

Inclusion, Equity & Diversity Strategy

March 2023



Our Inclusion, Equity & Diversity Strategy

Embracing difference, including everyone

At Wales & West Utilities we look after the pipes that keep the gas flowing across Wales and south west England. We cover an area that stretches from Wrexham to Redruth, from the mountains of North Wales to the cliff tops of Cornwall.

We serve diverse communities across cities, towns, villages, and open countryside. We are there for our customers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – it is a vital service and one that we are extremely proud to deliver.

The way we do things.

Our Ambition, Priorities and Values inform everything we do as a business – from our strategic planning to the performance management of our colleagues. Our values underpin everything we do, and we want to create a working environment that supports and fosters diversity, inclusion, and equity, where all of our colleagues feel valued and supported to contribute to their full potential.

We are focused on creating a culture where it doesn't matter about gender, race, sexuality, or disability; it's about our colleagues' skills, the way we do things and how we live our values.

We do not tolerate any forms of discrimination.

What does Inclusion, Equity and Diversity mean to us?

Inclusion is getting the best from our colleagues, harnessing the benefits of a culture where everyone can bring their whole selves to work. We want colleagues to offer their unique skills and experiences to take Wales & West Utilities into the future.

Equity refers to the fair treatment for all colleagues ensuring fair outcomes for all. Equity differs from equality in a subtle but important way. While equality assumes that all people should be treated the same way, equity takes into considerations a person's unique circumstances so that the end result is equal.

Diversity is recognising the value of differences, not just about the characteristics protected in legislation but making the most of those with different backgrounds, skills, and experiences.

This strategy sets our commitments and targets in these areas. 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.



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- 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.

Our Commitments

Our aim is to build a more diverse, multi-generational and inclusive workforce that better reflects the communities we serve. We are proud of our culture which is built on our values and empowers colleagues, valuing the benefits that inclusion and diversity bring.

To achieve this, we commit 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.



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Achieving our commitments

Our targets will provide focus on an annual basis and our enablers will support us to achieve our commitments. These will be reviewed each year with our stakeholder groups to make sure they remain relevant, effective, and appropriate.

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.

To enable this, we are focused on:

Providing internal communication channels, messaging and tone of voice that are inclusive and engaging.

Empowering colleagues to create and develop communities for like-minded individuals to provide support, a sense of belonging and a vehicle for change.

Delivering a Wellbeing & Health strategy so that colleagues have access to support when they need it

Regularly reviewing our Employee Value Proposition so that our colleague experience is inclusive and accessible for our whole workforce.

Creating a psychologically safe environment where colleagues feel able to speak up when things aren't right, and they know who can support and help them. Colleagues are encouraged to challenge and never knowingly walk past bad behaviour.

A no tolerance approach to discrimination and a focus on showing respect for each other.

Targets against this commitment

- Quarterly pulse surveys to capture feedback and measure progress.
- Bi-annual psychological safety audit, commencing with managers and then cascaded.
- Capturing data to make sure we understand our internal workforce characteristics and community information to inform and evolve our strategy.



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Supporting effective and meaningful conversations about inclusion, equity, and diversity by improving awareness and training

To enable this, we are focused on:

Developing a management group who are confident in creating an inclusive culture and a workforce that is educated about inclusion, equity and diversity.

Providing a Learning & Development strategy which builds skills and confidence for managers and colleagues regarding matters of inclusion, equity and diversity.

Evolving an internal communications plan which drives awareness of key themes and messages among colleagues and other stakeholders.

Targets against this commitment

- Delivering a programme of effective and meaningful conversations about inclusion and diversity which are accessible to all colleagues.
- Providing all managers with bi-annual training to ensure they are confident in discussing matters in relation to inclusion and diversity, including how to avoid unconscious bias when working with colleagues and customers.
- Rolling out awareness training to all colleagues

Removing barriers to attract and retain a diverse workforce.

To enable this, we are focused on:

Making sure our recruitment and selection methods are impartial, fair and follow internal guidelines and best practice.

- Provide accessible and effective entry routes making it easier for candidates e.g., removal of qualification requirements.
- Recruit based on our values, as well as technical competencies, to ensure best fit.
- Targeted and regionalised engagement and recruitment campaigns to make sure that roles, especially in technology and engineering, are attractive to all.
- Focus on areas of employment poverty.
- Tailor the language used in adverts and job descriptions to be appealing and accessible to different audiences.
- Making reasonable adjustments for those who need them.



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Providing coaching and development programmes where colleagues are enabled to reach their full potential.

An effective performance management framework so that colleagues understand how they contribute to the business and the value they bring.

Taking actions to prevent any negative impacts on our median Gender Pay Gap and look to improve our gender bonus gap.

Supporting people if they make the decision to re-enter the workplace e.g., service leavers and parent returners.

Developing a Neurodiversity strategy which sets out our commitments to those who have different needs.

Creating an environment which understands the impacts of both positive and poor physical and mental health on colleagues and in the workplace.

- Making sure our workplaces and roles are accessible to all.
- Seeking to find suitable alternatives where colleagues are temporarily or permanently unable to fulfil their normal role.
- Providing support through Occupational Health, the Employee Assistance Programme, Trade Union reps, Mental Health First Aiders and Wellbeing Champions

Providing a hybrid and flexible way of working

Targets against this commitment

- Improving our data – collecting meaningful information to improve our awareness for decision making and making improvements each year on agreed targets as outlined in our action plan.
- Measurement of feedback from internal and external candidates about their experience

Delivering an action plan which evolves and is based on the needs of our colleagues and our communities.

To support this strategy and our commitments we have an evolving three-year action plan which outlines the steps we plan to take to achieve our targets and the supporting initiatives and programmes we will develop or participate in.



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We are committed to working with external partners to get expert insight and support, and to engaging with a variety of stakeholders to seek their feedback and input to the development of the action plan.

Partnerships

We work with a number of partners and third parties to seek best practice and challenge ourselves to do things differently.

These include Energy & Utility Skills, Business in the Community, SCOPE, Time to Change, Armed Forces Covenant, Carers Wales, Careers Wales, Alzheimer's Society and The Living Wage Foundation.

Networks

In 2022, our first colleague community was launched, our Women's Inclusion Network. This is a group coordinated by colleagues and for colleagues, with support and resources provided by Wales & West Utilities. With this underway we will be looking to support the establishment of other groups that colleagues will value in the future.

