

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	Emergency Cover Review (ECR): Initial mapping and pre-consultation phase
Corporate objective being addressed	Objective 1: To work towards making improvements to the health, safety and wellbeing of people in North Wales. Objective 2: To continue to work collaboratively to help communities improve their resilience. Objective 3: To operate as effectively and efficiently as possible, making the best use of the resources available. Objective 4: To continue to identify opportunities to encourage greater engagement with people, communities, staff and stakeholders. Objective 5: To maintain a suitably resilient, skilled, professional and flexible workforce. Objective 6: To develop ways of becoming more environmentally conscious in order to minimise the impact of our activity on the environment.

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?	DCFO Stewart Forshaw AM Anthony Jones – Project Lead GM Sandra Williams SM Adam Leatham – Project Officer Tracey Williams – Head of Corporate Communications Bethan Millington – Deputy Head of Corporate Communications Rachel Corner - Deputy Head of Human Resources Natalie Jones – Welsh Language Officer Benji Evans – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer
What are the aims / objectives / expected outcomes of the policy / initiative / service?	<p>The main outcomes of the pre-consultation are to actively engage with key stakeholders across North Wales that will inform and shape our emergency cover review. Stakeholders living in different geographical locations including urban and rural areas will communicate their needs and aspirations through their feedback.</p> <p>Also, it is essential the pre-consultation captures the equality needs of the North Wales community. Within this engagement, suitable communication methodologies will be identified and we acknowledge different communities will prefer different ways of providing feedback. This insight will enhance our ability to conduct a full comprehensive consultation which runs from 20th July to 20th September 2023. Although September is the planned date to conclude the consultation, we may extend the consultation period if further engagement with stakeholders is required.</p>
Who is intended to benefit from the policy?	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 available to include the pre-consultation and full consultation phase of the review.
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 use population data and specific data which provides intelligence on the diverse community we need to engage and consult. As a Service, we collate data relating to protected characteristics, so we are able to analyse who is accessing our services and who is not.</p> <p>Following the professional advice of an external consultation company, our service have adopted a community risk profile methodology. A comprehensive mapping exercise has helped identify stakeholders which include equality interest groups which will enable us to connect and communicate with people with multiple protected characteristics which are often those who are seldom heard and disadvantaged.</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 EqIAs from other fire and rescue consultations have been shared with our service as a way of adopting best practice. Previous EIAs help us identify risk and we are then able to implement interventions that mitigate this risk. Previous EIAs help us reflect on learning of experiences of other similar organisations that have consulted with their communities.
Date of next review (if applicable)	This EqIA will be reviewed as part of the evaluation process. The content within this document combined with stakeholder feedback from the pre-consultation phase will inform the development of another EqIA as part of the full consultation phase which will commence on 20 th July 2023.

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 which has identified key partners to help connect and engage young people, people of working age and older people. With intersectionality in mind, the pre-consultation phase will benefit from both existing and new partnerships that will connect us with people from different geographical locations, ethnicities, genders, socioeconomic status, disabilities and health conditions. There is huge diversity within the groups identified in the initial contact list that has been constructed.</p>
5	1	5	

Disability		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
5	2	10

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 pre-consultation, our service will maximise our relationships with Disability Wales, various well-established disability networks such as Arfon Access network and disability charities like Choles and Sophies Special Ear Fund (CSSEF).

NWFRS has arranged pre-consultation focus groups with disability specific networks which will enable our service to identify specific risks and concerns that disabled people experience. The mapping exercise highlights various disability groups in 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, we have separated this group of people due to their being so many specific community and support groups that focus on mental health and wellbeing.

Mental health and wellbeing cover a broad group of people that experience low mood, anxiety, depression etc. To ensure NWFRS reach out and capture the needs of people with mental health conditions, a comprehensive mapping exercise has identified key partners to help 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.

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. We 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) which has been an effective way to engage with some older women.

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 to help us connect.

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 we have developed with various local LGBTQ+ networks and pride groups, we are able to capture feedback from trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people. North Wales Pride, Unique Transgender and LGBTQ+ staff networks across North Wales will enable us to connect. Targeted engagement with trans people will be achieved by attending pride events and hosting focus groups in partnership with our partners.

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 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). Although this is a sufficient group of people, there are no identified risks specific to marriage and civil partnership at this stage.

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 increased risk of some incident types (i.e. domestic dwelling fires).

Religion and/or Belief		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
5	2	10

Our service acknowledges there is lots of diversity regarding people’s religious affiliations and belief systems. 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, so place of worships 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 comprehensive mapping exercise has identified key partners to help us 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.

Race		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	3	12

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 ethnicity 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, our service has acknowledged potential language, communication and cultural barriers exist. 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).

Of the usual residents in Wales who did not select English or Welsh as a main language in 2021, 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%

			<p>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.</p> <p>To mitigate this risk, the service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer has been central to the project planning and initial engagement. Translation and interpretation can be arranged if required. Also, the Head of Corporate Communications has played an important role in the development and planning of the focus groups to ensure appropriate communication methodology is adopted. To ensure NWFRS capture the needs of different ethnically diverse groups and individuals, a comprehensive 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 local employers who employ ethnic diverse people.</p>
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Socio-Economic Duty		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
5	3	15
		<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 us organise focus group sessions using a wide range of methodologies. As a service, we acknowledged that some people have little or no means to travel or financial capacity to use private or public transport. To mitigate risk, we have organised a series of focus groups in the community to widen access for local people to meet face-</p>

			to-face in accessible venues. We also acknowledge that some people will prefer to voice their view via virtual technology (i.e. Teams, Zoom).
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Welsh Language			
Likelihood	Impact	Overall	
3	3	9	<p>The entire emergency cover review has considered the need to provide key information (written and verbal) in both Welsh and English.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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).</p>

Geography and Location			
Likelihood	Impact	Overall	
5	3	15	<p>North Wales is a large geography 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.</p> <p>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</p>

			<p>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.</p> <p>Some areas have well established community groups which enable our service to engage and connect. Some areas don't have well established community groups and social hubs that will enable us to connect with people easily. Therefore, we will maximise our partner agencies, community contacts and online platforms to connect. Equally, the pre-consultation phase will engage people across all parts of the region which will lay down the foundation for the full consultation over the Summer months.</p>
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On-Call System or Considerations for Part-Time Staff			<p>By the very nature of an emergency cover review, On-call staff are directly involved in this project. On-call staff will be consulted as part of the internal feedback sessions and some On-call staff will help us connect with people living within their local communities.</p> <p>There will be an internal focus and engagement with On-call staff as part of the pre-consultation and full consultation which will ensure a comprehensive review is conducted. These interactions will be very important to ease anxiety and fears that some On-call staff may experience.</p>
Likelihood	Impact	Overall	
4	2	8	

Other Equality Interest Groups			<p>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 trust mostly impacts the police and community engagement teams in local councils, but fire and rescue services can experience some adverse impacts too.</p> <p>The recent London Fire Brigade Culture review highlighted cultural issues in their service, but also across the sector (LFB, 2022). This means there may be a lack of confidence in fire and rescue services and staff amongst some equality interest groups.</p>
Likelihood	Impact	Overall	
4	1	4	

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 EqlA represent the current risk of the Service engaging with different sections of the North Wales community. As part of the full consultation phase, another EqlA will be completed to reassess the risk and provide some direction to which equality interest groups the Service need to engage with. A comprehensive engagement plan with the North Wales community in terms of population and diversity we help target specific groups.

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

This EqlA demonstrates how the service has shown due regard for the diversity of community members living in North Wales. There is consideration for how the service will engage and, in some cases, communicate with different equality interest groups. Intersectionality has been considered in various sections of this EqlA which enables the service to carefully plan its approach, engagement and communication methodologies to suit different groups of people.

There are some low scores which demonstrate confidence in engaging and capture feedback with some community groups. The medium scores in some sections of the EqlA highlight how risks exist because engagement with some people and communities will be challenging. As a service, we acknowledge that because we have engaged with a group of people, it is just one group of people and the research population that features as part of this pre-consultation has to be reflective of the whole region.

Engagement will be achieved with most equality interest groups through effective planning and the key component is offering flexibility and using the relevant communication method that meets the needs of group we intent to meet and seek feedback.

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

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