



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
De Cymru

South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

# Strategic Equality Plan

## Annual Review

### 2023 - 2024

COURAGE TO ACT, COMPASSION TO CARE



# Introduction

This is the 2023-2024 review of South Wales Fire Rescue Service's Strategic Equality Plan (the Plan can be found on the website, links below)



English:

[bit.ly/StrategicEqualityPlan2020-2025](https://bit.ly/StrategicEqualityPlan2020-2025)



Welsh:

[CymllunCydraddoldebStrategol2020-2025](https://bit.ly/CymllunCydraddoldebStrategol2020-2025)

This report provides a snapshot of the work undertaken to meet the ambitions outlined in our Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026.

# Overview

Our equality objectives are split into three key areas '**Services & Infrastructure**', '**Culture**' and '**People**'. Each key area has two specific equality objectives that we working towards. We also outline within these objectives the actions we would undertake to meet these ambitions.

The following pages detail our commitment to our equality objectives and updates as to what has been done and achieved against the objectives during the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

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## Objectives

- 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.
- Objective 2:** Align our Service's infrastructure to enable us to meet the demands of being a world class employer.
- Objective 3:** Embed a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion across SWFRS.
- Objective 4:** Ensuring all lead by example, role modelling and championing EDI across SWFRS. Improve our infrastructure to better support a 21st Century inclusive employer.
- Objective 5:** Increase the diversity of our workforce at all levels across the Service.
- Objective 6:** Ensure all staff are supported with the right policies, tools, and processes to ensure equity within the workplace.





# Our Services and 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 by:

- 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



## What we have worked on during 2023-2024:

- We worked to reconfigure many of our public facing forms to be able to collate accurate demographic data when interacting with the community to ensure we collect and analyse information effectively
- We embedded our new Equality Impact Assessment form and promoted the new style of assessment. This form encompasses all protected characteristics and allows for greater detail when assessing the impact of our work
- Face-to-face Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) training was provided to over 140 individuals to ensure colleagues are supported and understand how to deliver effective assessments. The quality of completed EqIAs has improved during the period which has, therefore, helped improve the inclusivity of our Service
- We conducted two '999 Days.' The first of these was in June 2023 in Bryn Bach Park and the second in Cardiff Bay in September 2023 which were perfect opportunities to communicate and engage with those that we serve to let them know what we are doing and why
- We attended events at Dar-UI-Isra Mosque in Cardiff for our inclusion specialists to receive training and to make links with under-represented communities
- We continued to engage with our All-Wales Fire Sector Partners to share learning, resources and knowledge on EDI initiatives and progress

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

**We will do this by:**

- 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



## What we have worked on during 2023-2024:

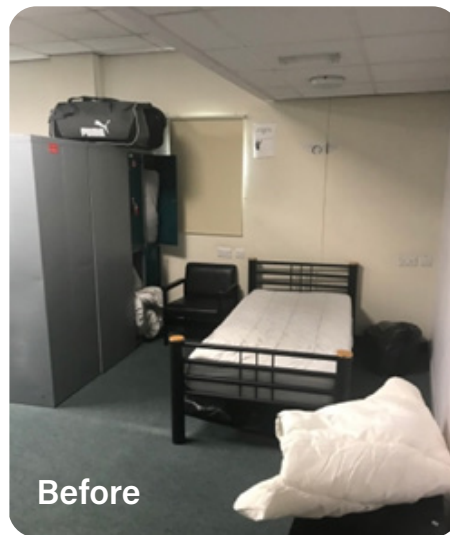
- From April to October 2023, re-development works occurred at Roath Fire Station which included the creation of a ramp to ensure the community room is fully accessible to all groups. Our dormitory provision was upgraded to provide individual dormitories for our employees to ensure everyone feels comfortable in the workplace. Similarly, work was carried out at Whitchurch Station regarding community room accessibility, providing individual dormitories and showering facilities
- Our Operational Risk Management team undertook work regarding SWFRS uniform ensuring that it is suitable for all staff regarding sizing and being menopause friendly
- During this period, we have ensured that all our operational ladders are appropriate to be used by all our staff and are not out of reach on the appliance for any employee
- We continued to be active members of the Public Sector Equality Board to share learning and resources with other public bodies and to track our own progress against our partners
- We continued to embed the Welsh language into the Service wherever possible, including using Welsh phrases in our training sessions. All our media communications are published in Welsh, and we always ensure we do not treat English more favourably than Welsh



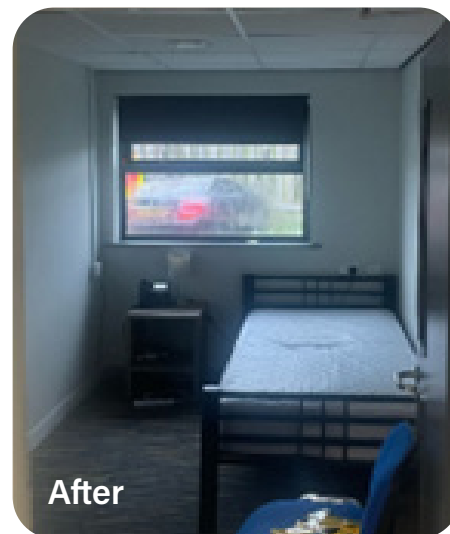


Ramp to ensure the community room is fully accessible.

Dormitory upgrade.



Before



After





# Our Culture

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

## We will do this by:

- 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



## What we have worked on during 2023-2024:

- We published the findings of the SWFRS commissioned independent review of its culture. Alongside this, we mapped all the Report's recommendations onto our Strategic Equality Plan and our Inclusive Action Plan to ensure all our activity is aligned and coherent
- We recruited our Director of Strategic Change and Transformation to oversee and inspire our culture change journey
- We marked and celebrated important EDI awareness days with internal campaigns, alongside posting externally of our stance on social media. This included campaigns on Black History Month, International Women's Day and Pride
- We also ensured that our images used in our recruitment campaigns reflect all communities that we serve ensuring diverse applicants and employees see themselves represented in the Service
- We continued to support and promote our diversity networks providing an opportunity for our staff to discuss lived experiences and discuss the Service's cultural journey
- We ran Hydra 10KV event in July 2023, bringing together a randomly selected group of individuals from across the organisation for a session at Cardiff Gate Training Centre to anonymously provide feedback on pressing issues. This initiative not only amplified the voices of underrepresented groups but also helped capture the collective sentiments of the wider SWFRS community. We then used this feedback to inform action to produce tangible outcomes to improve the inclusivity of the Service for our people

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

**We will do this by:**

- 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



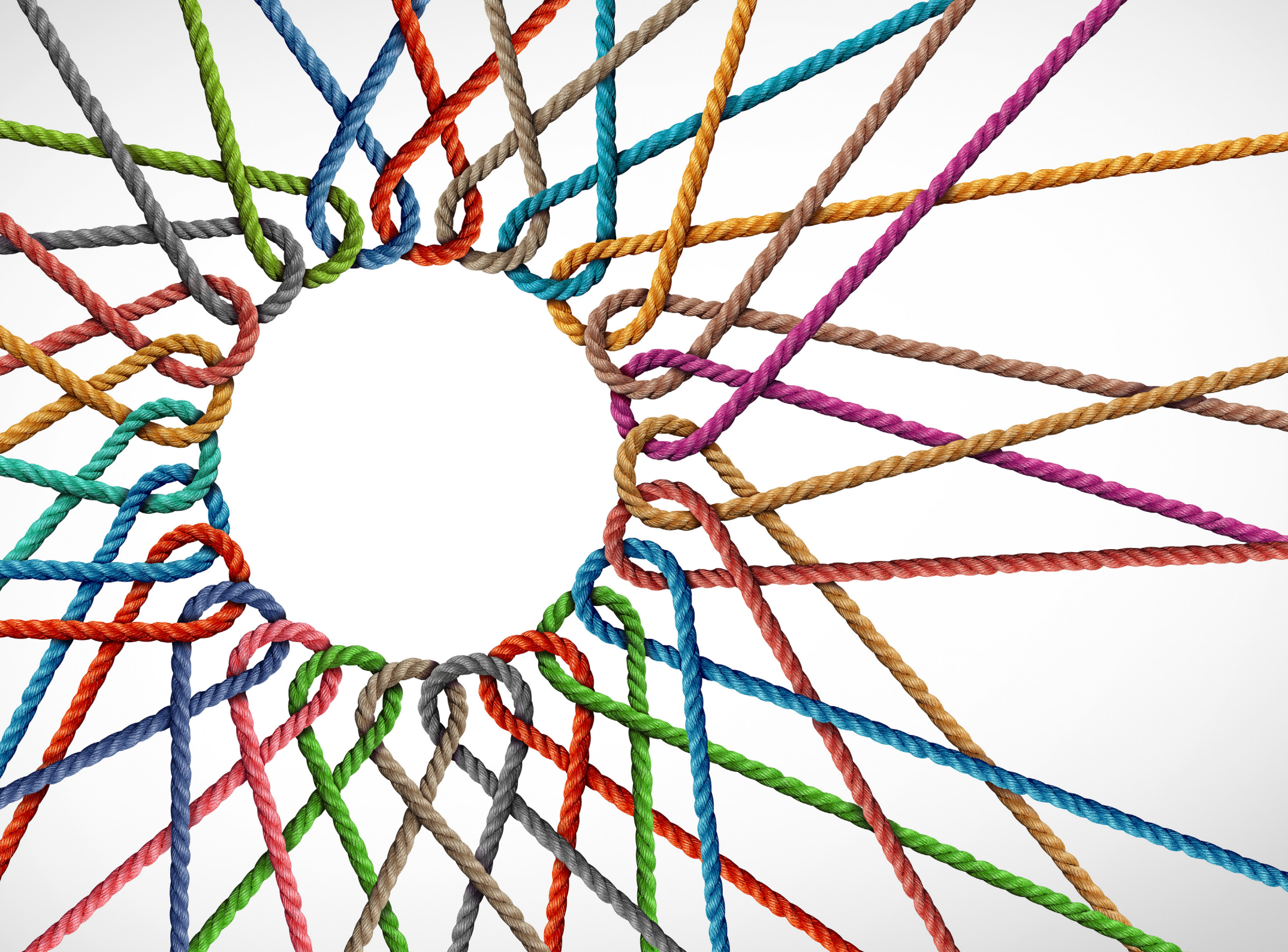


## What we have worked on during 2023-2024:

- Supervisory Leadership and Management Development Training completed its first full year cycle during this period. The content of this development training is based off the NFCC Leadership Framework, in that the level is the Leading Others level, and the modules feature the 4 areas of the NFCC framework, ie. Personal Impact, Outstanding Leadership, Service Delivery and Organisational Effectiveness. Within all these modules there is a focus on training our aspiring and current managers to be inclusive leaders
- Through the induction process our new starters receive in person EDI training alongside mandatory E-learning to ensure all our staff are empowered to lead themselves on all inclusivity matters
- Middle managers sessions have included EDI focussed discussions and sharing lived experiences ensuring our managers are EDI change agents
- The Additional Learning Fund continued to be available to all staff to access external learning that will further their development. Examples of grants made were for the 'Women in the Fire Service' Networking event, a conference on ending violence against women and the 'Delivering the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales' conference







# Our People

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

## We will do this by:

- 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 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.



## What we have worked on during 2023-2024:

- We launched a Wholetime firefighter recruitment campaign where we encouraged diverse applicants to apply to join the SWFRS team. We placed electronic billboards in both Cardiff and Newport to include those without reliable access to internet connection
- From April to December 2023, our fitness advisors ran ten 'Workout with the Watch' sessions to encourage communities to engage with the recruitment process. Some of these sessions had female only sections to encourage women to consider a career with SWFRS and support their understanding of the fitness levels required
- Similarly, a session on firefighter fitness was run for college students to give a taster to younger people of working in the sector, with the aim of recruiting young and diverse talent into SWFRS
- South Wales Fire and Rescue Service attended Pride Cymru in June 2023 where we took part in the parade where members of staff, volunteers, family and friends marched to celebrate and embrace genuine equality and diversity. We also distributed recruitment and safety messages via our market stall at the event as we are passionate about making everyone in our communities safer
- We created and introduced unconscious bias training for all employees sitting on interview panels to ensure all applicants receive fair and equitable treatment during our recruitment processes
- We held a bespoke event with the Amanah L4K Cymru group at Roath Station for young people to experience firefighter activities whilst featuring key community safety and recruitment messaging



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

**We will do this by:**

- 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

## What we have worked on during 2023-2024:

- We created and introduced a menopause procedure and a supporting menopause risk assessment to identify issues and put in place any support that may be required
- Employees can self-refer themselves confidentially to our Occupational Health Services for support around the menopause
- Introduced the Sanitary On-Site Welfare Kits at all our locations. These kits contain a variety of sanitary products, cleansing wipes, change of underwear (provided in a range of sizes) for employees to use
- Recruited an EDI Officer to support our EDI initiatives and provide guidance to the Service on improving the inclusivity of all its activity and culture
- We undertook work to improve the accessibility and resources available on our internal EDI page to ensure our people have access to the best information to support each other in the workplace
- We delivered Neurodiversity awareness training to our instructors at Cardiff Gate Training and Development Centre to ensure we fully support all our employees and new recruits when they are in learning environments
- We continued to provide access to online training on inclusivity topics. 71% of employees completed the inclusive language module, 78% of employees completed the unconscious bias training and 57% of managers undertook the inclusive leadership package. 614 employees voluntarily undertook the 'Menopause at Work' training
- During this period, we have further embedded our support for neurodiversity by publicising our tailored neurodiversity assessment and reasonable adjustment pathway. Our EDI team attended many SWFRS locations to provide support and promote awareness of the scheme



# 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](mailto:inclusion@southwales-fire.gov.uk)

**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead,**

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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.

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### Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

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