



Equality Impact Assessment CRMP 2025-30



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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Purpose

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's (HWFRS) Community Risk Management Plan 2025-2030 (the CRMP) is the Service's overall strategy for keeping people, their homes, communities and environment safe from fire and other emergencies with the resources available. It looks at the fire and rescue-related risks facing the communities we serve and sets out our high-level plans for tackling those risks through our prevention, protection and emergency response services. To be impactful, we must have consideration for the whole community who live, work and visit Herefordshire and Worcestershire. As a public service focused on delivering excellence for our whole community, we need to ensure equality of access to our services for everyone. We believe that our CRMP does not disadvantage or discriminate against any part of the community, that the strategic aims align to the Service's core code of ethics, and that decision making is supported by evidence. This assessment provides the scope for reflection throughout the CRMP process to ensure we have fully considered and heard from our community, and that targeted interventions to reduce risk are based in evidence. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be updated after the public consultation has been held on our plans to ensure that we have understood the view of, and addressed any impacts raised in respect of, people with protected characteristics.

The Statutory Context

The Equality Act legally protects people from discrimination on the basis of certain characteristics, referred to as the nine protected characteristics. The Public Sector Equality Duty is a duty on public authorities like Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority to consider how its policies and decisions affect people with protected characteristics.

In the context of managing risks, we know from our analysis that there are specific demographics that warrant our interventions. However, these decisions must be made fairly, be supported by robust evidence and intelligence, and not to the detriment of other groups. This assessment considers the community by way of protected characteristics to ensure that there are only positive or neutral impacts on those it may affect.

In undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) we can ensure that the Service's CRMP has had due regard for the community. In line with the Service's core code of ethics, the EqIA supports us to make decisions based on evidence without discrimination or bias, to promote equality, and to foster good relations.

Inclusion is integral to what we do and we champion our organisation as an inclusive employer. We are proud to have embedded the importance of equality and inclusion across our organisation and strive to reflect the rich mix of our communities we serve. For more information on our equality objectives, please visit the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) area of our website.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Communities

The counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire cover a large, mostly rural area of around 1,500 square miles. They had a combined population of 790,700 in the 2021 Census and the population is projected to increase by 5.6%, or 44,000 additional people, by 2031.

Age

The population in Herefordshire and Worcestershire is ageing. Since 2011, the median age of a person has risen across all

local authority areas in the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service area (the Service area). The age structures in the two counties have a higher proportion of over 65s compared to the West Midlands region and England. However, between our local authority areas there are differences in population age structures, whereby the median age of a person living in the authority areas of Worcester and Redditch is around 10-years younger compared to the median age of those living in Malvern Hills and Herefordshire.

Table 1: Local Authority Area Age Structures. Source: Office of National Statistics (ONS) Census 2011 and Mid-2023 Population Estimates.

Local Authority Area	Median Age (Census 2011)	Median Age (ONS Mid-2023 population estimates)	Percentage of Population aged 65+ (%) (ONS Mid-Year Estimates, 2023)
Herefordshire County	45.1	49.2	26.7
Bromsgrove District	44.6	45.2	23.0
Malvern Hills	47.8	51.1	28.4
Redditch	38.8	40.9	19.2
Worcester	38.0	40.1	18.2
Wychavon	45.9	47.9	25.4
Wyre Forest	44.4	47.5	25.4

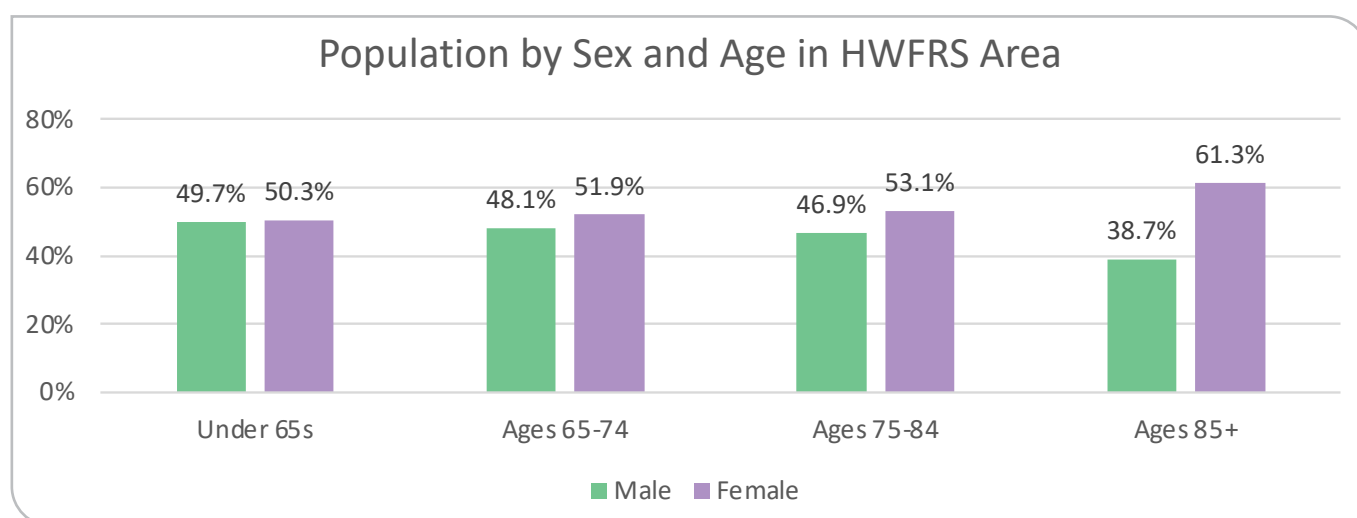
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Communities

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Sex

The population of the service area is broadly equal by sex for working-age people. However, the proportion of the population that are female increases with age whereby 66.7% of persons aged over 90-years in the HWFRS service area are female. This is reflective of the longer life expectancy of women compared to men.

Table 2: Service Area Population by Age. Source: ONS Mid 2023 Population Estimates



Ethnicity

Table 3: Service Area by Ethnic Group. Source: ONS Census 2021.

Local Authority Area	Herefordshire	Bromsgrove	Malvern Hills	Redditch	Worcester	Wychavon	Wyre Forest
Population (Census 2021)	187,032	99,183	79,487	87,034	103,869	132,495	101,609
% Arab	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
% Asian/Asian British	1.3	3.2	1.4	5.8	5.7	1.2	1.8
% Black/Black British	0.3	0.8	0.3	1.2	1.1	0.3	0.5
% Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	1.1	2.4	1.4	2.6	2.2	1.2	1.5
% Other White	5.1	1.6	2.5	6.6	6.6	5.2	2.4
% White British	91.1	90.4	93.3	82.4	82.7	90.6	92.5
% White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.4
% White Irish	0.4	1.0	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5
% White Roma	0.1	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	-
% Any other Ethnic Group	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.3

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Communities

Continued

The results of the Census 2021 indicate that the populations of Herefordshire and Worcestershire are predominately White British. The local authority areas of Redditch and Worcester recorded higher ethnic diversity whereby around 17.5% of

the population recorded their ethnicity as something other than White British. However, all authority areas in the two counties are less diverse compared to the West Midlands region and compared to England and Wales as a whole.

Religion or Belief

Table 4: Service Area by Religion. Source: ONS Census 2021.

Local Authority Area	Herefordshire	Bromsgrove	Malvern Hills	Redditch	Worcester	Wychavon	Wyre Forest
Population (Census 2021)	187,032	99,183	79,487	87,034	103,869	132,495	101,609
% No Religion	36.6	37.4	38.1	40	39.6	35	38.6
% Christian	54.9	53.5	53.9	48.9	48.9	57.7	53.3
% Buddhist	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.2
% Hindu	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.1
% Jewish	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	0	0
% Muslim	0.4	0.9	0.5	4.2	4.1	0.5	1
% Sikh	0.1	1.2	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3
% Other religion	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5
% Not answered	6.9	5.6	6.2	5.5	6.1	5.6	5.9

Across England and Wales 46.2% described themselves as Christian in the religion question of the Census 2021. Across all authority areas of the two counties, Christianity was the most common response surpassing national response rate for Christianity. In Redditch and Worcester, a higher proportion described themselves as Muslim (4.2% and 4.1% respectively). Whilst in Bromsgrove saw respondents indicated their religion as Hindu (0.7%) or Sikh (1.2%) in higher proportion than in our other authority areas.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Communities

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Disability

Table 5: Service Area Disability Rates. Source: ONS Census 2021.

Local Authority Area	Herefordshire	Bromsgrove	Malvern Hills	Redditch	Worcester	Wychavon	Wyre Forest
Population (Census 2021)	187,032	99,183	79,487	87,034	103,869	132,495	101,609
% Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot	6.7	6.1	6.4	7.7	7.0	6.1	7.9
% Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little	10.3	9.5	10.5	10.6	11.0	9.9	10.9
% Not disabled under the Equality Act	83.0	84.4	83.1	81.8	82.0	84.0	81.1

Census 2021 asked respondents to indicate whether they have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more. The percentage of respondents indicating a disability was broadly similar to the national response for England where 82.2% recorded no disability. The Wyre Forest district has the highest proportion (7.9%) of people in the category of day-to-day activities limited a lot, followed by Redditch (7.7%).

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Communities

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Sexual Orientation

Table 6: Service Area by Sexual Orientation. Source: ONS Census 2021.

Sexual Orientation by County (Census 2021)	Herefordshire	Worcestershire
% Straight or Heterosexual	89.70	91.03
% Gay or Lesbian	1.04	1.22
% Bisexual	0.90	0.97
% Pan-sexual	0.07	0.08
% Asexual	0.04	0.05
% Queer	0.01	0.01
% Other	0.11	0.08
% Not Answered	8.12	6.56

Sexual orientation was a voluntary question asked to those over the age of 16 in Census 2021. In England and Wales 89.4% of respondents identified as straight/heterosexual whilst a further 3.2% identified as gay or lesbian, bisexual, or other sexual orientation. A marginally higher proportion of people living in the counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire identified as straight/heterosexual compared to the national picture.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Communities

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Engagement

In August 2024, the Service held an engagement survey to capture the views of stakeholders, the public, and its staff. We sought views on community risk, concern about particular types of incidents, and how respondents would prioritise our activities. The survey was promoted on our website, via social media and shared with our stakeholder contacts list. Respondent of our initial engagement survey assigned the highest risk and concern to dwelling fires (57%) followed by road traffic collisions (RTCs) (53%) when asked about their perceptions of incident that the service might attend.

As a Service we want to ensure that we hear from a broad range of voices. The demographics of respondents were mostly representative of our communities with respect to gender, ethnicity and religion. However, there was an under-representation among some groups that we must endeavour to bridge which included people living with disabilities, and those who are aged over 65-years of age. It was noted that those aged over 65-years of age accounted for under 10% of respondents despite accounting for around 25% of the population in our two counties. The Service will be holding a formal public consultation on its draft CRMP and this will be conducted by an external party, Opinion Research Services, an independent specialist social research practice. There won't be any quotas set for participation and the Service would like as many people to respond to the consultation as possible. The consultation results will inform an updated equality impact assessment used for decision making before finalising the CRMP. This will provide assurance that our engagement has been wide reaching and that we have interpreted appropriately the community's perceptions of risk. We seek public agreement the CRMP has identified the main risks facing the community

and that the allocation of resources to the aims of prevention, protection and response are equitable and reflect public priorities.

Communications Strategy

The strategy for internal and external communications of the draft CRMP was developed through regular steering group meetings and formulation of the dynamic Campaign Plan. The Campaign Plan includes consideration of optimum targeting of a wide demographic externally, and all internal staff. To promote the August 2024 engagement survey externally, social media was utilised to encourage specific targeted demographic groups. The Service Facebook page has 11,897 followers of which 755 are over the age of 65. A younger age group of 18 to 34 years of age was targeted through Instagram, and the business community through 38,721 connections on LinkedIn. 528 direct emails were sent to partners, community groups neighbouring FRSs. Internally, the Service Bulletin promoted the survey and the online staff engagement sessions. Two all staff emails were distributed. A series of graphic panels with QR codes for easy access were published on the Service TriplePlay screens and SharePoint banners. A wider social media campaign is planned for the formal public consultation, linking to a comprehensive page on the Service website. The new Service website, which was launched in March 2024 has a comprehensive accessibility tool, with features such as language translation, text-to-speech, colour and type size alteration. The accessibility tool has been used 1024 times since launch.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Communities

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Equality Impact Assessment

This section summarises the expected impact of our CRMP on people with reference to characteristics protected under The Equality Act 2010, outlining risk factors and considerations.

Our CRMP will have a positive impact on all members of the community, but targeted interventions will be resourced towards groups at higher risk. Those at higher risk are identified by risk analysis around lifestyles rather than being solely identified for sharing a protected characteristic. However, there are inherently intersects between lifestyles and protected characteristics. For example, the Service's risk analysis using a consumer classification product (CACI ACORN) identified that the financially stretched group have more dwelling fires per household (e.g. 30% of dwelling fires compared to 20% of households). If the Service targets households that are financially stretched there is likely to be an overlap with protected characteristics because of the interrelation of factors contributing to socio-economic disadvantage. Therefore, this will mean our CRMP has a higher net benefit to some members of the community who share protected characteristics.

Age

The strategic aims of our CRMP will have a positive impact on people with this protected characteristic.

National Home Office statistics for fire incidents attended by fire and rescue services in England provide clear evidence that older people are more likely to be victims of fire. Our incident data corroborates this observation, whereby two-thirds of fire

related deaths at dwelling fires in the last five financial years have involved persons aged over 65 (a median age of 74).

We know that an ageing population may increase the number of people who are more vulnerable. It is often the combination of age and a further related factor like frailty, poverty, or disability that puts people at greater risk. Without significant improvements in health, we can expect that the number of persons living with poor health or living with a disability will rise as the population continues to age. We must also consider that older people are more likely to live alone, that they may experience above average rates of social isolation, or if they exhibit hoarding behaviour then this could be more problematic.

The Service recognises age as a risk factor in relation to road traffic collisions. National Home Office statistics for road casualties in Great Britain show that young drivers (aged 17-24) continue to represent the largest proportion of those seriously injured and killed in RTCs, although there is an increasing proportion of older driver casualties (aged 70 and over) which may be related to the ageing population.

Our CRMP involves identifying those at greatest risk and targeting prevention activities, such as safe and well visits or road safety partnership work, towards those most vulnerable. To support this, the Service uses fire risk mapping, household lifestyle analysis, shared partner information and local intelligence to help target those most vulnerable. We will continue to work with partners to ensure there are referral pathways to reach the most vulnerable.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Communities

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Disability

The strategic aims of our CRMP will have a positive impact on people with this protected characteristic.

We know that disability is one of a number of vulnerabilities in relation to fire risk and often this risk factor is intertwined with others like age or socio-economics and material deprivation. For example, those with limited mobility or difficulties with breathing could have greater difficulty escaping.

The Service has built up its partnership working to ensure that two-way referral pathways are used and are efficient. This includes working with partner agencies such as local authority social care, adult mental health teams and other health services. We will continue to work with partners to ensure that referral pathways are effective to enable our services to reach those who are more vulnerable.

Gender Reassignment

The strategic aims of our CRMP will have a neutral impact on people with this protected characteristic.

Persons may be more vulnerable if there are factors of social isolation or mental health difficulties. We know that discrimination and hate crime experienced by members of the transgender community has risen and this could exacerbate vulnerability among this group.

As an employer HWFRS is committed to the equality of opportunity for trans people and our employees are sensitive to individual needs and circumstances.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

The strategic aims of our CRMP will have a neutral impact on people with this protected characteristic.

No impacts have been identified for this group. If impacts are raised during the consultation, then we will address those concerns.

Pregnancy and Maternity

The strategic aims of our CRMP will have a neutral impact on people with this protected characteristic.

Expectant or new mothers may be at greater risk to fire where there are factors involving reduced mobility. Once a child is born, there will be an additionally vulnerably member of the household.

We will be able to support those from this group to feel and be safer by enhancing relations with agency partners, ensuring that there is a referral pathway for those whom our service offering would benefit.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Communities

Continued

Race

The strategic aims of our CRMP will have a neutral impact on people with this protected characteristic.

Our incident data does not show any evidence that people from a particular race are at a greater risk of fire. However, we are mindful that socio-economics is a risk factor and that race and racism contributes to socio-economic disadvantage.

People of some races may have lower levels of trust in the Service and be more reluctant to engage with us. By working with partner organisations and community groups we can increase our engagement and ensure that we develop effective referral pathways among all minority groups in our community. As a Service, we publish materials in several languages to help reduce barriers to engagement with us and have recently updated our website with a translation feature. The most popular language translations have been into Dutch, French, Polish and Spanish.

Within the Service we continue to monitor employment trends with a focus on positive action for under-represented groups.

Religion or Belief

The strategic aims of our CRMP will have a neutral impact on people with this protected characteristic.

Our incident data does not show any evidence that people from a particular faith are at any greater risk of fire. There is a risk factor around the lighting of candles for religious activities or overcrowding in religious venues. However, such incidents are not high from a risk likelihood perspective.

As a Service we are mindful and respectful of religious holidays and considerate in the

planning of activities and engagements. We seek to foster good relations and build our engagement with religious communities to strengthen effective referral pathways to reach all those vulnerable and at risk of fire.

Sex

The strategic aims of our CRMP will have a neutral impact on people with this protected characteristic.

The CRMP does not specifically target on the basis of sex, however some interventions may have a higher net benefit to those who are male if interventions are more impactful to those at greater risk. For example, our road safety partnership working delivered in schools is provided irrespective of sex but we know that men are more commonly recorded as being injured at road traffic collisions (RTCs). In the last five financial years, our incident data shows that men accounted for almost 60% of those injured at an RTC and men accounted for almost 80% of fatalities in RTCs.

Analysis of the Service's incident data finds that males accounted for almost two-thirds of those killed or injured at a fire incident (64.5%) in the last five financial years. This is consistent with the national picture and anecdotally there is reference to greater risk taking amongst men e.g. in attempting to fight a fire.

Sexual Orientation

The strategic aims of our CRMP will have a neutral impact on people with this protected characteristic.

No impacts have been identified for this group. If impacts are raised during the consultation, then we will address those concerns.

Conclusion

This document provides the scope for reflection throughout the CRMP process to ensure we have fully considered and heard from our community, and that targeted interventions to reduce risk via our Prevention, Protection and Response Strategies, are based in evidence.

Our CRMP will have a positive impact on all members of the community, but targeted interventions will be resourced towards groups identified as higher risk. For example, our Prevention Strategy sets out clear aims to target those with certain characteristics highlighted in this EqlA such as age, disability or sex via Home Fire Safety Visits, Road Safety campaigns and Safeguarding.

There are inherently intersects between lifestyles and protected characteristics. If the Service targets households identified through analysis of lifestyle factors, there is likely to

be an overlap with protected characteristics because of the interrelation of factors contributing to socio-economic disadvantage. Therefore, this will mean our CRMP and our Core Strategies will have a higher net benefit to some members of the community who share protected characteristics.

This EqlA will continue to evolve throughout the life of the CRMP and any findings will be reflected in our approach to delivering our aims. For example, during our engagement campaign, there was an under-representation among some groups that we must endeavour to bridge, which included people living with disabilities and those who are aged over 65-years of age. This will help inform how we undertake the Public Consultation to ensure that we have understood the view of and addressed, any impacts raised in respect of all people with protected characteristics.



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