

Welsh Assembly Government's Single Equality Scheme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2009 -2012



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Our executive summary of this Scheme is available in alternative formats and languages including Braille, audio, British Sign Language and Easy Read.

If you would like any information in an alternative format please let us know.

We welcome feedback on our Single Equality Scheme. You can do this, or request alternative formats, by using the details below:

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ISBN 978 0 7504 5187 1

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CMK-22-04-045(288)

E0400910

Welsh Assembly Government Single Equality Scheme and Action Plans 2009-2012

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the Welsh Assembly Government's first Single Equality Scheme and action plans.

Developing our Single Equality Scheme is a key way of helping us meet our commitment to the "One Wales" vision of a dynamic economy, better health, high quality lifestyles and sustainable communities in a diverse and bilingual Wales.

It will help meet our commitment to a fairer and just society.

This document has been developed following a three phase engagement and consultation process we have adopted which comprises: pre-consultation on key equality issues, (November 2007 - January 2008); consultation on a framework and priorities for a Single Equality Scheme (March 2008 - June 2008) and consultation on the draft Scheme and its action plans (October 2008 - January 2009).

The views and comments we received during the process have helped to inform the development of the Single Equality Scheme and departmental action plans.

The action plans set out key actions that our departments want to take forward over the next three years to deliver their commitment to promoting equality.

Some of the activities that appear in these action plans are commitments identified from earlier schemes and work programmes. Others have been developed as a result of consideration of equality issues and feedback from the consultation.

Six monthly reviews have been programmed into the implementation of the Scheme to ensure we have the opportunity to reflect and revise our plans and take into consideration changing legislative requirements.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to ensuring that people can access services in ways which make sense to citizens and meet their needs. We are committed to working across organisational and sectoral boundaries and will be focusing on achieving better services and better outcomes for service users.

This Scheme will help us demonstrate how we fulfil our obligations under current equality law. It sets out how we will promote equality of opportunity for all, and how we recognise and value diversity. We want to go further than meeting our legal responsibilities to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination in respect of disability, gender and race. We will apply the same broad principles to the new areas of equality - age, religion and belief or non-belief, sexual orientation and transgender.

The needs of Welsh speakers are also important to Welsh Assembly Government and this matter is dealt with through the Welsh Language Scheme.

In producing this Single Equality Scheme, the Welsh Assembly Government acknowledges that while there are common elements for each equality duty, there are also different, specific elements exclusive to each of the three duties. These make each duty unique and of special relevance to its particular equality strand.

We will build on the accomplishments of our work in respect of race, disability and gender. We will need to work effectively with all of our partners to make progress in delivering on this progressive agenda.

The building blocks of our work on equality, diversity, social justice and human rights are:

- A solid evidence base about the diversity of the population of Wales and about the inequalities experienced by different groupings and individuals.
- Embedding equality and diversity into our policy and strategy development through using Inclusive Policy Making (Equality Impact Assessments).
- Working with our stakeholders and partners to progress our work.
- Ensuring that the citizens of Wales have a voice in policy development and implementation.
- Considering and promoting cross strand and joint working opportunities.
- Regularly monitoring and reflecting on our work to ensure it meets the needs of those we serve.

2 OUR PRIORITIES

Feedback from our consultation has helped identify priorities for, and shape the development of, the departmental action plans and which will give it practical effect.

An overview of what each department does and their departmental priorities as identified in the final action plans is provided below. Much more detail is available in the action plans which are part of the Scheme.

These may change throughout the life of the Scheme.

2.1 Department for Constitutional Affairs, Equality and Communication

The Department for Constitutional Affairs, Equality and Communications works in support of Welsh Ministers to help them both deliver and communicate their policies and programmes, and informs staff about relevant developments within the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Department also helps the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that its equality and diversity commitments are understood and executed. It also promotes the statutory commitment that equality of opportunity for all people will underpin Welsh Assembly Government policies and programmes.

2.1.1 Action plan priorities:

- To ensure policies take account of the diverse population of Wales, aiming to ensure that all communication requirements are met.
- To receive applications and nominations for Honours and Public Appointments that broadly reflect the diversity of Welsh life.

2.2 Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

The Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills aims to drive forward improvements in services for children and young people. It aims to provide education and training to support the people of Wales in fulfilling their academic, social and economic potential. The Department aspires to deliver better outcomes for children, learners, communities, business and employers.

2.2.1 Action plan priorities:

- To promote the well-being of all children and young people by: providing support for them to reach their full potential; ensuring they can all benefit from formal education, informal and non-formal learning; and protecting their rights and entitlements.

- To improve learner outcomes and well-being through: a skills based curriculum and associated assessment arrangements; all age qualification reform and credit framework developments; a focus on school effectiveness and the professional development of practitioners.
- To lead the contribution that the post-16 education and training system makes towards enabling all learners including those from underrepresented and disadvantaged groups. To achieve a highly educated, highly skilled Wales with high employment opportunities. To identify and prioritise the knowledge and skills needs of employers, learners, communities and the Welsh Assembly Government. To enable education and training institutions to be flexible, of high quality and responsive to national and local needs.
- To promote inclusion, reduce disadvantage and tackle poverty of educational opportunity by developing programmes, policies and products to address the needs of learners of all ages including those with additional learning needs and inclusion issues. To successfully deliver financial support to students and other learners in partnership with key stakeholders.

The Department works alongside Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn) is to promote excellence for all learners in Wales. To that end Estyn provides an independent, high quality inspection and advice service relating to the distinctive circumstances and needs of Wales.

The Inspectorate is committed to ensuring that its internal operations are fair and deliver equality of opportunity irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, language, ability, age, religion, sexual orientation.

Through its Common Inspection Framework, Estyn ensures that assessment of the extent to which education and training providers in Wales promote diversity, comply with the relevant equality legislation and the expected standards for access and opportunity for learners irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation is embedded within its work.

2.3 Department for the Economy and Transport

The vision of the Department for Economy and Transport is for Wales to create a vibrant Welsh economy, delivering strong and sustainable growth by providing opportunities for all. The Department's areas of work include promoting industry and investment, transport policy, and the Wales European Funding Office.

2.3.1 Action plan priorities:

- To deliver a truly accessible business support service across Wales that takes account of people's needs arising from each of the equality strands.
- To improve the integration of social, economic and environmental considerations into regeneration.
- To provide an efficient and accessible transport system that assists in tackling causes of inequality.

2.4 Department for the Environment, Sustainability and Housing

The Department for Environment, Sustainability and Housing is committed to creating a sustainable environment for the people of Wales and for future generations. The Department is encouraging sustainable development through the environment strategy, planning system and the sustainable management of our landscapes. They are taking steps to reduce Wales' contribution to climate change and acting to mitigate its impact e.g. through flood defence.

2.4.1 Action plan priorities:

- To ensure that all households in all communities and irrespective of their means can afford a decent home.
- To ensure the physical planning of land use to reflect needs.
- To improve the physical environment.
- To give access to the natural environment.

The Department works alongside the Countryside Council for Wales and they will link in to their action plan:

The Countryside Council for Wales advises the Welsh Assembly Government on wildlife and landscape issues. The Council follows a policy framework and has objectives and key targets set out by the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing on a yearly basis.

2.5 Department for Health and Social Services the Department for Public Health and Health Professions and Child and Family Court Advisory Support Services

The Department for Health and Social Services, the Department for Public Health and Health Professions and Child and Family Court Advisory Support Services all have supporting roles in delivering a first class health system and promoting health and well being in Wales. Together they are responsible for funding, setting health care policy and public health policy, reviewing, inspecting, tackling inequalities and regulating social services cover, adult and child care and providing support and advice, grants and community voluntary care.

2.5.1 Action plan priorities:

- To enable and influence improvements in equality of access and provision of health and social care in Wales by ensuring equality, diversity and human rights are mainstreamed in strategic planning and workforce development.
- To improve the health and wellbeing of all the people of Wales.
- To improve outcomes for children and their families involved in family proceedings for the next three years.

The Department works alongside the following inspectorates and these will link in to their action plans:

The Care Council for Wales works with Children and Family Court Advisory Support Services. It promotes high standards for social care workers to improve safeguards for users of social care services. Its aim is to ensure that the 150,000 children and adults who are receiving social care services at any one time in Wales can rely on a workforce that is properly trained, appropriately qualified and effectively regulated.

The Health Inspectorate Wales is responsible for undertaking reviews and investigations into the provision of NHS funded care by the Welsh NHS. It provides independent assurance about and to support the continuous improvement in the quality and safety of Welsh NHS funded care.

2.6 Department for Heritage

The Heritage Department aims to develop services which give everyone the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from the rich and diverse cultural and historical experiences that Wales has to offer. The Department also promotes tourism.

2.6.1 Action plan priorities:

- To encourage all groups to participate in and shape the nature of contemporary Welsh culture.
- To provide opportunities for greater access to cultural activities for all groups and communities in society and to promote and protect a culture which celebrates the diversity of Wales and its many traditions.

2.7 Department for Human Resources

The Human Resources Department provides a range of services to our staff including the delivery of training and development, internal and external recruitment, performance management, Health and Safety, occupational health, pay and pensions.

2.7.1 Action plan priorities:

- To change our behaviour to create an inclusive culture, confident in our own diversity.
- To ensure there is clear and transparent accountability for delivering diversity.
- To develop systems to enable everyone to realise their potential.
- To have a workforce that is moving towards being representative of the population of Wales.

2.8 Department for Public Services and Performance

The Department for Public Services and Performance supports the Welsh Assembly Government's major agenda for change, integration, and performance development across the Public Services in Wales.

The goal is to put citizens at the heart of service design. Their expectations for quality, accessibility and results are high and rising fast. More and better performing services must bridge traditional provider boundaries to be effective, not least for equality and social justice. The Department's role is to enable providers to meet this challenge.

2.8.1 Action plan priorities:

- To develop a citizen centred model for public service delivery which takes account of the needs of all citizens in Wales.

The Department works alongside the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales and this links into their action plan:

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales is an operationally distinct division of the Department of Public Service and Performance. Its role is to inspect and review local authority social services and to regulate and inspect care settings and agencies. It uses the regulations made by, and national minimum standards set out by, the Welsh Assembly Government.

2.9 Department for Rural Affairs

The Department for Rural Affairs is committed to helping farmers become more sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. It helps to promote animal health and wellbeing. The Department delivers the Rural Development Plan for Wales which offers support for farming, forestry, agri-food and rural community regeneration. The Department also advises on wider rural issues and undertakes rural proofing on policies across the Assembly.

2.9.1 Action plan priorities:

- To embed inclusion to deliver a high quality, sustainable service to meet the diverse needs of all the people of rural Wales.

2.10 Department for Social Justice and Local Government

The Department for Social Justice and Local Government is responsible for improving and delivering excellent public services in Wales, with a particular emphasis on safeguarding and supporting vulnerable people, combating social exclusion and reducing inequality. It also provides support and funding to local government to deliver these objectives.

2.10.1 Action plan priorities:

- To promote Social Justice by reducing the effects of poverty on children in Wales.
- To support those marginalised from society by improving financial inclusion and ensuring everyone can be free from poverty.
- To promote a more cohesive community which encourages community regeneration, shared values and equal opportunities in all areas of Welsh society.
- To improve access to core services for disadvantaged groups including the victims of domestic abuse.