



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Annual Report on Equality 2023

Contents

Foreword	3
Chapter 1 - Introduction.....	4
Chapter 2 – Meeting our Equality Duties and Human Rights Legislation	6
Chapter 3 - Strengthening and advancing Equality and Human Rights in Wales.....	10
Chapter 4 – Evidence and Governance - Welsh Government Equality Evidence	18
Chapter 5 – Funding for Equality and Inclusion.....	23
Annex 1 – Our legal duties	32
Annex 2 - Strategic Equality Objectives 2020 – 2024	35
Annex 3 - Summary of progress towards Equality Objectives.....	37

Foreword

I am pleased to present the Welsh Government's Annual Report on Equality covering the period between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023.

This report provides an overview of action taken by Welsh Government to promote and strengthen equality and human rights which are central to the work of the Welsh Government and our vision for Wales.

We believe in fair treatment of every person, especially those facing the greatest discrimination, disadvantage, and marginalisation.

The Welsh Government continues to work to advance equality and human rights and foster good relations. We are also working to bring clarity and understanding to the need for Public Sector organisations to be consider the Socio-economic Duty and Public Sector Equality Duty when developing actions and interventions at the national and local levels.

As part of the development of the Welsh Government Strategic Equality Plan for 2024 – 2028, on 18 March 2024, following a 12-week consultation which closed on 12 February 2024, our new National Equality Objectives for the next four years were published.

Much work remains to be done as we continue to strengthen and advance equality and human rights in Wales. I look forward to continuing to work in partnership.

Lesley Griffiths MS

Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice

Chapter 1: introduction

This report, which covers the period between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023, sets out how the Welsh Government has worked to fulfill its equality objectives.

Our policies and decisions are informed by those most directly affected. Engagement with experts, equality groups, individuals and communities with lived experience provides us with support and advice to help us understand the needs, issues, barriers and experiences of all Welsh people and communities including, those with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. This is a requirement of our Wales Specific Equality Duties.

Throughout the period covered by this report, Welsh Ministers engaged with groups working to promote equality, to understand their priorities and the challenges they face on a daily basis.

The Welsh Government has several stakeholder groups through which we regularly engage to discuss and take forward equality matters. These include:

- Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing
- The Disability Equality Forum
- The Disability Rights Taskforce
- The Wales Race Forum
- National Partnership Board
- Nation of Sanctuary Strategic Oversight Board and Partnership Board
- The Faith Communities Forum
- The Gender Equality Forum
- The Period Dignity Round Table
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual/bi, Transgender/trans people, Queer or questioning (LGBTQ+) Advisory Group (being convened)
- The Human Rights Advisory Group
- The Budget Advisory Group on Equality
- Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) National Partnership Board

These groups (chaired or attended by Welsh Ministers or a senior Welsh Government official) enable equality stakeholders to engage directly and regularly with the most senior levels of government on issues of concern to them.

This report also provides an update on how the Welsh Government and other Public Sector organisations have delivered against the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duties.

It outlines how we have applied our responsibilities under equality legislation to integrate equality into our policy development and decision-making. As well as reducing the risk of negative impacts of our decisions, the legislation drives us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality for all.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2006 to report regularly to the UK Parliament on the extent to which equality and human rights are improving in Britain.

EHRC produced its first series of reports for Britain, Wales and Scotland in 2010. This was followed with 'Is Wales Fairer?' (EHRC, 2015) and 'Is Wales Fairer?' (EHRC, 2018) and their partner reports for Britain and Scotland.

The EHRC report [Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023: Is Wales Fairer?](#) was published in November 2023 and provided substantial fresh evidence to drive and underpin the work of all policy makers and delivery agencies seeking to build a more equal Wales.

The Welsh Government is considering the evidence and recommendations presented in the EHRC Report. This will be used to inform the development of future interventions and policy development, including our Strategic Equality Plan 2024 to 2028.

Chapter 2 – Meeting equality duties and Human Rights Legislation

A comprehensive framework of Welsh and UK legislation as well as international treaties and conventions underpins equality and human rights in Wales. This includes laws relating to particular aspects of life and work, such as employment, education, health or justice, as well as those relating to particular groups of people such as refugees, disabled people or children.

Public Sector Equality Duties

This report fulfils our duties under The Government of Wales Act 2006 and sets out what we have done to incorporate the statutory reporting requirements of equality legislation into our policies and practices, in particular the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the Welsh Specific Equality Duties.

The [Government of Wales Act 2006](#) places a duty on the Welsh Government to have due regard to the principle of equality of opportunity for all. The duty further ensures we give weight to promoting equality.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) places a duty on the public sector when carrying out its work, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

This duty is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). In order for specified public bodies in Wales to better perform and demonstrate their compliance with the PSED, the Welsh Government legislated to bring in Welsh specific equality duties. These duties, which are set out in the [Equality Act 2010 \(Statutory Duties\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2011](#) (also referred to as the Welsh Specific Equality Duties) apply to specific Welsh public sector organisations listed in the regulations, known as ‘listed authorities’.

The Welsh Specific Equality Duties place responsibilities on the devolved Welsh public sector covering engagement, equality impact assessments, pay differences, procurement, equality and employment information, and review and reporting arrangements. This report is published in accordance with regulation 16 of the 2011 Regulations to demonstrate Welsh Government’s compliance with the general duty.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) sets out a duty to carry out sustainable development with a view to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It contains 7 well-being goals and 5 ways of working. Further details can be found in Annex B: Welsh Specific Acts.

Welsh Government Strategic Equality Plans contributes to all of the well-being goals, and in particular supports progress towards:

- A more equal Wales: a society which enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances)
- A Wales of cohesive communities: attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities
- A healthier Wales: a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours which benefit future health are understood

The 5 ways of working, long-term, prevention, involvement, collaboration and integration will guide our work in delivering against our National Equality Objectives and the actions which will help ensure we fulfil them.

Together, the 7 well-being goals and 5 ways of working provided by the Act are designed to support and deliver a public service which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

To maximise our contribution to the well-being goals, we are focusing on areas where we can make the greatest impacts / improvement between 2024 to 2028.

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026

This refreshed version of the [Programme for Government](#) incorporated [The Co-operation Agreement: 2021](#). Responsibility for the commitments which directly contribute to our well-being objectives rested with the First Minister and the full Cabinet as these required the highest level of co-ordination and integration across the whole of government.

Welsh Ministers took direct responsibility for the remaining commitments. Both sets of commitments were treated with equal weight, the distinction between the 2 reflected the allocation of responsibilities and not their relative importance or priority.

In those areas covered by the Co-operation Agreement, Ministers worked with Plaid Cymru under the terms of the Agreement.

Additionally, well-being objectives set out how we will use the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) to help deliver our Programme for Government and maximise our contribution to the 7 shared national well-being goals.

Our Programme for Government and our well-being objectives complement and support our National Equality Objectives. They strengthen the implementation of the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Welsh Specific Equality Duties by improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales in a sustainable way.

While the programme is designed to improve the prosperity and lives of all citizens of Wales, we have made a number of specific commitments centred around celebrating diversity and taking strides to eliminate inequality across Wales.

Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms

We will:

- implement and fund the commitments made in our Race Equality Action Plan (now referred to as “An Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan”)
- Explore legislation to address pay gaps based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, and other forms of discrimination
- Ensure public bodies and those receiving public funding address pay disparities
- Pilot an approach to the Basic Income
- Ensure the history and culture of our Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities are properly represented by investing further in our cultural sector and museum network
- Make our Welsh public transport system more accessible to disabled people
- Continue our strong partnership with voluntary organisations across the range of our responsibilities
- Implement targets around Gender Budgeting
- Strengthen the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy to include a focus on violence against women in the street and workplace as well as the home
- Set up Improved evidence units to gather data on Equality, Race and Disability
- Incorporate both the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) into Welsh law

A report on progress against each of the commitments set out in our Programme for Government has been published in the overarching [Welsh Government Annual Report 2023](#).

Human Rights Legislation

The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) incorporates rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK domestic law. The HRA is also embedded into the founding legislation of the Welsh Government which means Welsh Ministers cannot act incompatibly with the HRA, and ensures all Senedd legislation must be compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) established in 1948 is the basis of all international human rights treaties, the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act. This Act established rights and freedoms for all in relation to the right to equal justice, equal opportunity and equal dignity for the first time.

The actions of the Welsh Government must be compatible with international obligations. This includes seven United Nations Core International Human Rights Treaties signed and ratified by the UK

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Covenant on Civil and political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

International Human Rights Law

The Welsh Government works alongside the UK Government and the other devolved administrations to report progress on meeting our obligations under international human rights law to United Nations (UN) Treaty Bodies. In the run-up to the UN Periodic Review of Human Rights in the UK, the Welsh Government published an overview of its [Action to strengthen human rights in Wales: 2018 to 2022](#).

The Welsh Government's Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 contains commitments to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Human Rights Advisory Group

In 2022 we established a Human Rights Advisory Group (HRAG) to oversee actions stemming from the [Strengthening and advancing equality and human rights in Wales Research Report 2021](#). This group membership includes members from legal, academia, third sector, civil society and the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales to ensure strong engagement as the work progresses. During the time period of this report the Counsel General Designate and the Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip co-chaired this Advisory Group. The Minister for Social Partnership also attends the meetings. An update on the work of this Group can be found at Annex 3 of this report.

Chapter 3 - Strengthening and advancing Equality and Human Rights in Wales

The Welsh Government's Strategic Equality Objectives and Actions

This chapter provides an overview of the Welsh Government's Equality Objectives in the period covered by this report.

Annex 2 sets out the strategic objectives for the 2020 to 2024 plan. Annex 3 provides examples of progress against the objectives. Activity supported by our key Equality and Inclusion Funding programme is described in Chapter 5.

The examples included in this report and the annexes are not a complete list of work towards delivering the Equality Objectives.

Overview of the Welsh Government's Strategic Equality Plans

Our Strategic Equality Plans set out:

- The legal basis which underpins them
- The main evidence relating to equality and human rights in Wales which influenced their development, drawing heavily on research and the Equality and Human Rights Commission reports "Is Wales Fairer?"
- A series of actions which we aimed to deliver, to support the aims and objectives in each plan

Each plan covers a 4-year period. The [Welsh Government Strategic Equality Plan 2020 to 2024](#) was published in April 2020.

The plan contains Long-term Aims, Objectives and Actions.

- Long-term Aims: These aims are about strengthening and advancing equality and human rights in Wales which we expect to remain relevant beyond the period covered by this plan.
- For each long-term aim, we have set a single, Welsh Government Equality Objective for 2020 to 2024. These objectives relate more closely than the long-term aims to the role and powers of the Welsh Government. They are a statutory requirement and support the Welsh Government to meet their Public Sector Equality Duties.
- The Objectives are underpinned by measurable Actions which demonstrate how the Welsh Government will achieve its objectives.

This report provides examples of action taken to support the delivery of our objectives. The strategic objectives are set out in full in Annex 2, with additional examples of performance against them in Annex 3. Chapter 5 provides information about some of our funding which supports equality and inclusion.

Strengthening and Advancing Human Rights in Wales

The Welsh Government has a clear commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, embedded into the founding legislation of the Welsh Government.

Human Rights Advisory Group

In 2022 we established a Human Rights Advisory Group (HRAG) to oversee and advise on actions stemming from the Strengthening and Advancing Equality and Human Rights in Wales Research Report 2021. This group has a wide membership including from legal, academia, third sector, civil society and the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales so we can benefit from a range of expertise. During the time period of this report the Counsel General Designate and Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip co-chaired this Advisory Group. The Minister for Social Partnership also attended the meetings. An update on the work of this Group can be found at Annex 3 of this report.

Our Programme for Government commits us to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Legislative Options Working Group (LOWG)

Welsh Government has established a Legislative Options Working Group (LOWG) who are scoping how we might achieve our incorporation commitments. In April 2023, the LOWG submitted a working interim report taking an expansive approach to incorporation. The LOWG are continuing to analyse the treaties on a right-by-right basis to ascertain what can be achieved through Welsh legislation. We will need to carefully consider reservations within the devolution settlement in determining how to take this forward.

British Sign Language (BSL)

BSL is the first or preferred language of the Deaf community in the UK. Since 2004, Welsh Government has recognised British Sign Language (BSL) as a language of Wales.

In February 2021, the British Deaf Association (BDA) undertook an audit of the British Sign Language (BSL) policies and provision in Welsh Government. The BDA and Equality Branch officials have worked with Welsh Government Policy leads to establish what work is being carried out in relation to BSL.

The BDA Audit Report was published by BDA on 14 February 2023. A written statement was issued on the publication date welcoming the report and recommendations. BSL translation of the written statement was also issued.

Welsh Government welcomes the report and recognises the need to take an intersectional approach in responding to the Audit's recommendations. Taking forward action from the BDA's Audit requires a long-term plan for change and will require sustained commitment and focus. Some of this work is being taken forward by the Disability Rights Taskforce.

We established an Accessible Communications Group to overcome barriers and improve access to information during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Group covered a wide range of people and organisations including those who are deaf, deaf BSL users, and hard of hearing. The Group developed a set of guidelines for all Welsh Government staff within the organisation to work from to assist with producing comms which were accessible to all. The document is published to the Welsh Government's own intranet for staff access.

We recognise there is much more to be done to develop a co-ordinated approach to promotion and support for BSL and we are committed to addressing these issues.

Community Cohesion

The Community Cohesion Programme funds 8 teams across Wales to provide front-line support to communities, including more direct engagement to help monitor and mitigate tensions, as well as ongoing awareness raising around hate crime.

Following an independent review of the Community Cohesion Programme, the Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip agreed in January 2023 to continue to fund the Programme in 2023 to 2024 to ensure this valuable work will continue in Wales.

The findings and recommendations of the review were used to shape and inform the work areas of the cohesion teams going forward. This includes grassroots engagement and partnership working with relevant agencies, to promote and foster community cohesion.

The Cohesion Programme is an essential part of our response to emerging and unforeseen issues impacting communities in Wales, and the cohesion teams actively collaborate with the relevant partners, such as the police and community safety partners, to support communities during these events.

Disabled People's Employment

We are focusing on supporting disabled people into employment or self-employment through our employability programmes, providing careers advice and guidance via Working Wales and supporting the current workforce to develop new skills and find new employment.

The Disability Rights Taskforce has agreed 10 priority areas for their work which cover a wide range of Ministerial responsibilities and will touch on relevant Programme for Government commitments which includes Employment and income.

Action to support disabled people into employment or self-employment is set out in our plan for employability and skills. We provide a range of employability programmes and services, including Jobs Growth Wales Plus, Apprenticeships, and Working Wales, which offers careers advice and support. We also provide a financial incentive, of £2000 per learner, to employers who recruit a disabled apprentice up to the end of March 2024.

We also offer a range of resources for employers to help raise awareness and understanding of the social model of disability, promote the benefits of employing a diverse workforce, and understand how to recruit, retain and support disabled workers.

This includes an employer toolkit, advice and guidance on Business Wales, an E-Learning module on the social model of disability, and our team of Disabled People's Employment Champions.

Promoting equal, diverse and inclusive workplaces is integral to our Fair Work agenda and we are working in social partnership with employers and trade unions across the public, private and third sectors, to increase awareness of workplace rights and responsibilities and promote best practice.

Our work continues to be informed by the Disabled People's Employment Working Group. The Group provides Welsh Government with advice and guidance on emerging issues and priorities for disabled people's employment in Wales to assist with the aim of increasing the number of disabled people into work.

The Disability Rights Taskforce

The Disability Rights Taskforce has been established to remove the barriers and inequalities experienced by disabled people, in Wales. The Taskforce works collaboratively with people with lived experience and expertise, disabled people's organisations, Welsh Government policy leads and other interested bodies/organisations.

The work is based on a common understanding of the social model of disability, human rights, lived experience and co-production, and is delivered by the following working groups:

- embedding and understanding of the Social Model of Disability (across Wales)
- access to services (including communications and technology)
- independent living: social care
- independent living: health
- travel
- employment and income
- affordable and accessible housing
- children and young people
- access to justice
- well-being

Socio-economic Duty

The Socio-economic Duty came into force in Wales on 31st March 2021. The Duty requires relevant public bodies, including Welsh Ministers, to give due regard to the need to reduce inequalities experienced as a result of Socio-economic disadvantage when taking strategic decisions.

Placing consideration of inequalities of outcomes arising from socio-economic disadvantage at the heart of our decision making will enable us to move towards a fairer and more prosperous Wales. A dedicated [website page](#) has been developed to host resources supporting implementation of the duty.

Early discussions with public body leaders have been positive and the Duty appears to have been welcomed. There are examples of public bodies integrating the Duty into planning and reporting frameworks, such as the intermediate team planning framework for health bodies.

Welsh Government's ['Implementing the Socio-economic Duty: A review of evidence on socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome'](#) provides a summary of key evidence relating to how socio-economic disadvantage affects the people of Wales. It particularly focuses on how it affects those with protected characteristics as well as communities of place and interest.

In addition, to further support public bodies in meeting with requirements of the Duty, a [progress tracker](#) tool has been made available to access via the Socio-economic Duty dedicated [website page](#).

Anti-racist Wales Action Plan

The Welsh Government is committed to creating an anti-racist nation by 2030.

Our [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#), which was launched on 7 June 2022, is built on the values of anti-racism and calls for zero tolerance of all racial inequality.

During the last 12 months, actions have been taken across Welsh Government to work towards our vision of making Wales an anti-racist nation by 2030.

In December 2023 we published the first [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan: Annual Report 2022 to 2023](#).

The impact of our work may not yet be apparent in the lived experience of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, but important foundations have been laid. In addition, we expect those we fund to address racism and this is clearly set out in our remit letters and financial arrangements.

To achieve an Anti-racist public sector in Wales we will aim to:

- demonstrate visible commitment to anti-racism, including through:
 - behaviour change and values
 - use of positive action
 - recruitment

- progression
- senior leadership
- board representation
- embed ways of working to tackle racism including through:
 - the use of all levers to tackle racism
 - the use of data and evidence
 - policy-making
 - use of funding and grants
- engage and deliver anti-racist services, including:
 - cultural awareness and competency in our communications
 - language and interpretation services
 - advocacy services
- embed accountability and demonstrate progress:

Our ArWAP governance and accountability structure is now in place. Eleven Diversity Representatives and 8 Experts by Experience help hold Government and public services to account and bring lived experiences and expertise to help us deliver better. This External Accountability Group, chaired by Prof. Emmanuel Ogbonna and Dr Andrew Goodall, Permanent Secretary, Welsh Government, meets bi-monthly.

Four Anti-racist Wales Action Plan Regional Forum Convenors are being recruited and will hold us accountable in terms of our impact, and serve as a conduit between local authorities and our ethnic minority communities.

The monthly webinar series, 'Evolving Together: the journey towards an anti-racist Wales by 2030' was launched by the Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip on 25 September 2023. This series shares both progress and challenges against the ArWAP goals and actions. The webinars are open to the wider public and aim to deepen engagement with communities, provide a forum for sharing good practice, and develop our collective understanding of anti-racism.

The Equality and Social Justice Committee launched a consultation and inquiry into the implementation of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan: [Anti-racist Wales](#). The recommendations from this inquiry will be important in informing the next iteration of the Plan.

The ArWAP is being refreshed to focus on the most impactful initiatives. The next iteration will cover 2024 to 2026. The focus will remain on refining existing goals and actions (if needed) to strengthen implementation and measurement.

Wider public, third sector and Government funded private sector

We have leadership responsibility for public, third and those private sector organisations we fund. We will hold those organisations to account, via our Accountability Group, to deliver 5 core actions:

1. A strong commitment to lead from the front and to demonstrate anti-racist values, behaviours, representation at all levels of the organisation and in accountability measures.
2. Participation in all decision-making and senior leadership groups in a way which enables lived experiences of ethnic minority people to be heard and acted upon.
3. Achieve, at the very least, minimum requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and to publish results in an open and accessible forum/platform.
4. Ensure minimum standards and provision of culturally sensitive and appropriate services, including provision of translation and interpretation.
5. Ensure robust complaints policies and processes for racial harassment are validated to the satisfaction of ethnic minority groups.

LGBTQ+ Support

The Welsh Government remains committed to making Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe. Our [Welsh Government LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](#), published in February 2023 strengthens protections for LGBTQ+ people, promotes equality for all and helps coordinate actions across government and beyond.

We are now focussed on implementation and making a substantial and positive impact to the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Wales.

Updates and progress against each action and activity in the Plan can be monitored on the [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales: progress update Tracker](#) which we published earlier this year.

We are working to produce an Evaluability Assessment Framework to measure the impact of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan and an Advisory Group was recently launched.

The [LGBTQ+ Action Plan bulletin](#) was also launched with the Tracker.

Conversion Practices or Therapy

The Welsh Government has a Programme for Government commitment to use all available powers to end conversion practices in Wales and to seek the devolution of any necessary additional powers.

We are working closely with Plaid Cymru to take this forward, including seeking legal advice to determine all the levers we can use to implement a ban in Wales, for both sexual orientation and gender.

From January to July 2023, a Working Group of Experts met and advised on actions we could take to ensure protection for all LGBTQ+ people and to ban conversion practices in Wales.

In May 2023 Laurel Research Consulting Ltd was commissioned by Welsh Government to undertake research aimed at understanding more about the experiences of conversion practices among people aged 18+ in Wales. Evidence from this research will be used to inform future policy development, tailor an awareness campaign, and help design and improve support service provision in relation to conversion practices in Wales.

In March 2024, we launched a campaign to raise awareness of support services for survivors of conversion practices and contracted a dedicated support service for survivors of conversion practices, which covers Wales and provides bilingual resources.

Chapter 4 – Evidence and Governance Welsh Government Equality Evidence

This chapter sets out how the Welsh Government gathers and uses evidence to inform and support its work to promote and safeguard equality. This includes an outline of the wider Welsh Government equality evidence base, an update on the progress of the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units.

The equality evidence base

In order to consider the aims set out in the general duty, we need sufficient evidence of the impact our policies and practices are having, or are likely to have, on people with different protected characteristics.

During 2023, we published a wide range of research and statistical outputs, which helped to inform us of the effect our policies are having, and where we need to do more. They also enabled our stakeholders to identify where further progress is required, and to hold us to account. The Welsh Government publishes its research and statistics at [Welsh Government Statistics and Research](#).

Some of these statistical outputs include:

- Well-being of Wales 2023 report – An ethnicity sub report was published alongside this
- Sexual orientation and gender identity in Wales (Census 2021)
- Health, disability and provision of unpaid care in Wales (Census 2021)
- Ethnic group differences in health, housing, education and economic status in Wales (Census 2021)
- Disabled people's outcomes in health, housing, education and economic status (Census 2021)
- Analysis of population characteristics by area deprivation (Census 2021)

We also:

- Provided evidence on equality impacts to inform the [Just Transition to Net Zero Wales Call for Evidence](#)
- Provided evidence to inform the Equality Impact Assessment of the [Universal Primary Free School Meals policy](#)
- Published [evaluation of Welsh Government's Period Dignity Grant](#)
- Provided analytical support as part of development of several published Migrant Integration Wales research projects, including
 - [Research on the adequacy and availability of legal advice services for forced migrants living in Wales](#)

- [English for speakers of other languages \(ESOL\): policy review](#)
- [Migrant integration: research on foreign language interpretation services](#)
- Provided evidence in response to the Equality and Human Rights (EHRC) call for evidence in support of their published [statutory review report 'Is Wales Fairer? 2023'](#)
- Critically reviewed and provided feedback on the [EHRC statutory review report 'Is Wales Fairer? 2023'](#)
- Provided evidence in support of the Welsh Government's response to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) report and the UN Committee Against Torture report
- Undertook a number of literature reviews to bring together the evidence for a number of policy development areas (internal documents only) Including: 1. Inclusion in sports in Wales to inform LGBTQ+ policy development in this area - unpublished. 2. Determining how best to identify, engage and involve disabled people in Welsh Government activities to inform the work of the Disability Rights Taskforce:- unpublished
- Produced a briefing paper for Ministers highlighting the main equality findings from the newly released ; [School Health Research Network \(SHRN\) National Report - 2021to 22022](#) unpublished
- Added questions relating to period poverty/dignity to the School Environment Questionnaire (SEQ) component of the SHRN survey
- Devised and ran a survey to ascertain the baseline level of human rights awareness in Wales: unpublished to be presented at the Human Rights Advisory Group meeting on 6th December
- Developed and implemented an equality monitoring survey for the International Learning Opportunities programme
- Provided analytical advice to support the development of the Provided analytical support in the development of data collection tools to support the monitoring of the Community Cohesion Programme
- Produced evidence review of single sex spaces: unpublished
- Provided evidence to support the Welsh Government response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) public inquiry, including details of actions taken to identify impact of COVID-19 on different equality groups used to inform policy decisions
- Provided evidence to support the development of the Migrant Integration Framework for Wales: published 18 December 2023
- Provided evidence to support the development of the revised Nation of Sanctuary Plan: due to be published in 2024-25

- Provided evidence to support the LGBTQ+ policy contribution to the development of the new Mental Health Strategy
- Provided evidence to inform the Child Poverty Strategy Equality Impact Assessment: to be published at the same time as the Child Poverty Strategy

This information, as well as further guidance from our analytical teams, was used to inform our Equality Impact Assessments; our advice to Ministers regarding proposed new policies or changes to policies; and contributions to Committee inquiry sessions. We constantly endeavour to improve arrangements for identifying and collecting equality information, wherever practical and cost effective.

In order to enhance our equality information, we have continued to progress the following activities:

Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units

The Welsh Government committed to establishing the Evidence Units in its Programme for Government 2021 in response to the need for strengthened evidence to address inequality in Wales. In January 2022 the Welsh Government established 3 distinct Evidence Units, each with their own evidence programme and lead:

- Equality Evidence Unit
- Race Disparity Evidence Unit
- Disability Disparity Evidence Unit

The Evidence Units work together as the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units with an overarching [Equality Evidence Strategy](#) to ensure synergy, effectiveness, efficiency and cohesion. The Evidence Units mission is to improve the availability, quality, granularity, and accessibility of evidence regarding individuals with protected and associated characteristics so we fully understand the level and types of inequalities across Wales. This will enable decision makers to develop better informed policies and to assess and measure their impact. This will drive us towards better outcomes for people with protected and associated characteristics and contribute to our goal of 'a more equal Wales' as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

There are several significant challenges the Evidence Units face with delivering on the Equality Evidence Strategy and they are committed to working with communities and stakeholders to address some of the barriers which are in place. These include trust in providing data and ensuring visible data feeds through to real change.

Some updates on some of our specific projects are outlined below:

Public Sector Bodies Wales data collection and publication 2022 to 2023

Work is ongoing to understand the diversity of board members across public bodies (PBs) regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Wales. Two pilot Surveys gathering information on Board and workforce diversity were issued to public sector bodies regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The surveys have now closed, and the Evidence Units are collating responses and summarising findings.

Equality data audit

We have carried out an equality audit of data used to produce Official Statistics by Statistical Services in knowledge and analytical services. We conducted an initial assessment of the data sources and outputs which contain equality information and are used and produced by statistical services. The Evidence Units are currently updating the KAS data audit and working with KAS colleagues to build our understanding of the barriers and enablers regarding data gaps. The Evidence Units are looking to publish phase 1 in early 2024.

Well-being of Wales report

As part of our commitment to provide an update on progress of the 7 well-being goals we released a new version of our Wellbeing of Wales 2023 report. This includes a chapter on 'A More Equal Wales', which comprises a summary of the most up-to-date equality related statistics applicable to Wales.

Feasibility of minorities sample boost for the National Survey for Wales

Desk based research has been undertaken and a paper presented to the Chief Social Researcher on the future of the National Survey for Wales. The Evidence Units will seek to undertake small-scale piloting in Spring 2024.

Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan evaluation

The Race Disparity Evidence Unit are exploring developing an overarching impact evaluation framework for the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. This includes an agreed impact evaluation framework. The External Accountability Group, established in January 2023, continues to support the Race Disparity Evidence Unit with shaping the development of the indicators through the creation of an evidence sub-group.

Research on how information can be collected to reflect the social model of disability.

This work aims to develop a suite of questions, response options, and guidance which reflect the Social Model of Disability, to incorporate into future social research and enable a standardised, consistent approach. The tender went live on Sell2Wales in November 2023 with a closing date of 8th January 2024.

Disability Rights Taskforce Research and Co-production

The Evidence Units have partnered with the Disability Rights Taskforce (DRT) and the KAS Internal Research Programme to co-produce evidence and use it to test and

strengthen the feasibility of some of the priorities already co-produced by DRT Working Groups. Chairs of the Working Groups have been invited to co-design the research alongside Welsh Government analysts and policy officers.

Sex and gender data collection standards

Scoping work has been undertaken to identify the extent to which the sex and gender identity standards meet the policy needs of the Welsh Government. A research proposal for Welsh Government to establish its own standardised questions and associated guidance on these topics has been developed with alignment with GSS standards.

The Evidence Units will shortly be commissioning the first phase of this work. This will involve a desk review of questions designed for data collection on the equality characteristics of sex and gender identity internationally, and an informal consultation with stakeholder organisations to understand if there are separate needs in Wales in this area.

LGBTQ+ Action Plan Evaluability Assessment

We have contracted an Evaluability Assessment of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan. The inception meeting and scoping conversations have been conducted and fieldwork is being planned. The Evidence Units will continue to work closely with policy colleagues across the organisation to ensure policy needs are met and engagement with external partners and LGBTQ+ communities is undertaken sensitively.

Chapter 5: funding for equality and inclusion

Our Equality and Inclusion Programme is at the heart of our work to foster equality and inclusion within Wales, and enables support, engagement and service for diverse communities and key groups. Funding is provided to a number of specialist organisations who work with those on the ground to provide help where it is needed.

We awarded contracts for our new Wales Hate Support Centre and new Sanctuary Seeker Support Service which replaced our National Hate Crime Report and Support Centre and Asylum Rights Programme from 1 April 2022. Victim Support Cymru and a consortium led by Welsh Refugee Council (under the name Wales Sanctuary Service) were the successful bidders, respectively.

Summary of the funding committed for 2022 to 2023:

Organisation	Allocation
Victim Support - Hate Crime Report and Support Centre	£432,000
Disability Wales (Adv) E&I Grant	£150,000
Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST)	£106,667
Tros Gynnal Plant (Adv)	£192,000
WEN Wales	£120,000
- Equal Power Equal Voice mentoring programme	£41,000
- We Belong Here Event	£24,750
Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales (FTWW)	£43,647
Plan International UK	£22,328
Stonewall Cymru	£100,000
Welsh Refugee Council – Wales Sanctuary Service	£636,983
TOTAL	£1,869,375

We took additional steps to improve the quality of the performance monitoring data collected by the organisations funded by the Welsh Government's Equality and Inclusion Programme. We supported each organisation to develop more outcome focused performance measures. For example, this included organisations obtaining information regarding the percentage of individuals who, following the advice and support they received, know more about the services and support available to them and feel their voices are more likely to be heard.

Hate : Victim Support Cymru

The Wales Hate Support Centre, run by Victim Support Cymru, provides independent support and advocacy to all hate crime victims, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Centre offers a range of services including emotional support, signposting, face to face meetings, advocacy / liaison with Police, personal safety advice, practical solutions and restorative justice support. The Centre also offers a national children and young person friendly hate crime service.

The Centre has developed a Lived Experience Advocacy Forum (LEAF) to comprised of past service users, to continually seek improvement of the service. LEAF is made up of past service users. LEAF's feedback is used to review the service, such as the Centre's complaints procedures.

The Centre's Training and Engagement team provided awareness raising training about hate crime to a range of audiences across Wales, with the aim of increasing the reporting of hate crime and increasing visibility of the service.

Between January and December 2023, the Centre received 2,257 referrals for victims of hate crime and provided support to over 580 victims of hate crime. Support was provided in 89% of cases where needs were identified. The service received 72 third party reports and 190 self-referrals. 82% of clients were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service in this period.

Disability: Disability Wales

Disability Wales is the representative body for disabled people and their organisations in Wales, working with the Welsh Government and other public bodies to ensure the views of disabled people are heard.

Equality and Inclusion Programme funding has been used by Disability Wales to support the delivery of the key Welsh Government's commitments linked to our Action on Disability Framework and Action Plan which was published in September 2019.

Disability Wales were also awarded £72,000 of European Transition Funding to deliver a capacity enhancing EU Exit support programme for disabled people's organisations and their stakeholders throughout Wales. They have also been awarded the contract to deliver an Access to Elected Office Fund pilot project which will be providing support for disabled candidates in both the Senedd and Local Government elections.

Disability Wales also played a key role in the development of Action on Disability: the Right to Independent Living, with the Chief Executive chairing the Steering Group which oversaw the development of the new framework.

Action on Disability: the Right to Independent Living

Our Framework 'Action on Disability: The Right to Independent Living' was published on the 18 September 2019. The Framework was co-developed with disabled people and the organisations which represent them.

The Framework is accompanied by an Action Plan which sets out priority actions underway across the Welsh Government to tackle some of the key barriers identified including in transport, employment, housing and access to buildings and places.

Disabled people told us local action is crucial, so the Framework is designed to strongly encourage Welsh Public Services, employers and organisations at every level to take note and take action.

It sets out the principles, legal context and commitments which underpin all our work with, and for, disabled people, and how we are fulfilling our obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

The 'Social Model of Disability', which recognises the need for society to be transformed, removing barriers so disabled people are able to participate fully, underpins the framework.

Over the period of this report, with the support of Welsh Government funding, Disability Wales have:

- delivered 11 events to 477 participants across Wales aimed at equipping disabled people and their organisations to promote disability rights and equality and challenge discrimination in their local area
- conducted a Cost-of-Living survey and focus groups resulting in new information on their website [Cost of Living - Disability Wales](#) as well as presenting this information to the Disability Equality Forum
- presented evidence to the Senedd Local Government and Housing Committee and the Education, Children and Young people Committee
- delivered a hybrid Annual Conference on disabled people and media representation 17th October 2023 and produced an annual conference evaluation report and a disabled people and the media report as a result of the conference. Participated in the COVID:-19 Inquiry Preliminary Hearing.
- launched their [Barely Surviving: The Impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis on Disabled People in Wales](#) in July 2023 and presented it at the Disability Equality Forum in September 2023 and an event for Ministers and Members of the Senedd in November 2023
- provided representation at the UN in Geneva for the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) UK Review and submitted a shadow report
- delivered a North Wales Disabled People's Organisations (DPO) summit as an online event in September 2023

In addition, the Disability Wales CEO chaired the Disability Rights Taskforce Independent Living (Social Care) Working Group which has now reported on proposed objectives to the Taskforce.

Race: Ethnic Youth Support Team EYST

Welsh Government funds EYST to deliver the All Wales Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Engagement programme. The programme employs officers in Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, and Wrexham to engage with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals, groups and organisations across Wales, and to gather their views and experiences. It aims to create an evidence base from which to influence Welsh Government policies to better reflect and respond to the needs of ethnic minority communities.

The programme supports the following objectives:

- engage and consult Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities on matters which affect them
- represent Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities on relevant Welsh Government stakeholder groups
- support the race equality and ethnic minority sector
- to showcase, unite and amplify voices for racial equality in Wales
- provide information on race equality to key stakeholders in Wales
- help deliver a more diverse pool of decision makers in public life and public appointments

Eyst Forum discussions were attended by 417 people during 2022 to 2023. Themes covered include:

- Community discussion on climate change, green spaces and countryside matters
- Where are you from? Identity and Belonging in Wales
- Race and Housing, Community Led Housing
- How poverty affects the obesity crisis
- Children and young people's mental health, What more can we do?
- Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum!
- Are Ethnic Minority Older People Invisible?
- Human Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery
- Becoming an Anti-racist Wales, How can you play a part?

EYST continue to receive funding from the Welsh Government to support grassroot organisations, throughout Wales, and offer advice and signposting out to relevant partnership organisations and projects. EYST also played a key role in the development of our Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru TGP Cymru

TGP Cymru is a Registered Charity which provides support and advocacy for children, young people and families in Wales. Travelling Ahead is contracted to provide advice, support and individual and community advocacy working alongside Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families on issues such as accommodation, sites, planning, rights and accessing services. The project has 3 broad aims:

1. advice and advocacy
- 2 rights and participation
- 3 -tackling discrimination

A freephone advice line 0808 802 0025 is operational weekdays. The number has been disseminated via leaflets, drop cards, word-of-mouth through regular outreach and engagement sessions and events, and via networks including social media and partner directories. Travelling Ahead's engagement team provide an outreach service regularly visiting sites and community settings. Face-to-face and word-of-mouth referrals remain the most popular way to make contact for communities.

The Travelling Ahead project works to ensure Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities can participate in consultations and advocacy opportunities, have their views heard, and engage with policy makers and service providers on issues affecting the communities in Wales or UK wide.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities engaged in the development of our Anti Racist Wales Action Plan. Their youth forums provide opportunities for young people to come together with decision makers alongside community groups and peer research projects (on site development, education, improving health services, for example). Positive representation through the Wales Youth Parliament and cultural activities also support the communities. Travelling Ahead works with organisations including the National Youth Forum, and developed Wales' first 'Gypsy Stars' choir made up of younger and older people from the Roma community.

Travelling Ahead has been tasked with improving community confidence in reporting, challenging racist incidents, hate incidents, hate crime and hate speech. Working with partners such as Victim Support, they have helped to raise awareness of hate crime reporting methods and support available through the advice service; developing a poster, and making stronger links with police force hate crime officers through engagement and training.

Gender: Women's Equality Network Wales WEN Wales

WEN Wales is a Registered Charity working towards gender equality in Wales. It has a growing network of members comprising both individuals and organisations. Funding has been provided to support the Welsh Government's gender equality work. Their objectives are:

- diverse and equal leadership in political and public life
- women's rights strengthened, realised, and embedded in Wales
- caring (both paid and unpaid) is valued and shared

WEN Wales connects with its network of members to capture the needs and lived experiences of women and girls in Wales to ensure their voices are heard. Information and evidence gathered informs its response to consultations and engagement with policy makers, in Wales and the UK.

Free WEN Café virtual events, were established in the wake of COVID-19 as a space for bringing together women's voices to explore issues and share solutions on inequalities exposed by the pandemic. Themes covered this year included supporting women refugees and asylum seekers in Wales, the Make Care Fair campaign, and the Wales Women's Rights Manifesto for the UK General Election.

In 2021, WEN Wales began working with schools and youth groups for International Women's Day (IWD). WEN Wales produced a toolkit to support teachers and youth workers in celebrating IWD, challenging gender stereotypes, and calling out gender bias and sexism with their classes and groups. For IWD 2023, every school in Wales received the toolkit.

The 'We Belong Here Day' took place in the Senedd on the 21 October 2023. With over 200 attendees, the event brought together a diverse range of women to explore participation in public or political life, learn about the stages involved and engage with women already in public or political life in Wales.

Gender: Equal Power Equal Voice mentoring programme

The Equal Power Equal Voice mentoring programme is led by WEN Wales, in partnership with Disability Wales, Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team (EYST) Wales and Stonewall. The intersectional scheme aims to increase diversity of representation in public and political life in Wales and is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and the Welsh Government.

The scheme supports over 100 mentees and helps participants develop a range of skills, tools and knowledge to prepare them for a role in public life through a programme of training days, workshop sessions, mentoring and peer to peer support.

Gender: Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales (FTWW)

Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales is the only patient-led charity in Wales which is dedicated to women's health equality. It is working to contribute (disabled) women's voices and perspectives to three policy areas: Disability Rights, Gender Equality, Period Dignity. The evidence of lived experience gathered from the network helps inform its response to consultations, contribute to research, engage with policy makers, and raise the profile of issues through a range of media channels.

Plan International UK

Plan International UK is a global children's charity. In Wales, they are running a series of girls' rights events, as a part of the Girls Rights Collective. In May 2023, they held an event in the Senedd which brought together a range of stakeholders and decision makers from across Wales to explore how to create a safer Wales for girls.

A number of well attended online and in-person events have been held covering topics including the impact of social media on young people's mental health, 'show-and-tell', and redesigning girlhood training.

LGBTQ+ - Stonewall Cymru

Stonewall Cymru has been awarded grant funding to act as the representative body for LGBTQ+ people in Wales. This includes working with the Welsh Government and other public bodies to ensure the views of LGBTQ+ people are heard.

The funding is provided to enable Stonewall to:

- 1: eEngage with LGBTQ+ Communities
- 2: empower LGBTQ+ people and allies
- 3: amplify LGBTQ+ voices
- 4: strengthen advice, information and advocacy services

As part of this funding, Stonewall Cymru has continued to run Stonewall Cymru Cafés, which aim to engage LGBTQ+ people in Wales who have intersecting identities and provide a platform to empower others. Increasing engagement with trans communities to hear their voice and campaign on their behalf has been a key activity.

Sport related work has included events which enable meaningful discussions, sharing and platforming of grassroots clubs, and the creation of best practice guidance for sports bodies and grassroots clubs to create an LGBTQ+ inclusive space.

During this period Stonewall has worked with LGBTQ+ organisations and groups across Wales to better understand the challenges they face and better represent these views and issues in their engagement with Welsh Government, ensuring

LGBTQ+ voices are heard and considered in the formation of public policy and the design and delivery of public services.

Pride

Welsh Government's support of Pride Cymru continued in 2023 with £50,000 of funding which included sponsorship of the main Pride event in Cardiff. We also supported 9 Grassroots Pride events across Wales.

- Swansea Pride
- North Wales Pride (Caernarfon)
- Cowbridge Pride
- Hay Pride
- Abergavenny Pride
- Colwyn Bay Pride
- Pride in the Port (Newport)
- Glitter Pride by Glitter Cymru
- Merthyr Pride

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Migration policy is not devolved, so solutions to some important issues lie with the UK Government. We are working with the Home Office and other UK Government departments, as well as Welsh stakeholders, to improve conditions in Wales.

A consortium led by the Welsh Refugee Council was contracted to deliver a Wales Sanctuary Service (WSS) was contracted from 1 April 2022 and will be supported for at least 3 years. During the 2022 to 2023 financial year, the Welsh Government provided £692,420 to the Welsh Refugee Council-led consortium to deliver this service. In this time, additional funding was provided to deliver services and support for those arriving in Wales from Ukraine under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, including via the Wales Super Sponsor route.

Welsh Government funding for this consortium enabled WRC and its partners to work towards the following objectives:

1. strengthen the skills, capacity and support for asylum seekers and refugees to build a life in Wales, encouraging participation and understanding of the wider community
2. supporting and enable people seeking sanctuary to have a voice
3. awareness raising of migration issues amongst the general public

Caseworkers have delivered advice sessions to clients across the 4 dispersal areas of Wales. The main focus of their work is as follows-

- preventing homelessness and destitution
- providing hardship support and advice

- making referrals to relevant statutory services regarding safeguarding and wellbeing
- liaising with the Home Office, legal representation and other key stakeholders

Asylum Justice have continued to provide legal support to hundreds of asylum seekers who are unable to access legal aid support from other sources. Many of their clients are 'Appeals Rights Exhausted' (ARE) and need support with submitting fresh claims. They also support appeals, family reunions and getting the 'no recourse to public funds' restrictions lifted. The work of Asylum Justice is invaluable as it is often the last hope for legal support for many vulnerable asylum seekers in Wales.

Advocacy Forums went online in May 2020, over 200 people have attended them. The topics discussed with relevant representation have included education, healthcare, vaccinations, Home Office, accommodation, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Wales Sanctuary Service, and its partners (including the Welsh Refugee Council) are part of the Welsh Refugee Coalition, which supports delivery of the Welsh Government's 'Nation of Sanctuary Plan'.

Our [Sanctuary - Choose a path](#) website provides refugees and asylum seekers with a range of information on their rights and entitlements including sections on health, education, and employment. The website allows users to access over 100 languages and text-to-speech software to ensure the site is accessible to a larger number of people seeking sanctuary.

We have continued to provide funding to Clearsprings Ready Homes to extend internet access to all asylum accommodation across Wales to enable access to online services, ESOL classes and connections with family friends.

The Welsh Government has continued to provide funding to support free transport for refugees and those seeking international protection in Wales in line with our Nation of Sanctuary vision.

Annex 1: our legal duties

The Equality Act 2010: the Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 (the 2010 Act) replaces previous anti-discrimination laws for England, Scotland and Wales with a single Act. The Act protects people from discrimination because of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

These categories are known as the 'protected characteristics'.

The 2010 Act also introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which has three overarching aims. Those subject to the duty must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The aim of the PSED is to ensure those subject to it consider advancement of equality when carrying out their day-to-day business. For the Welsh Government this includes shaping policy, delivery services and in relation to our employees.

The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 (the regulations)

In Wales, the public bodies listed in Part 2 of Schedule 19 to the Equality Act 2010 are subject also to specific duties found in the Regulations. These Regulations are also known as the Welsh specific equality duties.

The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

'Listed authorities' refers to public bodies listed in Part 2 of Schedule 19. Where we have referred to the 'Welsh public sector' or similar, we are referring only to those bodies listed in the schedule and subject to the Welsh specific equality duties.

The aim of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 (Wales Specific Equality Duties) is to enable the better performance of the PSED. They do so by requiring, for example, the publication of equality objectives together with equality impact assessments, engagement requirements, progress reports, collection of data and more. The equality objectives must, at their core, seek to address inequalities related to the 9 protected characteristics specified in the 2010 Act.

Regulation 16: Annual reports

Chapter 1 of this report fulfils partial compliance with regulation 16 of the Regulations which provide for the Welsh specific equality duties, requiring the Welsh Ministers to publish a report each year setting out how they are complying with the specific duties.

Chapter 1 includes a number of progress statements outlining how we are complying with the specific duties, including those regarding engagement, equality evidence and equality impact assessments.

The Government of Wales Act 2006

The duty in section 77 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act") requires Welsh Ministers to make appropriate arrangements to help ensure their functions are exercised with due regard to the principle of equality of opportunity for all people.

This duty further emphasises the importance Ministers place on mainstreaming equality in their work and ensuring it is given due consideration when making their decisions. The duty under the 2006 Act ensures we give weight to promoting equality, as well as meeting our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

This report includes examples and case studies outlining how we have exercised our functions with due regard to the principle of equality of opportunity for all.

The Socio-economic Duty

Section 45 of the [Wales Act 2017](#) devolves the power to Welsh Ministers to commence the socio-economic duty to the Welsh Government.

This involves enacting Part 1, Section 1 of the [Equality Act 2010](#) (the socio-economic duty).

The duty applies to eligible public bodies, who are deemed to have satisfied the ‘test’ under section 2(6) of the Equality Act 2010.

It requires specified public bodies, when making strategic decisions such as ‘deciding priorities and setting objectives’, to consider how their decisions might help to reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

The Welsh Government defines “socio-economic disadvantage” as “Living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society”.

The Socio-economic Duty will ensure those taking strategic decisions:

1. take account of evidence and potential impact through consultation and engagement.
2. understand the views and needs of those impacted by the decision, particularly those who suffer socioeconomic disadvantage.
3. welcome challenge and scrutiny.
4. drive a change in the way decisions are made and the way decision-makers operate.

A wide range of material to help Public Sector organisations and individuals is available including [A More Equal Wales: The Socio-economic Duty](#) and [The Socio-economic Duty: guidance and resources for public bodies](#)

Annex 2: Strategic Equality Objectives 2020 to 2024

Our equality objectives contribute to meeting the 3 requirements of the general duty and help us to work towards a more equal Wales. They outline our commitment to removing the barriers which limit opportunities and hinder aspirations. They seek to address long-standing, deeply entrenched and often inter-generational inequalities for those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

[Equality plan and objectives: 2020 to 2024](#)

Long-term Aim 1 - Elimination of inequality caused by poverty.

WG Equality Objective 1:

By 2024, we will improve outcomes for those most at risk of living in low income households, particularly those with protected characteristics, by mitigating the impact of poverty, improving opportunities and reducing the inequalities experienced by those living in poverty. [Measured through a range of data, including that relating to HBAI (Households with below average income)]

Long-term Aim 2 - Strong and progressive equality and human rights protections for everyone in Wales

WG Equality Objective 2: By 2024, we will complete investigations into ways the Welsh Government can ensure an integrated equality and human rights framework which promotes equality of outcome and opportunity and can help eliminate discrimination for all groups of people with one or more protected characteristic [Measured through the work of the Advancing and Strengthening Equality and Human Rights Steering Group.]

Long-term Aim 3 - The needs and rights of people who share protected characteristics are at the forefront of the design and delivery of all public services in Wales.

WG Equality Objective 3: In order to work towards fostering equality of opportunity and outcomes for all in Wales, we will continue to ensure the Welsh Government has implemented the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Welsh specific equality duties in all we do, and work to encourage other Public Sector organisations to follow our example. By adopting an approach based on removing barriers which prevent people fulfilling their potential (including, for example, equality of pay, or following the example of the Social Model of Disability), we will create better policy and better services for everyone. [Measured through improved PSED reporting arrangements and changes to Welsh specific regulations.]

Long-term Aim 4 - Wales is a world leader for gender equality. A gender equal Wales means an equal sharing of power, resources and influence for all women, men and non-binary people.

WG Equality Objective 4: We will begin to deliver the vision and principles of the Gender Equality Review. [Measured through the development of the Report and Roadmap for embedding feminist principles across Welsh Government.]

Long-term Aim 5 - Elimination of identity-based abuse, harassment, hate crime and bullying.

WG Equality Objective 5: By 2024, we will ensure victims who experience abuse, harassment, hate crime or bullying as a result of having one or more protected characteristics have access to advice and support to live without fear or abuse. [Measured by monitoring of hate crime reporting, services delivered by Victim Support, School-based counsellors, monitoring of bullying reports, National Survey responses about fear of crime / victimisation]

Long-term Aim 6 - A Wales of cohesive communities that are resilient, fair and equal.

WG Equality Objective 6: By 2024, we will develop a monitoring framework to measure progress towards community cohesion and foster good relations between all groups, building on our existing policies and interventions. [Measured by increased metrics in the Well-being of Future Generations National Indicators and the Home Office Indicators of Integration].

Long-term Aim 7 - Everyone in Wales is able to participate in political, public and everyday life.

WG Equality Objective 7: By 2024, we will increase the diversity of decision-makers in public life and public appointments, exploring areas where further action is needed to ensure greater balance of diversity among decision-makers and identify and investigate mechanisms to redress inequality. [Measured through the % of individuals from protected groups securing decision making roles within public and political roles.]

Long-term Aim 8 - The Welsh public sector leads the way as exemplar inclusive and diverse organisations and employers.

WG Equality Objective 8: By 2024 the Welsh Government will be an exemplar employer, increasing diversity, removing barriers and supporting staff from all backgrounds to reach their potential, creating equality of opportunity for all. [Measured through employment and recruitment diversity data and the Annual Equality Report.]

Annex 3 - Summary of progress towards Equality Objectives

This annex summarises progress towards achieving the aims and objectives in our [Strategic Equality Plan 2020 to 2024](#). The examples below are illustrative examples, and do not reflect the full range of actions carried out in this period.

Long-term Aim 1: - Elimination of Inequality Caused by Poverty

Objective 1: By 2024, we will improve outcomes for those most at risk of living in low-income households, particularly those with protected characteristics, by mitigating the impact of poverty, improving opportunities and reducing the inequalities experienced by those living in poverty. [Measured through a range of data, including those relating to HBAI (Households with below average income)]

Progress

Welsh Government reports annually against the performance of delivery organisations providing housing adaptations. A total of £31 million was invested in 64 schemes across Wales through the Housing with Care Fund in 2022 to 2023.

The Fund has supported a step change in the provision of accommodation services close to home for children with complex needs, investing in 19 children's residential schemes, and 5 emergency, respite or transitional accommodation schemes for children and young people.

Other investments include 14 supported living schemes for adults with a learning disability; 12 older people's schemes; and 6 supported accommodation schemes for adults and families with mental health and other care needs.

£23 million of the £60 million budget was prioritised for investment in the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme.

Long-term Aim 2 - Strong and progressive equality and human rights protections for everyone in Wales

Objective 2: By 2024, we will complete investigations into ways the Welsh Government can ensure an integrated equality and human rights framework which promotes equality of outcome and opportunity and can help eliminate discrimination for all groups of people with one or more protected characteristic [Measured through the work of the Advancing and Strengthening Equality and Human Rights Steering Group.]

Progress

The Welsh Government's Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 contains commitments to incorporate into Welsh law the UN Conventions 1. for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and 2. on the Rights of Disabled People.

Our research into [Strengthening and advancing equality and human rights in Wales research report](#), published on 26 August 2021, has explored a range of related issues and will inform our future work. The Welsh Government response to the report is here: [Strengthening and Advancing Equality and Human Rights in Wales research report: Welsh Government response](#)

To oversee this work, we have established a Human Rights Advisory Group (HRAG), co-chaired by the Counsel General Designate and Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip. The HRAG monitors and advises on the five main streams of work arising from the research (legislative options; guidance; review of Wales Specific Equality Duties; impact assessment and promotion) and connects with our other equality forums and with work arising from the Commission on Justice in Wales.

The Legislative Options Working Group (LOWG), a sub-committee of the HRAG, advises on the next steps to progressing the incorporation of Rights in Wales. The LOWG has submitted an interim report. The initial recommendations require a deeper analysis of the treaty articles on a right by rights basis to ascertain what can be achieved through Welsh legislation.

Long-term Aim 3: The needs and rights of people who share protected characteristics are at the forefront of the design and delivery of all public services in Wales.

Objective 3: In order to work towards fostering equality of opportunity and outcomes for all in Wales we will continue to ensure the Welsh Government has implemented the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Welsh specific equality duties in all we do and work to encourage other Public Sector organisations to follow our example. By adopting an approach based on removing barriers which prevent people fulfilling their potential (including, for example, equality of pay, or following the example of the Social Model of Disability), we will create better policy and better services for everyone. [Measured through improved PSED reporting arrangements and changes to Welsh specific regulations.]

Progress

Working with vulnerable children, young people and their families within the family justice system, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) Cymru Diversity and Inclusion programme is our approach and commitment to understanding and valuing diversity, recognising every child is an individual and valuing and promoting diversity within our work force.

We have established a new approach to gathering diversity information in respect of all Service Users (SUs), which informs our work in each individual case as well as building a picture of our SU population.

We are reviewing the information already gathered to inform further service development, such as developing guidance around how we respond to SUs with communication challenges.

The information gathered will be collated and analysed twice yearly within Cafcass Cymru. It will also be available with the other anonymised data shared through the [Secure Anonymised Information Linkage Databank \(SAIL Databank\)](#), which enables academic research to consider who is involved in family court proceedings and the outcomes for those children and families.

Long-term Aim 4: Wales is a world leader for gender equality.

Objective 4: We will begin to deliver the vision and principles of the Gender Equality Review. [Measured through the development of the Report and Roadmap for embedding feminist principles across Welsh Government.]

Progress

A Gender Equality Forum, bringing together stakeholders working on gender equality issues from across Wales, held its first four meetings.

The [Advancing Gender Equality Action Plan](#) draws on the recommendations made in Chwarae Teg's Deeds Not Words - a review of gender equality in Wales report. This report states a new vision for gender equality in Wales requires an equalities mainstreaming approach which includes gender budgeting as an intrinsic component.

Progress has been made against all recommendations in the Gender Equality Review. 50 have been complete and the remainder are ongoing. Some recommendations require long-term, structural change to embed equality. The progress to date reflects this. Progress includes:

- the introduction of the policy capability strategy
- the equality mainstreaming work
- the adoption of intersectionality within equality plans
- the updates and improvements to the integrated impact assessment
- and the gender budgeting pilots and the work to explore how best to embed it across the organisation

The Roadmap included recommendations which set out a range of medium term actions for Welsh Government to take across policy areas including health, education and skills, poverty and welfare reform, employment, childcare, transport and VAWDASV. Work in all these areas is ongoing.

Progress is measured via each appointment exercise undertaken by CST teams for the Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies (WGSBs) for which they are responsible. The Culture Sponsored Bodies have good gender balance on their Boards, with

either an equal number of male and female members or slightly more female than male members e.g. at present, Amgueddfa Cymru has 7 men and 9 women, National Library of Wales has 7 men and 7 women, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales has 4 men and 5 women. (Note: as this report is a statement of progress at a particular point in time, Board Membership may be subject to change).

Long-term Aim 5: Elimination of identity-based abuse, harassment, hate crime and bullying

Objective 5: By 2024, we will ensure victims who experience abuse, harassment, hate crime or bullying as a result of having one or more protected characteristics have access to advice and support to live without fear or abuse. [Measured by monitoring of hate crime reporting, services delivered by Victim Support, School-based counsellors, monitoring of bullying reports, National Survey responses about fear of crime / victimisation]

Progress

Welsh Government funds the Wales Hate Support Centre, run by Victim Support Cymru, to provide free, confidential support and advocacy to all victims of hate crime, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Support is provided over the telephone, face-to-face, or virtually.

National statistics relating to [Hate crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023 second edition](#) were released by the Home Office on 2 November 2023, which show a 4% decrease in recorded hate crimes across Wales compared to 2021 to 2022. This is similar to the overall 5% decrease across England and Wales. This is the first annual fall since the Home Office began collecting comparable data in the year ending March 2013 for both Wales, and England and Wales overall.

The Home Office notes increases in police recorded hate crime prior to this year were thought to have been driven by improvements in crime recording by the police and better identification of what constitutes a hate crime.

There were 6,041 recorded hate crimes across the four Welsh Police Force Areas of which:

- 3,727 (62%) were race hate crimes;
- 1,225 (20%) were sexual orientation hate crimes;
- 287 (5%) were religion hate crimes;
- 849 (14%) were disability hate crimes; and
- 302 (5%) were transgender hate crimes.

These proportions are similar to 2021 to 2022, with slight increases for religion and transgender status (both 4% in 2021 to 2022). It is possible for one hate crime offence to have more than one motivating factor which is why the above numbers sum to more than 6,041 and 100 per cent.

Compared to 2021 to 2022, there were increases in the number of hate crimes with religion or transgender status as recorded motivating factors, while there were decreases in hate crimes with disability, race and sexual orientation as recorded motivating factors:

- 8% decrease (1,329 to 1,225) in sexual orientation hate crimes
- 4% decrease (3,888 to 3,727) in race hate crimes
- 2% decrease (864 to 849) in disability hate crimes
- 22% increase (247 to 302) in transgender hate crimes
- 26% increase (227 to 287) in religion hate crimes

There was an increase of recording in Gwent Police Force Area, and a decrease in the remaining Police Force Areas in Wales. The increase in Gwent follows a large increase between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022, when this Police Force Area saw an 82% increase in recorded hate crimes.

- Dyfed Powys :750 hate crimes (9% decrease from 2021 to 2022)
- Gwent: 1,358 hate crimes (10% increase from 2021 to 2022)
- North Wales: 1,346 hate crimes (11% decrease from 2021 to 2022)
- South Wales: 2,587 hate crimes (5% decrease from 2021 to 2022).

Between 2012 to 2013 and 2022 to 2023 hate crimes recorded by Welsh police forces have increased by 242%, from 1,765 to 6,041. It is uncertain the extent to which the increases seen over recent years are due to the pattern of improvements in police recording or represent a real increase in hate crime.

Long-term Aim 6: A Wales of cohesive communities that are resilient, fair and equal

Objective 6: By 2024, we will develop a monitoring framework to measure progress towards community cohesion and foster good relations between all groups, building on our existing policies and interventions. [Measured by increased metrics in the Well-being of Future Generations National Indicators and the Home Office Indicators of Integration].

Progress

Our Community Cohesion Programme funds eight teams across Wales to provide front-line support to communities. Following an independent review of the Community Cohesion Programme, the Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip has agreed the

Programme should continue to be funded until 2025 to 2026, to ensure this valuable work can continue in Wales. The findings and recommendations of the independent review have shaped and informed our priorities in this area, and this will be used as a platform to build future work and how we monitor this.

This year the work of the Cohesion Programme has also been essential in helping support local government to participate in Afghan resettlement and asylum dispersal, as well as our response to supporting Ukrainian refugees.

Long-term Aim 7: Everyone in Wales is able to participate in political, public and everyday life

Objective 7: By 2024, we will increase the diversity of decision-makers in public life and public appointments, exploring areas where further action is needed to ensure greater balance of diversity among decision-makers and identify and investigate mechanisms to redress inequality. [Measured through the % of individuals from protected groups securing decision making roles within public and political roles.]

Progress

Our [Diversity and inclusion strategy for public appointments](#) was launched in February 2020. The Welsh Government [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#), published in 2022, sets out commitments to proactively engage with Board Chairs to improve leadership around anti-racism and to pilot data collection of the equality characteristics of regulated Public Sector Bodies.

Work is underway within our Knowledge and Analytical Services to look at collecting existing demographic data from Boards.

The Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip agreed funding to support job shadowing for people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups and disabled people onto Boards. This will secure an experienced pipeline into public appointments. It will also ensure pay parity for people who undertake job shadowing.

We have recruited 13 Senior Independent Panel Members from wide and diverse backgrounds (recruited through a competitive process).

We have also commissioned training programmes to enable people to gain the skills to apply to be a member of a Board. They are aimed at disabled people as well as people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The training programmes went live in July 2022 and will run until 31 March 2024.

Long-term Aim 8: the Welsh public sector leads the way as exemplar inclusive and diverse organisations and employers

Objective 8: By 2024 the Welsh Government will be an exemplar employer, increasing diversity, removing barriers and supporting staff from all backgrounds to reach their potential, creating equality of opportunity for all. [Measured through employment and recruitment diversity data and the Annual Equality Report.]

Our overall objective, set out in Welsh Government's current [Strategic Equality Plan 2020 to 2024](#), is that Welsh Government will be an exemplar employer, increasing diversity by:

- addressing in particular the under-representation of disabled people and people from minority ethnic communities at all levels of the organisation and the underrepresentation of women in senior roles
- removing barriers
- supporting apprenticeships from diverse communities
- enabling staff from all backgrounds to reach their potential, creating equality of opportunity for all.

The [Welsh Government workforce equality, diversity and inclusion strategy: 2021 to 2026](#) sets ambitious targets. In external recruitment:

- by 2026 we aim for 20% of people we appoint to be disabled and 20% will be from ethnic minority backgrounds
- by 2030, we aim to increase this so 30% of people we appoint will be disabled, in order to make bigger inroads into the very large-scale underrepresentation of disabled people in our organisation.
- more than 50% of appointments to the Senior Civil Service (SCS) at Welsh Government between now and 2026 will be women.

In internal recruitment, our aspirations are:

- to promote disabled staff at a level which exceeds their population share, to address current under-representation at all levels of the organisation
- to promote ethnic minority staff at a level which exceeds their population share, to address current under-representation at all levels of the organisation
- for more than 50% of promotions to the SCS to be women

Progress

Progress on our targets is measured annually, in a calendar year.

The Welsh Government's [Annual Employer Equality Report 2021 to 2022](#) sets out progress made against the 6 recruitment targets for the calendar year 2021, which showed four out of the 6 recruitment targets were met.

The 50% targets for the promotion and external recruitment of women to the SCS were exceeded.

The target for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff to be promoted at higher rates than their Welsh Government population share was exceeded.

The equivalent target for disabled staff was in line with the target set.

However, the 20% targets for the external recruitment of ethnic minority and disabled people were not met, with proportions seeing little change from the previous year.

The Annual Employer Equality Report 2022 to 2023 is to be published before 31st March 2023.