

Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2021 - 2026

Legal Notice

This paper forms part of Wales & West Utilities Limited Regulatory Business Plan. Your attention is specifically drawn to the legal notice relating to the whole of the Business Plan, set out on the inside cover of The WWU Business Plan. This is applicable in full to this paper, as though set out in full here.

The importance of Diversity & Inclusion

At Wales & West Utilities we are committed to continuing to deliver industry leading levels of gas safety, reliability and service to help the 2.5 million customers across Wales and the south west of England that we serve.

We know that to achieve this objective we need a diverse and inclusive workforce that's representative of the communities we serve. We want to create a working environment that supports and fosters diversity and inclusion, where all of our employees feel valued and supported to contribute to their full potential.

Our culture is already strongly rooted in our values and we strive to make sure that we embrace those differences that make us individuals because what's important to us is our colleagues' skills, the way they do things and the way they treat each other and our customers. This is already reflected in our colleague Wellbeing Strategy where we consider the 'whole person'.

This strategy sets our commitments and objectives in these areas. We plan to :

- Work hard to reflect the demographics of the areas we operate in to make sure we can deliver the best service and outcomes for our customers
- Make sure that our culture embraces and seeks out differences in thoughts and outlook as we know that this leads to new ideas and ways of doing things
- Continue our focus to attract and retain people with the right skills and behaviours

What does Diversity and Inclusion mean to us?

Diversity is about recognising the value of difference and inclusion. It's about being fair and ensuring we get the best from everyone.



Our Commitments

Our aim is to build a diverse, multi-generational and inclusive workforce that better reflects the communities we serve. To achieve this, we commit to:

1. To improve gender diversity within our workforce
2. Ensure our workplace culture is inclusive where everyone can be their whole self
3. Remove barriers to attract and retain a diverse workforce
4. Creating a positive working environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect
5. Driving a values based culture that empowers colleagues, promoting the benefits of a diverse workforce and removing any unconscious bias

How will we achieve our commitments?

To be able to achieve our five commitments, we have established a number of goals for each commitment. These have been developed to provide transparency but also to allow us to be held to account when measuring whether we have achieved our overarching ambition of reflecting the communities we serve.

Here, we take each commitment in turn and detail the initiatives and targets we will strive to achieve from 2021 – 2026.

1. Improving gender diversity within our workforce

We will:

- Carry out targeted and considered recruitment campaigns to ensure that roles (especially engineering roles) are attractive to women. To ensure this we will:
 - o Ensure we use the most up to date recruitment methods to ensure maximum attraction is achieved
 - o Ensure the language used in adverts and job descriptions is tailored to be appealing to a female audience
 - o Educate colleagues to ensure unconscious bias is removed from our selection and recruitment practices by providing appropriate training
- Remain focused on issues impacting our Gender Pay Gap, aiming to keep it at or close to a neutral level and improving our gender bonus gap to ensure further parity for those women who are eligible for bonuses
- Be involved in local and national groups aimed at improving gender diversity in all areas of the employment journey by sharing best practice solutions
- Create a culture of inclusivity and fairness to ensure we retain talent regardless of gender



2. Ensuring our workplace culture is inclusive where everyone can be their whole self

We will:

- Provide wellbeing tools and support to ensure colleagues feel able to communicate and find support if required
- Encourage colleagues to establish and join relevant groups and forums to create and grow a sense of community
- Ensure recruitment and selection methods are impartial, fair and follow set guidelines which enhance best practice approaches
- Provide a coaching framework to support individuals to develop, grown and reach their full potential
- Provide robust and effective communication channels to ensure colleagues feel engaged in business activities
- Provide an effective performance management framework so that colleagues understand how they contribute to the business and the value they bring
- Ensure reward is appropriate and reflective of roles, responsibilities and contribution to the organisations outputs

3. Remove barriers to attract and retain a diverse workforce

We will:

- Work with partners representing minority groups to review our application process and any barriers to attracting a diverse workforce, and act on the findings of these reviews. This would include but is not limited to Business In the Community, Remploy, Stonewall and local BAME representatives
- Explore targeted recruitment campaigns where this is appropriate
- Recruit based on our values, as well as technical competencies
- Provide managers with the tools and training to ensure they are competent when dealing with all aspects of recruitment selection
- Support people if they make the decision to re-enter the workplace e.g. service leavers and parent returners
- Continue to provide more accessible and effective entry routes making it easier to join us e.g. – removal of qualification requirements where possible – as we have done in some of our Apprenticeships



4. Creating a positive working environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect

We will:

- Continue to provide a comprehensive suite of policies and tools in place to support colleagues during a period of change in their lives, for example:
 - Our Family Friendly policies help our colleagues balance work and family responsibilities, allowing us to retain and develop their skills and experience
 - Our Redeployment Policy helps colleagues to continue to work if they find themselves unable to fulfil their current role due to ill health, returning from maternity leave, or another situation
 - Provide reasonable adjustments to roles and working environments to support colleagues with recognised disabilities to sustain employment
 - Recognising that the wellbeing of our people extends to their family, and therefore extending our Employee Assistance Programme services to them which provides confidential support relating to any personal matter including financial advice, legal advice and counselling
- Pledge to break down the stigmas associated with mental health, and commit to:
 - Train colleagues across the network as Mental Health First Aiders and Wellbeing Champions
 - Provide resilience training to all Managers across the business so that they understand their own resilience and also can identify when others in their teams are showing signs of poor mental health and resilience
 - Supporting initiatives such as Time to Talk Day and work with external agencies to break down stereotypes - encouraging colleagues to become more comfortable with talking about mental health
- Carry out effective communication and engagement practices to ensure we capture the views of all colleagues in order to create an inclusive environment
 - Continue to maintain our Investors in People accreditation to demonstrate our commitment to colleague engagement and to measure ourselves against a nationally recognised measure



5. Driving a values based culture that empowers colleagues, promoting the benefits of a diverse workforce and removing any unconscious bias

We will:

- Recruit based on values for all roles; to attract and recruit people who share our values because we can help colleagues develop new skills as long as they have an approach aligned to our culture
- Use transparent recruitment methods regionalising our approach to make sure that we are accessible to potential recruits
- Empower our colleagues to challenge others when something isn't right, asking them to 'never knowingly walk past bad behaviour'
- Provide our managers with behavioural training based on neuroscience to help them to be better managers and encourage behaviours that support our values
- Train all Managers in unconscious bias to ensure that people related activities are carried out fairly and impartially and consider their own biases

Delivering Our Plan

In support of this strategy – we have a detailed plan which has been developed in conjunction with our cross business Managers Action Group and has been endorsed by our Trade Union Groups and Young Person's Network.

We will review the strategy and plan annually, updating in line with best practices and new ideas, as well as measuring our success to date. We will also be publicly reporting on our progress as part of our commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

This plan contributes to UN Sustainable Development Goals:

3 – Good Health & Wellbeing

5 – Gender Equality

10 – Reduced Inequalities

