

# Building our team, shaping our future

OUR GENDER PAY REPORT 2022-23



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# Foreword



**Graham Edwards**  
CEO



**Bethan Jones**  
Head of Human Resources

**As the gas distribution network for Wales and the south west of England, we continue to take pride in delivering safe, reliable and affordable energy to the 7.5 million customers and communities we serve. It takes a monumental effort to do this day in, day out, every single day of the year and we can be immensely proud of every single member of the Wales & West Utilities team who make this happen.**

Over the past year we have continued to keep the gas flowing safely and efficiently across our region. This has included rapid responses to gas emergencies, restoring supply when interrupted and above all making the network safe for all customers. We have rolled out yet more of our programme to upgrade the gas network and we've taken further steps forward in developing sustainable and greener solutions for the future. We've also continued to support our communities, ensuring the most vulnerable do not suffer from the impact of the cost-of-living increases.

Like most organisations, we've been tackling the global and domestic challenges that are impacting on every part of our business and our lives. Our resolve to meet global challenges head on has been evident over the past three years with significant change in the way we work and adaptation across the team.

In 2021, we in-sourced our mains replacement activities and welcomed 233 colleagues to our team, securing a strong workforce to deliver the important upgrade across the 35,000km of pipeline in our network. We also became accredited by the Living Wage Foundation, joining a growing number of organisations in the UK who believe their staff deserve a wage that meets everyday needs.

Our focus is now firmly on shaping the future of our

organisation and the services we deliver. That's why the investment in our team must continue to be a top priority for sustaining our high-quality services to our customers and for delivering our vision for a greener future.

There's an exciting time ahead for our sector and our role will continue to be vital in up-skilling engineers, introducing new technologies and new ways of working to keep energy flowing safely, reliably, and efficiently to our customers.

Developing our team to reflect the communities we serve remains as a commitment at the most senior levels of the organisation. We have strength in our differences, and it is so important to continue valuing and harnessing the skills, experiences and benefits that a more diverse workforce can bring.

Over the past year, our ambition for diversity and inclusion has been shaped with the help of external experts in the field. Our Executive Team has demonstrated a clear and strong passion for change and improvement and will lead by example, taking responsibility for embedding the values and delivering on the commitments of our Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy.

Closing the gender pay gap is an important part of our Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy and the meaningful and sustained actions we are taking across the organisation to create a thriving business underpinned by a fair culture.

Ensuring all colleagues are valued and supported to meet their full potential has benefit all round. As we move forward with clarity about developing our team, we commit to an environment that supports and fosters diversity, inclusion and equity now and for the future.

# Our highlights

Launching our Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan

Appointing an External Inclusion Advisor to put our inclusion strategy into practice

Developing our Women's Inclusion Network and Future Generations Network

Embedding diversity and inclusion as a key theme in our revised Management Development Programme

Introducing our Perimenopause and Menopause Policy to raise awareness of symptoms and how to support colleagues, friends or family members, and providing training for Menopause Champions within WWU

Reviewing our recruitment processes and working practices to encourage greater diversity and inclusion in our workforce, including a specific focus on neurodiversity

Creating a blended work environment with hybrid working solutions, informed by colleagues and union members to suit the needs of colleagues and the business

Working with schools to encourage female pupils to consider STEM related careers and to challenge traditional stereotypes

Becoming an accredited employer by the Living Wage Foundation – demonstrating our commitment to paying the real living wage to all our colleagues

Introducing a scheme to give colleagues more flexibility around public holidays, allowing them to take alternative dates to celebrate the events that are important to them

Updating our Adoption leave policy so that it mirrors our maternity leave policy



# Our strategic approach to equity and diversity

In 2022, we launched our Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy which sets out our commitments and targets. This was shared with our Customer Engagement Group for feedback and is fully supported by our Executive Team.

## **We want to:**

- work hard to better reflect our communities in our workforce so that we can develop and deliver the best services and outcomes for our customers and stakeholders
- create a culture where differences are embraced and celebrated so that we can keep evolving and improving
- attract and retain great people who can be the difference in everything they do.

## **We are committed to:**

- ensuring our culture is equitable and inclusive so that everyone feels safe, can be their whole self at work, and is treated with dignity and respect
- supporting effective and meaningful conversations about inclusion, equity and diversity by improving awareness and training
- removing barriers to attract and retain a diverse workforce
- delivering an action plan which evolves and is based on the needs of our colleagues and our communities.

# Our team

**15%** of our team are female

a small drop of 2 percentage points following a broadly consistent pattern year on year

**10%** increase in the actual number of females working in our team

**3%** mean gender pay gap

our commitment to reducing the mean gender pay gap has ensured we remain under the national average of 5.45%



**1,836** colleagues

**15%** female (275)

**85%** male (1,561)

Last year: 1,471 colleagues – 17% female / 83% male

- Our workforce grew significantly in this period as a result of insourcing our mains replacement and repair activities. The transfer resulted in 233 colleagues being TUPE transferred to WWU. Of the 233 transferred, 95% were male and 5% were female.
- While impacting on our gender pay figures this year, the transfer further serves as a reminder that we must do more to encourage women to consider a career in the gas industry. We recognise the importance of continuing to work with educational partners to deliver sessions to pupils focused on challenging stereotypes and reviewing our recruitment processes to make sure we are accessible and attractive to future generations.



# Our gender pay gap data

The gender pay gap, which is accurate and completed in accordance with Gender Pay Gap Reporting requirements, is an equality measure that shows the difference in average earnings between women and men. It is shown in two ways:

- **The Mean:** adds up all the hourly earnings of men and women and divides by the number of men and women respectively. We report the percentage difference.
- **The Median:** lists all hourly earnings of men and women in numerical order, and the median is the respective middle numbers. We report the percentage difference.

The gender pay gap is different from equal pay – the right for men and women to be paid identically for doing the same work, or work of equal values. With clear job profiles and a well-established pay structure, we are confident that what a colleague earns is based on their job and our pay structure, and is not affected by their gender or any other characteristic.

## MEAN GENDER PAY GAP: 3%

NATIONAL AVERAGE 5.45%

2021	2020	2019	2018
-7%	-2%	1%	8%

Our gender pay gap shows that in WWU the mean average hourly earnings of men are 3% higher than that of women. This is a change from previous years, where women's average hourly earnings were 7% and 2% higher.

## MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP: 9.71%

NATIONAL AVERAGE 9%

2021	2020	2019	2018
-7%	-10%	-10%	-8%

Our gender pay gap shows that in WWU the median average hourly earnings of men are 9.71% higher than that of women. This is a change from previous years, where the average hourly earnings of women were 7% and 10% higher.

A number of factors have influenced this change, including the insourcing of our recruitment activities and TUPE transfer of our contractor workforce, and management roles which were predominantly male which has increased both the median and mean average male hourly earnings.

We also introduced a new performance related incentive scheme for operational colleagues, who were previously not eligible for our traditional bonus scheme. As our operational workforce is predominantly male, this has also increased the

average hourly male earnings, which has contributed to this year's gender pay gap figures.

We also reviewed our operational pay framework, linking pay scales and progression with technical skills and competence, which again predominantly affected male colleagues.

## BONUSES RECEIVED

FEMALE 34%

MALE 15%

2021	2020	2021	2020
40%	40%	16%	16%

## MEAN BONUS GAP: 36%

2021: 45% • 2020: 49%

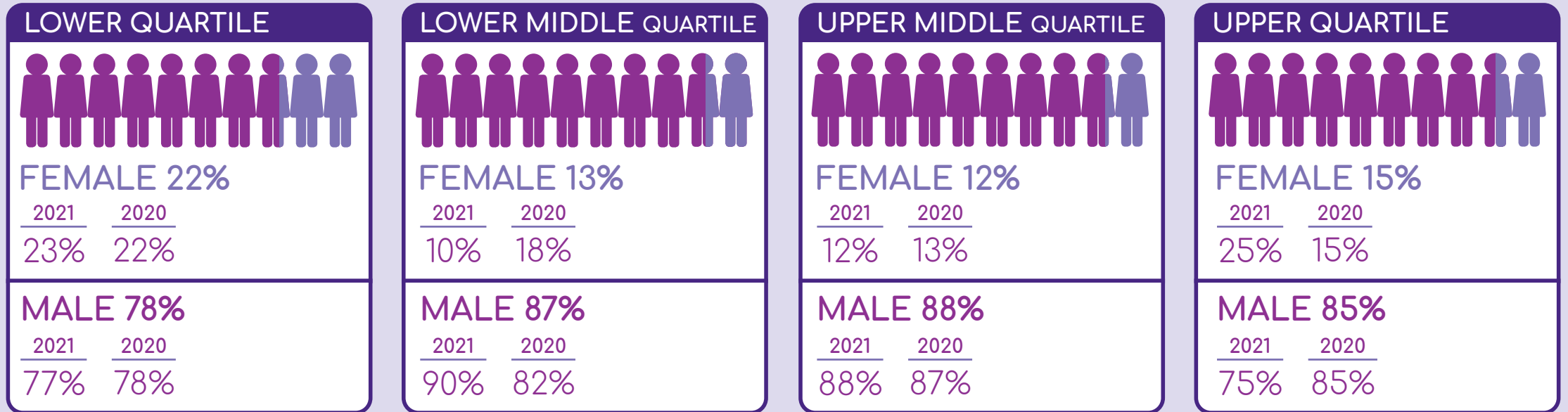
## MEDIAN BONUS GAP: 21%

2021: 37% • 2020: 42%

Our gender bonus gaps continue to fall, as an increasing number of women take on senior roles within WWU. The majority of women, however, are still in lower paid quartiles where bonuses are of lower value, and as our leadership team is predominantly male, this continues to impact our gender bonus gap. We are committed to encouraging, supporting and developing women to move into senior management and leadership roles to increase the diversity of our leadership team.

# Pay distribution

We calculate pay distribution by splitting our organisation into four equal parts based on what colleagues earn.



Our pay distribution has remained broadly consistent, year on year. However, the largest difference in 2022 is the reduction of women in the upper quartile of our organisation.

This is as a result of the number of male occupied positions TUPE transferred during the insource of our recruitment activities. However, we know there is more we must do in this area to support and encourage women to move into senior roles within our organisation.

In 2023, we are launching an Aspiring Leaders Programme, aimed at developing our leaders of the future and we will have a focus on encouraging women to take part in this programme – giving them the skills required to progress.

We continue to promote flexible working to help colleagues balance their working lives with other interests and responsibilities, and we were the first gas distribution network to introduce a Carers Policy, offering flexibility and understanding and providing

information and support within and outside the workplace.

We are also committed to holding colleague feedback sessions to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by colleagues so we can support them to develop in their careers.



# Case study – our Women’s Inclusion Network

**Our Women’s Inclusion Network (WIN) was launched in 2021 by colleagues from across WWU, and sponsored by a member of our Executive team.**

The group was created to make a positive difference for women, creating a safe space to share their life experiences, to promote and support career progression and to inspire young women to consider a career in the gas industry.

Our Women’s Inclusion Network has made a positive impact for women at WWU – the group identified its priorities which included a focus on raising awareness and education around the menopause, and women and lone work safety issues.

## **Perimenopause and menopause**

Members of the WIN have worked closely with an external expert to shape our first Perimenopause and Menopause Policy, which was launched in 2022 and raises awareness of the symptoms and support available for those who are affected by the perimenopause and menopause – whether they are male or female.

Members of our WIN are also becoming our first ‘Menopause Champions’ receiving training by an external expert so they can provide signposting and advice to colleagues experiencing perimenopause or menopause symptoms – whether directly or

indirectly – encouraging open conversations on the topic and removing any associated stigma.

## **Personal safety alarms**

Members of the WIN also coordinated a trial of personal safety alarms, recognising that colleagues who are lone workers, are involved in call outs or may be required to visit remote depots/locations at night can feel unsafe. The alarms were available for both male and female colleagues and feedback from the initial trial has been positive and there are plans in place to extend the trial outside of WIN to gain more feedback.

## **What WIN means to colleagues**

Wales & West Utilities’ Louise Alfaresi is a member of the Network. In her day job, she is part of the team that repairs gas leaks, connects new homes and businesses, and upgrades the gas network so it’s ready for a green future. She said:

“It’s great to be part of the launch of this network and I’m personally looking forward to seeing how it can help to inspire future generations of female gas engineers and industry leaders.

“I have had a fantastic career in this industry so far and hope that by creating a safe place for women to share their life experiences and support one another personally and professionally we can help other women to achieve their full potential.”



*“This network is a great platform for our colleagues to connect, share their experience and support each other’s careers. As we focus on Net Zero and converting our network to transport green gas like hydrogen and biomethane, we must also continue to Break The Bias, and build an inclusive culture, where all women can meet their career aspirations.”*

Graham Edwards CEO

# Looking ahead

**We are focused on a future workforce that represents the diverse communities we serve to help us continue to deliver industry leading levels of gas safety and reliability.**

## **We are committed to:**

- 1** Ensuring our culture is equitable and inclusive so that everyone feels safe, can be their whole self at work, and is treated with dignity and respect.
- 2** Supporting effective and meaningful conversations about inclusion, equity and diversity by improving awareness and training.
- 3** Removing barriers to attract and retain a diverse workforce.
- 4** Delivering an action plan which can evolve and meet the needs of our colleagues and our communities.

## **Over the next 12 months we will:**

- Take positive action to make our workforce more diverse and inclusive, ensuring the investment in our people is fair and establishes a team that represents the communities we serve.
- Continue to implement our Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Strategy to build the diverse, multi-generational and inclusive workforce we aspire to.
- Put inclusion, equity and diversity at the heart of decisions at the most senior levels, ensuring a continued commitment to leading by example across the organisation.

- Encourage and support colleagues to launch networks to focus on the issues that are important to them and create safe spaces for those issues to be discussed to influence positive changes. Men's health and accessibility are examples of those types of networks.
- Appoint an external training partner to deliver specific training focused on inclusion, equity and diversity for managers, building on diversity and inclusion discussions held with First Line Managers and Senior Managers.
- Host discussions for colleagues to share their thoughts on inclusion, equity and diversity to help shape key focus areas across the organisation.
- Refresh and relaunch our leadership programme, focusing on psychological safety and encouraging leaders to support our colleagues to be their whole self at work, valuing differences.
- Launch our Aspiring Leaders Programme, with a specific focus on encouraging women to become future leaders within WWU – building in feedback methods so we can gain a better understanding of the challenges they face.
- Explore improvements in the way we collect and use data about inclusion, equity and diversity, ensuring our priorities for improvement can be driven by both data and discussions with colleagues across WWU.



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