



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Combined Annual Reports on Equality

2019-2020 & 2020-2021

Working for Equality in Wales

Contents

Ministerial Foreword	1
Chapter 1 – Introduction	2
Chapter 2 – Meeting our Equality Duties	4
Chapter 3 – The Welsh Government’s Strategic Equality Objectives	7
Chapter 4 – Evidence and Governance	16
Chapter 5 – Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme	22
Chapter 6 – COVID-19 Impact and Response	34
Annex 1 – Our legal duties	42
Annex 2 – Strategic Equality Objectives 2016 – 2024	44
Annex 3 – Summary of progress towards Equality Objectives	48

Note: All photos used with permission. All photos used were taken before the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions and regulations or are within the scope of the same regulations using technology to continue activity safely.

Ministerial Foreword

I am delighted to present the Welsh Government's Annual Reports on Equality for 2019-20 and 2020-21, covering the period between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2021. We have taken the decision to produce this report in view of the unprecedented events of 2020, to provide an overview of how the Welsh Government responded to the equality impacts of COVID-19, from the outbreak of the pandemic early in 2020 up to the end of March 2021.

This combined report bridges the fourth and final reporting period for our Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan for 2016-2020 and the first year of our new Plan for 2020-2024.

During this two-year period, the Welsh Government continued its work to champion equality and human rights in the face of increasing pressure on public services, ongoing austerity and work to prepare for Wales and the United Kingdom to leave the European Union.

We have continued to promote social justice and challenge discrimination. Our Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme funded seven key strands of work, all led by Welsh equality organisations. The programme is delivered across Wales, reaching into communities, representing and empowering people with different protected characteristics and supporting us in achieving our equality objectives.

I am grateful to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in Wales for their advice and support throughout this period. Their latest "Is Wales Fairer?" report, which looked at all areas of life in Wales, has proved to be a valuable and essential source of evidence to help us ensure our decision-making is robust and that our

policies and services take account of peoples' needs and are accessible to all.

COVID-19 has had a massive impact on individuals and communities across Wales, with very significant implications in relation to equality. I have therefore dedicated a chapter of this report to the pandemic and I hope you will see that we have given careful consideration to the needs of those with protected characteristics, as well as those who are marginalised in any way, as we develop our plans to combat this pernicious and deadly virus. The pandemic has exposed deep inequalities disproportionately affecting many people and communities. Recovery plans are predicated on the commitment to build back better for a fairer and just outcomes for the people of Wales.

Tackling inequality remains a clear priority for the Welsh Government. The drive for greater equality is built into the fabric of this Government and it continues to influence everything we do. I am proud we will be commencing the Socio-economic Duty on the 31 March 2021.

An important undertaking in 2019-20 was the work to complete, in discussion with our stakeholders, the Welsh Government's Strategic Equality Action Plan for 2020-2024. Work is well underway across the Welsh Government and with our partners to start to deliver the agreed actions and outcomes and some of this is reflected in this report. At the heart of all which is being done is our commitment to strengthen and advance equality and human rights in Wales.



Jane Hutt MS

Deputy Minister and Chief Whip

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This report, which covers two years from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2021, sets out how the Welsh Government has worked to fulfill its equality objectives during this momentous period.

When we work to support each other as a nation, we are far stronger and more able to achieve our shared goals. This has never been more important, as recent years have brought us a series of unprecedented challenges.

Together Stronger – this maxim guides our thinking as we work to empower and strengthen the links between individuals, communities, and communities of interest.

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

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

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

- The Strategic Equality Board;
- The Disability Equality Forum;
- The Faith Communities Forum;
- The Wales Race Forum;
- Wales Refugee and Asylum Seekers Taskforce;
- The Budget Advisory Group on Equality;
- The Strengthening Equality and Human Rights Steering Group.

All of these forums are chaired by Ministers or a senior Welsh Government official. Some of them are unique within the UK in the way they enable equality stakeholders to engage directly and regularly with the most senior levels of government on the issues that concern them. They have played a particularly important role in supporting the Welsh Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is described in more detail in chapter 6.

This report highlights some of our work during the period from April 2019 to March 2021 to create a more equal Wales.

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

The **EHRC report *Is Wales Fairer? 2018*** was published in October 2018 and provided substantial fresh evidence to drive and underpin the work of all policy makers and delivery agencies seeking to build a more equal Wales. The report has proved to be a valuable tool to help ensure our decision-making was robust and that our policies and services took account of peoples' needs and were accessible to all.

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

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

Chapter 2 – Meeting our Equality Duties



Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS with Members of the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Council for Wales, and John Griffiths MS

This report fulfils our duties under The Government of Wales Act 2006 and sets out what we have done to incorporate the statutory reporting requirements of equality legislation into our policies and practices, in particular the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the Welsh Specific Equality Duties.

The Government of Wales Act 2006 places a duty on the Welsh Government to have due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people. The duty further ensures that we give weight to promoting equality.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the public sector when carrying out its work, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

This duty is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), and also as the 'general duty'. In order for specified public bodies in Wales to better perform and demonstrate their compliance with the PSED, the Welsh Government legislated to bring in Welsh specific equality duties. These duties, which are set out in **Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011** (also referred to as the Welsh Specific Equality Duties) apply to specific Welsh public sector organisations as listed in the regulations, known as 'listed authorities'.

The Welsh Specific Equality Duties place responsibilities on the devolved Welsh public sector covering engagement, equality impact assessments, pay differences, procurement, equality and employment information, review and reporting arrangements. This report is published in accordance with regulation 16 of the 2011 Regulations to demonstrate Welsh Government's compliance with the general duty.

Programme for Government

Taking Wales Forward and our Well-Being Objectives

Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021 sets out the Welsh Government's programme to drive improvement in the Welsh economy and public services, delivering a Wales which is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, united and connected.

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

Additionally, we have published well-being objectives which set out how we will use the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 to help deliver our programme for government and maximise our contribution to the seven shared national well-being goals.

Taking Wales Forward and our well-being objectives complement and support our equality objectives. They strengthen the implementation of the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Welsh Specific Equality Duties by improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales in a sustainable way.



Caption: Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS and Jon Luxton, Special Adviser on Disability, meeting with staff and members of Disability Wales.

The Wider Picture

Many other Welsh and UK laws, as well as international treaties and conventions, underpin equality and human rights in Wales. This includes laws relating to particular aspects of life and work, such as employment, education, health or justice, as well as those relating to particular groups of people such as refugees, disabled people or children. It is important to remember that the Equality Act and Well-being of Future Generations Act are not the only relevant pieces of legislation.

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

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

The actions of the Welsh Government must be compatible with international obligations, as set out in Section 82 of the Government of Wales Act 2006, including the seven UN Conventions signed and ratified by the UK State party.

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

On 11 March 2019, the UN Committee on CEDAW published its Concluding Observations www.tbinternet.ohchr.org/. The Concluding Observations contain a list of recommendations for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to take forward over the next 4 years:

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

Chapter 3 – The Welsh Government’s Strategic Equality Objectives



Members of the Race Council Cymru Windrush Group with Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the Welsh Government’s Equality Objectives in the two years covered by this report. The report bridges the periods covered by two Strategic Equality Plans, for 2016-2020 & 2020-2024, each with its own set of objectives. There was, however, considerable overlap between these set of objectives and a lot of activity continued or evolved from one period to the next.

The strategic objectives for both plans are set out in full in Annex 2. This chapter includes some examples of the activity which has been undertaken to achieve these objectives, focused on the two years covered by this report (2019-20 and 2020-21). More examples relating to both sets of objectives are provided in Annex 3, while activity supported by our key

Equality and Inclusion Funding programme is described in Chapter 5.

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

COVID-19 impacted greatly on almost all the work being undertaken to fulfil these objectives, delaying some work but also generating new activity to reduce the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged groups and promote equality during this unprecedented period. The Welsh Government’s response to Covid in relation to equality is outlined in more detail in Chapter 6.

Overview of the Welsh Government's Strategic Equality Plans

Our Strategic Equality Plans set out:

- The legal basis which underpins them;
- The main evidence relating to equality and human rights in Wales which influenced their development – drawing heavily on research and the Equality and Human Rights Commission reports *Is Wales Fairer?*;
- A series of actions which we aimed to deliver, to support the aims and objectives in each plan.

Each plan covers a four-year period.

This report relates to the final year of the plan for 2016-2020 and the first year of the plan for 2020-2024. The new Strategic Equality Action Plan for 2020-2024 gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-04/strategic-equality-plan-equality-aims-objectives-actions-2020-2024.pdf was published in April 2020. There is substantial continuity between these two plans and their aims are largely similar, but there are also important changes as well as fresh activity from year to year.

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

At the heart of the 2020-2024 plan there are three main elements: Aims, Objectives and Actions.

- **Long-term Aims.** These aims are about strengthening and advancing equality and human rights in Wales which we expect to remain relevant beyond the period covered by this plan.
- For each of these long-term aims, we have set a single, Welsh Government Equality **Objective** for 2020-2024. These objectives relate more closely than the long-term aims to the role and powers of the Welsh Government. They are a statutory requirement and support the Welsh Government to meet their Public Sector Equality Duties.
- Underpinning each of these Objectives are a number of measurable **Actions** which demonstrate how the Welsh Government will achieve its objectives.

Examples of Key Actions to Support Our Equality Objectives

NOTE: The strategic objectives are set out in full in Annex 2, with additional examples at Annex 3. See also Chapter 5 for information about the Equality & Inclusion Programme.

Developing a Race Equality Action Plan for Wales (SEP 20-24, Objective 1)

In our new Strategic Equality Plan we committed to developing a Race Equality Action Plan. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement following the killing of George Floyd in the USA has added impetus to this work. The Race Equality Action Plan has been shaped by the lived experience of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and has drawn in as wide a range of voices and perspectives as possible.

The Race Equality Action Plan is:

- Grounded in a recognition of the need for fundamental change and reflect our commitment to listen to Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and take action to make that change in ways that are tangible to Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.
- Developed through co-construction with Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and drawing in as wide a range of voices and perspectives as possible.
- Guided by evidence drawn from the testimonies of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people of their lived experiences, data highlighting areas of racial disparity and the huge body of evidence in the form of previous reports, public inquiries and other recommendations for change.

- Inclusive/broad-based, encompassing both issues which impact on all groups, such as structural and systemic racism, addressing the interests of specific communities and intersectionality by considering the issues relevant to particular groups including women, disabled people, young people, older people, LGBTQ+ people, and religious and non-religious groups.
- About achieving sustained change to make a difference in the short term, medium and long term.

The plan, which will be owned by the whole of Welsh Government, will be launched for consultation in March 2021, reflecting our commitment to address structural and systemic racism.

Pride Cymru 2019 (SEP 16-20, Objective 1)



Pride Cymru parade 2019 in Cardiff

The Welsh Government provided funding of £21,121.72 to support the annual Pride Cymru Event in Cardiff on 23-25 Augus 2019. Pride Cymru is a volunteer-led charity that works to promote the elimination of discrimination be it on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender, race, religion or ability.

Pride Cymru is committed to promoting and raising awareness of the issues affecting the LGBT+ community to work to develop a society free from hate crime, discrimination and prejudice.

Regional Advice Network (SEP 16-20, Objective 2)

Encouraging the development of Regional Advice Networks has been one of nineteen actions contained within Welsh Government's current Information and Advice Action Plan.

Six Regional Advice Networks have now been put in place, covering the following regions; North Wales, Mid & West Wales, Swansea Neath Port Talbot, Cwm Taf Morgannwg, Cardiff & Vale and the Gwent region.

The overall aims of the Regional Advice Networks are to ensure that advice providers, planners and funders work together to offer people in need of advice more joined-up services and to ensure that the resources invested are being used to create most impact.

Regional action priorities have been identified by regional network members and include issues such as mapping advice providers, putting in place improved referral procedures, sharing training, including training to support the wellbeing of service providers, and gaining greater insight into what matters to people using advice services.

Regional stakeholder engagement events took place in July 2019, from which steering group members were recruited. Regional Advice Network steering groups took place in October 2019, with inaugural meetings of full members occurring in November and December 2019 and then quarterly on an ongoing basis.

Apprenticeships (SEP 16-20, Objective 3)

The Welsh Government has worked to ensure that Apprenticeships are accessible to all by focusing on the following areas of activity:

- Increasing participation of protected groups in apprenticeships;
- Instigating a culture change on the programme to embrace diversity;
- Working with key partners to ensure that apprenticeships associated with ICT Infrastructure delivered programmes address and support those with protected characteristics.

We have continued to take forward actions in the Inclusive Apprenticeships Disability Action Plan published in December 2018. The practical actions set out in that plan have seen a year-on-year increase in the number of disabled apprentices, reaching 6.9% in 2019.

The practical actions within the plan that were developed under a number themes have

continued. The themes were: Marketing and raising awareness; Role Models; Incentives/ Motivations; Flexibility of Entry and Exit Criteria; Data and disclosure; Transition onto Apprenticeships; Support for Individuals; Support for Employers; and Support for Providers.

We continue to fund the National Training Federation for Wales (NTFW)'s Equality Champion who hosts regional Equality and Diversity meetings for our apprenticeship providers with guest speakers from third sector organisations such as Chwarae Teg, Ethnic minorities and Youth Support Team (EYST), the National Autism Team Wales and many others.

We also developed changes to eligibility criteria introducing flexibilities for people with learning disabilities undertaking Essential Skills Qualifications.

VAWDASV (SEP 16-20, Objective 4)

The new statutory anti-bullying guidance 'Rights, Respect, Equality' was published in November 2019. The guidance was updated to take full account of all relevant legislation and policies and was subject to formal public consultation before being finalised and published.

We continue to support Anti-bullying Week, including funding the development of bilingual resources for primary and secondary

schools in Wales to support and implement activity during Anti-bullying Week 2020. We worked with the Anti-Bullying Alliance to develop and deliver a collective cross-country (Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland) anti-bullying week campaign 'United against Bullying' and 'change starts with us' for anti-bullying week 2020.

Diversity & Inclusion Strategy for Public Appointments in Wales (SEP 16-20, Objective 5 & SEP 20-24, Objective 7)

This strategy was developed in 2019 and launched by the Deputy Minister & Chief Whip on 27 February 2020. The Strategy represents a significant milestone for improving the diversity of our public leaders in Wales. It outlines the strong moral, legislative and business case for diversity and inclusion and intends to build on the good work already undertaken by Boards. Broadly there are five goals:

- to gather better data (particularly diversity data), and get the right information from that data;
- to build a robust public appointment pipeline based on inclusion;
- to ensure that we have open and robust and potentially new types of public appointment assessment processes;

- to ensure Board members are fully knowledgeable and aware of equality and diversity, particularly in relation to their role and that of their organisation; and
- to strengthen leadership in relation to inclusion and diversity.

The Strategy is focused on regulated Boards only, but with the hope, and intention, it will encourage non-regulated bodies and others to adopt good practice.

Initially, the strategy will focus on helping disabled people and those from ethnic minority backgrounds to obtain public appointments. However, the work will cover all protected groups.

Community Cohesion in Rural Areas (SEP 16-20, Obj 6 & SEP 20-24, Objective 6)

Through the 'Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020' we have encouraged and supported improved conditions for migrant workers and job security through up-skilling. We have also worked to improve ICT literacy and transport access for disadvantaged groups living and working in rural Wales including ethnic minority groups.

The RDP also contains a Measure for Basic Services and Village Renewal. This was principally delivered via the Rural Community Development Fund (RCDF). Under RCDF the Welsh Government offered grants for eligible interventions designed to prevent and mitigate the impact of poverty in rural

communities improving conditions which can lead to future jobs and growth. This can include transport and digital inclusion actions designed to broaden access to employment and training opportunities.

Since the start of the RCDF scheme in late 2015 there have been a total of seven Expression of Interest (EOI) rounds. There was a range of thematic options available to address problems associated with access to services, digital exclusion, fuel poverty and in-work poverty.

The projects approved are currently under implementation. No further activity is planned under this programme.

Rewriting the Future & PDG (SEP 16-20, Objective 1 & SEP 20-24, Objective1)

The Welsh Government has worked to raise the academic attainment of learners from deprived backgrounds through implementation of strategies set out in **Re-writing the Future** and its revision, (the Welsh Government's overarching policy for improving the outcomes of pupils from deprived backgrounds) and an extended Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG).

We remain committed to the PDG for the remainder of this Senedd-Cymru term. This long-term commitment will enable schools to make sustainable, long-term decisions on investment that help identify and address barriers to learning early.

Year on year, we have extended the PDG. It now supports even more of our most vulnerable learners. As well as the free school meals element; the PDG suite now includes looked after children, those in the early years, those in pupil referral units and Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) provision.

We commissioned Children in Wales to produce a suite of guides for schools covering key aspects in addressing the cost of the school day, including understanding the causes and impact of living in poverty, food and hunger, and school uniforms and are available on Hwb (School children and parent accessible information portal).

Affordable Housing (SEP 16-20, Objective 1 & SEP 20-24, Objective 1).

The Welsh Government has committed to provide 20,000 additional affordable homes in this term of Government, with the largest proportion of this being social homes. We have provide grant funding for affordable housing through the Social Housing Grant (SHG) Programme.

All social housing schemes are required to meet Development Quality Requirements (DQR) Standards, including Lifetime Homes, in order to receive grant funding.

The schemes delivering 20,000 affordable homes provides opportunities for all to live in quality homes and provide the support needed to ensure people can sustain their tenancies and thrive. By providing quality homes with secured tenancies, we can positively impact on health, mental health and education of those living in them

We are confident we will exceed the 20,000 affordable homes target by the end of this government term. High level, national provisional statistics for 2019-20 were published on 3 February 2021 and show that 2,940 additional affordable housing units have been delivered across Wales.

Whilst there is a lag in data, Welsh Government statisticians are confident the 20,000 affordable homes target will be exceeded by March 2021. Officials statistics for 2020-21, which will be reported in autumn 2021, which will demonstrate that the target has been met. Any target beyond 2021 will be determined by the next government.

BSL Charter (SEP 20-24, Objective 1)



First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford MS delivering a BSL interpreted Coronavirus Update, part of a move to more inclusive Welsh Government Communications practise.

One of the commitments in our Framework 'Action on Disability: The Right to Independent Living' is to develop a BSL Charter for Wales.

We have recently funded the British Deaf Association to undertake an audit of our BSL policies and provision in the Welsh Government.

This work commenced in February 2021 and will conclude in July 2021. The audit will assess the Welsh Government's policies and services; provide a series of recommendations to inform an action plan; and outline a set of proposals for ongoing engagement with the Deaf community.

As part of the audit process the British Deaf Association will be arranging an engagement event with the Deaf community in Wales to ensure that Deaf people have an opportunity

to express their views, and share their experiences, of accessing services provided by the Welsh Government. This will ensure the involvement of as many Deaf people in the planning/action stages, as part of our co-production values.

The BSL audit will provide a strong basis to consider how BSL support services in Wales might be improved and how BSL skills might be enhanced.

Once the audit process is complete the Welsh Government anticipate signing up to the British Deaf Association's BSL Charter. As an organisation this will allow us to lead by example and promote good practice in accessible communications to other organisations and businesses right across Wales.

Age Friendly Wales (SEP 16-20, Objective 1 & SEP 20-24, Objective 3)

Age Friendly Wales: Our Strategy for an Ageing Society, sets out the action we will take to prepare for the future. To reflect the multi-dimensional nature of ageing, we have worked across government departments to address the range of factors that influence how we age – from our health and transport systems to the way we socialise, work and care for others.

The strategy aims to change the way we think about ageing. By acknowledging

and valuing the contributions of all older people in Wales, we aim reject ageism and work across generations to create an age friendly Wales.

The planned launch of the public consultation (March 2020) was delayed due to the pandemic, however, a public consultation was launched in Dec 2020 and will close at the end of March 2021. A final version of the strategy and a supporting action plan will be published in autumn 2021.

Gender Equality (SEP 20-24, Objective 4)

The Advancing Gender Equality in Wales plan was published on March 10, 2020. This is the first phase implementation plan for the Gender Equality Review and set out our priorities for the short, medium and long term. The aim of the Advancing Gender Equality in Wales plan is to ensure that all policy areas controlled by Welsh Government take account of the intersecting needs of citizens in Wales when developing and implementing policy and practice. A shift in focus from equality of opportunity to equality of outcome will be the key to achieving

the vision and our goals for a gender equal Wales.

The majority of direct activity on the plan has been paused due to the need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have continued with our gender budgeting pilot and ensured our equality impact assessments have been part of the COVID-19 response and recovery decision-making. We are reviewing the plan in early 2021 which will be an opportune time to reflect any changes in activity arising from disproportionate impacts of the pandemic.

Welsh Government leading by example (SEP 16-20, Objective 8 & SEP 20-24, Objective 8)

We took account of user needs for the re-procurement of new ICT services in 2019. As part of its routine review of IT provision across the Welsh Government estate, officials in Digital Data and Technology (DDaT) ICT Services liaised with interested Protected Characteristic Groups within the Welsh Government to ensure appropriate IT provision was procured, provided and rolled out. A number of individuals have been

provided with assistive technology to assist in their working lives. In addition, the recent roll out of new Lenovo laptop hybrids across the Estate has enabled officials to work in a number of flexible ways, including homeworking (both formally and informally). Appropriate workstation equipment has been made available at pace during the COVID-19 outbreak where required.

Chapter 4 – Evidence and Governance

Introduction

This chapter sets out how the Welsh Government gathers and uses evidence to inform and support its work to promote and safeguard equality. This includes an outline of how a COVID-19 Equalities Impacts Repository was developed and an update on the impact assessment of the Welsh Government budget.

The chapter also includes a section on our procurement policy.

The Equality Evidence Base

In order to give proper consideration to the aims set out in the general duty, we need to have sufficient evidence of the impact our policies and practices are having, or are likely to have, on people with different protected characteristics.

Between 2019 and 2021, we published a wide range of statistical outputs, which helped to inform us of the effect our policies are having, and where we need to do more. They also enabled our stakeholders to identify where further progress is required and to hold us to account. The Welsh Government publishes its statistics at gov.wales/statistics-and-research. Some of these statistical outputs include:

- Well-being of Wales: 2019 and 2020 reports.
- Update to Future Trends report supporting slides.
- Equality & Diversity statistics.
- Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019.

- Analysis of protected characteristics by area deprivation: 2017 to 2019.
- Coronavirus and employment: analysis of protected characteristics.
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Black, Asian and minority ethnic population in Wales, and
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the impact on Disabled people in Wales.

This information, as well as further guidance from our statistical teams, was used to inform our Equality Impact Assessments; our advice to ministers regarding proposed new policies or changes to policies; and contributions to Committee inquiry sessions. We constantly endeavour to improve arrangements for identifying and collecting equality information, wherever practical and cost effective.

In order to enhance our equality information we undertook the following activity:

Well-being of Wales report

As part of our commitment to provide an update on progress of the 7 well-being goals we released a new version of our Well-being of Wales report. This includes a chapter on 'A More Equal Wales', which comprises a summary of the most up to date equality related statistics applicable to Wales.

Availability of disaggregated data

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

Accessibility of equality evidence

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

Publications on religion and disability

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

Research on strengthening and advancing equality and human rights in Wales

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

Impact of Wales' exit from the EU on vulnerable communities

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

Development of a COVID-19 Equalities Impacts Repository

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

Equalities Evidence Unit(s)

COVID-19 has highlighted the need for robust, available data and evidence on minority groups such as Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and people with impairments in Wales. The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic socio-economic sub group (established to advise Welsh Government during Covid-19) recommended the implementation of a Race Disparity Unit to help address these data/evidence concerns.

Research is being undertaken to explore what the options are for a Race Evidence Unit, a Disability Evidence Unit and/or an Equalities Evidence Unit in Wales. The scoping research involves a series of interviews with

UK Government Departments equality units/centres; workshops and/or interviews with wider stakeholders and interviews with Welsh Government staff from both the policy profession and analytical professions.

The research is exploring what is important to stakeholders in an evidence unit(s), what enablers will help the unit(s) be successful and what is feasible given the practical barriers. The unit(s) will aim to address a range of improvements in the collection, analysis and use of equalities evidence to inform policy development and implementation. The hope is the established unit will collaborate with the communities it has been set up to support, mainstreaming considerations of equality evidence throughout the Welsh Government's policy cycles.

Equality Impact Assessment of the Budget

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

We also remain committed to reviewing our approach to assessing impacts.

On 21 December 2020, we published an updated **Budget Improvement Plan**¹ as part of the 2021-22 Draft Budget package, building on the first Plan published in December 2019. The Plan outlines our vision,

¹ gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/2021-2022-budget-improvement-plan.pdf

including short-term and medium-term ambitions over the next 5 years, to improve our annual budget and tax processes, including proposed improvements to assessing the impact of Budget decisions.

As part of this ongoing work, and reflected on Pages 4 and 5 of the latest Plan, during the periods 2019-20 and 2020-21 we commenced and progressed a range of improvements to Equalities considerations, including:

- Commencing a '**gender budgeting**' **approach** as part of a two year Personal Learning Accounts pilot launched in September 2019, in response to the Welsh Government's Gender Equality Review. We presented a summary of the pilot's early results in a case study as part of the 2021-22 Draft Budget narrative² and allocated an additional **£5.4m** to support the Welsh Government's decision to roll out the PLA offer across Wales from September 2020.
- Taking forward work, following engagement with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, to explore the **distributional impact of spending on devolved public services in Wales**, to understand the impact of public spending decisions on households in different parts of the income distribution. We published our initial analysis³ in December 2020, as part of the 2021-22 Draft Budget package.

- **Improving our approach to supplementary budgets** by prioritising our financial response to COVID-19 during the course of 2020-21 and protecting the most disadvantaged in our society from the wider impacts, including people with protected characteristics. Details are set out in the supplementary budgets published during the course of 2020-21⁴.
- Continuing to develop the **Strategic Integrated Impact Assessments (SIIA) of the Draft Budget**. In the 2021-22 Draft Budget we included details of the impacts of specific spending decisions as part of the main narrative on budget allocations in chapters four and six to enhance transparency. This was complemented by a summary of the contextual evidence that informed these strategic spending decisions, including evidence about the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic by different protected characteristics. We also presented detailed case studies on the impacts of specific spending decisions to better demonstrate how assessment is undertaken in more detail.

² gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/2021-2022-draft-budget-narrative.pdf

³ gov.wales/distributional-analysis-of-devolved-public-spending-in-wales

⁴ gov.wales/welsh-government-budgets#id_2020to2021

Procurement

Public service bodies in Wales spend around £6.7 billion each year on buying goods, services and works from suppliers. It is important every pound is spent wisely, achieving best value for the people of Wales.

Fulfilling the Procurement Duty in Our Welsh Specific Equality Duties

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

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

Our Procurement Policy

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

We have recently engaged with stakeholders to develop a revised WPPS (WPPS 2021) which will be launched in March 2021.

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

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

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

- ensuring key policies such as social value is built into contracts;
- simplifying the procurement process and lowering barriers for suppliers;
- ensuring equality is addressed appropriately at supplier selection stage;

- advertising contract opportunities through the Sell2Wales website; and
- completing a Sustainability Risk Assessment (SRA) when planning a procurement to ensure public contracts consider their equality duties when contracts are discharged.

Wales is working collaboratively to address risks of slavery and promote ethical employment in public sector supply chains. At the time of this report, over 304 organisations have now signed up to the Code of Practice on Ethical Employment in Supply Chains. Signatories include 55 public sector bodies and 229 private and 20 third sector organisations from a wide range of different markets. This work is being developed further with plans to place statutory duties on public bodies to deliver social value through procurement.

Mainstreaming and Embedding Equality within Procurement – Results

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

- Applying the Sustainability Risk Assessment to all Welsh Government contracts over £25,000, ensuring equality duties are considered and action taken in contracts where appropriate and an Equality Impact Assessment completed.
- Applying Community Benefits clauses in appropriate contracts to deliver employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged people and target educational support across communities in Wales from our suppliers.
- Signing up to the Code of Practice for Ethical Employment in Supply Chains and adopting best practice in our procurements.
- Reviewing our standard documentation to ensure specifications and contract documents meet best practice.

Chapter 5 – Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme



Participants in the EYST Mentoring Programme

The Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme – provides a strategic and coordinated approach to deliver advice and support to citizens and community organisations throughout Wales across a range of key equality and inclusion issues.

The programme supports the Welsh Government's Equality Objectives 2016-20 and protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010; it consists of a grant for representative organisations and Inclusion Projects for three specific areas of work.

We have published a programme summary document at Equality and inclusion programme: 2017 to 2020 gov.wales/equality-and-inclusion-programme-2017-2020 which provides details of the services delivered under the programme and relevant contact details.

We collaborated with our partners, including seven lead agencies for the programme, to provide support across Wales in relation to gender (WEN Wales); disability (Disability Wales); Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (TGP Cymru); refugees and asylum seekers (Welsh Refugee Council); sexual orientation and gender identity (Stonewall Cymru); race (EYST) and hate crime (Victim Support Cymru).

Summary of the funding committed in 2019-20:

Organisation	Allocation
Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST)	£120,000
Stonewall Cymru	£150,000
Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales	£120,000
Disability Wales	£243,062
Inclusion projects	
Victim Support Cymru	£247,265
Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru	£183,962
Welsh Refugee Council	£426,000
TOTAL	£1,490,289

Summary of the funding committed in 2020-21:

Organisation	Allocation
Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST)	£120,000
Stonewall Cymru	£175,000
Stonewall – LGBT+ Action Plan	£10,902
Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales	£145,000
Disability Wales	£350,000
Disability Wales – Covid Response Fund	£200,000
Disability Wales – Social Model – Schools, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning Support	£15,000
Inclusion projects	
Victim Support Cymru	£279,600
Victim Support – Additional European Union Transition Fund	£180,000
Victim Support – Additional Support	£5,040
TGP Cymru	£205,000
Welsh Refugee Council	£456,000
TOTAL	£2,141,542

We took steps to improve the quality of the performance monitoring data collected by the organisations funded by the Welsh Government's Equality and Inclusion Programme. We met with each organisation individually, to assist them in developing more outcome focused performance measures. For example, this included organisations

obtaining information regarding the percentage of individuals who, following the advice and support they received, know more about the services and support available to them and feel their voices are more likely to be heard. The impact of several streams of this programme are outlined below.

Race

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

Welsh Government funding for this organisation has enabled EYST to undertake action in support of the following objectives:

1. Engage and consult Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities on matters which affect them;
2. Represent Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities on relevant Welsh Government stakeholder groups;
3. To showcase, unite and amplify voices for racial equality in Wales.

EYST has supported four regional Black, Asian and minority ethnic networks in Swansea, Cardiff, Newport, and Wrexham with diverse representation of individuals to work with Regional Coordinators in each region to deliver regular engagement events for Black, Asian and minority ethnic people.

In addition, EYST has continued to provide advice and support to grassroots organisations by signposting to EYST's sister project – the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Skills project (which is supported by the National Lottery Community Fund in partnership with the County Voluntary Councils in Swansea, Cardiff and Wrexham). EYST has also played a key role in the development of our draft Race Equality Action Plan.

Gender



Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS with WEN Wales staff and WEN Wales conference using technology for Covid safety.

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

1. Gain a greater understanding of the needs and experiences of women and girls in Wales to help inform national policy;
2. Promote and raise wider awareness of women's rights and the issues that affect them and empower them to make informed choices;
3. Represent women and girls on key relevant Welsh Government stakeholder groups (including collating and disseminating research evidence);
4. Help to deliver a more diverse pool of decision makers in public life and public appointments by identifying and address barriers to engagement and participation for women.

WEN Wales connects with its network of members to capture the needs and lived experiences of women and girls in Wales to ensure their voices are heard. It uses the information and evidence gathered to help inform its response to consultations and its engagement with policy makers, both at a Wales and UK level.

WEN Wales runs a mentoring programme to help get more women – and more diverse women – into public life. The scheme helps participants develop a range of skills, tools and knowledge to prepare them for a role in public life through a programme of training days, workshop sessions, mentoring and peer to peer support. Achievements of the 2019-20 mentees included being elected as local councillors, becoming Board members and successful completion of a political party selection process.

WEN Wales delivers a number of events for International Women's Day (IWD) across Wales each year to celebrate achievements and address issues which affect women and girls. In order to widen the coverage and ensure everyone can participate in IWD, WEN has developed a downloadable toolkit www.wenwales.org.uk/wp-content/2020.pdf which provides individuals and organisations with practical ideas and resources.

In 2020-21 over 600 people have attended WEN Café virtual events, established in the wake of COVID-19 in March 2020. WEN Café is a space for bringing together women's voices to explore issues and share solutions on a number of themes related to inequalities exposed by the pandemic. A feedback survey showed that after attending WEN Café events, attendees felt more empowered to speak out on issues, more able to influence, and more informed on women's rights.

WEN is expanding the reach of its coalition across Wales and across age groups. For the first time, WEN has worked with schools and youth groups for International Women's Day in 2021. WEN produced a toolkit filled with activities and resources to support teachers and youth workers in celebrating IWD, challenging gender stereotypes, and calling out gender bias and sexism with their classes and groups.

Gypsies, Roma & Travellers



Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS attends an event for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

TGP Cymru, is a Registered Charity which provides support and advocacy for children, young people and families in Wales.

Travelling Ahead provides advice, support and individual and community advocacy working alongside Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families on issues such as accommodation, sites, planning, rights and accessing services. The project has three broad aims, with actions to underpin each objective.

- 1 – Advice and Advocacy;
- 2 – Rights and Participation; and
- 3 – Tackling Discrimination.

A Freephone Advice line **0808 802 0025** is operational weekdays. The number has been disseminated via leaflets, drop cards, word of mouth through regular outreach and engagement sessions, events, and via networks including social media and partner directories. Travelling Ahead's Engagement Team provide an outreach service regularly visiting sites and community settings; face-to-face and word of mouth referrals remain the most popular way to make contact for communities.

The Travelling Ahead project continues to work to ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are aware of, and have opportunities to participate in, consultations and advocacy opportunities, have their views heard, and to engage with policy makers and service providers on issues affecting the communities at a Wales or a UK level if appropriate. They have been very engaged in the development of our Race Equality Action Plan. Their youth forums provide opportunities for young people to come together with decision makers alongside community groups and peer research projects (on site development, education, improving health services for example). Positive representation through the Wales Youth Parliament and cultural activities also support the communities. Travelling Ahead works with organisations including the unique National Youth Forum and developed Wales' first 'Gypsy Stars' choir made up of young and old from the Roma community.

Travelling Ahead has been tasked with improving community confidence in reporting, challenging racist incidents, hate incidents, hate crime and hate speech. Working with partners such as Victim Support to raise awareness of hate crime reporting methods and support available through the advice service, developing a specific poster, and making stronger links with police force hate crime officers through engagement and training.

Hate Crime

[illegible]

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

Welsh Government funding has been provided to Victim Support Cymru for an All Wales Hate Crime Report and Support Centre. The project has three broad aims, with actions to underpin each objective.

1. Supporting Victims
2. Enhancing Engagement
3. Promoting Leadership

The service provides practical and emotional support to victims of hate crime and incidents in Wales and can provide assistance to victims such as help with case information, personal and home security devices and alarms, immediate and ongoing emotional support with specialist caseworkers, Police

advocacy and updates, housing advocacy and supporting letters, liaising with schools, colleges and universities, as well as online support modules via My Support Space and signposting and referrals to specialist agencies.

The Training and Engagement team are responsible for raising awareness about hate crime, increasing reporting of hate crime and increasing visibility of the service. They deliver free training sessions and work closely with partners in their area to engage communities.

In 2019-20 the service delivered 111 online sessions, training 1175 people across Wales ranging from public sector, private companies, third sector organisations and community members.

In 2020-21 Victim Support Cymru processed 2,195 referrals of Hate Crime and provided support to 562 victims of hate crime. They were able to maintain a consistent service throughout the early stages of the pandemic and started delivering support online via Skype and telephone.

They also published a report www.victimsupport.org.uk/sites/default/files/CYP_affected_by_hate_crime_in_Wales_English1.pdf into the current services available to Children and Young People affected by Hate Crime in Wales.

During Hate Crime Awareness Week 2019, Victim Support Cymru worked with Crimestoppers Wales to launch a national campaign to raise awareness of Hate Crime and reporting – Speak up Wales

- stop hate crime www.crimestoppers-uk.org/campaigns-media/campaigns/speak-up-wales-stop-hate-crime | Crimestoppers (crimestoppers-uk.org)

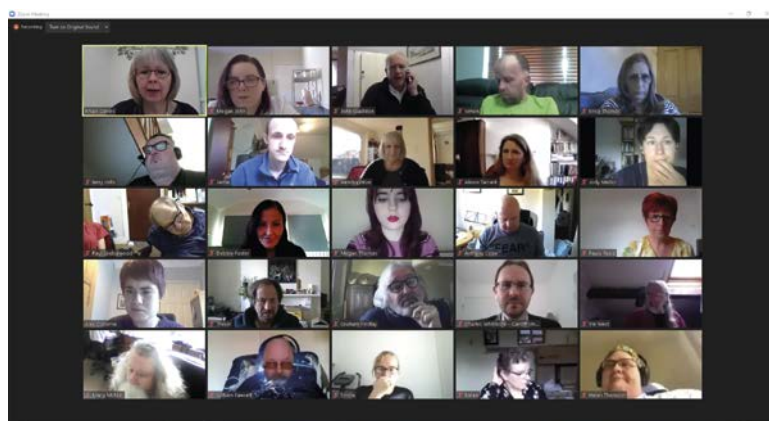
In 2019-20 they launched the Victim Support Hate Crime Charter www.reporthate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime-charter/. The Charter brings to the forefront the rights of victims and communities when hate incidences and crimes take place. It lays out in detail the rights of victims, and the commitments of organisations playing a part in tackling hate crime, providing support and information for victims, and to raise awareness of hate crime within agencies and the communities that they work with.

So far, over 30 organisations have signed up to the Charter including Local Authorities across Wales, Welsh Police Forces, Universities and colleges

across Wales, third sector organisations, the Welsh Government and many more.

In 2019-20 and 2020-21, Victim Support Wales switched to online training and developed sessions that could be delivered in an effective and interactive way. It launched a series of new resources in the summer of 2020 to help continue to raise awareness of hate crime throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. This included a Hate Crime Toolkit, Factsheets for each protected characteristic, a series of videos about how to report, what to expect from Victim Support and introduction to the team and Online Hate Crime posters.

Disability



Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS attends a Disability Wales conference in 2019 while in 2020 Disability Wales makes use of technology to hold a Covid-free meeting.

Disability Wales is the representative body for disabled people and their organisations in Wales. This includes working with the Welsh Government and other public bodies to ensure the views of disabled people are heard.

Equality and Inclusion Programme funding has been used by Disability Wales to support the delivery of the key Welsh Government's commitments linked to our Action on Disability Framework and Action Plan which was published in September 2019.

Disability Wales were also awarded £72,000 of European Transition Funding to deliver a capacity enhancing EU Exit support programme for Disabled People's Organisations and their stakeholders throughout Wales. They have also been awarded the contract to deliver an Access to Elected Office Fund pilot project which will be providing support for disabled candidates in both the Senedd and Local Government elections.

Disability Wales also played a key role in the development of *Action on Disability: the Right to Independent Living*, (see below), with the Chief Executive chairing the Steering Group which oversaw the development of the new framework.

Action on Disability: the Right to Independent Living

Our Framework – ‘Action on Disability: The Right to Independent Living’ was published on the 18 September 2019. The Framework has been co-developed through engagement with disabled people and the organisations that represent them.

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

Disabled people told us that local action is crucial, so the Framework is designed to strongly encourage Welsh Public Services, employers and organisations at every level to take note and take action.

It sets out the principles, legal context and commitments which underpin all our work with, and for, disabled people. It sets out how we are fulfilling our obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

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

Below is a selection of activity carried out by Disability Wales which has been possible owing to the funding provided through the Welsh Government Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme.

Disability Wales delivered 12 events to 371 participants in 2019-20 across Wales aimed at equipping disabled people and their organisations with the knowledge and skills to promote disability rights and equality and challenge discrimination in their local area. On average over 60% of participants stated that their knowledge of disabled people’s rights had improved as a result of attending DW events.

In 2020-21, Disability Wales launched a digital media project #LockdownLife, which involved nine disabled people using tablets and smart phones to capture their thoughts and daily life during lockdown. Participants represented the diverse community of disabled people from across Wales and shared some of the challenges they faced as well as their tips for managing the restrictions imposed by lockdown.

The videos were professionally edited and shared widely on social and mainstream media. These achieved thousands of views and impressions, helping to provide a platform for voicing disabled people’s experiences, particularly when many were shielding and generally feeling overlooked.

The production of Bring us our Rights: the Disabled People’s Manifesto provided another platform for disabled people to come together and highlight the barriers faced daily in society. Over 200 people contributed through online focus groups and surveys.

LGBT+



First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford MS and Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS with members of the LGBT community in Wales.

Stonewall Cymru has been awarded grant funding to act as the representative body for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) people in Wales. This includes working with the Welsh Government and other public bodies to ensure the views of LGBT people are heard.

The funding is provided to enable Stonewall to:

1. Engage with LGBT Communities
2. Empower LGBT people and allies
3. Amplify LGBT voices
4. Strengthen advice, information and advocacy services

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

Stonewall has been working to reach out to LGBT organisations and groups across Wales to support them in the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and to better understand the challenges they are facing as a result of the crisis. They are then representing these views and issues in their engagement with the Welsh Government as they respond to the pandemic, ensuring that LGBT voices are heard and included.

In February 2020 they delivered the Stonewall Cymru Workplace Conference, which supported organisations across Wales to create LGBT inclusive workplace environments.

They were also able to deliver several training programmes in January-February 2020 through this grant, including two education train the trainer programmes that equip teachers with the skills to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and create LGBT-inclusive environments in their school.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers



Members of the Welsh Refugee Council at the Senedd Cymru, and during a workshop session at Welsh Refugee Council.



The Welsh Government has allocated £1.065m to the Asylum Rights Programme (ARP) for 3 years, April 2017-21, to provide support services to Refugees and Asylum Seekers. The programme is delivered by a consortium of third sector agencies, led by the Welsh Refugee Council (WRC).

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

1. Strengthen the skills, capacity and support for asylum seekers and refugees to build a life in Wales, encouraging participation and understanding of the wider community;
2. Supporting and enable the asylum seeking & refugee community to have a voice;
3. Awareness raising of migration issues amongst the general public.

ARP Caseworkers have delivered 4381 casework sessions to 961 clients across the four dispersal areas of Wales since March 2020. The main focus of their work is as follows:

- Preventing homelessness and destitution.
- Providing hardship support and advice.
- Making referrals to relevant statutory services regarding safeguarding and wellbeing.
- Liaising with the Home Office, legal representation and other key stakeholders.
- Providing advice and support to people living in Penally Camp in Pembrokeshire.

Asylum Justice have continued to provide legal support to hundreds of asylum seekers who are unable to access Legal Aid support from other sources. Many of their clients are 'Appeals Rights Exhausted' (ARE) and need support with submitting fresh claims however, they have also been extremely busy with appeals, family reunions and getting the 'no recourse to public funds' restrictions lifted. The work of Asylum Justice is invaluable as it is often the last hope for legal support for many vulnerable asylum seekers in Wales.

Since the Advocacy Forums went online in May 2020, there has been in excess of 170 people attending. The topics discussed with relevant representation have included education, healthcare, vaccinations, Home Office, accommodation, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Asylum Rights Programme and the Welsh Refugee Council continue to be figural members within the Welsh Refugee Coalition. The Coalition is a mechanism for driving the Welsh Government's 'Nation of Sanctuary Plan' throughout its membership.

Migration policy is not devolved, so solutions to some important issues lie with the UK Government. We are working with the Home Office and other UK Government departments, as well as Welsh stakeholders, to improve conditions in Wales.

Chapter 6 – COVID-19 Impact and Response



Health and Social Services Minister, Vaughan Gething MS leads the way in the Black, Asian and minority ethnic community – receiving his COVID-19 Vaccine.

From early in 2020, the Welsh Government has worked closely with partners and stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors to do all we could to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. All our lives have been affected by the virus, in many ways, but it has impacted disproportionately on some groups in particular, including disabled people, Black, Asian and ethnic minorities and the poorest people in Wales. The risk of widening inequality were and remain very real.

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

This chapter contains a flavour of the main actions taken by the Welsh Government, in relation to equality, to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 up to the end of March 2021.

Disability Equality Forum

We hugely value the support and guidance Welsh national disability organisations provided to Welsh Government and to communities across Wales, and we were in regular contact with a number of these organisations with mechanisms in place to capture information and emerging issues.

Throughout the pandemic, the Disability Equality Forum has provided opportunity for stakeholders to advise the Welsh Government on the key issues that affect disabled people in Wales. Concerned about the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on disabled people, the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip asked members of the forum to

produce a report on the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people in Wales. The draft report is the outcome of several months of evidence gathering, sifting, analysing, writing and debate.

The Report was written by Prof. Debbie Foster of Cardiff University and co-produced with the Disability Equality Forum and a small Steering Group. The draft report was presented to the Forum for discussion on 27 January 2021.

Accessible Communications

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that all Welsh citizens are informed and aware of how to follow rules and stay safe during this pandemic – that is why we have ensured the presence of a BSL interpreter at our COVID-19 news conferences. Large print and braille are available on request alongside other accessible formats on key products such as the shielding letters from the Chief Medical Officer.

We have set up an Accessible Communication Group to discuss and overcome the barriers stopping people from accessing information during this time.

This Group includes a wide range of organisations, who have testified to the difficulties that those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, with learning difficulties or are autistic experience when trying to access clear and concise information during the coronavirus pandemic. The Group also includes organisations who represent refugees, children and the Gypsy, Roma Traveller communities.

Although having a live interpreter at public broadcasts is a good starting point, we acknowledge that there is much more that needs to be done. Providing more information in plain English and Welsh, producing content in British Sign Language (BSL) and in an 'Easy Watch' format, and making better use of videos and QR codes are all suggestions currently being considered and implemented by the Welsh Government.

We have made an active effort to improve the accessibility of our Covid-19 communications, which you can see, for example, in the suite of accessible materials available for resources such as our Test, Trace, Protect campaign.

Employment

The Minister for Economy, Skills, Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates MS, made a COVID-19 employability commitment, initiating the step changes necessary to remove barriers being faced by the most disadvantaged seeking employment. This will ensure that young people aged 16-24, disabled people, people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, women and those most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic will be prioritised to receive employability and skills support.

We recognise that employers play a crucial role in this, and our messaging to employers on the importance of inclusive recruitment and retention of disabled employees will be central to our work going forward.

That is why we have developed a comprehensive package of support for employers which includes an online tool-kit, which was launched on the 3 December 2020 to coincide with International Day of Disabled People; and established a network of Disabled People Employment Champions.

As part of the COVID-19 employability commitment, we have increased the number of Disabled People's Employment Champions that we are recruiting from three to six. This will allow for greater collaboration with business leaders, HR professionals and employer representative bodies across Wales.

The aim of this support package is to provide practical advice and guidance to employers by signposting support and resources. Moreover, the role of the Champions will be inspirational with the aim of dispelling any misconceptions surrounding the employment of disabled people and give employers in Wales the tools they need to remove barriers by applying the social model of disability in their own workplace.

Advice Services

The Welsh Government introduced the Single Advice Fund to help meet the increasing demand for access to advice services and ensure that it is grant funding strategically planned, cost effective advice services that provide seamless access to all the advice and other support a person requires to sustainably address their social welfare problems.

Through the Single Advice Fund, over £10m of grant funding has been made available for the provision of information and advice services during the period 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2021. The available funding has been allocated between six regional services and a national remote advice service.

At the start of the stay at home period, the Single Advice Fund providers transferred their face-to-face advice services to remote channels, i.e., telephone, email, web chat. It was a mammoth undertaking by the providers to transfer their services, but in

doing so, they ensured people could still get the advice they need.

The Single Advice Fund service delivery model includes Advice and Access Partners. Access Partners are a wide range of national and local organisations who reached out to their service users and local community groups to ensure people understood how they access the remote services to get the advice that they need.

The Single Advice Fund services are still reaching key target groups. 82% of people accessing advice in the stay at home period identified themselves as having a protected characteristic, which is comparable with the pre-crisis level of 83%.

However, for some people remote services are not suitable as a method of accessing advice, for example, due to access to affordable and useable digital connectivity, or through communication or health reasons. We continue to work with Citizens Advice Cymru and their Single Advice Fund partners to ensure that people who have struggled to access remote services will be able to safely access the advice they need as restrictions ease.

Race

In March 2020 the First Minister requested urgent work be taken forward to investigate the disproportionate adverse impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and ethnic minority people.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the Welsh Government has worked in close partnership with communities across Wales, to gather the evidence and data to understand the contributory factors and possible solutions.

A Black Asian and Minority Ethnic COVID-19 Health Advisory Group in Wales, chaired by Judge Ray Singh CBE, was established to oversee the investigation into this issue. Two sub-groups were set up to focus on:

- the workforce risk assessment issues and any additional safeguards that might be appropriate chaired by Professor Keshav Singhal;
- the wider socioeconomic factors that might influence poorer COVID-19 outcomes in Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups and possible remedial actions, chaired by Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna; and
- a Social Care Implementation sub-group (SCIG) to specifically ensure the social care sector's needs, social care workers and those working across social services were also engaged in the developments to protect health and Social care staff during the pandemic, and that the social care sectors aspect were taken in to account with the developing Covid actions.

A key element of the work was to support implementation of All Wales Risk Assessment Tool (AWRAT) into social care. Its outputs included:

- Reviewed relevant workforce data – 64000 workers of which 4.3% BAME and range of employers (many SMEs); considered how this workforce would be engaged with the all wales risk assessment tool (AWRAT);
- It analysed and drew conclusions about the impact on BAME and social care workers of Covid where it differed from other workers;

- It built a base of understanding of practice in the social services and care sector encouraging feedback about the sector response prior to the AWRAT availability. (eg Swansea and good practice approach);
- Provided feedback about implementation to evaluative report.

The First Minister published a response to Professor Ogbonna's Socio-economic Sub-Group report in September 2020. As the report outlines, work is well underway to address the recommendations and the Race Equality Action Plan for Wales will provide a crucial vehicle for some of the medium and longer term recommendations made in the report.

The work of the COVID-19 Socio-economic Sub-Group has been extraordinary in its pace and in its impact. The group remains in place to contribute to the Race Equality Action Plan, and ensure the needs and experiences of Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities are heard.

In recent months the Socio-economic Sub-Group have raised concerns related to the experience of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in relation to the Test, Trace, Protect system, the furlough scheme and Census 2021.

C-MEAG

A COVID-19 Moral and Ethical Advisory Group (C-MEAG) for Wales was rapidly established at the outset of the pandemic. It co-ordinates multiple sources of guidance to ensure they meet ethical standards, reflect the rights and needs of all communities across Wales. The group reports to the Chief Medical Officer and sponsoring Ministers.

The aim of the C-MEAG structure is to ensure that risk of unfair discrimination towards any part of the community is reduced or removed by ensuring that officials have the right input from relevant experts including from communities more likely to be adversely impacted by COVID-19 and the emergency response.

A Funerals, Burials and Cremations group was established under the C-MEAG, in order to bring together the wide range of ethical, faith and cultural viewpoints to enable access to specific requirements around death rituals. This group's scope has evolved and now stands as a Ceremonies Group, independent of the C-MEAG (but still informing it and other groups). This group and has been critical in the development of the work around re-opening places of worship. Marriage and funeral matters.

Community Cohesion

We have invested an additional £1.52m of funding into the Community Cohesion Programme between April 2019 and March 2021 to increase the capacity of the regional cohesion teams across Wales. We have extended this funding for an additional three months to June 2021.

The expanded programme supports ongoing work around hate crime, enabling greater engagement with local communities and greater capacity to deliver work to foster good relations and support those affected by prejudice.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our Community Cohesion Programme has played an integral role in our prevention work, working with key partners such as the Police, to monitoring and mitigate community tensions across Wales.

Faith/Belief

Religion and belief are important factors in promoting community cohesion and this has been especially true during the pandemic. This is why the Welsh Government is committed to working with faith communities to continue to foster and promote shared values and understanding across communities across Wales.

Faith leaders meet with the First Minister and the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip through the Faith Communities Forum which, like our other equality forums, met more frequently during 2020. Faith leaders across Wales have taken pro-active steps to ensure that Government and Public Health advice is adhered to across the faith communities. They have worked closely with the Welsh Government, providing advice and guidance on how to ease the restrictions in a safe way. This is a testament to the strength of both the Faith Communities Forum and the Interfaith Council in Wales.

In addition, a Welsh Government group has been convened to help develop guidance on burial, death rituals and funerals. It includes a broad array of faith leaders, community representatives (including representatives of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities)

and Welsh Government officials. The group met regularly during the early phase of the pandemic, to consider the guidance, how it applied to faith groups and address ongoing and emerging issues.

This group was officially disbanded and a new group with similar membership established in August 2020 which continues to advise on burials and funerals but now also considered other ceremonies, such as marriages. A Task and Finish group has been established from representatives of the Faith Communities Forum to support us developing guidance on the phased reopening of places of worship. It has met regularly since 1 June 2020.

Gender

The Gender Equality Review reports were published in September 2019 by Chwarae Teg along with contributory reports from Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) and Dr Alison Parken. These reports set out recommendations for the Welsh Government and others in Wales to advance gender equality in the short, medium and long term. As a result, we published our first phase implementation plan, 'Advancing Gender Equality in Wales' in March 2020.

Early in the pandemic, Chwarae Teg and Dr Alison Parken reviewed the Gender Equality Review Roadmap in the context of COVID-19 to highlight impacts and, with support from Welsh Government policy officials, provided updates on the impacts.

The majority of wider, more direct activity on the Gender Equality Review plan has been paused due to the need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, equality impacts – including those on women have been part of the COVID-19 response and recovery decision-making.

The Welsh Government remains committed to the Gender Equality Plan and will review the plan early this year, which will be an opportune time to reflect any changes in activity arising from disproportionate impacts of the pandemic.

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are known to experience profound health inequalities. Research by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission reports life expectancy some 10 years less than the national average, for instance. Incidence of respiratory and cardiovascular conditions that may influence COVID-19 risk are known to be higher for Gypsies and Travellers.

The settings within the majority of sites makes self-isolation extremely difficult and raises the risk of transmission. Access to basic services including deliveries and internet access is poor across many sites.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in March, the Welsh Government established regular meetings of an expert stakeholder group to provide us with advice and recommendations. This group consists of third and public sector organisations working directly with communities and has linked in with public health, education, transport and other officials throughout the pandemic. Welsh Government officials have also convened a number of meetings with colleagues in England and Scotland in order to share best practice.

The Welsh Government has issued updated guidance to all Local Authorities across Wales, to provide information on practical means to support those living on sites and at the roadside.

In addition to facilitating group engagement with health officials within Welsh Government and Public Health Wales to inform the development of Test, Trace, Protect systems for Gypsies and Travellers, the Welsh Government has co-produced the first Welsh edition of the Travellers Times, which provided health messages to the community and featured some of the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers living in Wales during the pandemic. Copies have been distributed widely across sites in Wales.

LGBTQ+

Even before a global pandemic, we knew that LGBTQ+ communities were more likely to experience inequalities across a range of outcome areas.

This disadvantage is also further compounded when the specific needs and vulnerabilities of being LGBTQ+ intersect with other protected characteristics including age, race, sex, gender, religion and disability⁵.

In light of COVID-19, emerging international and domestic evidence also suggests LGBTQ+ people have faced additional barriers in being unable to access healthcare services as a result of the pandemic and are at increased risk of violence, abuse, homelessness, lower employment, social isolation and loneliness⁶. This means there are broad and deepening human rights concerns for LGBTQ+ people in Wales and across the world.

Stonewall Cymru has worked remotely with their clients and has provided as full a service as possible. It is inputting into broader equality impacts work by submitting evidence briefing and feeding back in relation to impacts.

The Welsh Government remains committed to protecting human rights principles in our response to the pandemic. This is why our recovery framework has given a priority focus to securing prosperity, health and wellbeing based on the principles of fairness, equity and social justice. This means our recovery must also look to the longer term and give special attention to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of our most disadvantaged groups, including LGBTQ+ communities.

Migration

Our EU Citizens' Rights Project and Immigration Advice Service are supporting EU Citizens in Wales who may be concerned about their status within the UK or be experiencing barriers to equality of opportunity.

The disruption caused by COVID-19 has had an impact on the delivery of this service, particularly advice services who are currently only able to deliver limited face-to-face appointments. The service has operated via telephone and webinar but it has not been as effective a delivery method as hoped. However, there has been good progress through webinars hosted in languages from the home countries of EU Citizens.

A targeted digital promotional campaign is being undertaken to encourage further engagement and applications to the EU Settlement scheme. The campaign began December 2020 and will run for 20 weeks, initially in 31 European languages.

⁵ LGBT Foundation (2020) *Hidden Figures: The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on LGBT Communities in the UK*

⁶ EHRC (2020) *How coronavirus has affected equality and human rights*

Advice services provided by Citizens Advice Cymru and Settled are now operational until the end of March 2021 which will aid clients who have been waiting for documents to be updated or renewed by embassies and consulates to support the EUSS applications.

Equality Impact Assessment

There has been a considerable effort from across Government and in collaboration with stakeholders to understand the impacts arising from COVID-19 and the measures the Welsh Government has decided to put in place to respond.

The Welsh Government published the approach to easing lockdown restrictions in *Leading Wales out of the coronavirus pandemic: a framework for recovery* on 24 April and *Unlocking our society and economy: continuing the conversation* on 15 May.

These documents embody the Welsh Government's commitment to ensuring decisions to ease lockdown restrictions will seek to deliver a '*high positive equality impact*'.

We have published impact assessments of the measures to manage COVID-19 covering the 21-day reviews. These can be found at gov.wales/impact-assessments-coronavirus.

Further impact assessments relating to coronavirus legislation and guidance will be published in due course.

Annex 1 – Our legal duties

The Equality Act 2010 – The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 (the 2010 Act) replaces previous anti-discrimination laws for England, Scotland and Wales with a single Act.

The Act protects people from discrimination because of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

These categories are known as the 'protected characteristics'.

The 2010 Act also introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which has three overarching aims. Those subject to the duty must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The aim of the PSED is to ensure that those subject to it consider advancement of equality when carrying out their day-to-day business. For the Welsh Government this includes shaping policy, delivery services and in relation to our employees.

The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 (the regulations)

In Wales, the public bodies listed in Part 2 of Schedule 19 to the Equality Act 2010 are subject also to specific duties found in the Regulations. These Regulations are also known as the Welsh specific equality duties.

The Regulations can be found here:

www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2011/1064/contents/made

'Listed authorities' refers to public bodies listed in Part 2 of Schedule 19. Where we have referred to the 'Welsh public sector' or similar, we are referring only to those bodies listed in the schedule and subject to the Welsh specific equality duties.

The listed authorities can be found here:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/schedule/19/part/2

The aim of the Welsh specific equality duties is to enable the better performance of the PSED. They do so by requiring, for example, the publication of equality objectives together with equality impact assessments, engagement requirements, progress reports, collection of data and more. The equality objectives must, at their core, seek to address inequalities related to the 9 protected characteristics specified in the 2010 Act.

Regulation 16: Annual reports

Chapter 1 of this report fulfils partial compliance with regulation 16 of the Regulations that provide for the Welsh specific equality duties, requiring the Welsh Ministers to publish a report each year setting out how they are complying with the specific duties.

Chapter 1 includes a number of progress statements outlining how we are complying with the specific duties, including those regarding engagement, equality evidence and equality impact assessments.

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

The Government of Wales Act 2006

The duty in section 77 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act") requires Welsh Ministers to make appropriate arrangements to help ensure that their functions are exercised with due regard to the principle of equality of opportunity for all people.

This duty further emphasises the importance that Ministers place on mainstreaming equality in their work and ensuring it is given due consideration when making their decisions. The duty under the 2006 Act ensures that we give weight to promoting equality, as well as meeting our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Chapter 1 of this report includes examples and case studies outlining how we have exercised our functions with due regard to the principle of equality of opportunity for all.

Annex 2 – Strategic Equality Objectives 2016 – 2024

Our Equality Objectives strengthen our efforts to fulfil the three requirements of the general duty and help us to work towards a more equal Wales. They outline our commitment to removing the barriers which limit opportunities and hinder aspirations. They seek to address long standing, deeply entrenched and often inter-generational inequalities for those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

We published our eight Equality Objectives in March 2016 following extensive engagement with stakeholders across Wales. We re-examined these objectives in 2019 and consulted on the successor plan for the next four years, taking our action to mainstream equality up to 2024. The objectives for both the 2016-2020 and 2020-2024 plans are shown below.

Links to both plans are also added here for convenience.

Equality plan and objectives:
2016 to 2020 | GOV.WALES
gov.wales/equality-plan-and-objectives-2016-2020

Equality plan and objectives:
2020 to 2024 | GOV.WALES
gov.wales/equality-plan-and-objectives-2020-2024

Welsh Government Equality Objectives 2016-2020

WG Equality Objective 1:

Put the needs, rights and contributions of people with protected characteristics at the heart of the design and delivery of all public services, in particular health and mental health services, education, housing, social services and transport. Specifically ensure support and tackle barriers to enable disabled people to enjoy their right to independent living and have voice, choice and control in their lives.

WG Equality Objective 2:

Ensure the adequate provision of high quality, accessible advice, information and advocacy services to enable people with protected characteristics to understand and exercise their rights and make informed choices.

WG Equality Objective 3:

Identify and reduce the causes of employment, skills and pay inequalities related to gender, ethnicity, age and disability including closing the attainment gaps in education and reducing the number of people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

WG Equality Objective 4:

Reduce the incidence of all forms of harassment and abuse, including (but not limited to) violence against women, hate crime, bullying, child abuse, domestic abuse, and abuse of older people.

WG Equality Objective 5:

Deliver a more diverse pool of decision-makers in public life and public appointments by identifying and addressing barriers to engagement and participation for people from diverse backgrounds.

WG Equality Objective 6:

Strengthen community cohesion by fostering good relations, inclusion, mutual respect and understanding within and between communities across Wales.
Equality Objectives 2016-2020.

WG Equality Objective 7:

Reduce poverty, mitigate the impacts of poverty and improve living conditions for those groups most at risk of living in low income households, particularly disabled people, lone parents, certain ethnic minority groups, and families with disabled children.

WG Equality Objective 8:

Welsh Government will aim to be an exemplar in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda by 2020.

Welsh Government Equality Objectives 2020-2024

Long-term Aim 1: Elimination of inequality caused by poverty.

WG Equality Objective 1:

By 2024, we will improve outcomes for those most at risk of living in low income households, particularly those with protected characteristics, by mitigating the impact of poverty, improving opportunities and reducing the inequalities experienced by those living in poverty. *[Measured through a range of data, including that relating to HBAI (Households with below average income)].*

Long-term Aim 2: Strong and progressive equality and human rights protections for everyone in Wales.

WG Equality Objective 2:

By 2024, we will complete investigations into ways the Welsh Government can ensure an integrated equality and human rights framework which promotes equality of outcome and opportunity and can help eliminate discrimination for all groups of people with one or more protected characteristic.

[Measured through the work of the Advancing and Strengthening Equality and Human Rights Steering Group.]

Long-term Aim 3: The needs and rights of people who share protected characteristics are at the forefront of the design and delivery of all public services in Wales.

WG Equality Objective 3:

In order to work towards fostering equality of opportunity and outcomes for all in Wales we will continue to ensure the Welsh Government has implemented the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Welsh specific equality duties in all we do and work to encourage other Public Sector organisations to follow our example. By adopting an approach based on removing barriers which prevent people fulfilling their potential (including, for example, equality of pay, or following the example of the Social Model of Disability), we will create better policy and better services for everyone.

[Measured through improved PSED reporting arrangements and changes to Welsh specific regulations.]

WG Equality Objective 4:

We will begin to deliver the vision and principles of the Gender Equality Review.

[Measured through the development of the Report and Roadmap for embedding feminist principles across Welsh Government.]

Welsh Government Equality Objectives 2020-2024

Long-term Aim 5: Elimination of identity-based abuse, harassment, hate crime and bullying.

WG Equality Objective 5:

By 2024, we will ensure victims who experience abuse, harassment, hate crime or bullying as a result of having one or more protected characteristics have access to advice and support to live without fear or abuse.

[Measured by monitoring of hate crime reporting, services delivered by Victim Support, School-based counsellors, monitoring of bullying reports, National Survey responses about fear of crime / victimisation.]

Long-term Aim 6: A Wales of cohesive communities that are resilient, fair and equal.

WG Equality Objective 6:

WG Equality Objective 6: By 2024, we will develop a monitoring framework to measure progress towards community cohesion and foster good relations between all groups, building on our existing policies and interventions.

[Measured by increased metrics in the Well-being of Future Generations National Indicators and the Home Office Indicators of Integration].

Long-term Aim 7: Everyone in Wales is able to participate in political, public and everyday life.

WG Equality Objective 7:

By 2024, we will increase the diversity of decision-makers in public life and public appointments, exploring areas where further action is needed to ensure greater balance of diversity among decision-makers and identify and investigate mechanisms to redress inequality.

[Measured through the % of individuals from protected groups securing decision making roles within public and political roles.]

Long-term Aim 8: The Welsh public sector leads the way as exemplar inclusive and diverse organisations and employers.

WG Equality Objective 8:

By 2024 the Welsh Government will be an exemplar employer, increasing diversity, removing barriers and supporting staff from all backgrounds to reach their potential, creating equality of opportunity for all.

[Measured through employment and recruitment diversity data and the Annual Equality Report.]

Annex 3 – Summary of progress towards Equality Objectives

In this Annex you can find more information on a selection of activities helping to achieve each of the Aims and Objectives set out in our Strategic Equality Plans for 2016-2020 and 2020-2024, in addition to those highlighted in Chapter 3 of the main

report. There were numerous actions assigned to each of the objectives; the examples below only provide a snapshot of activity and do not reflect the full range of actions carried out in this period.

A. Strategic Equality Action Plan 2016-2020

Objective 1: Service design and delivery

Older People's Rights

We launched our carers and older people's rights campaign on 21 November 2019, with the support of national older people's organisations, to raise awareness of older people's rights. The supporting advertising element of the campaign was completed before the UK entered lockdown.

We have noted about our new Strategy for an Ageing Society that is rooted in the principle of co-production and is placing older people at the forefront of Welsh Government policy making.

In light of the pandemic we are re-visiting the strategy's development to ensure that consideration is given to how services have changed and what they look like for all older people going forward.

We also worked with Social Care Wales to co-produce practical guidance on how Local Authorities can have due regard to the UN Principles on Older Persons and commissioned Swansea University to update the Guidance on Escalating Concerns on Closures of Care Homes.

Objective 2: Advice and advocacy

Access to Advice Services

The Welsh Government published its Social Welfare Law Information and Advice Action Plan (IAAP)

gov.wales/social-welfare-information-and-advice-action-plan

llyw.cymru/cynllun-gweithredu-ar-gyfer-gwybodaeth-chyngor-am-les-cymdeithasol in December 2016. The aim of the plan is to develop strategically the provision of accessible and quality assured social welfare information and advice services throughout Wales.

The Welsh Government is working collaboratively with the National Advice Network (NAN) (Wales), advice providers, funders and commissioners to encourage a multi-agency approach to the progressing of the actions within the IAAP.

The plan is a live document and on an annual basis the NAN review progress being made and make appropriate recommendations to the Welsh Government. At their meetings held in October 2019 and January 2020, the NAN reviewed the Action Plan and noted good progress continues to be made in several areas within the plan.

These include the:

- implementation of the Information and Advice Quality Framework;
- introduction of the Single Advice Fund which is funding strategically planned, cost effective and integrated advice services across the whole of Wales;
- establishment of six Regional Advice Networks across Wales ensuring available advice resources within a region are being used as effectively as possible; and
- the development of outcome measures to capture the links between successful advice interventions and the well-being goals in the Well-being and Future Generations Act 2015.

Objective 3: Employment and skills

Employability

2019-20 has seen a sharper focus on monitoring the impact of the Employability Plan and the progress on tackling unemployment, economic inactivity and skills levels of those with protected characteristics and those further from the labour market.

This includes action in relation to our Employability Plan gov.wales/employability-plan and progress on tackling unemployment, economic inactivity and skills levels of people with protected characteristics and those further from the labour market.

This includes development of a data set to monitor impacts and progress through labour market statistics, and working with specialist organisations to understand how to minimise the barriers preventing people with protected characteristics from entering and progressing within sustained employment.

Policy leads across Government have reviewed current and future provision, ensuring it meets the needs of those most disadvantaged in the context of the long term economic and labour impacts of the on-going public health crisis, rising poverty levels, automation, an aging population and the UK leaving the EU at the end of 2020.

Going forward there will be increased emphasis on meeting the needs of those most disadvantaged in the labour market and meeting employers' recruitment needs in order to adapt to what is expected to be a challenging competitive labour market.

Other key deliverables include:

- Working Wales, the new employability advice service for Wales was launched in May 2019 to reduce the complexity of our existing employability delivery model for young people and adults.

It delivers a single, all-age entry point to employability support that is more responsive and flexible to better meet the needs of unemployed people, under-employed people and streamline and complement regional and community level delivery.

- We have improved financial support for higher education and part time learning through a new package of student maintenance grants and loans enabling students, regardless of age, or household or family income, to access higher education.
- Personal learning Account pilots commenced in September 2019 to support an estimated 1,000 employed adults in low paid and low skilled work to switch careers or enter employment at a higher level in priority sectors.
- The Childcare Offer for Wales provides 30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, for up to 48 weeks of the year. Since April 2019, the Offer has been available in all parts of Wales, supporting thousands of families.
- We are testing new approaches to helping people with mental health conditions to stay or to find work through an Individual Placement Support research project. Health led employment support is driving forward the Welsh Government priority to tackle health-related barriers to employment including the In work Support Service, and the Out of Work Peer Mentoring Service which is unique to the UK.

Objective 4: Harassment and abuse

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

The VAWDASV National Strategy sets out how we will implement the purposes of the Act through 6 key objectives, this is underpinned by a Delivery Plan. We published statutory guidance on Commissioning VAWDASV services in May 2019 to promote high quality collaborative commissioning that delivers

more consistent and effective services to prevent VAWDASV and protect and support victims of VAWDASV across Wales. The National Indicators were published in June 2019. We have also published guidance on working with perpetrators. During the COVID-19 pandemic we established a Strategic Stakeholder Group to ensure that we considered all options to help keep people safe and gain access to advice and support.

Objective 5: Diversity and public appointments

Public Sector Appointments – Barriers to Applying for Welsh Government funded posts

The Welsh Government has committed itself to work with chairs, to understand the barriers to participation in applying for public appointments amongst people with protected characteristics.

We have researched the barriers to participation in applying for public appointments amongst people with protected

characteristics. The evidence gathered underpins the actions contained in the Diversity & Inclusion Strategy for Public Appointments. gov.wales/diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-public-appointments

llyw.cymru/strategaeth-amrywiaeth-chynhwysiant-ar-gyfer-penodiadau-cyhoeddus

The next step is to implement the strategy in order to try to remove those barriers and increase participation from under-represented groups.

Objective 6: Community cohesion

Through the publication of the Nation of Sanctuary plan in January 2019, we aim to identify and address areas of discrimination and improve access to public services for asylum seekers and refugees in Wales. We have continued to fund the Asylum Rights Programme, delivered by a consortia of third sector organisations and led by the Welsh Refugee Council. Our ReStart project provides a holistic assessment of refugee needs that includes housing provision, health and benefit information and services. This has ensured that their integration into the UK once their refugee status has been

given has been seamless and that all services needed are provided.

Each of the projects mentioned above help hundreds of refugees and asylum seekers each year to access good quality advice and advocacy to ensure destitution, homelessness, unemployment, failed asylum claims and poor health are avoided.

Objective 7: Poverty and inequality

Fuel Poverty

The Welsh Government is committed to doing what it can to tackle fuel poverty in Wales by providing all households with access to advice and support to help them reduce their energy bills.

For low income households living in the most energy inefficient homes, and those living in the most deprived areas of Wales, we will continue to provide free home energy efficiency measures, maximising our investment by leveraging in funding from other sources, such as the Energy Company Obligation.

In 2019-20, the Warm Homes Programme Nest Helpline provided home energy efficiency advice to 15,283 people with free,

impartial advice and signposting to a range of support services.

During the year, 706 households were referred for a benefit entitlement check and 238 households were found to be eligible for new or additional benefits averaging £2,202 per household. This equates to £524,076 in benefit take-up this year, an increase of £248,076 from 18-19. More than 4,500 of the 15,823 households helped during this year had their homes improved with a package of free home energy efficiency measures such as a central heating system, a boiler or insulation. A further 1,945 households benefitted from home energy efficiency improvements through our area based Arbed scheme.

Objective 8: Welsh Government as an employer

Employer Equality Annual Report 2019-2020

As an employer, the Welsh Government is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and values individualism and diversity. All Welsh Government staff are expected to understand their responsibilities with respect to equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Welsh Government publishes its Employer Equality Annual Report by 31 March each year, reports can be found here: gov.wales/welsh-government-employer-equality-reports

B. Strategic Equality Action Plan 2020-24

Long-term Aim 1: Elimination of Inequality Caused by Poverty

Housing Adaptions

In April 2019 the Welsh Government issued Housing Adaptations Service Standards. The aim of the Standards is to set out the level of service expected for the delivery and installation of a housing adaptation that service users, regardless of their geographic location and tenure, can expect. The Housing

Adaptations Steering Group agreed the principle that small and medium adaptations should not generally be subject to a means test and made some progress with developing a regional strategic Planning Framework to provide a single point of access for adaptations services and integrated planning and delivery.

Long-term Aim 2: Strong and progressive equality and human rights protections for everyone in Wales

School Counselling

The Welsh Government committed to review statutory school counselling provision during 2020-21, exploring new models of delivery, including for those younger children not yet covered by the counselling scheme to ensure all those who require emotional and mental health support have their wellbeing needs met.

We contracted Cardiff University to undertake a review and evaluation of the existing school counselling scheme and the need and best delivery model for those children and young people below the current Year 6 threshold.

The review is expected to report in July/August 2021. In advance of the final review we have also made £466,500 available to local authorities in 2020-21 to support age appropriate interventions for children in primary schools.

We have also made an additional £1.252m in 2020-21 to support the existing school counselling scheme by improving capacity and addressing waiting lists and to support a move to online provision as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

Long-term Aim 3: The needs and rights of people who share protected characteristics are at the forefront of the design and delivery of all public services in Wales

Improving Accessibility to Cadw Sites

The Welsh Government is committed to engaging with people with protected characteristics in order to improve physical and intellectual access to Cadw sites. This includes engaging with and holding focus group sessions at project design stage in order to gain a better understanding of what access improvements people really want to see happening at our sites.

A number of Cadw's projects seek to improve physical access to our monuments. For example, improvements at Porth Mawr and Caernarfon Castle will incorporate new vertical access to increase access to areas of the monuments that were previously out-of-bounds.

Architects appointed for both Tretower Court Great Barn and Caerphilly Castle projects have incorporated level access design and associated facilities to improve physical accessibility.

Every September volunteers across Wales organise thousands of events to celebrate history and culture. This provides the public with a chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences for free. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was clear that a unique approach had to be taken. A new series of extensive online experiences enabled members of the public to virtually explore ten of Cadw's heritage properties throughout September.

We have been working with Race Council Cymru to organise visits for specific groups to our sites. Unfortunately these have had to be postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

We have also been making improvements for how people with protected characteristics can access Cadw sites, for example:

- creating walk through guides to make sites more accessible;
- commissioning films with BSL for the Children's Welsh History festival (a festival which usually took place at Cadw sites and replaced with on-line because of COVID-19);
- creating resources for visitors to Cadw sites with Additional Learning Needs;
- opening some Cadw sites during the pandemic for small family groups with Additional Learning Needs or disabilities, whilst the sites are closed to the general public.

Long-term Aim 4: Wales is a world leader for gender equality

Gender Equality Review & Plan

As noted elsewhere in this report the Welsh Government committed itself to the development of an implementation plan for the Gender Equality Review (GER) by April 2020. The Gender Equality Review reports were published in September 2019 by Chwarae Teg along with contributory reports from Wales Centre for Public Policy and Dr Alison Parken.

These reports set out recommendations for Welsh Government and others in Wales to advance gender equality in the short, medium and long term. As a result, we published our first phase implementation plan, 'Advancing Gender Equality in Wales' in March 2020.

Long-term Aim 5: Elimination of identity-based abuse, harassment, hate crime and bullying

Hate Crime Criminal Justice Board

The Welsh Government convenes the Hate Crime Criminal Justice Board Cymru to bring together all key partners working to reduce and mitigate hate crime across Wales.

The Board meets every quarter to advise Welsh Ministers and policy makers about tackling hate crime, and it provides leadership across criminal justice agencies in Wales on tackling hate crime. The membership is made up of representatives from the four Police forces in Wales, Crown Prosecution Service, Police and Crime Commissioners, Victim Support, and the third sector. Topics for discussion in 2020 included Black Lives Matter, COVID-19, and attrition rates.

The work of the Board during 2020 has ensured the Police have monitored hate crime and cohesion impacts derived from the Coronavirus pandemic, the killing of George Floyd and backlash against the Black Lives Matter movement, and other timely issues. The Board has helped to steer Welsh Government thinking regarding Hate Crime Minority Communities Grant and Hate Crime in Schools projects, as well as initial plans for communications campaigns. The Board has enabled awareness and sharing of opportunities relating to the Places of Worship Protective Security scheme.

Long-term Aim 6: A Wales of cohesive communities that are resilient, fair and equal

Support Services for Tenants

The Welsh Government considers services should be shaped and delivered with the expertise and insights of tenants living with mental health problems in the private rented sector.

In the summer of 2019, a competitive grant process was launched which included proposals for a tenant involvement project. The main requirement from applicants was: "Experience and detailed knowledge of delivering tenant involvement and support in Wales and, seeking tenants' views of their landlords' service across the social and private rented housing sectors."

TPAS Cymru were awarded a three year grant contract which commenced from April 2020. The coronavirus has impacted on TPAS Cymru's capacity and capability to progress this objective. Planned activities have been scaled back, with a limited service provided and the majority of staff members placed on furlough.

TPAS Cymru have adapted and have switched most of their operations to online services, providing remote communications such as webinars, online meetings, social media capability to engage with tenants. TPAS Cymru has also undertaken a survey of the thoughts, concerns and needs of its members through its Tenant Pulse programme.

Long-term Aim 7: Everyone in Wales is able to participate in political, public and everyday life

Diversity of decision-makers in public life and public appointments

The Welsh Government remains committed to the development of Diversity in Democracy Phase Two which is aimed at raising the awareness, value and attractiveness of the role of the councillor in the community through a range of actions. A programme which is aimed at increasing engagement in local democracy.

Phase 2 of the Diversity in Democracy programme was announced on 25 September. Actions will be achieved through a variety of pieces of work including the introduction of legislation, publication of revised guidance and undertaking research. A link has been provided to the written statement and the full action plan.

gov.wales/written-statement-phase-two-diversity-democracy

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act received Royal Assent on 20 January 2021. It provides a legislative framework to reform and strengthen local authority democracy, accountability, collaboration and performance. We are working towards the introduction of a Democracy Handbook which will bring together guidance for local government underpinning the themes and actions related to greater transparency within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

This work will be undertaken in two phases, the first of which will be to map the current and intended guidance for inclusion within the handbook. This is due for completion by April 2021.

The second phase will focus on the development, alongside partners, of the guidance itself in readiness for May 2022. A fundamental part of this development is to ensure diversity and equality is considered and included throughout the guidance.

The Welsh Government national communications plan launched on 18 January 2021. The campaign uses digital channels to encourage people in Wales (specific target audiences include young people, qualifying foreign citizens and typically disengaged groups) to participate and encourage positive change by putting their views to good use.

Work has commenced on the review of the role and remuneration of councillors. A three part research programme including a literature review of how other countries have increased confidence of their councillors and how this has affected the numbers who stand for election, a survey of councillors exploring issues such as value, behaviour, workload and remuneration and an omnibus survey of the public about their perceptions of councillors, their value and role, their workload, behaviour towards them and remuneration. Triangulating the outcome of the three pieces of work will inform future work programmes and help identify barriers to diverse people standing for election, including people with protected characteristics.

On 3 March regulations were introduced which extend family absence leave for members of principal councils who are adopters to align with the arrangements for maternity absence. This means that biological and non-biological parents will have the same period of absence available to them increasing the current adopters' absence from 2 weeks to 26 weeks. The change will come into force from 1 April 2021. The pilot Access to Elected Office Fund Wales is now open. Its aim is to support disabled candidates to stand for election in the May 2021 Senedd elections and the May 2022 local government elections. Disability Wales are managing the arrangements.

Long-term Aim 8: The Welsh public sector leads the way as exemplar inclusive and diverse organisations and employers

Welsh Government Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

We have produced a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which will be delivered from 2021-2026. This plan has been approved by the Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group and was presented at the Executive Committee on 29 October 2020.

Our overall objective – as set out in Welsh Government's current Strategic Equality Plan – is that by 2025 Welsh Government will be an exemplar employer:

- Increasing diversity by addressing in particular the underrepresentation of disabled people and people from minority ethnic communities at all levels of the organisation and the underrepresentation of women in senior roles;
- Removing barriers; and
- Supporting staff from all backgrounds to reach their potential, creating equality of opportunity for all.

The Action Plan outlines 16 key areas where we are determined to make a difference over the next 5 years.

For example, the Welsh Government has committed to take action to target outreach for our apprenticeship schemes in particular on potential disabled and Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates to increase the diversity of our workforce to represent our communities.

Both the Action Plan and the supporting Delivery Plan have been co-produced in conjunction with our staff diversity networks, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group members and Trade Union Side (TUS).

It has also been influenced by the Gender Equality Review (with accepted recommendations from the review incorporated in the Delivery Plan).