

Wales Race Forum
09:30, Wednesday 08 December

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Update on Race Equality Action Plan Development Work
3. Lateral Flow Test Access and Uptake Update
4. Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan
5. Modern Slavery Update
6. Any Other Business
 - Race Disparity Unit Update

Item 1 - Welcome and introductions

1. The Minister for Social Justice opened the meeting by welcoming attendees.
2. The Minister noted it would be the last meeting of 2021 and thanked attendees for their work over the year.
3. The Minister noted the continued challenges of Covid-19 and its disproportionate effect on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.
4. It was confirmed the Welsh Government will offer booster jabs to all eligible adults by January 2022.
5. Attendees were asked to encourage those in their communities to take the vaccine and refute strongly misinformation.

Item 2 - Update on Race Equality Action Plan Development Work

6. Kate Rose explained that Race Equality First was successful in receiving the contract to undertake the consultation analysis. They submitted their initial reports to policy leads at beginning of November and presented a draft of their findings to the REAP Steering Group in November and are now drafting their full response, which will be with us in December.
7. To fill gaps in our understanding of anti-racism, we convened all-day expert-led roundtable in November. It consisted of academics, consultants, experts and policy leads. It was chaired by Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna who also gave an overview of anti-racism and set the context for the roundtable.
8. Policy leads have been considering consultation responses and analysis and are reshaping their actions/goals. Ensuring they are more SMART and focussed.
9. Policy leads have been asked to focus on the key actions they've achieved since the consultation was launched. Welsh Government is committed to demonstrating that work continues at pace.

10. Work on developing the governance framework is ongoing. A document laying out the terms of reference for the internal accountability group has been drafted and will be shared with the Steering Group next week. It will then be submitted for approval.
11. The group will be made up of Welsh Government policy leads and 7 experts with lived experience. The experts will start their new role in May 2020.
12. The Minister noted Mutale Merrill's attendance and how pleased she was that Mutale could attend today.
13. Mutale introduced herself and confirmed she'd be on a break for 12 months. During this time, Wanjiku Ngotho-Mbugua will take over as Acting Chief Executive of BAWSO.
14. Aled Edwards noted he is pleased with process and feels work is going in the right direction.
15. Aled asked whether, in light of recent developments, do we increasingly now need to map and check where there may be points of frustration for us; he noted he is mindful of the fact that, in regard to the latest wave of Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy Scheme, we in Wales are doing things very differently to the UK Government and we're doing things better. Do we need to track and trace where there may be frustration points for us?
16. The Minister referred to her and Counsel General's Written Statement which raised concerns about the Nationality and Borders Bill ([Written Statement: UK Nationality and Borders Bill \(6 December 2021\) | GOV.WALES](#)).
17. The Minister also confirmed the Welsh Government's commitment to the REAP in the latest Programme for Government ([Programme for government: update | GOV.WALES](#)).
18. Wanjiku Ngotho-Mbugua noted we've seen Wales welcome increasing numbers of doctors and nurses from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. Wanjiku asked whether the issue of equality and inclusion been discussed with health officials and professionals in hospitals. She noted some doctors and nurses have approached her to say they don't know where to turn to when they face racism at the work place.
19. The Minister confirmed this issue will be raised with Welsh Government officials and that she has met with the Chair of British Medical Association to discuss issues relating to race and racism.
20. Professor Robert Moore confirmed he will also raise this issue with his health board's equality team, who are already looking at the issue of new staff.
21. Aled Edwards confirmed Health Education Wales takes this issue seriously and offered to put Wanjiku in touch with them.

Action: Ruth Meadows to share Welsh Government contacts for health workforce issues with Wanjiku.

Action: Professor Robert Moore to raise the issue with his health board's equality team.

Action: Aled Edwards to put Wanjiku in contact with Health Education Wales.

Item 3 - Lateral Flow Test Access and Uptake Update

22. Adrian Davies discussed community access to lateral flow tests and confirmed they're available free-of-charge to everyone in Wales. They can be ordered online or collected from various locations including pharmacies, libraries and community sports clubs.
23. 11 million tests have been issued through community channels, but this is outweighed by the number of tests ordered to peoples' homes directly: Last week, more than 300,000 tests delivered to people homes. More than 200,000 were collected from pharmacies.
24. While comms activity has been relatively low in the past, this is now being ramped up. A door drop to all homes has begun and more use of social media is being made.
25. Adrian welcomed comments or questions on what more can be done to engage communities.
26. The Minister confirmed local authorities have been given funding to create a community support hub. These will be places where people can get advice and information about Covid-19. Proven pilots have taken place in North Wales already.
27. Maria Mesa explained she has had a lot of enquiries about booster jabs. People would like to receive one, but haven't heard about their appointment through official channels.
28. The Minister confirmed the Welsh Government has now committed to offering every eligible adult a boost by January 2022 ([All eligible adults in Wales to be offered booster vaccination by end of January | GOV.WALES](#)). Those who haven't heard yet will do so soon.
29. Daniel Hurford asked Adrian for figures on distribution of tests per week. Adrian confirmed half a million individual tests are distributed per week.
30. Adrian confirmed that officials are exploring options on making tests available at other locations, for example places of worship.

Item 4 - Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan ([Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan | GOV.WALES](#))

31. The Minister confirmed the Welsh Government has worked for a number of years on financial initiatives to tackle period poverty.
32. The Minister affirmed everyone should have access to period products, as and when they are required, to use in a private space that is safe and dignified.
33. The Welsh Government is currently consulting on the Period Dignity Strategic Plan.
34. The Minister invited Hannah Fisher to explain how attendees can get involved in shaping the Plan.
35. Hannah confirmed the consultation for the Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan will run until 12 January 2022 and input on the Plan is welcome. Attendees were asked to share the consultation with their networks, particularly young people, thought it's important the Welsh Government engage as broadly as possible.
36. Local authorities have received funding from the Welsh Government to tackle period poverty.
37. The Welsh Government is increasing its ambition to think more broadly about period dignity.
38. Hannah confirmed that in terms of faith and ethnicity the Welsh Government recognises it must be careful on language.
39. The Welsh Government is aware it needs to meet the needs of the diverse groups of people across Wales.
40. The Welsh Government wants to make sure it provides support to older women who experience peri-menopause symptoms and welcome any advice on this.
41. The Minister recognised the team is not diverse enough and invited attendees to get in touch if they'd like to join Period Dignity Roundtable.
42. Noting the Welsh Government's Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy, the Minister referred attendees to her Oral Statement ([Plenary 07/12/2021 - Welsh Parliament \(assembly.wales\)](#)).
43. Ruth Meadows confirmed that Welsh Government will make attendees aware of upcoming events for the VAWDASV Strategy consultation.

Action: Welsh Government to make attendees aware of upcoming consultation events.

44. Tamasree Mukhopadhyay confirmed Kiran has been working on period dignity and domestic violence some time and offered to contact Hannah so their findings and views can be shared. Tamasree noted that when abuse is happening, some

women don't know how to express it, or where they go to get help; they also don't receive language support. Hannah offered Tamasree her email address.

Action: Tamasree to contact Hannah to share Kiran's findings.

45. Maria Mesa confirmed Women Connect First have received funding from Cardiff Council and are working with sister Black, Asian and minority ethnic organisations to ensure this issue is addressed across communities. Maria noted it is important to talk about these issues, not just supply products.

Item 5 - Modern Slavery Update

46. The Minister highlighted the untold suffering caused by modern slavery.

47. While modern slavery is non-devolved, the Welsh Government works alongside the UK Government and uses its influence to raise awareness, tackle this crime and support victims and survivors.

48. The Minister invited Joshua Vuglar to provide an update on modern slavery.

49. Joshua began by thanking Mutale for her years of service and offered congratulations to Wanjiku. Joshua went on to pay credit to Steve Chapman who he has taken over for.

50. Overcoming modern slavery requires us to work with partners across Wales, internationally and with the UK Government. Joshua noted the great commitment we have across organisation in Wales to making a difference on this issue.

51. Modern slavery is a crime which disproportionality affects people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

52. There are many types of exploitation. The Home office has identified 17 types which, broadly, can be categorised as: criminal exploitation (drug offenses, robbery etc.); labour exploitation; sexual exploitation; domestic servitude; and organ harvesting. In many cases victims will be forced in to several areas.

53. There were 336 national referral mechanism referrals in quarters one, two and three in 2021.

54. Joshua gave an overview of indicators that someone is a victim of modern slavery, for example their movements being controlled, unable to communicate freely, distrustful of authorities, physical injuries, fear/anxiety etc.

55. The Home Office is working with the Welsh Government on a new strategy for England and Wales and this will be launched next spring.

56. Wanjiku noted BAWSO is working closely with the Welsh Government on modern slavery. BAWSO run two contracts: Welsh Government provides funding to run

refuge in North Wales; BAWSO are also subcontracted by the Salvation Army to run a men's refuge and a women's refuge in Cardiff. Work to identify hidden abuse and victims who have not been identified because of the lockdown will take place over the next year.

57. Guidance on reporting modern slavery can be found at [Reporting modern slavery | GOV.WALES](#).

Item 6 - Any Other Business

Race Disparity Unit

58. The Minister confirmed the Welsh Government's scoping exercise as part of our commitment to establish a Race Disparity Unit (RDU) has reinforced the known inequalities, both felt by specific groups and highlighted throughout evidence elsewhere.

59. The recommendation is that Welsh Government implements three distinct teams prioritising two of the largest inequalities - Race and Disability.

60. This will be in terms of data, but also recognising the inequalities faced by these two groups more broadly within society.

61. The Minister invited to Ellie Brodie to provide an update on this work.

62. Ellie began by thanking those who contributed to the scoping over last year.

63. The focus for last few months has been recruitment. An external recruitment strategy is currently being developed and the Welsh Government expects to be in a position to recruit a Head of the RDU early in the new year.

64. In the new year Welsh Government will progress the development of the overarching Strategic Evidence Plan. Intersectionality will be at the heart of this.

65. Once there is more resource Welsh Government will be looking to undertake an updated mapping exercise of Public Sector evidence and data. Nearer the summer, Welsh Government will also look to develop plans and scope projects to fill the most important evidence needs when more of the resource is in place.

66. Welsh Government is also committing to investigating the feasibility of sustainable co-production mechanisms in the evidence cycle to ensure that evidence truly reflects the lived experiences of all people in Wales. This will also involve exploring how to balance this with the emotional burden placed on people from minority and seldom heard communities.

67. Once the Race Disparity Unit lead is in place, Welsh Government will begin development of the Ethnicity Evidence Programme, which will include identification of the priorities specific to ethnicity evidence.

68. In the shorter term the Race Disparity Unit will look to support the Race Equality Action Plan Accountability Group by delivering ad-hoc evidence reviews and analysis using available evidence sources.

69. In the longer term the Race Disparity Unit will have a role in influencing and improving a range of measures and evidence from a diversity perspective. Improvements to these areas could feed into longer term measurable performance indicators for the Race Equality Action Plan.

70. The Minister ended by noting Uzo Iwobi will be leaving the Welsh Government at the end of the month and thanked Uzo for her work.

71. The Minister offered season's greetings to attendees.

Participants

Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice
Aled Edwards, Cytun
Alicja Zalesinska, Tai Pawb
Daniel Hurford, WLGA
Maria Mesa, Women Connect First
Mutale Merrill, BAWSO
Noam Devey, Show Racism the Red Card
Professor Robert Moore, NWREN
Rhianydd Williams, TUC Cymru
Riaz Hassan, RCCC for Swansea and NPT
Tamasree Mukhopadhyay, Kiran
Wanjiku Ngotho-Mbugua, BAWSO
Adrian Davies, Welsh Government
Ellie Brodie, Welsh Government
Hannah Fisher, Welsh Government
Joshua Vuglar, Welsh Government
Patrick Daly, Welsh Government
Peter Kellam, Welsh Government
Ruth Meadows, Welsh Government
Sue Leake, Welsh Government
Sue Vincent-Jones, Welsh Government
Uzi Iwobi, Welsh Government