



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Annual Report on **EQUALITY**

Working for Equality in Wales
2016–17

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Ministerial foreword

I am pleased to present the Welsh Government's Annual Report on Equality, which covers the period between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017. This is the first Annual Report on Equality which is based on our revised Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan for 2016 – 2020.

This Annual Report outlines a wide range of cross-Governmental actions to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. These actions are part of the Welsh Government's work to achieve the well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in particular the goal to make Wales a more equal nation. The goals provide a long-term focus on tackling inequality, which is vital as we move towards an unprecedented period for Wales and the rest of the UK.

In March 2016, we published our refreshed Equality Objectives, which we developed following consultation and engagement with people across Wales. They encompass the full scope of the Welsh Government's portfolios and demonstrate the commitment of all Ministers to promote equality and inclusion. Six of the eight objectives continue our commitment to work in key areas where stakeholders agreed it was important to sustain momentum. We have added a further two objectives relating to community cohesion and tackling poverty.

Our Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020 was published in December 2016, and sets out the actions we will take to achieve the Equality Objectives and address the long-term, entrenched inequalities in our society.

During 2016-17, the Welsh Government remained committed to advancing equality of opportunity in the context of increasing demand for quality public services, the pressures of ongoing austerity, and as the UK voted to leave the European Union. The decades of European Union membership have produced a legacy of benefits covering many aspects of daily life in Wales, with a substantial body of legislation having been

developed to protect Wales' social well-being. Our guiding principle is that leaving the European Union should in no way reduce our focus on promoting equality and challenging discrimination wherever it exists.

As the withdrawal from the European Union presents us with new challenges, we recognise the crucial role of the Welsh Government to provide stability and a clear vision for Wales. In November 2016, the Welsh Government published its Programme for Government, *'Taking Wales Forward 2016 – 2021'*.

It outlined the commitments we will deliver over this fifth Assembly term to help drive improvement and make a difference to the lives of people living in Wales. It sets out how we will deliver more and better jobs through a stronger, fairer economy, improve and reform our public services, and build a united, connected and sustainable Wales.

'Prosperity for All: The National Strategy' published in September 2017, takes those commitments, places them in a long-term context, and sets out how they will be delivered by bringing together the efforts of the whole Welsh public sector.

This reporting period may have been one of change but it was also one of progress for the Welsh Government. The actions contained within the Annual Report on Equality reflect this continued drive towards making Wales a fairer nation.

For example, the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill proposes a complete overhaul of the system for supporting children and young people with Additional Learning Needs. The Bill describes an approach where the learning of all children and young people is prioritised. Placing the learner

at the heart of the process, the system will be far more equitable, simpler and less adversarial for those involved.

The National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – 2016 – 2021 builds on our collective progress to date, and prioritises delivery in the areas of prevention, protection, and provision of support, in line with the purpose of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. The Strategy is part of the Welsh Government’s work to create a Wales where everybody is able to live without fear in safe, equal, violence-free relationships and communities.

The Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme 2017 – 2020 funds seven lead agencies

working to provide support to individuals and communities across Wales in relation to gender (WEN Wales); disability (Disability Wales); Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (Tros Gynnal Plant); refugees and asylum seekers (Welsh Refugee Council); sexual orientation and gender identity (Stonewall Cymru); race (EYST) and hate crime (Victim Support Cymru). The programme supports the important work of the third sector, including community groups, in contributing to the Welsh Government’s delivery of our Strategic Equality Plan and well-being objectives.

Tackling inequality and discrimination remains a priority for the Welsh Government. Equality is built into the fabric of this Government and it continues to influence everything we do.



Julie James AM

Leader of the House and Chief Whip

Chapter 1 – Meeting our Equality Objectives

This chapter outlines examples from the 2016-17 reporting period that demonstrate how the Welsh Government promotes equality of opportunity, eliminates unlawful discrimination and fosters good relations.

The chapter covers:

- Policy and legislation
- Funding
- a fair and transparent system for providing information and advice, and for resolving concerns and appeals.

More information about how this report fulfils our legal obligations can be found at Annex 1.

Policy and Legislation

Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill

In December 2016, the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language introduced the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill.

The purpose of the Bill and wider Transformation Programme is to reform and improve the legislative system for children and young people who have Additional Learning Needs (ALN). These learners are currently referred to as having special educational needs (SEN) or learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) under existing legislation. The current legislative framework for supporting this group of learners is deemed to be confusing, adversarial and insufficiently focussed on the learner.

The Welsh Government's overarching objectives are to create:

- a unified legislative framework to support children and young people aged 0 to 25 years with ALN in schools and further education
- an integrated, collaborative process of assessment, planning and monitoring which facilitates early, timely and effective interventions

Extensive consultation on a draft Bill was undertaken during 2015-16. In 2016-17, we published a summary of responses to the consultation and continued to work with partners and stakeholders to refine the legislation ahead of its introduction into the Assembly in December 2016.

In February 2017, we made available a further draft of the Additional Learning Needs Code. Published to aid scrutiny of the Bill, the Code was the product of a significant programme of work with partners to further develop the draft.

Work to plan and prepare for implementation of the new ALN system continued throughout 2016-17. The Welsh Government committed to a £20 million funding package for the ALN Transformation Programme, which is focussed on working with partners to prepare for implementation of the Bill.

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence National Strategy 2016 – 2021

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) received Royal Assent on 29 April 2015, and in March 2016 the Welsh Government published statutory guidance on the National Training Framework; one of the key mechanisms for delivering the Act.

The purpose of the Act is to improve:

- arrangements for the **prevention** of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

- arrangements for the **protection** of victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- **support** for people affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

In November 2016, the Welsh Government published its National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – A Framework for Delivery 2016 – 2021, following consultation with the public and key stakeholders. The Strategy outlines six objectives which build on our collective progress to date, and prioritise delivery in the areas of prevention, protection, and provision of support, in line with the purpose of the Act.

We will publish national indicators and annual reports to demonstrate how effective we have been in achieving the objectives set out in the National Strategy, and achievement towards the purpose of the Act.

Framework for Action on Independent Living

The Welsh Government's Framework for Action on Independent Living, which was published in 2013, sets out how we are addressing social barriers to equality and inclusion so that disabled people have access to the same opportunities as everyone else. It contains key priorities for action, which were identified by disabled people themselves; including transport, housing, access to buildings and places, and employment.

In late 2016, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children agreed that the Framework should be reviewed and updated so that we continue to tackle the areas of inequality which matter most to disabled people of all ages in Wales. A steering group of disability stakeholders was established and engagement with disabled people and their representative organisations began in early 2017 with the aim of publishing a new version by early 2018.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) in Education and Training – improving the participation of girls in STEM

The STEM in Education and Training Delivery Plan for Wales, published in March 2016, features a strong focus on gender, setting out a number of specific gender-related actions, many of which are also reflected in the Talented Women report's recommendations. The actions contained in the Delivery Plan aim to address gender equity in learner progression in science, technology, engineering and mathematics related subjects in education and training, so that the flow of STEM skills is increased from schools into the Welsh economy, and that more girls access STEM related careers and further learning.

The actions undertaken in 2016-17 resulted in gender equity featuring in all Welsh Government related funding programmes, including funding to Technquest, Technocamps, Institute of Physics (IoP), Further Maths Support Programme, and National Science Academy (NSA) support.

During 2016-17, the Cabinet Secretary for Education also announced plans to establish National Networks for Excellence in Science and Technology (NNEST) and Mathematics (NNEM). The NNEST and NNEM will play a leading role in STEM-related professional learning as part of the Welsh Government's national mission for education in Wales, drawing on expertise from Regional Education Consortia, higher education, practitioners and other key partners. They will provide new levels of STEM support for practitioner skills and knowledge, including examining gender-focused support through research-based approaches to teaching and learning.

This overall approach, implemented through multiple programmes, represents a step change and is bringing about consistent messages to Welsh Government stakeholders on the importance of gender equity in STEM education and training.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan

We published the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan in November 2016, building on our first action plan published in 2008. The Strategic Action Plan was developed in response to what people with autism, and their families and carers, have said is important to them. We also worked with a wide range of stakeholders to identify some key priority themes and actions that will make a real difference to the lives of children and adults with autism.

The aim of the Strategic Action Plan is for children, young people and adults with autism, and their families and carers, to have their needs understood, to be supported to achieve their own wellbeing outcomes, and to lead fulfilling lives. In order to achieve this, the Strategic Action Plan includes actions to improve three priority areas:

- awareness raising, information and training
- assessment and diagnosis
- meeting support needs.

In March 2017, we also announced additional funding for a new National Integrated Autism Service to support people with autism and their families and carers who are unable to access existing statutory services because they don't meet the eligibility criteria.

The integrated autism service will support parents and carers by providing advice and support, signposting to other services and delivering programmes for young people. Autistic adults will also be able to get support from the service without needing to be referred by someone else.

Funding

Equality and Inclusion Grant Programme 2014-17

Our commitment to the principles of equality and fairness is also reflected in our Equality and Inclusion Grant Programme. Set as a three year grant, which commenced in April 2014, the programme provided funding to sixteen third sector organisations to assist them in reaching seldom heard groups, and providing benefit to individuals and communities in Wales, making tangible improvements to their lives.

The funding has had a positive impact on equality because of its direct benefit to people who often face exclusion, disadvantage and discrimination, and because it supports the important work of the third sector in contributing to the Welsh Government's delivery of its Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives. The funding was balanced across the protected characteristics and Equality Objectives, and also provided a wide geographical spread.

The three-year programme concluded in March 2017, with all 16 projects funded under the grant successfully completing their objectives. A post programme evaluation is due to be completed in 2017-18.

Case Studies

Age Concern North East Wales

From 2014 – 2017 Age Concern North East Wales received Equality and Inclusion Grant funding of £211,910 to raise awareness of domestic abuse and hate crime resulting in older victims of domestic abuse and hate crime being identified and accessing the service.

The project supported older people through a specialist elder and domestic abuse advocate and/or project support worker and ensured that their voice was heard in any decisions made and that their human rights were upheld.

The project received 455 referrals during the three years against the target of 360.

Taking Flight Theatre Company

From 2014 – 2017, Taking Flight Theatre Company received Equality and Inclusion Grant funding of £251,809 to prepare and design a theatre production (Real Human Being) to tackle disability hate crime to deliver to Year 9 pupils in schools across Wales.

Real Human Being tackled perceptions of disability in schools, working directly with over 9000 Year 9 pupils over the three years. The project won a National Diversity Award and the Bridgend Coalition of Disabled people's 10th anniversary award for changing lives.

Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme 2017 – 2020

Following consultation and development in 2015-16, we launched a new round of funding under the Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme 2017 – 2020. The programme is designed to support the Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives 2016 – 2020, including protected characteristics in line with the Equality Act 2010. It consists of an Equality Grant for representative organisations for Gender; Race; Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (LGBT+); and Disability; and an Inclusion Contract with projects for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers; Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants; and Hate Crime.

The Equality Grant was opened for applications in July 2016; the Inclusion Projects were opened for bids later in 2016. In both cases we provided extensive support and advice to potential applicants, online, in person and through information and networking events.

We also strongly encouraged partnership working and collaboration across this programme. For example, a networking event in September 2016 for the Inclusion Contract included a session delivered by the Wales Cooperative Centre, which provided advice on collaborative bids and offered support to suppliers wishing to bid as consortia.

The outcomes were announced in December 2016 for the Equality Grant and in February 2017 for the Inclusion Contract. Inception meetings with all seven lead organisations in February / March 2017 were followed by a programme networking event on 30 March, which was attended by the Equality and Inclusion organisations, the regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinators and other key internal and external stakeholders. This signalled the intention for the programme as a whole to provide a strategic and coordinated approach which will deliver advice and support to citizens and community organisations throughout Wales across a broad range of key equality, inclusion and human rights issues.

Work-Based Learning Equality and Diversity Champion

In 2014, Estyn published the findings of its review, 'Barriers to Apprenticeship'. The review was commissioned by the Welsh Government to inform further development of its equality and diversity guidance for Work-Based Learning (WBL) providers, and to disseminate good practice case studies across the WBL network. The report identified the barriers that prevent learners from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and those with disabilities from engaging in the apprenticeship programme in Wales. The review also identified gender-stereotyping issues in apprenticeship occupational sectors.

In 2016-17, the Welsh Government provided funding for an Equality and Diversity Champion to provide the WBL provider network with a supportive structure to assist them in increasing the take up of apprenticeships by individuals with protected characteristics. This aimed to instigate a culture change to embrace diversity and broaden access to the apprenticeship programme.

Throughout 2016-17 the Equality and Diversity Champion worked with a diverse range of organisations to create more opportunities to showcase the WBL sector to the wider community bringing awareness of apprenticeships to new audiences.

Pan-Wales equality and diversity meetings for the network of WBL providers were chaired by the Champion each quarter, and guest speakers from organisations such as Chwarae Teg, RNIB, Romani Cultural and Arts Company were invited to give presentations and consider options for collaborative working.

The Equality and Diversity Champion also collated a series of case studies, all with a focus on protected characteristics, for use by the providers and the Welsh Government when promoting the apprenticeship programme.

The Champion has established an Equality Engagement network of organisations that have expertise in working with protected

groups who can be called upon by the providers. These include Chwarae Teg, Diverse Cymru, North Wales Deaf Association, Disability Wales, Remploy, Ethnic Youth Support Team, Mind Cymru and many more.

The Equality and Diversity Champion role ensures that our network of training providers works continuously to broaden access to the apprenticeship programme.

European Social Fund Projects

The European Social Fund (ESF) has had a significant positive impact on the support provided to key groups with protected characteristics in Wales, and the 2014 – 2020 ESF programmes are building on the success of the previous funding round.

The programmes in Wales have been developed around three priority areas:

- **Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment priority** is the main lever ESF can bring to bear on tackling poverty, focusing on support for those furthest from the labour market to access or return to sustainable employment.
- The **Skills for Growth priority** is concerned with increasing the skills level, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce, supporting research and innovation activities with graduates and improving the position of women in the labour market.
- The **Youth Unemployment Attainment priority**, aims to reduce the number of young people at risk of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), improve attainment levels in STEM, and upskill the early years and childcare workforce (in West Wales and the Valleys). The priority takes a focussed approach to support young people who are NEET and sit within specific target groups, including lone parents, young people with disabilities and work limiting health conditions, and those experiencing social or digital exclusion.

Case Studies

Active Inclusion Youth and Inspire 2 Achieve

Support for young people through the Youth Unemployment Attainment priority is being delivered through projects such as Active Inclusion Youth, led by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), and local authority led projects such as Inspire 2 Achieve in South East Wales. These projects focus support on those who have been identified as being at risk of disengaging from education. They provide mentoring, training and coaching to support them to reintegrate into mainstream education provision or alternative curriculum models.

Active Inclusion Youth

Active Inclusion Youth is led by the WCVA and works with young people aged 16-24 who are NEET and sit within specific target groups including lone parents, young people with work limiting health conditions and disabilities, ex-offenders, and young people who are BAME. Young people receive support and training and a paid work experience opportunity for up to 26 weeks. Projects are delivered through grants awarded to organisations, which are mostly third sector but public organisations can also apply. There are two strands to the funds:

- **Include:** which is engagement type activity for those furthest from the labour market.
- **Achieve:** which provides a supported paid work experience placement for up to 26 weeks.

Active Inclusion Youth is a four year project, and was approved in April 2016. It will work with 6,285 participants across Wales, with a total cost of £12.9 million with ESF co-investment of £7.8 million.

Inspire 2 Achieve

Inspire 2 Achieve aims to reduce the number of those at risk of becoming NEET amongst 11-24 year olds. The project is delivered across the South East Wales region and is led by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in the West Wales and the Valleys Programme area, and Newport County Council in the East.

The project has a clear focus on identifying, and supporting young people most at risk of disengaging with education, in secondary schools and in further education. Inspire 2 Achieve provides early interventions aimed at identifying individual barriers and delivering supportive actions to reduce the risk of them dropping out. A holistic approach has been taken to address the transition of participants between school and further education, with a partnership made up of local authorities, Careers Wales and further education colleges in the region.

The project in West Wales and the Valleys started in November 2015, East Wales followed in April 2016, and both are three year projects working with almost 11,000 young people. Total project costs are just over £28 million, with an ESF grant of £18.2 million.

Chapter 2 – Welsh Specific Equality Duties

This chapter describes our actions to meet our responsibilities in regards to the Welsh specific equality duties as provided by the Equality Act (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. Further information about these regulations can be found in Annex 1.

This chapter deals with the following key areas:

- Engagement
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Procurement
- Evidence Base
- Our International Obligations

Engagement

Regulation 5 of the Equality Act (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 provides that specified public sector bodies must involve people who they consider representative of one or more of the protected groups and who have an interest in how an authority carries out its functions. This duty to engage provides the Welsh Government with expert support and advice in terms of understanding the key issues and barriers facing people with

protected characteristics. This information can then be used to achieve shared aims and to deliver better decision-making, for example, in policy and service development and in setting priorities for action.

Throughout the year, the Welsh Ministers engage regularly at many events and meetings with groups representing people with protected characteristics, to understand their priorities and what challenges they face on a daily basis. The Welsh Government has also established forums through which we engage with groups representing people with protected characteristics. These include:

- the Disability Equality Forum
- the Faith Communities Forum
- the Wales Race Forum
- the Strategic Equality Board
- the Budget Advisory Group on Equality.

Case Studies

Ministerial Taskforce of the South Wales Valleys

The Ministerial Taskforce of the South Wales Valleys was set up by the Welsh Government in July 2016 in response to a Manifesto Commitment following the National Assembly election and the EU referendum. The taskforce is comprised of several Ministers and a range of experts from the public, private and third sector who have been chosen not only for their expertise in various fields but also because they either live or work in the Valleys.

The high-level priorities of the taskforce are captured in 'Our Valleys, Our Future'. These include good quality jobs and the skills to do them, better public services, and personal and community well-being.

During 2016-17, we undertook significant engagement work in order to develop a detailed delivery plan for launch in November 2017. From the outset of the project the taskforce was clear that engagement with Valley communities should be the driving force behind any subsequent priorities or plans.

The taskforce gave clear direction that this work would be a collaborative approach between Welsh Government, the public, private and third sectors, but more importantly, with the communities that this initiative was designed to serve. An intense engagement programme was embarked on by Welsh Government policy leads with communities across the Valleys and wider stakeholders.

This work included:

- A series of thematic sessions to find out what the main issues, challenges and barriers were for different groups and those with particular needs and protected characteristics. These included sessions with young people, teachers, parents, parents accessing Flying Start settings, and housing association tenants with a strong focus on older people and those with access issues. Sessions were also held with businesses and employers, higher education providers and disability groups. All attendees were assured that any access or language requirements would be met at every event. All venues were physically accessible and some meetings were delivered through the medium of Welsh.
- A series of open public engagement sessions across the Valleys, in the evenings, to allow people with caring responsibilities, work or education commitments to be able to attend.
- Invitations and adverts for engagement sessions were published in a variety of formats to ensure they were as inclusive as possible. This included emails, Facebook and Twitter but also physical communication and posters in the respective communities.

- Accessing existing community networks to publicise engagement events to a full range of community members including young people, older people, disabled groups, parents, carers and BAME groups.
- Commissioning an independent research company to conduct a series of targeted focus groups. Participants for 12 focus groups were selected specifically to ensure a cross section were involved including men, women, young people, older people, BAME groups, full and part-time employed, unemployed, graduates and non graduates, single parents and those with disabilities.
- An online survey to conduct more traditional engagement but also to allow people who were unable to participate in public meetings a safe environment in which to feed back their views to us. The wording of the survey was sense checked to ensure a plain English approach for accessibility and was also published bilingually. We received nearly 1,000 responses from a range of socio-economic backgrounds across the Valleys region.

In order to translate the findings of the engagement programme into priorities, we arranged a series of workshops with stakeholders from the public, private and third sectors to discuss the findings and to work with the Welsh Government to turn these into actions.

The positive feedback we received regarding the engagement process expressed that Valley communities felt listened to and empowered during this process, and the result has been a high-level plan that is community focussed and community driven.

Case Studies

The Childcare Offer

The Welsh Government has committed to offering working parents of 3 and 4 year old children, 30 hours of childcare and early education per week, for up to 48 weeks of the year. This will build on the current universal entitlement for Early Years Foundation Phase, through which 3 and 4 years olds can already access free early education for at least 10 hours a week during school term time.

The aim of the childcare offer is to achieve one (or more) of the following goals:

- to provide parents, particularly mothers, with more employment choices, including returning to work
- to increase the disposable income of those in work and help counteract poverty for those in low-paid jobs
- to encourage child development and school readiness.

During the period between September 2016 to April 2017, we ran an engagement campaign with over 6,000 parents and childcare providers to understand their concerns and their needs. Feedback from the campaign highlighted that the cost of childcare and the impact that has on their finances and their quality of life is a major concern for many working parents. This direct engagement informed the policy direction and some of the key decisions regarding the offer.

In tandem, workshops were held with early implementer local authorities to understand local differences and to ensure the policy decisions for the first year of testing would work in different places across Wales.

As a result of the engagement the Welsh Government will tailor the policy to benefit the following groups:

- **Women who wish to return to work** – we listened to the concerns of parents, and particularly mothers, who say that the cost of childcare is acting as a barrier, preventing them from returning to work or making changes to their employment to better suit their family's circumstances. The childcare offer is being developed so that it can support these parents to return to work.
- **Families on low incomes** – for parents on low incomes, childcare is unaffordable. The offer will help to increase the disposable income of those already in work by removing some of their childcare costs, and by funding 30 hours of childcare per week may also allow some parents to increase their hours. This may help those living in poverty to increase their incomes and relieve some of the financial burden created by childcare.
- **Children from disadvantaged families** – the childcare offer supports the delivery of two Welsh Government child poverty objectives:
 - to use all available levers to reduce the number of families living in workless households, as children living in workless households are particularly at risk of living in poverty
 - to address the growing issue of in-work poverty in Wales through the creation of a strong economy and labour market, which supports the tackling poverty agenda.

Equality Impact Assessments

The Welsh Government, as with other specified public bodies covered by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, is required to carry out Equality Impact Assessments in respect of protected groups, across its proposed policies and practices, those it has decided to review, and the changes it proposes to make.

Assessing the impact of policies and practices on protected groups is one of the key ways in which public authorities can demonstrate they have had due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not and to foster good relations between different protected groups, when it makes its decisions. The Equality Impact Assessments undertaken by the Welsh Government help to ensure that the Welsh Government meets this duty. Our impact assessment arrangements are also a key part of meeting our duty under Section 77 of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

Equality Impact Assessments within the Welsh Government

The Welsh Government's process for completing Equality Impact Assessments consists of a formal, systematic and thorough analysis of proposed or existing policies, practices, action plans and budget processes. It is a structured approach that establishes and records whether the policy affects different groups of people in different ways, and takes action to eliminate or minimise any negative impacts where possible. Impact assessments also look for opportunities to advance equality of opportunity.

The Welsh Government's systematic approach to an Equality Impact Assessment ensures our policies and practices better meet the needs of the people of Wales.

Evidence

A clear theme emerging from completing Equality Impact Assessments across the organisation, both for the budget and policy decisions, is often a lack of evidence available for particular protected characteristics including: religion and faith, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups. A lack of evidence should not be taken to indicate that no inequalities exist for that group. We may either have very limited evidence (as is generally the case for gender identity), or any existing evidence is based on samples that are too small/ non-representative to generalise to the wider population. A requirement of completing an Equality Impact Assessment is not only to outline the evidence sources used, but also to recognise and identify where there might be a lack of evidence. Through this emerging trend of evidence gaps for these characteristics, departments are seeking to build in evidence collection within their policy evaluation and monitoring which focuses on the protected groups.

Monitoring the Impact of our Policies and Practices

The Welsh specific equality duties require that listed bodies ensure they continue to monitor the impact of their policies following an Equality Impact Assessment.

Equality Impact Assessments are live, interactive and continuous assessments which last the lifecycle of the decision or policy and, in some cases beyond. In the Welsh Government, on completion of an Equality Impact Assessment, an action plan is developed and a review date is set. At this review date, the original assessment of impact on protected characteristics must be reconsidered and evaluated. Where new impacts are identified, or evidence has been gathered which supports our original assessment of impact, these are incorporated into the assessment.

Equality Impact Assessment of the Budget

Our approach to the Impact Assessment of the Budget was informed by recommendations from a range of stakeholders including the Assembly Committees, the Budget Advisory Group for Equality, and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment is a more focused document with a strategic overview of the impacts of key budget changes. There is greater emphasis on assessing the differential impacts of proposals on the various groups in our society, where these are likely to be significant. This integrated approach has the key benefit of considering the impacts of spending decisions on all of the protected groups and, in doing so in an inclusive way, we have been able to develop a deeper understanding of the relationships between these key areas.

The Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment considers the impact of our spending decisions on the nine protected characteristics together with the impacts on the Welsh language, children's rights, tackling poverty and socio-economic disadvantage aligned under the umbrella of sustainable development and well-being. We have also taken account of the impacts of the UK Government's welfare reform and approach to austerity.

Procurement

Public service bodies in Wales spend around £6 billion each year on buying goods, services and works from suppliers. It is important every pound spent is done so wisely, achieving best value for the people of Wales.

Our Procurement Policy

Through compliance with regulation 18 of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, the Welsh Ministers ensure that the goods and services procured are fit for purpose and thus ensure they meet the needs of our diverse citizens and communities.

As part of our statutory Welsh specific equality duties, public bodies in Wales must:

- have due regard to whether it would be appropriate for the award criteria of the contract to include considerations to help meet the public sector equality duty
- have due regard to whether it would be appropriate to stipulate conditions relating to the performance of the contract to help meet the three aims of the public sector equality duty.

Fulfilling the Procurement Duty in Our Welsh Specific Equality Duties

The Wales Procurement Policy Statement consists of ten key principles which all Welsh public sector organisations should adhere to when delivering their procurement activity. This has been widely adopted by major public bodies in Wales, with all 22 local authorities having confirmed adoption and uptake being monitored.

The policy statement provides that Value for Money should be considered as 'the optimum combination of whole-of-life costs in terms of not only generating efficiency savings and good quality outcomes for the organisation, but also benefit to society, the economy, and the environment, both now and in the future'.

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

- ensuring key policies such as Community Benefits are built into contracts
- simplifying the procurement process and lowering barriers for suppliers
- advertising contract opportunities through the Sell2Wales website
- completing a Sustainability Risk Assessment when planning a procurement to ensure public contracts consider their equality duties when contracts are discharged.

Mainstreaming and Embedding Equality within Procurement – Results

The Welsh Government has been at the forefront of the delivery of the Welsh public sector procurement policies which have contributed to delivering equality for a number of years. Key policies include:

- A Sustainability Risk Assessment is applied to all Welsh Government contracts £25,000 and above, ensuring equality duties are considered and action taken where appropriate in all Welsh Government contracts.
- The Community Benefits policy continues to use public sector contracts to deliver employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged people. The approach also targets educational support from our suppliers for key subjects like STEM to across communities.

As of 31 March 2017, results from the first 308 public sector projects worth £1.38 billion show 82% has been re-invested in Wales, £291 million directly on salaries to Welsh citizens, and some £851 million with Wales-based businesses, 70% of which were Welsh small and medium sized enterprises. Some 2074 disadvantaged people were helped into employment, receiving over 44,058 weeks of training provided.

Community benefits are also included as an option in the Welsh Government's grants process as a standard condition of grant funding, and are used in key projects such as 21c Schools and Vibrant and Viable Places. The Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan is also committed to incorporating community benefits into the contracts within its scope.

- The Better Jobs Closer to Home programme is underway providing opportunity for cross cutting policy to support the creation of employment in some of the poorest communities

in Wales. Procurement working with Welsh Government's Skills and Business teams are taking forward a Programme that utilises procurement legislation innovatively to have greatest economic impact. The Programme targets procurement interventions to create equal employment opportunities for Welsh citizens.

The Evidence Base

We are aware the evidence around particular protected characteristics has historically been rather limited, which makes it difficult to assess accurately the potential impact of our policies, strategies and spending decisions on those protected groups. Despite these gaps, we are seeking to make progress towards strengthening our evidence base. Our collation of equality information as part of the actions within the Strategic Equality Plan and as per Regulation 7 of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 in addition to continual Equality Impact Assessments of our policies and strategies, together with engagement with protected groups, aim to make best use of the existing evidence base.

During 2016-17, Knowledge and Analytical Services within the Welsh Government produced an updated review of evidence by protected characteristic: <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/review-evidence-inequality-wales/?lang=en>

Further plans to improve the evidence base were also developed. These included:

- inclusion of information on diversity in the [Future Trends Report 2017](#)
- a summary of what the data says about progress towards meeting the well-being goal of A More Equal Wales in the first [Well-being of Wales Report](#)
- producing additional analysis of [Households Below Average Income](#) (HBAI) data in relation to age, gender, ethnicity and disability status.

In addition, updates were published for the following relevant statistical outputs:

- Academic achievement by pupil characteristics 2016
- Absenteeism by pupil characteristics
- School census results
- StatsWales tables on Further Education including Age, Gender and Disability
- Learner Outcome Measures for Further Education, Work-Based Learning and Adult Community Learning 2015-16
- Young people not in education, employment or training
- Higher Education Statistics
- StatsWales tables with data on equality strands (e.g. Annual Population Survey data)
- National Survey for Wales (including information on health and health reported lifestyles previously reported as part of the Welsh Health Survey)
- Assessments and social services for adults
- Health Statistics Wales
- Affordable housing provision
- StatsWales tables on Homelessness
- GP Access
- Welsh Government Flying Start
- Jobs Growth Wales.

We recognise that there are obstacles to collecting equality information which often limits the availability of evidence for particular groups, for example:

- Large-scale, high-quality sample surveys are costly, and the population subgroup is often so small the sample would have to be very large to collect robust information.
- It can be difficult to identify well-tested questions, or formulate new questions to produce accurate results: for example, respondents may not understand what is being asked or may not wish to provide the information asked for.

- Asking about some sensitive topics can offend respondents. This could lead to complaints, negative media coverage, and reduced response rates.

Nevertheless, we continue to collect data by protected characteristic where practicable, for example gathering details of age, gender, ethnicity and disability on household surveys and administrative data collections.

Our International Obligations

The United Nations Human Rights Treaty System provides an opportunity to highlight on an international level the work of the Welsh Government to promote human rights. The Welsh Government recognises the huge importance of meeting its international human rights responsibilities, and it values the stability and direction these treaties provide during the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The Welsh Government has an obligation to take steps to ensure that the people of Wales enjoy the rights set out in the UN treaties signed and ratified by the UK State party. The UN Committees responsible for each international treaty helps the Welsh Government to do this by monitoring implementation and recommending further action through periodic examinations.

The Welsh Government took part in two UN examinations during the 2016-17 reporting period, and was represented within the delegations which travelled to Geneva. In May 2016, the UK State party was examined against the periodic report it submitted to the UN in 2014 on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The UK underwent its second examination of the year in August 2016, this time on the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination. The examination focused on the UK's periodic report of 2015.

Chapter 3 – The Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020

This chapter fulfils regulation 16(1)(d) of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, which requires us to report on the progress we have made to fulfil our Equality Objectives. It is retrospective and covers the financial year 2016-17.

Equality Objectives 2016 – 2020

The Welsh specific equality duties require the Welsh Government to review its Equality Objectives every four years, to ensure we continue to work towards a fairer Wales, removing the barriers which limit opportunities and hinder aspirations. The Welsh Government published its revised Equality Objectives on 10 March 2016.

We undertook extensive engagement with relevant stakeholders across Wales in order to review and revise our Equality Objectives. The feedback we received clearly supported retaining the essence of the first set of objectives whilst also strengthening the link with tackling poverty, and broadening the scope to encompass the Welsh Government's work on inclusion and community cohesion.

Five of our eight new Equality Objectives were therefore built upon, and refined the content of, the first set of Equality Objectives, ensuring we maintain momentum and build on the firm foundation of the preceding four years. We also retained an objective focusing on the Welsh Government in its role as an employer.

We developed two new Equality Objectives which reflected the views of our stakeholders. This included an objective on community cohesion and inclusion, bringing together our ongoing work on community cohesion, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, and Refugees and Asylum Seekers under the umbrella of the Equality Objectives. We also added a specific objective on tackling poverty and inequality, which strengthens our approach to addressing socio-economic disadvantage within protected groups. The Equality Objectives 2016 – 2020 are:

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.
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.
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).

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.
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.
Equality Objective 6:	Strengthen community cohesion by fostering good relations, inclusion, mutual respect and understanding within and between communities across Wales.
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.
Equality Objective 8:	Welsh Government will aim to be an exemplar in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda by 2020.

Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020

Regulation 3(2)(i) of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 requires us to publish a statement setting out the steps we have taken or intend to take to fulfil each Equality Objective. This usually takes the form of a Strategic Equality Plan.

The Welsh Government published its Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020 in December 2016 following extensive public engagement. Detailed actions were formulated to contribute towards the achievement of the revised Equality Objectives, based on work across Welsh Government portfolios.

In drafting our Strategic Equality Plan, we considered evidence and engaged with stakeholders and public and third sector organisations. The Plan is purposefully strategic and sign posts to a range of activities that will help us to deliver our Equality Objectives. This approach allows those interested to delve into those areas of most importance to them.

The Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020 can be found on the Welsh Government's website.

Equality Indicators

We are in the process of developing a comprehensive set of indicators drawing on existing national indicators where appropriate. We acknowledge there are limitations to data due to small sample sizes in Wales and therefore disaggregating data by ethnicity and disability, for example, is not always possible. We are committed to reviewing our equality indicators as our Strategic Equality Plan evolves and changes.

Summary of progress made towards meeting our Equality Objectives in 2016-17

Effectiveness of the Welsh Government's actions to fulfil the Equality Objectives

The Equality Objectives seek to address long standing, deeply entrenched and often inter-generational inequalities for those with

protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. It is therefore imperative that our actions to address these inequalities have a long-term focus. A truly equal and inclusive Wales will take time to achieve but we plan to show measurable progress and outcomes.

The Welsh Government published its Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020 in December 2016. This leaves a relatively short period in which to evaluate the effectiveness of steps taken within the 2016-17 reporting period, or to identify any emerging trends in data. Nevertheless,

outlined below are a number of the actions we have taken during 2016-17 to progress towards achieving the Equality Objectives.

A more detailed assessment alongside a comprehensive set of indicators will also be provided in future annual reports, where we expect to be able to provide demonstrable progress. The Welsh Government is committed to evaluating its key policies and programmes, many of which have goals to reduce inequalities in health, educational, economic and social outcomes.

Equality Objective	Summary of Progress
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Mental Health Act 1983 Code of Practice for Wales In October 2016, the Welsh Government published the revised Mental Health Act 1983 Code of Practice for Wales, which contains specific reference to equality legislation and equity of service provision. As well as providing guidance for professionals, the Code of Practice also provides information for patients, their families and carers.</p> <p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) new inspection frameworks CSSIW introduced new inspection frameworks for Childcare, Play and Local Authority Social Services (April 2016) and Adult and Children Residential Care Homes (October 2016).</p> <p>The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the European Convention of Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 were embedded in the inspection framework and inspectors’ guidance.</p>

Equality Objective

Summary of Progress

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.

Social Welfare Law information and advice

We published a Social Welfare Law Information and Advice Action Plan in December 2016 to ensure equitable access to good quality advice services. The National Advice Network (Wales) continues to work collaboratively with the advice sector, advice funders and commissioners to encourage a multi agency approach to strategically develop the provision of sustainable social welfare information and advice service throughout Wales.

Financial Inclusion information and advice

We published the Financial Inclusion Delivery Plan in December 2016. Implementation is delivered with partner organisations across the public, private and third sectors, including the Money Advice Service, Credit unions and information and advice providers, with the support from the Financial Inclusion Delivery Group. Members of the group also act as ambassadors for the promotion of financial inclusion and financial capability within their own sectors. Financial inclusion has a vital role to play in improving the well-being of people living in Wales by, for example, giving them access to trusted and independent information and advice services. These services are central to ensuring everyone in Wales has a fair chance in life, through helping them to better understand and exercise their social welfare rights and to make informed choices. During 2016-17 through the Welsh Government's Front Line Advice Services funding, organisations responded to over 48,000 requests for information and advice, helping people to secure over £12.7 million in welfare benefit income, whilst the Better Advice, Better Lives programme helped over 21,250 people bringing in confirmed welfare benefit income of more than £20.8 million in 2016-17.

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).

Apprenticeships

We are working to ensure apprenticeships are accessible for all. In 2016-17 we held Equality and Diversity bi-monthly meetings with the network of Work-Based Learning providers.

We ran an Equality and Diversity workshop; providing practical tips and guidance on developing targeted messages to promote apprenticeships to diverse learners.

We also collated 36 case studies from Work-Based Learning providers around Wales, focussing on those from under-represented groups. These will be disseminated as good practice to the Work-Based Learning network.

Equality Objective

Summary of Progress

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

Tackling Hate Crimes and Incidents – A Framework for Action

The framework aims to tackle hate crimes and incidents in respect of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

In 2016-17 the framework was supported by a delivery plan, updated on an annual basis; and by funding for a National Hate Crime Report and Support Centre.

Positive campaigning and training continued to provide a strong basis for greater awareness and understanding for victims and services to spot potential cases of hate crimes. A strategic approach continued to be delivered through the work of the Hate Crime Criminal Justice Board Cymru whose membership includes the four Police Forces and Police and Crime Commissioners, as well as representatives from other Criminal Justice Agencies, WLGA and Victim Support.

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.

Welsh Government Diversity in Democracy Programme

The Diversity in Democracy Programme ran for two years, concluding in 2016-17, to support people from diverse backgrounds to become more involved in local democracy and consider standing for elected office. Every local authority nominated a councillor champion to encourage their council to raise awareness amongst under represented groups. For example, one champion worked with local mosques and BAME women's groups. The mentoring programme had 65 mentors and 51 mentees from under- represented groups. 16 mentees stood for election, and four were elected.

The Welsh Government will commission an evaluation of its Diversity in Democracy programme, which will help to inform future initiatives around improving the representation of under-represented groups, including considering the barriers faced by disabled people when participating in democracy.

Equality Objective 6:

Strengthen community cohesion by fostering good relations, inclusion, mutual respect and understanding within and between communities across Wales.

Community Cohesion

Our National Community Cohesion Delivery Plan 2016-17 was published in March 2016, to continue to strengthen, mainstream and sustain both local and regional community cohesion approaches across seven outcome areas of hate crime, modern slavery, Gypsies and Travellers, immigration, tackling poverty, mainstreaming community cohesion and tension monitoring. Eight Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinators worked regionally across all 22 local authorities, providing all-Wales coverage to support delivery of these objectives. Their work was monitored against the outcomes set in the national programme.

Equality Objective

Summary of Progress

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.

Nest – Fuel Poverty Scheme

Nest is the Welsh Government's fuel poverty scheme, which provides energy advice and support. For those households on the lowest incomes who meet the qualifying criteria, a funded package of free energy efficiency measures is available.

In 2016-17, the Welsh Government provided £19.5 million for Nest and a further £3.9 million was levered in through the GB-wide Energy Company Obligation.

Healthy Child Wales

The Healthy Child Wales Programme was launched in September 2016. It sets out what planned contacts children and their families can expect from their health boards from maternity service handover to the first years of schooling.

The programme includes a consistent range of evidence-based preventative and early intervention measures, and advice and guidance to support parenting and healthy lifestyle choices.

Equality Objective 8:

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

Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group

The Welsh Government's Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group includes representation from our staff diversity networks, our Diversity Champions, the Trade Union Side (TUS) and Human Resources. It is chaired by the Welsh Government Board's representative on equality.

In consultation with staff across the organisation, the Steering Group developed and agreed a three-year action plan setting out how the organisation will meet this Equality Objective. The plan includes a comprehensive set of indicators and action will be regularly monitored by the Steering Group.

Staff Diversity Networks

Our Staff Diversity Networks give under-represented groups a voice. They offer networking opportunities to provide a different kind of support to colleagues than is normally available. It's a chance to meet others in the same position and share issues and ideas. They also act as an advisory body to internal policy makers, and offer opportunities for staff to gain or develop new skills.

There are four staff diversity network groups within the Welsh Government:

- Disability Awareness and Support (DAAS)
- The Minority Ethnic Staff Network (MESN)
- Women's Network (Women Together)
- PRISM – the Welsh Government's sexual orientation and gender identity staff network.

Looking Ahead

Now that the new Strategy Equality Plan has been published, our next challenge is to ensure the steps we take continue to fully contribute to achieving the Equality Objectives. We will continuously monitor the effectiveness of the existing actions and agree new ones where we think more can be done. We will provide a transparent and robust update of progress on an annual basis against the objectives, which will be published on our website.

We will also further develop indicators to help us measure the affect our activities are having on eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. We will continue work to develop our evidence base so that we can be satisfied the impact of our policies and decisions are properly considered.

The Equality and Inclusion Grant programme saw out its final year in 2016-17, and following review and consultation (as described above), has been succeeded with a new round of funding covering the three-year period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020. Under this new programme, the Welsh Government is working collaboratively with our partners, including seven lead agencies working to provide support to individuals and communities across Wales in relation to race (EYST); gender (WEN Wales); sexual orientation and gender identity (Stonewall Cymru); disability (Disability Wales); refugees and asylum seekers (Welsh Refugee Council); Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (Tros Gynnal Plant) and tackling hate crime (Victim Support Cymru). This work is also supported by eight Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators, funded by Welsh Government, embedded in local authorities and working on a regional basis.

Our Programme for Government 'Taking Wales Forward' is our five year strategic plan, setting out what the Welsh Ministers want to deliver over the next term (2016 – 2021). It is a bold, strategic and ambitious programme that focuses on delivering real improvements in the every-day lives of people in Wales. 'Taking Wales Forward' sets out the four areas where we can have the biggest impact and the headline actions we will take. These are:

- Prosperous and Secure
- Healthy and Active
- Ambitious and Learning
- United and Connected.

Our four themes will consider how we can maximise the impact of everything that we do.

'Prosperity for All: The National Strategy' takes those commitments, places them in a long-term context, and sets out how they will be delivered by bringing together the efforts of the whole Welsh public sector.

Alongside the national strategy we have also published a well-being statement explaining how we have used the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to support the development of the national strategy and identify a single set of government well-being objectives and steps.

Annex 1

Our legal duties

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) replaces previous anti-discrimination laws for England, Scotland and Wales with a single Act. The Act protects people from discrimination because of:

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

These categories are known as the ‘protected characteristics’.

The Act also introduces a ‘public sector equality duty’. 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 public sector equality duty 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 Act (known as ‘relevant Welsh authorities’) are also subject to the Welsh specific equality duties found in the Regulations. The aim of the specific duties is to enable the better performance of the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Act. The Regulations do so by requiring, for example, the publication of equality objectives together with equality impact assessments, engagement requirements, progress reports, collection of data etc.

This report fulfils 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 the Welsh Ministers are complying with the specific duties. This is intended to provide transparency regarding the progress we are making towards achieving our equality objectives. The report includes:

- The steps we have taken to identify and collect relevant equality information, as well as any reasons for not collecting information we have identified but do not hold.
- How we have used the information we hold to comply with the general duty and the Welsh specific equality duties.
- The progress we have made in order to fulfil each Equality Objective.
- A statement of the effectiveness of:
 - a) our arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant equality information
 - b) what steps we have taken to fulfil each Equality Objective.

The Government of Wales Act 2006

The Government of Wales Act 2006 includes the legal duty to have “due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people”. The duty ensures that we give weight to promoting equality, as well as meeting our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.