



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service

Community Risk Management Plan Consultation 2024

Equality Impact Analysis



**ATAL AMDDIFFYN YMATEB
PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

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Introduction

This equality Impact analysis has been developed alongside the service's consultation report concerning its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-2029 following the consultation period between 25th March 2024 and 16th June 2024. Specific engagement with different equality interest groups during the consultation period has helped capture how different people feel about the proposed workstreams, their perceptions in terms of risk and to assess whether any of the proposed plans could place certain groups of people or communities at a disadvantage.

The overarching aim of this equality impact analysis is to highlight specific themes that emerged from the feedback during the CRMP 2024-29 consultation. From this analysis, potential risks of discrimination can be identified and mitigation can be implemented accordingly. As defined by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, this analysis will focus on the protected characteristics which fall within the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and within the Socio-Economic Duty in Wales, as well as consideration of any possible implications on the Welsh Language, according to the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

Background and Context of the CRMP Consultation

Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and Wellbeing of Future Generation Act 2015, Fire and Rescue services within Wales are required to consult on the arrangements they propose to put in place to secure continuous improvement and the improvement objectives and standards they intend to set themselves.

The service's previous three-year Corporate Plan (2021-24) has now concluded. In its place the service has adopted a five-year CRMP with annual implementation plans, based on a strategic framework developed by The National Fire Chiefs Council. It is intended to assist in transparent and justifiable decision-making and help Fire and Rescue Services identify collaborative opportunities with partner organisations more easily. In developing this plan, there is a requirement to 'effectively consult and engage' (in line with its governance arrangements) with communities, staff and stakeholders at appropriate stages of the community risk management planning process.

The CRMP document identifies the expected risks and challenges that the Service may experience within the next five years, so it is vitally important to

capture feedback from people from all backgrounds as part of this process.

Equality Impact Analysis (EIA): The Legal Context

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is part of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and came into force in April 2011.

Section 149 of the Equality Act sets out the main duty and states that authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, “have due regards to the need to” eliminate any conduct that is prohibited by the Act. This includes discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to the ‘Protected Characteristics’ which include;

- Age
- Disability (Including long term health conditions)
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (Ethnicity)
- Religion or belief
- Sex (Gender)
- Sexual orientation

Whilst ‘marriage and civil partnership’ is also a protected characteristic, under the Equality Act 2010, it is not covered by the PSED in the same manner as the other protected characteristics, listed above and is for the purposes of the duty to eliminate discrimination. It is important to note that Section 1 of the Equality Act ‘Socio-economic duty’ came into force in Wales on 31st March 2021, and this requires the same due regard as the nine protected characteristics listed above.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 is also another legal consideration which has been included in the EIA. In compliance with the Policy Making standards within the Service’s Welsh Language Standards compliance notice, it states that consideration should be made of any effects, whether positive or adverse to the Welsh Language. The EIA must include any identifiable effects on the opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the

Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

The PSED has three main facets, and these are to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to 'advance equality of opportunity' between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not includes having due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by them. Having due regard also means public organisations, such as NWFRS, take measures to meet the needs of such persons where those needs are different from persons who do not have that characteristic, and encourage those who have a protected characteristic to participate in public life.

As an essential part of meeting their PSED, public authorities conduct Equality Impact Analysis. This will be documented through the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). An Equality Impact Analysis is an assessment of a proposed organisational policy, or a change to an existing one so that it can be determined whether the policy has a disparate impact on persons from the protected characteristics. Whilst there is no longer a prescriptive way of doing this, case law has provided guidance in how to undertake an equality impact analysis, namely:

- Ensure there is a written record of the equality considerations that are considered;
- Ensure any decision-making included consideration of the actions that would help to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts on particular equality groups;
- Ensure the decisions made are done so on evidence; and
- Ensure the decision-making process is transparent.

Methodology

Underpinned by the three main facets of the PSED (listed earlier), this report highlights various themes which emerged from feedback in response to the exact same questions that were included online questionnaires and focus groups.

This report and the accompanying Equality Impact Assessment (EqIAs) focus on the equality related findings of the public consultation which was conducted between 25th March and 16th June 2024.

Approximately 70 different partner organisations and community groups were contacted to help promote the consultation. Amongst these partners included equality interested groups which consisted of community groups, charities and organisations that support specific groups of people (i.e. ethnic minority groups, young people, people living with dementia to name a few). Some equality interest groups were happy to complete and promote the online questionnaire amongst their members, whilst other groups wanted to organise a focus group which addressed promoted inclusion for people with limited communication skills, people that are digitally excluded and those who simply prefer to speak to a person and ask questions.

This report draws together the detail around engagement and consultation activity; the demographics of the NWFRA area, with specific reference to protected characteristics; the potential impact of the proposed activities relating to the five principles, specifically regarding equality of access; and any mitigating factors which will help to manage and mitigate any potential risks associated.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Area Demographics

North Wales has a population of circa 687,000 people spread over a geographical area of 2383 square miles (or 6,172 square kilometres). The region is made up of six counties which include Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Ynys Mon, and Wrexham. It encompasses a diverse landscape, including Eryri National Park, coastal areas, and rural communities. The region is well connected, with major highways, railways, and ports providing access to the rest of the UK and Europe.

The largest city in North Wales is Wrexham, which serves as a hub for commerce and industry, while other major conurbations include Bangor, Caernarfon, Colwyn Bay, Deeside, Llandudno and Rhyl. The region is also home to several universities and colleges, providing a strong talent pool for local and international businesses that are located here. Additionally, the region is a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors from all over the world with its stunning coastline, rich history, and unique culture.

Welsh, as a language for living, remains at the heart of the modern Welsh identity. Enjoying family life, education, work and leisure all through the medium of Welsh is testimony to the importance of the language to the people of Wales.

With regards to the 687,000 people that reside in North Wales, the 2021 Census data¹ states that 22.3% of the population were aged 65 years and over. Out of all local authorities across Wales, Conwy (27.4%) and Anglesey (26.4%) have the highest percentages of people aged 65 years and over. Conwy (1.5%) has the highest percentage of people aged 90 years in Wales. With intersectionality in mind, it is useful to explore disability and age due to a notable difference in the data between 2011 and 2021, particularly in the younger and older age groups². For females aged 15 to 19 years, the 2021, particularly in the younger and older age groups². For females aged 15 to 19

¹ Office of National Statistics (2021) Population and household estimates, Wales: Census 2021, Found at:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimateswales/census2021#local-authority-populations-in-wales

² Office for National Statistics (2023b) Disability by Age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021. Found at:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/disabilitybyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=Source%3A%20Office%20for%20National%20Statistics%20-%20Census%202021,-

years, the percentage of disability was 13.3% in 2021, 8.1 percentage points higher than in 2011 and 7.9 percentage points higher than in 2001. This trend continued into the 20 to 24-year age group, where disability prevalence increased substantially, from 6.2% in 2011 to 17.9% in 2021. For males, the increased prevalence of disability in 2021 began at earlier ages; 8.6% of males aged 5 to 9 years were disabled in 2021, compared with 5.6% in 2011 and 6.5% in 2001³.

The population of North Wales is much less ethnically diverse than across England and Wales as a whole and 96.8% of the population identified as “White” in the 2021 Census. In North Wales, the highest proportions of people from “Any other White background” in 2021 were in Wrexham (4.8%) and Flintshire (3.9%) and the lowest found in Anglesey (1.9%)⁴.

Age

The age of an individual, when accompanied with additional factors such as other ‘protected characteristics’ may affect their access to public services. Individuals may also experience discrimination and inequalities because of their age.

The European Social Survey 2012 found that age discrimination was the most common form of prejudice experienced in the UK, with 28% of respondents saying they had experienced prejudice based on age. In this section the age category to which most attention is given is 65+, as this is the age band that faces the most age-based discrimination. Analysis of the 2021 Census data shows that North Wales residents aged 65 or over were more likely than those under 65 to:

- Have a long-term limiting illness;
- Be in poor health;

³ Office for National Statistics (2023b) Disability by Age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021. Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/disabilitybyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=Source%3A%20Office%20for%20National%20Statistics%20-%20Census%202021,-Embed%20code&text=In%20Wales%2C%2022.3%25%20of%20females,10.4%25%20and%209.5%25%20respectively

⁴ Welsh Government (2022) Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion in Wales - Census 2021, Found at: <https://www.gov.wales/ethnic-group-national-identity-language-and-religion-wales-census-2021-html#:~:text=90.6%25%20of%20the%20population%20identified,to%202.3%25%20in%202011>

- Be living on their own;

Be without access to a car;

- Be providing unpaid care of 50 hours or more a week;
- Be living in a household without central heating.

People aged 50 or over were more likely than those under 50 to:

- Be living on their own;
- Be isolated and excluded;
- Be providing unpaid care; and
- Have no qualifications.

The ageing population will have financial and resource implications, as this will likely to be the age at which the health and social care needs of individuals will increase.

Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have 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. This is consistent with the Census definition of a limiting long-term health problem.

According to 2021 Census data, North Wales has 20.7% of the total population reporting a disability and/or long-term health condition. The national average in Wales is 21.1% and for comparison purposes 17.7% in England⁵.

Disability and age are closely related, with older people being more likely to be disabled. In North Wales, Census 2021 data shows that the age group with the highest proportion of people with below average health are those ages 65 and over (12.5%), with the lowest proportion in those aged 15 years and under (0.5%). This was seen in all local authorities with some minor variation in the percentages.

⁵ Office for National Statistics (2023c) Disability, England and Wales: Census 2021. Found at: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/disabilityenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=In%20Wales%2C%20in%202021%2C%20a,\(23.4%25%2C%20696%2C000\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/disabilityenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=In%20Wales%2C%20in%202021%2C%20a,(23.4%25%2C%20696%2C000))

In North Wales, the highest percentage within the population aged 17 years or under with below average health were aged 16 to 17 years (1.2% of this population), and the lowest percentage in North Wales was in those aged 2 years and under (0.3% of this population). There was some variation in the local authorities although the highest percentage was in those aged 16 to 17 years in all local authorities except Denbighshire where the highest percentage was in those aged 15 years (1.7% of this population). It is not possible to compare this data with the data included in the previous report as an alternative data source was used.

Gender

According to the Census 2021 data, the North Wales population by gender is 51% female and 49% male. When combined with additional factors such as living alone, employment status, financial income, health and social care needs, research suggests that one's gender can have disproportionate outcomes. People are disproportionately affected by their gender when different concepts are explored which include Hate crime and domestic abuse⁶, gender pay gap and financial income⁷, accessing health care⁸, mental health⁹, domestic abuse¹⁰ and individuals may also experience discrimination and inequalities because of their gender¹¹.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is an umbrella term covering sexual identity, attraction, and behaviour. According to Stonewall¹², approximately 7% of people identify as having a sexual orientation that involves being attracted to people of more than one gender.

⁶ Stop Hate (2023) Gender Based Hate Crime, Found at www.stophateuk.org/about-hate-crime/gender-based-hate-crime/

⁷ ONS (2022) Gender Pay Gap 2022, Found at www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/genderpaygapintheuk/2022

⁸ WHO (2023) Gender and Health, Found at www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/gender-and-health

⁹ Mental Health Foundation (2023) Men and Mental Health, Found at www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/men-and-mental-health

¹⁰ ONS (2021) Domestic Abuse Victims, Found at www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuse/victimcharacteristicsenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2022

¹¹ CIPD (2023) Gender Equality Work, Found at www.cipd.org/uk/views-and-insights/cipd-viewpoint/gender-equality-work/

¹² Stonewall (2022) Rainbow Britain Report, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/rainbow_britain_report.pdf

According to the Census 2021¹³, 89.4% of the Welsh population identify as heterosexual or straight, 7.6% of the population 'did not answer', with 3% of the population identifying as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or 'other'.

Research investigating people's experience of accessing public services has found that people that identify as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or an orientation other than heterosexual, often involves inequality and restricted access. Although there is very limited research on fire and rescue services, restricted access has been highlighted in various public services including health care¹⁴ and Police and Local authorities¹⁵.

Gender Reassignment

Gender reassignment is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. This means an individual does not need to have undergone any treatment or surgery to be protected by law. Evidence shows that when transgender (41%) and/or non-binary (31%) people reveal their gender variance, they are exposed to a risk of discrimination, bullying and hate crime¹⁶.

67% of transgender people and 70% of non-binary people had experienced depression in the past year¹⁷. Almost half of the people who identified as transgender (46%) thought about taking their own life in the past year; 60% thought their life was not worth living; and 12% had made a suicide attempt.

¹³ ONS (2021) Sexual Orientation, Age and Sex in England and Wales, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/articles/sexualorientationageandsexenglandandwales/census2021

¹⁴ Stonewall (2018) LGBT+ in Britain Report 2018, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_health.pdf

¹⁵ Stonewall (2017) LGBT+ in Britain: Hate Crime, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_hate_crime.pdf

¹⁶ Stonewall (2018) LGBT+ in Britain: Trans Report, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_-_trans_report_final.pdf

¹⁷ Manchester University (2018) Found at: <https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/carms/2020/06/17/gender-identity-why-are-transgender-and-non-binary-people-more-at-risk-of-suicide/>

By comparison, it is estimated that around 20% of the general population experience suicidal feelings in their lifetime¹⁸ and around 13% self-harm¹⁹. Therefore, transgender and non-binary people are at a much greater risk of a range of suicidal experiences, as they face mental health problems and suicidal experiences at significantly higher rates than the general population, especially amongst younger people^{20,21}.

Research has also found that trans and/or non-binary people encounter significant difficulties in accessing and using health and social care services due to staffs' lack of knowledge and understanding and sometimes prejudice²².

Research carried out by Stonewall²³ found that a quarter of health and social care staff were not confident in their ability to respond to the specific care needs of trans and/or non-binary people patients and service users.

An increasing number of trans people are accessing Gender Identity Clinics; it is unclear if this represents an increase in the trans population or an increasing proportion of the trans population accessing Gender Identity Services²⁴.

Whilst there are no official estimates of gender reassignment at either national or regional level, Stonewall estimate²⁵ that around 1% of the population identify as trans, including people identifying as non-binary. Therefore, a logical estimation would suggest between 6,000 and 7,000 people in North Wales are experiencing some degree of gender variance.

¹⁸ Time To Change (2020). Suicidal feelings, Found at: <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/about-mental-health/types-problems/suicidal-feelings#toc-2>

¹⁹ Selfharm UK (2020) Self-harm statistics, Found at: <https://www.selfharm.co.uk/get-information/the-facts/self-harm-statistics>

²⁰ Stonewall (2017) School Report, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/school-report-2017

²¹ Transgender Trend (2016) The Suicide Myth, Found at: www.transgendertrend.com/the-suicide-myth/

²² Royal College of Nursing (2020) Fair Care for Trans and Non-Binary, Found at: www.rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/publications/rcn-fair-care-trans-non-binary-uk-pub-009430

²³ Stonewall (2018) LGBT+ in Britain: Trans Report, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_-_trans_report_final.pdf

²⁴ LGBT Foundation (2017) Transforming Outcomes A review of the needs and assets of the trans community, Found at: <https://dx.fy8lrzbp.ywr.cloudfront.net/Files/acd2bcc5-a2d4-4203-8e22-aed9f4843921/TransformingOutcomesLGBTFdn.pdf>

²⁵ University of Bristol (2018) Ensuring trans people in Wales receive dignified and inclusive health and social care in later life: The Trans Ageing and Care (TrAC) project, 2016-18, Found at: www.bristol.ac.uk/policybristol/policy-briefings/trans-ageing-and-care-project/

Pregnancy and Maternity

The Equality Act 2010 protects people who are pregnant, have given birth in the last 26 weeks (non-work context) or are on maternity leave (work context) against discrimination in relation to their pregnancy.

In the past 20 years, North Wales range between 7,086 and 7,826 live births each year. Over this period, the largest proportions of these deliveries were in the 25 to 29-year-old age group. The second largest proportion of births were in the 30 to 34-year-old group, whereas the over 40's group were the lowest. Over the past two decades, teenage births have made up between 4.7% to 9.6% of overall births in North Wales each year. With exception of the occasional year, teenage births have reduced year-on-year since 2003.

Race

The Equality Act 2010 states that race includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. 96.8% of people in North Wales identify as White Welsh/British. Asian or Asian Welsh/British was the second largest ethnic group (1.4%), followed by mixed or multiple ethnic groups (1.1%), other ethnic group (0.4%) and Black, British Welsh/British, Caribbean or African (0.3%).

The population of North Wales is much less ethnically diverse than across England and Wales as a whole and 96.8% of the population identified as "White" in the 2021 Census. In North Wales, the highest proportions of people from "Any other White background" in 2021 were in Wrexham (4.8%) and Flintshire (3.9%) and the lowest found in Anglesey (1.9%).

The COVID-19 pandemic had a disproportionate impact on people from ethnic minority communities and recently the Welsh Government²⁶ highlighted that highlighted many people, including those who were born in Wales, still experience racism on a regular basis.

An Equality and Human Rights Commission report²⁷ from 2016 highlighted various issues that are still relevant in 2023 for people from ethnic minority

²⁶ Welsh Government (2022) Anti-Racism Action Plan, Found at: www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-06/an-introduction-to-an-anti-racist-wales.pdf

²⁷ Equality and Human Rights Commission (2016) Healing a divided Britain, Found at: www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/2021/healing-a-divided-britain-august-2016.pdf

groups that continue to experience discrimination and inequality in education, employment, housing, pay and living standards, health, and the criminal justice system.

Amongst people aged 65 and over, Asian/Asian British people and Black African/Caribbean/Black British people were more likely than people from other ethnic backgrounds to have a long-term limiting illness and to be in poor health.

People of Gypsy or Irish Traveller origin were considerably more likely to be in poor health compared with all other ethnic groups (15.9% of Gypsy/Irish Travellers compared with 4.6% of White British people). Gypsies and Travellers are still regarded as having the poorest health and lowest life expectancy in the UK.

Households headed by people from 'other White', mixed/multiple, Asian/Asian British, Black African/Caribbean/Black British and 'other' ethnic backgrounds were all more likely than households headed by people from White British backgrounds to have fewer bedrooms than was required. People from mixed/multiple and Black African/Caribbean/Black British backgrounds were more likely than other ethnic groups to live in social housing. People from White British and White Irish backgrounds were less likely than other ethnic groups to be living in private rented housing.

People from all groups which were not White British were more likely than White British people to be living in a household without access to a car or van.

Amongst people aged 25-34, people from White backgrounds were less likely to be unemployed than people from Black and Minority ethnic backgrounds. Amongst people aged 25-34, people from White Irish and Asian/Asian British backgrounds were more likely to have level 4 qualifications (a degree or higher) than White British people, whilst people from Black African/Caribbean/Black British, 'other' White, and 'other' ethnic backgrounds were less likely than White British people to have this level of qualification.

Amongst people aged 16-24, people from mixed multiple, White Irish, 'other' White and 'other' ethnic backgrounds were all more likely than people from White British backgrounds to have no qualifications. In the same age group, people from Asian/Asian British backgrounds were less likely than White British people to have no qualifications. The percentage of people in this age group with no qualifications was similar for Black African/Caribbean/Black British people and White British people.

Amongst people aged 25-49, people from White Irish, White British and 'other' White backgrounds were less likely to be unemployed than people from Black and Minority ethnic backgrounds. Amongst people aged 25-49, White Irish and Asian/Asian British people were more likely to be in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations than White British people, whilst people from Black African/Caribbean/Black British, 'other' White, mixed/multiple, and 'other' ethnic backgrounds were less likely than White British people to be in such occupations.

Religion and/or Belief

According to the 2021 Census²⁸, Christianity is the most common religion within all ages in North Wales and represents 49.8% of the population. Whilst the next main group stated they had no religion at 41.7%, statistics show 1.8% of the population account for people who follow Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh religions. 6.7% of people chose not to state their religion or belief.

In summary, North Wales has a higher proportion of people who are Christian, have no religion, or have not stated a religion than the national figures. In contrast it has a lower proportion of people who follow a religion other than Christianity, which reflects the ethnic composition of the religion.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

As mentioned earlier in the report, marriage and civil partnership do not fall under the PSED in the same way as the other protected characteristics, however the Equality Act 2010 does protect individuals who are in a civil partnership, or marriage, against discrimination. The Service has considered this protected characteristic in the same way, mainly because a person's relationship status is one of the many factors that may place them at more 'risk' of fire in the home. For example, if people live alone, they are more at risk of experiencing fire in the home. People aged 65 and over that live alone are at even further risk.

²⁸ Office for National Statistics (2021) Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021 Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandandwales/census2021

Evidence suggests being married is associated with better mental health²⁹, and physical health³⁰. There is less evidence on the benefits of being in a civil partnership, but it is likely the benefits will also be experienced by people in similarly committed relationship such as civil partnerships. Where heterosexual couples differ from couples in same-sex relationships and civil partnerships, they experience hate crime, discrimination, and victimisation because of their sexual orientation³¹ and this is likely to negatively impact on their mental wellbeing and sense of safety. This may also relate to a lack of public recognition and a consistent social framework on which such relationships can be built³².

Across older age groups, both men and women living as a couple were more likely to be in very good or good health compared to those not living as a couple, regardless of whether those not living as a couple lived with other people³³.

As you would expect, people aged 16-24 are the most likely to be single, while those aged 65+ are the most likely age group to be widowed or a surviving partner from a same sex civil partnership³⁴. Same sex civil partnerships are most common amongst 35–49-year-olds, where they account for 0.2% of the total age group. The proportion of people that are married, separated or divorced increases with age, until 65+ when it begins to fall, to consider the increasing proportion of people who have lost a partner.

Welsh Language Considerations

²⁹ Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K. & Newton, T. L. (2001) Marriage and health: his and hers. *Psychological bulletin*, Vol 127(4), 472.

³⁰ Johnson, D.R. & Wu, J. (2002) An empirical test of crisis, social selection, and role explanations of the relationship between marital disruption and psychological distress: A pooled time-series analysis of four-wave panel data. *Journal of marriage and family*, Vol 64(1), 211-224.

³¹ King et al (2003) Mental health and quality of life of gay men and lesbians in England and Wales: controlled, cross-sectional study. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol 183(6), 552-558.

³² King, M. & Barlett, A. (2006) What same sex civil partnerships may mean for health Found at: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2465551/

³³ Office of National Statistics (2021) People Population and Community, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/profileoftheolderpopulationlivinginenglandandwalesin2021andchangessince2011/2023-04-03

³⁴ Office of National Statistics (2021) People Population and Community, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/profileoftheolderpopulationlivinginenglandandwalesin2021andchangessince2011/2023-04-03

According to the 2021 Census³⁵, significantly, the highest percentages of Welsh speakers in Wales can be found in the North Wales counties of Gwynedd (64.4%) and Anglesey (55.8%). North Wales as a region is home to over a third of Wales' Welsh speaking population.

The Service is committed to promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh as a language of the workplace and community, and reports on this annually as required under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011). Alongside this, the Service supports the Welsh Government's 'Cymraeg 2050' Welsh language strategy with the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 (Welsh Government, 2017). The strategy aims to increase both the number of Welsh language speakers and to create favourable conditions for this to happen, including increasing the use of Welsh within the workplace across all sectors.

More information is published in the Equalities and Human Rights Commission monitoring report [click here](#).

Socio-economic Considerations

According to the Census 2021, some of the most deprived areas in Wales are concentrated in North Wales coastal and border towns^{36,37}.

These areas include Rhyl and Kinmel Bay. In Rhyl South West, around 70% of households are affected by deprivation according to the map. Other areas, such as Abergele, Denbigh West and Gronant also have some high rates of deprivation, at around 60%. Around 50% of homes are affected by at least one type of deprivation in St Asaph, Dyserth and Mostyn. Caia Park Community in Wrexham lies within the 10 most deprived areas for the income, education and community safety domains. Other deprived areas include coastal communities across Flintshire such as Deeside, Delyn and Alyn. Comprehensive engagement was conducted in these deprived areas and a full breakdown is provided in full consultation report.

³⁵ Welsh Government (2022) Welsh Language in Wales, Found at: www.gov.wales/welsh-language-wales-census-2021-html

³⁶ Welsh Government (2022) Analysis of population characteristics by area deprivation (Census 2021), Found at: www.gov.wales/analysis-population-characteristics-area-deprivation-census-2021-html

³⁷ Welsh Government (2021) Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): April 2020 to March 2021. Found at: www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2021/9/2/1632824878/young-people-not-education-employment-or-training-neet-april-2020-march-2021.pdf

North Wales (14.4%) has the highest proportion of young people (aged 16 to 24) who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), when compared to 13.1% in South Wales who have the lowest³⁸. With intersectionality in mind, 55.8% (26,600) of males aged 16 to 24 years old were NEET, compared to 44.2% (21,100) of females aged 16 to 24. Disabled young people are more likely to be NEET than young people that are not disabled and the proportion of disabled people who are NEET rises from 18.1% at age 16 to 18 to 41.2% at age 19 to 24³⁹.

The employment rate for people aged 16 to 64 in Wales was 73.0% in the year ending March 2023, down 0.6 percentage points on the previous year⁴⁰. Unemployment rates differ across North Wales with Gwynedd (26.4%), Denbighshire (26.1%), Conwy (24.2%), Anglesey (22.6%) (Wrexham (22.1%) and Flintshire (21.3%)⁴¹.

Employment (or working) does not preclude experiencing poverty and deprivation. Low-paid work is the biggest contributor to in-work poverty as it makes it very difficult to escape poverty, mainly because some people don't get paid enough or there are not many well-paying jobs in a particular area⁴². Pay gaps and in-work poverty affect certain groups much more than others and the risk of in-work poverty is greater for disabled and ethnic minority workers⁴³.

In terms of health, a household is classified as deprived if any person in the household has general health that is bad or very bad or is identified as disabled⁴⁴. A breakdown of disability can be found in the relevant section on

³⁸ Welsh Government (2023) Participation of young people in education and the labour market: 2021 and 2022 (provisional), Found at: www.gov.wales/participation-young-people-education-and-labour-market-2021-and-2022-provisional.html

³⁹ Welsh Government (2022) Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): April 2020 to March 2021, Found at: www.gov.wales/young-people-not-education-employment-or-training-neet-april-2020-march-2021.html

⁴⁰ Welsh Government (2023) Labour market statistics (Annual Population Survey): April 2022 to March 2023. Found at: www.gov.wales/labour-market-statistics-annual-population-survey-april-2022-march-2023.html

⁴¹ Welsh Government (2023) Labour market statistics (Annual Population Survey): April 2022 to March 2023. Found at: www.gov.wales/labour-market-statistics-annual-population-survey-april-2022-march-2023.html

⁴² Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2020) UK Poverty Report 2019/20. Found at: www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2019-20

⁴³ Welsh Government (2019) Most children in poverty living in working households. Found at: www.gov.wales/most-children-poverty-living-working-households-new-report

⁴⁴ Office of National Statistics (2021) Household deprivation variable: Census 2021, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/census/census2021dictionary/variablesbytopic/demographyvariablescensus

page 12, it is worth noting that 21.1% of the North Wales population have a disability and/or long-term health condition⁴⁵. Although, Gwynedd (18.1%) is one of the local authorities with the lowest proportion of disabled people in Wales, the average percentage of disabled people across the region is higher than other parts of the UK. With intersectionality in mind, 22.3% of females and 19.8% of males were disabled. The percentage of those who were limited a little was 11.9% for females and 10.3% for males. A higher proportion of females than males indicated that they were limited a lot; 10.4% and 9.5% respectively⁴⁶.

With intersectionality in mind, there is a direct link between the cost-of-living crisis and health with 60% of people in Wales saying that their health has worsened due to rising costs⁴⁷.

Life expectancy is an important consideration when exploring living standards and health. In Wales, life expectancy at birth was 82 years for women and 78 years for men for 2018-20⁴⁸. This was a slight reduction for both males and females, following higher death rates in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Healthy life expectancy was 62 years for females and 61 years for males in 2018 to 2020.

Welsh Government statistics⁴⁹ suggest the highest life expectancy for women in North Wales was 83.1 years in Conwy and Gwynedd, while in men it was Gwynedd (79.5). The lowest life expectancy for women in North Wales was in Denbighshire (81.1) and in men it was Denbighshire and Wrexham (78.3).

[s2021/householddeprivation#:~:text=A%20household%20is%20classified%20as%20deprived%20in%20the%20health%20dimension,or%20illnesses%20are%20considered%20disabled](#)

⁴⁵ Welsh Government (2023) Health disability and provision unpaid care Wales Census 2021, Found at: www.gov.wales/health-disability-and-provision-unpaid-care-wales-census-2021-html

⁴⁶ Office of National Statistics (2021) Disability by age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/disabilitybyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=In%20England%2C%2018.7%25%20of%20females,19.8%25%20of%20males%20were%20disabled.

⁴⁷ National Health Service (2022) 60 per cent of people in Wales say their health has worsened due to rising cost of living. Found at: www.nhsconfed.org/news/60-cent-people-wales-say-their-health-has-worsened-due-rising-cost-living

⁴⁸ Welsh Government (2022c) Wellbeing of Wales, 2022. Found at: www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-healthier-wales-html#:~:text=Life%20expectancy%20at%20birth%20was,males%20in%202018%20to%202020

⁴⁹ Welsh Government (2022c) Wellbeing of Wales, 2022. Found at: www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-healthier-wales-html#:~:text=Life%20expectancy%20at%20birth%20was,males%20in%202018%20to%202020

Engagement and Consultation with Specific Equality Groups

A series of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion focus groups were organised in partnership with equality interest groups across North Wales. During each focus group, an overview of the CRMP was provided and feedback was captured in line with the same questions listed in the consultation questionnaire. This approach ensured the questions posed to the community members were consistent, and feedback could be compared and contrasted.

A total of 12 focus groups were organised in partnership with equality interest groups, which included community and youth groups, charities and specific departments within local authorities that supported people that are traditionally more 'at risk' of fire and other emergencies. The 12 focus groups took place in Conwy (x 1), Flintshire (x 5), Gwynedd (x 3), Wrexham (x 2) and Anglesey (x 1).

Consultation questionnaires were completed during the focus groups and scribes assisted some people who were unable to write. Some attendees chose to take the questionnaire and information away with them to complete at a later stage. Focus groups are a very effective way of capturing feedback, especially amongst people who know very little about the fire and rescue service as they are able to ask questions and query information that is not clear.

Although 223 people responded to the consultation, some of the respondents were providing feedback on behalf of a much wider group of people (i.e. their 'community' group or charity). Amongst the 12 focus groups, over 1000 people were represented in the feedback.

Summary of the Findings of the Equality Impact Analysis

Equality related themes relating to all five principles has been included in the relevant sections. Feedback has been summarised below and mitigation can be found in **BOLD**.

People Principle

Developing diverse teams: There was a strong consensus amongst respondents that recruiting and developing diverse teams adds value and helps deliver

inclusive services. There was some specific reference to gender, ethnicity and disability.

Mitigation: To ensure the service attracts and recruits talented people from all backgrounds, a range of communication methods are adopted. The service also reviews its recruitment practices on a regular basis to ensure best practice is adopted.

Language and cultural barriers: Concerns were raised about different ethnic minority groups experiencing language barriers regarding recruitment and how religious and cultural practices could clash with recruitment activity.

Mitigation: Recruitment activity take place in response to the demands of the service, although the recruitment of firefighters is ongoing which presents multiple opportunities for people to apply around specific key dates in the annual calendar.

Communications: Feedback from respondents suggest the service's recruitment activities and associated information needs to be tailored to attract people from different background. Feedback suggests the service need to adopt a much broader range of engagement and communication methods to reach different audiences.

Mitigation: The service will take this feedback on board and communication methods are reviewed annually.

Addressing the issue of on-call recruitment: Some respondents felt the service should improve the way it recruits people into on-call roles to provide more effectively emergency cover. There was specific reference to improving cover in Gwynedd and central areas, plus there is the added benefit of creating new jobs for people in specific locations.

Mitigation: The service will conduct an emergency cover review and the outcome of the review will determine future duty systems and fire cover arrangements to ensure the best possible fire cover is provided.

Prevention Principle

Safe and Well Provision: There was huge support for Safe and Well checks, although some equality groups felt the service should conduct more Safe and Well checks each year. Many respondents reported concerns that disabled people and older people were at an increased risk regarding fire and emergencies due to being isolated, having limited mobility and their inability to escape a building quickly and independently.

Mitigation: There is an increased number of Safe and Well checks planned each year during the next strategic cycle. Safe and Well checks are delivered to people that meet an evidence-based criterion which include older people and disabled people.

Language and cultural barriers: Suggestions were made by different ethnic minority groups concerning their cultural practices and prevention and fire safety interventions should be developed according to risk profile of the region.

Population with disabilities: A significant portion of the North Wales population is disabled or they live with long-term health conditions, as highlighted by the latest Census data. Disabled people were well represented during the consultation. Disabled people felt they were more at risk of falls and they have limited mobility which restricts their ability to escape from an emergency situation. With intersectionality in mind, Disabled people that live alone were more concerned about their safety, particularly older people.

Mitigation: Prevention activities are reviewed annually and planned activity is shaped around safety campaigns and new and emerging trends that are discussed in the Campaigns Steering Group. This holistic approach ensures the services is identifying risk and developing safety messages to help prevent associated emergencies.

People living in poverty: Some respondents referred to socio-economic status with regards to people experiencing increased risk due to living in poverty and deprivation. Discussions related to people not eating healthily and people not heating their homes due to the cost of living crisis.

Mitigation: The Service refer people that are experiencing hardship. In some specific situations, the Service do help people directly by providing safe

alternatives bedding and devises. Indirectly, operational and prevention teams support various causes (i.e. food banks during the festive period).

Concerns relating to Road Safety: Some respondents, especially older people were deeply concerned about road safety, with particular reference to the 20mph speed restriction causing dangerous driving, people driving whilst being on their phones and modern agriculture vehicles taking too much space up on the roads.

Mitigation: Feedback will benefit the prevention team and partner agencies that work collaboratively to address concerns relating to road safety.

New and Emerging Technologies: Many respondents were concerned about e-bikes and e-scooters in terms of fire risk, but also how they are hazards on pathways and roads.

Mitigation: This feedback will add the growing numbers of reports which enables the service to assess concerns raises by the public and incidents data which informs risk, response and prevention activity.

Protection Principle

Strong support for the protection work: Many respondents felt the service's protection was valuable and a risk-based approach helps ensure local businesses are safe and promote public safety.

Infrastructure and access concerns: Feedback suggests many people across North Wales experience access issues in shops, older buildings, often with steps on the entrance (or exit) and narrow access. This will naturally impact on disabled people, but there is a disproportionate number of disabled people within older age groups of people. Additionally, concerns about speed restrictions impacting emergency response times were highlighted, especially in rural areas and build up urban areas with narrow access and parked cars restricting access to properties.

Mitigation: Through a risk-based inspection programme and referrals, the service advises local businesses accordingly, thus holding landlords and business owners to account for potential and actual risks to public safety.

New and Emerging Technologies: Many respondents were concerned about e-bikes and e-scooters in terms of fire risk, especially in shared accommodation. Other electrical items such as power chairs were mentioned, particularly in terms to how they are stored in care and residential homes.

Mitigation: The Service collate intelligence which help assess risk. Any specific reports are followed up by the protection team.

Response Principle

Population aging: With a significant portion of North Wales' population aged 65 and over, concerns were raised during the consultation regarding response times, particularly in geographical areas where slower emergency response times might affect their safety. There was general support for another review of emergency cover provision, strong support to maintain existing fire cover and a small group of people which proposed building new fire stations as a way of improving cover.

Infrastructure and access concerns: Feedback suggests many people across North Wales experience access issues in shops, older buildings, often with steps on the entrance (or exit) and narrow access. This will naturally impact on disabled people, but there is a disproportionate number of disabled people within older age groups of people. Additionally, concerns about speed restrictions impacting emergency response times were highlighted.

Mitigation: To ensure the service provides effective fire and emergency cover across North Wales, a comprehensive review will be conducted in partnership with the representative bodies.

Disability and age: Feedback suggests an increasing prevalence of disability in different age groups, which could affect emergency response needs and the ability of certain individuals to escape during emergencies, such as fires. More than half the respondents aged over 65 were disabled with limited mobility and reduced ability to escape from an emergency situation.

Mitigation: The service target older people, disabled people and those that meet other criteria to receive Safe and Well checks which enable people to receive advice of how to escape a building safely and quickly, as well as fire

detection systems that are installed to alert them of fire at the earliest possible stage.

General support to review specialist vehicles: A small number of respondents specifically highlighted their support for the service to conduct a review into our specialist vehicles and fire engines. Specific reference to this workstream was evident amongst older people and disabled people who felt specialist vehicles will help future proof the service to be able to respond effectively in the future.

Environmental Principle

General support to reduce carbon footprint: There was general support for this priority amongst all equality interest groups, particularly any changes that will reduce costs long term and changes that make facilities more accessible.

Mitigation: The service has planned to reduce their carbon footprint and become more energy efficient through various projects which can be seen within the service's [Environmental Strategy 2023-2030](#).

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