

Building a diverse team

OUR GENDER PAY REPORT 2021-22



Contents

Introduction	3
Our performance	5
Our story so far	10
Creating an inclusive culture	13
Diversity and inclusion	18





Introduction

The last two years have been challenging for all of us. A once-in-a-lifetime global pandemic has changed the way we live and work. At Wales & West Utilities, our top priority remains the same: to serve customers and communities with safe, reliable and affordable energy services today, while investing wisely to create a sustainable, greener future.

Across Wales and south west England, almost 7.5m people have relied on us more than ever. We are incredibly proud of our team who have worked round the clock responding to gas emergencies and upgrading the gas network. They have worked incredibly hard to deliver outstanding services to the communities we serve during such unprecedented times. We're pleased to be on track to transport green gases like hydrogen and biomethane in the future.

And while the worst of the pandemic in the UK may be behind us, a growing cost of living crisis is upon us. We are all concerned about the rising cost of energy in the UK. For home heating, for keeping the lights on, for powering industry – these important services play an essential role in our everyday lives. Making sure they remain accessible for everyone is vital.

The sector and, proudly, our business has a great track record for delivering on behalf of our customers. The safety and reliability of our network is second to none. And by keeping our contribution to customers' bills flat, while supporting the most vulnerable, we're doing all we can to help communities when they need it most.

By working with other gas networks, our regulator, Ofgem, and the Government, we are developing exciting and essential plans to enable alternative, greener energy sources.

Converting homes and businesses to green gas like hydrogen and biomethane will allow communities to go green while keeping the disruption to communities, homes and businesses to a minimum.

As well as contributing to UK net zero targets, we're confident these solutions will offer a long-term, sustainable future for the sector, our business and, most importantly, our customers.

Alongside this work, locally we continue to develop our support for those most vulnerable, working in partnership with industry colleagues, consumer groups, charities, local authorities and governments, while delivering initiatives offering essential energy safety advice, additional funding for insulation, home heating appliances and more.

As we look forward to what our team will look like by 2050, our gas engineers will be skilled, maintaining green gas pipelines, working with robotics, smart sensors and detecting equipment. All of our teams will have vital roles to play in shaping the future of the business – with new ways of collaboration helping us make the most of our time together.

And our team will be much more diverse than ever before, in gender, ethnicity and sexuality. We are committed to becoming a sustainable business and have a team that reflects the communities we serve. The enforced disruption of the pandemic has highlighted the importance of diversity and the benefits it can deliver, considering the strengths of all our colleagues and the potential they offer. Valuing difference brings us together, and we believe this will help us deliver for our customers, and maintain performance and a successful, thriving and fair culture.

So, while we'll continue to invest in pipe, we'll be investing in our people too, making sure they have all the skills to meet the needs of our customers. And we'll work hard to make our workforce more diverse and more inclusive, because we know that to truly meet the needs of the communities we serve, we must reflect them.

Sarah Hopkins
People & Engagement Director

Graham Edwards
Chief Executive



Our performance

17% of our team are female – which has been broadly consistent year on year

-7% mean gender pay gap – demonstrating our commitment to fair pay irrespective of gender

Women are playing key leadership and management roles – designing the future of our business and our industry, while an increasing number of women are applying for our operational roles

Our HR team won 'Best In-House' HR team at the CIPD Wales Awards – demonstrating excellence in people management

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development commend our strategic approach to workforce planning

We retain our Silver level Investors in People accreditation – an accolade only 5% of companies achieve

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Silver
Rydym yn buddsoddi mewn pobl Arian

We developed our first Diversity & Inclusion Strategy, becoming more accessible to women, the BAME and LGBTQ+ communities, and those living with disabilities, so we reflect the different and diverse communities we serve



Our team

- **1,471 colleagues** (2020: 1,617)
- **17% female** (2020: 16%)
- **83% male** (2020: 83%)



In Operations...

- **7% female** (2020: no change)
- **93% male** (2020: no change)



In the (home) office...

- **47% female** (2020: 44%)
- **53% male** (2020: 56%)



Many colleagues have been working from home since the pandemic hit in March 2020. After consultation with our team, we plan to continue to offer this flexibility in the future by moving towards a hybrid working system.

Colleagues told us they missed connecting, collaborating and informal opportunities for networking with others and although technology has helped to keep us connected, it is not a complete substitute for being together. So we're now adopting a hybrid working system, helping our team build on the benefits of home working while maintaining work life balance, and enabling team working in the office.

The Coronavirus pandemic gave us opportunity to stop and reflect on the way we work. A hybrid approach reflects changes in expectations and priorities of our team and will help make Wales & West Utilities an even more inclusive place to work.



Pay and bonus

The gender pay gap shows the difference in average pay between men and women that work at Wales & West Utilities in two ways.

- The mean adds up all salaries and divides the result by the number of men and women respectively. We report the percentage difference.
- The median lists all male and female salaries in numerical order and 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: -7%

2020	2019	2018	2017
-2%	1%	8%	10%

We're proud that our mean gender pay gap has reduced significantly since 2017, when it stood at 10%. This year, the mean gender pay gap of -7% reflects the increasing number of women playing important roles in our business – as leaders and managers both in the office and Operations. Driven by our structured grade-based approach to pay with clear and

consistent job profiles, it demonstrates our commitment to fair pay irrespective of gender.

MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP: -7%

2020	2019	2018	2017
-10%	-10%	-8%	-4%

Our median gender pay gap is also -7%. This is due to differing roles that the majority of men and women play in our team. Large numbers of men work in lower-paid operational positions in a strict pay framework, while a larger proportion of women hold supervisory and management roles.

This gap has increased since 2017 through the recruitment of a large number of gas engineering operatives, primarily in south west England, and women stepping in more senior roles. In the last 12 months, a number of Operational colleagues took voluntary redundancy, reducing the gap.

WHO GETS A BONUS

40% OF WOMEN GET A BONUS

2020	2019	2018	2017
40%	38%	39%	37%

16% OF MEN GET A BONUS

2020	2019	2018	2017
16%	16%	17%	18%

There are two types of bonuses at Wales & West Utilities, recognising colleagues who do different types of jobs.

- Our Operations team receive overtime, standby and callout payments, and

performance-related incentives. This is reflected in the low proportion of male colleagues who receive bonuses.

- Colleagues in our grade-based structure – primarily office based are eligible for a bonus based on a percentage of their salary dependent on their performance, while our senior management and leadership team receive a bonus based on their contribution to our delivery for our customers, and their own personal performance.

MEAN GENDER BONUS GAP: 45%

2020	2019	2018	2017
49%	53%	57%	52%

MEDIAN GENDER BONUS GAP: 37%

2020	2019	2018	2017
42%	31%	28%	17%

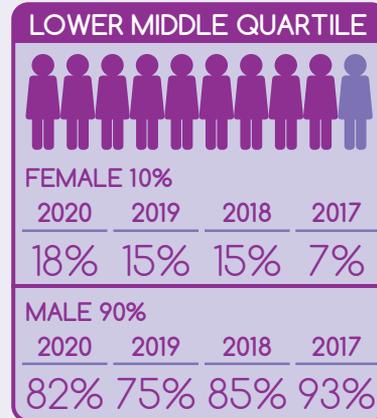
Our gender bonus gaps continue to fall as an increasing number of women take on senior roles – with two women now on our seven-strong leadership team. However, the majority of women are still in lower quartiles where bonuses are of lower value.

Pay distribution

These charts show the gender profile of our team at different pay bands. It's calculated by splitting our organisation into four equal parts based on what they earn.



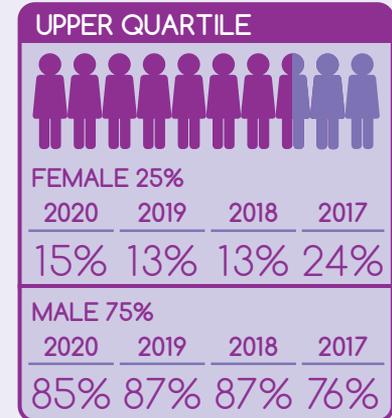
Colleagues in 'hands-on' operational and office-based administration roles, alongside customer service roles, are in the lower quartile. The gender split at this level has remained broadly flat year on year, after more – primarily male – engineers joined our team in 2020 so we could continue delivering our essential work.



Supervisory and specialised engineer roles, both in the office and Operations, make up this quartile. Women have decreased in the quartile due to a number of experienced male gas engineers joining our team this year. Additionally, we have introduced a new operational pay framework which rationalised engineering salaries, making sure they were fit for purpose and based on skills and qualifications. This will further reinforce equal opportunities for our engineering colleagues. And it moved a number of experienced colleagues, predominantly male, into this quartile.



Our middle management oversee office-based functions and lead engineering teams on the network. The figures in this quartile reflect the significant role that women play in managing our business in management positions, in Operations and in the office. In real terms, the number of women in this quartile has increased year on year.



Women have their highest representation in this quartile. Our senior team has become increasingly more diverse in the last two years, with women in our leadership team and an increasing number of women stepping into senior management roles. They will all play key roles as we rise to meet the challenges of the future.

Case study

Kate Williams

Kate Williams did a career U-turn after having a family made her think about what she really wanted from her working life. She has since gone on to have a rewarding career within the gas industry, earning the respect of her colleagues and quickly becoming the first woman to lead a team of 40 men in the Logistics team. She is now an engineering manager, leading teams who maintain the gas network, connect new homes and businesses, and prepare the gas network to transport hydrogen and biomethane.

Kate, 46, had been working in a solicitors' firm for a number of years but when her son was six months old, she knew that when she went back to work, it wouldn't be in the same industry.

Kate explains: *"I decided there was no time like the present and went to a job agency to see what other roles matched my skills.*

"It was fate – while there, they took a call detailing how Transco, Wales & West Utilities' predecessor, was looking for a depot clerk – someone to help with the planning and administration of work. I knew at that point I needed to apply."

After successfully applying, Kate was quick to realise how the company, and the industry, was male dominated.

"On my first day I found out I was the only woman based at the depot but I didn't let that deter me."

In Kate's time with Wales & West Utilities, she has been surrounded by supportive managers and senior leaders. This, coupled with her determination to carve out a successful career and want to progress, has helped her grasp the opportunities presented.

"I've had nothing but support and encouragement from an early point in my time with Wales & West Utilities. This has meant I could flourish in my work and develop a clear career path.

"I was working as a depot clerk when the company was looking to establish a specialist Logistics team. My manager, at the time, didn't hesitate in putting me forward to work alongside other senior managers on the three-month programme.

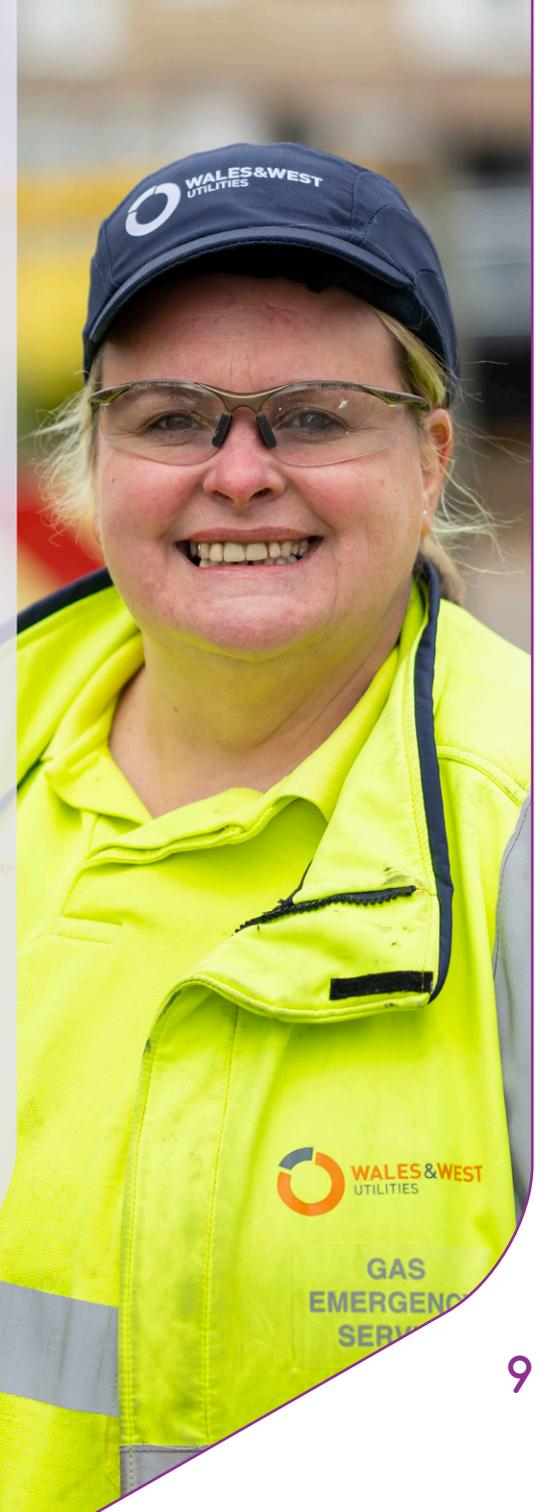
"Once the team was established, a role was yet to be filled. I decided to go for it and successfully applied, going on to manage 40 men in the Logistics team – mainly truck drivers."

Kate quickly proved her worth in leading the Logistics team in Wales, supporting delivery of engineering work – essential to keep the gas flowing to local homes and businesses.

"It's always felt like fate meant I ended up working at Wales & West Utilities but the fact I've gone on to progress and work in various roles within the company has been down to managers investing in my career and a lot of self-belief.

"I started as the only woman working in a depot, but I've seen an evolution in the industry, with the industry attracting a much more diverse group of people.

"There is no denying the industry presents vast opportunities to men and women alike. You're recognised for your skills and the work you do, so if you do your job well you can go far."



Our story so far

When we started operations in 2005, most industry insiders and commentators didn't give independent gas networks much of a chance. Smaller than gas networks had been historically, our size has allowed us to be more responsive to the needs of customers across Wales and south west England.

Our first focus was health and safety: developing our own systems and processes so we could be sure our network and the communities we serve were as safe as they could possibly be. More than a decade on, this foundation of health and safety has stood us in good stead, with nine ROSPA Gold medals secured in successive years, as well as numerous other awards and accreditations.

On this solid foundation, we built a customer service record to be proud of, designing our services to meet customer needs and expectations. We go above and beyond, offering a bespoke customer experience and evolving as technology does. In 2005, you could write, call and try to email us. Now 16 years on, whether you phone, text, tweet, DM or live chat us, we'll respond to you quickly. And if we do get things wrong, we're committed to putting them right – resolving problems and leaving you happy within 24 hours.

To make sure we are as good as we can be, we've secured challenging external verification; the Institute of Customer Service ServiceMark and the British Standard for



Inclusive Service Provision helps us compare ourselves to top performing customer service companies and share best practice to meet the changing needs of customers.

In 2013, our leadership team began a review of the fundamental purpose of our business, engaging with colleagues right across our diverse operating area. The process resulted in the development of our ambition, priorities and values, designed to guide vital business decisions as we continue to meet the needs of our communities, customers and stakeholders. And they helped underpin our move to being a responsible business – taking more care of the society and environment in which we operate. This responsibility has allowed us to nurture partnerships with fire services and other trusted organisations to support the most in need, and during the pandemic, help charities who support more than 14,000 of the most vulnerable in Wales and south west England. Our commitment to responsible business practices has seen us twice rewarded by BITC Cymru – firstly as Wales' most responsible business and during the pandemic as a responsible business champion for our commitment to supporting our local communities.

“Wales & West Utilities have put their values at the heart of what they do and truly embedded responsible business through their operations and decision making.”
BITC





With the declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, we are committed to playing our part in helping the UK decarbonise and get to net zero.

So, we're working alongside other UK gas networks to explore how we can convert the existing safe and reliable gas network to transport green gas and biomethane, which will help communities go green cheaper and with less disruption than the alternatives. And we're getting our own house in order, too. Acting on feedback from our customers and stakeholders, between 2021-2026 we're focusing on becoming a sustainable business, reducing the impact on the environment of our vehicles, depots and our operations, while reusing or recycling 80% of our waste by 2026. We will also adopt the principle of biodiversity net gain, an approach that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was previously.

2021 and 2022 have seen a dramatic rise in the cost of living, while the Russian invasion of Ukraine has increased pressure on household bills even further. We are committed to supporting the most vulnerable in our communities at this challenging time. While we do not bill customers directly, we are committed to keeping our contribution to energy bills – approx. 15-20% – as low as possible. Between 2021-2026 we're spending £7m on projects that will support the most vulnerable in our communities, while working with partners to help people access information about energy bills, energy efficiency and steps they can take to make

sure they stay safe at home – and for the elderly, support to live independently for longer.

In early 2022, we launched our new ambition, priorities and values to reflect this evolving focus, and to deliver it, we are going to need a team that is more diverse and inclusive than ever. Not only in background, but in skills too.

For the first time, we're recruiting cyber security specialists, programmers, data modellers, econometrics analysts and sustainability managers as we transition to a sustainable future and sharpen our focus on supporting the most vulnerable. As we continue to recruit the most talented and able in the range of roles that are essential to deliver for our customers, the Wales & West Utilities of 2050 will look different than the company we inherited in 2005.



Creating an inclusive culture

Our goal is to encourage diversity and continue to grow an inclusive culture. While we have an increased number of women working in the office, in leadership, customer service and support roles, there's a smaller number in Operations. We're working hard to change this and make our whole team more diverse and inclusive:

- **Launching our Women's Inclusion Network** to help women share life experiences and gain advice

and support, both personally and professionally. It seeks to improve gender balance across Wales & West Utilities while inspiring more women to pursue a career in the gas industry.

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.



Louise says:

"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."

#IWD22





- **Doing all we can to change perceptions of the gas industry** – role-modelling some of our outstanding women while continuing to engage with schools, colleges and the community. As the pandemic eases, we're looking forward to engaging with these groups as we continue to build those relationships.
- **Focusing on wellbeing** – we try to be as family friendly as possible and have introduced enhanced maternity leave, shared parental leave, flexible working policies and a Carers Policy – a first for a gas network. Our wellbeing strategy supports our colleagues in their lives at home and work.
- **Focusing on mental health** – we encourage our colleagues to prioritise mental health and ask for help when needed. For the past five years, we have supported Time to Talk Day, which allows us to come together and talk about our mental health at work or home.

- **Embedding our values in recruitment** – we give new recruits all the skills and training they need to fill roles from gas engineer to planner, administrator to asset manager. We've also removed the requirement for academic qualifications unless they are strictly necessary. Our structured approach to development means an equality of opportunity irrespective of gender/sexuality.
- **Working with Business in the Community's** Age at Work programme to focus on age inclusion, helping support mature workers remain in the workplace if they wish to.
- **Recognising we can all stereotype** – all recruiting managers receive unconscious bias training, to adjust the

way they think and eliminate unwitting discrimination, allowing them to connect to those with different experiences.

- **Helping to shape education choices** – we engage with schools, colleges and community groups. STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) ambassadors and experienced female engineers regularly visit schools and clubs to talk about their experiences and the opportunities for girls.
- **Promoting our job opportunities to a diverse audience** – we're using new ways to reach out to women (as well as BAME and LGBTQ+ communities), targeting people with an interest in engineering.



Case study

Sarah Burgess

Sarah Burgess decided at the age of 16 that she wanted a hands-on job. She successfully applied for an apprenticeship and hasn't looked back. With a career now spanning 28 years, she is thrilled that she followed her heart.

Sarah explains:

"In school, I loved all the hands-on subjects and started to look at the opportunities an apprenticeship would bring. It was during this time that I focused on engineering, as that really appealed. So, you can imagine how happy I was to be offered a gas industry apprenticeship straight after completing my GCSEs."

Sarah's apprenticeship involved a mix of college work and on-the-job-learning – something that she enjoyed and allowed her the opportunity to get stuck in. Sarah stayed in the gas industry through reorganisation, working for Transco, before joining Wales & West Utilities in 2005.

Sarah worked hard in a number of roles and was the first female Gas Emergency Service First Line Manager at Wales & West Utilities.

"The industry presents so many opportunities and with the right levels of motivation and determination,

they are there for the taking. I loved my job as an engineer and wanted to concentrate on it. At the time I had two young children, but thankfully with a supportive husband, I didn't need to make a choice between one or the other.

"Helping customers and keeping them safe and warm in their own home is the biggest motivator for me – I still find my role fulfilling and rewarding."

She has been in her role as a Gas Emergency Service First Line Manager for more than five years and encourages anyone to follow their dreams.

"Everyone deserves the chance to make their dreams a reality – I'm a huge believer in there being the right role for everyone. Being a female in a male-dominated industry didn't deter me – I'm just doing a job I love.

"I have always been encouraged to go for whatever I want, and Wales & West Utilities and the wider industry provides people, like me, with so many opportunities. I am excited to see what the next chapter has in store."



Case study

Travis Wheatle

Travis Wheatle was intent on developing a career path within the gas industry. Joining Wales & West Utilities as a graduate after completing his university course has allowed him to work within various areas of the business.

Travis has now worked for Wales & West Utilities for more than six years and still looks back on the graduate training programme as one of the best decisions he's ever made.

Travis explains:

“Joining as a graduate gave me exposure to many areas within the company and was a fantastic grounding for a long-term career within the gas industry. The programme lasted two years and I gained invaluable experience of working within both office and operational roles. This allowed me to quickly realise where my skills lay.”

After completing the programme, Travis was offered a permanent role and has since held managerial roles in Bristol and Swindon, leading teams repairing gas leaks, connecting new homes and businesses, and preparing the gas network to transport green gases like hydrogen and biomethane.

In early 2021, he became a Performance Manager – supervising six managers and 56 engineers across Exeter.

“Wales & West Utilities has provided me with so many opportunities and I’m proud to have accomplished what I have in a relatively short period of time.

“While I love my role, I know that I want to progress further and would love to work in progressively more senior roles. As I continue building my engineering career I want to learn more and push myself further.

“The company is great at supporting colleagues to achieve their career aspirations, but you’ve got to have the drive to do it in the first place.

“Wales & West Utilities has a huge number of highly experienced people who are all there to provide support and practical advice. This network has meant that I’ve been able to move my career in the right direction.”

Travis is looking to become a Chartered Engineer and won't stop until he reaches the pinnacle of his career.

“You can’t always be successful – I’ve failed a number of times, but the way I see it, for every failure, you’re closer to success. The gas industry is great, and the opportunities are endless.”





Case study

Chris Dowden

Chris Dowden has been working for Wales & West Utilities for more than 11 years. Working in a predominantly male-dominated industry, he has seen a great change in the world during this time but has always felt accepted in the workplace.

Chris, 34, explains:

“At the time I started my job with Wales & West Utilities, things were very different. Prejudice was a lot more prevalent and some people, sadly, chose to hide who they really were in the workplace.

“I am an openly gay man but didn’t give it another thought when I came to work for Wales & West Utilities – maybe that’s down to my character, or maybe it’s because I felt accepted for who I am by my colleagues from the off.”

Chris has worked in a number of roles at the gas and emergency service and is now on the Connections team, helping customers who want to connect to mains gas or alter their supply.

“If Wales & West Utilities is to be an inclusive and diverse organisation it’s important the business represents society – not only in its vision but its practice, too.

“I’ve always felt welcome and, increasingly, our team reflects the diversity of the people and communities who we engage with.

“The company is always trying to go further in removing any barriers which people may face and I am proud to be employed by such a forward-thinking organisation.

“It’s important that we reach out to a diverse community – not only to demonstrate how inclusive an employer we are, but to also attract a diverse workforce.”

Case study

Zoe Peel

Zoe Peel has a long career within the gas industry which stretches over 27 years. Today she is a Senior Network Technician – designing instrumentation systems for the gas network. Starting work in the south east of England, her career led her to several roles in the gas industry before her personal life took her to south Wales.

Zoe, 53, explains:

“My partner’s work led me to look for new work premises, so with no roots put down we made the move to south Wales, where we had friends.

“At the time I worked at Transco and managed to secure a transfer to south Wales with the Electrical and

Instrumentation department, working as a Network Technician doing a job I loved.”

Wales & West Utilities set up in 2005, from National Grid (formerly Transco), and Zoe moved across to work within the business.

“I’ve worked in this male dominated industry for decades and I can honestly say I’ve never had a problem with any prejudice to either being a woman or being a gay woman.

“Maybe that’s down to the person and personality I am but it’s never really mattered to me. I’ve worked within a number of different roles over the years, and it shouldn’t matter what or who you are – as long as you can do the job well.”

Zoe believes the industry is making strides to improve diversity and equality, but still has a way to go.

“Only when there is no requirement to talk about diversity will we be fully diverse.

“I’d encourage anyone willing to work, to go for it and join the gas industry. From my experience it’s the same whether you’re gay or straight, male or female – the opportunities and support are there if you take them.”

Diversity and inclusion

Traditionally the gas industry has been dominated by white men. In the future, as we decarbonise the energy system in the UK, the work that a gas network will be doing will change. The skills and competencies we need in the future will be very different from today as we transform the network to transport green gas like hydrogen and biomethane.

From big data to robotics, cyber security

to econometrics, becoming an even more inclusive and diverse place to work is essential as we continue to deliver for our customers today and in the future.

Increasing the diversity of our team not only allows us to recognise the differences and individuality of all our colleagues, it also acknowledges that more diversity promotes a range of ideas and perspectives.

Making Wales & West Utilities a more

inclusive place to work will help all our colleagues feel that their contribution matters and they are able to do their job, irrespective of their background, identity or individual circumstances.

In 2021, we took the opportunity to support and celebrate the LGBTQ+ communities around the world and at



Wales & West Utilities during Pride month. Responding to colleague and stakeholder feedback, we are exploring the possibility of developing a LGBTQ+ network and a Trans strategy. We hope this will reassure colleagues who choose to transition of the support available throughout their journey.

In 2019, we signed the Armed Forces Covenant, which underlines our commitment to being a welcoming and inclusive employer of former military personnel. We remain focused on supporting service leavers joining our business, and those who have previously served.

Evolving strategy

Recognising the changes brought to our communities by the Coronavirus pandemic, we are reviewing our Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and delivery programmes.

We are developing a stand-alone diversity and inclusion module for our First Line Managers and, above that, it will also be available to all colleagues. We plan to appoint a Diversity Advisor to help guide and shape our Diversity & Inclusion Strategy as we continue to make sure we meet the needs of our colleagues today – and those who may work for us in the future. Recognising the changes brought to our communities by the Coronavirus pandemic, we are reviewing our Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and delivery programmes, to make sure they continue to meet the needs of our colleagues today – and those who may work for us in the future.

Please stay up to date online by following our social media channels

Follow us on Twitter [@wwutilities](#)

Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/wwutilities

Find us on LinkedIn [wales-&-west-utilities](#)

On Instagram [wwutilities](#)