



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

POLICY AND STRATEGY

Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units strategy

Describes the scope and emerging priorities of the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units.

First published: 22 September 2022

Last updated: 22 September 2022

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Background

The importance of inclusive evidence

One of the 4 core values of the Civil Service (as set out in the [Civil Service Code](#)) is 'objectivity' defined as 'basing your advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence'. Reliable evidence is required throughout policy development in planning, during implementation and in evaluating whether the policy was successful and where improvements are required. We need to understand whether policies impact positively across the board, for the whole Welsh population.

The Welsh Government is committed to advancing the rights and outcomes for people with protected characteristics. A Disability Rights Taskforce is also considering the actions required to remove the barriers for disabled people in our society. We have an Advancing Gender Equality in Wales plan in place and have published a revised [action plan](#) following consultation. We are working with LGBTQ+ groups on an LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales.

Coronavirus, COVID-19 and its impacts have highlighted the need for strengthened evidence to address inequality in Wales. We recognise that having reliable and useable evidence is essential to understand the systemic inequalities citizens in Wales face and addressing the often deep-rooted issues which adversely impact those with protected and related characteristics. Data often hides distinct and unique differences between minority identities and where there is intersectionality between two or more characteristics. We understand there is a need to ensure evidence truly reflects the lived experiences of the groups it is aiming to capture.

This led to the development of the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units consisting of

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

The Units will focus on improving the equality evidence for use in decision making, delivery of policies/interventions, provision of services, research and debate, both within the Welsh public sector and beyond.

How did we get here?

Whilst there has been a longstanding understanding around the lack of evidence in relation to inequalities in Wales two reports relating to COVID-19 in particular highlighted the gaps and called for distinct Evidence Units to be established:

- **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) COVID-19 Socioeconomic Subgroup: report:** a report into the factors influencing negative COVID-19 outcomes for individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds first called for evidence units to be established.
- **Locked out: liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19:** a report about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled people followed with a recommendation for a disability evidence unit.

A **rapid review** by the COVID-19 Evidence Centre published in January 2022 also highlighted the difficulties in obtaining intersectional data related to gender and COVID-19 impacts.

Reflecting on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic it became clearer that policy makers had limited capacity to engage with equalities evidence in making decisions around public health. In January 2021 we undertook research to scope the role of the recommended Evidence Units with a focus on equality evidence. This involved a series of interviews, focus groups and workshops with internal

and external stakeholders.

Two strong themes that emerged from engagement with our stakeholders were the importance of involving people with lived experience at all stages of creating and running the Evidence Units, and ensuring an intersectional approach. The scoping work agreed with the recommendations from the two reports above and led to recommendations for establishing the Evidence Units, the resources required and their governance arrangements, all of which have been developed further for this Equality Evidence Strategy.

Introduction

In January 2022, we established 3 distinct Units, each with their own evidence programme:

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

The Units will work together as the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units with an overarching Equality Evidence Strategy to ensure synergy, effectiveness, efficiency and cohesion.

For ease the Units will be referred to together in this document as 'the Units'.

This strategy describes the scope, remit and intentions for the Units as an overarching strategy and we have also published a list of priorities for the Units. The priorities include tasks required to establish the Units and key research priorities. They have been developed with stakeholders based on commitments already made and emerging requirements from An Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, Disability Rights Taskforce, Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan, the

draft LGBTQ+ Action Plan, and other key Welsh Government plans and strategies.

This strategy has been built on the many conversations with stakeholders across all characteristics during the development of various Welsh Government action plans and in scoping the Units. It has been discussed with stakeholders and evolved into the version it is today. This Equality Evidence Strategy is intended to be a live document. As the Units develop and deliver, the remit of the Units may also flex and stakeholder priorities may change, we will also, through our relationships, learn more about stakeholder requirements. As we implement the strategy, we will continue to involve stakeholders in developing, reviewing and agreeing priorities. This strategy will therefore be refreshed and revised as necessary.

The vision for Wales: a more equal Wales

The Welsh Government's vision for Wales is set out in the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#). It is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales ensuring that when policies are developed they improve the lives of people today and future generations. The Act sets out 7 well-being goals to make sure all public sector bodies are working towards the same purpose.

One of the goals in the Act is "A more equal Wales". The work of the Units in delivering this strategy will play an important part in supporting Welsh Government and public bodies to meet this goal and measure its impact across all goals for all people with associated and protected characteristics.

The Welsh Government recognises that the Wales of today is not an equal country and the experiences of the many communities within it are very different. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people face discrimination and racism.

Disabled people have long battled for the fundamental right to independent living and have developed the statement 'Nothing about us without us'. The Welsh Government accepts that disabled people experienced discrimination, restriction and exclusion because of the COVID-19 pandemic and that we need to fully involve disabled people in planning of policies.

We are also committed to advancing gender equality towards a Wales with an equal sharing of power for all women, men and non-binary people. There is also a continued commitment to develop a country where all LGBTQ+ people in Wales are safe to live and love authentically, openly and freely as themselves.

The policy context

This section outlines the main pieces of legislation, strategies and plans that relate to equality in Wales.

Equality legislation

The **Equality Act 2010** legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It places a duty on public sector bodies to consider how they can reduce inequalities for key groups when they make decisions. The protected characteristics set out in the Act are:

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

- sex
- sexual orientation.

This list forms the basis for the scope of the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units but we have expanded on this in our scope to include what we call ‘associated characteristics’ which captures socioeconomic status, brings in the wider LGBTQ+ community as concepts around sex and gender have developed, and includes asylum seekers and refugees as part of race. Characteristics in scope are listed in the Scope section. Understanding inequalities and impacts of policies on these groups relies on the availability of evidence.

The **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)** is set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and places a duty on public bodies to have due regard in exercising their functions to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 are distinctive Welsh Regulations which build on the Act and provide a further foundation for taking equality forward in Wales with the aim of enabling the better performance of the PSED. Under these Regulations listed devolved public sector bodies, including the Welsh Ministers, are required to set, review and revise equality objectives to which evidence is key. Section 5 of the Act includes a requirement to review these objectives with representatives of people with protected characteristics, and evidence collected by the Units could facilitate this through deliberative research techniques.

The Welsh Government’s **Socio-Economic Duty** came into force in 2021 and

aims to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage. The overall aim of the duty is to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring that those taking strategic decisions take account of the evidence, consult with individuals and drive positive change. Evidence shows that minority groups are more likely to be socio-economically deprived and there is therefore a clear link between evidence required to assess socio economic status and evidence on protected characteristics. There is further work to do on the definition of socio-economic status and the Units will be involved in developing that.

The **Human Rights Act 1998** sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law. There is a need to assess human rights by characteristics to ensure all members of our communities are able to exercise their human rights.

The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales for the people of today and future generations. The Act sets out 7 goals including:

- a more equal Wales and
- a Wales of cohesive communities

The Act provides for better decision-making by ensuring that public bodies consider and involve people of all ages and diversity. It is about ensuring the decisions taken are fit for now and the future. Improved equality evidence will support how we assess whether the well-being goals are being met.

It is becoming clearer that the goal of a more equal Wales is not possible until discrimination and disparity is removed from our society.

Welsh Government commitments

The Welsh Government's **Programme for Government** 2021 sets out the commitments made by Welsh Ministers for 2021 to 2026. There is a specific commitment to

- create a Race Disparity Unit alongside an Equality Data Unit to ensure an inclusive evidence base to inform decision making in government

There are also related commitments which the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units will contribute with respect to advice, guidance and support around evidence:

- celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms
- implement and fund the commitments made in our Race Equality Action Plan
- use the new network of Disabled People's Employment Champions to help close the gap between disabled people and the rest of the working population
- 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
- implement targets around Gender Budgeting
- introduce legislation to reform the Senedd, based on 80 to 100 Members; a voting system, which is as proportional, or more, than the current one and introduce gender quotas in law

The Welsh Government's **Strategic Equality Plan 2020 to 2024** sets out the equality objectives for Wales against long term aims. These actions are grouped by policy domains (education, work, living standards, health, justice and personal security and participation). The work of the Units will feed directly into measuring the implementation of the actions set out and achievement of the

aims. An Equality Funding Programme Outcomes framework has been developed to support equality funding programmes to assess and demonstrate delivery against the long term aims in the strategic equality plan.

The Welsh Government's **An Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan** followed on from the Strategic Equality Plan 2020 to 2024 and in light of the inequalities that were highlighted and intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consultation on a draft plan has taken place and a revised version was published in June 2022. The plan sets out the Welsh Government's vision for Wales as a country that is anti-racist, where everyone is treated as an equal citizen. It requires conscious efforts and deliberate actions to provide equitable opportunities for all people, on an individual, organisational and systemic level. It also requires individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups to be involved at all levels of decision making so that their needs and experiences of inequalities are understood and considered. The Race Disparity Evidence Unit is stated in the plan as a key resource for ensuring the plan is evidenced, monitored and evaluated.

A **Disability Rights Taskforce** has been established in Wales to look at the barriers faced by disabled people and as part of the Welsh Government's response to the Locked Out: Liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19 report. The Minister-led Disability Rights Taskforce is taking forward the work to address the inequalities highlighted by the Locked Out report and oversee the development of actions that will form a Disability Rights Action Plan. A key recommendation of the report was use of the social model of disability, which Welsh Government has in principle been committed to since 2002 and the commitment was reaffirmed by the Executive Committee in December 2019. The Disability Disparity Evidence Unit will work closely with the Taskforce to ensure there is suitable evidence available to evidence, monitor and evaluate the plan.

Welsh Government's **Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan** was published in March 2020 and sets out key objectives over the short term to achieve a gender equal Wales. The Equality Evidence Unit will work closely with

the policy leads to ensure there is suitable evidence available to evidence, monitor and evaluate the plan. The Equality Evidence Unit will also play an important role in the design of the second iteration of the Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan which will provide the framework for the Welsh Governments work on gender equality from 2023 onwards.

The Welsh Government's draft **LGBTQ+ Action Plan** was published for consultation in July 2021. The consultation responses are being reviewed and a revised plan is being developed. The plan seeks to tackle the existing structural inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ communities, to challenge discrimination and to create a society where LGBTQ+ people are safe to live and love authentically, openly and freely as themselves. The Equality Evidence Unit will work closely with policy leads to ensure there is suitable evidence available to support, monitor and evaluate the plan.

The Welsh Governments' **Strengthening and advancing equality and human rights in Wales** report details research that was commissioned as part of the Welsh Government's commitment to developing a clear approach in Wales to ensuring equality and human rights are fully considered and protected.

The research findings outline mechanisms to strengthen and advance equality and human rights in Wales, and include recommendations for legislative, policy, guidance, or other reforms to meet this objective. A number of recommendations refer to objectives, targets, indicators and impact assessments. Equality evidence will support these processes.

We have committed to contributing to the recommendations of the UK Statistics Authority's **Inclusive Data Taskforce**. The recommendations describe how best to make a step-change in the inclusivity of UK data and evidence.

There are additional activities and actions which will also require reliable and relevant information on equality characteristics as they are considered across all policy areas and all decisions

- The **Children and young people's plan**
- **Welsh Government Organisational Strategy on Workplace, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 2021 to 2026**
- The **Strategy for Older People in Wales 2013 to 2023**
- **Nation of Sanctuary: Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan**
- **Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan**
- Review of Public sector Equality Duty
- Implementation of **Socioeconomic Duty**
- The **Stronger, fairer, greener Wales: a plan for employability and skills**, which includes a focus on gender, ethnicity and disability
- The **Diversity and inclusion strategy for public appointments**

Units mission

Mission statement

The Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units will improve the availability, quality, granularity and accessibility of evidence about individuals with protected and associated characteristics so that we fully understand the level and types of inequalities across Wales.

This will enable decision makers across Wales to develop better informed policies and measure their impact. This will drive us towards better outcomes for people with protected and associated characteristics and contribute to a more equal Wales as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

This will provide clear challenge to the Welsh Government and Public Sector Bodies around the evidence they need to monitor and the actions that need to be taken as a result of the evidence presented.

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Definitions relating to the mission statement

Protected characteristics under the **Equality Act 2010** are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Whilst we acknowledge that the terms 'gender identity' and 'gender expression' are not protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Government believes that policy which includes provision for those persons who identify within the 'trans' umbrella (rather than on the basis of binary gender) is a more inclusive approach and one which ensures Welsh Ministers are in a position to comply with all our statutory duties related to equality and the promotion of well-being in Wales. We therefore include associated characteristics which expand on those defined in the Equality Act; in particular expanding to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning people (LGBTQ+) (with the + representing other identities including non-binary).

Due to the strong relationship between minority groups and socioeconomic status this is also within scope in order to support the Welsh Government's **Socio-Economic Duty** which aims to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage.

Asylum seekers and refugees as well as the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community are explicitly included as part of the race characteristic due to the lack of visibility in current evidence sources.

We will also consider intersectionality, the interconnected nature of characteristics which can compound discrimination or disadvantage creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

A full list of characteristics in scope are listed in the Scope section.

Availability

Making information available to more organisations and more people, publicly if appropriate.

Quality

Working to understand how the evidence we use and promote meets professional standards and understand the limitations of evidence sources available to us. We will work with evidence providers to improve the quality of evidence so that it can be used confidently for a number of purposes. We are committed to [The Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and [The Government Social Research Code](#) and Publications Protocol.

Granularity

To understand the experiences of minority communities and people who have more than one characteristic users need to be able to drill down through evidence to see the unique experiences of different minority groups. This is difficult to achieve as minority populations lead to small sample sizes in surveys and issues with data disclosure. We will explore all ways of finding and presenting suitable evidence to maintain non-disclosure whilst presenting information at the lowest level possible.

Accessibility

To ensure evidence is available in formats, languages and using appropriate technology that makes it accessible to all users including the communities that the evidence represents.

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Evidence

Different types of evidence can be useful in informing policy. Different types of evidence serve different purposes but can also be used to support and complement each other. Types of evidence include:

- lived experience
- social research
- evaluation (process, impact and economic)
- statistics
- economic research
- expert knowledge and stakeholder consultation
- operational research

Scope

We are aware that data often hides distinct and unique differences between minority identities and where there is intersectionality between two or more characteristics. All three units will consider intersectionality in their work and many projects will require working across the three units. All three of the units will also work across all key policy areas. Cross-cutting areas of interest include, but are not limited, to: socio-economic status; people in need of care or support; unpaid carers; homeless people; prisoners, people who have had contact with the justice system.

The Race Disparity Unit will specifically focus on:

- ethnicity
- religion and belief
- migrants

- refugees
- asylum seekers
- Gypsies, Roma and travellers

The Disability Disparity Evidence Unit will specifically focus on: social model of disability, physical impairments, mental impairments, additional learning needs; neurodivergence.

The Equality Evidence Unit will specifically focus on: gender (including women, men and non-binary people including cisgender and transgender populations); gender reassignment; LGBTQ+ (including a focus on gender equality covering both cisgender and transgender populations); age; sex (including male, female and intersex); marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity.

Our remit

As set out in the mission the aims of the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units is to improve the availability, quality, granularity and accessibility of evidence about individuals with protected and associated characteristics.

Improved evidence sources and access to them will benefit the Welsh Government as well as the wider public sector in Wales, civil society organisations and the wider community. Whilst being an advisory service for equality data is not within our remit at present, the Units do have a role to play in guiding and equipping the wide range of users to find and use equalities evidence effectively. This could involve access to developed or new data sources, tools and approaches. We will also talk to our wide range of stakeholders to invite priorities from outside the Welsh Government and build this into our work programme.

As the Units are in development, we will initially focus on assessing the

landscape and making any evidence, advice and guidance available as widely as possible for all to benefit. Initial priorities lie around providing evidence for the Welsh Government commitments as set out in the Policy Section but advancing evidence in these areas should benefit the whole public sector. Any advice, guidance and evidence developed will be shared publicly for equal access and maximum benefit as we provide leadership, build capacity and share knowledge.

Routine data collection and analysis, research, evaluation and ad-hoc policy evidence requests remain the remit of existing Welsh Government analysts unless they are directly related to key equalities strategies such as An Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan or Disability Taskforce requirements.

Key responsibilities of the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units are to

- Assess the current landscape of evidence in relation to protected and associated characteristics with regards to the availability, quality, accessibility and granularity of equality evidence.
- Understand and assess the impact of gaps in equalities evidence from the needs of the wider public sector, civil society organisations and the wider community.
- In response to gaps, assess, prioritise and scope projects to fill key gaps by improving and linking existing data sources and develop new sources of equalities evidence, where required. We will develop a set of criteria to support our prioritisation, which will include considering the needs of stakeholders.
- Ensure that all types of evidence are considered and to develop our use and understanding of lived experience by establishing a co-production approach. We will champion the use of lived experience evidence as equal to other sources ensuring people's stories are heard.
- Improve the quality and accessibility of equalities data sources for Welsh Government and the wider external use. Ensure that the data is presented clearly and unambiguously so that accountability groups can confidently challenge decision makers on equality.

- Provide high level advice, guidance, support and challenge to policy makers so that the data can be used appropriately to support better policy decisions including policy impact assessments. It is envisaged that this will be in the form of publicly available tools and would include for example general guidance on standard question wording in relation to equalities surveys and monitoring, or in the collection of equality data sources. This advice and guidance will be available to all policy makers across Wales but an advisory service will not be provided outside Welsh Government. Within Welsh Government, the Units, alongside existing analysts, may provide additional guidance to enable policy makers to undertake key policy impact assessments however the Units will not carry out impact assessment on their behalf.
- To use evidence to highlight good practice and positive change and allow comparative assessment of policies and organisations.
- Provide evidence and advice to support and evaluate key Welsh Government equality action plans, such as An Anti-Racist Wales Plan, the work of the Disability Rights Taskforce, the Advancing Gender Equality in Wales plan, the draft LGBTQ+ Action Plan.
- Ongoing engagement and work with equality groups and fora in order to understand and inform priority research areas including the Anti-racist Wales Accountability Group, Disability Rights Taskforce, Gender Equality Subgroup and LGBTQ+ Expert Stakeholder Group.

Challenges

We are aware of a number of significant challenges we will face with delivering on this Equality Evidence Strategy and are committed to working with communities and our stakeholders to address some of the barriers that are in place. Our plan and ways of working start to address these challenges.

Trust

We understand that there is a lack of trust in some minority communities when providing data to government.

We will work with these communities to build relationships and trust. Building an understanding of data security, how the information will be used and the benefits of providing data to support decision making. We know there are some areas where relationships and trust have improved and will learn from those.

Ensuring visible data feeds through to real change

There is a real lack of evidence on equality, however there is sufficient evidence to show us that inequality exists and action is required. Linked to trust there may be a lack of confidence in communities that improved evidence will lead to change in individuals' lives and experiences.

We will report to accountability groups so that they can use our evidence with confidence to challenge policies and organisations so that real change can be achieved. Currently accountability groups include

- Anti-racist Wales Accountability Group
- Disability Rights Taskforce
- Gender Equality Subgroup
- LGBTQ+ Expert Stakeholder Group

Changing existing sources

Statistical data collections are often difficult to change, often for very good reasons like wanting to compare the same information across a long time frame.

It can also be practically difficult and therefore costly to change data collection tools and reporting processes. Where these changes are required by other public sector bodies they may not have the resources or skills available to make changes. Some important data collections are governed by regulations which set out what they can collect and this may be a barrier to change.

We will work with those who manage relevant data collections to work through these challenges and find workable solutions. We will need to assess costs of making changes against priorities and benefits.

Lack of data sharing arrangements

Whilst data sharing across government departments and between public sector bodies has improved there remain areas where data is not shared and more needs to be done to build on secure and trusted data sharing methods.

Minority populations are less visible in evidence

It is often difficult to break down survey data for small populations as sample sizes are not large enough to provide estimates for these groups. Some characteristics or combinations of characteristic are not collected in survey or administrative data.

We will look at data linking and sample boosting to address this challenge. Administrative data could also be a good source of data on minority populations (if they have declared their protected or associated characteristics) as they may provide greater coverage than surveys alone. However, data quality can be variable in administrative data sources in relation to protected characteristics and work to build trust and understanding in collecting and providing this information will influence the quality of any evidence developed.

Resources and mechanisms for co-design and co-production

The way research is traditionally done has resulted in gaps in the evidence needed to tackle inequalities. We want to learn to coproduce research with people who share lived experiences of inequalities and researchers from other organisations to fill those gaps. This will require different ways of managing research to build trust; sharing decisions about how to do research and ensuring that everyone benefits from working together.

We are researching best practice and consulting with our stakeholders to develop effective co-production approaches and reviewing organisational procedures that might undermine coproduction and finding ways to reward or remunerate contributors to co-production. We will pilot and evaluate coproduction of a research project, refine our approach and share what we learn to encourage others to co-produce research.

Prioritisation differences between stakeholder groups or policy areas

We recognise the real need for improved equality evidence that comes from all stakeholder groups and understand that there could be times when priorities differ and resources are limited.

We are building relationships and working with all stakeholder groups to fully understand their needs and will involve all groups in prioritisation discussions in an open way.

What we will do

This strategy underpins more detailed evidence plans, which are being developed for the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units. It does not aim to set out a list of projects that will be undertaken by the Units but is strategic in its nature setting out the direction and aims of our work.

We are starting with an evidence audit and gaps analysis, which will lead us to a number of areas where improvements are needed in equalities evidence. Some of those required improvements are already known and we have already started work on some specific projects where there is an immediate need to fill a known gap. We anticipate our gaps analysis leading to a suite of tasks, which depending on complexity and priority we will aim to deliver in the short, medium and long term. We will include the needs of stakeholders in our prioritisation and consult on each Unit's evidence plan.

However, based on our scoping work and initial discussions with stakeholders, examples of projects we anticipate may be needed following the evidence audit and gaps analysis include:

- examining the feasibility of boosting population surveys or aggregating across years to increase the sample size for respondents with minority characteristics
- examining the feasibility of different options to introduce new data sources or adapting current data sources to meet identified data gaps including data linking techniques with Administrative Data Research Wales.
- undertaking research projects to understand barriers to reporting and to further understand the intersectional impacts on people with multiple characteristics.
- making recommendations for changes to data collections to bring definitions and question wording in line with harmonised standards as well as being involved in work to review the harmonised standards in line with Welsh

policy needs.

- developing guidance and training tools which could be shared with public and third sector organisations on the use of equality evidence

Work that has already started as identified as high priority:

- scoping and piloting a data collection of equality data from Public Sector Bodies in Wales
- involvement in the development of measures for the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan
- Feeding in Welsh Government's views on the Social Model of Disability to the UK Cabinet Office Disability Disparity Unit survey of disabled people
- analysis of the National Survey for Wales to see what information can be published by characteristics
- coproduction to design and test new research questions that reflect the social model of disability (and guidance for using these), which could be incorporated into future social research

We are committed to measuring our progress and regularly reporting on it to Ministers and our stakeholders.

Ways of working

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act requires public sector organisations in Wales to improve the lives of people now and to ensure it is sustainable for future generations.

The Welsh Government recognises that the Wales of today is not equal and urgent action is needed. There are systemic issues with equality that need to be addressed and there is sufficient evidence available now to show this. We do not need to wait until further evidence is available before the equality needs of the

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current generation are addressed. Our commitments through the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, Disability Rights Taskforce, Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan and LGBTQ+ Action Plan are set out to tackle inequalities that exists in our communities today.

In line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act we will look to adopt the 5 ways of working which ensure the sustainable development principle is adhered to.

Involvement and co-production

We have already involved people with protected and associated characteristics and representative organisations in developing this strategy and our initial research priorities. We will continue work with people and organisations to understand their experiences and how they are reflected in evidence. We will value lived experience. We will work with people who use equality evidence to understand their needs for analysis and evidence in order to help shape the way that information is prioritised and disseminated. We will encourage people and organisations to get involved in shaping and delivering our programmes of evidence and research projects.

We are starting to describe what co-production looks like in research and learning from and sharing with others in the organisation and externally who have or want to carry out co-production. We will adopt full co-production where we are genuinely able to share decisions and responsibility for planning, designing, researching and evaluating projects. We will be clear about when we are co-producing and will work to agreed co-production principles. Where there are insufficient resources or time to do so or if research is highly technical, we will invite involvement in other ways. For example, contributing to the research design, sense-checking findings and thinking through implications for policy or service development.

Integration

Public sector bodies work together to influence the lives of the people of Wales. We will develop our priorities and work plans by considering all stakeholder needs. Any evidence sources and tools that are developed will be shared. Working with public sector bodies and the Administrative Data Research Unit we will draw upon administrative data sources and other evidence from relevant public sector bodies so that it can be brought together into one location to be used by all. This will help build an evidence base that provides a more complete picture of the experience of people with protected and associated characteristics which is naturally influenced by more than one public sector body.

Collaboration

The Units sit within the policy teams responsible for equality and human rights in Welsh Government and are also professional members of the Government Statistical Group and Government Research Service. Existing Welsh Government analysts currently provide statistical services to support decision making, resource allocation, research and debate within government and the wider community. The Units will work strategically, alongside existing analysts, to look at ways to improve the evidence base for the future. This will include making sure equality evidence in Wales reflects the continually changing landscape of diversity in society and allows us to understand the experiences of key groups of people who may be small in number but have unique experiences. The Units will also work with Administrative Data Research Wales in order to maximise existing data sources through data linking techniques.

Long term

Whilst change is needed now we also need to ensure inequalities are not left for future generations to deal with and any change is sustainable. The Welsh Government is taking action now to reduce inequality however by filling in the gaps in evidence on equalities we will build evidence sources that will continue into the future so that progress can be measured and assessed.

We are also aware that society evolves and how people define themselves changes over time. We are therefore expanding on the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act to include socioeconomic status; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning people (LGBTQ+) (with the + representing other identities including non-binary); and including asylum seekers and refugees as part of race. We will continue to be involved in the discussions as identities develop to ensure evidence reflects how people identify themselves as society changes.

Prevention

By enabling decision makers to better assess the equality impacts of their policies we will limit or reduce the use of systems and structures that drive and maintain inequalities.

In order to deliver on our mission and maximise our contribution to the vision for Wales we have identified a core set of principles relating to evidence which will underpin our work.

Trust

We understand the lack of trust across some minority groups in providing

information to official sources on personal characteristics. We will work to build trust with communities so that better information can be captured to understand and improve experiences for all. This will include communicating our security protocols as well as the benefits of the use of this information when decision makers can use community experiences to develop policies.

Value all types of evidence and lived experience

We will look across different types of evidence from data and statistics, research and lived experience. The stories people tell are key to understanding people's experiences and will be considered as valuable as other sources of evidence. We will bring together different sources and types of evidence to enrich understanding of people's experiences.

Standards of evidence

We will work to understand how the evidence we use and promote meets professional standards and understand the limitations of evidence sources available to us. We will work with evidence providers to improve the quality of evidence so that it can be used confidently for a number of purposes. We are committed to [The Code of Practice For Statistics](#) and [The Government Social Research Code](#) and Publications Protocol.

Maximise existing evidence sources

We will improve what we have before developing anything new. We will look at consistency across data sources, aim to improve the definitions and categories used and explore how data that is already available can be broken down for different characteristics or how methodological developments can increase what is published. We will look at data linking and survey boosting options to explore

how data can be broken down by protected characteristics and geographic area from existing sources to compare experiences across different protected and associated characteristics.

Encourage development of data sources in line with need

We will clearly identify and articulate the need for any changes we recommend and only suggest collecting information that has a clear use and adds value to the outcomes for people.

Accessible dissemination

The evidence we collect about people with protected characteristics should be accessible to those with protected characteristics. We will explore how to improve the accessibility of our outputs and publications addressing issues like language, presentation and technology. We will also consider accessibility in involvement of people with relevant characteristics in our involvement and co-production, for example providing BSL interpretation and virtual access to meetings. Dissemination will be clear so that the requirements for change are visible to all and accountability groups can challenge with confidence.

Focus on adding value

The Units will focus on adding depth and breadth to existing analysis and data collections and will limit its involvement in routine, ad-hoc analysis, research and evaluation requests.

Working with others

During the scoping undertaken prior to the establishment of the Units we ran a series of interviews, focus groups and workshops with previous and existing Welsh Government equality forums (such as the Disability Equality Forum, Race Equality Forum, LGBTQ+ stakeholder group, and others), and internal Welsh Government stakeholders. The scoping interviews also explored other UK government departments (such as the Race Disparity Unit (RDU) UK, ONS Centre for Equality and Inclusion), which included an interview with Lord Simon Woolley to learn from his experiences as the UK Race Disparity Unit (RDU) advisory group former chair. We have continued conversation with these groups as this strategy has developed and also met with the Gender Equality Sub-Group, which did not exist at the time of scoping to gather their views.

We have mapped out our key stakeholders including the key groups set out above but reaching beyond these. This list describes the types of customers and stakeholders we are working for and with and provides some examples of organisations. It is not an exhaustive list but gives a picture of our interactions:

Ministers

All Ministers will be involved in forming the Unit's work programme and priorities and ensuring our work effectively supports Programme for Government commitments. A quarterly update will be provided to all Ministers on both the Units' emerging priorities and on key outputs from and implications of their work. The Units will also involve relevant Special Advisers, where emerging priorities or findings are focused on particular ministerial portfolio areas.

Policy colleagues across Welsh Government

Those who work on specific equality areas and policy areas like health and social care, education etc. We will be part of both the Welsh Government's Equality Policy Team and Analysts Team.

Citizens who are members of minority group

The Units mission is to improve the availability of equality evidence so that policy makers can make better decision to improve the outcomes for all citizens. Key in developing this evidence is the citizens of Wales who are parts of the groups experiencing discrimination including members of Black, Asian and minority Ethnic Groups, disabled people, women and members of the LGBTQ+ community. This will be in a co-productive way involving representative organisations and the individuals themselves. Through co-production these individuals will have a say in the decisions made around evidence development, collection and presentation.

UK Government, Scottish Government and Northern Ireland counterparts

Those working on equalities evidence improvements so that we can link up, where appropriate, and learn. This includes organisations such as the Cabinet Office Equality Hub and Scottish Government Equalities Team.

Statistical and research organisations and groups

Colleagues in the Office for National Statistics, in particular within the Statistical

Coherence and inclusion Division which include the harmonisation team, colleagues responsible for the implementation of the recommendations of Inclusive Data Taskforce and the centre for Equalities and Inclusion. Evidence stakeholders like the Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee.

Welsh Government internal equalities networks

The Welsh Government has a number of staff diversity networks which we will engage with to supplement and support the lived experience within the Units and from involvement and co-production with external stakeholders.

Wales public bodies

For example, Public Health Wales, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Wales), Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Older People's Commissioner, Children's Commissioner, Wales Audit Office, Care Inspectorate Wales, Health Inspectorate Wales and Estyn. We will work with these organisations to improve data across the public sector to benefit all. We will also engage with Trade Unions when representation of people in work is required.

Cross sectoral, stakeholder and accountability groups

We will engage with these organisations in developing our work, for example the Race Equality Action Plan Steering Group, Disability Rights Taskforce, Gender Equality sub Group, LGBTQ+ Expert Stakeholder Group, and more. We will also reach out to impartial stakeholders with lived experience through public consultation where appropriate.

Third sector

There are numerous third sector organisations that work to improve the lives of people with protected and associated characteristics. Many are represented on stakeholder groups and are an important way of connecting with individuals with lived experience and experts by experience. Third Sector Statistics User Panel are a key stakeholder for the Units.

Researchers and academics

There are a number of expert academic and researcher groups with expert and lived experience alongside evidence experience that have worked in the equalities field. We will refer to their work and provide opportunities for them to work with us when we commission specific projects.

Resources and governance

One of the major priorities and challenges for the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units in its first year is to recruit a team of individuals with a combination of the necessary skills and lived experiences. We feel that the team should reflect the diversity of the population of Wales and lived experience will add value to the way we work and our outputs.

The team will be inter-disciplinary with a mix of statisticians, researchers and policy makers. As well as staff resources we have access to a research budget with which to commission external research. We aim to build on existing relationships with the research and academic community in Wales and beyond.

We start 2022 as a small team of individuals with resources growing by the end

of March 2023. We acknowledge the challenge of recruiting individuals with the right technical skills as well as lived experiences and are therefore employing innovative approaches to recruitment within the Civil Service by reaching out to diverse communities.

The Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units report directly to the Minister for Social Justice who will be provided with regular updates. Given the cross-cutting nature of the Units, quarterly updates will also be provided to all Ministers on emerging priorities and on key outputs from, and implications of, our work.

Accountability groups for various equality action plans such as the Anti-racist Wales Steering group and Disability Rights Taskforce will be consulted on direction and decisions and given regular progress reports.

The team is a technical one with statisticians and researchers making up most of the staff with some policy staff to bridge the gap between evidence and policy-making. Professional Accountability will be via the Chief Statistician and Chief Social Researcher for Wales as heads of profession and the Units will work closely with the Welsh Government's existing analysts.

Further information

For further information please contact:

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