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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Welsh Government

Consultation Document

Welsh Government Draft Equality Objectives for 2016-2020

Date of issue: 20 April 2015

Action required: Responses by 10 July 2015

Overview

This twelve week consultation seeks views on what should be the Welsh Government's Equality Objectives to be included in its Strategic Equality Plan 2012-16.

The Welsh Government published its first Strategic Equality Plan on 2nd April 2012, following extensive public engagement which strongly supported the Welsh Government's Equality Objectives, reinforcing that they reflected the priorities of those with protected characteristics in Wales.

The Welsh Government wants to engage through this consultation on what are the greatest barriers facing those with protected characteristics in Wales and what should be our Equality Objectives for the next Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20.

How to respond

Please respond to this consultation by completing an on-line form, which can be accessed by following this link:

<http://gov.wales/consultations/people-and-communities/draft-equality-objectives-2016-2020-consultation/?lang=en>

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

Annex 1 provides a list of key policies and programmes where you may find helpful information to inform your response.

Contact details

For further information:

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Data protection

How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

Ministerial Foreword

Equality is about creating a fairer society where diversity is valued and respected, where people do not face discrimination and prejudice and where everyone can participate, flourish and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Modern day Wales is a society built on diverse and multi-cultural communities. However, there are many deeply entrenched and persistent inequalities for protected groups in Wales. These are often long-standing and inter-generational, for instance, in employment prospects and earnings.

Equality is at the heart of the Welsh Government and we are committed to ensuring the citizens of Wales live in a society which is safe, inclusive and where there are equal opportunities for all to contribute to the social, economic, cultural and environmental life of Wales. Our long-term vision for Wales is to be the best place to live, learn, work and do business.

The Equality Act 2010 created a Public Sector Equality Duty and also gave Welsh Ministers the power to impose specific equality duties on devolved Welsh public authorities through regulations. These duties have laid a further foundation for working towards a more equal Wales.

Our first Strategic Equality Plan, published in April 2012, contains outcome-focused Equality Objectives which put the spotlight on the practical differences we need to make to people's lives. These objectives were based on the robust evidence gathered by the Welsh Government and on extensive public engagement with numerous organisations and individuals across Wales.

The level of engagement on the Strategic Equality Plan 2012-16 was much appreciated and it raised the bar for this round of engagement on our second set of Equality Objectives. I would encourage organisations and stakeholders to take part in the engagement events and workshops which will inform this consultation so your voices can be heard, and you can help influence and shape the Equality Objectives and the Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020.

Lesley Griffiths AM

Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

Summary

What is this consultation about ?

The Welsh Government is consulting on the review and refresh of the Equality Objectives within its future Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20.

Following extensive public engagement, the Welsh Government published its Equality Objectives within its first [Strategic Equality Plan \(SEP\)](#) on 2 April 2012. The Welsh Government's SEP and its eight outcome-focused Equality Objectives allow us to identify and tackle barriers to equality, achieving better outcomes for the people of Wales.

Where are we now?

The Equality Act 2010 set a duty for the Public Sector known as the general duty or public sector equality duty. In summary it places a duty on public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Welsh Government was the first part of Great Britain to regulate to create specific duties under the 2010 Equality Act. Public sector bodies in Wales, including the Welsh Government had a statutory duty to publish Equality Objectives by 2 April 2012 and to have developed a Strategic Equality Plan as soon as possible thereafter.

The [latest Welsh Ministers Report on Equality](#) was published on 18 December 2014. It provides an overview of the progress we have made across the devolved Welsh public sector, in complying with the public sector equality duty since its introduction in 2011.

The Equality and Inclusion Grant 2014-17 is currently funding 16 Third Sector organisations, delivering across Wales, reaching a variety of people with different protected characteristics and assisting in achieving the Equality Objectives. A consultation seeking views on our equality and inclusion funding for 2017-20 is running parallel to this consultation and can be found using the following link <http://gov.wales/consultations/people-and-communities/equality-inclusion-programme-consultation/?lang=en>

The background to this consultation

The Welsh Specific Equality Duties make provision for a comprehensive four yearly review of listed public bodies' Equality Objectives.

The purpose of this consultation exercise is part of meeting the requirement under those duties to review our Equality Objectives and to engage with protected characteristic groups in doing so. It is part of working towards new Equality Objectives by 1 April 2016.

Since the publication of the first SEP, there have been a number of key developments and we are all aware of the very challenging financial climate we face. Therefore, it is crucial we, as part of the Welsh Public Service, work collaboratively and with a focus on preventative action to ensure delivery of effective and sustainable services.

In 2010 the Equality and Human Rights Commission produced "*How Fair is Wales?*"; a landmark equalities review. In 2015 the Commission will produce *Is Wales Fairer?* This report will examine progress on both equality and human rights since the Commission's first report, and will help Welsh Government and other public bodies and organisations understand the existing and emerging issues, and the social, political and economic challenges ahead.

Within the Welsh Government, our evidence base on the inequality affecting the people of Wales has been growing since 2010, although there is still a long way to go to strengthen it further. In the report "[Review of the evidence on inequality in Wales 2014](#)", we examined inequality with respect to both specific themes and each of the protected groups.

In February 2014, the then Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty initiated a [National Conversation](#) with the people of Wales to inform the national well-being goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill.

Through the Conversation people were asked to discuss the Wales they want to leave behind for their children and grandchildren. The National Conversation discussions focused on areas of opportunity such as technology, skills, leadership, diversity, identity, local enterprises and preventative action. This resulted in seven foundations for the well-being of future generations.

- 1. Children need to be given the best start in life from very early years**
- 2. Future generations need thriving communities built on a strong sense of place**
- 3. Living within global environmental limits, managing our resources efficiently and valuing our environment is critical**
- 4. Investing in growing our local economy is essential for the well-being of future generations**
- 5. Well-being of all depends on reducing inequality and a greater value on diversity**
- 6. Greater engagement in the democratic process, a stronger citizen voice and active participation in decision making is fundamental for the well-being of future generations**
- 7. Celebrating success, valuing our heritage, culture and language will strengthen our identity for future generations**

Tackling Poverty and socio-economic disadvantage

Evidence shows people with certain protected characteristics are at greater risk of living in low income households and initiatives which tackle poverty should therefore always seek to have a positive impact on those groups.

We also know certain Black and ethnic minority groups, disabled people, lone parents (who are predominantly women), disabled children and younger people who are not in employment, education and training (NEET) are more at risk of living in low income households. They are therefore more likely to be affected by poverty, including poverty caused or increased by welfare reforms. They also find more barriers to obtaining work.

The impacts of the UK Government's welfare reforms are significant and not spread equally. Our evidence shows some households have been hit much harder than others. Working-age disabled households are hit significantly harder than working-age non-disabled households. Working-age households with children are harder hit than pensioners or households without children.

Linked to the greater likelihood of living in poverty, we know particular groups with protected characteristics have disproportionately low educational attainment, including some Black and ethnic minority groups, e.g. pupils of Black and African Caribbean origin and those of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin, as well as those with Special Educational Needs and white boys from lower socio-economic groups. Ethnic minority pupils and white working class boys are also represented disproportionately in those permanently excluded (with all the negative consequences this often brings). For pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) this is even starker – approximately half of those excluded have SEN.

No doubt partly as a consequence of low educational attainment and/or exclusion, certain groups are also more likely to be NEET, including- again, disabled young people, certain Black and ethnic minority groups, young men among 16-18 year olds, and young women amongst 18-24 year olds.

Therefore, the Welsh Government believes its objectives to promote equality must be effectively integrated with efforts to tackle socio – economic inequalities.

Next Steps

Throughout 2015 we will be engaging with Welsh Public Bodies, the Third Sector, stakeholders (including protected characteristic groups) and the public. The information and evidence you provide will help the Welsh Government develop a refreshed set of Equality Objectives and inform the actions our departments will take to deliver the objectives and better outcomes for the people of Wales. It will also help to strengthen the evidence base on inequalities in Wales. The reviewed and refreshed Equality Objectives will be published by 1 April 2016.

What we would like you to tell us

Consultation Response Form

Your name:

Organisation (if applicable):

email / telephone number:

Your address:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here:

Current Strategic Equality Plan Objectives – 2012 - 2015

Section A

The current Equality Objectives are listed below with questions we would like you to consider. It is your opportunity to shape the Welsh Government's Equality Objectives in the next four-year Strategic Equality Plan (2016-2020). We know many areas of inequality are deeply entrenched and will take many years to eradicate. For this reason, you may feel the priorities have not changed since 2012 and we therefore seek your views on whether the existing Equality Objectives should remain or change and/or whether we should include other priorities.

Objective 1

Strengthen advice, information and advocacy services to help people with protected characteristics understand and exercise their rights and make informed choices.

1. Do you think this issue should continue to be prioritised in an equality objective for the Welsh Government in 2016-20?
2. If yes, do you think it needs to be updated and if so, how?
3. If you think it is no longer a priority as an equality objective, why is this?

Objective 2

Work with partners to identify and address the causes of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay and employment differences.

1. Do you think this issue should continue to be prioritised in an equality objective for the Welsh Government in 2016-20?
2. If yes, do you think it needs to be updated and if so, how?
3. If you think it is no longer a priority as an equality objective, why is this?

Objective 3

Reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

1. Do you think this issue should continue to be prioritised in an equality objective for the Welsh Government in 2016-20?
2. If yes, do you think it needs to be updated and if so, how?
3. If you think it is no longer a priority as an equality objective, why is this?

Objective 4

Reduce the incidence of all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse, 'honour' based violence, hate crime, bullying and elder abuse.

1. Do you think this issue should continue to be prioritised in an equality objective for the Welsh Government in 2016-20?
2. If yes, do you think it needs to be updated and if so, how?
3. If you think it is no longer a priority as an equality objective, why is this?

Objective 5

Tackle barriers and support disabled people so that they can live independently and exercise choice and control in their daily lives.

1. Do you think this issue should continue to be prioritised in an equality objective for the Welsh Government in 2016-20?
2. If yes, do you think it needs to be updated and if so, how?
3. If you think it is no longer a priority as an equality objective, why is this?

Objective 6

Put the needs of service users at the heart of delivery in key public services, in particular health, housing and social services, so that they are responsive to the needs of people with protected characteristics.

1. Do you think this issue should continue to be prioritised in an equality objective for the Welsh Government in 2016-20?
2. If yes, do you think it needs to be updated and if so, how?
3. If you think it is no longer a priority as an equality objective, why is this?

Objective 7

Improve the engagement and participation of under represented groups in public appointments.

1. Do you think this issue should continue to be prioritised in an equality objective for the Welsh Government in 2016-20?
2. If yes, do you think it needs to be updated and if so, how?
3. If you think it is no longer a priority as an equality objective, why is this?

Objective 8

This objective looks at equality barriers internally for Welsh government staff.

Create a more inclusive workplace that promotes equality of opportunity for staff with protected characteristics through improved employee engagement and increase awareness of learning and development opportunities that are accessible to all staff.

1. Do you think this issue should continue to be prioritised in an equality objective for the Welsh Government in 2016-20?
2. If yes, do you think it needs to be updated and if so, how?
3. If you think it is no longer a priority as an equality objective, why is this?

Do you think there are any gaps?

Do you think there should be any other Equality Objectives, either instead of or in addition to the ones in our current Strategic Equality Plan? If so, what should those objectives be?

We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to record them.

Please enter here:

Section B

We also want your views on the main issues and difficulties faced by individuals in Wales today, in relation to those with the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). Your views will help the Welsh Government identify where action needs to be focused and feed into the development of the Equality Objectives which will make a difference to people's lives.

Some commonly reported areas of concern are outlined below. Please feel free to give additional examples of issues / difficulties people may experience in the comments section provided.

1a In which of these areas do you think people in Wales face issues / difficulties because of their age?

Health	yes / no
Education	yes / no
Housing	yes / no
Access to transport	yes / no
Crime & Criminal Justice	yes / no
Ability to influence decisions which affect themselves	yes / no
Social & leisure	yes / no
Access to Care & Support	yes / no

Employment yes / no
Other (please specify).....

1b Please explain why you think this:

2a In which of these areas do you think people in Wales face issues / difficulties because they are disabled?

Health	yes / no
Education	yes / no
Housing	yes / no
Access to transport	yes / no
Crime & Criminal Justice	yes / no
Ability to influence decisions which affect themselves	yes / no
Social & leisure	yes / no
Access to Care & Support	yes / no
Employment	yes / no
Other (please specify):.....	

2b Please explain why you think this:

3a In which of these areas do you think people in Wales face issues / difficulties because of gender reassignment?

Health	yes / no
Education	yes / no
Housing	yes / no
Access to transport	yes / no
Crime & Criminal Justice	yes / no
Ability to influence decisions which affect themselves	yes / no
Social & leisure	yes / no
Access to Care & Support	yes / no
Employment	yes / no
Other (please specify):.....	

3b Please explain why you think this:

4a In which of these areas do you think people in Wales face issues / difficulties because of marriage and civil partnership?

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Health | yes / no |
| Education | yes / no |
| Housing | yes / no |
| Access to transport | yes / no |
| Crime & Criminal Justice | yes / no |
| Ability to influence decisions which affect themselves | yes / no |
| Social & leisure | yes / no |
| Access to Care & Support | yes / no |
| Employment | yes / no |
| Other (please specify):..... | |

4b Please explain why you think this:

5a In which of these areas do you think people in Wales face issues / difficulties because of pregnancy and maternity?

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Health | yes / no |
| Education | yes / no |
| Housing | yes / no |
| Access to transport | yes / no |
| Crime & Criminal Justice | yes / no |
| Ability to influence decisions which affect themselves | yes / no |
| Social & leisure | yes / no |
| Access to Care & Support | yes / no |
| Employment | yes / no |
| Other (please specify):..... | |

5b Please explain why you think this:

6a In which of these areas do you think people in Wales face issues / difficulties because of their race?

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Health | yes / no |
| Education | yes / no |
| Housing | yes / no |
| Access to transport | yes / no |
| Crime & Criminal Justice | yes / no |
| Ability to influence decisions which affect themselves | yes / no |
| Social & leisure | yes / no |
| Access to Care & Support | yes / no |
| Employment | yes / no |
| Other (please specify):..... | |

6b Please explain why you think this:

7a In which of these areas do you think people in Wales face issues / difficulties because of their religion, belief and/or non-belief?

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Health | yes / no |
| Education | yes / no |
| Housing | yes / no |
| Access to transport | yes / no |
| Crime & Criminal Justice | yes / no |
| Ability to influence decisions which affect themselves | yes / no |
| Social & leisure | yes / no |
| Access to Care & Support | yes / no |
| Employment | yes / no |
| Other (please specify):..... | |

7b Please explain why you think this:

8a In which of these areas do you think people in Wales face issues / difficulties because of their sex (gender)?

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Health | yes / no |
| Education | yes / no |
| Housing | yes / no |
| Access to transport | yes / no |
| Crime & Criminal Justice | yes / no |
| Ability to influence decisions which affect themselves | yes / no |
| Social & leisure | yes / no |
| Access to Care & Support | yes / no |
| Employment | yes / no |
| Other (please specify):..... | |

8b Please explain why you think this:

9a In which of these areas do you think people in Wales face issues / difficulties because of their sexual orientation?

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Health | yes / no |
| Education | yes / no |
| Housing | yes / no |
| Access to transport | yes / no |
| Crime & Criminal Justice | yes / no |
| Ability to influence decisions which affect themselves | yes / no |
| Social & leisure | yes / no |
| Access to Care & Support | yes / no |
| Employment | yes / no |
| Other (please specify):..... | |

9b Please explain why you think this:

10. In relation to the issues / difficulties you have identified, what would be the one thing the Welsh Government could do which would make the biggest difference?

