

Gender Equality Forum

18 January 2024

Agenda item 6: Update on the Gender Plan – Welsh Government

Current Position

50 of the original 81 recommendations from the Gender Equality Review are now considered to be completed. Progress has been made against all recommendations, to a greater or lesser degree, with many of the remaining 30 recommendations considered as ongoing areas of work.

The Gender Equality Review, and the plan that resulted from it, was the first of the single protected characteristic equality plans. While its focus was on gender equality, it also recognised that its impact could be far wider and drive forward equality for all. As such, the Deeds Not Words and Roadmap reports included recommendations which were designed in such a way that some were quick wins while others would require long-term, structural change to embed equality. The progress to date reflects this.

Key Achievements

Deeds Not Words

While work around the long-term, structural change within Welsh Government is ongoing, the foundations are firmly in place with, for example:

- the introduction of the policy capability strategy;
- the equality mainstreaming work;
- the adoption of intersectionality within equality plans;
- the updates and improvements to the integrated impact assessment;
- and the gender budgeting pilots and the work to explore how best to embed it across the organisation.

Roadmap

The Roadmap included recommendations which set out a range of medium term actions for Welsh Government to take across policy areas including health, education and skills, poverty and welfare reform, employment, childcare, transport and VAWDASV. It recognised that these recommendations were just the start of the journey and not exhaustive and, as such, work in all these areas is ongoing – and will continue to be so.

Development of an Internal Implementation Plan

We are developing the internal implementation plan. Whilst we were hoping to have a draft plan available for you by the end of the last year, it is important that we get it right. There are well-documented financial pressures on all public services, making it more important than ever to ensure that the available resources are utilised where they are needed most.

To create a workable plan, we need to work with Ministers and policy officials across Welsh Government to ensure the recommendations are focussed, evidence-based, challenging, and achievable.

It is also right that we ensure the updated plan reflects the current position. The Gender Equality Review was undertaken in 2018 and 2019 and could not have foreseen the Covid-19 pandemic or the cost-of-living crisis.

Consequently, the current landscape is very different to that of 2018. This is why we have asked the Equality Evidence Unit to work with us to review the remaining recommendations and the priorities identified by the Forum. A review of recent research has been undertaken, to provide us with an evidence base for the next stage. The review has concluded that many of the recommendations and themes remain valid to addressing gender inequalities in Wales.

The report also identifies that poverty, welfare reform and women's mental health have become even more pressing concerns in recent years because of the effect on women of the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis.

The Equalities Evidence Unit will continue to work with policy officials and attend future Gender Forum meetings.

Forward Look

The next step will be to finalise the draft implementation plan considering the findings from the Equality Evidence Unit. We aim to share the draft plan with you before the next Forum meeting in April.

To ensure you receive more regular and up-to-date information regarding progress, instead of providing you with annual highlight reports, we will be issuing quarterly updates.

We are also working with the trustees of Chwarae Teg to ensure that the Gender Equality Review reports remain publicly available. The reports were published on the Chwarae Teg website and, following its closure, we are conscious that the reports are not in the public domain. We are working to ensure this is rectified as soon as possible and will update Forum members as soon as we have further news on this.