

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM – MATRICES AND PROMPTS

Equality Matrix and Scoring - the Integrated Impact Assessment is based on the RAG risk scoring as follows:

LIKELIHOOD				
Unlikely	Low Probability	Possible	High Probability	Almost Certain
1	2	3	4	5

IMPACT		
5	VH	Catastrophic – legal action (discrimination claim)
4	H	Major – a serious matter that may lead to negative publicity and disciplinary action within the Service context.
3	M	Moderate – an external complaint or internal grievance.
2	L	Minor – additional small amendments or changes to policy are required.
1	VL	Little impact – only minor considerations are required.

		IMPACT					
		VL	L	M	H	VH	
		1	2	3	4	5	
LIKELIHOOD	Almost Certain	5	5	10	15	20	25
	High Probability	4	4	8	12	16	20
	Possible	3	3	6	9	12	15
	Low Probability	2	2	4	6	8	10
	Unlikely	1	1	2	3	4	5

Overall Risk Rating	Description	Monitoring
1 – 4 Manageable	The risk may be so low that the Service chooses to accept it and instead simply records that the risk has been identified and that, due to its low likelihood or impact, no further action will be required. Alternatively, minor considerations may be needed upon implementation.	The Project Lead will maintain oversight and continue to manage locally.
5 – 10 Medium	The EIA owner will mitigate identified risks through slight amendments or implement further controls that reduce or eliminate the risk. Alternatively, the owner could confirm that all reasonable steps have been taken to mitigate the risk and no further reasonable action is possible.	
12 – 15 High	This policy, project or service cannot be rolled out until detailed external and / or internal consultation has taken place with those that this area of work affects.	Scores above 12 will require further action, at which point it is advisable to consult with the relevant project sponsor or Principal Officer.
16 – 25 Very High	High risks have been identified, so take immediate action. If legal action is likely, then the Service cannot go ahead with the policy without fundamentally changing it. If the impact remains severe even with this mitigation, then consultation with internal and / or external groups will have to take place.	

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Purpose

This Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) ensures that the Service’s policies, projects and provision do not unlawfully discriminate against any person, especially those who fall under protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. The scope of this particular EqIAs ensures our Service go beyond any legal requirements and public sector equality duties. This document sets out to identify risk(s) to people, and provides some description as to how the Service intends to mitigate such risk.

Once an EqIA has been completed, it will have to be checked and signed off by the relevant Head of Department. Anyone completing an EqIA who is unclear as to any of the content should contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

Title	Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Initial mapping and engagement pre-consultation.
Corporate objective being addressed	<p>Our People Principle Being in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills. Ensuring a highly skilled workforce by recruiting, developing and retaining a motivated and bilingual workforce that represents and champions the diversity of the communities we serve.</p> <p>Our Prevention Principle Working with partners to help make communities safer. Reducing risks to our communities, especially for those people who may be more vulnerable, through our established intervention programmes such as Safe and Well Checks and the Phoenix Project.</p> <p>Our Protection Principle Making businesses safer together. Providing businesses with expert guidance on fire protection to help ensure the safety of buildings, employees, and customers, thereby supporting businesses to grow. High-risk buildings are prioritised for inspections, contributing to overall public safety.</p>

	<p>Our Response Principle Providing an effective emergency response. Being ready to respond when you need us: to protect what matters to you, to save lives, reduce harm, and protect homes and businesses.</p> <p>Our Environment 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.</p>
Department / function carrying out the assessment	Planning Performance and Transformation.
Who is responsible for the implementation of the policy?	Project Sponsor – DCFO Stewart Forshaw
Who is involved in the impact assessment process?	AM Anthony Jones – Project Lead Gary Ashton – Corporate Planning and Performance Manager Benji Evans – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer
What are the aims / objectives / expected outcomes of the policy / initiative / service?	<p>The initial mapping exercise aims to identify equality interest groups and wider community members that represent the diverse population of North Wales. By identifying groups of people across different protected characteristics, NWFRS will be able to adopt a targeted approach to ensure comprehensive feedback is captured regarding the draft CRMP priorities and proposed activity throughout 2024 to 2029.</p> <p>Through a targeted approach, suitable communication methodologies can be adopted that enable different communities to provide feedback through their preferred method(s). While some people enjoy speaking in a group setting, others prefer to provide personal and individualised feedback via other means.</p>
Who is intended to benefit from the project?	Internal and external stakeholders.

Is the policy / initiative / service for external or internal purposes?	Internal and external.
Does this policy / initiative / service have an impact upon the On-Call duty service?	Yes, all stakeholders are directly involved in this consultation.
Are other organisations involved in the delivery? If so, please state which these may be.	There is a full list of stakeholders that will assist our Service to engage effectively with the North Wales Community.
What information / previous experience does the Service have, i.e. a similar initiative and what did this information tell us? (information can be demographic data, i.e. census findings, research findings, comparisons between similar policies in our Service and other Services, survey data, equality monitoring data, ad hoc data gathering exercises).	<p>Our Service will most recent demographic and population which provides intelligence on the diverse groups across the region that require engagement and consultation.</p> <p>Following similar consultations where extensive engagement took place with the North Wales community, the Service will benefit from an established community risk profile methodology. A comprehensive mapping exercise will help identify stakeholders which include equality interest groups and individuals that can be defined as seldom heard, which often include some of the most 'at-risk' people in our society.</p>
Has a similar impact assessment been conducted by other Fire and Rescue Services or local authorities in respect of a similar policy? If so – is it possible to adapt / incorporate their findings?	Various EqlAs from other fire and rescue consultations have been shared with our service as a way of adopting best practice. Previous EqlAs help us identify risk and the Service is able to implement suitable interventions that mitigate this risk. Previous EqlAs help the Service reflect on learning of previous experiences of their own practices, but other similar organisations that have consulted with their communities.
Date of next review (if applicable)	This EqlA will be reviewed as part of the evaluation process. A separate EqlA will be developed with regards to the CRMP document and all associated activities that have been proposed between 2024 and 2029.

Equality Impact Assessment

Protected Characteristics or Equality Theme	Rationale for your decision (include / refer to evidence)
	How might this have an impact?

Age (band)			Description of age band:
Likelihood	Impact	Overall	<p>The total population across North Wales is 687,000 (ONS, 2023a). The trend of population ageing has continued, with more people than ever before in the older age groups. The ONS (2023a) states that 22.3% of the population were aged 65 years and over. Out of all local authorities across Wales, Conwy (27.4%) and the Isle of 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.</p> <p>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 groups (ONS, 2023b). For females aged 15 to 19 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 2001 (ONS, 2023b).</p> <p>NWFRS will capture the needs of people across all age groups through a comprehensive mapping exercise. This process helps to identify and contact key partners that connect the Service with young people, people of working age and older people. With intersectionality in mind, the service will benefit from working with existing partners and also develop new connections during the pre-consultation phase. Through partnerships, the Service will engage with people across different age categories across all geographical locations, ethnicities, genders, socioeconomic status, disabilities and health conditions.</p>
4	1	4	

Disability		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	2	8

According to ONS (2023c), 21.1% of the population have a disability and/or long-term health condition. 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 North Wales 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% respectively (ONS, 2023b).

Disabled people are some of most disadvantaged people in our society, so we acknowledge the importance of capturing their needs, aspirations and expectations of a modern-day fire and rescue service. To capture the needs of people that meet the definition of 'disabled' (including those with long term health conditions) during the consultation, the Service will maximise their partnerships with Disability Wales, Autistic UK, Dementia Friends, Headway and various well-established disability networks such as Arfon Access network and charities like Choles and Sophies Special Ear Fund (CSSEF).

The Service have excellent contacts with community groups that include disabled people. Focus groups and other methods will be used to capture feedback with community groups, charities, disability networks and support groups which will enable our service to seek their views. The mapping exercise highlights various groups across North Wales which provides a true picture of their needs and aspirations.

Mental Health and Wellbeing		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	3	12

Although mental health falls under the definition of disability, NWFRS have separated this group of people due to the nature and challenges associated with targeting people from a mental health and wellbeing perspective.

Mental health and wellbeing cover a broad group of people that experience low mood, anxiety, depression etc. Therefore, NWFRS will work closely support groups and charities to reach out and capture the needs of people with mental health conditions. The mapping exercise has identified key partners that will enable the Service to connect with this target audience. See the focus group contact list for full details. Engaging with people that experience adverse mental health can be

			more challenging when compared to engaging with some other equality interest groups, hence why there is a slightly higher scoring.
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Gender		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	1	4

According to ONS (2021a), the North Wales population is evenly split across females (51.1%) and males (48.9%). Although engagement with males and females will occur organically through contact with different equality interest groups, some specific gender-based organisations enable us to connect with gender groups with specific needs (e.g. older people, unemployed, parents).

For example, NWFRS work closely with North Wales Women’s Centre who support hundreds of local women who experience domestic violence, poverty and unemployment. The Service have well established relationships with various gender specific sports teams which is an effective way to connect with thousands of males and females across most age groups. Our prevention team have long standing relationship with the Women’s Institute (WI) and Dementia Friends Support Groups which has been an effective way to engage with some older women previously.

Pregnancy and Maternity		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	2	8

To ensure NWFRS reach out and capture the needs of people that are pregnant and those within their maternity phase, a comprehensive mapping exercise has identified key partners to help connect with this target audience.

Key partners include women only groups, local and regional parent support groups, LGBTQ+ and pride groups, childcare providers and baby support groups. The Service have a well-established relationship with many partner organisations ensure this groups of people provide feedback.

Gender Re-assignment / Identity		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	3	12

The exact number of trans and/or non-binary people in North Wales is unknown. However, Stonewall (2022) estimate between 0.5% and 1% of the population is Trans and/or non-binary which gives us some kind of indication who we need to engage with to ensure our consultation is meaningful.

Through the extensive contacts the Service has developed with various local LGBTQ+ networks and pride groups, comprehensive feedback from trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people will be captured. Pride Cymru, North Wales Pride, Unique Transgender and other LGBTQ+ networks across North Wales will enable the Service to connect. Targeted engagement with trans and non-binary people will be achieved through focus groups that will be organised in partnership with our partners and attendance at LGBTQ+ specific events (i.e. pride).

Sexual Orientation		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	2	8

Stonewall estimate between 5-7% of the population are lesbian, gay, bisexual or another sexual orientation which is other than heterosexual (See NHS, 2015). Stonewall (2022) have published more recent reports which suggest younger people are more likely to be open about sexual orientation and gender identity. North Wales has a growing LGB+ community and the emergence of new pride events, support groups and staff networks in the workplace means that engagement with this audience is more meaningful than previous years.

With intersectionality in mind, it is useful to know the age profile of people who identified as LGB+ which tends to be younger than the overall population. More than half of those who identified as LGB+ (57.9%) were aged between 16 and 34 years (ONS, 2021d). In contrast, less than a third of the overall population were aged between 16 and 34 years (29.6%). This intelligence helps our service know who to engage.

To ensure NWFRS reach out and capture the needs of people with different sexual orientations, a comprehensive mapping exercise has identified key partners to help connect with this target audience. Key partners including Pride Cymru, Colwyn Bay Pride, North Wales Pride, LGBTQ+ charities, LGBTQ+ sport teams, LGBTQ+ staff networks across the region and local LGBTQ+ support groups will help us connect with people across different age groups.

Marriage or Civil Partnership		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
3	1	3

48.1% people aged 16 and over are married or in a civil partnership (Stats Wales, 2020). Generally, this protected characteristic does not present any particular risks. Although, it is important to stress, people that live alone are deemed more at

NWFRS will connect with people that are married or in a civil partnership through our interaction with different equality interest groups during the pre-consultation phase. As a protected characteristic, it is useful to understand households which include two or more people who are accessing services, mainly because single occupants can be at an increase risk of some incident types (i.e. domestic dwelling fires).

Religion and/or Belief		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
3	3	9

Our service acknowledges there is some diversity regarding people’s religious affiliations and belief systems across North Wales. Equally, it must be acknowledged that more people reported “No religion” than any single religious affiliation up from 32.1% in 2011 to 46.5% in 2021 (WG, 2022b). This data indicates approximately half the North Wales population have religious affiliations. Therefore, places of worship and faith-based organisations are a logical avenue to engage with this audience.

To ensure NWFRS reach out and capture the needs of religious people and those who observe a particular belief system, a mapping exercise has identified key partners to the Service connect. Key partners include some well-established places of worship across North Wales, faith-based organisations, charities, local community and some support groups that work closely with religious groups. Some religious groups have been more challenging to connect with in the past, mainly because there is no particular hub or venue where some of the minority religions meet. As members of the North Wales Interfaith Forum, the Service aim to establish new community contacts during this consultation.

Race		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
3	3	9

Like other regions in Wales, North Wales has become more ethnically diverse in the past decade. According to the census data in 2021, ethnic minority groups has increased from 4.4% in 2011 to 6.2% in 2021 (WG, 2022b). For clarity, ethnic minority is any ethnic group outside of white ‘Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish and British’.

The largest ethnic minority group in every local authority in Wales was “Other White”. The proportion of the population identifying with this ethnic group was highest in Wrexham (4.8%) and Flintshire (3%). Within the high-level “White” ethnic group, Conwy was the local authority with the highest proportion of those identifying as “Irish” (0.7%) in Wales. Interestingly, 5.3% of households were multiple ethnic group households, up from 4.2% in 2011 (WG, 2022b).

With intersectionality in mind, NWFRS acknowledge potential language, communication and cultural barriers. Nationally in Wales, 2.9 million usual residents aged three years and over spoke English or Welsh as their main language (96.7% of the population, down from 97.1% in 2011).

According to the 2021 Census, residents in Wales that did not select English or Welsh as a main language, 78% said they could speak English well or very well, while 22% could not speak English very well or at all. As in 2011, Polish was the most common main language after English or Welsh at 0.7% of the population. Arabic (0.3%) was the most common main language aside from English, Welsh or Polish in 2021. British Sign Language (BSL) was the preferred language of 900 people (which equates to 0.03%) usual residents aged three years and over across Wales.

To mitigate any potential communication barriers, the service will adopt inclusive practices by making key information readily available in physical formats and via the Service’s website. In addition, the Service’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer can help organise translation and interpretation if required. To ensure NWFRS capture the needs of different ethnic minority groups and individuals, a mapping exercise has identified key partners to help connect with this target audience. Key partners include race equality networks and support groups, places of worship, faith-based organisations and also local employers who employ ethnic diverse people.

Socio-Economic Duty		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	3	12
<p>The Socio-economic Duty came into force in Wales on March 31st 2021 and requires specified public bodies, when making strategic decisions (such as deciding priorities and setting objectives), to consider how their decisions might help reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>According to the Census 2021, some of the most deprived areas are concentrated in north Wales coastal and border towns (WG, 2021). Working does not preclude experiencing poverty. To explain further, in-work poverty has risen over the last 5 years and a total of 12.7 per cent of workers live in poverty due to low pay or limited hours (JRF, 2020).</p> <p>To ensure NWFRS reach out and capture the needs of people who meet the criteria for low economic status and deprivation, a comprehensive mapping exercise has identified key partners to help connect with this target audience. Key partners include local authorities, charities, foodbanks, places of worship, faith-based organisations and local support groups.</p> <p>Specific actions during the consultation phase will see the Service organise focus group sessions using a wide range of methodologies. The service acknowledges some people have little or no means to travel to attend organised focus groups, while some people don't have the financial capacity to use private or public transport. To mitigate risk, the Service will organise focus groups in different locations to help widen access for local people to meet face-to-face in accessible venues. The Service will organise virtual focus groups (i.e. via Teams) if there is a demand. There was not much demand for virtual sessions during the previous public consultation, but the Service will explore whether this option is required through the initial engagement. Feedback will be captured via physical feedback forms, email and the Service website to enable people to voice their views without attending focus groups.</p>		

Welsh Language		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
3	3	9

All materials relating to the CRMP consultation project will be produced (written and verbal) in Welsh and English.

The number of people that stated they could speak Welsh in North Wales is 235,567 and this equates to 34.3%. Our service is extremely proud to communicate in Welsh and we ensure we meet (and where possible exceed) the Welsh standards.

The most recent data published by the Welsh Government suggests 29.1% of people aged three and over were able to speak Welsh. This figure equates to 883,600 people and there is evidence that the Welsh language is growing in popularity as a spoken language and as a first spoken language. With intersectionality in mind, we acknowledge that the highest percentages of Welsh speakers in Wales can be found in Gwynedd (77%) and the Isle of Anglesey (67%) which are both located in North Wales (WG, 2022).

Geography and Location		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
5	3	15

North Wales is a large geographical area which has several urban areas that are highly concentrated with diverse people and groups. In contrast, some rural areas have extremely small amount of people residing in the area.

The region includes the localities of Wrexham, Deeside, Rhyl, Colwyn Bay, Flint, Bangor, Llandudno and Holyhead. The largest localities in North Wales are the city of Wrexham and the conurbations of Deeside, Rhyl and Prestatyn, where the main retail, cultural, educational, tourism, and transport infrastructure and services of North Wales are located. Bangor, St Asaph and Wrexham are the region's cities, Bangor is Wales' oldest city, whereas St Asaph is one of Wales' smallest and Wrexham which became a city in 2022 is the region's largest settlement.

Some areas have well established community groups which enable our service to engage and connect. However, some areas don't have well established community groups and social hubs that will enable the Service to connect with people easily. Therefore, the Service will need to maximise partnerships, community contacts and online platforms to connect. Equally, CRMP consultation will

			engage people across all parts of North Wales which will ensure the feedback captured is representative of the region.
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On-Call System or Considerations for Part-Time Staff		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	2	8

On-call staff are directly involved in this project. On-call teams have been involved with the design and development of the Services CRMP through Heads of Departments and middle managers seminars. Naturally, on-call staff that work the retained system will be able to provide feedback that will help shape the CRMP and strategic direction of the Service between 2024-2029.

Other Equality Interest Groups		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	1	4

For all protected characteristics, there have been increases in the number of recorded hate crimes in Wales in recent years (EHRC, 2018). Very low prosecution rate in court means some victims of hate crime lack trust in uniformed public services. Although this lack of trust mostly impacts the police and community engagement teams in local councils, fire and rescue services can experience some adverse impacts too.

The recent Culture reviews in England and Wales have highlighted cultural issues in the sector. This means there may be a lack of trust and confidence in fire and rescue services within the community.

Do any of the above criteria have a score of 12 and above and therefore need to move to a full equality impact assessment?

Yes

No

If yes, please contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer via e-mail benji.evans@northwalesfire.gov.wales to proceed with the full impact assessment.

If no, and any of the criteria has a score of between 1-5 or 6-10, what additional control mechanisms or amendments can you put into place to reduce the score even further? Please identify what the score will be after the control mechanism in place.

Some sections have a score of 12 and over. The scores in the EqIA represent the current risk of the Service engaging with different sections of the North Wales community. A communications and engagement plan has been devised to engage with all geographical areas during the consultation to capture comprehensive feedback.

What positive outcomes or changes will be taken as a result of any points identified by this impact assessment?

This EqIA demonstrates how the service have shown due regard for the diversity of the North Wales community. There is consideration for how the service will engage and communicate with its community. Intersectionality has been considered in various sections of this EqIA which enables the service to carefully plan its approach, in terms of engagement and adopt suitable communication methodologies to meet the needs of different equality interest groups.

There are some low scores which demonstrate how suitable methodology is being adopted to capture feedback with some community groups. The medium scores in some sections of the EqIA highlight how risk does exist and to acknowledge that engagement with some people and communities will be challenging.

Engagement will be achieved with most equality interest groups through effective planning. There is a requirement for the Service to adopt a team approach where different staff will need to be involved to overcome language, communication and logistical challenges.

Post-initiative evaluation

Where applicable, please provide an overview (age range, gender, ethnicity etc.) of who attended the event(s), or were involved in or affected by the policy or initiative, and any relevant comments or complaints that were received in terms of equality and inclusion. The information should then be used to address any relevant concerns.

Before finalising, you may wish to seek advice from the services Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer. You can do this by emailing to benji.evans@northwalesfire.gov.wales for review.

Once completed please return to benji.evans@northwalesfire.gov.wales

Reference List

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