

ELL(2) 03-06(p4)

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

Meeting date: 8 February 2006

Meeting time: 9.00am - 12:00 pm

Meeting venue: Committee rooms 3 &4, National Assembly for Wales

Consideration of the Welsh Assembly Government's Annual Equality Report 2004-05

This paper makes suggestions as to how the Committee might assess the Assembly Government's arrangements for promoting equality within the Education and Lifelong Learning Remit.

Sections 48 and 120 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 place a duty on the Assembly (including the Assembly Government and the Assembly Parliamentary Service) to make arrangements which ensure that its business and functions are conducted with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people. Section 120 also requires the Assembly to publish an annual report which details the arrangements it has made to achieve this and an assessment of how effective these arrangements have been in promoting equality of opportunity.

The Assembly Government and Assembly Parliamentary Service annual equality reports for 2004-05 were presented to the Equality of Opportunity Committee on 24 November 2005. On 29 November 2005 the Panel of Chairs agreed that subject committee chairs would include the sections of the Assembly Government report relevant to their remit on their committee's agenda for consideration. This report is attached as Annex 1.

The report provides information about the ways in which the Assembly Government has attempted to promote equality at a strategic level and includes a number of examples which relate to the portfolio of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee (see, for example, the case studies on gender stereo typing in modern apprentices and 'Education for All' which aims to ensure that access to education is not limited by a person's sexual orientation). The report also provides information about the statistical data which the Assembly Government has used to determine specific areas of inequality and highlights gaps in the data (see section 3). Annex B of the report contains contributions provided by each department within the Assembly Government specifying the actions they undertook during 2004-2005 to promote equality of opportunity. Information of particular relevance to this Committee is contained in the contribution of the Department for Training and Education.

Given the significant amount of information included in the report which is of relevance to the Committee's remit, and the Assembly's agreed 'mainstreamed' approach to equality, Members may wish to consider the Assembly Government's promotion of equality of opportunity within areas covered by their remit in one or more of the following ways:

By specifically considering the aspects of the Assembly Government's 6th Annual Equality Report which relate to the remit of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning at a future meeting and reporting key issues raised to the Equality of Opportunity Committee;

By focusing on issues of particular interest to the Committee from an equality of opportunity perspective. In doing this, the Committee may wish to take evidence from key stakeholders such as the standing invitees of the Equality of Opportunity Committee and groups representing people from particular communities or circumstances to assist them in assessing the arrangements made to promote equality by the Assembly Government.

By requesting that the Members Research and Committee Service identify some key issues relating to equality of opportunity for every Committee agenda

Committee Members are invited to consider these suggestions.

MRCS

February 2006