



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

REPORT

Equality: Welsh Government annual report 2021 to 2022

What the Welsh Government has done from April 2021 to March 2022 to support equality.

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Ministerial foreword

I am delighted to present the Welsh Government's annual reports on equality for 2021 to 2022, covering the period between 1 April 2021 and 31 March to December 2022. This report provides an overview of Welsh Government action to promote and strengthen equality and human rights, and progress in the delivery of the requirements of Wales specific equality duties.

We have continued to promote social justice and challenge discrimination.

I continue to be grateful to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in Wales for their advice and support throughout this period.

Tackling inequality remains a clear priority for the Welsh Government. The drive for greater equality is built into the fabric of this Government and it continues to influence everything we do.

Our work to deliver against the objectives set out in Welsh Government's strategic equality plan for 2020 to 2024 continues. I am proud of our commitments to develop Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary, of our Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and our other developments in supporting women, disabled people, the LGBTQ+ community and others, which you will read about in this report.

I know there remains much work to be done and many discussions to be had to continue our journey to strengthen and advance equality and human rights in Wales. I look forward to continuing to take that journey forward, even if it is in little steps, with those who need and expect our support accompanying us on that journey.

Jane Hutt AM
Minister for Social Justice

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Chapter 1: introduction

This report, which covers two years from 1 April 2021 to 31 December 2022, sets out how the Welsh Government has worked to fulfill its equality objectives during this momentous period.

Our policies and decisions must be informed by those most directly affected by them. Engagement with experts, equality groups, individuals and communities with lived experience provides us with support and advice to help us to understand the needs, issues, barriers and experiences of all Welsh people and communities including, in particular, those with protected characteristics. This is a fundamental requirement of our Welsh specific equality duties.

Throughout the period covered by this report, Welsh Ministers engaged at many events and meetings with groups working to promote equality, to understand their priorities and the challenges they face daily.

The Welsh Government has several well-established forums through which we regularly engage with advocates and representative groups to discuss equality matter. These include:

- The Disability Equality Forum
- The Faith Communities Forum
- The Wales Race Forum
- Wales Refugee and Asylum Seekers Taskforce
- The Budget Advisory Group on Equality
- The Strengthening Equality and Human Rights Steering Group, (this Group has now been evolved in the Human Rights Advisory Group; more will be covered on this further on in this report)

All of these forums are chaired by Ministers or a senior Welsh Government official. Some of them are unique within the UK in the way they enable equality

stakeholders to engage directly and regularly with the most senior levels of government on the issues that concern 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. A section on this is included in Chapter 2 of this report.

It outlines how we have applied our responsibilities under equality legislation to integrate equality into our policy development and decision-making. We welcome the challenge to consider carefully how our work affects different groups of people and enables us to provide services that meet the diverse needs of all citizens living in Wales. As well as reducing the risk of negative impacts of our decisions, the legislation also drives us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality for all.

The EHRC report **Is Wales Fairer? (2018)** was published in October 2018 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 report has proved to be a valuable tool to help ensure our decision-making was robust and that our policies and services took account of peoples' needs and were accessible to all.

Is Wales Fairer? (2018) collected evidence from across 6 areas of life: education, health, living standards, justice and security, work and participation in politics and public life. Prospects for disabled people, some ethnic minority people, and children from poorer backgrounds have worsened in many areas of life. This inequality risks becoming entrenched for generations to come, creating a society where these groups are left behind in the journey towards a fair and equal country.

The Welsh Government is working to improve equality data and statistics to inform future policy development.

Chapter 2: meeting our equality duties, 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 that there should be equality of opportunity for all people. The duty further ensures that 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), and also as the 'general duty'. 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 Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 (also referred to as the Welsh specific equality duties) apply to specific Welsh public sector organisations as 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, 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.

In 2019, the EHRC in Wales undertook a monitoring exercise looking at how the 73 listed public bodies were performing against the duties. The Commission published their findings in 2020 and have subsequently met with senior representatives of the Welsh Government and many of the other listed authorities to discuss sectoral issues and how compliance with the PSED can be improved.

The Welsh Government has commissioned a review of the Wales specific regulations. We have convened a reference group made up of external stakeholders and academics to consider the nature of the review and this work will now move forward at pace. While the Welsh Government is determined to see this work done quickly, it is imperative to ensure that the reference group has sufficient time to gather the necessary data to provide sound advice.

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026

This refreshed version of the **Programme for Government** incorporates **the Co-operation Agreement: 2021**. Responsibility for the commitments that directly contribute to our well-being objectives will rest with the First Minister and the full Cabinet as these will require the highest level of co-ordination and integration across the whole of government.

Ministers will take direct responsibility for the remaining commitments. Both sets of commitments will be treated with equal weight, the distinction between the 2 reflects the allocation of responsibilities and not their relative importance or priority.

In those areas covered by the co-operation agreement Ministers will work with

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Plaid Cymru under the terms of the agreement.

Additionally, we have published well-being objectives which set out how we will use the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 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 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

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 2022](#) (not to be confused with this report which focuses specifically on equality actions).

The wider picture

Many other Welsh and UK laws, as well as international treaties and conventions, underpin 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. It is important to remember that the Equality Act and Well-being of Future Generations Act are not the only relevant pieces of legislation.

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms for everyone in the UK. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law.

The ECHR derives from the Council of Europe (not the European Union) and is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was the first international agreement on the basic principles of human rights, accepted by nearly every state in the world. The UK remains a signatory to both the ECHR and the universal declaration.

The actions of the Welsh Government must be compatible with international obligations, as set out in Section 82 of the Government of Wales Act 2006,

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including the 7 UN Conventions signed and ratified by the UK State party.

The Welsh Government works alongside the UK Government and other devolved administrations to ensure Wales is fully represented in the presentation of reports to meet our United Nations and European obligations. On 26 February 2019, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which is signatory to the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) took part in an examination on its compliance with the Convention.

On 11 March 2019, the UN Committee on CEDAW published its concluding observations. The **Concluding observations** contain a list of recommendations for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to take forward over the next 4 years.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will be required to submit a report in March 2023 outlining its progress in implementing these recommendations, as well as other actions relating to the advancement of the rights of women and girls since the 2019 examination.

We are in uncertain times as regards the UK Government review of Human rights protections, and as to how it is taking forward proposed legislation to reconsider some of the protections in place through a UK Bill of Rights. The Welsh Government has made clear its concerns about many of the aspects of the proposed legislation **Human rights act reform: a modern bill of rights**.

At the time of the launch of the proposals the Deputy Prime Minister has said that the UK will remain a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights, it seems clear that the intention is to undermine the Convention by increasing the rights of UK Ministers and reducing the power of UK courts, as well as the European Court of Human Rights, to enforce the rule of law and hold Ministers to account.

While during the Truss administration, work on this Bill was paused, the successive Sunak administration has resolved to resume work on this matter.

We will of course study the Bill very carefully and have previously told the Deputy Prime Minister that we are willing to continue dialogue as it progresses through Parliament.

For context, in the run-up to the recent United Nations Periodic Review of Human Rights action delivery and progress across the United Kingdom, the Welsh Government has recently published an overview of its own actions in relation to human rights delivery in Wales [Action to strengthen human rights in Wales: 2018 to 2022](#).

Chapter 3: strengthening and enhancing equality and human rights in Wales

This chapter provides an overview of the Welsh Government's Equality Objectives in the 2 years covered by this report.

The strategic objectives for the 2020 to 2024 plan are set out in full in annex 2. This chapter includes some examples of the activity which has been undertaken to achieve these objectives. More examples are provided in annex 3, while activity supported by our key equality and inclusion funding programme is described in chapter 5.

It should be noted that the examples included in this report and the annexes are not a complete list of everything the Welsh Government has done or will do to achieve our equality objectives.

COVID-19 impacted greatly on almost all the work being undertaken to fulfil these objectives, delaying some work but also generating new activity to reduce

the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged groups and promote equality during this unprecedented period. The Welsh Government's response to Covid in relation to equality is outlined in more detail in chapter 6.

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 [Strategic Equality Action Plan for 2020 to 2024](#) was published in April 2020. There is substantial continuity between this plan and its predecessor, and their aims are largely similar, but there are also important changes as well as fresh activity from year to year.

The main changes include an increased focus on safeguarding equality and human rights (Long-term Aim 2) and a renewed emphasis on gender equality (Long-term Aim 4), which is reflected in our [Advancing Gender Equality: action plan](#).

At the heart of the Strategic Equality Plan 2020 to 2024 there are 3 main elements: 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.

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- For each of these long-term aims, 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.
- Underpinning each of these objectives are a number of measurable actions which demonstrate how the Welsh Government will achieve its objectives.

This report sets out a number of examples of action taken to support the delivery of our objectives.

Strengthening and advancing human rights in Wales

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

The Programme for Government commits us to 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). I have agreed with Ministerial colleagues that a holistic approach should be explored, potentially a Bill, and other possible actions in relation to specific issues need to be jointly considered.

The Welsh Government takes an inclusive approach, going beyond these two UN conventions to include consideration of older people's rights, the UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), LGBTQ+ people's rights and extending children's rights.

Equal opportunities is a reserved matter, although there are a range of exceptions to that which provides the Senedd with some legislative space. Further, all Senedd legislation must be compatible with the European

Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) to be within competence. Furthermore, the Human Rights Act 1998 is a protected enactment under GoWA meaning that the Senedd cannot modify that Act. There are therefore wider devolution issues to consider.

Nonetheless we would like to consider the potential scope of what could be achieved, whether that be through a Bill or other measures. The purpose of such a Bill would be to strengthen rights in Wales.

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. The report points the way in relation to safeguarding and promoting equality and human rights of individuals and communities in Wales and will inform our future work.

Our response was published in May **Strengthening and Advancing Equality and Human Rights in Wales research report: Welsh Government response**.

The response sets out the main areas of work we are taking forward, including:

- undertaking preparatory work on options for incorporation of UN conventions into Welsh law
- developing a suite of guidance on human rights
- reviewing the Public Sector Equality Duty regulations
- adding human rights to our integrated impact assessments
- stepping up the way in which we promote these issues in Wales

We are developing a detailed plan of action and timeline to cover all of these streams of work, taking account of the recommendations of the SAEHR report and our own Programme for Government commitment around incorporation of UN conventions.

We will continue to work closely with stakeholders as the work progresses and

will consult formally on any legislative options which emerge.

Human rights advisory group

To oversee this work, we have established a new Human Rights Advisory Group (HRAG). This is a direct successor to the steering group for the SAEHR research report, with similarly wide membership to ensure strong stakeholder engagement as the work progresses. The Counsel General and Minister for Social Justice co-chair this advisory group.

The HRAG will monitor the 5 main streams of work arising from the research (legislative options; guidance; review of Wales specific equality duties; impact assessment and promotion), including relevant equality issues. It will also maintain strong links with our other equality forums and with work arising from the Commission on Justice in Wales.

We have also established a small working group, as a sub-committee of the HRAG, to take forward exploration of legislative options to fulfil our Programme for Government commitment to incorporate UN Conventions into Welsh law. A further working group has already begun reviewing the 2011 regulations which implement the Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales. The 2011 regulations contain Wales specific equality duties (WSED).

Community cohesion

Our 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.

We have commissioned a review of the community cohesion programme to help

shape and inform our work in this area. This review will be completed this year.

We are developing a set of community cohesion principles with key partners with the aim of identifying an agreed definition of community cohesion and common goals for partners to work towards to foster and promote community cohesion.

The work of the cohesion programme has been essential in helping us to build local government commitments to participate in Afghan resettlement and asylum dispersal in recent months, as well as our response to supporting Ukrainian refugees.

Disabled people's employment

Working in partnership with the Minister for Economy, 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.

Alongside this, we are increasing the number of apprenticeships by providing employer incentives until 28 February 2022, of up to £4,000, with an additional payment of £1,500 to employers for each new disabled apprentice they hire. On 15 November the Minister for Economy announced a young person's guarantee which will provide every young person under the age of 25 with the offer of work, education, training or self-employment to ensure that there is no lost generation in Wales following the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, we have developed a package of support for employers providing the tools to create high performing inclusive workforces, helping to remove societal barriers and improve employment outcomes for disabled people. This includes an employer tool-kit, guiding employers through the journey of recruitment through to the retention, an e-learning module for employers on the

social model of disability, to be published shortly, and creation of a network of disabled people's employment champions.

The champions are working with Business Wales and employers across Wales to promote awareness of the support available and utilise their lived experience to advocate for employment of disabled people. They are promoting awareness of the support available to employers, including providing practical advice and help on issues such as inclusive HR policies, recruitment, retraining and staff retention.

We are also making use of our social partnership approach and our influence to encourage employers to do more to reap the benefits of a more equal, diverse and inclusive workforce. This includes embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into our interventions to support, facilitate and encourage social partnership and fair work, as well as working with employers, trade unions and others to promote best practice, which includes increasing awareness of the availability and benefits to employers of the champions initiative.

The Welsh Government has extended the champions pilot by a further 12 months up to February 23.

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.

By requiring relevant public bodies to make better decisions, ones which place consideration of inequalities of outcomes arising from socio-economic disadvantage at their heart, it will further help tackle the uncertainty of EU Exit and our recovery from COVID-19, allowing us to move towards reconstruction of

a fairer and more prosperous Wales.

A wealth of information has been developed to support implementation of the Duty, including statutory guidance, an animation film, lived experience films, webinar recordings and an on line training resource. In their development, the Welsh Government has worked with relevant public bodies, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and Third Sector bodies. A dedicated [website page](#) has been developed to host this information.

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](#).

Welsh Government is supportive of the Equality and Human Rights Commissions plans to undertake future research into the impact of the Duty, it is our understanding that this is intended to take place no earlier than late 2022, giving relevant public bodies the time and space to embed the Duty.

Anti-racist Wales action plan

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

Our [Anti-racist Wales action plan](#), launched on 7th June, is built on the values of anti-racism and calls for zero tolerance of all racial inequality.

We have identified a vision for an anti-racist nation, where everyone is valued for who they are and the contribution they make.

Work is continuing at pace to help us to move from the rhetoric on racial equality and ensure we deliver meaningful action.

On Friday 1st July the Minister for Social Justice issued a letter to Welsh public sector leaders and other key stakeholders, asking them to work with us in delivering the Anti-racist Wales action plan and in building an anti-racist Wales: a Wales we can all be proud to belong to, and in which everyone can thrive.

The Governance structure is in place with the first meeting of the Internal Support and Challenge group held on Thursday 14th July. The Group is now meeting monthly.

Work is underway to establish regional forums which will capture lived experience and provide a direct link to our work.

To establish a shared approach to tracking progress and meeting our commitments, a task and finish group has been formed to agree on this.

LGBTQ+ support

The Welsh Government remains committed to making Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe which is why we are developing a robust and cross-

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cutting LGBTQ+ action plan, one that strengthens protections for LGBTQ+ people, promotes equality for all and helps coordinate ambitious actions across government and beyond.

Intensive work is underway to move the draft LGBTQ+ plan into a final document with focussed, phased and measurable actions that will make a substantial and positive impact to the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Wales. We aim to publish the revised plan during LGBT history month in February 2023.

Conversion practices or therapy

The Welsh Government stands by its 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 commissioning research to better understand the impact of conversion practices or ‘therapy’ on survivors to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of support services.

Curriculum for Wales: relationships and sexuality education (RSE)

The roll out of the curriculum for Wales commenced in September 2022, and developmentally appropriate relationships and sexuality education (RSE) will become mandatory for all learners.

RSE has a positive and protective role in learners’ education. Schools and settings have an important role to play in creating safe and empowering environments in supporting learners’ rights to enjoy fulfilling, healthy and safe relationships throughout their lives.

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RSE will be realised in a way that is inclusive in accordance with the principles of equality. The RSE Code will ensure that 'all learners can see themselves, their families, their communities and each other reflected across the curriculum and can learn to value difference and diversity as a source of strength'.

Homophobic and transphobic bullying within education

Bullying is completely unacceptable and we want to see an end to all forms of bullying. We continue to work with the anti bullying alliance to ensure that bullying and harassment, in any form, is stamped out in schools.

We are working with a range of stakeholders, including the Police, to develop a multi-agency action plan to tackle peer-on-peer sexual harassment in education settings. It will include specific actions to tackle the unwanted behaviours all too frequently experienced by LGBTQ+ children and young people.

Chapter 4: evidence and Governance

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 how a COVID-19 equalities impacts repository was developed and an update on the impact assessment of the Welsh Government budget.

The chapter also includes a section on our procurement policy.

The equality evidence base

In order to give proper consideration to the aims set out in the general duty, we need to have sufficient evidence of the impact our policies and practices are

having, or are likely to have, on people with different protected characteristics.

Between 2019 and 2021, we published a wide range of 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 **statistics**. Some of these statistical outputs include:

- Well-being of Wales: 2019 and 2020 reports
- update to future trends report supporting slides
- equality and diversity statistics
- Welsh index of multiple deprivation 2019
- analysis of protected characteristics by area deprivation: 2017 to 2019
- coronavirus and employment: analysis of protected characteristics
- coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population in Wales
- coronavirus (COVID-19) and the impact on disabled people in Wales

This information, as well as further guidance from our statistical 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 undertook the following activity:

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: 2022** report. This includes a chapter on a more equal Wales, which comprises a summary of the

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most up to date equality related statistics applicable to Wales.

Availability of disaggregated data

We continued to publish all statistical analyses by protected characteristic where sample sizes allowed and explored options to improve the availability of disaggregated data in Wales.

Accessibility of equality evidence

We continued to review the ways in which our equality statistics could be improved. In particular, considering where statistics could be made more accessible and suitable for a wide-ranging audience. For example, in September 2019 a new public sector equality duty webpage on the StatsWales website, Welsh Government's open data platform, was launched. The page makes available links to equality data for Welsh public bodies, in open data format, in a single location.

Publications on religion and disability

In collaboration with the ONS centre for equalities and inclusion, analysts from a range of government departments and agencies, and the EHRC we explored available data sources to establish the extent to which they could be used to describe the experiences of disabled people and people of different religious groups in England and Wales. This was the first phase of a longer programme of work in which we will work with others to explore options for improving the data available on disabled people and religion.

Research on strengthening and advancing equality and

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human rights in Wales

Following the many calls for action to strengthen and advance equality and human rights in Wales the then Deputy Minister and Chief Whip (now Minister for Social Justice) agreed to set up a steering group and commission a research consortium involving Swansea University, Bangor University, Diverse Cymru and Young Wales to explore options to achieve this. The aim of the research was to investigate mechanisms to strengthen and advance equality and human rights in Wales, and to make recommendations for legislative, policy, guidance, or other reforms to meet this objective. The final research report, including a series of recommendations for the Welsh Government and other public bodies, was received in March 2021.

The Welsh Government response to its recommendation [Strengthening and Advancing Equality and Human Rights in Wales research report: Welsh Government response](#).

Impact of Wales exit from the EU on vulnerable communities

As part of a programme of work preparing Wales for leaving the EU, we collated and analysed a range of evidence detailing the impact of Wales' exit from the EU on Welsh communities. This work is now being taken forward as part of a wider programme to assess the impact of a range of factors on disadvantaged places and vulnerable groups, including COVID-19, leaving the EU, climate change and austerity/recession.

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Development of a COVID-19 equalities impacts repository

A COVID-19 equalities impacts repository has been created to help colleagues across the Welsh Government fulfil their legal duty to carry out an equality impact assessment when developing policy. We have collated, logged and analysed all of the information received over recent months in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on people with protected characteristics in Wales. This includes reports and briefings, as well as online blogs, many of which have been provided by partners we work with collaboratively. The repository is a live document which is being added to on a regular basis. It provides an invaluable tool for informing effective, evidence-driven equality impact assessments and to learn more about the potential wider, long-term effects of COVID-19 on equality to drive the development of new, post COVID-19, policies across the Welsh Government.

Equalities evidence unit(s)

In January 2022, The Welsh Government established 3 distinct units, each with their own evidence programme and lead.

- Equality Evidence unit
- Race Disparity Evidence unit
- Disability Disparity Evidence unit

The 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 Welsh Government committed to setting up the Units in its Programme for Government 2021 in response to the need for strengthened evidence to address inequality in Wales as highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The structure

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emerged from scoping work undertaken interviews, focus groups and workshops with internal and external stakeholders.

The Units mission is to 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 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 a number of significant challenges the units will face with delivering on the Equality Evidence Strategy and they are committed to working with communities and stakeholders to address some of the barriers that are in place. These include trust in providing data and ensuring visible data feeds through to real change.

PHD interns are looking at the National Survey for Wales data to see what information can be published by characteristics, for example by aggregating years.

We are developing the questionnaire to collect diversity data from Public Sector Bodies for 2022 to 2023.

We have carried out an equality audit of data held by statistical colleagues, the next stage is to summarise the position and identify gaps. We then need to look broader than the Welsh Government statistical data to other data sources as well as administrative.

We have started to look at standard guidance for key equality characteristics and assessed these against the Welsh Government policy requirements. We have started to set out a plan to test alternative questions which better meet our

policy needs alongside understanding the barriers to providing this information.

We are testing our co-production in research with a pilot research project to understand how we can measure the social model of disability. We expect to commission this research and have a draft specification.

Equality impact assessment of the budget

The strategic integrated impact assessment (SIIA) of the draft budget continues to consider spending decisions through a number of lenses to understand their impact on different groups of people and areas, including consideration of equalities. We recognise that people and places are multi-dimensional and the integrated approach seeks to capture multiple and cumulative impacts which reflect people's lived experience and the reality of our economy, culture and environment.

We also remain committed to reviewing our approach to assessing impacts. On 13 December 2022, we published an updated **budget improvement plan** as part of the 2023 to 2024 draft budget package. The plan outlines our vision, including short-term and medium-term ambitions over the next 5 years, to improve our annual budget and tax processes, including proposed improvements to assessing the impact of Budget decisions. The plan also reflects on the work undertaken over the last 12 months.

Procurement

Public service bodies in Wales spend around £8.3 billion each year on buying goods, services and works from suppliers. It is important every pound is spent wisely, achieving best value for the people of Wales.

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Fulfilling the procurement duty in our Welsh specific equality duties

As part of our Welsh specific equality duties, we must:

- consciously consider whether it would be appropriate for the award criteria of a contract to include considerations to help meet the three aims of the PSED (see annex 1)
- consciously consider whether it would be appropriate to stipulate conditions relating to the performance of a contract to help meet the 3 aims of the PSED

Our procurement policy

The Wales procurement policy statement (WPPS) sets the strategic vision for public sector procurement in Wales. It helps define our progress against the wellbeing goals we are pursuing for future generations, putting the Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 at the heart of all procurement decisions, supporting us to achieve the 'Wales we want'. We all have a responsibility to ensure we are preventing problems and thinking about the long-term, while maximising opportunities to deliver economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.

The Wales procurement policy statement (WPPS) consists of 10 key principles which all Welsh public sector organisations should adhere to when delivering their procurement activity. We have recently engaged with stakeholders to develop additional information to support organisations apply the principles of the WPPS, which was published in August 2022.

The forthcoming Procurement Bill, which is currently making its way through the House of Lords and the Senedd, will include a power for Welsh Ministers to

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publish a Wales procurement policy statement which Welsh public sector organisations will need to have regard to. This will allow the Welsh Ministers, for the first time, to legislate in this important area, setting out what our key procurement policy priorities are now and, in the future, and will help to ensure that Welsh procurement policy priorities are inextricably woven into an organisation's procurement functions and activity.

The key to delivery of this WPPS will be through continued collaborative working. We will review and refresh the WPPS regularly with partners to ensure that it remains a true reflection of our shared ambition of public procurement in Wales and to achieve greater transparency on outcomes.

The Welsh Government developed an action plan to underpin delivery against the statement's principles which was published on our website in November 2021. Buying organisations, either individually or as part of a collaboration, will develop and publish their own action plans detailing how they will support the delivery of priorities at a local, regional and national level. The proposed Social Partnership and Procurement (Wales) Bill statutory guidance will take into account this statement and associated action plans, placing contracting authorities under a duty to deliver socially-responsible outcomes through procurement which places fair work and social value at the centre rather than being solely focused on achieving financial savings.

Embedded within the policy statement are a number of key drivers which influence the delivery of equality considerations including:

- ensuring key policies such as social value is built into contracts
- simplifying the procurement process and lowering barriers for suppliers
- ensuring equality is addressed appropriately at supplier selection stage
- advertising contract opportunities through the Sell2Wales website
- completing a sustainability risk assessment (SRA) when planning a procurement to ensure public contracts consider their equality duties when contracts are discharged

Wales is working collaboratively to address risks of slavery and promote ethical employment in public sector supply chains. At the time of this report, over 304 organisations have now signed up to the code of practice on ethical employment in supply chains. Signatories include 63 public sector bodies and 421 private and 24 third sector organisations from a wide range of different markets. This work is being developed further with plans to place statutory duties on public bodies to deliver social value through procurement.

Mainstreaming and embedding equality within procurement: results

Each year the Welsh Government spends around £700 million on externally procured goods, services and works. The commercial team at the Welsh Government worked with the business sector to embed our Welsh equality duties in our contracts by:

- applying the sustainability risk assessment to all Welsh Government contracts over £25,000, ensuring equality duties are considered, action taken in contracts where appropriate and an equality impact assessment completed
- applying community benefits clauses in appropriate contracts to deliver employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged people and target educational support across communities in Wales from our suppliers
- signing up to the code of practice for ethical employment in supply chains and adopting best practice in our procurements
- reviewing our standard documentation to ensure specifications and contract documents meet best practice

Chapter 5: funding for equality and inclusion

The Welsh Government has a long history of setting aside funds to promote and support actions which foster equality and inclusion within Wales. Our equality and inclusion programme has long been at the heart of this work, enabling support, engagement and service for diverse communities and key groups, with funding provided to a number of representative organisations with appropriate expertise who work with those on the ground to provide help where it is needed.

We have provided significant investment in this way and intend to continue doing so.

The current funding programme commenced in April 2017 to support our equality objectives. It funded 7 organisations to provide support to individuals and communities across Wales in relation to gender, disability, gypsies, roma and travellers, refugees and asylum seekers, sexual orientation and gender identity, race and hate crime. The funding was initially extended to 31 March 2022 to enable development of successor arrangements and to link with the newer objectives set out in our strategic equality plan for 2020 to 2024.

In 2021 we carried out a consultation seeking options and discussion about the nature and future of funding we provide to tackle all forms of disadvantage and discrimination and show that equality is for all. This is helping inform a co-designed approach to future funding rounds.

Getting this right takes time, and it remains vital that we take the necessary time to work with partners and stakeholders to make sure that our support delivers funding where it can do the most good and be targeted to reach as many communities as possible without diluting its intended impact.

We have 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 were the successful bidders, respectively.

We are considering a co-designed solution for future funding rounds, which we anticipate will begin shortly and conclude during 2023. We aim to develop a more flexible, accessible, collaborative, and coordinated funding model, which will reduce competition between external agencies and make the best possible use of available resources.

We will ensure that funding for those organisation we currently support will continue for key services both while the new model is developed, and afterwards as we move towards new ways of working, including the seven lead agencies for the programme, to provide support across Wales in relation to gender (WEN Wales); disability (Disability Wales); Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (TGP Cymru); refugees and asylum seekers (Welsh Refugee Council); sexual orientation and gender identity (Stonewall Cymru); race (EYST) and hate crime (Victim Support Cymru).

Summary of the funding committed in 2021 to 2022

Organisation	Allocation
WEN Wales	£120,000
EYST	£120,000
Disability Wales (COVID Reserves) E and I Grant	£340,000
Disability Wales (Adv) E and I Grant	£150,000

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Organisation	Allocation
Stonewall Cymru	£150,000
Brexit and Disabled People Project	£200,000
Tros Gynnal Plant (Adv)	£180,000
Welsh Refugee Council - Asylum Rights Programme	£426,000
Victim Support - Hate Crime Report and Support Centre	£432,000
Public transport assistance schemes for asylum seekers	£250,000
Total	£2,368,000

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 met with each organisation individually, to assist them in developing 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. The impact of several streams of this programme are outlined below.

Race: ethnic youth support team (EYST)

EYST was originally established to fill a gap in provision for young Black, Asian

and Minority Ethnic people aged 11 to 25 by providing a targeted, culturally sensitive and holistic support service to meet their needs. It has subsequently expanded its activities to meet the needs of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people, families and individuals including refugees and asylum-seekers living in Wales. It does this through the provision of a wide range of services including education, employment, health, family support and community safety.

Welsh Government funding for this organisation has enabled EYST to undertake action in support of 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
- to showcase, unite and amplify voices for racial equality in Wales

EYST initially supported 4 regional Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic networks in Swansea, Cardiff, Newport, and Wrexham with diverse representation of individuals to work with regional coordinators in each region to deliver regular engagement events for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people. This later progressed to pan-Wales online engagement events led by policy officers.

In addition, EYST provided advice and support to grassroots organisations by signposting to EYST's sister project, the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic skills project (which was supported by the National Lottery Community Fund in partnership with the county voluntary councils in Swansea, Cardiff and Wrexham).

The project has had 458 attendees at our forums over the past year, the discussions have been focussed on current topics that really matter to individuals from Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities or individuals from a minority ethnic background. Themes covered include:

- history, heritage and housing: the gentrification of Cardiff
- race in education 2021: where are we now?
- race and the unemployment crisis
- inside out: the shortfalls of the healthcare system
- Universal Basic Income (UBI): what could it do for us?
- news and media representation: the look of diversity
- the environment is for everyone
- are ethnic minority older people invisible?
- human trafficking and modern day slavery

The project is no longer running, however, EYST continue to support grassroots organisations, from all over Wales, by advising and signposting out to relevant partnership organisations and projects. EYST has also played a key role in the development of our anti racist Wales action plan.

Gender: women's equality network Wales (WEN Wales)

WEN Wales is a registered charity working towards gender equality in Wales. It has a network of members comprising both individuals and organisations. Funding has been provided to support the Welsh Government's gender equality work. The focus of the work is based on broad aims around engagement, education, empowerment and representation. Their objectives are to:

- to build and connect a coalition of activists across Wales to campaign for a transformed Wales, free from gender discrimination, and help make Wales a world leader in gender equality
- diverse and equal leadership and representation in all spheres of Welsh life
- women's rights strengthened, realised and embedded in Wales

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. It uses the information and evidence gathered to help inform its response to

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consultations and its engagement with policy makers, both at a Wales and UK level.

In 2021 to 2022, nearly 600 people attended public WEN events including the WEN café events. 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 a number of themes related to inequalities exposed by the pandemic. They are free and open to all. The cafes continue to offer an effective mechanism through which a wide range of topics can be examined.

WEN is expanding the reach of its coalition across Wales and across age groups. In 2021, WEN began working with schools and youth groups for International Women's Day (IWD). WEN produced a toolkit filled with activities and resources 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 2022, WEN Wales worked with the office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales and their youth panel to update and enhance the toolkit and extend its reach across schools in Wales.

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 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.

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, Tros Gynnal Plan Cymru (TGP Cymru)

TGP Cymru, is a Registered Charity which provides support and advocacy for children, young people and families in Wales. Travelling Ahead provides 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, with actions to underpin each objective.

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, 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 continues to work to ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are aware of, and have opportunities to participate in, consultations and advocacy opportunities, have their views heard, and to engage with policy makers and service providers on issues affecting the communities at a Wales or a UK level if appropriate. They have been very 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 unique National Youth Forum and developed Wales' first 'Gypsy Stars' choir made up of young and old 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 to raise awareness of hate crime reporting methods and support available through the advice service, developing a specific poster, and making stronger links with police force hate crime officers through engagement and training.

Hate: Victim Support Cymru

Victim Support is an independent charity dedicated to supporting people affected by crime and traumatic incidents in England and Wales providing specialist services to help people cope and recover and to empower them to engage with policy makers and deliverers individually and collectively at a local and national level.

Between April 2017 and March 2022, the Welsh Government funded Victim Support Cymru via the equality and inclusion programme to run the National Hate Crime Report and Support Centre.

The service had 3 broad aims, with actions to underpin each objective:

1. supporting victims
2. enhancing engagement
3. promoting leadership

The National Hate Crime Report and Support Centre offered provision of an independent support and advocacy to all hate crime victims, available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. This included emotional support, signposting, face to face

meetings, advocacy/liaison with Police, personal safety advice, practical solutions and restorative justice support. This free support was provided over the telephone, face-to-face or virtually. The service was confidential and offered bilingually, and in other languages as required.

The Centre also provided a free and confidential online resource, My Support Space, which was designed to help people over the age of 16 who have experienced hate crime to manage the impact. Users accessed a range of tools to help them cope and move forward after their experiences. My Support Space included a series of interactive guides that addressed specific needs and offer videos, techniques, activities and tips. The service created specific hate crime modules on trauma, race, Gypsies Roma and Travellers, trans-awareness, and mental health.

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.

From 2021 to 2022 the service received 3,065 referrals for victims of hate crime and provided support to over 1,617 victims of hate crime. A 76.88% conversion between cases with needs identified and support provided. The service received 120 third party reports and 186 self-referrals. The service is well-regarded with client satisfaction rates high 98% are either satisfied or very satisfied with the service in the period of 2021 to 2022.

Disability: Disability Wales

Disability Wales is the representative body for disabled people and their organisations in Wales. This includes 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 has been co-developed through engagement with disabled people and the organisations that represent them.

The Framework is accompanied by an action plan which sets out a wide range of priority actions underway across the Welsh Government to tackle some of the key barriers identified by disabled people themselves, including transport, employment, housing and access to buildings and places.

Disabled people told us that 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. It sets out how we are fulfilling our

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obligations under the UN Convention on the rights of disabled people.

Underpinning the whole Framework is the 'Social Model of Disability', which recognises the need for society to be transformed, removing barriers so that disabled people are able to participate fully.

Below is a selection of activity carried out by Disability Wales which has been possible owing to the funding provided through the Welsh Government equality and inclusion funding programme.

Disability Wales delivered 16 events to 646 participants in 2020 to 2021 across Wales aimed at equipping disabled people and their organisations with the knowledge and skills to promote disability rights and equality and challenge discrimination in their local area.

Disability Wales developed social model of disability campaign and held social model of disability webinars where feedback in the form of surveys was gathered from participants.

Disability Wales held the Disability Wales annual conference and AGM 'Beyond 2020: new opportunities or same barriers'

Disability Wales launched #LockdownLife, a digital media project where participants representing the diverse community of disabled people in Wales used tablets and smart phones to capture their thoughts and daily life during lockdown. These were professionally edited and shared widely on social and mainstream media

Disability Wales held the 'Bring us our Rights: Disabled People's Manifesto' which was attended by the then Deputy Minister and Chief Whip (now Minister for Social Justice) Jane Hutt MS; Mark Isherwood MS; Nadine Marshall, Plaid Cymru Prospective Candidate for Police and Crime Commissioner; Leena Farhat, Equality and Diversity Officer Lib Dems and Senedd Candidate.

Disability Wales held 9 topic specific focus groups on Disabled People's Rights and Enforcement, Health and Social Care, Poverty and Digital Inclusion, Employment and Transport, Housing, Hate Crime, Disabled Women, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Disabled People, LGBTQ+ Disabled People

Disability Wales delivered 3 focus groups on specific topics related to the pandemic: Rights and Equality; Housing and Employment; and Direct Payments and Personal Assistant Employment. Focus group findings informed a range of consultations undertaken by Welsh Government, Senedd Committee on Equality, Communities and Local Government and Social Care Wales.

LGBTQ+: Stonewall Cymru

Stonewall Cymru has been awarded grant funding to act as the representative body for Lesbian, Gay, BI-sexual, Transgender and Queer (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:

- engage with LGBTQ+ communities
- empower LGBTQ+ people and allies
- amplify LGBTQ+ voices
- strengthen advice, information and advocacy services

As part of this funding, Stonewall Cymru established a trans engagement officer post to work within trans communities at a grass roots level around Wales to hear their voice and campaign on their behalf.

Stonewall has been working to reach out to LGBTQ+ organisations and groups across Wales to support them in the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and to better understand the challenges they are facing as a result of the crisis. They

are then representing these views and issues in their engagement with the Welsh Government as we responded to the pandemic, ensuring that LGBTQ+ voices were heard.

During this period Stonewall has worked to reach out to LGBTQ+ organisations and groups across Wales to better understand the challenges they face. They then represent these views and issues in their engagement with Welsh Government, ensuring that LGBT voices are heard and considered in the formation of public policy and the design and delivery of public services.

In 2021 to 2022 the Welsh Government became an official sponsor of Pride Cymru with £25k of funding to support the main event in Cardiff.

Refugees and asylum seekers

The Welsh Government allocated £1.065m to the Asylum Rights Programme (ARP) from April 2017 to the end of March 2022, to provide support services to refugees and asylum Seekers. The programme was delivered by a consortium of third sector agencies, led by the Welsh Refugee Council (WRC).

A new service from 2022 has been procured and is being delivered by the Welsh Refugee Council to deliver a similar service to the ARP.

Welsh Government funding for this consortium has enabled WRC and its partners to undertake action in support of the following objectives:

- 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
- supporting and enable the asylum seeking and refugee community to have a voice
- awareness raising of migration issues amongst the general public

ARP Caseworkers have delivered casework 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 however, they have also been extremely busy with 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, there has been in excess of 200 people attending. The topics discussed with relevant representation have included education, healthcare, vaccinations, Home Office, accommodation, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Asylum Rights programme and the Welsh Refugee Council continue to be figural members within the Welsh Refugee Coalition. The Coalition is a mechanism for driving the Welsh Government's nation of sanctuary plan throughout its membership.

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.

Chapter 6: COVID-19 impact and response

From early in 2020, the Welsh Government worked closely with partners and stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors to do all we could to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. All our lives were affected by the virus, in many ways, but it has impacted disproportionately on some groups in particular, including disabled people, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, and the poorest people in Wales.

As the pandemic developed and Wales entered lockdown, more frequent meetings took place with our Disability Equality forum, Wales Race forum, Refugees and Asylum Seekers taskforce, and the Faith Communities forum. Most of these meetings were chaired Welsh Ministers, with senior officials, including the Chief and Deputy Chief Medical Officers, attending some meetings.

As our response to COVID-19 evolved, we published (and continue to publish) advice, guidance and statistical reports on our website at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

The independent COVID-19 public inquiry was formally established under the Inquiries Act 2005 and officially began its work on 28 June 2022, following publication of its final terms of reference. The inquiry is chaired by Baroness Heather Hallett, who in her opening statement on 21 July confirmed that the inquiry would take a modular approach to its work, and launched the first module, which is examining how well prepared the UK was for the pandemic.

Modules 2 and 3 have also been launched; Module 2 is examining the core political and administrative decision making of the UK Government, and Modules 2a, 2b and 2c are examining the core political and administrative decision making of the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive. Module 3 considers the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on

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healthcare in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It is expected that further modules will be announced from early 2023, and the first public hearings will begin in May 2023. Details of the inquiry's work [UK COVID-19 Inquiry](#).

The Welsh Government is determined to ensure that the experiences of people in Wales during the pandemic will be properly and thoroughly reflected in the inquiry and that the decisions made by the Welsh Government and other Welsh public services are properly scrutinised by the inquiry team.

The Welsh Government has already received a number of formal requests for statements and supporting documentation and expects to receive many more such requests throughout the course of the Inquiry. We are committed to ensuring that we respond to the Inquiry's questions and requests fully, openly and transparently.

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 3 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 that 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.

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 Welsh 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 that 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.

Regulation 16 also requires listed authorities to provide an annual statement of the effectiveness of the steps we have taken to fulfil our equality objectives. We will be publishing a separate report covering this information by the statutory reporting deadline of 31 March 2019.

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 that their functions are exercised with due regard to the principle of equality of opportunity for all people.

This duty further emphasises the importance that 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 that 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 that those taking strategic decisions:

- take account of evidence and potential impact through consultation and engagement
- understand the views and needs of those impacted by the decision,

particularly those who suffer socioeconomic disadvantage welcome challenge and scrutiny

- drive a change in the way that decisions are made and the way that 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 strengthen our efforts to fulfil the three 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.

Welsh Government equality 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)).

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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

In this annex you can find more information on a selection of activities helping to achieve each of the aims and objectives set out in our [Strategic Equality Plan 2020 to 2024](#), in addition to those highlighted in Chapter 3 of the main report. There were numerous actions assigned to each of the objectives; the examples below only provide a snapshot of activity 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.

Progress

- economically inactive and long-term unemployed individuals receiving support with the following barriers to employment:
 - care and childcare responsibilities
 - from a jobless household
 - have a work limiting health condition or a disability
 - from a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic group
 - have low or no skills
- economically inactive and long term underemployed individuals entering employment
- number of workers who hold no qualifications or only 1 or 2 qualifications, receiving training and the number gaining a qualification and the number of those who are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic or disabled

Helped over 37,000 economically inactive people, of whom over 25% have been supported into employment and others have improved their employability. 5% of those supported were Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic people.

Helped over 25,000 long-term unemployed people, of whom over 20% have been supported into employment and others have improved their employability. 6% of those supported were Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic people.

Delivered training to over 62,000 lower skilled workers, of whom almost 70% have gained a qualification. 4% of those supported were Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic people.

Supported over 4,600 employed women, of whom over a third have improved their labour market situation.

Case studies of a selection of ESF-funded projects, including project-level detail of support for groups with protected characteristics.

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

Mental health support workers tell us there is a high occurrence of letting agents/ landlords putting the phone down on potential tenants when a mental health condition and/or presence of a support worker is mentioned.

To address this we will:

- create a communications campaign, normalising behaviour to reduce stigma
- undertake research to establish the scale and types of discrimination that are prevalent across the PRS

Rent Smart Wales (RSW) offer free continuous professional development (CPD) training for landlords and agents on mental health awareness. The full licensing/ relicensing training also covers mental health awareness.

RSW also host guidance on mental health as well as a local authority directory of support services available in each area. The training and resources have been sent to all landlords and agents across Wales.

We will soon be commissioning research on the impact of rent rises on mental

health and wellbeing and as part of a future review of the difference that fitness for human habitation regulations have made.

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

The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, as amended, contain Wales specific equality duties bespoke to Wales. The Welsh Government has committed to reviewing the Welsh specific equality duties (WSED) as contained in the 2011 regulations. This process is already underway, having been delayed by the Covid pandemic. A fresh work plan and timeframe is currently being developed with a view to making significant progress during 2022 and aiming to consult on proposed changes at some point during 2023.

This work forms part of the **Welsh Government Response** to the **Strengthening and Advancing Equality and Human Rights in Wales Report**

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published last year which made a number of recommendations relating to the PSED.

The review will involve working with key partners, such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), Welsh Public Sector and Third Sector bodies along with other stakeholders and interested parties across Wales. We are currently establishing, as part of the scoping exercise, the process to update and re-engage stakeholders with this work. Alison Parken of Cardiff University and EHRC officials act as advisors. The Wales specific equality duty (WSED) reference group met on 18 October 2022, with the next meeting scheduled for early December.

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 has been convened and has held its first 4 meetings. The group brings together stakeholders working on gender equality issues across Wales and work is currently underway to set the group's work programme for the next 12 months.

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

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Two new gender budgeting pilots are underway. The young person's guarantee and active travel pilots will complement the initial findings of the personal learning account pilot undertaken previously. In addition, a mainstreaming equality pilot, led by Dr Alison Parken, reported at the end of September.

Ensuring fast paced implementation of the Plan is our priority and we will work with the Gender Equality sub-group to do this and to reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis on gender equality in Wales.

The Chwarae Teg **State of the Nation 2022** report highlighted some promising progress in relation to employment, leadership and representation. However, despite these pockets of promise, this year's report also demonstrates how much there is still to do.

We have committed to fund childcare for more parents in education and training and those on the edge of work. The childcare offer gives parents, in particular women, more choice and a greater ability to have both a family and a career.

The Welsh Government is committed to work in social partnership with public sector bodies to eliminate the pay gap for gender, race and ethnicity by 2050.

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.

We are currently in the process of procuring a provider to deliver the next phase of our anti-hate crime communications campaign, Hate Hurts Wales, which will run until at least March 2024.

The [National Hate crime, England and Wales, 2021 to 2022](#) show a 35% increase in police recorded hate crime in Wales. It is uncertain to what degree the increase is due to continued recording improvements, alongside the range of work to encourage victims to report incidents, such as our Hate Hurts Wales campaign.

Nevertheless, any increase in hate crime is concerning and an indication of why our continued work in this area is required.

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 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

We have commissioned a review of the community cohesion programme to help shape and inform our work in this area. This review will be completed this year.

We are developing a set of community cohesion principles with key partners with the aim of identifying an agreed definition of community cohesion and common goals for partners to work towards to foster and promote community cohesion.

The work of the cohesion programme has been essential in helping us to build local government commitments to participate in Afghan resettlement and asylum dispersal in recent months, as well as our response to supporting Ukrainian refugees.

We are continuing to participate in our effective 'Team Wales' multi-agency approach to provide a very positive welcome to Afghans and Ukrainians in Wales and to find sustainable placements throughout Wales.

Wales has now welcomed approximately 700 people from Afghanistan and work continues to increase this further. Efforts to move families from temporary bridging accommodation to more sustainable homes have been impacted by capacity issues at the Home Office and also our need to ensure families have received the health screening they need before being dispersed elsewhere. We're hopeful those delays are now behind us.

The Welsh Government is proud that every Welsh local authority has come forward to pledge their support to the two new schemes, the Afghan relocation

and Assistance Policy, or ARAP, and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. This support should also be seen in the wider context, every Welsh local authority previously supported the Syrian resettlement scheme and many have continued to support asylum system day-in-day out for the last couple of decades.

Wales is a Nation of Sanctuary, we will do all we can to provide a warm welcome in the short-term and our communities will, no doubt, be enriched by their skills and experiences in the very near future.

We have produced information about all aspects of life in Wales on the Welsh Government's [Sanctuary website](#). This is available in a variety of languages.

Local authorities are provided with details of people arriving from Ukraine and their sponsors via the Homes for Ukraine scheme so property and safeguarding checks can be undertaken and support services can be offered.

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

The Welsh Government an Anti-racist Wales Action plan details commitments to proactively engage with board chairs to improve leadership around anti-racism

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and to pilot data collection of the equality characteristics of regulated Public Sector bodies. We are running an event to engage with partnership teams on the requirements for chairs and board members to explore equality and diversity objective setting .

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for Public Appointments, was launched in February 2020, which underpin these objectives.

Work is underway with knowledge and analytical services to look at collecting existing demographic data from boards and this should be completed by March 2023. For 2021 to 2022, 56.4% of appointments (excluding re-appointments) were women, 16.4% disabled people and 10.9% from ethnic minority communities as baseline data. The data for 2022 to 2023 is yet to be collated to enable us to compare data

In 2021, 13 senior independent panel members were recruited from across Wales to join recruitment panels for some of the most significant public appointments in Wales. Individuals have been drawn from all walks of life (and protected characteristics). Members have shared their knowledge and expertise (including lived experience) to enrich and add value to fair recruitment practices and processes.

We are working with external partners to facilitate mentoring and shadowing opportunities for people from protected groups to help build a pipeline of individuals who are interested in applying for a board position.

The Public Bodies Unit procured a suite of training and development programmes in 2021. Training is focused on diversity and inclusion, fair recruitment practices and induction for aspiring board members and existing board members and chairs.

The development programmes are focused on near ready leaders and public leaders of the future, these are aimed at individuals from ethnic minority

communities and disabled people and have attracted individuals from a range of backgrounds and protected characteristics. This pilot has ended and we are currently undertaking an interim evaluation to assess impact.

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).

Progress

All the Welsh Government sponsored bodies to appoint dedicated champions within the organisation for areas such as mental health and health issues (such as the menopause) with a view to improving the mental wellbeing of the workforce and to provide dedicated support to staff members.

All sponsored bodies have trained mental health first aiders. Amgueddfa Cymru have a team located at each of their sites, National Library of Wales have 8 across their workforce and Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales have 3 mental health first aiders across their 33 staff.

In addition to this, each sponsored body offers either all staff training around mental health and wellbeing or “promotion” days focusing on mental health and wellbeing; with RCAHMW further offering a weekly wellbeing hour in line with Welsh Government policy. During regular monitoring meetings with the individual sponsored bodies, officials receive updates on staff health and

wellbeing.

Annex 4: progress of Public Sector organisations in Wales in delivering PSED

Public Sector Equality Duty is an explanation of the aim of the Public Sector Equality Duty and the organisations covered.

This section fulfils our duty to publish a Welsh Ministers' report on equality every 4 years, in accordance with regulation 17 of the 2011 Regulations, outlining the progress relevant Welsh authorities in Wales have made towards complying with the PSED, and further opportunities for coordinated action.

'Relevant Welsh authorities' refers to public bodies listed in Part 2 of Schedule 19 to the Equality Act 2010. 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.

We invited the relevant Welsh authorities to provide feedback on their experiences in implementing the three aims of the PSED within their organisations, recognising the wide range in size, resources and the nature of their functions.

We received a good response rate with high quality and insightful returns from many organisations. The first half of this Part 2 report provides an overview of the progress made by relevant Welsh authorities towards compliance with the PSED during the reporting period.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in Wales has this year undertaken compliance and monitoring research aimed at both checking compliance with legal requirements and establishing whether the PSED is being

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used to drive forward action on making Wales a more equal nation.

The areas monitored included:

- increasing workforce diversity
- the employment of disabled people
- the collection of employment information
- addressing pay differences

Sector specific topics including:

- local authorities: action taken to address identity based bullying in schools
- Health Boards/NHS Trusts: access to mental health services by people from different protected characteristics
- higher education: action taken to tackle identity based violence
- further education colleges: how colleges are promoting diversity within apprenticeship schemes
- Fire and Rescue Services: workforce diversity and access to information.
- Welsh Government: increasing diversity of public appointments
- other listed bodies including Welsh Government sponsored public bodies: how they are using the procurement duty

The EHRC will be publishing its findings on its website. Therefore, to avoid duplicating the EHRC's work in this area, we have not included an exhaustive description of all compliance activity, instead providing an overview that highlights areas of good practice or where more progress is needed.

It should also be noted that relevant Welsh authorities are subject to the statutory reporting requirements of the Welsh specific equality duties, and as such are required to publish an annual report on equality. More detailed equality information for these bodies is usually located on their websites.

PSED organisations

Welsh ministers routinely provide progress updates on work being done to comply with PSED by public bodies in Wales and the Welsh Government sponsored bodies (WGSB) which receive funding provided by the Welsh Government to carry out their duties. These include:

Welsh Government sponsored bodies

- **Arts Council of Wales**
- **Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales**
- **National Library of Wales**
- **National Museum Wales**
- **Natural Resources Wales**
- **Qualifications Wales**
- **Sport Wales**

National Health Service

Local Health Boards

- **Aneurin Bevan University health board**
- **Betsi Cadwaladr University health board**
- **Cardiff and Vale University health board**
- **Cwm Taf Morgannwg University health board**
- **Hywel Dda University health board**
- **Powys Teaching health board**
- **Swansea Bay University health board**

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NHS Trusts

- **Public Health Wales**
- **Velindre NHS trust**
- **Welsh Ambulance Services NHS trust**

Community Health Councils

- **Board of Community Health Councils in Wales**
- **Aneurin Bevan CHC**
- **Betsi Cadwaladr CHC**
- **Cwm Taf Morgannwg CHC**
- **Hywel Dda CHC**
- **Powys CHC**
- **South Glamorgan CHC**
- **Swansea Bay CHC**

Local Government

County Councils and County Borough Councils

- **Blaenau Gwent**
- **Bridgend**
- **Cardiff**
- **Carmarthenshire**
- **Caerphilly**
- **Ceredigion**
- **Conwy**
- **Denbighshire**

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- **Flintshire**
- **Gwynedd**
- **Isle of Anglesey**
- **Merthyr**
- **Monmouthshire**
- **Neath Port Talbot**
- **Newport**
- **Pembrokeshire**
- **Powys**
- **Rhondda Cynon Taff**
- **Swansea**
- **Torfaen**
- **Wrexham**

There are 4 regional partnerships or Corporate Joint Committees, where local government organisations have elected to work together for mutual benefit.

- Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee
- North Wales Corporate Joint Committee
- South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee
- South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

Although covered within the Public Sector Equality Duty, they have no website in their own right. Information in their activities can be obtained by contacting relevant local authorities.

- **Welsh Local Government Association: WLGA**

Fire and Rescue Authorities

- **Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service**
- **North Wales Fire and Rescue Service**

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- [South Wales Fire and Rescue Service](#)

National Park Authorities

- [Brecon Beacons National Park Authority](#)
- [Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority](#)
- [Snowdonia National Park Authority](#)

Educational bodies

- [The Education Workforce Council for Wales](#) (previously General Teaching Council for Wales)
- [Estyn](#) His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales
- [Higher Education Funding Council Wales](#)
- [Qualifications Wales](#)

Other public authorities

- [Audit Wales](#)
- [Auditor General For Wales](#)
- [Public Services Ombudsman for Wales](#)
- [Social Care Wales](#)
- [Welsh Revenue Authority](#)

Commissioners for Wales

- [Children's Commissioner for Wales](#)
- [Older People's Commissioner for Wales](#)
- [Welsh Language Commissioner](#)

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Universities in Wales

- [Aberystwyth University](#)
- [Bangor University](#)
- [Cardiff Metropolitan University](#)
- [Cardiff University](#)
- [Swansea University](#)
- [University of South Wales](#)
- [University of Wales Trinity Saint David](#)
- [Wrexham Glyndwr University](#)

Further education institutions

- [Bridgend College](#)
- [Cardiff and Vale College](#)
- [Coleg Cambria](#)
- [Coleg Gwent](#)
- [Coleg Sir Gar](#)
- [Coleg y Cymoedd](#)
- [Gower College Swansea](#)
- [Grŵp Llandrillo Menai](#)
- [NPTC Group of Colleges](#)
- [Pembrokeshire College](#)
- [St David's Catholic Sixth Form College - Cardiff](#)
- [The College Merthyr](#)

UK Organisations covering England and Wales

Cross border organisations (along the border between England and Wales):

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cross border Welsh authorities

- **Environment Agency**
- **NHS Blood and Transplant**
- **NHS Business Services Authority**
- **Student Loans Company**

There are several UK organisations which operate in Wales, which are not covered in the Welsh Ministers report since they operate at a UK level.

Progress and key achievements

The introduction of the PSED and Welsh specific equality duties has resulted in many positive examples which have helped to progress the equality agenda in Wales. We have included some of the examples provided to us by Relevant Welsh Authorities:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- equality monitoring toolkit

To better understand the needs of our customers and advance equality of opportunity we have developed an equality monitoring toolkit. The PSED highlights that actions should be preventative not reactive, meaning an active effort in finding and targeting gaps in customers and service users is needed in the Council to reduce and prevent discrimination. Having better data and making data informed decisions is key to this.

The toolkit was launched in the Summer 2022. The toolkit provides best practice from Welsh Government, Civil Service, Office for National Statistics and feedback from RCT staff networks, meaning options are as representative as they can be, whilst also being balanced in the interest of the Council.

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To support the roll-out of the toolkit, awareness sessions have been held and an e-learning package is being developed.

Proud Councils partnership

Proud Councils is a partnership of local authorities supporting LGBTQIA+ inclusivity across the region, raising visibility and unity. Members are Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport, Powys, Swansea, Torfaen and RCT. Over the Summer we have engaged with the public at various Pride events including; Powys Pride, RCT Pride, Young People's Pride Carnival in RCT, Newport Pride and also marched in the Pride Cymru Parade, where around 60 officers, staff network members and elected Members showed a united front to promote equality in the region. Proud Councils has its own **Twitter** and Instagram pages.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park authority

Wild Wellbeing Wanderers (Disability)

Testing and trying out walking routes for people with different mobility and accessibility needs. Exploring how to share those routes so that someone with mobility issues could make informed decisions as to whether the route was suitable to their capabilities and equipment. Setting up a walking group that was inclusive as to as many users as possible as part of this process.

Three consultation events were initially held with professionals and potential participants, and they were asked how we could make walks in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park more accessible. One of the main themes that came back was knowing where to go and detailed information on what the walk was like. This was also highlighted in the PCNPA Experience for All report, with walking

rating highly as a 'preferred activity', but issues around accessibility and 'knowing where to go' were identified as barriers for some alongside the cost of carparking and a lack of toilet facilities.

This project has sought to create solutions to some of these barriers. Following guidance from Fieldfare Trust 'Countryside for All' report, the walkability officer approached Value Independence to ask if they would like to be part of a working group to pilot accessible walking opportunities. Value Independence offer day services locally to a wide demographic of people with disabilities, so within one group we can get varied feedback on how we can do better, making them an ideal partner for this project. It also vital to include people with disabilities in this work to ensure that their views guide the development of activity in this area.

Canaston Woods was decided upon as a site for a monthly walking group due to its reasonably central location. Recent work undertaken by Sustrans and NRW (a consultee and supporting organisation in developing this project) to improve routes in this area, together with access to free parking also made it an ideal location. The possibility of providing routes to suit different walking capabilities also meant that Canaston Woods was the ideal setting for an accessible walking programme. A recent Canadian national parks accessibility conference highlighted the need for different users within a group to have choices of routes for variable capabilities to enjoy an area together. Toilets were also a barrier and we have purchased a disabled 'porta loo' with a tent for use on the site.

Equipment to access walks was also a barrier so we have the mountain trikes, walking sticks and a walker that converts into a wheelchair on site. We also have a selection of wellington boots and ponchos for wet weather.

A programme of walks was delivered by the walkability officer this year supported by colleagues from the National Park Authority and volunteers and professionals from stakeholder groups.

As part of the wild, wellbeing wanderers sessions and also on our once a month

'discovery walks' we have been piloting the use phototrails (Home (phototrails.org), a phone based App, which grades the routes both in decent and accent and grades the path surfaces. We have found phototrails to be very user friendly in creating digital maps for routes despite some cliches when the signal drops out).

Supported walking: walkability and West Wales walking for well-being (disability, carers and age)

Walkability provides opportunities for people to access, take part and gain confidence in walking opportunities in the park. It provides opportunities for people who are wheelchair users, have limited mobility, with physical or learning needs and those recovering from illness or injury. It also trains people who wish to lead walks. The West Wales walking for well-being project is a regional partnership project funded by Welsh Government's healthy and active fund covering Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion. The authority is acting as project lead with regional partners including Ceredigion Actif/ Ceredigion County Council, Carmarthenshire County Council, Hywel Dda Public Health Team and Snowdrop independent living in Haverfordwest. With a regional collaborative approach central to delivery of the project. The project aims to develop and deliver a programme of 'walking for wellbeing' opportunities in West Wales that is community based, sustainable, and embraces a social prescribing model which seeks to connect to primary health care at a local level.

Despite the impact of COVID-19 walkability sessions had 6,971 participants between 2016 to 2017 and 2021 to 2022. 71 Walkability sessions were delivered in 2021 to 2022. These included open walkability sessions and sessions delivered for Value Independence, VC Gallery, Roots to Recovery Project and MIND, Pembrokeshire People First and Exercise Referral North. Walkability also delivers dementia supportive well-being walks.

Feedback from participants on impact of participating in Walkability include:

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“ I have been walking with our group for many years. I started after having experienced health and domestic caring issues. I have gained confidence good health and happiness in such a great group of friends and leaders.

“ As a wheelchair user I have found that using a mountain trike is a great way of being able to see wildlife... Thing's that grow on our front door, it's a fantastic feeling to be able to do all these outdoor walks.

“ Having been at a low point in my life, I decided to join the fortnightly leisure walks and achieved better fitness levels, met and made lifelong friends, have a new positive outlook, and at nearly 82 years old, have a new “spring in my step”.

“ Love the walkability group, benefits my physical and mental health, have made new friends and look forward to our walks so much.

“ I find the walks are great for keeping me healthy and mobile. It is a great way of interacting with other people. I have also discovered many new places in Pembrokeshire I never knew existed.

“ Does my mental health a power of good, fresh air and good company. ”

The West Wales walking for well-being project was impacted by COVID-19 but with the easing of COVID-19 regulations the project was able to expand the number of walking opportunities available through its programme and is now running a full programme of walks. The project has reported an increase in referrals from community connectors and some GP practices as the number of walks on offer increased. Up until March 2022 the Walking for Wellbeing project had delivered 662 walks across the three counties at range of locations. 4,061 walkers (total attendance on all walks delivered by the project) took part in total together with a further 2,627, who took part in the projects virtual walking programme.

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Both Walkability and West Wales Walking for Well-being Project are supported by volunteer walk leaders and the number of walks available would not be possible without the support of these volunteers.

Supported volunteering and increasing access to volunteering (disability)

People can face a range of barriers to accessing volunteering, including transport, needing additional support, lacking confidence or reasonable adjustments.

The Pathways project aims to help more people spend time in the outdoors by providing volunteering, training and learning opportunities in the National Park and its surrounding area. The project is designed to remove some of the barriers faced by people who want to get out and explore the local countryside and provides transport for many of its activities. Pathways volunteers tackle practical tasks ranging from footpath repairs, hedge laying, grassland, and woodland management, as well as other conservation projects in and around Pembrokeshire. Some participants attend with their support workers. The project provides a stepping-stone to other volunteering roles in the authority. It has also provided an opportunity for volunteers without additional support needs to mix and support those with support needs, in particular volunteers who have taken on volunteer leader roles.

An evaluation day was held in September, participants noted the following in terms of question focused on most significant change for their life thanks to Pathways:

- it has greatly widened the range of people I communicate with and the tools I have to do so
- feel more fit and healthy ... now I'm less anxious. I sleep better, and have less depression

- sense of satisfaction
- satisfaction and well-being
- exploring, I found a snake!
- chance to get out and meet people
- friendships making new friends
- learning to use strimmer
- that we have learnt new skills and visited a variety of places
- helped to provide a focus following retirement
- knowledge and learning

In addition, the authority has supported two participants who are military veterans to become volunteer walk leaders through Walkability working with VC Gallery. One is a wheelchair user and uses our mountain trike for volunteering. As volunteer walk leaders they assist with our Wild Wellbeing Wanderers walking group and Walkability groups. They both say how much they get out of walks and volunteering and how it has benefited them.

Volunteer mentors are also being developed through the Roots to Recovery project with Mind Pembrokeshire. They support other participants and activities taking place from the project hubs. By the end of 2021 to 2022 the project had 6 trained volunteer mentors.

Castell Henllys is also providing volunteering opportunities for participants from Value Independence at the site, where they are volunteering in habitat creation and vegetation maintenance.

First 1,000 days (age to early years)

Children spending more time indoors, with a 'disconnect with nature' reported amongst children. The disconnect is observed amongst children in both urban and rural areas. The '1st 1000 days' of a child's life is seen as an important time, within which inequalities that might be with the child for the rest of their lives are

embedded by initial experiences. PCNPA is contributing to the Welsh Government's focus on tackling inequalities in the 1st 1,000 Days of a child's life. Children are leading less active lifestyles which can lead to health issues, this is likely to have a disproportionate impact on children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The project started in January 2022 and runs once a week supporting parents and children to engage in the outdoors. The project also supports Flying Start play groups/settings to provide outdoor activities at their settings and enable nursery workers to be more confident in spending time outdoors in and around their setting. It is delivering a 10 week programme supporting families in Pembroke Dock.

As a result of the project:

- parents and children more engaged more comfortable and better equipped to spend time outdoors
- parents, children and pre-school professionals more confident in making use of natural outdoor spaces in providing positive experiences for children
- appreciation for their local environments and outdoor opportunities in and around the National Park
- children caring for wildlife and the natural world
- appreciation of the different seasons
- allowing children to be creative with natural resources
- children using all their senses to experience new environments
- helping children to develop fine and gross motor skills.
- learning social skills

In addition, Castell Henllys have been hosting Can I Blant Penfro in their Tepee and have also led a wac natur (nature walk) for this group.

The authority's rangers have also provided outdoor engagement opportunities for Kinship family groups in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council.

Sport Wales

New investment approach focused on tackling inequality

An indication of our strong commitment to tackling inequality is the basis for the prioritisation of funding in our revised investment approach. Using survey data on participation from national surveys, funding awards to the National Governing Bodies (NGB's) of sport are weighted in favour of the sports that are more popular for disadvantaged groups (girls; socio-economic deprivation; ethnically diverse communities and people with a disability). This approach is in harmony with the areas of change set out by the Future Generations Commissioner as it shows how the ways of working and wellbeing objectives are being built into financial planning for the long term.

Similarly funding for the regional sports partnerships that are being established will see the majority of the prioritisation weighting focused on: young people (0 to 15 years); socio-economic deprivation (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation); Black and Minority Ethnic census data; Rurality (ONS Urban Rural Classification).

Establishing a sport Wales youth panel

Ensuring 'everyone has a lifelong enjoyment of sport' and giving 'every young person the best start' were the core drivers for the establishment of a Sport Wales panel in 2021. The purpose of the panel is to give a voice to young people across our work by linking directly to the Sport Wales board.

The panel takes place five times a year and comprises of 14 members. Members of the panel are aged between 14 to 26 and were recruited through a competitive interview process. We place a strong commitment on ensuring

gender parity and diversity throughout the panel. The current panel has a representative voice with a balance of skills, experience, backgrounds, ethnicity, and gender.

Tackling racial inequality

This is an area that we admit hasn't had the necessary impact previously, and thus Sport Wales has increased the strategic importance of this. Having acknowledged this in 2020 and established the tackling racism and racial inequality in sport initiative in 2021, a key part of its implementation was an extensive piece of work on community investment with the support of the Centre for Digital Public Services (CDPS) leading to significant changes in our approach to grassroots funding.

We need to continue to recognise the intersectional needs of communities.

We have been open about some of our previous limitations in this space and recognised the need to develop stronger networks with ethnically diverse communities.

We have taken immediate action to address this. Historical aspects of our approaches to collaboration have been reviewed and thus, different approaches are being taken currently involving the support of a consultancy organisations and a range of partners who have trusted relationships within specific communities. We are also reviewing our own internal systems and processes, actively looking at ways in which we can work in a more intersectional way.

Through investigating new partnership and engagement opportunities over the past 12 months, we have invested £200,000 through our capital funds for 3 national partners to collaborate and help us understand barriers and tackle inequalities with a focus on race across Wales.

Sport Wales work supporting free swimming

Sport Wales have continued to support the free swimming initiative working with local authority partners in taking a targeted approach with their investment.

Throughout 2021 to 2022 there have been a variety of offers to make swimming fun and engaging to a broader audience including the upskilling of staff and making small changes to pool areas.

Pembrokeshire and Powys local authorities for example, have attempted to tackle rural deprivation, seeking to understand the barriers to swim participation and working with customers to overcome these. Other areas such as Merthyr and Gwynedd have partnered with food banks, housing associations and social services to develop voucher schemes and deliver targeted swimming sessions, and lessons for those who live in areas of deprivation.

Specific targeted work for under 16 and over 60 age groups has also taken place, as well as specific sessions for children with additional learning needs, autism friendly sessions, dementia friendly sessions as well as girls only and closed sessions for ethnically diverse communities. These specific sessions have been tailored to respond to the varied needs of communities.

Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales

Completion and the implementation of the 2017 electoral review programme

In June 2021 the Commission completed all 22 electoral reviews of principal councils in Wales. One of the key outcomes of the review is to make recommendations that provide for effective and convenient local government, in

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accordance with the Local Government (Democracy)(Wales) Act 2013.

The Act prescribes the factors the Commission must consider in recommending electoral arrangements. The paramount of these is to seek to ensure that the ratio of local government electors to the number of members of the council to be elected is, as nearly as may be, the same in every electoral ward in the principal area.

The impact of the Commission's recommendations are positive for people with protected characteristic as it achieves a measurable improvement in respect of electoral parity.

The Commission has welcomed and encouraged representations from diverse communities in developing its proposals. This has been achieved by increasing the amount of advertising conducted via social media and other local and national advertising.

The Commission has also developed easy reads of its final recommendations to improve accessibility to reports.

Qualifications Wales

Qualifications Wales publishes progress against its strategic objectives, these are our most recent reports covering [Qualification Wales Annual Equality Report 2021](#) and [Qualifications Wales Equalities Report 2021 to 2022](#).

These are some highlights:

Awarding 2020 and 2021

The challenges of awarding qualifications during COVID showed the importance of following the 3 strands of the PSED.

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For summer 2020 and 2021 examinations were cancelled and we had to develop alternative arrangements for awarding GCSEs, AS A levels and other qualifications.

The reports linked above outline how we did this, using our integrated impact assessments to identify issues and consider those with protected characteristics.

Qualifications assessment arrangements cannot eradicate inequalities, and it is possible that disadvantaged learners suffered more from disruption to learning than other groups.

We sought to develop alternative arrangements that did not further disadvantage these learners.

By making assessments flexible schools and colleges could award against only what was taught, and learners who were isolating could complete these from home. We also took care that private candidates, who were more likely to have protected characteristics, had opportunities to be assessed.

We shared our approach with those bodies representing groups with protected characteristics to continue to foster good relations. During awarding we monitored WJECs compliance to our requirements, with particular regard to the guidance and training offered to teachers on unconscious bias.

After awarding was complete, we published an equalities analysis of results for use by the wider education system.

Learner engagement

Young people do not always get a voice. In 2021 we established channels to better understand their views and needs.

We established a Learner Advisory Group of 18 young people aged between 14

to 18. Members are an inspiring group of young people with a diverse and broad range of experiences and characteristics, representative as far as practicable of the national demographics across Wales. The group met nine times in 2021 to 2022 and were joined by the Minister for Education.

We have also established a vocational/work-based learning learner group to hear from a different group of learners on qualifications review and reform activity linked to post-16 vocational training and education.

Developing potential

To ensure our Board benefits from diverse voices, we have appointed a head teacher from an ethnic background as a board advisor.

During 2021 we have also supported the housing trust Pathway to Board membership project by providing the cohort from an ethnic minority background with mentoring and the opportunity to observe board meetings.

We intend to publish our anti-racism plan in December 2022. During 2023 we will be reviewing our overall approach to inclusion and developing revised objectives for 2024 onwards.

Velindre University NHS Trust

Eliminate unlawful discrimination: respect for all citizens. Removing the ban on Gay men from blood donation

On June 14, 2021 (world blood donor day and the start of national blood donor week) the UK rules around blood donation changed, allowing more people than ever before to be eligible to donate including people from the MSM community.

Dr Stuart Blackmore from WBS played a leading role in the research that led to this change.

Prior to the change in donation rules, we announced the changes through media releases distributed to national and local outlets, including Welsh Government and LGBT+ groups. The announcement was shared through national news outlets such as ITV, BBC and S4C. Detailed information was also provided through the WBS channels such as dedicated webpages, FAQs and social media posts.

On the day of launch a donation session was arranged featuring an MSM couple, an MSM male and regular blood donor, and the First Minister of Wales. ITV and BBC both filmed on the day and media releases were sent publicly, including Welsh Government, Wales247 and more. Announcements were made on the day via WBS social channels featuring quotes from the donors including the First Minister.

After the launch, the Welsh Blood Service continued to promote the introduction of the new rule over a 16-week period (one full cycle for donors) via SMS and social media updates. WBS' Dr Stuart Blackmore also represented the service at a live q and a held by Pride Cymru for the LGBT+ community. A full review was carried out to analyse the success of the campaign during national blood donor week. Over 235,000 accounts were reached during the week.

As a result of this change, we no longer ask donors about their sexuality, this makes it difficult to quantify the number of previously excluded individuals have now become donors. Anecdotal feedback immediately after the change was extremely positive and continues to do so.

Foster good relations: with positive clinical outcomes

Increasing the diversity of the bone marrow donor panel

Approximately 2% of the Welsh bone marrow donor registry (WBMDR) panel is identified as minority ethnic and this is reflected in the blood donor panel. In recognition of the under-representation and to encourage ethnic diversity on the stem cell donor panel, the WBMDR have introduced registration for non-blood donors using mouth swabs instead of blood samples. Consequently, the service can recruit from communities not actively giving blood strengthening the ability of the WBMDR to recruit donors from all communities.

The WBMDR is actively engaging ethnic minority communities to understand the barriers to joining the stem cell donor panel. This includes the Welsh Race Forum and the National Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Transplant Alliance.

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For more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

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