

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

Strategic Equality Action Plan 2020-2024

Published 2020

Our Equality Objectives 2020 - 2024

Our equality objectives represent the Service's commitment to challenging the barriers to equality and inclusion and contribute to our key strategic objectives:

Priority 1 – Life and Health

Equality Objective 1

Reduce dwelling fires and associated casualties through a comprehensive prevention strategy that specifically targets people living in North Wales who can be shown to be at greater risk because they may share one or more particular characteristic.

Priority 2 – Employment

Equality Objective 2

Through our own employment practices, programmes and schemes we aim to increase the employment prospects of people who might otherwise find it difficult to gain equal access to the world of work. We will prioritise action to advance gender equality in North Wales.

Equality Objective 3

We will progress an inclusive culture where leaders and staff demonstrate their commitment to promoting equality and support for a fair and inclusive workforce.

Priority 3 - Education

Equality Objective 4

Through a comprehensive programme of tailored education and advice provided singly and in collaboration, to empower people living, working and visiting North Wales to continue to reduce their own level of risk from fire and other hazards throughout the different stages in their lives.

Priority 4 - Personal Safety

Equality Objective 5

Reduce the risk of death or injury from fires for people sharing different protected characteristics in North Wales, by the provision of effective prevention and protection services and emergency fire and rescue response.

Priority 5 - Participation

Equality Objective 6

By being open and accountable about what we do and what our plans are, encourage more people to involve themselves in the process of determining the way fire and rescue services are delivered in North Wales, and aim to increase the range of representative voices that contribute to that process.

Priority 1 – Life and Health

Equality Objective 1

Reduce dwelling fires and associated casualties through a comprehensive prevention strategy that specifically targets people living in North Wales who can be shown to be at greater risk because they may share one or more particular characteristic.

Reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To further develop knowledge and understanding of factors that contribute to a person’s vulnerability to dwelling fires and use this to provide targeted messaging to build awareness of the risks and try to influence and change behaviours. Promote safety campaigns to ensure identified areas of greatest risk are prioritised. To better understand the needs of and increase the safety of the public living, working and visiting North Wales. In particular those who are shown to be at greater risk because of they share one or more protected characteristic or because of their personal circumstances. 	
Actions	Identify community groups that represent the full diversity of the citizens living in the area covered by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and develop all available communication channels with those more vulnerable and at risk, either directly or through partnership working with other agencies.	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21	Developing relationships with partner agencies that can refer the more at risk in society to NWFRS for a Safe and Well Check is a core duty of each Partnership Manager. The more at risk in society are prioritised for Safe and Well Checks.	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Actions	The Service target agencies in a bid to gain more high risk referrals for free Safe and Well checks.	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Fire Safety Manager
Actions	The partnership managers are to develop an understanding of the community profile to better recognise the needs of the public and how the Service can best improve their safety.	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Fire Safety Manager
Actions	Engage with the local business community and raise awareness and promote fire safety in their required language. *	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Fire Safety Manager

Priority 2 – Work		
Equality Objective 2 Through our own employment practices, programmes and schemes we aim to increase the employment prospects of people who might otherwise find it difficult to gain equal access to the world of work. We will prioritise action to advance gender equality in North Wales.		
Reason	Equality Objective 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the diversity of the workforce in all sectors of the Fire and Rescue Service. 	
Actions	Run positive action events to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.	Head of HR
Progress 20/21	Face to face positive action events have been placed on hold during Covid-19. Planning has commenced for future virtual recruitment days/events incorporating positive action during the pandemic.	Head of HR
	Continue to analyse and review the recruitment and selection process, to ensure we increase the diversity of applicants.	Head of HR
Progress 20/21	Recruitment activities have generally been on hold due to restrictions in place relating to Covid-19. Alternative ways to conduct interviews via online methods, such as Skype and WebEx reviewed, and options for online assessments also considered and implemented. Use of video-conferencing and Facebook live events to engage with potential applicants to assist with positive action.	Head of HR
Actions	Review the annual employment monitoring data for trends and continuity planning	E&D Advisor Head of HR
Progress 20/21		E&D Advisor Head of HR
Actions	Set up and run career workshops for people from minority groups to encourage them to apply for vacancies undertake this work in partnerships with other North Wale Public Sector employers.	E&D Advisor
Progress 20/21		E&D Advisor

Actions	<p>Make connections with local colleges offering FRS input to public service courses, with a view to engaging more widely and on a more regular basis to deliver pre-prepared information for standardisation.</p> <p>Make connections and attend recruitment events with a view to engaging a wider audience. Develop a standard format for this type of engagement in order to ensure that a consistent and inclusive message is delivered at every opportunity. Review the format in line with feedback gathered also review the number and location of school/colleges/events attended.</p>	<p>Senior Training & Development Manager Head of HR</p>
Progress 20/21	Some difficulties associated with engaging with local colleges and attending recruitment events due to lockdown and Covid-19 restrictions. It is likely that any such events may be undertaken on a virtual basis.	Head of HR
Actions	Develop an internal communications strategy to explain the difference between positive action and positive discrimination in order to counteract the view of some that an individual has been employed/promoted because they are female/BME/LGBT. Work with the Representative Bodies to support the Service's work in this regard in order to re-enforce the message.	Head of HR
Progress 20/21	This is currently being undertaken with input from E&D Advisor and Corporate communications.	Head of HR
Actions	Conduct an equality training needs analysis on members of the Inclusive Fire Service Group and arrange an appropriate training package (as recommended by the IFSG Improvement Strategies Survey – to include unconscious bias, cultural awareness and training on the benefits of an inclusive workforce).	Senior Training & Development Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Training & Development Manager
Actions	<p>All members of the NWFRS IFSG will become the Services Diversity Champions and sign a Champions Pledge. Members are encouraged to champion individual characteristics (i.e. LGBTQ+, LGBTQ+ Allies, and Disability) and are encouraged to attend and promote national and local events throughout the year.</p> <p>Continue to promote the work of the Inclusive Fire Service Group.</p> <p>Provide an annual report to the Inclusive Workforce Group on the level of interest in the Service's coaching and mentoring initiatives, broken down by protected characteristic</p>	<p>IFSG Membership</p> <p>Senior Training & Development Manager</p>
Progress 20/21	Due to Covid-19 the May IFSG meeting was cancelled. The next IFSG meeting is now due to take place in October, work on the IFSG Improvement Strategy 2019-2022 has progressed and the plan has been updated, this item will be discussed at the October meeting.	<p>IFSG Membership</p> <p>Senior Training & Development Manager</p>

Actions	Undertake a gap analysis around current management training provision. Explore the options currently available and identify which would best meet the requirements of each managerial level within the organisation based on the results of the gap analysis. Arrange the roll out of the training and the subsequent evaluation of that training.	Senior Training & Development Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Training & Development Manager
Actions	Senior managers should lead by positive example and should be equipped to reinforce appropriate behaviours, challenge bullying and harassment, deal with conflict and be able to have difficult conversations as part of the role. Ensure we provide training around management skills which will better equip our staff to manage diverse teams and promote an inclusive culture.	Senior Training & Development Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Training & Development Manager
Actions	Understand the different needs of our staff, and in particular of those who have specific learning needs, when designing and implementing processes relating to internal development and progression, undertake an Equality Impact Assessments for each process.	Senior Training & Development Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Training & Development Manager
Actions	Raise awareness and promote throughout the Service, the new Core Values.	Senior Training & Development Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Training & Development Manager

Priority 2 – Work

Equality Objective 3

We will progress an inclusive culture where leaders and staff demonstrate their commitment to promoting equality and support for a fair and inclusive workforce.

Reason	Equality Objective 3	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively encourage female operational staff to participate in the promotion process. Engage with employees from under-represented groups with the aim of identifying any potential or perceived barriers to progression within the Service. 	
Actions	Better understand what barriers may exist regarding the progression of women into senior positions and what the Service can do to change this.	Senior Training & Development Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Training & Development Manager
Actions	Increase awareness among staff of the existing coaching and mentoring programmes and how to access support.	Senior Training & Development Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Training & Development Manager
Actions	Undertake an equality training needs analysis, then source and develop a suite of training for managers and key staff on equality and diversity topics.	Senior Training & Development Manager E&D Advisor
Progress 20/21	The Equality Advisor identified equality training topics specifically for the IFSG members and senior managers. This training could be run concurrently with managers to ensure the training session captures a diverse attendance, this will add to the learning experience. This has not progressed further so far this year due to Covid-19.	Senior Training & Development Manager E&D Advisor
Actions	Provide training around management skills which will better equip our staff to manage diverse teams and promote an inclusive culture.	Senior Training & Development Manager

Progress 20/21		Senior Training & Development Manager
Actions	Undertake a review of the Equality Impact Assessments for each stage of the promotion processes, and take the appropriate action if any issues are identified.	Senior Training & Development Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Training & Development Manager
Actions	<p>Ensure that all personnel are aware of the requirements of each stage of the promotion process and are able to identify which process they need to enter into, in accordance with their current circumstances.</p> <p>Continue to gather data around those entering into, and those who successfully complete the Service's promotion processes, and highlight any potential issues as and when appropriate.</p>	Senior Training & Development Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Training & Development Manager
Actions	Undertake an Equality Impact Assessments for each stage of the current coaching and mentoring programme, and take the appropriate remedial action of any issues are identified.	Senior Training & Development Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Training & Development Manager
Actions	<p>Review the standards of conduct policy which will incorporate the policies listed below as a relevant sources for all staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance • Discipline • Anti-Bullying and Harassment • Dignity at Work • Equality • Attendance Management 	Head of HR
Progress 20/21	A review has commenced however due to Covid-19 there may be some delay in progressing this project further.	Head of HR

	<p>Equal Pay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to reduce the gender pay gap and produce a gender pay action plan. 	
Actions	Continue to undertake Gender Pay Audit in line with legislation, and produce a Gender Pay Action Plan and place on the Governments website.	Head of HR
Progress 20/21	Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Government has suspended enforcement of the gender pay gap reporting deadlines for 2020. However, the Service has undertaken the Gender Pay Gap analysis and an action plan	Head of HR
Actions	Continue to report pay gaps for gender, disability, age and ethnicity through the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Employment Monitoring Report ensuring this is reported by contract type, permanent and fixed-term contracts, full-time, part-time and other flexible working arrangements.	E&D Advisor
Progress 20/21	Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Government has suspended enforcement of the gender pay gap reporting deadlines for 2020. However, the Service has undertaken the Gender Pay Gap analysis including the above headings.	E&D Advisor
Actions	<p>NWFRS is a predominantly male workforce which is reflected in the salary quartiles, with more men in the workforce it is likely that differences in pay are exacerbated. In order for there to be no gender pay gap there would need to be an equal ratio of males to females in each band. It is recognised that women are still under-represented in the operational workforce however positive action work is high on the NWFRS agenda and it is encouraging to note that this work has impacted on the gender pay gap.</p> <p>Most non-operational support staff are female and engaged under Green Book terms and conditions, these roles generally offer a lower rate of pay. The majority of male staff are operational and employed under Grey Book terms and conditions. Pay and allowances differ under each set of terms and conditions which may further explain the gender pay gap.</p> <p>NWFRS is confident that its gender pay gap is the result of the roles in which males and females undertake within the organisation and the salaries these roles attract due to differing terms and conditions of employment and not due to gender.</p>	<p>Head of HR</p> <p>Senior Training & Development Manager</p>
Progress 20/21	Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Government has suspended enforcement of the gender pay gap reporting deadlines for 2020. However this action is incorporated in the Gender Pay Action Plan.	<p>Head of HR</p> <p>Senior Training & Development Manager</p>

Priority 3 – Education

Equality Objective 4

Through a comprehensive programme of tailored education and advice provided singly and in collaboration, to empower people living, working and visiting North Wales to continue to reduce their own level of risk from fire and other hazards throughout the different stages in their lives.

Reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the public’s knowledge and awareness of the safety risks by increasing the delivery of Safe and Well Checks, with at least 25% of the checks being delivered to households referred to the Service by another agency. • To increase the safety of people living, working and visiting North Wales. In particular those who are shown to be at greater risk because of they share one or more of the protected characteristics. • Ensure North Wales Fire & Rescue Service staff understand the Social Model of Disability. 	
Actions	Commence a regular programme of engagement with specific communities/schools/colleges, and develop a consistent procedure for this type of engagement in order to ensure that a consistent and inclusive message is delivered at every opportunity.	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21	This is a core duty of the Services Educationalists however so far this year activity has ceased due to Covid-19 restrictions. We do not yet know when this activity will re-commence.	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Actions	Ensure that all materials used within the school setting are available in the appropriate format for use with children who have additional learning needs, and that our staff are sufficiently trained to be able to deliver in these formats.	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21	Resourcing of materials is an issue experienced across Wales. Work is currently ongoing to assess the needs.	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Actions	Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of current safety messages and campaigns In particular those who are shown to be at greater risk because of they share one or more of the protected characteristics.	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Fire Safety Manager
Actions	Promote an understanding and awareness amongst staff of the Social Model of Disability.	E&D Advisor
Progress 20/21		E&D Advisor

Priority 4 - Personal Safety

Equality Objective
 Reduce the risk of death or injury from fires for people sharing different protected characteristics in North Wales, by the provision of effective prevention and protection services and emergency fire and rescue response.

Reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To better understand the needs of and increase the safety of people living, working and visiting North Wales. In particular those who are shown to be at greater risk because of they share one or more protected characteristic or because of their circumstances are living in a low income household. 	
Actions	Incorporate into the Safe and Well checks an understanding and awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hate/Mate crime Elder Abuse Domestic Abuse Modern slavery 	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21		
Actions	Further develop a better understand around the specific needs of the victims of domestic violence from <u>underrepresented groups</u> .	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21		
Actions	Review the way in which we support local business' to reduce the risk of fire and remain compliant within fire safety legislation to ensure that all the information we provide is appropriate and in an accessible format.	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21		

Priority 5 – Participation and Communication

Equality Objective 6

By being open and accountable about what we do and what our plans are, encourage more people to involve themselves in the process of determining the way fire and rescue services are delivered in North Wales, and aim to increase the range of representative voices that contribute to that process.

Reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To extend the ways we engage with communities and encourage them to participate in how the services we provided are developed and delivered. Increase the number of diverse groups who actively engage with the Fire and Rescue Service. 	
Actions	Understand the community profile to better recognise the needs of our customers and how we can best improve their communication and participation with the Service.	Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21		Senior Fire Safety Manager
Actions	Identify community groups that represent the full diversity of people living in the area covered by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Develop all available communication channels with them, either directly or through partnership working with other agencies. Share these communication channel with staff working in the community.	E&D Advisor Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21		E&D Advisor Senior Fire Safety Manager
Actions	Ensure that the Service is represented at as many local forums and events as possible in order to maximise interaction with underrepresented groups.	E&D Advisor Senior Fire Safety Manager
Progress 20/21	Due to Covid-19 national and local events have not taken place, North Wales Public Sector Equality Network have met via Teams and the work of this group continues.	E&D Advisor Senior Fire Safety Manager

Actions	Continue to look at the most effective methods of engagement via our existing links with community groups and organisations. Further identify other community groups that represent the full diversity of the public living in the area covered by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Encourage these groups to actively participate when we are consulting on our Strategic Plans and Objectives.	Senior Fire Safety Manager Corporate Communications Manager
Progress 20/21	Community safety campaigns are coordinated through the Campaigns Steering Group and this work has continued with adaptations throughout the Covid-19 period – campaigns are scheduled and resourced appropriately in advance for the coming year with clear objectives and evaluation afterwards. Appropriate means and methods of communications are considered as part of the strategies adopted and collaboration is undertaken with partners in North Wales and with Welsh FRS partners as appropriate. Since Covid-19 there has clearly been more of an emphasis on virtual and online communications and this is expected to continue both as we come out of lockdown and beyond with NWFRS looking at how best to deliver Safe and Well Checks and educational programmes in the future which the communications function will look to support. Meeting equality and diversity objectives will be considered as part of this delivery.	Corporate Communications Manager
Actions	Organise community events including open days at our fire stations where our front-line staff can engage and build relationships with the local community, in order to promote career opportunities, Cadets programmes and apprenticeship schemes; and offer fire safety advice in order to improve the public's understanding of risk.	Corporate Communications Manager
Progress 20/21	As Above – face to face events and initiatives have been on hold and work is currently ongoing as to how best to pick this up to be able to delivery virtually and on line.	Corporate Communications Manager
Actions	Ensure that the website and all forms of communication on the site (surveys, forms etc.) are fully accessible, and we are offering the fire safety message in other languages and formats.	Corporate Communications Manager
Progress 20/21	We have recently moved away from 'Readspeaker' to 'Recite Me' as an accessibility add-on to our website which further improves accessibility e.g. more languages. Our website had previously undergone a thorough accessibility review in line with statutory requirements which has also led to further accessibility improvements being adopted.	Corporate Communications Manager
Actions	Continue to promote our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion throughout the procurement process and in our relationships with suppliers and contractors.	Head of Finance
Progress 20/21	The majority of procurement, by the Service follows established public procurement routes, via Frameworks as well as working collaboratively with the Fire Services across Wales, who have specialist procurement staff to ensure the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion.	Head of Finance
Actions	Strengthen the Integrated Impact Assessment process to ensure all policies, projects and processes are inclusive of all the protected characteristics including the Socio-Economic Duty.	Professional Standards
Progress 20/21		Professional Standards