

Gender Equality Forum
05 December 2024, 10.00-11:00
Teams meeting (virtual)

Attendees

Deputy Director, Equality and Human Rights, Welsh Government (Chair)
Cardiff University
Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Wales
Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales (FTWW)
Homestart Cymru
National Federation of Women's Institute (NFWI) Wales
Oxfam Cymru
National Adviser, Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)
Wales Trades Union Congress (TUC) Cymru
Women Connect First
Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales

Welsh Government officials

Equality and Human Rights
Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units
Fair Work
Senedd Reform
Women's Health

As the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip was unable to attend, the Deputy Director, Equality and Human Rights, Welsh Government chaired the meeting.

1. **Welcome and update on actions from previous meeting – Deputy Director, Equality and Human Rights, Welsh Government**
- 1.1 An update on the actions from the previous meeting was provided. The two actions not yet completed were:
 - Childcare officials to confirm whether research has been undertaken to understand the low take-up of the Childcare Offer, and
 - Equality officials to include an agenda item on the budget at the next meeting.

Written updates will be provided for both of these actions.

- 1.2 Written updates will be issued for two of the Forum's priority areas - unpaid care/childcare and intersectionality between equality plans.
- 1.3 The other priority area – women's health – is included at agenda item 2.

- 1.4 The Terms of Reference require an annual review and will be circulated to Forum members for comment with a view to ratifying them at the next meeting.

2. Women's Health – Head of Women's Health, Welsh Government

Women's Health Plan

- 2.1 The [Women's Health Plan for Wales - NHS Wales Executive](#) will be published on 09 December. It is a national plan aimed at improving health services for women and women's experience of those services, taking a life course approach. It contains eight priority areas with short, medium and long-term actions for each.
- 2.2 It has been developed on the basis of 'The Discovery Report – Foundations for a Women's Health Plan' which consulted with around 4,000 women and girls in Wales. All Health Boards, Public Health Wales, NHS Wales Executive, Academia and Welsh Government and Expert Clinical Reference Groups have been involved in the development of the plan.
- 2.3 The Plan is a 'live' document and feedback from stakeholders will be incorporated into the implementation of the Plan.

Women's Health Research

- 2.4 As part of the plan, £750,000 will be spent on research for women's health conditions. A call for research will be launched in April 2025.
- 2.5 Work is under way through surveys and workshops to identify the top 10 research questions with a view to seeking research funding in future.

Next steps:

- Welsh Government (Women's Health) to confirm with relevant team whether women's health research funding would be open to Third Sector.
- Welsh Government (Women's Health) to meet with Wales TUC Cymru to discuss the wider determinants of women's health.
- Welsh Government (Women's Health) to share the link for the next survey with Forum members.

3. Diversity and Inclusion Guidance for Political Parties – Head of Diversity Policy & Legislation, Senedd Reform, Welsh Government

- 3.1 The consultation on Diversity and inclusion guidance for registered political parties ends on 7 January 2025. Forum members were encouraged to share the consultation with their networks and to input their views and ideas.

- 3.2 Links to the consultation documents:
[Canllawiau amrywiaeth a chynhwysiant ar gyfer pleidiau gwleidyddol cofrestredig | LLYW.CYMRU](#)

[Diversity and inclusion guidance for registered political parties | GOV.WALES](#)

- 3.3 The Welsh Ministers must publish the guidance by 1 May 2025 and keep the guidance under review.
- 3.4 The guidance is voluntary for registered political parties.

Next steps:

- Forum members were encouraged to formally submit their ideas and feedback through the consultation process.

4. Employment Rights Bill update – Head of Modern Slavery and Workers’ Rights, Welsh Government

- 4.1 The UK Government introduced the Employment Rights Bill on 10 October 2024. It is currently going through the Commons Committee Stage.
- 4.2 The Bill is a key part of the UK Government’s Plan to Make Work Pay. It is intended to help more people to stay in work, improve job security and boost living standards. The majority of the reforms are expected to come into force in 2026.
- 4.3 Notable provisions include:
- Introducing Equality Action Plans – setting out how to address gender pay gap issues and support employees going through the menopause.
 - Strengthening employers’ obligations on preventing sexual harassment.
 - Expanding ‘day 1’ employment rights.
 - New protections from dismissal for a woman who is pregnant and for six months after her return to work
 - Strengthening flexible working.

Next steps:

- The slides will be shared with Forum members and include additional information.

5. Update on review of research literature on gender – Equality Senior Researcher, Welsh Government

- 5.1 The Equality Evidence Unit had undertaken an in-house scoping review of relevant research in early 2024. An overview of findings covered the following topic areas: health; education; poverty and welfare reform; employment; childcare and unpaid care; violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence; representation; crime and justice; and sport and cultural life.
- 5.2 It was recognised that there were limitations in the review due to time constraints.

6. Update on Gender Equality Implementation Plan – Head of LGBTQ+ and Gender Policy, Welsh Government

- 6.1 While the Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan covered the period 2020 – 2023, much of it remains relevant. Officials have recently reviewed the plan and updated with progress made in 2024. The updated priorities and actions against the plan will be drawn up in consultation with stakeholders and will be available on the Welsh Government website when agreed in early 2025. A directive from the First Minister is to focus on priorities and deliverables rather than publishing a new plan.

Next Steps:

- Welsh Government will reach out to Gender Equality Forum members for feedback on whether the priorities are correct.

7. Any other business

- 7.1 Forum members were invited to share relevant information with officials after the meeting, including feedback on the content of meetings and suggestions for future agenda items. If members wanted to share information with the Forum such as progress updates from their organisation, examples of good practice or upcoming events, they were asked to share with officials for circulation.
- 7.2 A link to the [Anti-Slavery Wales Forum](#) was shared with Forum members. Welsh Government welcomes all organisations with an interest in this subject matter. Forum members were invited to contact officials if they wanted further information.
- 7.3 Diary markers have been sent out for upcoming Forum meetings. The next meeting will be on 3 March 2025.