



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Inclusive Communications Guide



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Foreword

Toby Mason, Director of Communications, Welsh Government

I am proud to share this Inclusive Communications Guide with colleagues and partners across Welsh Government. Day in, day out, our communications work helps people across Wales access vital services and support, provides information and advice at key moments in peoples' lives, and helps change behaviour for the public good. How we develop truly inclusive communications - by fairly representing our audiences and working hard to challenge stereotypes, by considering involvement and co-creation at every opportunity, and by carefully ensuring our audiences can access and use the communications we produce - are all key considerations which are highlighted in this guide.

The broader marketing and communications industry still has a lot of work to do when it comes to being inclusive. Research has found that more than 50% of people do not feel accurately represented in advertising. Disabled people are only represented in 1.1% of online adverts, despite making up 23% of the UK population for example. Rightly so, within Wales and across the UK, there are growing expectations from our audiences for content that better resonates with their own lived experiences and backgrounds - that better reflects who they are, where they live, what they do, and what they have to say.

Wales is a small but hugely diverse country. The 2021 Census showed that of a population of just over 3 million, 670,000 people in Wales are disabled; 192,000 identify as being from an ethnic minority group; 662,000 people are aged over 65; and 77,000 people identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or another minority sexual orientation. Many languages are spoken in Wales, with Polish, Arabic, Romanian and Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya) featuring in the top 10 most common main languages. The diversity of our country drives the richness of our culture, and as Government communicators, we can make an important contribution to this by prioritising inclusion in our work.

In its Programme for Government (2021-2026), the Welsh Government commits to and outlines its plans for celebrating diversity and moving to eliminate inequality in all of its forms. Our policy and delivery colleagues and partners are working hard to implement the commitments set out in our equality action plans. Effective communications has an essential role to play in helping to deliver all of these ambitions and more.

The more attention we pay to delivering inclusive communications, the more effective our work will be. But we also have a wider opportunity here. I want our work to lead the way across the Welsh public sector and beyond - in increasing the visibility of under-represented groups, in challenging stereotypes that we know are inaccurate and harmful, in reflecting and celebrating the diversity of Wales in all its glory.

We know that delivering inclusive communications isn't easy. And that there is a lot of nervousness out there about making missteps and getting it wrong – about the risk of causing offence, of going too far, of not going far enough. The purpose of this guide is to help you work through delivering inclusive communications, step by step. It gives you all of the main themes to consider and examples to help demonstrate the points made.

I also want to emphasise that this is very much a living document, and it will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that it stays relevant. We hope you find this a useful resource but please don't hesitate to get in touch with any thoughts or comments about the guide.

Lastly, I want to thank everyone who has been involved in the development of this guide. I want to thank Folk for leading this work with us. And of course give my personal thanks to those who have shared their lived experiences and expertise with us. Your contributions have been invaluable.

Sheri Hall, Communications Director at Folk, says: “Many of us understand and prioritise this responsibility. However, this can easily lead to one of two barriers to inclusive communications: a fear of making mistakes due to a lack of awareness or feeling overwhelmed when there are so many considerations. These challenges can stifle creativity and our ability to take inclusive action - so nobody wins.

“That's why this guidance is so important. It's been hugely rewarding to build on our existing research and to work with the Welsh Government to co-create it, alongside numerous contributors with lived and communications experience. It will play a key role in giving communications professionals within Welsh Government, and those who work with them, the confidence to be fearlessly inclusive as well as the tools to make practical decisions.”



Glossary for this guide

Accessibility: in the context of communications, accessibility is about designing and developing communications so that all people can use them. Accessibility is one of six communications principles used in this guide.

Alt text (alternative text): describes the appearance or function of an image on a web page. Alt text is read aloud by programmes called screen readers which are used by people with visual impairments and low vision. Alt text displays in place of an image if it fails to load, and is indexed by search engine bots to better understand image and page content.

Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan: Welsh Government's plan to make a measurable difference to the lives of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, setting out a vision of an anti-racist Wales by 2030.

Assistive technology: products or systems that support and assist disabled people, people with restricted mobility or other impairments to perform tasks that might otherwise be difficult or impossible.

Audience relevance: one of six communications principles used in this guide, audience relevance is about ensuring you have understood and defined your audience.

Authenticity: one of six communications principles used in this guide, authenticity is about ensuring your communication comes across as real and genuine.

Bias: an inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair. A bias may be 'unconscious', meaning it is present but not consciously held or recognised.

Bilingual communication: in the context of this guide, this refers to communications that include both Welsh and English.

British Sign Language (BSL): a visual language made up of manual signs, which are created by the hands, and non-manual features, which are created by the face and shoulders. BSL is the first or preferred language of the Deaf community in the Wales. Much like Welsh and English, it has its own grammar, syntax and lexicons. Since 2004, Welsh Government has recognised British Sign Language (BSL) as a language of Wales.

Colourism: unfair treatment of members of a particular racial group who have a darker skin colour than others in the same group.

Contextual targeting: also known as contextual advertising, this means targeting display, video, or text ads based on a website or app's content.

Diversity: in the context of communications this means ensuring the presence of people who are typically under-represented in the media, for example, through imagery or story-telling.

'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' (DEI): three different but interconnected concepts that together refer to a movement that aims to eliminate discrimination and bias, particularly for people who are more likely to experience it.

Easy-to-exclude audiences: people or groups who may be inadvertently overlooked or marginalised in communications and marketing, often excluded due to assumptions, stereotypes, or lack of awareness from the communicators. Avoid using the term 'Hard to Reach' to refer to these groups.

Equity: the fair treatment of individuals. In communications, it means providing audiences of your communication with access by, for example, ensuring your communication is accessible to people with different impairments.

Incidental representation: representing protected groups across all communications, regardless of whether their protected characteristic is directly relevant to the objective, theme or messaging.

Inclusion: involving our audience in the process of creating communications, helping to ensure that we, as communicators, fully understand them. By not involving our audience, they may feel misunderstood if we make assumptions about them - particularly if our assumptions prove to be wrong.

Inclusive communications principles: this guide is based on six principles to help guide inclusive communications: audience relevance, representation, portrayal, authenticity, terminology and accessibility.

Intersectionalities: the complex way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism or sexism) combine, overlap, or intersect.

Involvement: involving your audience in the process of creating communications, helping to ensure that you, as a communicator, fully understand them.

LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales: Welsh Government's plan to make Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe.

Othering: an “us vs. them” way of thinking, where individuals or groups are treated and marked as different and inferior from the dominant social group.

Portrayal: one of six communications principles used in this guide, portrayal is about considering the messages you are sending about the people in your communications by the way you are depicting them.

Protected characteristics (or groups): in the UK, the Equality Act 2010 legally protects people in society from discrimination in relation to nine protected characteristics, including age; sex; race; disability; religion or belief; sexual orientation; pregnancy and maternity; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership.

Representation: one of six communications principles used in this guide, representation is about how present your audience is in your communications.

Screen readers: technology that helps blind and partially sighted people to access and interact with digital content.

Social Model of Disability: an approach to disability developed by disabled people and formally adopted by the Welsh Government, the Social Model makes an important distinction between ‘impairment’ and ‘disability’. It recognises that people with impairments are disabled by barriers that commonly exist in society.

Stock imagery: generic photos or illustrations that are already taken and available on platforms such as Getty or Shutterstock.

Terminology: one of six communications principles used in this guide, terminology is about using the right words and terms to talk about and to your audience.

Tokenism: an action that seems to support or help a group of people who are treated unfairly in society, but which does not help in a lasting way.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in communications

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - what does it mean and why is it important?

‘Diversity, Equity and Inclusion’ (DEI) refers to a movement that aims to eliminate discrimination and bias, particularly for people who are more likely to experience it. As we become more connected globally and cultural awareness grows, DEI has become increasingly important in the eyes of society and for organisations and the way they operate.

DEI is rooted in law and public duty

In the UK, the Equality Act 2010 legally protects people in society from discrimination in relation to nine protected characteristics, including age; sex; race; disability; religion or belief; sexual orientation; pregnancy and maternity; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership. It is also good practice to consider socioeconomic and geographic factors when appropriate.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) places a legal responsibility on public bodies (and those performing functions on their behalf) to consider how any policy or decision affects people who are protected under the Equality Act.

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion also means paying due regard to the lived experience of people who speak Welsh and for whom this is a strong element of their identity. The Welsh Language Standards, introduced under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 places a duty upon bodies to provide services in Welsh and protects the rights of Welsh-speakers to use Welsh in their involvement with those bodies.

DEI is a priority for Welsh Government

In its Programme for Government (2012-2026), the Welsh Government commits to ‘celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all its forms.’ Delivering inclusive communications is a priority across Welsh Government, as outlined in key commitments including:

Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan

Promoting and embedding the Social Model of Disability

LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales

Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan

What are 'inclusive' communications?

Using DEI practices makes communications 'inclusive'. That is to say they help to make diverse groups feel included - or not excluded - by the communication.

In the context of communications, DEI means:

- **'Diversity'** - ensuring the presence of people who are typically under-represented, for example, through imagery or storytelling.
- **'Equity'** - the fair treatment of individuals. It means providing audiences of your communication with the access they need by, for example, ensuring your communication is accessible to people with different impairments.
- **'Inclusion'** - involving our audience in the process of creating communications, helping to ensure that we, as communicators, fully understand them. By not involving our audience, they may feel misunderstood if we make assumptions about them - particularly if our assumptions prove to be wrong.

The Academic Wheel of Privilege can help you to think about inequalities in different areas. In the graphic below, which is based on the Academic Wheel of Privilege, the outer ring of the wheel shows the different areas which are affected by privilege. The innermost rings highlight characteristics which are an indication of privilege (e.g. white skin colour) compared to the outer rings (e.g. dark skin colour).





PLANT-BASED
STREET FOOD

FRENCH TOAST £4.50
WITH STRAWBERRIES + MAPLE SYRUP

MUSHROOM RAREBIT £5
GARLIC MUSHROOM, CHEESE + MUSTARD ON TOASTED CIABATTA

SAUSAGE HASH £5
VEGGIE SAUSAGE, PEPPER, ONION, TOMATO, POTATO

BREAKFAST BURRITO £6
SMOKY BEANS, MUSHROOM, TOFU SCRAMBLE, AVOCADO + CHEESE IN A TOASTED WRAP

CANNED DRINKS, TEA, COFFEE + BOTTLED WATER £1

ALL HOMEMADE AND 100% PLANT BASED

TAG US IN YOUR PHOTOS! F+IG

@BUTTERCUPVINTAGECARAVAN

ci SPRITE

Introducing Welsh Government's Inclusive Communications Guide

What is it? Best practice guidance for inclusive communications.

Who is it for? The Welsh Government's Communications Teams, policy and delivery colleagues, and partners working with Welsh Government.

How to use the guide: The guide is based on six Inclusive Communications Principles. It offers practical guidance and examples, as well as advice for areas specific to Welsh Government communicators. It does not offer a one-size-fits-all approach or a checklist - the nature of inclusion is too nuanced and complex for that. Communicators should apply this knowledge critically to make decisions about their communications.

Remember, the principles in this guide are relevant and important to consider no matter what the size of your activity or campaign.

An Inclusive Communications Record can be found on [page 61](#) so communicators can record successful approaches to inclusive communications, as well as any barriers, so continuous improvement can be made.

Inclusive communication principles

Audience relevance

Have you defined and understood your audience?

Representation

How present are diverse audiences in your communications?

Portrayal

What messages are you sending about the people in your communications by the way you are depicting them?

Authenticity

Does your communication come across as real and genuine?

Terminology

Have you used the right words to talk about and to your audience?

Accessibility

Can your audience access the communication?

Does the guide focus on particular audience groups?

Yes. It has been created with the following Welsh Government policies and practices in mind: the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan; the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales; the Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan; and the Social Model of Disability. It also focuses on priority audiences covered by the Equality Act 2010, including Welsh speaking communities. The principles can also be applied to broader audiences.

How do these principles relate to GCS Models like OASIS, COM=B and EAST?

These principles and this guidance do not replace any of these GCS models and guidance. You should use this guidance in conjunction with OASIS, COM=B and EAST to make sure inclusion is considered across the different phases and aspects of your comms planning, implementation, and evaluation.

How was the guide created?

The guide is based on the latest best practice for inclusive communications, using a wide range of authoritative sources. These sources were identified via an extensive literature review, and in collaboration with Welsh Government communications and policy colleagues, Welsh Government Staff Networks, and external stakeholders.

Lived experience is vital in creating truly inclusive communications. So we held workshops and interviews with Staff Networks and external stakeholders and groups with lived experience, who provided valuable input and examples that have informed this guide throughout.

Welsh Government groups consulted for this guide:

- Disability Awareness and Support Group
- Minority Ethnic Staff Network
- PRISM
- Tinnitus, Deaf, and Hard of Hearing Support Group
- Women Together
- Neurodivergence Network
- Visible Difference Network
- BSL Network
- Welsh Government Shadow Board

External groups consulted for this guide:

- EYST (Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team)
- Welsh Refugee Council
- Pride Cymru
- Stonewall Cymru
- Disability Equality Forum
- Wales Race Forum

The guide also draws together work that has previously been undertaken across Welsh Government in this area to ensure knowledge is centralised and consistent.

How often will the guide be updated?

Best practice around DEI is constantly evolving, and we are open to feedback and discussion. So, this guidance is a living document that will be regularly reviewed and updated.

What do I do if I can't see the answer to my question reflected in the guidance or I need some advice on implementing what is included here? Please contact Catherine Ashford, Deputy Head of Communications - Catherine.Ashford001@gov.wales

Principle 1 - Audience relevance

Have you defined and understood your audiences?

Why does this matter?

Communications planning fundamentals of objective setting and audience insight (as set out in the OASIS planning framework) are more important than ever for effective engagement with easy-to-exclude groups. Without defining and understanding your audience, **and the different groups within it**, you risk missing your communication goals and excluding important audiences. Work closely with your policy colleagues to understand and carefully define your communications objective and gather information and data about your audience.

What considerations should I be aware of?

- Better understanding easy-to-exclude audiences
- Audience prioritisation
- Intersectionalities
- Formats and channels

How should I approach this?

Better understanding easy-to-exclude audiences

You can use the protected characteristics – age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership – as a lens through which to look at, and better understand your audience. This is especially true if you are working with a broad audience to begin with.

There are lots of information sources available to you to do this. Online desk research; speaking to policy and Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS) colleagues about what information is available; engaging community organisations; or commissioning new research if it is needed are all important sources of insights you can get stuck into.

It's also important to be aware of your own views and whether this is creating any blind-spots for you. Ask yourself: "Is there anyone I'm forgetting?"; "Am I letting my biases predetermine who I think my audience is?"

Seek out population insights for your audience:

While this is not the only consideration when defining your audience, it is a useful starting point to understand who makes up your audience. For example, check the [latest census data](#). Does it show anything surprising and significant about the diversity of your audience that could affect your planning? Did you know that 23% of the Welsh population are disabled? Did you know that the third most spoken language in Wales is Polish? And that Wales has more than double the number of young people who identify as 'White and Asian' or 'White and Black African' compared with the overall Wales-England population?

View the policy through the lens of different protected characteristics - what could this mean for your messaging?

This can help with understanding how your audience may be affected by the policy and how they may perceive it differently or the same. For example, how might an LGBTQ+ parent view the world compared to a heterosexual parent? How could people from different faiths and cultural backgrounds view your message differently or the same?

Mapping your audience's motivations and barriers can help with this too. You can use this approach to find points of difference you might need to take into account. But this approach can also help you to find important and useful common ground between the different groups within your target audience that you can tap into.

Remember not everyone within a protected characteristic group is the same!

Remember to consider the nuances here. For example, if you are targeting disabled people, think about the different groups and different experiences within this protected characteristic. Think about how you can use your audience insight work to explore this.

Improve your knowledge about your audiences:

Learn about historical, cultural and demographic implications. There are some useful podcasts, such as BBC's Radio 4 [Anti-Social podcast](#), and newsletters such as the [Independent's Race Report](#) and [Independent Women](#) to keep up to date on the latest issues related to inclusion.

Keep a track of religious and cultural holidays:

Consider the impact these might have for your communications. For example, if your audience includes the Jewish Orthodox community, is it appropriate to launch a digital campaign on Shabbat - a day of rest where the community does not use any form of electrical device? There are lots of free diversity, cultural and interfaith calendars online.

Audience prioritisation

Prioritising your audiences can be daunting, but it will help determine which groups need to be at the forefront of your mind when planning your communications, who we should strive to feature in imagery etc. You are likely to be asking yourself questions like: should you prioritise audiences according to population size? Or should you prioritise smaller audience groups in the interest of equality and driving greater engagement among certain groups? And what about when you have so many segments that you do not know where to start?

Different considerations need to be factored into your decision making:

Focus on what you are trying to achieve with your communication:

In keeping with OASIS, consider who you are trying to reach and why. How will engaging with this specific audience achieve the policy objective? This is the most important consideration when determining your key audiences.

“But my audience is everyone”. Is it really?

It's common to be asked by your policy team to reach everyone in Wales with your message! Always consider carefully whether your audience really is 'everyone'. As well as using the protected characteristics to help understand a broad audience, you can use them as a lens to help narrow and focus the target audience for your activity. For example, someone who is blind may not be a priority audience for something that impacts driving licence holders. Similarly, policies that have a specific audience in mind - such as a campaign encouraging retirees to return to work - will be highly unlikely to need to engage with a younger audience or represent younger people in imagery.

Inclusive communication is about reducing inequality:

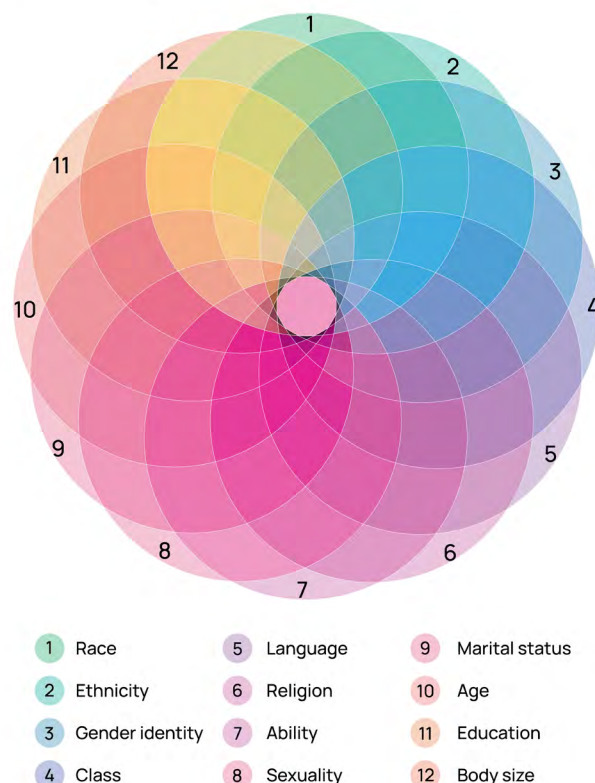
This should be factored into your decision making. If there are known inequalities for a segment of your audience for whom the policy area is relevant, think about how you can address this in your work. For example, is a particular group much less likely to seek help or use a service you are promoting? This may impact the decisions that you make about where you allocate resources, accessibility requirements, and the people you feature in your imagery.

Intersectionalities

There may be easy-to-exclude groups you need to consider within your audience (LGBTQ+, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic etc.) and within those there will be 'intersectionalities'. For example, an LGBTQ+ person might also be a Welsh speaker and neurodivergent. Increasing the public's understanding of intersectionality and how it can have an impact of people's lives is an important role for inclusive communications. Think about whether you have an opportunity in your work – perhaps through story-telling and using case studies – to make the experience of intersectionality more visible and better understood.

This intersectionality wheel used by the World Health Organisation can help broaden the way you think about who makes up your audience. If your primary audience is, for example, men aged between 18-24, you might want to think about the different intersections that exist within this audience. White Muslim men? Transgender neurodiverse men?

Intersectionality wheel



Formats and channels

When planning what channels to use for your activity or campaign, it's likely you'll have a debate about whether to select channels which reach larger 'mass' audiences, or channels that are more 'niche' and targeted at specific groups or areas of interest. Most of the time, it's likely you'll want a mix. Even within so-called mass channels, careful audience targeting is often possible too.

If you are working with an external agency or media buyer, they should be able to make recommendations on appropriate media strategies to reach easy-to-exclude audiences and the appropriate way to balance your communication priorities. For example, this might mean seeking media that is aimed at Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic audiences - online and offline publications, community radio and narrowcast TV - which may be more effective than mainstream media as they are targeted to very specific audiences. However, remember that many easy-to-exclude audiences consume mainstream media too!

Example: communicating with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic business leaders

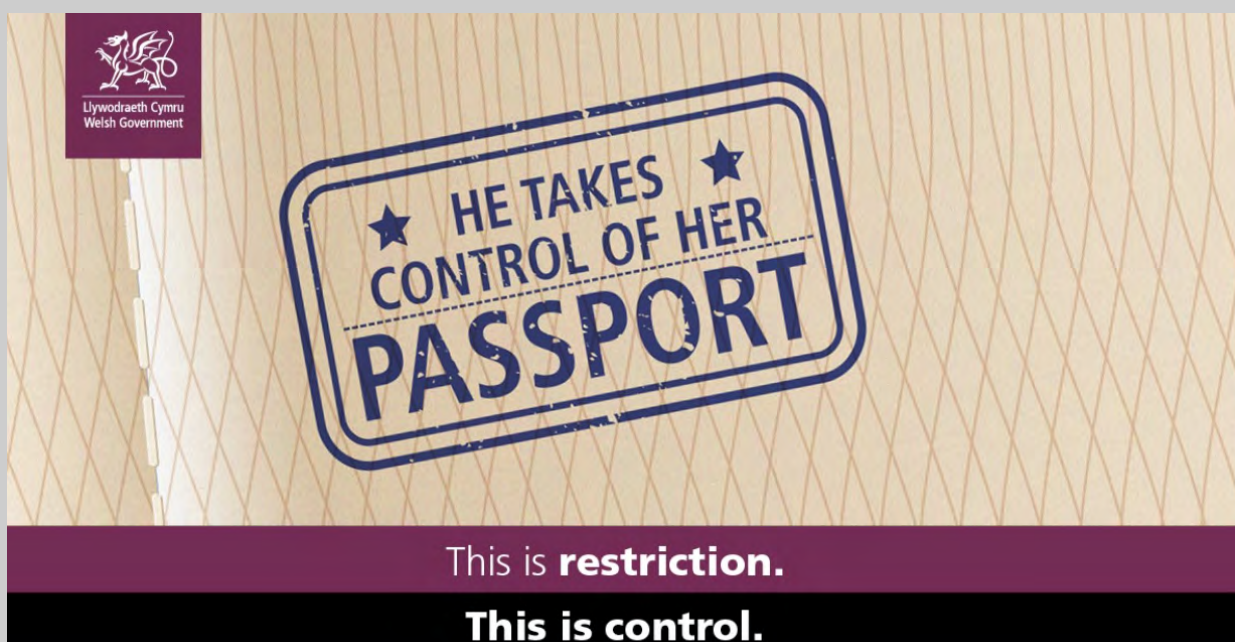
During the pandemic, the UK government found minority ethnic business owners were less likely to be aware of business support schemes.

It created a low-cost communications plan, tailoring media activity to different ethnic groups. For example, British Pakistani business owners were significantly less aware of grants available, so the team arranged interviews with BBC Asian Network and Curry Life Magazine, an Asian trade publication.

Overall, the communications activity resulted in over 100 pieces of targeted media coverage, and tracked links showed that users were highly engaged with content, suggesting the channels used were targeting the correct people.

Example: Live Fear Free / Byw Heb Ofn

The Live Fear Free 'This is not Love. This is Control' campaign focused on the signs of an unhealthy, controlling relationship to encourage victims, bystanders and perpetrators to recognise these behaviours as abusive. The campaign video included couples from a range of backgrounds and sexual orientations. The campaign assets were also designed to resonate with a diverse range of communities, with messaging and graphics tailored to reflect the specific experiences of different groups. The example below reflects the experiences of migrant women shared during stakeholder engagement work.



Principle 2 - Representation

How present are diverse audiences in your communication?

Why does this matter?

Representing easy-to-exclude groups from your audience can help make people feel visible and included. It demonstrates that you're committed to them and their communities and helps to address inequality and power imbalances.

When people don't see themselves represented in communications, it gives a signal that "this isn't for me".

What considerations should I be aware of?

- Some tips to improve audience representation
- Colourism
- Incidental inclusion
- Unintended consequences

How should I approach this?

Ways to improve audience representation

It's likely that your activity or campaign will include different communications formats. Use different formats to show a range of people. It is not possible to represent your entire audience within a single piece of communications, such as an image. So consider a balance of representation across your activity or campaign as a whole.

Examples of representation might include:

- Visually featuring or depicting people with differing physical characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, age, impairment or visible difference.
- Visual, audible or written forms of storytelling that showcase differing situations, such as religious and cultural traditions, relationships and families, jobs and activities.
- Taking an opportunity to show intersectionality through story-telling or imagery.

Imagery is incredibly powerful, but sometimes it's important to question whether an image is the best way of representing a given audience.

For example, it is estimated that 80% of impairments are not visible - you may be able to represent this audience in other ways, for example through storytelling. You might find it difficult to get photographs from certain settings. Using illustration is one way to address the issue. Creating characters with illustration means we can choose their age, gender, skin tone, expression and more, meaning ideas can be easily communicated. Or sometimes, an image of people may not be needed at all.

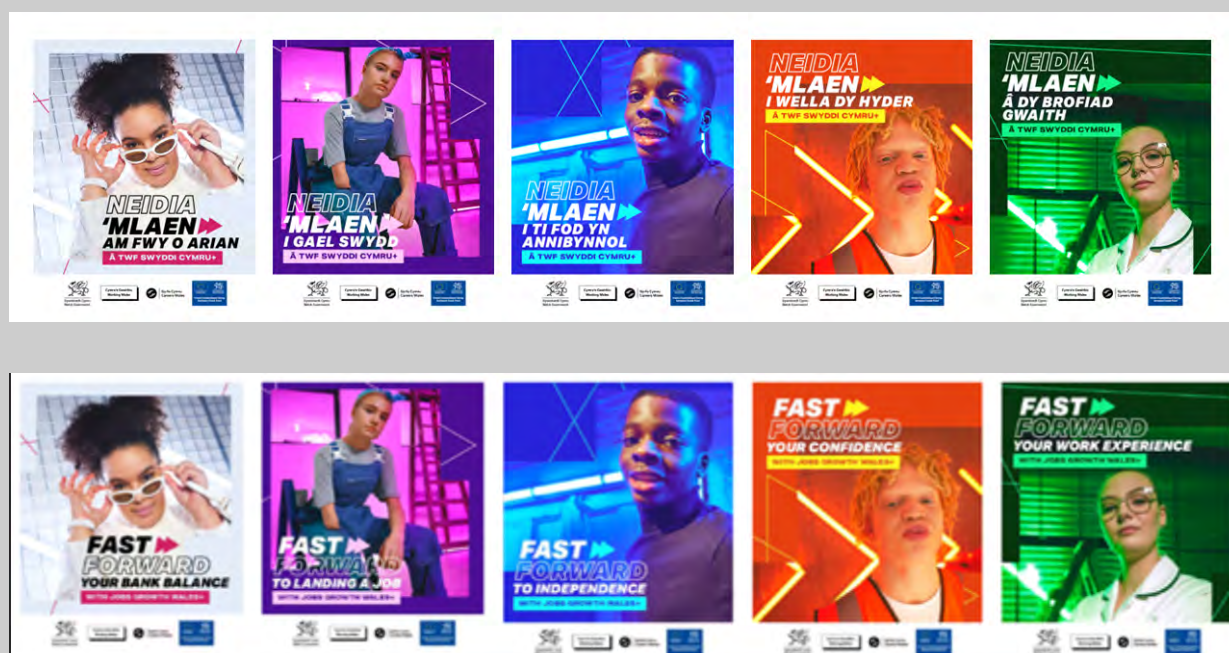
Try to represent a wide range of impairments, including non-visible impairments and health conditions, rather than solely relying on images like a wheelchair user to denote a disabled person; such images have become like a 'shorthand' and could be considered stereotypical.

Consider if representing the audience more prominently will help to overcome inequalities in the policy area or engage with a disengaged audience.

Example: Jobs Growth Wales+ / Twf Swyddi Cymru Plws

Jobs Growth Wales+ / Twf Swyddi Cymru Plws is a training & development programme for 16-19-year-olds who are NEET (not in education, employment or training). The programme equips them with the skills, qualifications and experience needed to enable them to get a job or progress to higher-level training.

The campaign featured five hero models across all paid-media assets, who were chosen for visible diversity together with a range of influencers from protected characteristics groups co-creating organic social content.



Example: Hate Hurts Wales / Mae Casineb yn Brifo Cymru

The Welsh Government campaign 'Hate Hurts Wales' / 'Mae Casineb yn Brifo Cymru' aims to raise awareness and understanding of the impact that hate crime has on individual victims. It seeks to encourage victims and bystanders to report hate crime through a Victim Support service or via the police.

The individuals featured in the campaign materials were chosen specifically to align with the protected characteristics covered by the campaign.

To ensure complete authenticity in both English and Welsh TV ads, voiceovers were done by Welsh-speaking participants who bore the same characteristics. The scripts were discussed fully with those participants to ensure it was in a language that they were comfortable using.



Dylai neb oddef casineb.

MAE CASINEB YN BRIFO CYMRU

Safwn gyda'n gilydd yn erbyn **troedd gasineb.**

Riportia fo a mynna gyngor.
llyw.cymru/casinebynbrifo

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No one should tolerate hate.

HATE HURTS WALES

Let's stand up to **hate crime** together.

Report it and get support.
gov.wales/hatehurtswales

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Example: Images from Employers Guide to Employing Disabled People / Canllaw cyflogwyr i gyflogi pobl anabl , which “features people with a range of different impairments in a range of different settings” (interviewee).



Colourism

‘Colourism’ is defined as discrimination on the basis of skin tone, often against people with darker skin. One way to avoid creating colourist work is to use images of people with a range of complexions in your assets. This should be a key consideration when using stock footage or when commissioning new photography.

“Colourism is favouring lighter skin tones. Mostly lighter skin people are used in comms, such as supermarket ads”
- interviewee

Incidental inclusion

It’s sometimes easy to only prioritise diverse representation when your work is specifically targeting a certain group or if your work is specifically aimed at addressing an area of inequality. However, all of our work is an opportunity to reflect the diversity of the people of Wales. In-fact, ‘incidental inclusion’ of diverse groups in our work can be very powerful for driving a broader sense of inclusion amongst our audiences.

Aim to represent easy-to-exclude groups across your work, in an incidental manner; regardless of whether their protected characteristic is specifically relevant to the objective, theme or messaging. For example, an advert promoting Wales as a place visit or to start a business might include footage of a lesbian couple - the subject matter does not need to be about LGBTQ+ issues for them to feature.

“National Lottery ran ads featuring a gay couple are excellent as they have been running all year round. The fact they are gay is irrelevant to the ad, it was incidental. The consistency makes people feel you are for real with this”
- interviewee

Example: a person with a ‘visible’ difference is represented in a Transport for Wales advert

**Gallwch arbed
hyd at hanner pris
teithiau penodol
i Fanceinion**

gyda thocynnau trên Advance

Prynwch eich tocynnau ar ap TrC a [trc.cymru/tren](#)

Mae'r cerbydau yn cael eu gwerthu'n ddwyddyn neu'n ddwyddyn o'i blaen ym 10/11/2026 dim brysio i'w prynu. Dim ffordd i'w prynu os nad ydych chi dderbyn yr amodau. Dim ffordd i'w prynu os nad ydych chi dderbyn yr amodau. Dim ffordd i'w prynu os nad ydych chi dderbyn yr amodau. Dim ffordd i'w prynu os nad ydych chi dderbyn yr amodau.

TRAFNIDIAETH CYMRU
TRANSPORT FOR WALES

Y rhwydwaith cynddelusol go lawn

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TRAFNIDIAETH CYMRU
TRANSPORT FOR WALES

The real social network

Example: Workplace recycling law campaign / Ymgyrch cyfraith ailgylchu yn y gweithle

The Welsh Government's Workplace recycling law campaign features a disabled person, a wheelchair user in this instance, on the TV advert, out-of-home advertising as well as across a range of other channels.



**Gweithleoedd Cymru.
Gadewch i ni sortio eich ailgylchu.**

Bydd cyfraith ailgylchu yn y gweithle newydd yn dechrau ar 6 Ebrill. Ewch i weld sut i baratoi.

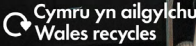
Chwiliwch: Ailgylchu yn y Gweithle

**Workplaces of Wales.
Let's get your recycling sorted.**

New workplace recycling law starts on 6 April.
Find out how to get ready.

Search: Workplace Recycling Law Wales

 Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

 Cymru yn ailgylchu
Wales recycles

 Gweithredu ar
Hinsawdd Cymru
Climate
Action Wales

Example: Welsh Government Help Us Help You / Helpu ni Helpu

This is a Welsh Government campaign to promote and signpost the most appropriate ways to access NHS services, to help people access the right care, in the right place, first time. The campaign is aimed at all adults in Wales, although specific activity such as PR and partnerships is used to target key audience groups as part of the strategy.

The advertising uses imagery throughout which includes a broad range of audiences and deliberately cast the actors within the TV ad from a range of backgrounds and ages.

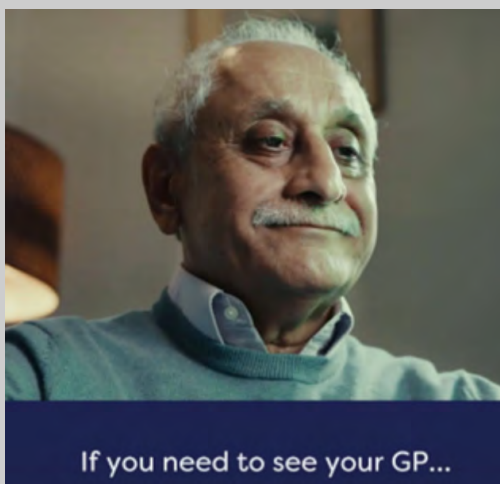
Online GP TV Cutdown - ENGLISH 1x1 (gov.wales)

30s Social Ad 1x1 CYMRAEG (gov.wales)

The team also worked with influencers throughout the campaign. In particular they worked with Funke Kay to help reach parents, and Jessie Davies to help reach a younger audience to promote messages on accessing NHS services in the run up to Christmas. This also provides an example of incidental representation in terms of ethnic diversity and disability - Jessie had a stammer which she openly talks about on her TikTok and Instagram channels.

The team also partnered with Now in a Minute 2023, a community interest company, to create engaging content targeting the younger Muslim community on trying to address the stigma of mental health within the Muslim community, as part of World Mental Health Day.

The team collaborated with the Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team and Dr Sherif, a bilingual GP who is from a diverse background. A workshop was held with young people in Newport where they discussed the range of ways you can access NHS services. Information leaflets were also handed out so the young people could also share with their families. The workshop was filmed to increase the reach and messaging to a broader audience. This was shared across EYST and Welsh Government social channels.



Unintended consequences

Representing a variety of people from your audience is important. As you've already seen, you can do this across the different formats you are using. Restrictions to the size of some formats will mean you can only show one person or a small number of people at one time. Consider whether there could be any unintended consequences of singling out a group in certain circumstances. This singling out could be seen as 'othering', where individuals or groups are treated and marked as different and inferior from the dominant social group.

Example: Ending Physical Punishment / Stopio Cosbi Corfforol

Representing and reaching different families was an essential part of the Welsh Government's Ending Physical Punishment / Stopio Cosbi Corfforol campaign. As well as including an extensive programme of engagement with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic organisations and communities, the campaign also translated materials about the change in the law into 12 different languages.

Following the introduction of the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act on 21 March 2022, the Welsh Government launched the next phase of the campaign called 'Not Here' which included digital and TV advertising. The main TV advert showed a range of families from different backgrounds, which aimed to represent the diversity of families across Wales.

Some of the families featured in the adverts also appeared individually or as family units on boosted social media graphics as part of the campaign. One graphic received criticism, both externally and internally, for featuring a Muslim family. This gained some traction amongst individuals and community groups, with the main complaint being that the advert suggested it was only Muslim families who physically punish their children. The people who made the complaints felt like Muslim families had been unfairly singled out and that the advert in question should have instead featured a number of diverse families – an example of 'othering'.

Welsh Government officials acted quickly, paused the campaign temporarily, received advice from a leading community organisation and decided to move away from image-led graphics and instead, promote animations for the social media campaign. However, the team did not change the campaign's TV adverts as they featured a range of different and diverse families and therefore avoided the risk of 'othering' particular groups.



**Mae cosbi plant yn gorfforol yn
anghyfreithlon yng Nghymru**

**Physical punishment
of children is illegal in Wales**

**Stopio Cosbi
Corfforol**
Ending Physical
Punishment



Principle 3 - Portrayal

What messages are you sending about the people in your communications by the way you are depicting them?

Why does this matter?

How you present a person or group in your communications sends a message about them that may have little to do with your comms message itself. For example, you might send a message about a person's status in society, and how capable or qualified they are. The ways that people are depicted can be helpful in breaking down harmful assumptions and inaccurate beliefs. If you are not careful, the way you depict people can reinforce these ideas.

It is crucial to show or describe people in a fair, real and empowering way. This is particularly important when using imagery – whether from stock footage or commissioning new photography.

What considerations should I be aware of?

- Avoiding and challenging stereotypes
- Portraying people as individuals with 'agency'
- Avoid showing unequal power relationships
- Victimisation and unwanted heroising
- Briefing photo or video production agencies

How should I approach this?

Avoiding and challenging stereotypes

Stereotypes are beliefs that many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic. These beliefs are often unfair and untrue.

Reinforcing stereotypes is the fastest way to show audiences you don't understand them!

Stereotypes we must avoid include, but are not limited to:

- Gender: for example, only showing women and girls in domestic situations, and only showing men outside the home, working and taking an active part in society more widely
- Age: for example, portrayals of older people as frail and helpless
- Race and ethnicity: for example, only showing white people in positions

of power and authority; associating black men with crime; or only associating immigration with illegality

- LGBTQ+: for example, only portraying gay men as camp and flamboyant
- Gypsy Roma Traveller groups: for example, associating people with crime or poor education
- Disability: for example, a disabled person is held up as a hero or inspirational, or conversely as vulnerable and a victim

“Avoid just using settings like a gay club - it’s important to think about the breadth of the community more holistically and that it’s not just associated with night-life or drinking.”

- interviewee

There are many more examples so it is important to do your research. Here are some links which may be useful:

- [Gay men stereotypes](#)
- [LGBTQ+ stereotypes](#)
- [Transgender stereotypes](#)
- [Gypsy Roma Traveller stereotypes](#)
- [Stereotypes about ageing and older people](#)
- [Marketers’ use of stereotypes](#)
- [Gender stereotypes](#)
- [Stereotypes about race and ethnicity](#)

As well as avoiding reinforcing limiting and harmful stereotypes, our communications activity is also a huge positive opportunity to challenge stereotypes by showing different people and experiences.

Example: This is Me / Dyma fi

The Welsh Government's This is me / Dyma fi campaign recognises the link between gender and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. It acknowledges that the pressure to conform combined with gender inequality in our society can be a cause and consequence of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. This campaign is an example of work seeking to challenge gender stereotypes and show range of different experiences.



Example: BA safety video

BA's 2023 safety video "includes people from all walks of life" (interviewee) without stereotyping them .

[British Airways | Safety Video | The Original Safety Briefing \(YouTube\)](#)



Example: Business Wales

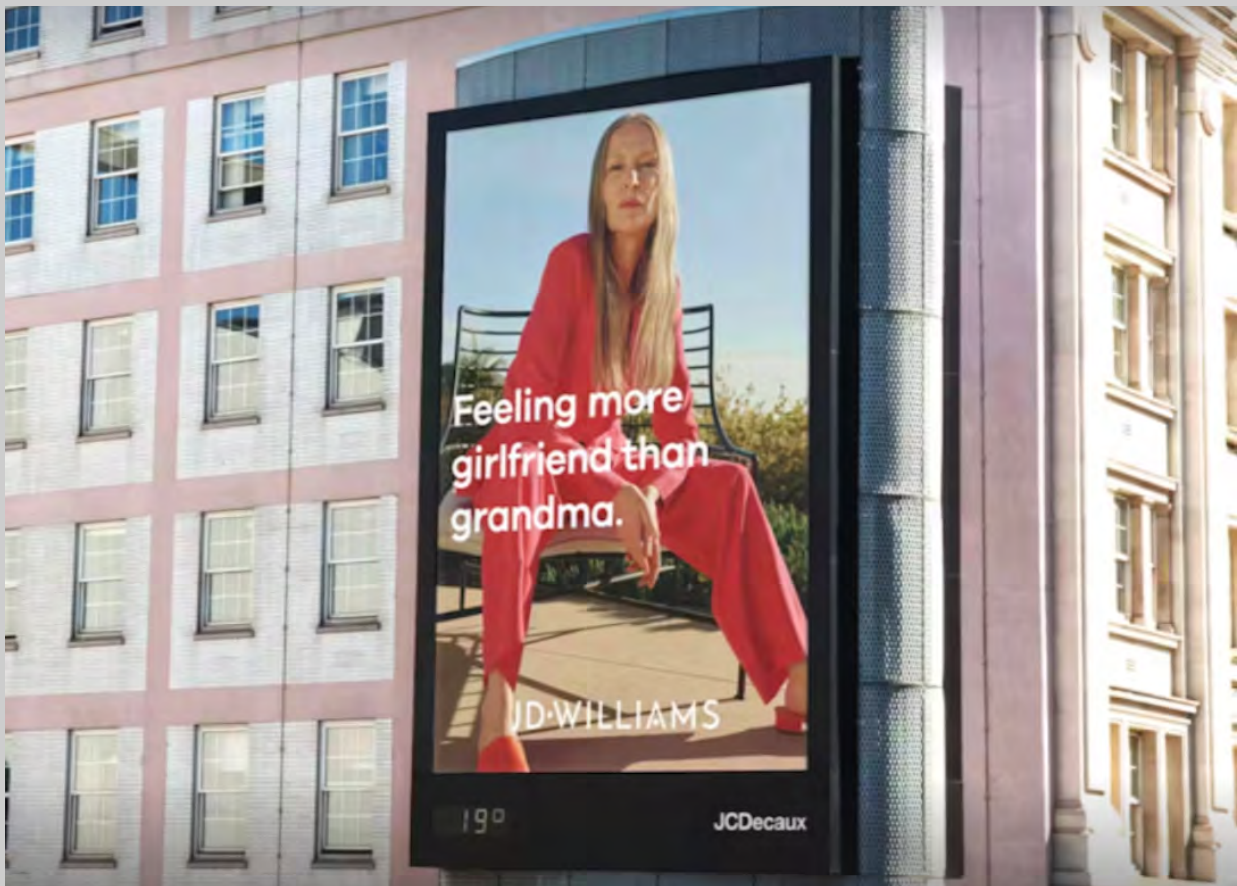
The Business Wales Export Exemplars / Enghreifftiau Allforio Busnes Cymru campaign showcases the Welsh businesses who are receiving export support from Welsh Government and uses their story to inspire other businesses to begin their exporting journey.

The team included imagery of a diverse range of female entrepreneurs to challenge gender stereotypes which exist in the business community.



Example: Admit it, this age thing suits you

Online retailer JD Williams launched a campaign bringing together a group of midlife women, who each celebrate their age and champion women at different stages in mid-life.



Example: Ageism is never in style

Charity group Centre for Ageing Better and The Bias Cut's activism platform Ageism Is Never In Style launched a campaign to fight against ageism with thought-provoking content.



For further information to help avoid age stereotypes in your communications, the Wales Older People's Commissioner has produced a guide on how to avoid ageism in communications and together with the Centre for Ageing Better has produced Media Guidelines for reporting on ageing and older age. It also offers a free age-positive image library.

Portraying people as individuals with ‘agency’

Everyone needs help and support at different points in their lives. It’s crucial to portray people – even when they are getting help – as individuals who can make independent choices and take meaningful actions.

For instance, disabled people should not be patronised and should be spoken about, treated and represented in the same way as non-disabled people.

“Disabled people are normal people and live normal lives”
- *interviewee*

“It’s frustrating when people see physical impairment as anything other than a few logistical difficulties that I have to be creative with and find ways around. It doesn’t define my motivations, ambition and identity, so why should anyone have this preconception?”
- *interviewee*

Avoid showing unequal power relationships

When commissioning new imagery or selecting stock imagery, think about:

- Who is in the picture and what are they doing ?
- What is happening in the picture?
- What does it say about the relationship between those people? Does the image imply one individual has power over the other? Are you only showing white people or men in positions of power? Perhaps a wheel-chair user is being pushed without their consent? Are people from an easy-to-exclude group engaged in conversation or action, or are they in the background and not taking part?

Example: Stock image showing a business relationship whereby the woman is in a position of authority



Example: A man, rather than the woman, holds the child's hand in an image from Active Travel Act guidance / Canllawiau Ddeddf Teithio Llesol



Victimisation and unwanted heroising

Victimisation:

Avoid terminology or narratives that suggest disabled people are ‘victims’ and ‘suffering’ unless the aim is to shine a spotlight on barriers disabled people face and how to overcome them.

Unwanted heroising:

People such as disabled people or refugees should not be glorified for their achievements unless impressive regardless of their impairment or refugee status. Similarly, non-disabled people should not be heroised for supporting disabled people.

“The ‘hero’ rhetoric potentially undermines the perceived need to remove barriers in society for people who are disabled”

- interviewee

Briefing photo or video production agencies

If you are arranging photography or footage, consider having a call with your agency to discuss portrayal considerations beforehand.

Here is some [guidance](#) to inclusive imagery and photography.



Principle 4 - Authenticity

Does your communication come across as real and genuine?

Why does this matter?

Authenticity is vital for communications to come across as real and genuine. It is hugely important for building trust with easy-to-exclude audiences, many of whom have experienced prejudice and unfavourable treatment. It demonstrates that you understand your audiences, and their lived experiences, and helps people to connect with your communication.

What considerations should I be aware of?

- Co-creation and feedback
- Authentic settings and environments
- Using stock imagery
- Consistent communications
- Use case studies to tell real stories

How should I approach this?

Co-creation

To be authentic from the beginning to the end of a communications project, look for ways to involve real people throughout. Co-creation with people with lived experiences is central to making our communications authentic. This might entail workshops, interviews or surveys, or using relevant case studies.

“Have specialists and professionals from each of these communities feed into [the] piece of work.”

- workshop participant

Example: Welsh Government Teacher recruitment campaign / Ymgyrch recriwtio athrawon Llywodraeth Cymru

As part of a campaign to attract a more diverse teaching workforce, the Welsh Government worked on co-producing a campaign with a group of learners from Llanwern High School and Ysgol Glantaf. Their brief was to produce films to promote teaching as a career to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people.

The campaign featured a range of Welsh speakers (both teachers and learners) from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community, to ensure that there was a diverse representation of the Welsh language.

These are the four films produced by the learners to promote teaching as a career to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals and to highlight the importance of representation. Content and messaging were tested with community mentors and other ethnic minority contacts before finalising.

- [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Teaching Wales Stakeholder Toolkit \(Dropbox\)](#)
- [Teacher Case Study Films \(Dropbox\)](#)
- [Teaching Wales Showreel \(Dropbox\)](#)

Example: Sound / lawn

Launched in July 2023, Sound / lawn encourages men aged 18-34 in Wales to learn about gender-based violence, encouraging them to 'sound out' their relationships, behaviours, and thoughts with each other, to get 'sound advice' from sector-informed trusted sources and to embody the 'sound as' spirit of those they consider role models.

The campaign has co-creation at its heart, with groups of men from across Wales helping to shape and create the campaign, including young footballers from Cardiff, electricians from Ystrad Mynach, musicians from Carmarthenshire, and members of St Joseph's Boxing Gym in Newport.

The Welsh name for the campaign is lawn, which is not a direct translation of 'Sound' but has the same meaning conversationally in Welsh and has multiple uses, in the same way the English name does, and resonated with a bilingual Welsh audience. It was important that campaign content was as meaningful and relatable as possible, which is why some content was created in Welsh only or Welsh first - such as the Sound on the Street clips at the Eisteddfod, and videos with a rugby team based in Dolgellau and with Welsh band Los Blancos. These were groups where the Welsh language was most natural to them, and this was reflected in the content.

- [Sound x Sage Todz \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- [Sound x Connagh Howard \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- [Sound as: Cardiff Rugby team up with Sound to tackle toxic masculinity \(YouTube\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Authentic settings and environments

When producing images or video, seek to show people in their natural environment with minimal staging, and ensure people share their story in a natural way. Consider:

- Do settings in images or videos feel like real places in Wales? Think about housing, the views, weather and the streets.
- Are people wearing authentic clothing? Are they wearing clothes you see out and about?
- If there is audio, do they sound like the group they represent in real life?

Example: working with Children in Wales / Plant yng Nghymru to make the Budget Improvement Plan more engaging to a younger and wider audience

The design team worked closely with young people from Children in Wales / Plant yng Nghymru to make the Budget Improvement Plan more engaging to a younger and wider audience through an animated video.

During a workshop, the young people pointed out that a scene in a storyboard for the animation could look more “Welsh” so that it would resonate more with the viewer. After further discussion, the young people decided that the housing and weather in this scene should be changed (as seen in the before and after images).



Example: Nike's 'Nothing Beats a Londoner' campaign

Nike's 'Nothing Beats a Londoner' campaign was based on over 120 interviews and several workshops to ensure authentic audience representation at every stage of the project. The film also works hard to present a real representation of the places people live.

Nike - Nothing Beats a Londoner (Vimeo)



Using stock imagery

Resource constraints may mean you have little choice but to use stock imagery. Select images in line with inclusive principles on portrayal and representation.

As above, consider the setting and authentic environments - such as housing and scenery - that represent Wales. Be mindful that stock imagery is often produced in the US, so take special care in thinking about whether it can be used to represent people and places in Wales. For example, did you know that American Sign Language (ASL) and British Sign Language (BSL) are different languages – so take care and seek advice when planning to use stock imagery of sign language.

Remember, you can always talk to a member of the Welsh Government Design Team to get support and advice on image selection for your work. Contact: Design@gov.wales

“I was quoted for a telecoms company. But the picture was someone who looked radically different to me. You shouldn’t make assumptions.”

- workshop participant

Consistent communication

Consistency is also key for authenticity; one-off instances, such as celebrating awareness days without year-round support, may appear ingenuine. They may be considered as tokenism - making superficial, symbolic efforts that don’t create any real change or action.

Use the opportunities that awareness days provide, but in a meaningful way as part of a long-term plan.

Use case studies to tell real stories

Featuring real people with lived experiences will uncover unique stories and perspectives and make your communications feel real and inclusive.

“Understand the target audience’s culture, needs and challenges...be curious about other realities and people when not at work”

- workshop participant

Responsible and respectful sourcing

Willing case studies can be hard to find. When we secure good case studies, we need to maximise the opportunity and work with them in a respectful and sensitive way.

- **Explain what’s in it for them:** Asking case studies to share their experiences will not always be welcomed, particularly for groups that feel disengaged and ignored by society. Explain what is in it for them. Why are you asking them? What role will featuring their lived experience play in achieving the policy goal?
- **Always arrange photos and videos where possible:** Make the most of their limited availability, and capture a range of content.

- **Ask about reuse:** Some case studies might be relevant for multiple campaigns or communications. You will need to reconfirm their consent at a future point and always give them the chance to withdraw. Be careful not to overuse the same case study.
- **Keep them informed:** Asking people to share their lived experiences is not a one-way street. Sharing feedback about how the campaign is going and, where appropriate, the results can help to establish long-standing relationships.

Safeguarding your case studies

- **Make sure they feel in control:** Anyone who is identifiable should be given the chance to talk through potential consequences of this for them. Being a 'poster' person can be daunting. Ask them to complete a consent form so that they can advise of any support needed. Allow them to review how they are presented prior to distribution. You must advise they can withdraw at any time, even after the communications has gone live.
- It's also important to encourage case studies to relax and feel accepted when they speak Welsh – whatever sort of Welsh they have. It is OK if they switch back and forth between English and Welsh if it makes them more comfortable.
- **Do they need additional safeguards?** Some individuals, for example people within the trans community, experience significant threats of violence and so you may have limited opportunity to engage with real people or to use them as case studies. However, in the interest of inclusion, this should not be the default position. Consider what is possible provided you have a willing case study and robust safeguards in place.

For more information see guidance on safeguarding from the [National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#).

What if you can't find a suitable case study?

If you have made reasonable attempts to source a case study without success, capture the reasons why you think this is when reviewing your campaign (see [Inclusive Communications Record](#)). What needs to happen to connect with this group next time? How can better relationships be formed in future?

If a case study declines to have their image used, consider how detrimental this really is to the communications. Are there other ways they might be able to be represented through storytelling? If their contribution to the campaign is valuable, it is important that authenticity is maintained and they are not discounted because they don't want their image used. See [Using Stock Imagery](#) section for more guidance.

Principle 5 - Terminology

Have you used the right words to talk about and to your audience?

Why does this matter?

How we communicate with people, and address them, is hugely important. Using the right words and phrasing can help ensure people feel included and fairly treated.

What considerations should I be aware of?

- Being intentional about your word choices
- Welsh Government guidance on terminology

How should I approach this?

Being intentional about your word choices

Small adjustments to the words and terms we use can reduce stereotyping and offence, and make our communications more accessible and effective.

“Language is really important. There’s a lot of antiquated, unpleasant language used about disabled people”
- *interviewee*

Language should be understandable. Avoid jargon and technical language. And depending on the audience, be mindful of using turns of phrases that not all groups may know. Colloquial terms like bog-standard, chuffed, brolly or chinwag, while unlikely to be offensive, probably won’t be understood by people whose first language isn’t English.

Language evolves over time, so be prepared to re-think the language you use as new information becomes available.

You may be worried about making mistakes, but we are all learning together and there is always help available to ensure you use the right language - see below.

Welsh Government guidance on terminology

Using the best terminology, and avoiding offence, can seem challenging as sometimes there isn't agreement over specific language to describe under-represented groups.

But there is clear guidance in place for Welsh Government communications, including:

- We use the term 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic', along with 'ethnic minorities' as a short version, but never BAME.
- Welsh Government guidance on Promoting and embedding the Social Model of Disability says 'disabled person' or 'disabled people' is the appropriate way of describing people with impairments who are disabled by society. 'People with disabilities' or 'the disabled' should not be used.
- LGBTQ+: Refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual/bi, transgender/trans people, queer or questioning. Other letters can be added to the acronym to include other groups, orientations and identities, such as I (intersex) and A (asexual/aromantic). The + (plus) is used as a shorthand to include and acknowledge other diverse terms people identify with.
- If you are considering adopting a gender-neutral term as part of your campaign or communications work that is not already in widespread and common use, please consult the Head or Deputy Head of Communications before including.
- Use older person/people or older adult/adults instead of old person/people, elderly, pensioners, senior citizen/s, or OAP. The Older People's Commissioner for Wales has more information on [How to avoid ageism in communications](#).

“Don't use 'gay' as a catch-all term when you mean LGBTQ+ or you mean lesbian, gay and bi”
- interviewee

Where can I go for more help?

Use the language and terminology guides listed above. In addition, other useful sources for further help include:

- [Disability Wales inclusive language guide](#)
- [Social model of disability language guidance](#)
- [Welsh Language Race and Ethnicity Terminology](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales: Glossary of terms](#) (as well as the glossary, also consider this document a useful best practise reference for imagery and language)
- [Welsh language LGBTQ+ terminology](#)
- [TermCymru – the Welsh Government Translation Service’s termbase](#)
- [Yr Arddulliadur – the Welsh Government Translation Service’s style guide](#) (see articles on “Model Cymdeithasol o Anabledd” and “cenedl geiriau, rhyw a rhywedd”)
- [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan \(pages 17-18\)](#)
- [How to avoid ageism in communications](#)
- [Media guidelines on reporting ageing and older age](#)

Principle 6 - Accessibility

Can the audience access the communication?

Why does this matter?

Accessibility can mean lots of different things, but it is all about removing barriers and ensuring everyone is included.

In terms of inclusive communications, accessibility means ensuring your target audience can access, understand and engage with your communication: everyone is included and no one is left out of receiving your message.

What considerations should I be aware of?

- Prioritising accessibility from the start of a campaign
- Welsh Government guidance on communicating using accessible formats
- Ensuring events are accessible and inclusive

How should I approach this?

Prioritising accessibility from the start of a campaign

Accessibility should be built in from the start of a campaign or communication; creating accessible communications and campaigns help you reach more of your intended audience.

When considering accessibility of communications it is vitally important to consider the range of needs of the target audience.

Welsh Government guidance on communicating using accessible formats

Refer to the Welsh Government intranet for guidance on Communicating using accessible formats for how to use accessible formats to meet the needs of people across Wales when carrying out communications activities and campaigns.

The accessible formats covered by the guidance includes:

- Content in Plain English/Welsh
- Web content that meets web accessibility standards
- Large print
- Easy Read

- Audio
- BSL
- Braille
- Content in languages other than English and Welsh

The language/s chosen for communication purposes is also covered by the guide.

In 2023, the Government Communications Service published its [Guide to BSL translating and interpreting for public facing communications](#). Take a look at the guide for detailed advice and guidance on incorporating British Sign Language into your work from the start.

Other useful links for creating accessible communications include:

- [WCAG 2.2](#)
- [Accessibility standards for GOV.WALES | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Web accessibility guidance and standards](#)
- [GOV.WALES standards and guidance | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#)

Ensuring events are accessible and inclusive

If you organise events, attendees are likely to come from a variety of backgrounds and will have varying needs.

For advice and guidance on planning and holding an inclusive event that takes into account accessibility and diversity considerations in line with Welsh Government policies and values, refer to the Welsh Government intranet for Guidance on Organising Inclusive Events.

This covers:

- Ensuring diversity
- Bilingual considerations
- Considerations for deaf and disabled attendees, including those with visual, hearing, and mobility impairments.
- Accessibility for speakers and remote audiences
- Giving presentations and using videos



Inclusivity and the Welsh language

Why does this matter?

Cymraeg 2050 is the Welsh Government's strategy to promote the use of the Welsh language, with the goal to achieve one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Wales is a richly diverse nation, so to realise this long-term ambition it is essential that easy-to-exclude audiences have the opportunity to access and engage in communications in Welsh as well as English.

What considerations should I be aware of?

- Bilingualism: approaches to consider
- Screen readers, bilingualism and social media
- Terminology
- Casting

How should I approach this?

Bilingualism: Approaches to consider

There are three ways to use the Welsh language within communications. These are creative choices which should be determined by the aim, nature and purpose of the communication:

1. Complete translation - whereby both Welsh and English are provided side-by-side and at the same time.
2. Bi-lingual communication as peppered phrasing - whereby Welsh language words are interspersed with English and vice versa.
3. Bi-lingual communication as sentence interchange - whereby full Welsh sentences are used alongside full English sentences.

While some people claim that switching between two languages for words or phrases can be 'confusing', bilingual communication is essential for introducing audiences to both of Wales's official languages, Welsh and English. This blended approach allows audiences to experience both languages on a daily basis within the audience's channel of choice, which helps to build familiarity in an easy-going and undaunting way.

When creating bilingual versions of campaigns or communications, think about what will land well with Welsh-speakers – literal translations of phrases often used in Government communications do not resonate.

Bilingual audiences do not need to see the same thing twice, so think about how to engage well in Welsh without mirroring English phraseology. In a bilingual piece of communication, the tone of the Welsh could be more colloquial, refer to a different cultural touchstone, or say something different to the English which - while equally pertinent to the messaging - adds resonance that will allow the Welsh-speaker to feel included and considered fully.

The Welsh language isn't just about translation and bilingualism: it also shapes and intersects with speakers' characteristics and experiences. The approaches outlined throughout this guide will help you best represent, portray and reflect Welsh identities and speakers in your work.

Screen readers, bilingualism and social media

Assistive technology, such as screen readers, is a complex area for bilingual communication. Screen readers are programmed to detect a single language at a time. So if the screen reader is set to 'English' it will often mispronounce interspersed Welsh words and vice versa.

The Welsh Government is currently undertaking a project to make improvements in this area in line with the [Welsh Language and Technology Action Plan](#).

While these improvements are being investigated, in the interest of pursuing the goals of Cymraeg 2050, bilingual communication is encouraged throughout written copy, such as tweets. However, communicators should use English-only alt text for images that support communications that are otherwise bilingual.

Terminology

The correct terminology to use when speaking about or to easy-to-exclude audiences can be found in the following guides:

- [Welsh Language Race and Ethnicity Terminology](#)
- [Stonewall LGBTQ vocabulary \(Welsh language\)](#)
- [Welsh language Race and Ethnicity Terminology](#)
- [Welsh language LGBTQ+ terminology](#)
- [TermCymru – the Welsh Government Translation Service's termbase](#)
- [Yr Arddulliadur – the Welsh Government Translation Service's style guide](#) (see articles on “Model Cymdeithasol o Anabledd” and “cenedl geiriau, rhyw a rhywedd”)

Casting

In keeping with the inclusive communications principle of 'authenticity', it is important to seek out individuals who speak Welsh and who also represent the easy-to-exclude audiences that are relevant to your campaign, wherever possible (see Hate Hurt Wales campaign example on page 24).

Where can I go for more help?

Please contact Catrin Parri, Senior Adviser on bi-lingual communications - Catrin.Parri@gov.wales

Testing

Why does this matter?

Gathering feedback from audiences can help ensure our communications are inclusive, authentic and credible. This might be achieved through workshops, interviews, surveys or even creating a bespoke panel of people whom you can regularly lean on for advice and guidance throughout your project.

“If I had to only stress one thing, it’s to encourage people not to feel scared about asking. It’s better to ask someone how they would like to be included, rather than feel awkward and assume one thing and then get it wrong”
- interviewee

It also helps to remove subjectivity and enables you to develop an in-depth understanding of intersectional similarities and differences within an audience group.

What considerations should I be aware of?

- Access
- Relying heavily on one source
- A/B testing

How should I approach this?

Access

Access to audiences may seem challenging at times, but spending the time and resources on gathering this insight will result in more effective communications. You may want to allow extra time for sourcing this insight. It is worthwhile checking what is realistic with the agency you are working with.

Broadening your pool of connections, such as with organisations you do not usually work with, can help with access.

Combine insight projects across departments where possible, especially if it is with a community that has historically been disengaged or hard to reach, to make the most of their time and the time you have spent sourcing them.

Relying on one source

It can be tempting to repeatedly default to the same sources for feedback because they are easy to access, for example, through policy colleagues. But it is important to remember “a single community is not a monolith” (interviewee) and you may be missing out on valuable lived experience insights by not branching out your network of sources. This can also take the pressure off community representatives who already work with the Welsh Government and often give up a lot of time to contribute insights and feedback. So:

- Consider a range of sources for insight. This might include smaller organisations and community groups that you do not usually work with, as well as social media communities, colleagues, friends and family.
- Ensure source range is included in your agency briefs.

A/B testing

Testing different advert creatives through A/B testing can help determine the most effective approach for reaching easy-to-exclude audiences.

Improving our confidence and knowledge

Inclusive communications is complex and can seem daunting, so it is important that we support each other through knowledge and resource sharing:

- If you have received positive feedback or you have achieved good results, offer to present it as a case study to the wider team.
- Update colleagues on audience insight work before it takes place - not just the results. For example, if you are holding a workshop with members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and they are also a key audience for another department, a heads-up to your colleagues will give them the opportunity to get the insight they need, too. This also helps to make the best use of our audiences' often limited time, and reduces duplication.
- Share resources or tools as and when you come across them. For example, the X-Gov Comms and Marketing Group is a good forum to share best practice.
- Raise any issues. Your colleagues may have had a similar experience and will be able to help you find a solution. Or your feedback can be factored into improving processes in future.

Documenting inclusive communications

Documenting how you have applied the inclusive communications principles is important to help us get better in this area, by:

- Helping to ensure that all areas of best practice are considered
- Enhancing knowledge sharing of practices you have found useful with colleagues and partners
- Evidencing the reasonable measures you have taken with the resources available to you
- Acknowledging the barriers you have faced so that continuous improvements can be made

The Inclusive Communication Record should be updated at the beginning and throughout the implementation of your campaign or strategy to capture steps taken and barriers experienced along the way.

Inclusive Communication Record example

	Steps taken	Barriers
Audience relevance	Include here a short narrative on the actions you have taken on each of the principles in this column	Here include a note on any barriers or challenges you have faced. Also consider what you or the wider Comms Profession could do to help address these barriers in the future
Authenticity		
Accessibility		
Representation		
Portrayal		
Terminology		

What should I do with the Inclusive Communications Record once completed?

Once completed, please share your Inclusive Communications Record with Catherine Ashford, Deputy Head of Communications via catherine.ashford001@gov.wales to inform continuous learning, knowledge sharing and process improvement.

Responding to complaints or negative feedback

What to do if we ‘get it wrong’

By developing knowledge and understanding of inclusive communications and putting these steps into practice you are in the best position to avoid missteps. However, if the worst does happen:

- Consider whether it is something you really did get wrong or whether it is subjective. Consult your community connections. What do they think?
- Reinforce your commitment to inclusive communications and the steps you took and barriers you were unable to overcome as stated in your Inclusive Communications Record; and, if appropriate, apologise.
- Review whether anything can be done to correct it.
- Learn from it. Identify what went wrong and what could be done differently next time. Involve the community or person it relates to in the retrospective process.
- Share your learnings. It is tempting for mistakes to be cause for embarrassment. But mistakes should be shared among peers just as much as good examples of best practice as it prevents those mistakes from being repeated.
- Support your colleagues. DEI is a complex, subjective and nuanced area, so it is important that colleagues support each other when missteps are made. This is crucial for overcoming the fear of getting it wrong.

What to do when faced with criticism for not going far enough

Consider whether you made reasonable attempts to follow inclusive DEI best practice principles. If the answer is yes, then reinforce your commitment to inclusive communications and highlight the steps you took, the barriers you faced and attempts to overcome them as stated in your Inclusive Communications Record.

Reporting hate speech online

Freedom of opinion and expression are a basic human right. They are the pillars of free and democratic societies. These freedoms support other rights, such as to peaceful assembly, to participate in public life, and to freedom of religion. Therefore we need to take care when it comes to regulating online comments that are critical of matters related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

You can refer to [Welsh Government social media house rules](#), which set out what we will not tolerate. You can also get advice on what to do if you suspect content is breaking those rules directly from the Social Media Team at SocialMedia@gov.wales

Useful links

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Case study: communicating with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic business leaders, GCS, 2021 (<https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/media/media-case-studies/case-study-communicating-with-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-business-leaders/>)

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How To Do Representation in Marketing the Right Way, Hubspot, 2023 (<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/representation-in-marketing>)

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Avoid charity or inspiration porn: how to better represent disability in ads, The Drum, 2022 (<https://www.thedrum.com/news/2022/07/01/avoid-charity-or-inspiration-porn-how-better-represent-disability-ads>)

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