# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **A More Equal Wales – Commencing the Socio-economic Duty** |
| **DATE** | **11 March 2020** |
| **BY** | **Jane Hutt, Deputy Minister and Chief Whip** |

On 22 November 2019 I launched a consultation on the commencement of Part 1, Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 – the Socio-economic Duty. The duty will require specified public bodies, when making strategic decisions such as ‘deciding priorities and setting objectives’, to consider how their decisions could help to reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

The consultation ran for 8 weeks, gaining views on Welsh Government’s proposal to commence, which public bodies should be captured by the duty and how the duty should be delivered.

Today I publish the summary of responses to that consultation.

The Welsh Government received a total of 98 responses and there were over 140 attendees at the engagement events held across Wales. I am delighted with the level of engagement and that the responses showed significant support for the duty. Furthermore, the notion of bodies not listed in the legislation “honouring the spirit of the duty” also emerged as a prominent idea.

However concerns were raised regarding the short time they had to prepare for the implementation of the duty – planned for 1 April 2020, with requests for a longer ‘lead-in time’.

Alongside the Social Partnership Bill and Fair Work, this duty will give us the opportunity to do things differently in Wales. Commencing the duty will mean that tackling inequality will be at the heart of strategic decision-making in public life, building on the good work public bodies are already doing, particularly through implementing the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Given the importance of the Duty, it is crucial therefore, that we listen to the views of stakeholders in support of our public bodies. We want to ensure they are as fully prepared as possible before the Duty comes into effect and that it delivers for the people of Wales. In recognition of this and in response to the requests for more time to prepare. The duty will be enacted on 29 September 2020.

Officials are currently working with stakeholders to produce guidance to prepare relevant public bodies for the commencement of the Duty. This will be available from the 1 April on the Welsh Government’s website.

Between publication of this guidance and the c commencement of the Duty later this year, the Welsh Government will work with relevant public bodies, the TUC, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, third sector bodies and those who have experience of socio-economic disadvantage to refine this document to provide statutory guidance. This time will provide an opportunity for continuous review and on-going engagement to allow a better understanding of how the duty is expected to be delivered in practice and how it can work within existing systems and processes, aligning to wider equality legislation helping public bodies deliver A More Equal Wales.

The summary of responses are available at:

https://gov.wales/equality-act-2010-commencing-socio-economic-duty