

Dr Andrew Goodall
Ysgrifennydd Parhaol
Permanent Secretary



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Andrew R.T. Davies MS
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16 June 2026

Dear Andrew R.T. Davies,

Thank you for your questions tabled on 3 June 2025.

You asked whether the Welsh Government would end the practice of positive action within recruitment processes, whether the Welsh Government have ever shortlisted a BAME candidate over a similarly qualified white candidate on the basis of race, whether the Welsh Government would publish Senior Civil Servant's anti-racism objectives and whether we intend to end the practice of providing unconscious bias training to staff.

As an organisation that develops policy and delivers services for the whole of Wales, the Welsh Government is committed to ensuring its civil service is representative of the diverse communities it serves. All recruitment is conducted in line with the Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles, which require appointment on merit following fair and open competition.

'Positive action' is a lawful provision within the Equality Act 2010 that enables employers to take proportionate steps to reduce disadvantage and address underrepresentation within their workforce, including targeted outreach and guaranteed interview schemes. These measures sit alongside, and do not override, the requirement for fair and open competition.

Positive action does not undermine merit-based appointment, nor does it limit opportunities for candidates who are not from underrepresented groups. In all cases, the highest scoring candidate will be appointed on merit, irrespective of their background, identity or circumstances. Used appropriately, positive action supports a level playing field by ensuring that all candidates have an equal opportunity to compete and demonstrate their skills within a fair, open and merit-based process.

However, positive discrimination—appointing someone solely because they have a protected characteristic—is unlawful.

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All Welsh Government recruitment and selection processes must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and ensure appointments align with the Civil Service Commissioner's principles of fair, open and based on merit.

You also asked whether the Welsh Government would list all anti-racist performance objectives assigned to our Senior Civil Servants (SCS). SCS performance objectives are agreed as part of the standard performance management framework and are tailored to individual roles and responsibilities. As part of this, our SCS are expected to demonstrate leadership on anti-racism, in line with Welsh Government priorities, our values and our commitment to the Anti-Racist Wales plan, put in place by the previous Welsh Government. Individual performance objectives and appraisals are between individuals and their line managers, supported by a confidential moderation process. While it would not be appropriate to provide a list of personal anti-racism objectives, an overview of the broad themes and activities covered could be provided if required.

To your final question relating to unconscious bias training, I can confirm that the Welsh Government's corporate learning programme does not include training on unconscious bias for staff.

Yours,
Andrew Goodall

Dr Andrew Goodall

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