



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Advancing LGBTQ+ equality

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LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales

July 2021

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Draft LGBTQ+ Action Plan

Ministerial Foreword

Everyone has the right to be safe, to be themselves and to lead lives free from discrimination. Equality and inclusion are core values of the Welsh Government and our commitment to social justice means that we must do all that we can to value diversity and protect and advance human rights in Wales. As we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, these values are even more central to creating a fairer, more prosperous and a more equal Wales. Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning people (LGBTQ+) (with the + representing other identities including non-binary) is at the heart of this commitment.

We want Wales to be a nation, where everyone feels safe to be themselves, to be open about their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, at home, leisure or work without feeling threatened.

In the past few years alone we have made remarkable progress. We have pushed forward with curriculum reform, embedding LGBTQ+ inclusive education. We established a gender identity service to help our trans family be their true selves. We became the first nation in the UK to offer PReP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, an anti-HIV drug) free on the NHS. We have supported Pride Cymru and our First Minister marched at the front of the parade. During Covid-19 we set up a bespoke LGBTQ+ venue grant and we enabled drag artists to access our freelancer fund.

But there is always more to be done. We recognise the very real struggles against disadvantage, inequality and discrimination experienced by LGBTQ+ people in Wales. We have been working closely with representatives of Wales' LGBTQ+ communities to develop this action plan. In January 2021 we established an Independent Expert Panel comprised of individuals with a depth of community-based, professional, organisational, academic and personal lived experience to help set out the next steps for advancing LGBTQ+ equality. In March, this panel presented their report including a strong set of recommendations which has formed the basis for this Action Plan. We are in no doubt that the draft LGBTQ+ Action Plan, is a better Plan than we would have managed without the advice, guidance and recommendations from the panel and the individuals who contributed their lived experiences.

This ambitious, cross-government LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales seeks to tackle the existing structural inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ communities, to challenge discrimination and to create a society where LGBTQ+ people are safe to live and love authentically, openly and freely as themselves. This is our first plan to focus on responding to the specific needs, diversity and vulnerabilities of our LGBTQ+ communities. For the first time, we have brought together our existing commitments and set out how we intend to advance LGBTQ+ equality and inclusion, to make a real difference to the life chances, prospects, rights and outcomes for LGBTQ+ people, into the future.

We know that issues being faced by the LGBTQ+ community are often multidimensional: that is why this action plan has an unprecedented focus on intersectionality. It aligns closely with all of our work to advance human rights and reduce inequality relating to gender, disability, faith, age and race. Equality is for and means everyone in Wales, with no-one left behind.



Mark Drakeford MS
First Minister



Jane Hutt MS
Minister for Social Justice



Hannah Blythyn
Deputy Minister for Social Partnership

Introduction

The Welsh Government is committed to safeguarding human rights for everyone – we want to enable all LGBTQ+ people in Wales to live as full lives as possible – to be healthy, to be happy and to be safe. We've come a long way in the past three decades when it comes to strengthening equality and human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) people in Wales and across the UK. Legislative change has meant that schools, organisations and public services are now doing much more to advance these rights and tackle LGBTQ+ bullying and discrimination. Equal marriage and adoption rights are now a reality for many and Section 28 (a law passed in 1988 that stopped councils and schools "promoting the teaching of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship) has been consigned to history. We have seen a huge shift in positive attitudes toward LGBTQ+ communities and for LGBTQ+ inclusion.

While these changes are to be celebrated, we've also witnessed a rise in anti-LGB and anti-trans attitudes and hostility in many parts of the world. The human rights of LGBTQ+ people are under continuing or renewed threat in many countries. We must recognise that disadvantage, inequality and discrimination remains a reality for many LGBTQ+ people living in Wales too. Many continue to face significant barriers to participating fully and equally in Welsh society. In a recent survey¹ Stonewall Cymru found that 78 per cent of LGBTQ+ people in Wales have avoided being open about their sexual orientation or gender identity for fear of a negative reaction from others. Furthermore, 46 per cent of LGBTQ+ people in Wales have experienced verbal harassment in the last year. Such findings show the distressing experiences that LGBTQ+ people continue to go through in Wales today and demonstrate how far we still have to go to achieve equality and for people to feel happy and safe just simply being who they are.

Even before a global pandemic, we knew that LGBTQ+ communities were more likely to experience inequalities across a range of outcome areas. For example, LGBTQ+ people are more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to:

- Report lower life satisfaction levels
- Experience poorer access to healthcare services
- Be a victim of bullying, discrimination and hate crime in school, the workplace or in their communities;
- Drink alcohol, smoke and engage in substance misuse, and,
- Suffer from poorer mental health including loneliness, depression and suicide.

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

¹ Stonewall Cymru was commissioned by the Welsh Government to author and publish a survey in summer 2020, to capture statistics on LGBTQ+ people in Wales's experiences. This survey also included the opportunity to capture individuals' recommendations for a future LGBTQ+ Action Plan. These suggestions have been reflected, and in some cases included directly, into the Expert Panel's recommendations. The survey was promoted on a number of social media channels from organisations across Wales (encompassing both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ organisations). The survey received 532 responses

religion and disability². The Covid-19 pandemic has laid bare and further exacerbated the structural inequalities faced by Wales' most marginalised and disadvantaged communities³. For LGBTQ+ people, in particular, the Expert Panel report has highlighted ongoing concerns in education, personal and community safety, health and social care, and the workplace. Their report also highlighted the need for improved strategic coordination on LGBTQ+ issues. Emerging international and domestic evidence also suggests LGBTQ+ people have faced additional barriers in being unable to access healthcare services or medication as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and are at increased risk of violence, abuse, homelessness, lower employment, social isolation and loneliness⁴. This means there is a broad and deepening human rights crisis for LGBTQ+ people across the world, including Wales. The actions within this plan aim to address these problems, providing tangible action to be taken to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Wales.

Progress can and never should be taken for granted and more work needs to be done for Wales to lead by example and safeguard the hard won freedoms of LGBTQ+ people. The Welsh Government's position is clear: LGBTQ+ rights are human rights. Our draft LGBTQ+ Action Plan signals our commitment to respecting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of LGBTQ+ people in Wales. The LGBTQ+ Action Plan will act as the coordinating framework for LGBTQ+ policy development across government. It will set out the concrete steps we will take to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people, to challenge discrimination and to create a society where LGBTQ+ people are safe to live and to love authentically, openly and freely as themselves. The Plan is underpinned by the rights-based approach set out by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights⁵ and the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (IESOGI)⁶ and supports the realisation of rights guaranteed to LGBTQ+ people by the:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- United Nations Principles for Older Persons (UNPOP).

This approach ensures the plan will contribute strongly to the Welsh Government's fulfilment of its Public Sector Equality Duty functions, under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This plan will link to related work on gender, disability, race and other protected characteristics under this Act. We recognise the need to ensure our equality action plans work together. While this is the first policy framework to focus on the specific needs and vulnerabilities of LGBTQ+ people, it forms part of a wider approach to mainstream equality and strengthen human rights protections

² LGBT Foundation (2020) *Hidden Figures: The Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on LGBT Communities in the UK*

³ Welsh Parliament: ELGC Committee (2020) *Into sharp relief: inequality and the pandemic*

⁴ EHRC (2020) *How coronavirus has affected equality and human rights*

⁵ https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/29/23&referer=/english/&Lang=E

⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/sexualorientationgender/pages/index.aspx>

for everyone. As such, it should be read alongside our Strategic Equality Plan, Race Equality Action Plan, Framework for Action on Disability, and Gender Equality Plan.

This national LGBTQ+ Action Plan has been established to help coordinate action by Welsh Government and other agencies. The plan sets out an overarching set of actions to improve the recognition of LGBTQ+ people and also includes a wide range of policy-specific actions relating to education, improving safety, housing, health and social care, and promoting community cohesion. The Welsh Government will continue to vocally defend and promote the rights and dignity of trans and non-binary people in Wales to enable them to take a full and equal role in Welsh society at all levels. For the first time, we have brought together our existing commitments and set out how we intend to advance LGBTQ+ equality and inclusion, to make a real difference to the life chances, prospects and outcomes for LGBTQ+ people, today and into the future.

Key steps in the development of this Action Plan

The Welsh Government has worked collaboratively with a wide range of representatives from LGBTQ+ communities to inform the development of this draft Action Plan. In summer 2020, we commissioned Stonewall Cymru to carry out initial engagement with stakeholders to explore what important themes should be taken forward into a new LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales. Stonewall Cymru captured LGBTQ+ people's lived experiences via a survey (over 600 respondents) and a series of virtual focus groups. Some of the key messages from this engagement focused on tackling LGBTQ+ discrimination, improving safety and addressing health inequalities, particularly trans health.

In November 2020, the Welsh Government established an LGBTQ+ External Reference Group to provide advice and guidance and in January 2021, a smaller Independent LGBTQ+ Expert Panel was established to build on Stonewall Cymru's initial stakeholder engagement and provide strategic advice on advancing LGBTQ+ equality in Wales. The Independent Expert Panel chaired by Lu Thomas, comprised of people with a depth of community-based, professional, organisational, academic and personal lived experience, established the issues which must be addressed if we are to achieve substantial change and improved outcomes for all LGBTQ+ people in Wales. This panel was supported by workshops and sub-groups which considered many issues in more detail.

The Welsh Government also commissioned Stonewall Cymru to carry out further stakeholder engagement sessions to support the Independent Expert Panel's consideration of the intersectional experiences of LGBTQ+ people. The arrangements included virtual roundtable focus groups (representing LGBTQ+ young people, older people, disabled people and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people) and some additional discussions with organisations including the Wales TUC, WEN Wales and LGBT Helpline Cymru.

The Independent Expert Panel presented their report and recommendations to the then Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS, in March 2021. They recommended that the LGBTQ+ Action Plan take an intersectional approach to address how disadvantage experienced by LGBTQ+ people frequently intersects with other protected characteristics, such as race and

disability, to compound structural inequalities and disadvantage. As a result, this draft Action plan pays particular attention to the diversity of LGBTQ+ people's specific needs and vulnerabilities, including those experiencing intersectional discrimination (for example trans and non-binary people, who are among the least accepted groups in society and generally experience more discrimination and violence than others in the LGBTQ+ communities).

Discrimination is also often multidimensional and here too the plan takes an intersectional approach in order to pave the way to sustainable and respectful changes in society. The Expert Panel report included a set of overarching recommendations focusing on the incorporation of human rights into domestic law, strategic coordination and integration of plans, and training, awareness-raising and capacity building. The report included thematic recommendations for a broad range of policy areas, including recognition of trans and non-binary people; safety; home and communities; health and social care; education and lifelong learning; workplace and supporting the Covid-19 response. These recommendations have formed the basis of the draft Action Plan.

Language: The Expert Panel has recommended that we should use the acronym LGBTQ+ in relation to this work. Both the panel and the Welsh Government recognise that there are different views and usages across our communities, and that practice is likely to change again in future.

Overarching Aims

The overarching actions below provide a strategic and common thread which runs throughout the more specific actions that follow. They help to identify the commonalities shared by actions in the plan as a whole.

| | Actions |
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| 1. | We will strengthen equality and human rights for LGBTQ+ people and we will seek to influence the UK Government to strengthen the protections afforded to trans and non-binary people under the law, including refugees and those seeking asylum. |
| 2. | We will ensure that the rights of LGBTQ+ people are recognised and mainstreamed across the public sector in Wales. |
| 3. | We will ensure that all public service workers understand LGBTQ+ needs, encouraging comprehensive, intersectional equalities training to be undertaken where necessary. |
| 4. | We will help to challenge heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions and will require public bodies to appropriately identify and record LGBTQ+ identities at the point of access. The needs of LGBTQ+ communities will be made visible in service design and population-level analysis; and we will encourage service design to be co-produced. |
| 5. | We will improve data collection, including intersectional data, to identify the discrimination and wellbeing disparities experienced by our LGBTQ+ communities. |
| 6. | We will formalise the Independent Expert Panel to guide, monitor and evaluate implementation of the plan. We will provide an annual progress update on the implementation of the plan. |

Human Rights & Recognition

We will continue our support of LGBTQ+ people and ensure we continue to vocally defend and promote their rights and dignity to take a full and equal role in Welsh society. Research undertaken in preparing this Action Plan highlighted concerns from non-binary people over a lack of recognition both societally and in how they are reflected in the way services operate. In addition Trans people in Wales would like to see the Welsh Government go above and beyond the actions of the UK Government in protecting and furthering trans people's rights.

There is particular concern around the continuing practice of 'conversion therapy. 'We want every LGBTQ+ person to be treated with equal value, to be safe and to live authentically and openly as themselves, which is why the Programme for Government highlights that we will ban all aspects of LGBTQ+ conversion therapy that are within our current powers and seek the devolution of any necessary additional powers to enable us to achieve this. In addition, we will seek to devolve powers in relation to Gender Recognition and support our Trans community.

| | Actions |
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| 7. | Continue to vocally defend and promote the rights and dignity of trans and non-binary people in Wales to take a full and equal role in Welsh society at all levels. |
| 8. | Provide recognition of non-binary people throughout devolved policy areas, including education, housing and health as far as possible under the law. |
| 9. | Seek to devolve powers in relation to Gender Recognition and support our Trans community. |
| 10. | Use all available powers to ban all aspects of LGBTQ+ conversion therapy and seek the devolution of any necessary additional powers. |
| 11. | Explore ways unnecessary personal identifications such as name, age and gender markers can be removed from documentation particularly in recruitment practices. |
| 12. | Provide LGBTQ+ people with a greater understanding of their human rights, what they mean, how they intersect, or when they have been infringed, as well as how to seek redress when this happens. |

Ensuring LGBTQ+ People's Safety

Whilst there have been improvements in some areas, many LGBTQ+ people in Wales continue to feel unsafe and at a high risk of abuse or discrimination⁷. With recorded hate crime against LGBTQ+ people continuing to rise, most notably against trans people⁸ (more than doubling since 2017 to 106 per cent), it is vital that action is taken to address this and guarantee the safety LGBTQ+ people in Wales. Although the majority of LGBTQ+ people in Wales do live fulfilling and positive lives, we also know that too many live in fear of discrimination and prejudice. The comprehensive outreach undertaken to support development of this Action Plan revealed that LGBTQ+ people in Wales continue to face discrimination at home and in their respective communities. Nearly half of survey respondents (46 per cent) stated they had been subjected to verbal harassment, 26 per cent had suffered online abuse or harassment and 13 per cent experienced the threat of physical or sexual harassment and violence in the last year. These findings show how much more must be done to make homes and communities in Wales safe for all. Having safe communities will allow LGBTQ+ people to thrive and live without fear.

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| 13. | Work with Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables to consider building on existing ongoing engagement activity with marginalised communities, to ensure that their relationship with the police is more reflective of their needs. This will include LGBTQ+, disabled communities and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. |
| 14. | Work with Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables, along with other criminal and social justice partners, to review the under-reporting of LGBTQ+ hate crimes with the aim of acting to further improve the levels of reporting. |
| 15. | Work with the tech companies and media platforms to tackle hate crime and misinformation. |
| 16. | Engage with members of LGBTQ+, disabled and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to understand issues where there appears to be a lack of understanding amongst police call handlers and other front line staff. This should then inform work with Chief Constables to develop awareness raising inputs on specific issues related to hate crime, human rights and how those with protected characteristics are targeted. |
| 17. | Specifically target violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) in the LGBTQ+ community - to better understand the reasons for |

⁷ LGBT in Wales - Hate Crime and Discrimination report, 2018,

https://www.stonewallcymru.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_wales_-_hate_crime_stonewall_cymru.pdf

⁸ Hate Crime Figures Available Online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2017-to-2018>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2019-to-2020>

| | Action |
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| | historically low reporting from the community, ensuring all literature, messaging and awareness raising initiatives are inclusive, and where necessary specific to the LGBTQ+ community. Data collection from VAWDASV service providers, along with professional and public services, including police data should capture LGBTQ+ reporting, referrals, incidences etc. |

Home & Communities

Wales is made up of diverse communities, languages, identities and cultures. LGBTQ+ people exist in all our communities: from rural and urban communities to communities of faith, culture and the arts. All people, however they identify or where they reside, should be able to feel a sense of belonging both to their community and to Wales.

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| 18. | Support and resource LGBTQ+ community groups and organisations across Wales to combat regional inequalities that people experience when accessing services. Targeted intervention is also needed to increase the Welsh medium support services available to LGBTQ+ people. |
| 19. | Work with the youth work sector to find a longer term sustainable funding model for organisations, including in the voluntary sector, who provide support for a wide range of young people with differing backgrounds and needs, including support for LGBTQ+ young people. Future strategies including the work of the Interim Youth Work board should consider equality and diversity for all young people. |
| 20. | Utilise – and encourage the use of – LGBTQ+ awareness events in the annual calendar as opportunities to uplift LGBTQ+ voices, particularly from under-represented sections of the community. These include, but are not limited to, Pride events, LGBTQ+ History Month (February), IDAHOBIT (17 May), International Non-Binary Day (14 July), (Bi Visibility Day (23 September), Trans Day of Remembrance (20 November), and World AIDS Day (1 December). Work with other public bodies to support bi people with shows of support, such as flying the bi pride flag. |
| 21. | Support Prides across Wales by sponsoring Pride Cymru, establishing a Wales-wide Pride Fund and appointing a Wales wide Coordinator |
| 22. | As part of the Democratic Renewal campaign we will provide access to diverse role models to promote participation in democracy including standing for office, at all levels, in Wales. |
| 23. | <p>REPRESENTATION – Culture & Sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach out to LGBTQ+ individuals, groups and communities inviting them to support the design and development of holistic approaches across the Culture and Sport sectors in Wales, and building on the existing work of public bodies represented in the Public Body Equality Partnership. Improve LGBTQ+ representation in the Culture & Sport sectors in Wales at all levels, including at Board, workforce and volunteers' levels. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use national and local collections in the Culture and Sport sectors in Wales to celebrate and share LGBTQ+ stories and histories, providing funding where appropriate. • Consider how to provide greater focus on equality as part of skills development, work experience, volunteering, mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities. |
| 24. | <p>CELEBRATION – Culture & Sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate the LGBTQ+ communities in Wales by developing our national and local collections, encouraging LGBTQ+ communities to collate and donate collections to local archives and museums, providing funding where appropriate. • Use national and local collections to support Pride activity across Wales, including at Pride Cymru events and during Pride month. • Public bodies in the Culture and Sports sectors in Wales will work with any future appointed Wales Pride Coordinator to maximise opportunities to celebrate diversity. |
| 25. | <p>PARTICIPATION – Culture & Sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Sport Wales and national governing bodies to address the findings of the review of Transgender Inclusion in Domestic Sport. • Ensure workforces are engaged and aware of events and activities at local, regional and national level. • Consider how to provide greater focus on equality as part of skills development, work experiences, volunteering, mentoring and apprenticeship activities and opportunities, providing funding where appropriate. |
| 26. | <p>COHESION – Culture & Sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate across the culture and sport sectors to cascade and share good practice and learning. National, local and voluntary organisations will work cohesively to develop good practice that can be scalable and shared as appropriate, to ensure that best practice across the sectors is recognised and adopted wherever appropriate. |
| 27. | Examine how we can provide support to faith groups to create open and accessible environments for LGBTQ+ people, and to promote inter-community dialogue. |
| 28. | Strengthen LGBTQ+ representation on equality forums. |
| 29. | Ensure that all homelessness services sensitively capture people’s sexual orientation and trans status to tailor appropriate and safe pathways. |
| 30. | Evaluate specific LGBTQ+ projects, such as the Ty Pride project, and gather best practices and principles to share with local authorities regarding LGBTQ+ homelessness. |
| 31. | Work with the UK Government to encourage sensitive identification of LGBTQ+ people throughout their asylum claim by making amendments to the ASF1 form and asylum case worker guidance. |

| | Action |
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| 32. | Work with the UK Government and Clearsprings Ready Homes to encourage the development of LGBTQ+ only asylum properties in Wales, with necessary safeguarding and welfare considerations implemented. |
| 33. | Work with specialised LGBTQ+ asylum and refugee support services, such as Glitter Cymru and Hoops & Loops, to identify improvements to relevant policies and support organisational sustainability. |
| 34. | Ensure our commitments to making Wales a Nation of Sanctuary are inclusive of LGBTQ+ people. |
| 35. | Ensure that appropriate mental health support is provided to LGBTQ+ refugees and people seeking asylum. |

Improving Health Outcomes

Outreach which informed the Actions within this Plan found that LGBTQ+ people in Wales continue to face significant inequalities when accessing health and social care services. The Expert Panel survey found that, whilst improvements are being made 85 per cent of responders indicated that there was no effect (69 per cent) or positive effect (16 per cent) when disclosing their LGBTQ+ identity to healthcare staff, and experiences of discrimination continue at an unacceptable rate. 22 per cent of survey responders indicated that they had been subject to inappropriate questions or curiosity when disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity, whilst 18 per cent felt their specific healthcare needs were ignored or not taken into account and 12 per cent stating they had avoided treatment or accessing services for fear of discrimination or intolerant reactions. Research also suggests that LGBTQ+ people face distinct inequalities when accessing social care.⁹ Previous reports show that LGBTQ+ disabled people continue to face discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity from those providing personal care.¹⁰ Research on the experiences of LGBTQ+ older people in care homes has shown it is often noted that the needs of older people are not always met.¹¹ Each of these findings display that work must be done to ensure that LGBTQ+ people in Wales are safe and confident in accessing the health and social care system. There are also several areas where LGBTQ+ people are disproportionately affected, such as depression and suicidal thoughts, sexual health conditions and substance use.¹² We must take action to better understand and mitigate for these disproportionalities.

| Action | |
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| 36. | Undertake targeted public health work to combat issues where LGBTQ+ people are disproportionately at risk, including substance use, sexual health and mental health. |
| 37. | Continue to ensure that maternity and fertility services are accessible and straightforward to use for LGBTQ+ people. |
| 38. | Work alongside NHS Wales, Social Care Wales and social care providers and commissioners to embed comprehensive and ongoing LGBTQ+ specific health and social care training to all staff. Health Inspectorate Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales should act to ensure compliance with best practice |
| 39. | Include consideration of the needs of LGBTQ+ people, including LGBTQ+ older people and younger people, in the process of reviewing our codes of practice and statutory guidance under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, to link in with appropriate professional training. |

⁹ Health and Social Care and LGBTQ Communities, House of Commons, Women and Equalities Committee - <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201919/cmselect/cmwomeq/94/94.pdf>

¹⁰LGBTQI+* Disabled People and self-directed social care support <https://www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk/PDF/Findings/RF77.pdf>

¹¹ Developing inclusive care homes for older people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBTQ) <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/policybristol/policy-briefings/inclusive-care-homes>

¹² Stonewall, 2018, LGBTQ in Britain: Health Report: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/LGBTQ-britain-health>

| Action | |
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| 40. | Ensure any future review of mental health services takes account of the focus on and efficacy for LGBTQ+ people including young people. |
| 41. | Publish and act on a new HIV and Sexual Health Action Plan which includes a focus on prevention, education and equitable service provision. |
| 42. | Support the moves to tele-medicine for sexual health appointments and postal testing where possible and desired by the patient. |
| 43. | Commit to review the Gender Identity pathway for children and young people in Wales following the review in NHS England. |
| 44. | Continue to develop the Wales Gender Service with GPs able to initiate hormone therapy as part of the adult pathway. |
| 45. | Work with the Wales Gender Service to address public perception that there is disparity of access to gender identity services for non-binary people. |
| 46. | Consider establishing an NHS Wales-wide review on trans people's medical records, led by trans communities, to promote trans people's engagement with healthcare services, privacy, and quality of healthcare. |

Education

In 2017, the Expert Sex and Relationships Education panel drew on a wide range of national and international research,¹³ one of the key findings of the panel was that there was a gap between children and young people’s lived experiences of relationships and sexuality (online and offline). Drawing on Stonewall Cymru’s survey which found that there remains a lack of discussion in educational environments about sexual orientation and/or gender identity, with 44 per cent of those in education in the last three years stating that neither of these topics was discussed, the expert panel concluded that rarely is Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) LGBTQ+ inclusive, and provision is too heteronormative. These findings have been confirmed by teachers’ own evaluative audits with their students in a recent professional learning programme with primary, secondary and special schools¹⁴ – practices supported by the published commitment and promise of new statutory guidance for schools, in which LGBTQ+ inclusivity is an underpinning principle.¹⁵

Change is underway: while the LGBTQ+ people who engaged with Stonewall Cymru’s outreach process were largely optimistic about the opportunities of the new Welsh curriculum,¹⁶ specifically the commitment to teach inclusive RSE for all learners (age 3-16), concerns were raised around the implementation of the commitments on a truly inclusive curriculum.

| Action | |
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| 47. | Provide strategic, comprehensive investment in professional learning and training on designing a fully LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum. This should include delivering LGBTQ+ inclusive RSE for all. |
| 48. | Ensure that training must also act to empower professionals to adequately support LGBTQ+ young people and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, by embedding a rights based approach. |
| 49. | Promote resources to help the families of LGBTQ+ young people, through Parenting. Give it time. |
| 50. | Provide statutory national trans guidance for schools and local authorities. |
| 51. | Continue to invest in hate crime prevention programmes across Wales. |
| 52. | Work with colleges and universities in Wales to ensure that they are LGBTQ+ inclusive environments for learners and staff, identifying and building on best practice. |

¹³ Renold, E. and McGeeney, E. 2017a. The Future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales. Wales: Welsh Government. AND Renold, E. and McGeeney, E. 2017b. Informing the Future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales. Cardiff: Cardiff University.

¹⁴ Renold, E.J., Ashton, M. and McGeeney, E. (2020) *CRUSH: Transforming Relationships and Sexuality Education*. Cardiff: Cardiff University. Available Online at: www.agendaonline.co.uk/crush/

¹⁵ Welsh Government. 2020a. *Cross-cutting themes for designing your curriculum*. Hwb. [Online] Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/cross-cutting-themes-for-designing-your-curriculum>

¹⁶ Welsh Government, Available Online at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales>

| Action | |
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| 53. | Consider options for the targeted funding of research into the experiences of the LGBTQ+ population of Wales. |
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Workplace

While progress has been made on making workplaces more equal, this remains dependent on the type of industry and the level of commitment shown by the employer. More and more organisations are taking pride in their commitment to LGBTQ+ staff, customers and service users. Yet, discrimination in the workplace remains widespread, requiring action and Government commitment to drive change. The outreach process found that whilst 45 per cent of people reporting that those in the workplace reacted only positively when aware they were LGBTQ+, 24 per cent reported un-permissible exposure of their LGBTQ+ identity in the workplace and 10 per cent recounted experiencing verbal harassment. Focus group attendees also stated that they experience workplace inequalities and discrimination, particularly those in more precarious employment. Workplaces in Wales have improved, yet we need to go further to eradicate discrimination and empower all those in employment to be themselves as well as championing the positive impact diversity can have in all types of organisation.

| | Action |
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| 54. | With support from Trade Unions, create a more homogenised approach to private workplace training resources for workplaces to become more LGBTQ+ inclusive. |
| 55. | Provide a resource detailing employment protections as well as employer responsibilities for upholding the rights of trans staff working in the private sector. |
| 56. | Promote the importance of the collection of diversity data to businesses in Wales. |

Covid-19 Response

Research conducted by the University College London and the University of Sussex into the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Britain during the coronavirus lockdowns has uncovered a mental health crisis among the LGBTQ+ community, with 69 per cent of respondents suffering depressive symptoms, rising to 90 per cent of those who had experienced homophobia or transphobia¹⁷. This evidence is supported by further research on the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on LGBTQ+ people, conducted by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the

¹⁷ The mental health and experiences of discrimination of LGBTQ+ people during the Covid-19 pandemic: Initial findings from the Queerantime Study: <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.08.03.20167403v1>, 2020

High Commissioner¹⁸, LGBT Foundation¹⁹ and highlighted by Human Rights Watch²⁰. These findings are reinforced by the results of a Welsh Government commissioned Stonewall Cymru survey, with many LGBTQ+ people in Wales reporting experiences of isolation as a result of Covid-19. This social isolation along with some being forced back into unsupportive or openly-hostile households, highlights the stark impact of coronavirus for LGBTQ+ people, and the need to recognise and consider their experiences when responding to the crisis. Evidence suggests the potential impact of Covid-19 is even more marked among certain LGBTQ+ groups such as older LGBTQ+ people, younger LGBTQ+ people, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic LGBTQ+ people and LGBTQ+ disabled people”^{21,22,23,24}

| | Action |
|-----|--|
| 57. | Consider the distinct experiences of LGBTQ+ people including, explicitly LGBTQ+ children and young people as Wales comes out of lockdown and plan the post-COVID recovery. |
| 58. | Consider undertaking a thorough investigation into how LGBTQ+ people in Wales have been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. |

¹⁸ United Nations Human Right – Office of the High Commissioner, 2020, Report on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the human rights of LGBT persons, Available Online at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SexualOrientationGender/Pages/COVID19Report.aspx>

¹⁹ LGBT Foundation, 2020, Hidden Figures: The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on LGBT communities in the UK, Available Online at: <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/lgbt-website-media/Files/7a01b983-b54b-4dd3-84b2-0f2ecd72be52/Hidden%2520Figures-%2520The%2520Impact%2520of%2520the%2520Covid-19%2520Pandemic%2520on%2520LGBT%2520Communities.pdf>

<https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/lgbt-website-media/Files/7a01b983-b54b-4dd3-84b2-0f2ecd72be52/Hidden%2520Figures-%2520The%2520Impact%2520of%2520the%2520Covid-19%2520Pandemic%2520on%2520LGBT%2520Communities.pdf>

²⁰ Graeme Reid, 2020, Human Rights Watch: LGBTQ Inequality and Vulnerability in the Pandemic, Available Online at:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/18/lgbtq-inequality-and-vulnerability-pandemic>

²¹ Phillips, C. (2021). How covid-19 has exacerbated LGBTQ+ health inequalities.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/372/bmj.m4828.full.pdf>

²² Ruprecht, MM; Wang, X; Johnson, AK; et al. (2020). Evidence of Social and Structural COVID-19 Disparities by Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Race/Ethnicity in an Urban Environment. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11524-020-00497-9>

²³ Gato, J; Barrientos, J; Tasker, F; et al. (2021). Psychosocial Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Mental Health among LGBTQ+ Young Adults: A Cross-Cultural Comparison across Six Nations.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00918369.2020.1868186>

²⁴ LGBT Foundation. (2020). Hidden Figures: The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on LGBT Communities in the UK.

<https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/lgbt-website-media/Files/7a01b983-b54b-4dd3-84b2-0f2ecd72be52/Hidden%2520Figures-%2520The%2520Impact%2520of%2520the%2520Covid-19%2520Pandemic%2520on%2520LGBT%2520Communities.pdf>