# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Working with the World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office Europe to promote Health Equity.** |
| **DATE** | **04 October 2019** |
| **BY** | **Vaughan Gething, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

I was delighted to participate and speak at both the World Health Organisation (WHO) High-level Health Equity Conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia (11 June) and the WHO 69th Regional Committee for Europe in Copenhagen (16 September).

These high-profile events had a focus on solutions to reduce health inequalities and to ensure that health equity is central to national policy decision-making across sectors. It also gave me the opportunity to learn from and to share our experiences here in Wales with Health Ministers from across Europe.

The conference in Ljubljana saw the launch of the [*WHO European Health Equity Policy Tool*](http://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/events/events/2019/06/healthy,-prosperous-lives-for-all-in-the-european-region-high-level-conference-on-health-equity/publications/health-equity-policy-tool.-a-framework-to-track-policies-for-increasing-health-equity-in-the-who-european-region-working-document-2019), which aims to provide an interactive health equity atlas as well as other tools to support countries to promote health equity within their own nations. The tool highlights the trends in the status, conditions needed and effective policy actions for equity in health. It offers five concrete conditions for health equity: *universal access to quality, affordable health services, income security and social protection, safe, decent living conditions, building social and human capital and good employment and working conditions*. The conference also resulted in the [Ljubljana statement on health equity](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/403939/190325_HealthEquityConferenceOutcomeStatement.pdf?ua=1).

Following the success of the conference, I was asked to contribute to a discussion on health equity at the 69th WHO Regional Committee for Europe in Copenhagen (16 September), where a resolution on ‘[*accelerating progress towards healthy, prosperous lives for all, increasing equity in health and leaving no one behind in the WHO European Region’*](http://www.euro.who.int/en/about-us/governance/regional-committee-for-europe/69th-session/documentation/resolutions/eurrc69r5-resolution-on-accelerating-progress-towards-healthy,-prosperous-lives-for-all,-increasing-equity-in-health-and-leaving-no-one-behind-in-the-who-european-region), was formally adopted.

The principles of both these statements are supportive of the action we are taking in Wales to address health equity and are consistent with the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The WHO regional office have recently published their [Health Equity Status Report (HESR)](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/412333/Hesri-executive-summary.pdf?ua=1) which is a comprehensive review of the status and trends in health inequities and of the essential conditions needed for all to be able to live a healthy life in the WHO European Region. During the course of the two visits, I had the opportunity to discuss with senior officials of the WHO opportunities for Wales to be one of the first nations to produce its own Health Equity Status Report (HESR), with a view to sharing our learning to help advance local, national and European solutions for health, wellbeing and prosperity for all. My officials are working with Public Health Wales to progress this exciting area of work and will update Members further on this in due course.