

**External Accountability Group Meeting 1**

**27/01/23 - 09:00-10:30**

**Microsoft Teams**

**Attendees**

Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice

Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna, Co-Chair

Andrew Goodall, Permanent Secretary, Welsh Government, Co-Chair

[REDACTED], Welsh Government

[REDACTED], Welsh Government

Claire Bennett, Welsh Government

[REDACTED], Welsh Government

[REDACTED], Welsh Government

[REDACTED], Welsh Government

[REDACTED], Welsh Government

[REDACTED], Welsh Government

Amelia John, Welsh Government

[REDACTED], Welsh Government

[REDACTED], Welsh Government

[REDACTED], Welsh Government

[REDACTED], WCVA

[REDACTED], WCVA

[REDACTED], WLGA

[REDACTED], EHRC

[REDACTED], South Wales Police

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], Bangor University

[REDACTED], Cardiff University

[REDACTED], Diversity Representative

- ██████████, Diversity Representative
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### **Welcome and address to the group**

1. The MSJ welcomed attendees to the meeting and introduced the ARWAP, emphasising its importance and the full backing of the Welsh Government (WG).
2. Due to other pre-engagements, the MSJ left the meeting.

### **Introductions**

3. Prof Ogbonna (EO) welcomed the External Accountability Group (EAG) Members and invited them to introduce themselves

### **Mutual expectations**

4. EO introduced the work of the EAG and described expectations and how the work will proceed. The following points were made:
5. The numbers of ethnic minority staff in WG illustrate the importance of this group working with data.
6. There needs to be policies deployed in the workforce, and existing policies that need to be changed. The EAG can bring understanding of why existing policies have failed.

7. The EAG should have access to comments from public consultations to see people's opinions.

**ACTION – officials to share comments from the public consultation with EAG members**

### **Group discussion: Forward work programme**

The following points were made:

8. We need to set a clear trajectory to enable maximum impact, bringing in colleagues working on delivery.
9. We need to challenge public services and prioritisation and consider what is missing.
10. We need to consider co-construction as a value and whether the group is happy with this approach.
11. There are concerns around delays on implementing GRT actions, Jimmy Carr performing in WG and Arts-Council funded venues and the under-resourcing of GRT work.
12. We need to consider how WG's levers work in challenging racism.
13. EO said we'll do a stock take on each areas progress and plans. It would be too difficult to cover everything in one meeting. We need to link EAG members to policy leads and for people to report back on specific issues.
14. We need to focus narrowly on actions which will bring measurable success rather than on too many issues. Accountability structures must be in place.
15. The Race Disparity Unit (RDU) is looking for EAG members who would like to help think through measuring the outcomes of the ARWAP. Please let officials know if you want to put your name forward.

**ACTION – EAG members interested in working with the RDU to contact officials**

16. We need to scrutinise WG relationships with other organisations as the blockage of implementation may sit with bodies like LAs.
17. We need to use existing levers such as the PSED and the social partnership and procurement bill and consider how we maximise these instead of re-inventing the wheel. WG needs to be an exemplar and take the next step.
18. WG doesn't always need to be the intermediary, LAs have their own accountability structures and need to take ownership.
19. We need to be clear within the ToR about our purpose. As more information comes in, the lines may become blurred. We need to define outcomes, KPIs, and success.
20. Research on councillors regarding the extent of racism they face is horrifying. LAs must be held to account for events at the grassroots level.
21. This is a co-production, we need to use our leverage. There is a huge role for WCVA, WLGA, and schools.
22. ■ explained that WLGA colleagues couldn't join today, but the Minister will discuss representation next week, considering official or councillor attendance.

23. We have policy strands for accountability within WG, but some issues appear consistently across policy topics.
24. We are keen to hear about experiences of leadership in various organisations.
25. We're running out of time and should each respond in writing to the papers sent out. Wide-ranging discussions on the forward work programme and the ToR don't give clear answers. People need a chance to input separately.

**ACTION – EAG members to respond to the forward work plan paper sent in advance of the meeting and send them to [REDACTED].**

26. We all need to be on the same page. It would be useful if all EAG members had a list of officials in each area and clarity on whether all communication should be shared with the group or just reported on at meetings.

**ACTION – officials to connect EAG members with WG policy leads.**

27. CB suggested a focus on Leadership for the next meeting as this connects all policy areas.

**ACTION – officials to investigate a Teams channel or Objective Connect for sharing information with EAG members.**

28. EO said there are some divergent opinions within the group and that it might be positive for members to focus on specific areas they understand well and to work together offline and online.
29. Data is important and that the Race Disparity Unit can help, but this won't tell us about lived experience, you can only get this qualitatively.
30. Other items on the agenda must be dealt with separately as we have overrun.

### AOB

31. EO asked if there was any other business and confirmed that there were no suggestions.
32. EO asked if members are happy to meet on Friday mornings at 10am and this was agreed.
33. EO said this would be CB's last meeting and thanked her for her work. [REDACTED] said he was sure we would benefit from CB's ongoing interest. [REDACTED] paid tribute to CB's contribution to the plan.

### ACTIONS

1. Officials to share comments from the public consultation with EAG members
2. EAG members interested in working with the RDU to contact officials
3. EAG members to respond to the forward work plan paper sent in advance of the meeting and send them to [REDACTED]

## Anti-racist Wales Action Plan

### External Accountability Group Meeting

Friday 31 March 2023 – MS Teams

#### Minutes

##### Item 1 – Welcome and intro

- Prof Ogbonna (EO) opened the second meeting and welcomed [REDACTED] as a new member of the External Accountability Group.

##### Item 2 – Leadership and representation update

- [REDACTED], Chief Operating Officer ([REDACTED]) introduced [REDACTED], talked about [REDACTED] experience in Welsh Government (WG) in the 6 months since joining the organisation, and spoke about the following:
  - The impact of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan on WG and the importance of implementation and leadership, through the work of the leadership group.
  - Progress on the review of internal processes in view of Anti-racism.
  - The launch of the new Values Framework, and the importance of the Fairness element of this. Leaders need to role model this within the organisation.
  - The need to show progress in future and use the expertise of this group.
- EO thanked [REDACTED] and asked for questions:
  - What processes will be put in place to increase recruitment, retention and promotion of ethnic minority staff? Improving WG culture is less impactful if there aren't many ethnic minority staff in the first place.
- [REDACTED] agreed that this is the real test. There are limits to external recruitment, but there has been positive action e.g. apprenticeships.
- [REDACTED] said the gateways showed improved outcomes from those with diversity characteristics. We have launched a new approach to promotion and are working towards targets.

[REDACTED] made the following points:

- We haven't used Positive Action in the past. We need to introduce it more and be clear about it in recruitment adverts and progression. We must show we're underrepresented in specific roles.
- The anonymised recruitment in large campaigns has helped deliver improvements. The new recruitment system Cais will facilitate this across all recruitment.
- The language used to describe roles which may be off-putting will be addressed.
- We must improve representation on recruitment panels. Training will be key; this is a behavioural shift and a societal issue. We must track the data.
- Recent progression arrangements, while receiving negative feedback, have seen improvements for disabled colleagues, partly due to reasonable adjustments.

- Getting middle managers involved and cascading down objectives is key. This is about societal change and support for G7s and SEOs is necessary to promote understanding.
- Leadership at all levels is being discussed. Change must begin with senior leaders to set objectives or it will not progress lower down. There will be a thorough review of policies and processes through an ANTI-RACIST lens.
- Working with Trade Unions will take time but there will be engagement with managers at all levels.

██████████ made the following points:

- There was disappointment expressed on progress with WG's 2020 pledge on more diverse and inclusive leadership. Many managers from ethnic minorities tried to progress and left.
- We need clarity on the numbers of ethnic minority leaders within WG.
- WG doesn't have the necessary representation at senior levels despite slight improvement and must focus on outcomes and changing processes. Change must take place in the next year or so.
- ██████ said the shadow board is a positive action to ensure diverse voices at our highest level, while not ideal or a final answer. One of the co-chairs of the shadow board has joined the HR leadership team.

██████████ made the following points:

- Measures like mentoring etc. are unnecessary if unequal structures have been dismantled.
- Does 'lived experience' mean experience in anti-racism, or is it simply being an ethnic minority?
- Contractors reviewing HR policy with an anti-racist lens should be involved in upskilling policy professionals. WG seems unsure how to do this.
- What are the minimum requirements of the Equality Act and why isn't WG planning to go beyond this?
- Fairness is a nondescript term; it needs defining in practice.
- 12.2, 12.3, 12.4 are not in the updates.
- Why aren't guaranteed interviews for ethnic minority staff confirmed? Other measures could be implemented e.g. open days.
- ██████ suggested meeting ██████ to go through these points. He acknowledged that 'fairness' is a vague term but we need to have a conversation - specific actions in Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan are about delivering fairness.
- ██████ suggested returning to interviews and Positive Action later.
- **ACTION: Emma Bennett agreed to take an Action to look into why certain points around leadership goals weren't updated. EB also suggested speaking to ██████ to discuss some points.**

██████████ raised the following comments points:

- In laying the framework for leadership, did WG identify any model organisations?
- If WG has baseline data is this available for sharing?
- Proportionate representation is important but we need to have disaggregated data so we can see how it breaks down by different racial groups.
- Diverse leadership is non-existent. HR processes are not fit for purpose. Where does the accountability lie?

Welsh Government colleagues responded:

- The Race Disparity Unit will report on data in the summer.
- The issue of HR is fundamental. There is a skills gap as line managers “deliver” HR.
- WG cannot be effective without a good evidence base. GDPR is not a barrier. we can use the silver, bronze, and gold levels to assess data, and We do not need to publish it but can still use it internally. Evidence and resources are essential to strategic change.

Other points made were:

- Distributed leadership is important, and leadership accountability must be there.
- We need to understand the barriers to advancement in anti-racism. The Met Police is a good example of how, a generation later, nothing has changed. Resistance to anti-racism must be understood.
- WG needs to think about whiteness in terms of promotions and recruitment. This is the WG’s current configuration and remains invisible in WG. What are people doing to reject anti-racism and entrench whiteness?
- There is a strong business case for anti-racism and making use of people’s potential.
- There was a successful positive action apprenticeship programme recently. Is WG tracking the progress of those who went through it?
- Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting would be useful for disaggregation and can be used internally only if confidentiality issues.
- What functions are ethnic minority staff performing? There are patterns where their roles aren’t visible or reinforce certain stereotypes.
- South Wales Fire and Rescue trained all managers in anti-racism, not just the top level, and invited critical friendship.
- We need a sub-group on these points and there isn’t enough time here.
- Accountability is very important, people are asking EAG members about the progress of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. People have contributed and want to know more. Perception is important, people want hope.
- ██████ thanked everyone and asked attendees to let him know if they want to be involved with the leadership group.
- The Permanent Secretary thanked everyone for comments agreed that WG needs to be an exemplar.

**Item 4 – Forward Work Plan**

- Amelia John (AJ) introduced herself as interim Director of Communities and Tackling Poverty.  
AJ summarised feedback from the EAG on the Forward Work Plan and made the following points:
  - Arrangements would be made for remuneration for additional meetings.
  - If training on how WG works would be useful for external advisors, WG is happy to arrange this.
  - The size of the group is a risk in terms of time and everyone having a chance to contribute and sub-groups may be helpful.
  - Overcoming and scaling the implementation gap is key to the success of the plan. There is a proposal for the EAG meetings to focus on one sector per meeting for both updates and unique perspectives from the EAG as we have today. This will help ensure that the EAG members' expertise informs WG's work and this is translated into policy and delivery.
  - We also need to look at the mapping and policy development related to impact assessment and how they inform and shape policy and delivery.
- It was agreed we need subgroups. These larger meetings could then be used to provide updates from a number of colleagues rather than individuals around certain areas of expertise. We should aim for no more than 5 members per subgroup; some members could commit to multiple policy area subgroups (if they have capacity).
- ██████████ asked to hear from Business Wales, Food and Agriculture divisions. Migrant workers are overrepresented in those areas and do not have a history of working with unions.
- ██████ said we are at a critical time with UK Government - some matters are non-devolved, 4000 pieces of legislation may change in 9 months with EU retained law act.
- Access to housing is affected by racism and should be an area of focus.
- There was interest in discussing electoral reform considering recent comments in the Senedd.
- It was also suggested that a session on crime and justice is important.
- Next session to focus on Education, followed by Health and Social Care and then future meetings to cover housing; crime and justice; Employability and Skills; Housing; electoral reforms in terms of their accountability regarding GRT issues; also thematic work on GRT; youth work is completely dropped from the plan, so we need to bring it in and consider it when we touch on that subject.
- Positive Action training is available and can be provided to EAG members if they wish.

#### **Item 5 - Feedback from the Race Disparity and Evidence Unit (RDAEU)**

- EO introduced the RDU and the importance of their work in future.
- ██████████ said the subgroup meeting with volunteers interested in data went well. ██████████ is the new head of the RDAEU.
- ██████ shared slides about the work of the Unit, what they can offer and how they measure change and challenges to measuring outcomes.



- The RDAEU is piloting a project on developing research and stats in a co-productive way, though there are barriers around paying people.
- [REDACTED] talked about desired change and next steps around qualitative data and lived experience, then invited comments.

Feedback from the group was:

- Will you consider the theory of change? People were consulted for the Plan, will they be engaged again? Their data will be with the organisation funded for this work. There may be information already there during the development of the Plan
- The framework is a really good starting point and will underpin many of our subsequent conversations - we will need to ensure that measures to lead along the path to expected outcomes. Needs to look at the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan through the wellbeing measures and this would also help to underpin other visible measures, subject to having data – just being able to see the data alongside the issues immediately allows us to target some early actions.
- We need to go back to those people who were involved in the consultation stage. If we do not keep or support the involvement of those previously involved, we will be unable to go back to them for further input.
- Many people contributing to the Plan would never take part in a national survey but were brought in by grassroots organisations. We need to make use of them.

#### **Item 6 – AoB**

Points made were:

- The visibility of this group – the work of the EAG needs to be communicated to the key stakeholders.
- We need to have a communications Plan to make this happen and reflect this in our future meetings.
- EO closed the meeting due to time and repeated the importance of sharing progress with stakeholders who helped develop the plan and all whose lives are affected.

