

Cyngor y Gweithlu Addysg

**Education Workforce
Council**



**DRAFT Strategic Equality
Plan**

2015 - 2018

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 brings together - and replaces - previous anti-discrimination laws into a single Act, with a view to simplifying and strengthening existing law. The Act includes a public sector Equality Duty, which supersedes duties previously in place covering race, gender and disability. It came into force on 5th April 2011.

The new duty covers nine protected characteristics, including:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief (or lack of belief)
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Duty has three main aims:

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

It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all; and which meet different stakeholders' needs.

About the Education Workforce Council

Legislative context

The Education Workforce Council (EWC) was established by the Education (Wales) Act 2014. Under the Act, the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) was reconfigured and renamed to become the Education Workforce Council (EWC). The EWC came into being on 1st April 2015.

As a public body, the EWC is governed by the Freedom of Information Act. The EWCs Publication Scheme sets out the categories of information it makes available as a matter of course to the public.

In addition, the EWC is treated as a public body for the purposes of the Welsh Language Measure. The EWC is committed to providing an equally high quality service in Welsh and English. The standards of delivery are set out in its statutory Welsh Language Scheme.

The Education Workforce Council is required to comply with the Wales specific public sector Strategic Equality Duty and this plan describes the Council's response to the duty.

Strategic aims

The principal aims of Council are to:

- contribute to improving the standards of teaching and the quality of learning in Wales;
- maintain and improve standards of professional conduct amongst teachers and persons who support teaching and learning in Wales;
- safeguard the interests of learners, parents and the public and maintain public trust and confidence in the education workforce

Our role and remit

The Council's main functions are to:

- establish and maintain a Register of Education Practitioners;
- maintain a Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for the education workforce;
- investigate and hear allegations of unacceptable professional conduct, serious professional incompetence or relevant criminal offences that might call into question a registered practitioner's fitness to practise;

- provide advice to the Welsh Government and others on matters related to the education workforce and teaching and learning;
- monitor Induction and hear Induction appeals (where applicable) for the education workforce;
- promote careers in the education workforce;
- undertake specific work in relation to teaching and learning at the request of the Welsh Government.

The EWC is funded by practitioner registration fees, but receives grant funding from the Welsh Government for the following activities undertaken on its behalf:

- administering the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS);
- administering funding, tracking and recording arrangements for Induction, the Masters in Educational Practice (MEP), and Early Professional Development (EPD);
- hearing Induction appeals and the issuing of Induction certificates.

Strategic Equality Plan

This plan sets out how we are working towards diversity and equality within our remit for all those areas covered by the protected characteristics, as required in the Equality Act 2010.

Equality Aims and Objectives

The Council has two main aims to advance equality in our work. This includes inward-facing objectives and outward-facing objectives, in relation to the statutory services provided. The Council's equality aims are:

- 1. To ensure Council's policies and procedures facilitate best practice in promoting equality**
- 2. To review equality issues within the education workforce and advise Welsh Government accordingly**

Equality Objectives supporting these aims are reviewed and revised annually, and are available on the EWC website.

Monitoring arrangements

The Equality Objectives are embedded across six key areas, namely:

- General policies and practice
- Recruitment and employment
- Training
- Registration and Fitness to practise
- Advisory work
- Communications

Progress against the annual Equality Objectives is subject to the scrutiny of the Senior Management Team at its monthly meetings and the oversight of the Executive Committee, and EWC Council.

We will report on progress against our Equalities Objectives in our Annual Report each year. This report will be published on the EWC website.

Equality information

The EWC will collect equality information through various mechanisms.

In respect of information about EWC employees, data will be collected via a biennial staff survey in relation to the protected characteristics.

We also believe it is important to have a diverse Council. We will therefore conduct a survey of members of Council to gather equality data during members' term of service

Equalities information will be reviewed by the Management Team and the Equalities Team. In respect of its outward-facing duties, EWC benefits from holding significant data on the education workforce in Wales maintained on the Register of Education Practitioners. The EWC will work to gather accurate data on new registrant groups: teachers in Further Education, learning support staff in schools and Further Education, Youth Workers and facilitators of Work Based Learning

Education workforce employment matters are outside the EWCs remit, but equality data held on the Register of Education Practitioners will be useful to employers and the Welsh Government.

Equality data will also be collated on applicants for registration and registered practitioners subject to Council's Fitness to Practise procedures. This data will be used to inform guidance and procedures and will inform annual training undertaken by Fitness to Practise panel members.

Publishing equality information

The EWC will make arrangements to publish equality data collected on its website..

Publication of equality data will include:

- the Annual Statistics Digest, which provides a wide range of important information on the education workforce in Wales;
- Equality data on applicants for registration and registered practitioners subject to Council's Fitness to Practise procedures, including data on cases handled in the year by age, ethnic group and gender;
- A gender pay analysis, reporting salary information of EWC employees by gender.

Equality Impact Assessments

All relevant policies and procedures will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment which will form part of the development and approval process for any new or reviewed policy.

For any internal policy / practice review and development, the assessment will be conducted by the Equalities Team and then submitted with the policy to the Personnel Forum as part of the whole-staff consultation process, and then to the Senior Management Team who will consider the assessment as part of the adoption of the new or revised policy.

For external policy /practice review and development, the assessment will be attached to the draft policy document, and submitted to the relevant Committee / Council for approval. The cover paper will summarise the impact assessment.

Equality training and development

The Council will provide regular training for all staff in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty. When a new member of staff is appointed, the Induction process will include an overview of the Public Sector Equality Duty, and then follow up with further regular all-staff training.

Similarly, training will be arranged for Council members covering the Public Sector Equality Duty, and their role in setting the strategic direction of the Council, reviewing its performance and ensuring that strong governance arrangements are in operation.

Equalities training will also be arranged for the Council's Fitness to Practise investigating Committee and panel members.

Engagement

The EWC will conduct an annual rolling programme of meetings with key stakeholders and interest groups. This will include regular meetings with education workforce unions where equalities issues appropriate to the EWCs remit will be discussed.

EWC officers will continue to participate in equalities networks and groups, these include:

- EHRC Wales Equality and Human Rights Exchange
- WGSB Equality and Diversity Forum
- South East Wales Equalities Network

We will continue to highlight relevant equalities information to our registrants and other stakeholders..

We will continue to ensure that our website and other publications are accessible to all.

Gender pay objectives

Gender pay information will be reviewed annually and an analysis published on the EWC website.