



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
Fire and Rescue Service

# Workforce Representation Strategy 2026-2029

**ATAL AMDDIFFYN YMATEB**  
**PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

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# Contents

|                                                                  |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Foreword</b> .....                                            | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Profile</b> .....                                             | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Aims of the Strategy</b> .....                                | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Core Values and Workforce Representation</b> .....            | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Strategic Achievements to Date</b> .....                      | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Future Generations – A Culture of Which to Be Proud</b> ..... | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Strategic Objectives – The Five Principles</b> .....          | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Current Workforce Diversity</b> .....                         | <b>10</b> |
| <b>The Welsh Language</b> .....                                  | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Steps to Deliver and Measure NWFRS’ Success</b> .....         | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Conclusion</b> .....                                          | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Appendix 1 – Wholetime (WDS) Recruitment Campaigns</b> .....  | <b>16</b> |

# Foreword

At the centre of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) is a profound mission: to serve and protect all members of our community with professionalism, integrity and compassion. If we are to do this effectively, we must reflect the diversity of the people we serve – not only in our core values and actions but also in the very composition of our workforce.

On receipt of the cultural review (2025), the Service sought to develop and publish a clear strategy that sets out NWFRS's approach, particularly in recruitment and selection, to improve understanding of why diversity matters and how positive action supports a fair and inclusive workforce.

We recognise that our strength lies in our people, and that diversity of background, thought, experience and identity drives innovation, builds trust and enhances operational effectiveness. We are proud of the progress we have made; however, we also appreciate that there is always room for improvement.

The strategy aligns with and supports national equality objectives in Wales by contributing to a fair, inclusive, and representative workforce. It reflects the principles set out in relevant Welsh Government equality and inclusion priorities, including commitments to reducing inequality, improving representation across protected characteristics, and fostering inclusive workplaces.

This strategy outlines clear actions to attract, retain and develop talent from within our community, whilst also fostering a culture in which every individual feels valued, heard and empowered to thrive, thereby strengthening psychological safety across the Service.

As Chief Fire Officer, I am personally committed to this work. It is not just about compliance or policy, but rather it focuses on fairness, opportunity and the belief that everyone should have the chance to contribute to, and indeed benefit from, a Service that truly belongs to all of us.

Together, we will create a fire and rescue service that is not only fit for the future but is also genuinely representative of the society we proudly serve.



**Dawn Docx**  
**Chief Fire Officer**  
**North Wales Fire and Rescue Service**





## Profile

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service helps to protect an estimated population of 678,461 people over an area of 2,400 square miles, as well as the hundreds of thousands of tourists and visitors who come to North Wales every year.

There are approximately 317,051 domestic properties and 24,484 non-domestic properties in North Wales that fall under the Service's protection. It also carries out extensive work with schools, businesses and local communities so as to promote fire safety and prevention.

The Service employs some 900 staff in operational and corporate roles.

## Aims of the Strategy

The strategy seeks to ensure that the Service reflects the diversity of the communities it serves, promotes equality and fosters an inclusive culture. This involves addressing under-representation in various roles and at all levels, thus creating a fair and equal workplace, as well as encouraging a culture of respect and understanding.

The purpose of the strategy is to understand the issues that the Service is currently facing in increasing diversity within its workforce. It is essential that we reflect the community that we serve if the Service is to ensure that it appreciates the diverse needs and challenges that it encounters; this will in turn increase public trust and confidence, as members of the community will be able to rely on NWFRS to act in their best interests.

To address the work still needed to be done, three objectives are outlined below:

### Attract, Recruit and Retain

To strengthen the Service's ability to attract, recruit, and retain individuals from underrepresented groups, particularly those with protected characteristics. Recruitment activity will be targeted towards these communities, using effective positive action to encourage applications, remove barriers to entry, and support the development of a more diverse workforce. (Appendix 1 outlines how this approach has been successfully applied in Wholetime (WDS) recruitment campaigns).

## A Culture Fit for the Future

To develop a better understanding of positive action and its role in creating a supportive, inclusive, and celebratory workplace culture. Through a Service-wide approach, we will ensure that all staff share responsibility and take pride in contributing to a workforce that is representative, engaged, and empowered.

## Understanding and Developing Our Workforce

We are committed to understanding our workforce by listening to employee feedback and acting on what we learn. Through tools such as the Fire Family Survey, Cultural Review, and ongoing engagement activities—including appraisals and feedback opportunities with all employees upon completing 12 months of service - we will promote open dialogue, strengthen engagement, and support retention.

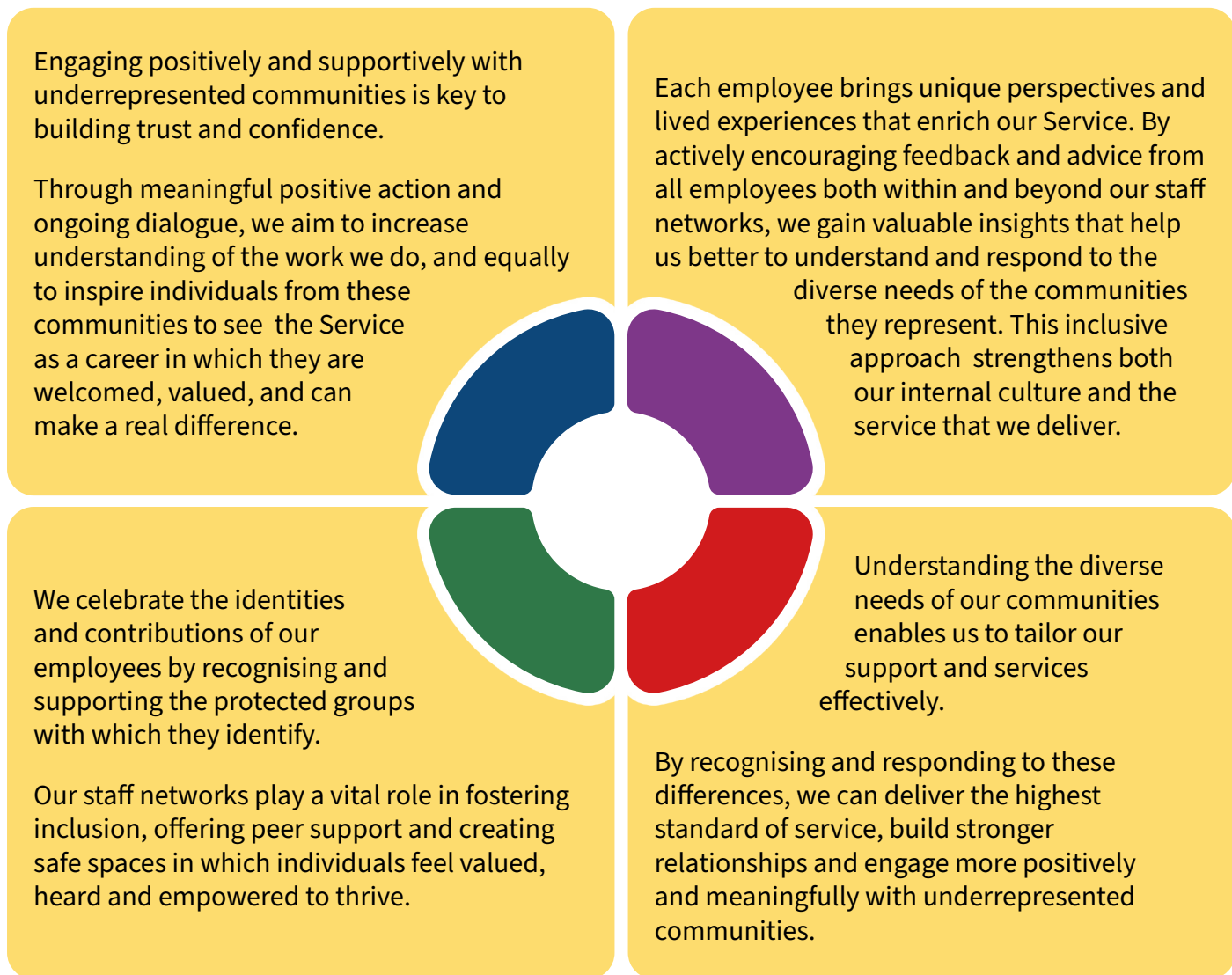
Providing accessible learning and development opportunities for all staff and Fire Authority Members is essential to improving service delivery to the community. By investing in our people, we aim to support, develop, and retain the skills and talent within our workforce.

## Core Values and Workforce Representation



This strategy is focused on building a workforce that is truly representative of the North Wales community. While achieving full representation is NWFRS' long-term goal, it is acknowledged that this is a journey that will take time, sustained effort and commitment at every level of the Service.

The motivation for a representative workforce is illustrated (below) as being cyclical in nature, demonstrating how representation fosters improved trust and engagement with the communities, which in turn enhances our ability to attract and retain diverse talent; this serves ultimately to strengthen service and to deepen the connection with those whom we serve.



# Strategic Achievements to Date

As the Service pursues its objective of a representative workforce, its strategies, policies and procedures will reflect its current position and identify areas in which further progress is required.

This strategy lays out the important foundations for change. However, the Service has already made meaningful strides towards its goal, with several key milestones having already been achieved:

- introducing an anonymised recruitment process which incorporates dedicated preparation time before interviews, enabling candidates to formulate more thoughtful and structured responses, ultimately improving both the quality of the interview and the candidate experience. The basis of this initiative forms part of the Service's ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive, supportive and equitable recruitment process for all candidates.
- amendments to the promotion process which have been implemented in response to recommendations from the Cultural Review, with the aim of enhancing transparency, fairness and alignment with the Service's Core Values. An external audit of the process was carried out in 2025/26 to ensure continued improvement and accountability.
- a strengthened collaboration with staff networks by introducing Service Leadership Team representation to each group with the objective of driving initiatives that promote inclusion, amplify diverse voices and inform strategic decision-making, to enhance support and workforce representation;
- the introduction of additional mandatory training for employees, focussing on key areas such as challenging and reporting inappropriate behaviour and conducting difficult conversations with the purpose of fostering a more respectful, accountable and inclusive workplace culture;
- the launch of 'Siop Siarad' initiative so as to create open forums at which employees can voice concerns, raise issues, receive updates and contribute to continuous improvement through direct, two-way communication;
- undertaking the Emergency Cover Review driven by public feedback and operational need, ensuring resources are effectively aligned – particularly in rural communities – to enhance resilience, efficiency, and the future-readiness of the Service;
- the production, adoption and publication of a suite of family-friendly policies and procedures; these include Neonatal Care Leave and Fostering Leave alongside the introduction of enhanced payments for all employees on Maternity Leave, thus promoting a more supportive and inclusive working environment.
- the achievement of a substantial increase in female representation within the Service, rising from 10% in 2010 to 22% in 2025, this reflecting a successful focus on inclusive recruitment and workforce diversity;
- an increase in female representation in senior positions, resulting in a more diverse and representative leadership team;
- the Service has increased the number of people from ethnic minority groups - 19 employees in 2022 to 39 employees in 2025.

- the implementation of the All-Wales Fire and Rescue Service People and Organisational Development Strategy 2025-2030; this underpins the three Services' joint commitment to attracting, developing and retaining a diverse and talented workforce, fostering a culture in which everyone is valued and supported, one which prioritises wellbeing and performance.

## Future Generations – A Culture of Which to Be Proud

NWFRS is committed to building a culture which not only meets today's needs, but which also shapes a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient future. This means making purposeful, long-term decisions that benefit current employees as well as future generations.

This approach focuses on wellbeing, innovation, equality and inclusion, ensuring that the Service's workforce evolves alongside the communities that it serves. By fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, the organisation aims to leave a legacy of fairness, representation and continuous improvement.

This will be achieved by:

- creating an inclusive, values-driven culture in which all employees feel empowered and proud to belong;
- championing behaviours that reflect the Service's commitment to equity, wellbeing and adaptability;
- developing a consistent, confident approach to positive action that supports colleagues with protected characteristics and embraces difference as a strength;
- embedding inclusion and representation into everyday practice, leadership accountability and team culture - making diversity a shared responsibility across the Service.
- aligning with relevant Welsh Government policy frameworks on LGBTQ+ inclusion, including the LGBTQ+ Action Plan, supporting Wales' ambition to be one of the most LGBTQ+ inclusive nations.

## Strategic Objectives – The Five Principles



## **Our People Principle**

The Service believes that its workforce should reflect the diversity of the communities that it serves. Representation matters – it drives innovation, builds trust and strengthens the organisation's impact.

NWFRS is committed to attracting, developing and retaining talent from all backgrounds, with a focus on colleagues with protected characteristics. By embedding equity throughout the employee lifecycle, a more inclusive and effective Service is shaped.

## **Our Prevention Principle**

At NWFRS, prevention is about more than reducing risk – it is about building trust with every community that the organisation serves. A diverse workforce is key to the delivery of effective, inclusive prevention.

When NWFRS teams reflect the communities they support, the Service is better placed to engage, educate and reduce risk.

By embedding representation into its prevention approach, the Service builds stronger partnerships, improves safety outcomes and serves its communities more fairly and effectively.

## **Our Protection Principle**

Protection is central to the Service's mission – safeguarding people, property and communities when it matters most. To deliver fair and effective protection, its workforce must reflect the diversity and values of those it serves.

A representative service builds public trust, improves decision-making and ensures equitable outcomes for all.

By aligning its workforce with the communities it protects, the Service strengthens its legitimacy, empathy and impact—both now and for the future.

## **Our Response Principle**

Response brings together trust, readiness and resilience, often in life-critical moments. To meet the diverse needs of its communities, NWFRS' workforce must reflect and understand them.

A representative team enhances the organisation's ability to deliver timely, compassionate and culturally-aware responses, especially under pressure.

## **Our Environmental Principle**

Protecting and preserving our natural environment for future generations. Adopting eco-friendly practices in our daily operations to cut down on carbon emissions and other environmental impacts and raise environmental awareness amongst our staff and our communities

# Current Workforce Diversity

Under the Equality Act 2010, there are nine protected characteristics:

## **Age**

A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds).

## **Disability**

A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

## **Gender reassignment**

Where a person undergoes, or proposes to undergo, a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex.

## **Marriage and civil partnership**

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple.

Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

## **Pregnancy and maternity**

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

## **Race**

A race is a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnicity or national origins. A racial group can be made up of more than one distinct racial group, such as Black British.

## **Religion or belief**

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

## **Sex**

A man or a woman.

## Sexual orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

The Welsh language does not form part of the Equality Act 2010, as it is covered by its own specific legislation, namely the Welsh Language Measure 2011, but it is no less important.

The Service is committed to building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the population of North Wales, and to ensuring fair and equitable representation across all protected characteristics. This also includes naturally representing the linguistic diversity of North Wales when employing local people into the workforce.

## A section of workforce representation compared to National Census Data for North Wales

| Protected Characteristic                                                         | National Census (e.g. England & Wales 2021)      | NWFRS Workforce | Representation Gap |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>Race – Ethnic Minority Groups</b>                                             | 3.2%                                             | 4.28%           | +1.08%             |
| <b>Disability</b>                                                                | 17.8% report a disability or long-term condition | 10.9%           | -6.9%              |
| <b>Sex – Female</b>                                                              | 50.7%                                            | 21.0%           | -29.7%             |
| <b>Welsh Speakers</b> Able to conduct a conversation through the medium of Welsh | 29.1%                                            | 47.38%          | +18.2%             |
| <b>Sexual Orientation</b> (based on number who chose to declare)                 | 2.5%                                             | 3.3%            | +0.8%              |
| <b>Transgender</b> (based on number who chose to declare)                        | 0.3%                                             | 0.5%            | +0.2%              |

## The Welsh Language

Wales is a bilingual nation; the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 requires that English and Welsh are treated equally by bodies that provide services to the public in Wales. NWFRS has demonstrated the strength of its commitment to supporting its bilingual and Welsh-speaking communities.

The communities have a right to communicate with the Service in their language of choice, and those whose first language is Welsh must never be placed at a disadvantage. Supporting a bilingual workforce, especially front-facing staff, is key to ensuring that residents and visitors to North Wales receive a high-quality, compassionate service at their most vulnerable moments; this not only upholds their rights but also builds trust, improves confidence in the Service, and enhances the quality and effectiveness of the organisation's work.

Protecting and encouraging the Welsh language within the Service's workforce is essential to preserving Wales' cultural heritage and to ensuring an inclusive, effective public service. In promoting the Welsh Language in the fire and rescue service workforce, NWFRS currently offers equality of opportunity for Welsh speakers and learners so that the Service reflects the linguistic diversity of the communities that it serves.

Current practices within NWFRS include:

- bilingual job postings;
- positive action initiatives;
- Welsh language skills assessments;
- Welsh language training and development opportunities;
- bilingual signage and communication;
- celebrating Welsh culture;
- Annually reporting on the Welsh language standards compliance;
- public engagement.
- choice of language correspondence
- support to learn Welsh (Welsh Champions, paned a sgwrs etc)
- all roles require a minimum of Level 2 Welsh skills with front facing roles being Level 4. Support is provided to individuals to achieve Level 2 within their probation period if required for roles not deemed Welsh essential.

Year on year, the Service continues to increase the proportion of Welsh speakers in its workforce and actively encourages and supports employees to learn and progress their knowledge and use of the language.

|             | Level 0 | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 |
|-------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>2015</b> | 11.60%  | 17.79%  | 22.80%  | 8.50%   | 9.50%   | 27.20%  |
| <b>2025</b> | 8.42%   | 10.63%  | 31.58%  | 8.74%   | 10.53%  | 28.11%  |

| Level | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0     | No knowledge of spoken Welsh                                                                                                                                                               |
| 1     | Can pronounce Welsh words and names correctly, greet others appropriately and understand basic phrases. May also be able to complete simple forms or record basic information.             |
| 2     | Can engage in basic conversations, understand routine instructions and requests, and write short, simple messages.                                                                         |
| 3     | Can participate in everyday conversations, understand most workplace documents and write informal messages and internal reports.                                                           |
| 4     | Can confidently take part in meetings and discussions, understand formal reports and correspondence, and draft business documents.                                                         |
| 5     | Can communicate fluently in a wide range of situations, including complex discussions and presentations; can understand detailed reports and produce high-quality business correspondence. |

# Steps to Deliver and Measure NWFRS' Success

## 1. Defining Representation Objectives

Set clear and measurable goals to improve workforce diversity and inclusion, aligned with national standards, legal obligations and local community demographics.

Examples include:

- increasing the proportion of employees with protected characteristics in recruitment by increasing diversity across ethnicity, disability, gender and across all age categories.
- improving gender balance across all roles.
- promoting inclusive progression and leadership opportunities.
- Increasing the number of work experience/apprenticeships across the service:
  - \* to improve access, equality and equity of opportunity, especially for young people (16-18 yr olds)
  - \* deliver Apprenticeships through the medium of Welsh: strengthening opportunities to undertake an apprenticeship through the medium of Welsh or bilingually, ensuring all learners have the opportunity to maintain and develop their Welsh-language skills.

## 2. Action Planning

Identify targeted actions which will achieve these objectives, such as:

- positive action and engagement with individuals with protected characteristics;
- continuing accreditation of Disability Confident whereby we review and adopt best recruitment practices as part of the validation process.
- recognise neurodiversity as an important dimension of workforce representation and we are committed to removing barriers in recruitment and career development, and to creating an environment where neurodivergent employees can thrive and contribute fully.
- the implementation of inclusive recruitment campaigns and accessible application processes to ensure fairness and equal opportunity for all candidates, as part of the Service's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. These include:
  - \* anonymous sifting at the shortlisting stage – applications are anonymised during the shortlisting process so as to reduce unconscious bias and to ensure that decisions are based solely on relevant skills and experience;
  - \* inclusive Interviews – each shortlisted candidate is provided with the interview questions 30 minutes in advance of their interview to allow time for preparation and to help level the playing field for individuals who may benefit from additional processing time.

## 3. Data Collection and Monitoring

Apply robust methods in the collection and analysis of workforce data, whilst ensuring data protection and confidentiality.

Key metrics include:

- workforce composition by ethnicity, gender, age, disability and Welsh language skills etc;
- collect and monitor top 5% earners, grievances, complaints, completion of training and leavers (these themes are part of our public sector equality duty).
- recruitment and promotion rates across demographics.
- Fire Family Survey feedback on inclusion and belonging.

## 4. Performance Measures and Key Performance Indicators

Establish key performance indicators to measure progress. Examples include:

- percentage change in the representation of specific groups over time;
- retention rates across diverse employee groups;
- Moving towards gender pay parity (gender pay gap)

## 5. Governance and Accountability

Ensure that objectives are embedded into both personal and departmental objectives, making inclusive practice a shared and measurable priority. Clear responsibility for the delivery of inclusive recruitment and accessibility objectives has been allocated at senior leadership level, thus ensuring ownership from the top of the organisation. The strategy directly supports the delivery of the NWFRS Community Risk Management Plan (2024-2029) by ensuring our people, skills, and culture are aligned to current and emerging community risks, enabling a more responsive and inclusive service. Progress will be reported regularly, for example to, the People and Organisational Development Committee, the Organisational Resourcing Committee, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee and to the Service Leadership Team.

Externally governance involves the annual reporting of information to the Welsh Government and the Office of National Statistics, such as the numbers of men and women employed and whether they are full- or part-time. The Service also reports and publishes its Gender Pay Gap on a yearly basis; this measures the difference in pay between women and men by age, region, full- or part-time employment and occupation.

So as further to strengthen feedback and development, the Service has introduced 360-degree reviews for senior leaders; this provides a rounded view of performance and inclusive leadership, incorporating feedback from peers and stakeholders, as well as direct reports.

## 6. Review and Continuous Improvement

Review outcomes regularly to assess impact and to identify areas for further action. Use feedback from Service committees, staff networks, exit interviews and community groups etc in order to inform updates to strategy.

# Conclusion

Achieving a truly representative workforce is a long-term commitment that requires continuous effort, reflection, and accountability. Based on this strategy, the Service reaffirms its dedication to building an inclusive culture in which everyone can thrive and contribute fully, regardless of background, identity or circumstance.

By embracing diversity, NWFRS not only strengthens its workforce but also enhances the trust and confidence of the communities that it serves. The organisation will continue to monitor its progress, engage and listen to its people and adapt its approach to ensure meaningful and measurable change.

The goal is clear: a workforce that reflects the rich diversity of NWFRS' communities and embodies the values of fairness, respect and belonging at every level of the Service.

# Appendix 1 – Wholetime (WDS)

## Recruitment Campaigns

The Service's communities are diverse, and the organisation is working hard to meet their differing needs through the service that it provides. Firefighters need to be people who not only reflect these communities, but who also want to put something back into these communities. They must be able to communicate effectively with individuals and groups within the community.

Regarding operational firefighters, operational managers and strategic leaders, the proportion of women has increased in recent years. By means of positive action in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and targeted interventions, the Service has seen an increase in women who express an interest in firefighter roles and, ultimately, more women have joined the organisation. NWFRS is proud that women currently comprise 22% of its entire workforce, with women now making up 15% of its operational workforce, compared to 10% just a few years ago.

By way of comparison the Home Office statistics for the year ending March 31, 2025:

- **National Average (2025):** 9.7% of firefighters employed by FRSs were women.
- **Comparison to 2023:** This represents an increase from the 8.7% reported for the year ending March 2023.
- **Wholetime vs. On-Call:** The percentage of female wholetime firefighters reached 10%, while on-call (retained) firefighters was 8.3%.
- **Broader Context:** While improving, this remains significantly below the 51% of the English population and 36% of police officers who are women.

**Wales Statistics by Regional Service:** Based on recent workforce and gender pay gap reports:

- **North Wales FRS:** Women comprise 22% of the total workforce as of 2025, a slight increase from 21.2% in 2024.
- **Mid and West Wales FRS:** Representation in wholetime operational roles is 11.3%. The service reported that overall female representation increased by 1% compared to the previous year.
- **South Wales FRS:** Historically reported lower operational percentages (around 3% in recent years), but successfully increased its female contract intake to 17.3% by March 2024

Whilst recognising that it has increased the gender diversity of its workforce, NWFRS plans to attract, develop and retain yet more women to ensure that its teams are able to meet the diverse needs of the communities that it serves.

Further information regarding other protected characteristics can be found in the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Annual Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Performance Assessment Report and Equality Monitoring Annual Report.

The intention is for women to feel encouraged and empowered to join the Service, supported not only through the application process but throughout their time with the organisation.

It is recognised that the current approach to recruitment within the WDS includes the separation of candidate pools by gender, which may give the perception of prioritising one protected characteristic over others. This approach reflects the fact that women represent approximately 51% of the population and have historically been underrepresented within operational roles and therefore forms part of targeted action to address this imbalance. However, the Service remains fully committed to advancing equality across all protected characteristics. This includes ensuring that recruitment, progression, and retention practices are inclusive and equitable for individuals from all underrepresented groups, and that no characteristic is overlooked in efforts to improve workforce representation.

There are several elements to the Wholetime recruitment campaign, as listed below. The measurement outcome is a 'Pass' or 'Fail' for Stages 3 to 6, which comprise the written assessments, physical tests, interviews, pre-employment checks and the medical.

| Stage                                      | Content                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1 Registration</b>                      | Application through the online portal – application will be reviewed and eligibility checked.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>2 Online Assessments</b>                | Application through the online portal – application will be reviewed and eligibility checked.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>3 Written Ability Tests</b>             | Invited to sit the National Firefighter Selection Written Ability tests. This takes approximately 3 hours and includes numerical reasoning, mechanical reasoning and understanding information tests.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>4 Physical Ability Tests</b>            | Invited to take the National Firefighter Selection Physical Ability tests. Further information about these tests can be found in the Practical Assessments information booklet.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>5 Interview</b>                         | Applicants can choose to carry out the interview in either Welsh or English, as preferred.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>6 Medical and Pre-employment Checks</b> | <p>On the successful completion of all stages of the recruitment process, an agreed selected number of applicants will offered a conditional offer of employment and invited to attend a medical which includes a fitness assessment and drug and alcohol test.</p> <p>Pre-employment checks including a Standard Disclosure and Barring Service check, Right to Work Check and references will also be requested.</p> <p>Holding List (see below) – If successful at all the stages of recruitment but not selected for the initial intake, details may be retained for a period of time in the event that further appointments need to be made. However, this is at the discretion of the Service and there is no guarantee of a role being offered.</p> |
| <b>7 Appointment</b>                       | Candidates who are successful at all of the stages and checks undertaken are then offered a contract of employment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

Following the final stage of a WDS recruitment process, there are generally a number of candidates who have successfully completed the process but for whom there is no immediate job opportunity; this is because of the limited number of vacancies to be filled within any specific recruitment process. Candidates are advised that their names will be retained for any future opportunities that may become available; this is common practice in the sector and allows the Service to fill vacancies that arise in-between recruitment campaigns. Generally, names will be retained for a maximum of two years which is, once again, consistent with the approach taken by other Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.

## Selection of candidates

The selection process for the final stage of appointment is as follows:

1. the Service refers to the pool of successful candidates;
2. the list is anonymised by allocating a unique identifier number to each individual;
3. a number random generator is used to select candidates from the male and female pool of candidates;
4. the numbers selected are then applied to the WDS list and are cross-referenced with the names on the list; and
5. those individuals are then offered a role.

This approach ensures both consistency and fairness in the selection process.

The Service has sought legal advice regarding this process to recruit more candidates from female applicants so as to increase diversity. This is lawful positive action on the following grounds:

- the Service reasonably believes that ‘persons who share a protected characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to that characteristic’ or ‘participation in the activity by persons who share a protected characteristic is disproportionately low’; and
- because of that, the Service is treating a candidate with a protected characteristic ‘more favourably in connection with recruitment or promotion than another person’; and that person is ‘as qualified’ as non-protected candidates.

## Gender Balance for WDS Recruitment Campaigns April 2021 to December 2024

|                             | April 2021 -<br>March 2022 |          | April 2022 -<br>March 2023 |           | April 2023 -<br>March 2024 |          | April 2024 -<br>December 2024 |          |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------|----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Male / Female               | M                          | F        | M                          | F         | M                          | F        | M                             | F        |
| New WDS Apprentice          | 8                          | 5        | 9                          | 10        | 0                          | 0        | 5                             | 0        |
| Transfer from RDS           | 8                          | 1        | 2                          | 2         | 0                          | 0        | 9                             | 1        |
| Transfer from Corporate     | 1                          | 1        | 1                          | 0         | 0                          | 0        | 1                             | 0        |
| Transfer from Other Service | 10                         | 1        | 2                          | 0         | 4                          | 0        | 0                             | 0        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>27</b>                  | <b>8</b> | <b>14</b>                  | <b>12</b> | <b>4</b>                   | <b>0</b> | <b>15</b>                     | <b>1</b> |

## Gender Balance for WDS Recruitment Campaigns January to September 2025

|                             | January 2025 |          | September 2025 |          |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| Male / Female               | M            | F        | M              | F        |
| New WDS Apprentice          | 4            | 2        | 6              | 1        |
| Transfer from RDS           | 2            | 2        | 0              | 1        |
| Transfer from Corporate     | 0            | 0        | 0              | 1        |
| Transfer from Other Service | 0            | 0        | 0              | 1        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>6</b>     | <b>4</b> | <b>6</b>       | <b>4</b> |

|                   | RDS-WDS Migration Sept 2024 |          | RDS-WDS Migration (Nucleus) 2025 |          |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|----------|
| Male / Female     | M                           | F        | M                                | F        |
| Transfer from RDS | 4                           | 1        | 10                               | 2        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>4</b>                    | <b>1</b> | <b>10</b>                        | <b>2</b> |

This document forms part of a suite of information covering this subject area; hyperlinks to all the documents are available by clicking back to the home page.

Should any omissions or errors come to light with regard to the content of this suite of documents, readers are invited to contact [policy.development@northwalesfire.gov.wales](mailto:policy.development@northwalesfire.gov.wales) with their feedback.