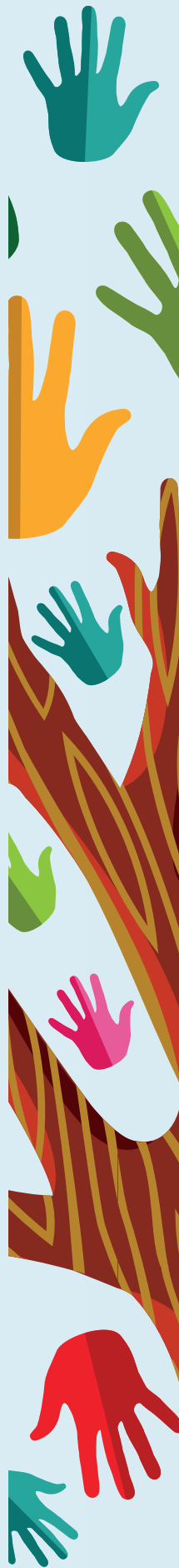
Objective 4: Ensuring all lead by example, role modelling and championing EDI across SWFRS

We will do this through:

- Embedding the NFCC Leadership Framework.
- Ensuring the Senior Management Team are empowered as diversity champions and EDI change agents.
- Ensuring senior leaders, managers and champions are highly visible in their commitment to EDI.
- Defining and establishing leadership accountability for EDI at all leadership levels.
- Embedding EDI within our training and leadership development programmes, enhancing leadership capabilities for all aspects of EDI.
- Providing all leaders with the skills and resources to generate 'upstander culture' across the Service, thereby limiting 'bystander' behaviour.

We will know we have done this when:

- All Senior Management Team members have received comprehensive training on the importance of EDI as part of strategic best practice.
- There is increased visible leadership around EDI issues where senior leaders are clear advocates and champions for all protected characteristics and under-represented groups e.g., through the challenging of behaviours and mindsets, putting EDI on the Board agenda for decision-making, attendance at EDI events.
- Data and feedback across the Service reflects a significant shift in behaviours and attitudes in relation to 'bystander' behaviour (exit interview, cultural surveys, disciplinaries etc.)





OUR PEOPLE

Objective 5: Increase the diversity of our workforce at all levels across the Service

We will do this through:

- Championing SWFRS as a truly inclusive employer of choice, embedding EDI in all our activities when promoting careers within SWFRS.
- Showcasing the varied support structures and benefits the Service can provide to a diverse workforce at all levels within the Service.
- Removing barriers (real and perceived) for recruitment and promotion into all Service roles through the effective design of attraction, selection and retention processes and activities, supported by a robust Integrated Assessment.
- Designing inclusive communications, media and attraction campaigns which build on developing engagement within under-represented groups. This will include the provision of inclusive and regular positive action events which promote equity of opportunity.
- Ensuring fair and transparent selection and assessment activities for all levels across the Service through the provision of effective recruitment, unconscious bias and EDI training.
- Supporting individuals from protected characteristic groups to have equity in opportunities for promotion to the next level e.g., coaching and mentoring etc.

We will know we have done this when:

- Our communications and recruitment/selection documentation are inclusive as per feedback from our communities.
- Returns on Integrated Assessments for all attraction, selection and assessment processes are increased.
- Recruitment applications show an increase in diversity at all levels across the Service.
- Recruitment, unconscious bias, and EDI training statistics shows that all employees conducting recruitment, selection and assessment activities have received relevant training.
- Data planning shows an increase in diverse interview panels.
- Workforce data shows an increase in under-represented groups across all levels of the Service.
- Statistics show an increase in coaching and mentoring partnerships for those from a protected characteristic.

OUR PEOPLE

Objective 6: Ensure all staff are supported with the right policies, tools, and processes to ensure equity within the workplace

We will do this through:

- Creating, embedding, and supporting all individuals with appropriate policies and procedures that have undergone Integrated Assessments.
- Collaborating with internal and external subject matter experts to ensure best practice when creating and embedding any activities that may impact a protected characteristic or under-represented group.
- Ensuring reasonable adjustment requests are assessed in line with Service procedures with the focus on the individual.
- Ensuring our Neurodiversity plan and support structures are in place and promoted across the Service.
- Embedding staff networks within the Service with a focus on equity, inclusivity, and wellbeing e.g., Inclusive Workforce Group, EDI champions and Wellbeing champions etc.
- Ensuring all individuals are provided with a comprehensive learning package around EDI issues.
- Ensuring all employees have a regular Personal Review to focus on their wellbeing, workplace experiences and performance across the year.
- Ensuring protected characteristics have specific action plans to ensure their experiences in the workplace are equitable and inclusive.

We will know we have done this when:

- We have received positive feedback from all groups within the Service around the inclusiveness of our policies.
- In-house networks show an increase in engagement and completion of action plans.
- Data from Neurodiversity Assessments and Work with Me Passports show an increase in reasonable adjustment requests.
- Training records for EDI show an increase in completion rates.
- Completion rates of the Personal Review process show an increase year on year.
- SWFRS have action plans published for specific protected characteristics e.g., Gender equality, Anti-Racist Action Plan.





CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

This document will be published on our website and reported on annually to assess progress.

This Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026 has been a result of consultation with external partners, our internal Inclusive Workforce Group, Employee Unions, and our internal colleagues.

We will continuously review our objectives to ensure they are fit for purpose and reflect the needs and requirements of our diverse communities and workforce.

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 report 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.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Staff Demographic

Appendix 2: Community Demographic

Community data is taken from the Office for National Statistics Wales: Census 2021.



APPENDIX 1

STAFF DEMOGRAPHIC

South Wales Fire & Rescue Service has over 1600 employees. The data contained within Appendix 1 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 stands at 1st February 2023 and will be used as a baseline to measure against in the future reporting of this Strategic Equality Plan.



Age

Age Range		
< 20-25	168	9.9%
26-35	436	25.8%
36-45	487	28.8%
46-50	435	25.7%
56-60	140	8.3%
66->70	25	1.5%
Total	1,691	100%



Ethnic Origin

Ethnicity		
Welsh	495	29.3%
British	443	26.2%
Other	17	1%
White	34	2%
English	21	1.24%
European	<5	<0.5%
Mixed (Asian/White)	<5	<0.5%
Traveller	<5	<0.5%
Mixed (Black Caribbean/White)	<5	<0.5%
Black (African)	<5	<0.5%
Scottish	<5	<0.5%
Irish	<5	<0.5%
Prefer not to say	27	1.6%
Undisclosed	646	38.2%
Total	1,691	100%



Religion

Religion		
Buddhism	3	0.17%
Christianity	182	10.8%
No Religion or Belief	164	9.7%
Other	25	1.5%
Prefer not to say	625	37%
Undisclosed	692	40.9%
Total	1,691	100%



Welsh Speaking

Welsh Speaking Skills		
Level 0	204	12.06%
Level 1	42	2.48%
Level 2	16	0.9%
Level 3	10	0.6%
Level 4	6	0.35%
Level 5	9	0.53%
Undisclosed	1,404	83.02%
Total	1,691	100%



Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation		
Bisexual	<5	<0.5%
Gay	<5	<0.5%
Heterosexual	493	29%
Lesbian	<5	<0.5%
Other	<5	<0.5%
Prefer not to say	544	32%
Undisclosed	643	38%
Total	1,691	100%



Welsh Language

Welsh Language Skills		
Level 0	626	37.01%
Level 1	94	5.5%
Level 2	42	2.48%
Level 3	28	1.65%
Level 4	18	1.06%
Level 5	31	1.83%
Undisclosed	852	50.38%
Total	1,691	100%



Disability

Disability		
Yes	9	5%
Undisclosed	1,682	95%
Total	1,691	100%



Gender Identity

Gender		
Female	300	17.7%
Male	1,391	82.3%
Total	1,691	100%



APPENDIX 2

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC*

Age

Age Range		
17 and under	314,348	20.6%
18-24	135,737	8.9%
25-34	204,948	13.4%
35-44	188,522	12.4%
45-54	195,811	12.8%
55-64	196,025	12.9%
65-74	158,069	10.4%
75+	130,445	8.6%
Total	1,523,905	100%

Gender Identity**

Gender		
Different from sex registered at birth	5,570	0.4%
Same as sex registered at birth	1,165,636	93.7%
Not answered	72,972	5.9%
Total	1,244,178	100%

Sex

Sex		
Female	778,892	51.1%
Male	745,023	48.9%
Total	1,523,905	100%

Ethnic Origin

Ethnicity		
Asian, Asian British, Asian Welsh	61,105	4%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	20,630	1.4%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	31,050	2%
Other ethnic group	17,953	1.2%
White	1,393,179	91.4%
Total	1,523,905	100%

*Community data is taken from the Office for National Statistics Wales: Census 2021.



Religion

Religion		
Buddhist	4,682	0.3%
Christian	606,240	39.8%
Hindu	8,360	0.5%
Jewish	1,225	0.1%
Muslim	50,278	3.3%
No Religion	752,916	49.4%
Not answered	89,719	5.9%
Other religion	7,496	0.5%
Sikh	2,989	0.2%
Total	1,523,905	100%



Sexual Orientation**

Sexual Orientation		
All other sexual orientations	3,630	0.3%
Bisexual	16,663	1.3%
Gay or Lesbian	20,746	1.7%
Did not answer	86,924	7%
Straight or Heterosexual	1,116,211	89.7%
Total	1,244,178	100%



Disability

Disability		
Limited a little	170,220	11.2%
Limited a lot	164,277	10.8%
Not disabled	1,189,408	78.1%
Total	1,523,905	



Welsh Language Skills

Welsh Language Skills		
Some Welsh Language Skills	228,543	15%
Does not apply	46,587	3.1%
No Welsh Language Skills	1,248,77	81.9%
Total	1,523,901	100%



Welsh Speaking

Welsh Speaking		
Can speak Welsh	152,850	10%
Cannot speak Welsh	1,324,468	86.9%
Does not apply	46,587	3.1%
Total	1,523,905	100%

**This dataset provides Census 2021 estimates that classify usual residents aged 16 years and over in England and Wales by gender identity. The estimates are as at Census Day, 21 March 2021.





Main Language

Main Language		
African Language	2,303	0.2%
Arabic	6,106	0.4%
Caribbean Creole	6	0%
Does not apply	46,587	3.1%
East Asian Language	6,230	0.4%
English or Welsh in Wales	1,419,783	93.2%
French	941	0.1%
North / South American	3	0%
Oceanic / Australian	13	0%
Other European	20,513	1.3%
Other Language	146	0%
Other UK	71	0%
Portugese	2,173	0.1%
Russian	740	0%
Sign Language	613	0%
South Asian Language	11,665	0.8%
Spanish	1,943	0.1%
Turkish	1,163	0.1%
West or Central Asian Language	2,905	0.2%
Total	1,523,904	100%



Marital and Civil Partnership Status

Marital and Civil Partnership Status		
Divorced / Formerly in a civil partnership now legally dissolved	129,124	7.7%
Does not apply	300,366	18.4%
In a registered civil partnership	2,678	0.2%
Married	583,808	34.7%
Never married and never registered a civil partnership	522,979	32%
Separated	27,676	1.7%
Widowed / Surviving partner from civil partnership	90,437	5.3%
Total	1,657,068	100%



Household Deprivation

Household Deprivation		
Household is deprived in four dimensions	1,419	0.2%
Household is deprived in one dimension	233,909	32.9%
Household is deprived in three dimensions	34,521	4.9%
Household is deprived in two dimensions	115,595	16.3%
Household is not deprived in any dimension	324,820	45.7%
Total	710,264	100%



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South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



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