



# Building our team, shaping our future

GENDER PAY GAP AND EQUITY,  
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)  
REPORT 2025-26

# &WEST



# In this report

1. We are Wales & West Utilities	03
2. Opening remarks	04
3. What shapes the gender pay gap today	05
4. Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)	06
5. EDI: This year's progress	07
6. Gender pay gap numbers	14
7. Real stories	18
8. Looking forward	25



# We are Wales & West Utilities

At Wales & West Utilities (WWU), we're dedicated to providing our customers with a safe and reliable supply of gas whenever they need it. Our dedicated teams work around the clock to transport gas to the homes and businesses we serve while also preparing our network to carry the green gases of the future, such as biomethane and hydrogen.

Responding to gas emergencies, connecting new homes and businesses to our network and upgrading old metal gas pipes to new, more durable pipes are also part of our core business. We are committed to making sure the communities we serve receive a safe and reliable gas supply for generations to come.

We own and maintain more than **35,000km** of gas pipes.

Supply **2.5m** households and **100,000** businesses.

Serve **7.5m** people.

Employ almost **2,000** skilled colleagues.

Have **680,000** homes on the Gas Suppliers' Priority Services Register.

Operate from North Wales to south Cornwall, covering **one sixth** of the UK.

There for our customers **24/7**, **365** days a year.



# Opening remarks

## Graham Edwards, our CEO



At Wales & West Utilities, we are committed to creating a workplace where people can thrive – regardless of background, identity, or circumstance. Our approach to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) focuses on removing barriers, widening access to opportunity, and strengthening our policies, practices and culture so they better support fairness at every stage. Gender pay gap reporting forms an important part of this wider commitment and, while it provides a helpful snapshot of representation and reward across our organisation, it sits alongside broader work to improve accessibility, progression, wellbeing and inclusion across our teams.

Of our 1,916 colleagues at the time of publication, 332 are female (17%), and 1,584 are male (83%). While this report focuses on gender pay gap reporting, our wider EDI work is designed to support fair access to opportunity and progression for everyone. Where we place particular focus on women's progression and representation, it is to address current under-representation in some roles and levels, and to help ensure talent can thrive across the organisation.

We're taking action to make Wales & West Utilities an increasingly accessible, inclusive, and contemporary career option. This includes widening access to roles across our organisation by improving inclusive recruitment practices, expanding early career pathways, and making progression opportunities clearer and better supported for under-represented groups.

I look forward to building on our initiatives and furthering our commitment.

## Bethan Jones, our Head of People and Customer Experience



As we look ahead to 2026 and beyond, the direction we're heading in as a business is changing how we think about our future workforce. We're adapting to new regulatory requirements, supporting the transition to net zero, and investing in better use of data and digitalisation – all of which require us to have the right people, skills and experiences to continue delivering for the communities we serve. We're also proud to be playing our part amongst the energy sector as a whole to attract a broader and more diverse range of people to help meet the challenges ahead.

Our EDI Strategy and action plan set out how we're working to create a workplace where people feel welcome, supported and able to build lasting careers with us. This includes widening access to opportunities, supporting colleagues to stay and grow with the organisation, and making sure our policies reflect the different needs people have at different stages of their lives.

We also know that lasting change doesn't happen in isolation. That's why we work closely with others across the energy sector – including through TIDE (Tackling Inclusion & Diversity in Energy), our sector skills council and specialist partners – to learn from one another and contribute to positive, practical change.

People from all backgrounds make a vital contribution to the work we do at Wales & West Utilities, and we remain committed to creating an environment where everyone can thrive – now and in the future.

# What shapes the gender pay gap today

To continue taking meaningful action on our gender pay gap, it's important to understand the wider context shaping the energy sector and our workforce today. These themes help us focus our efforts and build on the progress already underway.

## A changing industry and workforce

The energy sector has long been shaped by traditional career routes and skill sets, particularly in technical and operational roles. As the industry modernises, there is growing momentum to broaden awareness of the diverse careers available to ensure opportunities are more visible and accessible.

## Awareness, perception and opportunity

For many years, the gas industry was not always widely promoted to all audiences. Today, changing perceptions, outreach programmes and visible role models are helping to highlight the breadth of opportunities across the sector.

## Representation across roles and levels

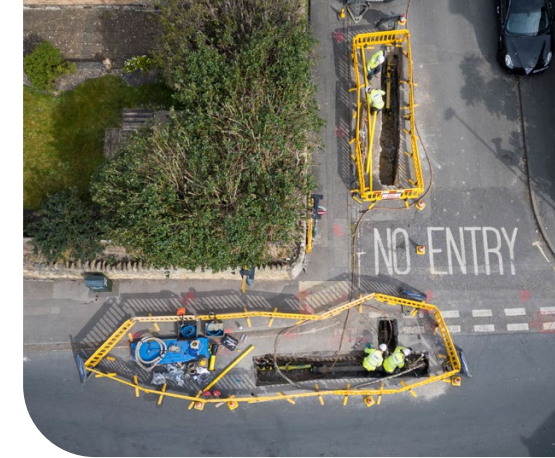
Our workforce includes a wide range of skills and experience across all areas of the organisation. Like much of the sector, representation is not yet evenly distributed across all role families and levels, and increasing representation in technical, engineering and leadership positions remains a shared priority. This is supported by inclusive recruitment practices, development opportunities and clear progression pathways.

## Supporting progression at key career stages

Across the industry, there is an opportunity to strengthen support for colleagues as they move from mid-management into senior leadership. Targeted development programmes, mentoring and structured pathways are helping to create clearer routes for progression and leadership.

## Flexibility and sustainable careers

Flexible working plays an important role in supporting long-term careers, particularly for colleagues balancing work with caring or other responsibilities. By expanding flexible opportunities at all levels – including senior roles – we aim to create more sustainable pathways for progression and development.



# Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion

## Building a workforce where everyone belongs

By continuing to engage with our colleagues to understand their needs, we can make impactful change and shape our organisation for the future.

Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy outlines how we will build a more diverse, multi-generational and inclusive workforce, together with our supporting three-year action plan. We are committed to a workplace culture where barriers are broken down and opportunities provided for all, regardless of gender, race, sexuality, or disability.

## Our strategy commits us 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 equity, diversity and inclusion by improving awareness and training.
- Removing barriers to attract and retain a diverse workforce.
- Delivering an action plan which can evolve and meet the needs of our colleagues and our communities.



# EDI: This year's progress

How we're building a more inclusive workplace

During 2025-26, we advanced a range of initiatives designed to grow diversity, strengthen inclusion and ensure fair, equitable investment in all our colleagues.



## Our key highlights

### Making EDI a natural part of workplace conversations

- Inclusion awareness sessions run through 2025 for colleagues to voluntarily join.
- Monthly meetings were held by our Accessibility Network, that works to support colleagues with disabilities, long-term health conditions, and/or neurodivergence, while promoting inclusive practices across the company.
- EDI content was a key part of our management and leadership training, focused on supporting our managers to create a psychologically safe culture.
- We introduced monthly leadership EDI prompts, known as “nudges”, to provide our leaders with helpful tools and to reinforce the importance of psychological safety with their teams.
- Through our Inspire leadership programme, 135 senior leaders completed the new module, consisting of 37 women and 98 men. The sessions included targeted support to help colleagues build confidence, influence and resilience as they progress.

### Accessible recruitment: our ongoing work

- We removed the need for academic qualifications, unless specifically required for a role.
- By assisting applicants to apply via different means – such as via telephone – it opened possibilities for more people to apply.
- At the same time, we continued simplifying our application processes to ensure they are easier to navigate.
- We made it possible for applicants to receive interview questions in advance at their request, helping them feel more prepared and confident.
- Through our partnership with the Accessibility Network, we listened to colleagues and used their insights to help remove recruitment barriers.

# Recognition with award wins



## Investment in People Award

**At the 2025 Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers (IGEM) Gas Industry Awards, we were proud to receive the Investment in People award for our financial wellbeing initiatives.**

When colleagues told us how they would choose to prioritise their money – with pensions, mortgages, savings and debt repayment topping the list – we responded by creating our Financial Wellbeing Pot (FWP). This gives colleagues greater choice in how they use their pension funds beyond core savings. We also introduced tailored financial education, recognising that financial needs differ from person to person. Our People Team continues to champion excellent HR and people practices, and being recognised alongside other industry leaders is a meaningful endorsement of that work.

## 'Hi Vis' Award

**At Utility Week's 2025 Women in Utilities Awards, our colleague Louise Alfaresi was honoured with the Hi Vis award.**

This award celebrates women delivering exceptional work in field operations – those who make a tangible difference to their organisation and act as inspiring role models for the next generation. It specifically recognises hands-on, operational roles across the utilities sector.

Louise joined WWU in 1991 and has progressed to become a Compliance First Line Manager, leading more than 200 gas engineers. We were delighted to see her achievements recognised and made more visible, helping to inspire future women leaders across our industry.



# Working with our Women's Inclusion Network (WIN)

WIN is open to colleagues who support its aims, including allies. Insights and ideas gathered through WIN are shared to help inform policies, workplace practices and development approaches that benefit colleagues of all genders.



- By partnering with external organisations, WIN continued to support the professional development of female colleagues.
- **In July 2025, we worked with Womens Utilities Network (WUN) to deliver Championing Change: Creating Better Workplaces for Women in Utilities – Wales.** The event brought together an expert panel sharing insights, experiences and practical actions, along with lively discussion on the challenges and opportunities for women in utilities. Colleagues were also able to connect through informal networking to learn, exchange ideas and build relationships.
- **Period products continued to be freely available** at our sites, supporting the wellbeing needs of colleagues across the organisation.



# Supporting managers to lead inclusively



- **Externally facilitated workshops helped managers** to explore real scenarios, recognise bias and strengthen their ability to support colleagues with diverse needs.
- **Open forums gave managers space** to share perspectives, discuss challenges and reflect on their own starting points in building inclusive teams.
- **Training sessions equipped managers** with practical knowledge of wellbeing, psychological safety and the neuroscience behind behaviour, deepening their understanding of how their leadership choices can influence team dynamics.
- **Guided discussions encouraged managers** to put inclusive practices into action – from adapting communication styles to amplifying diverse voices – so every team member feels valued and supported.

# Leadership that supports colleagues to be their whole self



- We introduced a new **psychological safety module** into our leadership curriculum, focusing on practical behaviours like inclusive decision-making, active listening and spotting bias. These are simple actions leaders can start using straight away.
- Through our **Inspire leadership programme**, **135 colleagues** completed the new module, consisting of 37 female and 98 male colleagues. The sessions placed particular emphasis on supporting **future female leaders**, giving them tools to build confidence, influence and resilience as they progress.
- Leaders also worked through **real scenarios and case studies**, helping them understand what psychological safety looks like in everyday situations – from creating open conversations to building a strong team purpose.

# Supporting leaders of the future



- Our **Aspire leadership programme** continued with a mixed gender cohort, making sure everyone has a fair chance to develop and move forward.
- In 2025, 40 colleagues took part in Aspire, consisting of 17 female and 23 male colleagues, each receiving a **personal development plan** tailored to their strengths, career goals and the direction in which they want to grow.



# Inclusion through health, wellbeing and community

- **Inclusive physical and mental health support** was the focus of our wellbeing activities this year. We made our Step Challenge accessible by recognising a wider range of movements and activities, including wheelchair use.
- **We strengthened our mental health support** through talks from mental health organisation States of Mind and wellbeing sessions for operational colleagues at Safety Stand Downs. We also partnered with Mental Health UK to develop training that helps colleagues to support customers who are facing mental health challenges – including a self-care module for colleagues. We added a Mental Health Awareness module to our Manager Development Programme.
- **Our Networks played an important role in strengthening inclusion.** WIN led health campaigns, including Menstrual Health Awareness. Our first all-network AGM took place in Bristol and, later in the year, the Men's Health & Wellbeing Network launched, open to colleagues of all genders. Their events included a suicide awareness talk delivered by the organisation #Andy'sManClub.
- **We broadened access to support** by extending full EAP services to colleagues' families and sharing a library of recorded webinars. We piloted suicide prevention training and delivered in-person bereavement support in Bristol. Our offer expanded, including access to an enhanced carers support service called

Adult & Eldercare Support. EAP usage in 2025 rose by 65.7% compared to 2024, in addition to a 65.75% increase in the total counselling cases created, and a 116% increase in the number of counselling sessions delivered. Our Wellbeing Advisor has elevated awareness throughout WWU of the support on offer, and these results indicate an increase in colleagues reaching out for support, receiving structured counselling, and staying engaged with the counselling for longer.

# Our gender pay gap numbers

## What our 2025 data shows

Our team | 1,916 colleagues



**17% female (332) | 83% male (1,584)**

2024 figures for comparison:

1,943 total colleagues – 17% female (331), 83% male (1,612)

While our workforce numbers decreased in 2025-26, the percentage of women and men has remained consistent with 2024-25 figures.



## What is the gender pay gap, and why are we reporting it?

The gender pay gap is the **difference between the average pay** of men and women in an organisation. Any employer with 250 or more employees on a specific date each year is legally required to report their gender pay gap data to the UK Government.

Once calculations are made, they must be **reported on the gender pay gap service**. Part of the requirements state we must confirm our gender pay gap is accurate and completed in accordance with gender pay gap reporting requirements – we can confirm this is the case.

## How are the numbers reported?

### 1/ The Mean

The mean is found by determining the average hourly pay for men and women separately, then working out the percentage difference compared to men's pay. This percentage difference is what we report.

#### SNAPSHOT ACROSS THE YEARS: MEAN GENDER PAY GAP

2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
7%	8%	8%	3%	7%

#### In more detail

Our 2025-26 gender pay gap data shows that in Wales & West Utilities the mean average hourly earnings of men are 7% higher than that of women. This is a reduction of 1% since last year's gender pay gap findings.

### 2/ The Median

The median is worked out by listing hourly earnings for women in numerical order and doing the same separately for men. The median is the middle numbers of each list. We report the percentage difference.

#### SNAPSHOT ACROSS THE YEARS: MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP

2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
6%	9%	10%	9%	7%

#### In more detail

Our 2025-26 gender pay gap data shows that in Wales & West Utilities the median average hourly earnings of men are 6% higher than that of women. This remains below the national average of 12.8% and is a reduction of 3% since 2024-25.

## Is the gender pay gap the same as equal pay?

No, the gender pay gap is different from equal pay.

Equal pay is **the right for men and women to be paid identically for doing the same work, or work of equal value.**

With our well-defined job profiles and established pay structure, we are confident that what our colleagues earn at WWU is based on their job and our pay structure, and is not affected by their gender or any other characteristic.

### Bonuses

BONUSES RECEIVED			
FEMALE 35%		MALE 17%	
2024	2023	2024	2023
35%	35%	17%	16%

MEAN BONUS GAP: 2025 45%

2024: 37% • 2023: 45% • 2022: 36%

MEDIAN BONUS GAP: 2025 34%

2024: 40% • 2023: 42% • 2022: 21%

## Pay distribution

We calculate the pay distribution by looking at our organisation in four equal parts based on colleague earnings.

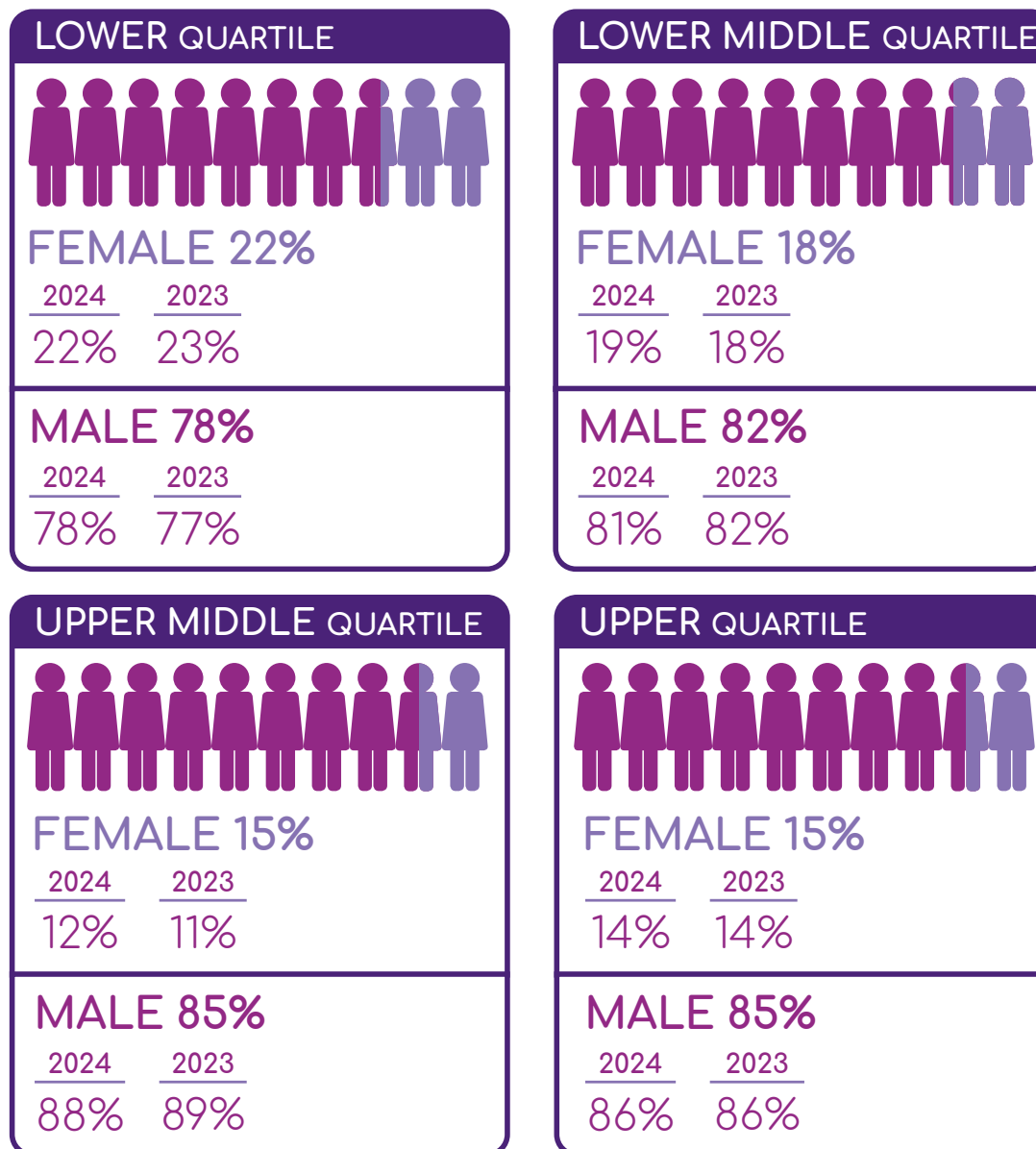
### In 2025, women made up:

- 15% of employees in the **upper** hourly pay quarter (highest paid jobs)
- 15% of employees in the **upper middle** hourly pay quarter
- 18% of employees in the **lower middle** hourly pay quarter
- 22% of employees in the **lower** hourly pay quarter (lowest paid jobs)

### In more detail

Our pay distribution has remained largely consistent over recent years. However, there has been a 3% increase in the percentage of women colleagues in the upper middle pay category of WWU between 2024 and 2025. This represents the women of WWU that have been promoted from the lower middle quartile to a higher grade, demonstrating both the talents and tenacity of our colleagues and the success of our development programmes.

2025 and previous figures for comparison



# Real stories

Redefining women in the workplace

*These stories highlight women's experiences and achievements, and also reflect the practical changes—such as flexible pathways, inclusive leadership and visible role models—that help create a supportive environment for everyone.*

# Senior Manager spotlight

Driving change: how Lindsay Atkins turned setbacks into leadership success

Lindsay never expected her transport and logistics background to lead her into the gas industry, but today she wouldn't choose to be anywhere else.

*Continued >*



Lindsay's career began behind the wheel as a delivery driver for a courtesy-car company. It didn't take long for her talent to show, and she quickly progressed to office coordinator. Six months later the manager's role was advertised. The opportunity offered both financial stability and the chance to take on new responsibility. She got the job. Over her years in this role, it became a passion for Lindsay – as the only female manager with her own depot in the entire company – to challenge herself to be the best.

However, sometimes life throws curveballs. The courtesy-car company went into administration, and Lindsay was there to hand over the keys on the last day. She needed a new role. When a job in logistics came up at WWU, she decided a non-management role might be a welcome change after a turbulent period. Kate Williams was

a Logistics First Line Manager (FLM) when Lindsay joined and inspired her to see that being female in utilities wasn't a barrier. One year in, Lindsay felt that familiar pull toward leadership. With her depth of experience, she naturally saw opportunities for improvement – and soon worked her way up to Performance Manager.

Lindsay attended our leadership development programme, Inspire, that focuses on building psychological safety, encouraging authentic leadership and creating a strong sense of purpose. It combines workshops with practical activities to help people put their leadership learning into practice day to day.

In March 2025, Lindsay was appointed as Transport Manager, and it immediately felt like the right fit. Reflecting on her journey, Lindsay says:

*I genuinely feel that all the opportunities that have been given to me have been at the right times and stages of my development. It has sometimes felt like there's been someone sat on my shoulder, knowing when I need the next nudge and in which direction.*

*A highlight is being appointed to my current role as Transport Manager. Having the business believe in me. Allowing me to be a Senior Manager. I feel very honoured they have put that trust in me. I feel like I'm in the place I'm meant to be, until I retire, for all the right reasons. I feel empowered by the business to do the right thing, and to be given a voice.*

# Graduate spotlight: Jessie Walters

Led by values: building a career shaped by sustainability

Jessie Walters joined us in 2024 as a Sustainability Graduate. Drawn to our values and our sustainability strategy, Jessie has always been passionate about the environment and wanted to be part of the transition to net zero in a way that had practical impact.

 *I've developed my communication skills with a lot of stakeholder engagement. I've grown the ability to be adaptive from being in new environments, and I've learned to ask smarter questions as I've gone along. I recognise I'm quite resilient, and I'm a people person, having built relationships across the business.*



*Continued >*



The graduate programme stood out for its holistic approach – giving Jessie the opportunity to explore the entire business, not solely the environmental side. This broad exposure has been key to understanding how every department contributes to sustainability goals.

Jessie and her fellow graduates joined at the same time, forming early connections and collaborating on placements. Alongside building community, one of the most empowering aspects of WWU's graduate programme is its self-led structure. Jessie took charge of planning and managing her own placements across departments – a challenge that helped her grow in confidence and capability.

Mentorship is a cornerstone of the graduate experience.

Jessie meets monthly with her mentor, creating space for reflection, advice, and growth. Alongside the hands-on development, Jessie is also undertaking an online master's degree with Edinburgh University and is working towards professional chartership with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). Additional development opportunities have included project management and operational qualifications.

Reflecting on her journey so far, Jessie shared the skills she has strengthened, the surprises along the way and her aspirations for the future – as well as her advice for women considering a career in gas, and for anyone who wants to help make the sector more welcoming and inclusive.



*I really enjoyed operations which surprised me. I really enjoyed being out with Build & Repair and Emergency Metering Service. Beforehand, I was dreading six weeks out in the freezing cold in January, digging up gas mains! But actually – I loved it. Getting involved with the teams. Experiencing the pressures they face and having exposure to that.*

*In terms of a career path, I see myself within project management and driving strategy to reach net zero.*

*Women might be surprised in terms of the environment. When we think of a male dominated industry we might have a lot of misconceptions. Everyone has been so welcoming and friendly. I think there's a lot of opportunity for women to build a career and progress within the gas industry. When it comes to the graduate programme, it gives you the freedom to shape your own experience, so take advantage of that. Reach out, ask questions, and explore parts of the business you might not have considered.*

*And don't worry if you don't have all the answers – the culture at WWU is really supportive, so you'll learn and grow every step of the way.*



# Manager spotlight: Sophie Shorney

Finding purpose through people: Sophie's journey to becoming a leader in customer and community impact

A career in the gas industry wasn't something Sophie ever imagined. With a degree in Graphic Design, she expected to pursue something in that field. But over time, she discovered a different vocation – supporting people, shaping customer experiences and driving positive outcomes for communities. That calling has shaped a rewarding and varied career across WWU.

*I'm not completely sure what the future holds, and I'm quite comfortable with that. I'm happiest in roles that have strong people or customer focus, so I imagine they will always be at the heart of whatever is next.*

*My career so far has shown me that sometimes the most fulfilling roles are the ones you never expected, so I'm keeping an open mind and staying curious.*

*Continued >*



Sophie joined us in 2013 as a Customer Service Assistant before moving into the Complaints team and becoming a key contact across the network. Her move to the Priority Customer team as a Business Analyst was a turning point, allowing her to shape services for vulnerable customers and lead the writing of the Customer and Communities chapter of the GD2 Business Plan. The experience built her confidence and confirmed her passion for work that directly supports people.

She later progressed to be Customer Capability Lead. Following maternity leave in 2019, returning initially felt challenging on a personal level, with an adjustment to the transition and finding her preferred pace again – but she soon rebuilt momentum. That period strengthened her resilience and helped her reconnect with what she valued most in her career.

2022 brought a new role as Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide

Allowance Manager – one of the most meaningful of Sophie's career. She worked directly with partners that supported customers experiencing fuel poverty, helping them access support that genuinely changed their lives. It was work that played to her strengths: empathy, problem-solving, and dedication to people.

Three years later in 2025, she joined the Communications and Engagement Team as Engagement and Social Impact Manager. In this role, she oversees stakeholder engagement, VCMA projects, and activity involving Corporate Social Responsibility. Although still in the early stages, Sophie is energised by the opportunity to support communities on a wider scale and to shape work that delivers long-term social and environmental benefits.

Sophie credits strong support from her managers. Their belief in her potential, even when she doubted

herself, has been a recurring theme. Development programmes like Pathways Coaching also helped her step into new opportunities with greater confidence. Having a network of colleagues on similar career paths has provided reassurance and a sense of shared experience. Flexible hours to balance work and family life without slowing her career progression have allowed her to be present both at home and in her role.

Concluding our interview, Sophie considered what's ahead, her mindset of staying curious, and her advice for others considering a career path in gas.

Sophie's experience also reflects our broader aim: to make progression, flexibility and development support accessible and effective for colleagues of all genders, so that everyone can build a sustainable career.

*“Wherever I end up, I hope it's in a role where I feel I'm adding value, growing, and doing work that genuinely matters to me.”*

*“Would I recommend a career in gas to women not currently in the industry? Absolutely. Go for it! There are so many opportunities for women to join and grow into roles they truly care about. My biggest piece of advice would be to believe in yourself and not be afraid to shape your career in a way that aligns with your passions and strengths.”*

# Looking forward

With our Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and action plan guiding the year ahead, we are taking clear, practical action to drive meaningful change.

## Recognising inclusion with a calendar of events

A dedicated calendar of inclusion and diversity events will spotlight key moments such as National Inclusion Day, International Women's Day, Endometriosis Month, and Neurodiversity Celebration Month, creating regular opportunities for colleagues to learn, engage and participate.

## Encourage more women to join us

By continuing to promote the breadth of careers available across our organisation, we aim to broaden awareness and attract talent from a wider range of backgrounds. Targeted outreach through our graduate and apprenticeship programmes will help ensure our opportunities are visible and accessible to everyone. Alongside women-focused outreach, we will continue removing barriers and widening access for all under-represented groups, so that the best talent can join, develop and progress.



energy services today, while investing wisely to  
 create a sustainable, greener future



## Sustain colleague conversations

Networks and steering groups will continue gathering insights from colleagues, ensuring that lived experiences and real concerns shape our priorities. We aim to roll out a wellbeing survey which will help us understand in more depth what colleagues need and want. Then, we will develop a new Wellbeing Strategy for 2027 and beyond.

## Drive inclusive recruitment practice

Recruitment processes will be refined to remove barriers, strengthen accessibility, and reinforce inclusive decision-making at every stage of hiring.

## Embed inclusion awareness in training

Our management and leadership programmes will put further emphasis on inclusion, making the learning practical, relevant and something leaders naturally use day to day.

## Expand awareness of psychological safety

Monthly prompts – known as “nudges” – will keep psychological safety front of mind, prompting managers to spark conversations within their teams and apply learning in daily interactions.



### Further inclusion knowledge

Bespoke awareness sessions will be delivered to help colleagues explore unconscious bias and privilege, creating space for reflection and change.

### Support our networks

Support for colleague networks will expand, including exploring different colleague communities. We will recruit Wellbeing Ambassadors from Networks, each with a special interest area for their wellbeing promotion work – such as menopause or reproductive health.

### Collaborate with industry working groups

Partnerships with industry groups will help identify future workforce needs and clarify the skills required to meet upcoming decarbonisation challenges.

### Establish action based on data

Diversity data from new starters will be collected and analysed, creating a solid foundation for exploring ethnicity pay gap reporting in future years.

# Any questions?

If you have any questions related to our EDI work, please contact [enquiries@wwutilities.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@wwutilities.co.uk)

## Sources

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