

National Assembly for Wales
Assembly Commission Equality Plan

2012–2016



The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

Copies of this report can also be obtained in accessible formats including Braille, large print, audio or hard copy from:

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1. Introduction

Our Organisation

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account. The Assembly Commission provides resources, property and staff to enable the National Assembly for Wales to function as a parliamentary institution. As such, we have responsibilities as an employer and as an organisation that supports Assembly Members and interacts with the public.

Our Legal Duties in Relation to Equality

The Government of Wales Act 2006 states that the functions of the Assembly Commission and the proceedings of the National Assembly for Wales should be conducted with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the Assembly Commission is a non-devolved public body. This means that as an organisation, we have responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty set by the UK Government. Where we deem it relevant, we will act in accordance with the more prescriptive Public Sector Equality Duty set by the Welsh Government.

Our Plan recognises that the Equality Act 2010 places a general duty on the Assembly Commission to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic¹ and those who don't; and
- foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Act 2010 also requires that the Assembly Commission publish monitoring data and to consider the equality impact of decisions and policies.

¹ For these purposes the "relevant protected characteristics" are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Functions of the Assembly Commission and proceedings of the National Assembly for Wales should be conducted so that the English and Welsh languages are treated on a basis of equality. The Assembly Commission has a separate Bilingual Services Scheme that ensures our compliance with this duty.

Our Vision

Our vision is to be an exemplar organisation in our commitment to promoting equality, valuing diversity and respecting human rights. We believe that equality of opportunity for all is a basic human right and actively oppose all forms of discrimination.

We strive to create an accessible parliamentary body, which engages with and respects all of the people of Wales.

Our Values

Staff, Assembly Members and the public can expect the Assembly Commission to:

- promote, respect and value equality of opportunity and diversity;
- challenge and eliminate harassment and discrimination;
- recognise and address barriers to equality, access and participation;
- behave as an exemplary employer and accessible service provider;
- aim for our workforce to be representative of our diverse society;
- encourage and widen participation and engagement across Wales;
- promote positive attitudes and good relations between different groups of people.

How we plan to achieve our vision and promote our values:

- Implementing and actively monitoring our Equality Plan and other supporting policies;
- having fair, inclusive and effective policies in place for staff and service users, both the Assembly Members and public that we serve;
- training and supporting Assembly Commission staff, Assembly Members and their staff with relevant equality training and awareness-raising activities so they are able to play their role in implementing this Plan;
- acting, where appropriate, on feedback, complaints and suggestions;

- looking at the impact of our decisions, policies, functions etc. on different people.

How we will monitor our progress in achieving this:

Our Equality Plan will run from April 2012 until the end of the Assembly term in April 2016 after which it will be reviewed. Each April, we will publish an Annual Equality Update which will detail our progress in meeting our equality objectives set out in our Equality Plan and provide other relevant equality information including workforce monitoring data. The Assembly Commission will review the updates annually.

We will publish the information on the Assembly's website and make it available in accessible formats.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Assembly Commission is committed to the central concepts of equality, fairness, dignity and respect. In order to embed them throughout our organisation, it is important that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in promoting of equality, eliminating discrimination and fostering good relations. These are:

- Assembly Commissioner and Senior Management to provide strategic lead and champion equality and diversity;
- Line Managers to ensure that their staff are supported and realise their full potential;
- frontline staff to deliver a service that encompasses the concepts of dignity and respect;
- relevant teams to review and assess the equality impact of our work;
- Equality Team to support, coordinate and monitor the progress of the Equality Plan's actions;
- all staff to be aware of their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010; challenge and report discriminatory behaviour; treat colleagues with dignity and respect and provide an inclusive service to all customers.

2. Consultation methodology

Throughout October and November 2011, we undertook a consultation exercise to gather feedback to inform the development of our plan. Internally, we produced bilingual online surveys for Assembly staff, for Assembly Members and their staff. We also attended team meetings and held internal focus groups with staff, including our staff networks, with contracted staff and with Assembly Member Support Staff.

Externally, we produced an online bilingual survey in a range of alternative formats and community languages which were available on our website and promoted via a press release, Twitter and Facebook. The information was produced in Easy read, British Sign Language, audio, large print, Somali, Arabic, Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati, French, Hindi, Punjabi, Polish and Mandarin. Links to the public survey and the range of formats were shared with all of our contacts, across the equality field throughout Wales. Links to our consultation were also promoted through external organisations including Llanelli Multi-Cultural Network, Healthy Newport Bulletin, Silobreaker, Participation Cymru, Stonewall Cymru, Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham, Disability Wales, Deaf Association Wales.

Table 1 below outlines the focus groups and meetings that we held with external organisations.

Table 1: External focus groups

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Cardiff | Cardiff-Wales Mardi Gras |
| Across South Wales | Valleys Faith Forum South East Wales Regional Equality Council (SEWREC) |
| Llandeilo | Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services Trans GIST |
| Senedd | Women Making a Difference |
| Swansea | MEWN Cymru |
| Wrexham | Wrexham Asylum Seekers Support Group Tangnefedd – North East Wales Interfaith, Peace and Justice Forum |
| Colwyn Bay - Rhyl | Conwy Access Group VIVA – LGBT youth group |

In addition to our focus groups, we received responses to our public survey from a variety of individuals and groups including disability advocates, attendees at Mardi Gras, trans people, Cytun, National Federation of Women's Institutes - Wales, Deaf Association Wales, Age Cymru, Chwarae Teg, Tai Pawb and People First groups.

3. Our Priority Equality Objectives

In drawing up our priority objectives we focussed on our key functions. The Priority Objectives we identified are:

- encourage and widen public engagement;
- further develop the Assembly Commission as an equality of opportunity employer;
- support and provide services to Assembly Members and their Staff;
- embed equality in organisational management.

We also took into account:

- our size, resources and the nature of our work;
- evidence and information we have collected;
- our previous work on Equality, including a review of our 2008-11 Equality Scheme;
- feedback and complaints;
- our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Each aim has been given one of the priority level rankings below:

Priority

- 1 Aim identifies a major gap in our work
- 2 Needs some further work to meet the aim
- 3 Maintain current commitment

Those aims identified as priority level 1 are specific and measurable. The Action Plan sets out the work the Assembly Commission plans to undertake over the next four years to help us to meet these aims. While many of the actions are new, others build upon current good practice.

4. Contact Us

If you need more information about our Equality Plan or would like to speak to someone regarding a query or a suggestion, please contact us using the details below:

Ross Davies 029 2089 8197

Sarah Crosbie 029 2089 8204

Textphone: 029 2089 8601

Email: EqualitiesTeam@wales.gov.uk

Priority Objective 1: Encourage and Widen Public Engagement

What we mean by effective public engagement:

- Members of the public being able to find out information easily and quickly about the Assembly and its business, know how to contact Assembly Members and how to contribute to the business of the Assembly
- Assembly Members are provided with the means to engage with the people of Wales
- our facilities and services are inclusive and accessible to the public
- our organisations and interest groups can consider the Assembly estate as a venue where they can hold events
- our Committees, Outreach and Education Teams reach diverse / under-represented groups that have not previously come into contact with the Assembly or been involved in its work
- members of the public know that they can visit the Assembly estate and are aware of our facilities.

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|---|----------------|---|---|----------------------|------------------------|
| We will proactively engage with diverse people across Wales | 2 | Diverse groups know about the work of the Assembly and how they can get involved and contact their Assembly Members. Feedback gathered by our outreach team | <p>Review written outputs to ensure people understand the role of the Assembly and Assembly Members</p> <p>Focus on engaging grass roots and diverse groups in our engagement and consultation strategies</p> <p>Consider how we provide hard copy information in a range of community locations</p> <p>Develop our use of social media to reach diverse groups</p> <p>Promote Outreach work through social media, local media and local contacts</p> <p>Work closer with Members and the Presiding Officer to promote public engagement</p> <p>Assess the feasibility undertaking a further Step Up Cymru mentoring scheme</p> | September 2012 | Head of Communications |
| | | | Focus on engaging grass roots and diverse groups in our engagement and consultation strategies | April 2013 | Head of Communications |
| | | | Consider how we provide hard copy information in a range of community locations | April 2013 | Head of Communications |
| | | | Develop our use of social media to reach diverse groups | September 2012 | Head of Communications |
| | | | Promote Outreach work through social media, local media and local contacts | September 2012 | Head of Communications |
| | | | Work closer with Members and the Presiding Officer to promote public engagement | April 2013 | Head of Communications |
| | | | Assess the feasibility undertaking a further Step Up Cymru mentoring scheme | September 2013 | Equality Manager |

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|--|----------------|---|--|---|--|
| | | | <p>Promote equality through a series of a cross-Wales events</p> <p>Develop a cross-Wales programme of events related to promoting equality</p> | <p>April 2013</p> <p>April 2013</p> | <p>Head of Communications</p> <p>Head of Communications</p> |
| We will ensure that our estates and facilities are accessible | 2 | Positive feedback from service users | <p>Undertake an access audit of the Assembly Estate and prioritise actions</p> <p>Create signage outside the Senedd to welcome visitors and to promote services and facilities</p> <p>Undertake monthly maintenance checks of accessible services</p> | <p>June 2012</p> <p>April 2013</p> | <p>Head of Estates and Facilities</p> <p>Head of Estates and Facilities</p> <p>Head of Estates and Facilities</p> |
| We will make sure that our information is accessible (written, visual and Internet services) | 2 | <p>Increase in the range of information available in accessible formats.</p> <p>Feedback from service users</p> | <p>Review our publications brand to identify and prioritise actions to address any barriers to access</p> <p>Develop a new introductory publication in a range of accessible formats and languages</p> <p>Provide plain language training to staff</p> | <p>September 2012</p> <p>September 2012</p> <p>September 2012</p> | <p>Head of Communications</p> <p>Head of Communications</p> <p>Head of Communications</p> <p>Head of HR training, Head of Communications</p> |

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|--|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| We will ensure that the formal business of the Assembly is accessible to diverse people in Wales | 2 | Positive feedback from service users Increase in evidence submissions and consultation responses from diverse groups | <p>Undertake an access audit of our website and prioritise actions</p> <p>Develop outreach work to increase committee engagement</p> <p>Use a checklist to ensure accessibility of venues booked across Wales</p> <p>Promote relevant debates to representative groups</p> <p>Promote petitions to diverse groups through outreach and communications</p> <p>Review processes to identify and remove barriers to engagement and involvement</p> | <p>April 2013</p> <p>April 2013</p> <p>September 2012</p> <p>April 2013</p> <p>April 2013</p> <p>April 2013</p> | <p>Head of Communications</p> <p>Head of Communications</p> <p>Head of Assembly Committees, Head of Chamber and Legislation Service</p> <p>Head of Communications</p> <p>Head of Communications</p> <p>Head of Assembly Committees, Head of Chamber and Legislation Service</p> |

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|------|----------------|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------|--|
| | | | Review and update database of equality groups for consultations | April 2013 | Head of Assembly Committees, Head of Chamber and Legislation Service, Head of Research Service |
| | | | Produce a toolkit of ways of conducting inclusive consultations | April 2013 | Head of Assembly Committees, Head of Chamber and Legislation Service, Head of Research Service |

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|--|----------------|---|--|----------------------|--|
| We will make sure that there are events that take place on the Assembly estate that are diverse and promote equality and diversity | 3 | The Assembly hosts various events which represent the diverse population of Wales | Audit the use of the Assembly estate as an event venue by diverse groups | April 2013 | Head of Front of House |
| | | | Review current event guidance to include information on accessibility to third parties holding events here by sharing our accessible publications guidance | September 2012 | Head of Front of House |
| | | | Ensure access issues are considered for events through equality impact assessments | September 2012 | Head of Front of House Events, Head of Corporate Events |

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|---|----------------|--|---|---|--|
| We will improve the visitor experience for diverse groups | 2 | The Assembly welcomes and receives positive feedback from diverse visitors | <p>Promote the availability of tours and visits to diverse groups</p> <p>Facilitate tours in BSL upon request</p> <p>Review information and signage directing people to the Assembly</p> <p>Front of House staff undergo training on welcoming diverse visitors.</p> <p>Provide visitor information prior to security check in the Senedd</p> | <p>April 2013</p> <p>September 2012</p> <p>September 2012</p> <p>September 2012</p> <p>September 2012</p> | <p>Head of Communications</p> <p>Head of Front of House</p> <p>Head of Estates and Facilities</p> <p>Equality Manager, Head of HR training, Head of Front of House</p> <p>Head of Front of House</p> |

Priority Objective 2: Develop the Assembly Commission as an Equality of Opportunity Employer

What we mean by an equality of opportunity employer:

- Staff are supported and are able to realise their full potential as employees;
- different people from a variety of backgrounds view the Assembly Commission as a potential employer of choice;
- staff are aware of their responsibilities in terms of equality and diversity;
- our recruitment and employment policies are inclusive and fair;
- we monitor data to help us to know if there are issues or concerns for staff.

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|---|----------------|---|---|--|---|
| We will provide our staff with the knowledge and skills they need to understand and meet their equality responsibilities via an equality training programme and the Assembly Commission's People Strategy | 1 | All staff, including senior managers and line managers, to know responsibilities via awareness-raising and equality learning and development opportunities (induction, refresher and specific frontline staff training); Governance Statement results on staff knowledge of governance issues | <p>Develop and implement training strategy for all staff</p> <p>Develop glossary of equality language and promote to staff</p> <p>Build equality considerations into Management Development Programme</p> <p>Run annual Equality and Diversity Week to raise staff awareness of equality issues</p> | <p>December 2012</p> <p>June 2012</p> <p>December 2012</p> <p>Every June</p> | <p>Equality Manager, Head of HR training</p> <p>Equality Manager</p> <p>Head of HR training, Equality Manager</p> <p>Equality Manager</p> |
| We will support staff who have specific requirements related to their protected characteristics | 3 | Staff feedback and equality climate survey, feedback from staff networks | <p>Promote support mechanisms to staff – networks, Equality Team, employee helpline, HR, Unions</p> <p>Undertake Display Screen Equipment Assessments for all Assembly staff</p> | <p>April 2013</p> <p>April 2013</p> | <p>Head of Communications</p> <p>Head of HR Health and Safety</p> |

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|--|----------------|---|--|--------------------------------|--|
| | | | Promote equality-related policies to staff | April 2013 | Head of HR Operations, Head of Communications |
| | | | Develop mental health and wellbeing policy | September 2012 | Head of HR Operations, Head of Health and Safety |
| | | | Undertake a rolling programme of Equality Impact Assessments of staff policies | April 2013 | Head of HR Operations, Equality Manager |
| We will ensure that our recruitment and employment policies promote equality and do not discriminate | 3 | Each of our policies will undergo equality impact assessment at development and review stages | Ensure all recruitment panels undergo equality awareness training | April 2013 | Head of HR Training, Head of HR Recruitment |
| We will continue to undertake Equal Pay Reviews | 3 | Our pay system is fair, non-discriminatory and pay gaps do not exist/can be justified | Equality Impact Assess recruitment practices | April 2013 | Head of HR Training, Head of HR Recruitment |
| | | | Undertake annual reviews | Annually, published each April | Head of HR Operations |

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|---|----------------|--|---|---|--|
| We will provide support for our staff networks and engage them in policy developments and use their expertise to see where we can improve policies/services | 3 | Networks have the facilities and resources that they need to promote equality of opportunity | <p>Develop guidance outlining the support available for staff networks</p> <p>Involve staff networks in the Equality Impact Assessments of corporate policies</p> <p>Establish BME staff network</p> <p>Establish staff maternity network</p> | <p>September 2012</p> <p>April 2013</p> <p>December 2012</p> <p>December 2012</p> | <p>Head of HR Operations, Equality Manager</p> <p>Head of HR Operations, Equality Manager</p> <p>Head of Equality Team</p> <p>Equality Manager</p> |
| We will improve our workforce equality data and publish it where it does not compromise individuals' privacy | 1 | More complete staff monitoring data (broken down by characteristics) | <p>Encourage staff to complete monitoring form through internal communications and HR system</p> <p>Report annually on staff monitoring</p> | <p>April 2013</p> <p>Annually, published each April</p> | <p>Head of HR Operations, Head of Communications</p> <p>Head of HR Operations, Equality Manager</p> |

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|---|----------------|---|---|------------------------------|--|
| We will use staff feedback to develop the equality agenda and address areas of concern | 3 | Use staff survey data and other routes of feedback to gather evidence | Undertake regular staff surveys | April 2013 | Survey lead, Head of HR Operations, Equality Manager |
| We will promote our organisation as an employer of choice for people, celebrate diversity and attempt to appeal to a wide range of people | 2 | Recruitment monitoring data and feedback. Consider how and where posts are advertised | Offer one work placement a year to people from under-represented groups Develop communications to address barriers to applications from diverse people | April 2013 April 2013 | Head of HR Recruitment Head of HR Recruitment, Head of Communications |

Priority Objective 3: Support and Provide Services to Assembly Members and their Staff

What we mean by supporting and providing services to Assembly Members and their staff:

- Providing advice and guidance for Assembly Members and their staff to do their jobs effectively;
- providing briefings on equality-related issues and Assembly business;
- providing advice on equality and access issues to the Assembly Commission;
- providing accommodation, ICT and other relevant services.

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|--|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| <p>We will ensure that Assembly Members have the up-to-date information that they need to understand and meet their equality responsibilities as employers and service providers</p> <p>We will keep Assembly Commission briefed on legal requirements and best practice</p> | 3 | <p>Advice and guidance is available to Members on access and equality in relation to their various roles as Assembly Members (e.g. as elected representatives, employers).</p> <p>Members feel confident that they know what their legal obligations are under Equality Law</p> | <p>Annually review and update equality guidance for Assembly members</p> <p>Promote equality guidance to Members through internal communications</p> <p>Develop training and awareness raising strategy for Members on equality issues</p> <p>Provide Members with a checklist for hiring / using accessible venues</p> | <p>April 2013</p> <p>April 2013</p> <p>April 2013</p> <p>September 2012</p> | <p>Equality Manager, Head of Legal Services, Head of Commission and Members' Support Team</p> <p>Head of Communications, Equality Manager, Head of Commission and Members' Support Team</p> <p>Head of Commission and Members' Support Team, Equality Manager</p> <p>Equality Manager</p> |

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|---|----------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | | <p>Develop a glossary of equality language</p> <p>Promote staff networks to Members and their staff through internal communications</p> <p>Introduce and promote Access Fund to support disabled Members</p> | <p>June 2012</p> <p>April 2013</p> <p>June 2012</p> | <p>Equality Manager</p> <p>Head of Communications, Network Chairs, Equality Manager</p> <p>Equality Manager, Head of Commission and Members' Support Team</p> |
| <p>We will provide Assembly Members with the necessary support to ensure that equality considerations are built into their work</p> | <p>2</p> | <p>Briefing for Members for Plenary, Committee work and constituency work.</p> <p>Research Service quality assurance process and output monitoring</p> | <p>Ensure that equality is considered in all areas of research work</p> <p>Introduce Access Fund to support Members to effectively communicate with diverse constituents</p> | <p>April 2013</p> <p>June 2012</p> | <p>Head of Research Service</p> <p>Equality Manager, Head of Commission and Members' Support Team</p> |

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|------|----------------|--|--|----------------------|------------------------|
| | | Briefing Members on their duties/preparing for engagements | Promote the work of Outreach and Events Teams to Members to include them in our work to promote equality | April 2013 | Head of Communications |

Priority Objective 4: Embed Equality in Organisational Management

What we mean by embedding equality in organisational management:

- The way decisions are made which take into account equality considerations/the impact on different people;
- having a senior member of staff champion and lead by example on equality in the organisation.

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|--|----------------|---|---|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| We will identify the potential impact of our decisions on different groups of people when we are developing or reviewing policies, contracts, functions or services relevant to equality | 1 | <p>Relevant policies and decisions will have undergone equality impact assessments and are fair and inclusive</p> <p>Complaints are monitored and actioned</p> <p>Policies and services have external recognition</p> | <p>Introduce new system of undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EQJAs) of our decisions, policies and practices.</p> <p>Build Equality Impact Assessing into strategic developments and Project Initiative Documents.</p> | June 2012 | Equality Manager, Policy leads |
| We will ensure that equality considerations are built into the procurement process and that suppliers are compliant with | 2 | <p>Equality is mainstreamed throughout the procurement process and we are able to attract diverse suppliers who meet their equality law</p> | Ensure Equality is built into the review of procurement systems | April 2013 | Head of Procurement |

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|---|----------------|---|---|----------------------------|--|
| equality law | | obligations | | | |
| We will keep a record of equality issues | 2 | Equality team to log and address equality issues | Monitor equality –related issues and complaints | April 2013 | Equality Manager |
| We will provide regular updates on our progress which are transparent and accessible | 3 | Annual updates will be produced and published | Produce Annual Equality Reports which identify performance on achieving objectives | Annual updates, each April | Equality Manager |
| We will promote the Equality Plan and Objectives to staff and share with suppliers and other relevant parties | 2 | Completed programme of awareness raising activities across the organisation; maintain high-awareness of staff in our equality responsibilities in the | Promote the equality agenda by working with the Presiding Officer, Assembly Commissioners and Chief Executive via internal communications and sponsoring and speaking at events | September 2012 | Equality Manager, Head of Communications |

| Aims | Priority level | How we'll know if we have succeeded | Actions | Target / Review date | Lead Responsibility |
|------|----------------|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|---|
| | | Governance Statement | Share our corporate values with suppliers and the public | April 2013 | Head of Procurement, Head of Communications |