



Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**
Social Care **Wales**



Noddir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Sponsored by
Welsh Government



Strategic equality plan

2018 to 2022

Contact details

Social Care Wales
South Gate House
Wood Street
Cardiff
CF10 1EW
Tel: 0300 3033 444
Minicom: 029 2078 0680
Email: info@socialcare.wales

Twitter: [@SocialCareWales](https://twitter.com/SocialCareWales)
© 2018 2018 Social Care Wales
ISBN: 978-1-911463-78-8

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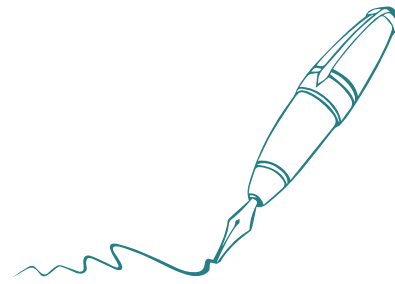
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This document is also available in Welsh. Copies of this document are available in large print or other formats, if required.

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Foreword



Promoting equality and valuing people's differences are central to the core values of Social Care Wales. They are also vital for supporting the well-being of people who need care and support, or carers who need support.

Social Care Wales was established in April 2017 and this is our first Strategic equality plan. This Strategic equality plan has been informed and developed by involving and engaging with people who use care and support, and their carers.

We have a crucial role to play in building the confidence of the workforce and supporting them to work in ways that promote equality. We also want to lead and support improvement in the provision of care and support to make sure people have a positive experience irrespective of the individual characteristics, which may limit their opportunity to achieve their well-being outcomes.

Promoting equality is more than just a statement of how we will meet our statutory requirements. It is an integral part of the way we carry out our business. We are committed to

promoting equality and providing an inclusive and supportive environment for staff and others who work closely with us.

We will be putting our Strategic equality plan into practice over the next four years. It is vital we meet the equality objectives we set out in this plan to maintain the confidence of all the communities we serve – the people who use care and support, the social care workforce and our staff.



Sue Evans
Chief Executive,
Social Care Wales

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Our Strategic equality plan sets out how we, through our role and functions, will promote and advance the equality of opportunity for the communities we serve:

- the people who use care and support, their families and carers
- the workforce who provide care and support
- our staff.

Social Care Wales was established in April 2017, bringing together social care workforce regulation, workforce development and service improvement in one organisation. We are also involved in shaping the research priorities for social care and building stronger links to care and support.

Our vision is for every person who needs care and support to live the life that matters

to them. We have a crucial role to play in improving the well-being outcomes for children and adults who use care and support, their families and carers.

This *Strategic equality plan* is based on a principle of **promoting equality and valuing diversity**.

It sets out:

- our equality objectives
- how we will identify and collect relevant equality information
- how we will publish relevant equality information
- how we will carry out impact assessments
- how we will promote knowledge and understanding of the general and specific equality duties to our staff.



1.2 Legal context

What we will do

While we have a statutory duty to publish a strategic equality plan, our ambition is to go beyond this and set out our commitment to improving the well-being outcomes for people who use care and support.

We will do this by tackling discrimination on the grounds of:

- gender
- marital status
- ethnic origin
- preferred language
- religious belief
- sexual orientation
- age
- disability
- family/domestic responsibilities
- any other individual characteristic, which may limit a person's opportunity to achieve their well-being outcomes.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 covers or gives protection to the following groups:

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

These are now called "protected characteristics".

The general equality duty

The **Equality Act 2010** places a **general equality duty** on public sector bodies. This means when we carry out our functions, we must have due regard to:

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

Specific duties

The **Equality Act 2010** sets out **specific duties** in Wales that place additional responsibilities on public bodies such as ourselves. These duties include:

- developing equality objectives
- publishing a strategic equality plan
- carrying out effective engagement with protected characteristic groups and/or those who represent their interests
- assessing the impact of policies and practices
- collecting and publishing relevant equality information
- developing a gender pay difference objective
- publishing an annual equality report
- staff training
- embedding equality into procurement.

Our Welsh language commitment

We recognise our responsibilities under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and our leadership role in supporting the Welsh Government's *More than just words – strategic framework for Welsh language services in health, social services and social care*.

Our current Welsh Language Scheme (Welsh Language Act 1993) and the forthcoming Welsh language standards set out how we will give effect to the need to treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality. While the Welsh language is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, our approach and values ensure our work and our policy decisions champions the importance of the Welsh language for people who use care and support, and their families and carers.



2. Equality objectives

2.1 Developing our equality objectives for 2018 to 2022

We have developed our equality objectives for 2018 to 2022 by using the priorities identified and the trends' analysis from the following sources:

- the consultation responses we received about our [strategic plan 2017 to 2022](#)
- the well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- feedback from our staff on emerging equality priorities
- the outcomes of our equality impact assessments
- the emerging themes from the [National population assessment report](#)
- the equality profile of the social care workers who are registered with us.

2.2 Purpose of our equality objectives

We recognise our leadership role in promoting equality and valuing diversity across the social care sector. Our purpose is to develop outcome-focused equality objectives that respond to the diverse needs of the communities we serve:

- **individuals with protected characteristics** – people receive care and support in ways that reflect their specific needs
- **the workforce providing care and support** – the workforce reflects the diversity of the population of Wales and understands how to respond to the diverse care and support needs of individuals with protected characteristics
- **our staff** – our staff reflects the diversity of the Welsh population and understands the diverse care needs of those who share one or more of the protected characteristics and how they should respond to that need.

It is important for us to make sure our equality objectives are in line with the principles and ethos of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.





2.3 Engaging and involving people who use care and support

When we set our equality objectives, it is important we listen and reflect the views of those who share one or more of the protected characteristics. Not only because we have a legal duty to do so, but also so we can make sure our work is informed by the views and needs of people with one or more protected characteristics. Our six equality objectives have been informed by people who use care and support, their families and carers.

Forty-three participants attended our focus groups and they included women, older people and disabled people across impairment groups, including people with learning, mental health, sensory, cognitive and physical impairments, and long-term health conditions. Several participants identified as disabled people with multiple impairments. The participants also included black and minority ethnic (BME) and younger people, and several identified as current or former carers.

We are indebted to those people who informed the development of our equality objectives, and all those who took the time to comment on our plans. Many people gave their time freely and willingly, and we would like to acknowledge and thank them for their contribution. Their feedback has been invaluable in helping us make sure the equality objectives better reflect the priorities and concerns of diverse communities.

2.4 Equality objectives for 2018 to 2022

Individuals with protected characteristics receive care and support in ways that reflect their specific needs

Objective 1 – Raise awareness of the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care (the Code) among people using care and support, their families and carers

Why is this one of our objectives?

We want to make sure that people who use care and support, their families and carers know about the Code. The standards are there to help make sure people have the support they need to live their life in the way that reflects their needs.

We have collected evidence that suggests there is little or no knowledge of the Code among BME people. With this starting evidence, we are committed to using a range of tools and resources to raise awareness of the Code among the diverse people who use care and support in Wales.

People who attended our focus groups have already told us about a number of actions we can take to achieve this objective. Some of these include:

- making the Code available in a range of formats
- making the Code available to people the first time they seek information and advice
- social care professionals making sure



people have understood the standards and information they have been provided with.

Objective 2 – Research and share good practice that supports improved outcomes for people who use care and support

Why is this one of our objectives?

We want improved outcomes for children and adults who use care and support, their families and carers. We want to understand and share good practice that responds to the care and support needs of the diverse communities of Wales.

The priorities for improvement agreed with our partners are:

- people living with dementia
- children who are looked after
- care and support at home.

Work is already taking place to address these issues through national strategies and we will make sure we align our ongoing work with this equality objective.

The workforce providing care and support reflects the diversity of the population of Wales, and understands how to respond to the diverse care and support needs of individuals with protected characteristics.



Objective 3 – Support the sector to achieve a diverse and representative workforce

Why is this one of our objectives?

We want a social care workforce that is more representative of the communities it serves, particularly where we have evidence of under-representation. We want to work with partners to identify and address the barriers that may prevent people who share one or more of the protected characteristics from joining the social care workforce.

People who use care and support have told us that a diverse workforce brings a range of ideas, experiences and skills that has a positive effect on the way care is provided. They also told us it is vital to promote social care as a valued profession and to make a range of entry routes available for people to join the sector. We are committed to supporting the sustainability of the workforce by developing and implementing a workforce strategy, and producing resources to support employers and the workforce.

Objective 4 – To make sure equality, human rights, dignity and respect continue to underpin social care training

Why is this one of our objectives?

Social care in Wales is changing. More people with protected characteristics need care and

support, and are rightly demanding care and support that meets their needs. Hence it is important, if not critical, that equality is central to the training of the workforce.

We want to make sure the workforce is supported and provides social care in line with the law, and that their practice reflects the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The principles are:

- voice and control – putting people and their needs at the centre of their care and support, and giving them a voice in and control over the outcomes that help them achieve well-being
- prevention and early intervention – being able to access more care and support at an early stage within the community to reduce or delay the need for longer term care and support
- well-being – supporting people to achieve well-being in every area of their lives and measuring the success of care and support
- co-production – encouraging people to become more involved in the design and provision of the care and support they receive.

Our staff reflects the diversity of the Welsh population and understands the diverse care needs of those who share one or more of the protected characteristics and how they should respond to that need

Objective 5 – Recruit and retain a representative workforce with the skills and knowledge to support and promote equality of opportunity

Why is this one of our objectives?

Our workforce is our most valuable resource. We are committed to advancing equality and diversity, and eliminating all forms of discrimination, victimisation and harassment in the workplace.

A more diverse workforce that better reflects the communities we serve remains central to our efforts of creating an inclusive and learning workplace. We want our staff to be aware of their own responsibilities for advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. We will achieve this through targeted training and development activities.

Objective 6 – To expand and improve the ways we communicate and engage with the public and the workforce

Why is this one of our objectives?

It is important for us, as a public leadership organisation, to increase and improve our engagement with people who share one or more of the protected characteristics, if we are to realise our vision.

We play a crucial part in bringing people together to improve the quality of care and support across Wales, and it is important we do so in a manner that reflects our value of encouraging and enabling everyone to work together. Meaningfully connecting with diverse communities enriches our shared knowledge and enables us to achieve our aims by working with people, other public

sector bodies and care providers across Wales.

2.5 Keeping you informed

To be an effective and transparent organisation it is important we report on our performance regularly and seek your feedback.

We will develop and publish an annual action plan to help us meet our equality objectives and report annually about what was achieved.

2.6 Pay objectives

We are an equal opportunities employer. The aim of our pay and grading arrangements is to provide a modern, logical and coherent plan that reflects the vibrant nature and complexity of the organisation. The plan also provides enough flexibility to address staff needs, allowing us to compete effectively in the jobs market in Wales.

Our annual equal pay audit was completed in March 2018 and included the following:

- a comparison of the pay of men and women who do equal work
- gender pay gap reporting
- identification of any pay gaps
- an explanation of any gaps
- details of the actions we will take to address any gaps.

The audit report is published on our website. We are pleased to confirm that there is no evidence of pay discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics. However, we are committed to monitoring and reporting annually.

3. Equality information

3.1 Monitoring

We are committed to meeting our equality duties by making appropriate arrangements to identify and collect relevant equality information about our staff and stakeholders. We use a range of approaches to collect this information, these are set out below.

Workforce survey

We carry out an annual equality and diversity survey of our staff. This information is used to review the effectiveness and inclusivity of our recruitment processes. It can also be used to make sure there is equality of opportunity with regards to staff promotions, and learning and development opportunities.

The Register of Social Care Workers (the Register)

We register social workers, social work students, residential child care managers and workers, domiciliary care managers and adult care home managers in Wales. The Register is open for domiciliary care workers and registration will be mandatory from 2020.

We monitor the protected characteristics of all those on our Register and publish annual profile reports about them. We also gather information about the Welsh language skills of the people who are registered with us. This equality monitoring is voluntary and we publish the information we collect as part of our annual profile reports.

National social care data set for Wales

We are working with Data Unit Wales to develop the first phase of a national social care data set for Wales. This data set will provide a national overview of social care in Wales, as well as provide opportunities for evaluating,

monitoring and researching the relationship between the provision of care and support, and the outcomes for the people who receive it.

The data set includes the following sections:

1. **Demand for care and support services** – adults and children in Wales with current or future care and support needs. It will include data from the Welsh Government annual adult protection report, Welsh Government Daffodil care services projections, and data about children and young people, including the Child Protection Register.
2. **Supply of care and support services** – workforce and services providing care and support. This will include data collated from the Welsh Government Staffing of Local Authority Social Services (STF), our Register and the Social Worker Workforce Planning survey.
3. **Performance of care and support services** – the quality of care and support provided, and how much money local authorities have spent on care and support. It will include data from the Welsh Government National Strategic Indicators.
4. **People and communities** – people living in Wales, as well as health, housing and economic data. It will include projected population data from the Office of National Statistics Annual Population Survey.

4. Impact assessments

4.1 Our approach

We use an impact assessment framework to build up greater awareness and understanding of how our work affects those who share one or more of the protected characteristics. We use the findings to improve our policies and practices. The main purpose of our framework is to make sure our work does not disadvantage particular groups of people in any way and helps identify opportunities to advance equality of opportunity.

There are two stages to our impact assessment process: an initial impact assessment and a full impact assessment. The initial impact assessment seeks to identify the likely impact in respect of all the protected groups, and the Welsh language.

If the evidence supports further investigation, we will carry out a full impact assessment involving those who are likely to be affected by the policy.



5. Learning and development

5.1 A confident workforce

We are responsible for promoting knowledge and understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty to our staff. We provide equality and diversity training for new staff as part of their induction by way of an e-learning module. In developing our annual learning and development plan, we will make sure relevant equality training is provided for teams to suit their job roles and functions.

A range of learning opportunities will also be made available to staff to raise awareness of the barriers to inclusion faced by protected groups.





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