

Agenda – Equality and Social Justice Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 (Senedd)

Meeting date: 15 April 2024

Meeting time: 13.30

For further information contact:

Rhys Morgan

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting registration (13:15 – 13:30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(13:30)

2 Papers to note

(13:30)

2.1 Correspondence between the Chair and the South Wales Fire Commissioners regarding Fire and Rescue Services in Wales

(Pages 1 – 10)

2.2 Correspondence from the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust to the Chair providing additional information in the Fire and Rescue Services inquiry

(Pages 11 – 14)

2.3 Correspondence from the Chair of the Finance Committee to the Chair requesting further information relating to budget scrutiny

(Pages 15 – 17)

2.4 Correspondence from the Welsh Government to the Chair responding to an action point that arose following the Equality and Social justice Committee meeting on 21 January 2024 regarding Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units

(Pages 18 – 39)



- 2.5 Correspondence from the Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip to the Chair regarding the strip searching of children by Police**
(Pages 40 – 41)
- 2.6 Correspondence between the Chair and OXFAM regarding the follow-up inquiry into childcare provision in Wales**
(Pages 42 – 44)
- 2.7 An executive summary from the NHS Confederation Wales entitled: "Action for equality in Wales and Northern Ireland"**

[Action for equality in Wales and Northern Ireland: the time is now](#)

- 3 Motion under SO17.42 (vi) and (ix) to exclude the public from the remainder of today's meeting**
(13:30)
- 4 Forward work programme: consideration of next steps**
(13:30–14:30) (Pages 45 – 69)



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru
South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Agenda Item 2.1

27 March 2024

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Sent via email: SeneddEquality@Senedd.Wales

Dear Chair,

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Firstly, please know that we see your inquiry as a valuable part of our work to develop proposals for the future governance of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and which are most likely to minimise the risk of further failings (Commissioners' Terms of Reference, No.6).

We are pleased to provide the following information in response to each of your questions.

Appointment of Stuart Millington as Interim Chief Fire Officer (CFO)

1. *Why was it necessary to appoint an Interim Chief Fire Officer and what is the anticipated duration of the appointment?*
 - 1.1. The most pressing reason for appointing an interim CFO was to provide immediate capacity and experience during the current intervention. There are only three operational staff at executive level, and the loss of the substantive CFO following the publication of the Morris Review left an immediate gap in on-call cover arrangements.

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Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,
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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y gymraeg a'r saesneg - byddwn yn ymateb yn gyfartal i'r ddau ac yn ateb yn eich dewis iaith nes gwisgo.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English - we will respond equally to both and will reply in your language of choice without delay.

- 1.2. The review had identified concerns about the effectiveness of the executive leadership team, and it was felt by the Commissioners that an interim leader from outside SWFRS was needed.
 - 1.3. We were determined that should be a secondment and a 'Welsh solution', to enable us to move at pace.
 - 1.4. The secondment is for an initial six-month period but may be extended if recruitment of a permanent CFO or Chief Executive Officer cannot take up the role in that timeframe.
2. *Who made the decision to recommend the appointment of Stuart Millington as Interim Chief Fire Officer? What involvement, if any, did the following have in the appointment process (in each instance please specify the nature of the involvement):*
- a. *Welsh Government officials;*
 - b. *the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and Inspector for Wales, Dan Stephens;*
 - c. *the Chief Fire Officers of North Wales, and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Services;*
 - d. *the responsible Welsh Government Minister (either that the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership or the Minister for Social Justice)?*
- 2.1. Vij Randeniya led a process to identify available and suitable individuals in Wales with operational competence at Assistant Chief Fire Officer rank and above and who would be able to relocate to the SWFRS area to be part of the on-call rota.
 - 2.2. We had already ruled out an internal temporary promotion within SWFS.
 - 2.3. Via the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor, the CFOs at Mid and West Wales FRS and North Wales FRS were asked for the names of potential secondees who met that criteria.
 - 2.4. Having identified those individuals and briefed us about them, the CFOs and Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor played no further part in the selection. Obviously, CFO Dawn Docx was consulted to confirm the release of Stuart Millington on secondment.
 - 2.5. No Welsh Government Minister or officials were involved in identifying individuals or approving the secondment.
 - 2.6. All four Commissioners were involved in reviewing the available individuals against our criteria of having appropriate experience, skills, and being available to relocate to the SWFRS area.

3. *During our evidence sessions with trade unions, both the Fire Brigades Union and the Fire and Rescue Services Association expressed concerns regarding the appointment. In particular Tristan Ashby told us: “we were surprised that somebody without any proven track record and somebody who wasn't a chief, but was an assistant chief, was chosen,” adding that they did not understand how the appointment was made or what due diligence was undertaken. How would you respond to these concerns?*
 - 3.1. The Commissioners do not share Mr Ashby's concerns.
 - 3.2. No individuals in Wales at Chief or Deputy level were available or met the criteria.
 - 3.3. Stuart Millington is a hugely experienced fire service leader, with experience serving in different FRs in Wales and England. He has already proved to be an effective and empathetic leader in his time at SWFRS.
 - 3.4. Beyond his operational and leadership expertise, CFO Millington's breadth of experience closely match the transformation programme requirements at SWFRS and align with the Commissioners' terms of reference. (Appendix A).

Appointment of a permanent successor as Chief Fire Officer

4. *What are the anticipated timescales for the appointment of a permanent successor as Chief Fire Officer for South Wales? What is the target start date? Do you have a target start date?*
 - 4.1. Work is already underway to prepare the recruitment materials, so a full-scale recruitment process will launch very soon. The advertising and shortlisting process could take up to three months and it is likely that the successful candidate will need to give three months' notice to their current employer.
 - 4.2. We have not set a target start date beyond 'as soon as practicable'.
5. *Who will be responsible for deciding the recruitment criteria for the permanent successor as Chief Fire Officer?*
 - 5.1. The Commissioners and executive leadership team are in the process of writing a person specification and a role description that is designed to meet specific current and emerging needs of the SWFRS. Many of the role requirements are set out in the Gold Book standard terms and conditions.
6. *How would you involve staff and stakeholders in the appointment process?*
 - 6.1. How we involve colleagues and stakeholders in the recruitment is still being developed, but they will be a vital part of a challenging process designed to identify an exceptional individual to lead the Service.

6.2. It is likely that we will invite staff and stakeholders to be part of panels that will meet with shortlisted candidates, ask them questions, and be part of discussions and exercises. They will then provide feedback to assist the appointment panel with its deliberations. The exact exercise will be developed in partnership with the relevant staff-led Transformation Programme working group.

7. *How do you intend to ensure a diverse field of candidates for the position of Chief Fire Officer? Will For example, might you consider appointing a candidate from a different professional field or background?*

7.1. To ensure we attract a broad and diverse field, we will be working with an executive search consultancy with specific experience of recruiting to blue light and public sector leadership roles.

Resources for undertaking your work

8. *How will costs incurred as a result of your work be paid for? Will they be met from the Welsh Government budget or the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service budget?*

8.1. The Commissioners fees and activities driven by our Terms of Reference are paid from the SWFRS budget.

9. *What dedicated resources have been made available for your use within the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service?*

9.1. The Commissioners will be making use of the talented and knowledgeable staff across SWFRS, because much of the work arising from our Terms of Reference forms part of core duties and roles.

9.2. There is already an established team that support the governance function previously undertaken by the Fire Authority.

9.3. A new post of Director of Strategic Change and Transformation has been created to oversee the Transformation Programme.

9.4. We have a dedicated Personal Assistant, and a Project Progress Administrator is being recruited, both on secondment from other roles within SWFRS.

10. *What dedicated resources have been made available for your use within the Welsh Government?*

10.1. We have access to the existing staff within the Welsh Government's Fire Services Branch.

Working together

11. *How will you ensure effective communication between all four commissioners? Given the nature of your other commitments, you are likely to be working from different locations across the country how will you ensure that this does not become a barrier to collaboration?*

11.1. Commissioners have online meetings and telephone conversations as required, in addition to working together in person for one day a week. Our PA maintains an actions and contact register.

12. *What arrangements will you put in place for regular reporting on progress?*

12.1. The Commissioners initially met with the Deputy Minister and/or Welsh Government staff every week to provide a progress report against our Terms of Reference.

12.2. An oversight board, chaired by Welsh Government officials, has now been established, and meets formally every month and informally in-between.

We believe this answers the questions raised, but please feel free to contact us again if we can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Commissioner for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

cc Vij Randeniya
 Lady Wilcox
 Kirsty Williams
 Carl Foulkes
 CFO Stuart Millington

Appendix A – CFO Stuart Millington biography

After spending 14 years working in a variety of roles in the former Clwyd and then North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS), I transferred to Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS), in November 2008.

I spent six years working in a variety of roles both within GMFRS as well as in a seconded position working for the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, and during this time I was responsible for producing the Greater Manchester Strategic Assessment.

My time in Greater Manchester allowed me to experience a myriad of different challenges and work to improve the life experiences and chances of people and communities in highly deprived and socially challenging parts of inner-city Manchester and Salford, as well as across all ten Greater Manchester Boroughs.

In November 2014 I returned to NWFRS as an Area Manager with responsibility for Prevention and Protection as the Senior Fire Safety Manager (SFSM).

During this time, I was the Welsh lead for Children and Young People (CYP) and worked collaboratively with colleagues in the other two Welsh fire and rescue services towards our common goals, as well as representing Wales at the NFCC CYP Executive Board.

As SFSM I was instrumental in developing community safety activities on a journey from the traditional Home Fire Safety Check towards the 'Safe and Well' checks that incorporated brief intervention conversations regarding healthy eating, exercise, smoking, drug or alcohol use and mental well-being, as well as introducing the use of the falls risk assessment toolkit (FRAT) as part of an integrated offer to residents.

I was the North Wales Blue Light services lead for 'Prevent and Respond', the group that designed, developed, and introduced new ways of preventing and responding to incidents from a tri service perspective. This saw the introduction of a falls response service called the Community Assistance Team (CAT). CAT was made up of NWFRS staff members who responded to non-injured fallers on behalf of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust.

I have also led on the introduction of a structured approach to support North Wales Police in providing a timely response to those who are highly vulnerable and who may be missing from their homes or healthcare establishments, with highly complex needs.

In September 2017 I moved into the Senior Operations Manager (SOM) role and became responsible for the delivery of our operational emergency response.

Time spent in this role allowed me to oversee some key pieces of work including devising new ways of working with 'on call' firefighters to maintain and improve Service availability, as well as the introduction and implementation of National Operational Guidance and learning. I was also responsible for progressing the tender and introduction of new items of equipment on an 'all-Wales' basis, including breathing apparatus, fire kit and fire appliances.

In November 2019 I moved into the Senior Training and Development Manager (STDM) role and worked to challenge and reform the way in which training was being delivered in North Wales. However, as that work was beginning to gather momentum in early 2020, Covid struck and I led for the Service in much of the work to maintain business continuity and a suitable operational response in a socially distanced and locked down world.

I led on the introduction of several control measures including safe systems of work, PPE and Covid testing, as well as work to support the introduction of Rainbow hospitals and an emergency mortuary. I also supported partners in the work to roll out inoculations.

In February 2021 I was promoted to Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) with strategic responsibility for all operational matters, including response, preparedness, procurement, Fire Control, as well as Fleet and Training and Development.

Soon after which we began to emerge from Covid, and I led the organisation's return to its new normality and supported staff transition back into the workplace.

I led on an operational management restructure that moved from functional departments to area-based teams, all in a bid to gain a better understanding and more timely response to the local issues facing staff and partners.

As part of filling the new operational management structure, I led on a review and overhaul of the internal promotional process and introduced annual promotional boards with full transparency and communication with candidates at every stage.

As Armed Forces lead, I worked to support the introduction of the Armed Forces Covenant and achieved firstly bronze and subsequently silver and then gold award status in the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Awards.

I have also recently supported the NFCC response to assist with appliances and equipment in the Ukraine and ensured that North Wales was part of the last three convoys to drive to the Ukraine and Poland border.

At NWFRS, I chaired the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, and have instigated work to improve the organisations position in relation to contaminants, and this has included the introduction of safe systems of work to remove contaminants, clean cab solutions and the installation of two Breathing Apparatus washing machines.

I also chaired the Operational Learning Committee. This committee oversees and holds to account the work of seven subgroups: Operational Assurance, Operational Learning, Training and Development, National Operational Guidance, Research and Innovation, Risk Information, and Business Continuity. It is through this committee that I have led on the organisational response to the recommendations from Grenfell, Manchester Arena Inquiry and the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor for Wales' thematic reviews.

I was the strategic lead for business continuity arrangements in the event of industrial action and moved the organisation to the position where it was prepared to provide a reduced service in the event of strike days being called.

I led on business continuity planning for a national power outage and have recently worked with the Head of Control to ensure robust arrangements are in place in the event of a national or regional loss of the 999 networks. I am the Service strategic representative on the ESMCP Fire Customer Group.

I represent Wales at the NFCC Operations, Preparedness and Response Committee, as well as being the Welsh Strategic lead for National Resilience and NILO.

I am the Vice Chair for the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and I am the Chair of the LRF Coordination Committee. I also represent North Wales Fire and Rescue Service on North Wales Public Service Boards.

I recently sponsored and oversaw the completion of our RDS Experience Review, written by 'on call' firefighters, for 'on call' firefighters in a bid to break down barriers and allow a better experience to be had, with the goal to improve recruitment and retention.

I regularly present items for discussion and decision to the Fire Authority and have supported Members in several working groups, including most recently to develop and introduce an Environmental Strategy and the subordinate documents that will help to achieve the Welsh Government target of public services being carbon neutral by 2030. I have also supported the Fire Authority in working to introduce a new operational response model for North Wales following public consultation as part of an extensive Emergency Cover Review.

I am the current Chair of the Local Pensions Board and represent North Wales at the Welsh Firefighters Pension Scheme Advisory Board.

For the last two years I have also supported the NFCC Executive Leadership Programme and have assessed potential candidates and provided feedback to them after their assessments.

Carl Foulkes
Vij Randeniya
Baroness Wilcox of Newport
Kirsty Williams

18 March 2024

Dear Commissioners,

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

We have been clear from the outset that our inquiry into the governance of fire and rescue services must not detract from your important work to reform the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS). We wish you every success in that endeavour and were grateful for the opportunity to emphasise this when we met last week. To enable an open and frank conversation, we took the decision to hold that initial meeting in private. However, we recognise that there are several public interest matters arising from our work that need to be pursued more formally and in writing. These are set out below.

Appointment of Stuart Millington as Interim Chief Fire Officer

We would like to request more information regarding the appointment of Stuart Millington as Interim Chief Fire Officer at SWFRS. In particular we would be grateful if you could provide a response to each of the following questions:

1. Why was it necessary to appoint an Interim Chief Fire Officer and what is the anticipated duration of the appointment?
2. Who made the decision to recommend the appointment of Stuart Millington as Interim Chief Fire Officer? What involvement, if any, did the following have in the appointment process (in each instance please specify the nature of the involvement):
 - a. Welsh Government officials;
 - b. the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and Inspector for Wales, Dan Stephens;
 - c. the Chief Fire Officers of North Wales, and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Services;
 - d. the responsible Welsh Government Minister (either that the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership or the Minister for Social Justice)?

3. During our evidence sessions with trade unions, both the Fire Brigades Union and the Fire and Rescue Services Association expressed concerns regarding the appointment. In particular Tristan Ashby told us: *"we were surprised that somebody without any proven track record and somebody who wasn't a chief, but was an assistant chief, was chosen,"* adding that they did not understand how the appointment was made or what due diligence was undertaken.¹ How would you respond to these concerns?

Appointment of a permanent successor as Chief Fire Officer

4. What are the anticipated timescales for the appointment of a permanent successor as Chief Fire Officer for South Wales? What is the target start date? Do you have a target start date?
5. Who will be responsible for deciding the recruitment criteria for the permanent successor as Chief Fire Officer?
6. How would you involve staff and stakeholders in the appointment process?
7. How do you intend to ensure a diverse field of candidates for the position of Chief Fire Officer? Will for example, might you consider appointing a candidate from a different professional field or background?

Resources for undertaking your work

8. How will costs incurred as a result of your work be paid for? Will they be met from the Welsh Government budget or the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service budget?
9. What dedicated resources have been made available for your use within the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service?
10. What dedicated resources have been made available for your use within the Welsh Government?

Working together

11. How will you ensure effective communication between all four commissioners? Given the nature of your other commitments, you are likely to be working from different locations across the country how will you ensure that this does not become a barrier to collaboration?
12. What arrangements will you put in place for regular reporting on progress?

I would be grateful for a response at your earliest convenience and no later than April 5th 2024. I am copying this letter to the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

¹ Equality Social Justice Committee, Record of Proceedings, [paragraph 237](#), 4 March 2024



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Ymddiriedolaeth GIG
Gwasanaethau Ambiwylans Cymru
Welsh Ambulance Services
NHS Trust

Agenda Item 2.2

Chair: Colin Dennis

Prif Weithredwr

Chief Executive: Jason Killens

Swyddfa'r Prif Weithredwr a'r Cadeirydd Chair and Chief Executive's Office

Ref: JK 11/24

25th March 2024

Ms Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Dear Ms Rathbone

Further information on the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust response to recommendations of Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery 2014

Many thanks for the opportunity to appear before Committee on the afternoon of March 18, 2024 in respect of Committee's work on the governance of fire and rescue services. The constructive and insightful questioning by members was much appreciated and it is hoped the responses I provided, together with our Director of People and Culture, Angela Lewis, were helpful.

I made a commitment to respond to Ken Skates' question in relation to the Welsh Ambulance's response to recommendations made by the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery, which was led by Sir Paul Williams and published in January 2014.

I have taken the opportunity to review the recommendations of the Commission, given that its publication predates my arrival at WAST by more than four years.

If I am correct, the recommendations to which Mr Skates is referring are recommendations 16 and 20, which I set out for ease below:

Recommendation 16: FRAs should also assume responsibility for scrutinising joint working between the fire and ambulance services. In the future, and subject to further devolution, a reconstituted body may be established with responsibility for providing scrutiny across all the emergency services. (paragraph 2. 61)

Mae'r Ymddiriedolaeth yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg, ac na fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi

The Trust welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English, and that corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay

www.ambulance.wales.nhs.uk

Pencadlys Rhanbarthol
Ambiwylans

Regional Ambulance
Headquarters

Pack Page 11

Beacon House
William Brown Close
Llantarnam, Cwmbran
NP44 3AB

Ffôn/Tel
01633 626262

Recommendation 20: The three Fire Services and the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust (WAST) must capitalise on their common responsibilities and service delivery mechanisms. To do so:

Each of the Fire Services and WAST must produce a clear plan for strategic and operational co-ordination and alignment by the end of 2014, including proposals as regards sharing of premises and co-ordinating responses to incidents requiring both a fire and ambulance presence;

Once established, the reformed FRAs should scrutinise progress in developing and implementing these plans at least on an annual basis. (paragraph 2.83)

If I may start with recommendation 20, I think it is fair to say that there has been some progress in terms of the sharing of premises across Wales. At the time of the 2022 Audit Wales review of joint working by emergency services, 15 of 110 (13.6%) buildings owned or leased by the Welsh Ambulance Service had one or more emergency service or responder working from them. However, it is also fair to say that there has been more limited progress in respect of operational co-ordination and alignment.

For example, the Trust agreed a strategic direction of travel in 2016 to deliver clinical contact services from three centres across Wales, one in North Wales and two in South Wales, with a focus on delivery of the “integrated health” model.

This model would bring together EMS control, NEPTS control, NHSDW/111 and GP out-of-hours services and, wherever possible, include collaboration with other emergency services in Wales.

The tri control centre in Bridgend presented as an opportunity to work with Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and South Wales Police, and an exercise followed which tested the “fit” of this opportunity for WAST.

At its meeting on 23 March 2017, Board members considered a detailed paper on the outcome of engagement with staff and stakeholders on the future location of the Clinical Control Centre in Mid and West Wales. Specifically, this work tested whether a move of the then NHS Direct Wales services in Thanet House, Swansea and EMS control in Llangunnor, Carmarthen to the new tri-service centre in Bridgend was a feasible and viable option that would bring about benefits.

The engagement exercise focused, in part, on testing the validity of the assumptions made as part of the previous desktop options appraisal work, as well as gauging staff and stakeholder views more generally about the future options for a clinical contact centre serving mid and west Wales.

The paper concluded that a move of all services to the tri control centre was not a feasible or preferable option for a number of reasons, namely:

- Distance to travel to Bridgend from Llangunnor, with many staff living further west.
- Workforce implications, including staff welfare and wellbeing and recruitment and retention.
- Synergy with the previously articulated strategic direction and realising the benefits co-terminosity, specifically the move to being coterminous with South Wales Police from a CCC where co-terminosity applies to only two of five divisional desks and the resultant loss of any co-terminosity with Dyfed Powys Police.
- The challenge which such a move would pose to the previously articulated strategic direction of three CCCs based on an integrated health model.

The Board agreed that a wholesale move of both NHS Direct Wales and the Llangunnor CCC to the tri-service centre was not supported, for all the reasons identified.

To the best of my knowledge, there was no scrutiny of that decision at that time by the relevant Fire Service Authorities. WAST has continued to develop its approach to the integration of its services and call handling capacity, recognising that much ground has been travelled since 2017, including the development of the pan-Wales 111 service, provided by the Welsh Ambulance Service, greater integration of NEPTS call handling within our clinical contact centre environments and the development of our clinical support desk functions, which increasingly provide a “consult and close” service for lower acuity patients, as well as providing clinical advice and support to on-scene crews.

In terms of strategic development and identifying opportunities for further collaboration, we are active members of the Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG), to which I made reference at Committee. The Group considers services’ contribution to civil contingencies, counterterrorism and focuses on addressing wider cross-service issues of joint interest. While this is an informal grouping of Chief Officers from the three emergency services across Wales, it provides an opportunity for discussion of shared challenges and opportunities, including a very successful integrated anti-violence campaign, #WithUsNotAgainstUs, which is now being used as a template across the UK. This initiative was led and developed by WAST. You can read more about it here. JESG was also a helpful vehicle in sharing issues around emergency service response during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Clearly, while we also work closely with Mid and West Fire and Rescue Service on a co-responding model that focuses on where fire service colleagues can absolutely add value to the service we provide, for example in support patients who have fallen, are uninjured but, for whatever reason, are unable to get up, we continue to keep our options open as to the opportunity for further collaboration with emergency service partners across Wales.

In respect of more recent issues which have emerged in fire and rescue services, the work that WAST continues to undertake to improve its cultural climate and sexual safety is an example of perhaps where there is greater opportunity to share our learning, notwithstanding that we have presented the work undertaken to-date to colleagues at JESG. For example, we would be pleased to engage with the new commissioners of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and I have already reached out to the incoming interim Chief Fire Officer, Stuart Millington, to offer any assistance he might require.

In terms of more structural integration and reform, the Audit Wales report acknowledges that, while optimising the opportunity for further collaboration and achieving better value for money for the taxpayer are critical, further integration is not a priority at this time, for a range of operational and governance reasons, as we outlined in our evidence.

That said, we recognise that government funding is under significant financial pressure and, as an ambulance service, we will continue to actively explore appropriate opportunities to further our relationship with the other emergency services in Wales. It is important to recognise that our role is not just one of a first responder to life-threatening emergencies, but predominantly one of a first line of care and support to patients with a range of health conditions, some of which may not be life-threatening, but which are complex and debilitating. We are currently working with our commissioners and other stakeholders on our long-term plans, which would see us play a more central care co-ordination and management role across the health and care sector, with an ambition to care for patients more appropriately in the community, reducing the need for hospital conveyance and admission, optimising the skills of our staff coupled with digital technology.

While organisationally there would be a willingness to consider alternative, and potentially more closely aligned governance arrangements between WAST and fire and rescue services across Wales, it is important to remember that the ambulance service has a pan-Wales footprint and manages significantly more demand than the three fire and rescue services combined.

Given that the overwhelming majority of our work is in relation to individual patients and/or clinical episodes of care, rather than joint work with other emergency services, we would not see a sole entity overseeing our services alongside fire and rescue, or indeed the police services should they be devolved at any point in the future, given the criticality of WAST remaining within the NHS as a key clinical service.

I trust this response has been helpful to Committee. However, should any further assistance or information be required, please do not hesitate to contact me. We look forward with interest to the Committee's recommendations in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Killens', written in a cursive style.

Professor Jason Killens KAM
Chief Executive

Chair, Children, Young People, and Education Committee
Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee
Chair, Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee
Chair, Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee
Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

22 March 2024

Dear Committee Chairs,

Scrutiny of the Draft Budget

You will recall that I wrote last year inviting Committees to express views on improvements that the Welsh Government could make to the documents it produces alongside its Draft Budget and in ministerial written evidence provided to Committees.

Your responses were considered by the Committee on 21 June 2023 and I subsequently wrote to the Minister for Finance and Local Government (the Minister) on 23 June 2023 asking for the concerns raised to be taken into account ahead of the 2024-25 budget round. These related to:

- the late publication of the Draft Budget leading to truncated scrutiny;
- a lack of transparency regarding the impact that the Draft Budget has on policy areas within each Committee's remit;
- the poor quality of written evidence provided by the Welsh Government; and
- the Welsh Government not providing responses to certain Committee recommendations ahead of the Final Budget debate.

These issues were raised again during the consideration of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25 earlier this year. Our report made the following recommendations and conclusions building on the views previously expressed:

***Conclusion 2.** The Committee will consult Senedd Committees involved in budget scrutiny ahead of the 2025-26 budget round to gain a better understanding of the evidence provided by the Welsh Government in support of the Draft Budget, and to explore ways to maximise budgetary scrutiny throughout the year*

***Recommendation 1.** The Committee recommends that the Minister publishes ministerial evidence papers at the same time as the Draft Budget in order to provide clarity on the criteria and priorities behind ministerial decisions, with the aim of enabling stakeholders to engage in the scrutiny process more effectively and at an earlier stage.*

***Recommendation 2.** The Committee recommends that, if the Draft Budget is delayed again in future years:*

- *the Minister and officials continue to attend a pre-scrutiny session with the Finance Committee; and*
- *the Minister works with the Finance Committee to identify approaches that can enhance scrutiny opportunities, including providing documentation relating to the Draft Budget, at an earlier stage.*

These recommendations were accepted in principle, with the Minister highlighting the practical difficulties in responding to the quantity of information requested by individual committees, at the same time as the publication of the Draft Budget.

We therefore ask you to consider the following issues, and to provide a response by Friday 24 May 2024.

- What improvements, if any, have you seen in the documentation provided by the Welsh Government alongside the Draft Budget 2024-25?
- Have you identified any further improvement that could be made to the information provided alongside the Draft Budget?
- Given the short time available for scrutiny, what consideration, if any, have you given to scrutinising budgetary matters within your remit at an earlier stage, for example considering longer terms strategic planning, following up on previous scrutiny recommendations or pre-scrutiny of decision making processes before the Draft Budget is published?

- The Committee is also currently working with the Minister and other stakeholders to review the Budget Process Protocol to ensure that the Senedd's budgetary processes reflect custom and practice developed in the Sixth Senedd to date. Do you have any views regarding the Senedd's budget procedures more widely?

We are grateful to you for your ongoing engagement with us on these matters and welcome any further correspondence responding to the points above.

Our aim is to raise these issues on behalf of Committees with the Minister in advance of the Plenary debate on budget priorities for 2025-26 that will take place before summer recess.

Yours sincerely,



Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Finance Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 2.4

Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Work Plan (March 2024)

Background

The Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units were established in January 2022 following a number of key reports highlighting the higher impact of COVID on disadvantaged groups. The Evidence Units consist of three teams:

- Equality Evidence Unit,
- Race Disparity Evidence Unit,
- Disability Disparity Evidence Unit.

Most of the work of the Evidence Units is deliberately cross-cutting and intersectional so the three Evidence Units work jointly on most projects.

In 2023-24 the Evidence Units' budget was £1.5m and remains around that level for 2024-25. Some of their projects are carried out in-house and other work is commissioned where expert resources are required.

The Evidence Units are made up of a mixture of analysts, which includes statisticians and social researchers that support policy-making across the Welsh Government. The Evidence Units sit alongside policy colleagues who work in the areas of equalities, human rights, and social justice and also work closely with other analysts across the Welsh Government.

Our Purpose

The purpose of the Evidence Units is to improve the availability, quality, granularity and accessibility of equalities evidence to enable decision-makers across Wales to develop better informed policies and measure their impact. A Welsh Government [Equalities Evidence Strategy](#) was published in Autumn 2022.

Many of the projects are therefore longer-term and aimed at fundamentally improving the equalities evidence base. Specific examples include:

- Looking at options to boost the sample for the National Survey for Wales so that National Well-being measures can be broken down by equality characteristics.
- Working with Administrative Data Research to secure data for more granular pay gap analysis on ethnicity, disability and gender.
- Providing insight into the equality characteristics of the board members of Public Sector Bodies in Wales.
- Development of frameworks which set out how to measure the impact of key strategic equality actions plans, including the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.
- Setting out how information can be collected to measure the social model of disability.
- Coproducing evidence, for example, with members of the Disability Rights Taskforce to provide further evidence on the feasibility of the taskforce's recommendations.
- Considering the development of measures for sex and gender in Wales.

The Evidence Units play a key role in embedding considerations of equality throughout all evidence across Welsh Government.

Examples of impact on policy-making so far:

The Evidence Units have delivered evidence to support policy decisions, for example:

- An analysis of the impact of budget decisions on equality groups for Budget and Government Business.
- An additional analysis of the Census providing breakdown of all key Census data by ethnicity, which is central to measuring the impact of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP).
- Led on measuring the Migrant Integration Framework ([Migrant Integration Framework | GOV.WALES](#)), including identifying Wales-level data sources to measure outcomes for migrants.
- An additional analysis of the Census providing breakdown of all key Census data by disability, which is central to measuring the impact of a future Disability Rights Action Plan.
- Provided evidence to shape and agree priorities for the LGBTQ+ Action Plan and Advancing Gender Equality Action Plan.
- An additional analysis of the Census providing breakdown of all key Census data by sexual orientation and gender identity, which is central to measuring the impact of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan.

Annex A provides a full list of the projects the Evidence Units have completed in the 2023-24 and are delivering and scoping in 2024-25 including information on impact. These have been informed by policy need as part of the evidence planning process across the three Evidence Units. A summary of our key priorities and their intended impact is provided below.

Our key priorities for 2023-25 and intended impact of our work

Evidence to inform budget setting

The Equality Evidence Unit are members of the Budget Improvement and Impact Advisory Group. Policy needs arising from this group and the review of the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment process will be built into the Evidence Units evidence plan for 2024-25 and 2025-26. The Evidence Units are commissioned each year to undertake a macro summary of the evidence on equality to highlight who would be the most impacted by budget setting to inform decisions on budget allocations. This involves drawing out where people who belonged to equality groups/those with protected characteristics had multiple intersecting characteristics that meant they would be more susceptible to negative impacts from potential cuts to certain services compared to people without multiple intersecting equality characteristics. This evidence will be used in the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment of the 2025-26 Draft Budget.

Feasibility of minorities sample boost for the National Survey for Wales

The National Survey for Wales (National Survey) is a key data source for the National Well-Being indicators which monitor progress and is a key source of information for policy decisions. In its current design state, the National Survey cannot provide sufficiently granular information for small populations such as protected characteristics. The Race Disparity Evidence Unit

commissioned a professor of Quantitative Social Science at the London School of Economics to assess the appropriateness of different sampling approaches to boost the survey. This was completed in 2023. Based on recommendations from this, the Evidence Units are seeking to explore the proposed option in more depth with a view to publish findings from both research projects in Summer 2024.

Pay Gap reporting for Wales

The Evidence Units are working with Knowledge and Analytical Services to explore a number of different techniques to allow more granular analysis of pay gaps for protected and associated characteristics including data pooling and data linking.

Discussions to secure access to administrative data held by other government departments on pay are well developed and moving towards a data sharing agreement. If successful, the Welsh Government will be able to link pay data to other sources such as Census 2021, to be able to publish more granular analysis than is currently possible.

Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan Evaluation Framework

The Race Disparity Evidence Unit are developing an overarching impact evaluation framework for the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. This sets out how RDEU expect change to occur from the actions that are being carried out and whether those actions are delivering a change and by how much. As well as using numbers to measure change, RDEU will gather people's stories or lived experiences to help describe the value or experience of any change that is taking place. RDEU are also commissioning several small-scale lived experience evidence projects to provide further evidence to evaluate the impact of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. These projects focus on the key common themes emerging from the delivery of the Plan e.g. bullying and harassment, and several have an intersectional focus.

Disability Rights Taskforce

DDEU and EEU are working with the Disability Rights Taskforce (DRT) and the Internal Research Programme within Knowledge and Analytical Services to co-produce evidence that will test and strengthen the feasibility of some of the DRT priorities. Chairs of the Working Groups have been invited to co-design and deliver the research alongside Welsh Government analysts and policy officers. The Evidence Units aim to use learning from this project to facilitate future evidence co-production work across the Welsh Government. The aim is to publish in Autumn/Winter 2024.

Social Model of Disability

Existing evidence is all based on the medical model of disability which focusses on impairments instead of the social model of disability which asserts that environmental and societal barriers disadvantage individuals not their health conditions. The Disability Disparity Evidence Unit has commissioned research to develop and test questions that can be used to collect data to identify people with health conditions who experience societal barriers that disable them. This will support Welsh Government to understand the impact of policies on disabled people and how policies can reduce or remove barriers for people with health conditions. The specification was developed in partnership with internal and external stakeholders and topic experts. The

research has been awarded to the National Centre for Social Research, and the contract will commence in March 2024.

LGBTQ+ Action Plan Evaluability Assessment

The Equality Evidence Unit has commissioned Alma Economics to deliver an Evaluability Assessment of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan, which will recommend how to evaluate the impact of the plan. This will ensure the plan is delivering for people. The Equality Evidence Unit worked closely with policy colleagues across the organisation to ensure that policy needs are met and engagement with external partners and LGBTQ+ communities was undertaken sensitively. The fieldwork has been completed and the report is being quality assured, with a view to being published by Summer 2024.

Sex and gender data collection standards

Current Welsh Government data collections are guided by the Government Statistical Service harmonised standards on sex and gender. This is a contentious and complex area and extensive work is underway to understand the legal, ethical and consultative approaches required to deliver the research appropriately. The Equality Evidence Unit has commissioned the first phase of this work which will involve a desk review of questions designed for data collection on sex and gender identity and an informal consultation with stakeholder organisations to understand if there are separate needs in Wales in this area. The contract has been awarded to Laurel Research and commenced in March 2024.

How the Evidence Units work with others

In our strategy the Evidence Units have committed to co-production, wherever possible and appropriate, in developing equalities evidence. The Evidence Units work with people with lived experience and those who use equality evidence to understand their needs for analysis and evidence in order to help shape the way that information is prioritised and disseminated. The Evidence Units encourage people and organisations to get involved in shaping and delivering our programmes of evidence and research projects.

The Evidence Units provide six monthly updates about our work to the Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip which is shared with all Ministers, Special Advisers, and external stakeholders.

The Evidence Units are part of key equality stakeholder groups (including Anti-racist Wales Action Plan External Accountability Group, Disability Right Taskforce, LGBTQ+ External Accountability Group, Gender Equality Forum and Budget Improvement and Impact Advisory Group). Where the Evidence Units provide evidence support and build their needs into the Evidence Units evidence plan.

The Evidence Units collaborate regularly with colleagues in academia and evidence centres to make connections and develop areas of research interest. For example, the Centre on the dynamics of ethnicity and the Migration, Ethnicity, Race and Diversity Research Group at Cardiff University. The Evidence Units meet regularly with SPARK at Cardiff University to share learning across various equality projects, including developing approaches to co-produce

research and remunerate partners with lived experience. The Evidence Units work closely with the Wales Centre for Public Policy on research relevant to equality, such as the increasing diversity across the "One Wales Public Service" and review of gender affirming approaches to inform guidance in schools.

The Evidence Units also meet regularly to share learning and identify opportunities to join up on overlapping priorities with other government departments and public sector organisations such as Public Health Wales, Cabinet Office, and Scottish Government. For example, the Evidence Units have learnt from UK Race Disparity Unit's Ethnicity Facts and Figures which has been fed into the scoping for the Welsh Government's one-stop-shop for equalities evidence. The Evidence Units worked with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on ensuring Welsh perspectives around Gypsy Roma and Travellers were reflected in a project ONS led. They have also worked closely with the ONS and Office for Statistics Regulation to inform the review of sex and gender identity use in data collection in Official Statistics. The Evidence Units are also currently participating in a joint ONS/Cabinet Office working group to develop a survey of disabled people.

Annex A

Projects completed in 2023-24

| Project | Aim | Publication | Impact |
|--|---|--|---|
| Well-being of Wales report: More Equal Wales chapter | To collate the published equality statistics for the More Equal Wales chapter in the annual Well-Being of Wales report which helps us to assess whether we are making progress across the National Indicators | The Well-Being of Wales 2023 report was published on 28 September 2023 An ethnicity sub-report was published alongside the main report. | The Well-being report is a key source used by Welsh Government stakeholders, including citizens and the media to understand the key trends and challenges facing Wales. It is used by Senedd Cymru, the Commissioners and Wales Audit Office, to provide scrutiny against Wales' performance against the goals. The ethnicity sub-report will be one of the baselines to measure the success of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. |
| Macro-level inequality rapid evidence assessment | To provide evidence for the Budget's Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment on inequalities across Wales, focusing on who is most disadvantaged. | Internal review: was shared with Cabinet for discussion 18th Sept. 2024 on 23/24 budget cuts, informed the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment for the Draft Budget 24/25. | Welsh Government's budget allocation has considered within its prioritisation resources to support people who are at most risk of being disadvantaged. |

Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Work Plan (March 2024)

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| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Covid Inquiry – assessment of evidence for the Covid-19 inquiry.</p> | <p>To provide peer review of reviews commissioned by England Covid-19 inquiry to assess whether the Wales evidence base was sufficiently covered.</p> | <p>Pre-existing inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ groups</p> <p>Inequality, later life and ageism</p> | <p>Welsh perspective and evidence was fully reflected in evidence presented as part of the Covid-19 Inquiry.</p> |
| <p>Development of the alignment framework to support Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028</p> | <p>An internal mapping tool to be used by colleagues across the Equality and Human Rights division to track alignment between equality policy areas.</p> | <p>An internal tool for use by equality policy officials</p> | <p>The alignment framework has aided development of the draft Strategic Equality Plan to identify interactions between the equality action plans and draw out opportunities for greater consideration of intersectionality across all the equality action plans.</p> |
| <p>Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan Impact Evaluation and Monitoring Framework</p> | <p>To evaluate the success of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.</p> | <p>Draft of high-level summary of the framework will be shared with wider External Accountability Group by end of February 2024.</p> <p>Publication is expected by Spring 2024.</p> | <p>The impact of the evaluation framework is to influence and embed anti-racist approaches through our approach to measurement of ARWAP and track whether it is achieving its aim of making Wales an anti-racist country by 2030.</p> |
| <p>Census analysis on ethnicity</p> | <p>To undertake further analysis of Census 2021 on ethnicity by life outcomes.</p> | <p>Ethnicity bulletin was published 5th July 2023.</p> | <p>Informed policy decision making that has sought to address socio-economic inequalities in society for ethnic minority communities in Wales.</p> |

Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Work Plan (March 2024)

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|---|--|---|--|
| | | | To be a baseline in measuring the impact of the ArWAP. |
| Anti-Racism and Further Education Qualitative Research on lived experiences of further education students | To provide advice and guidance on Anti-Racism and Further Education Research on lived experiences of post-16 learners and staff. | The Anti-Racism and Further Education final report was published on October 5 th , 2023. | Implement more anti-racist approaches throughout policy decisions in Further Education in Wales e.g., enhancing early career support provisions for ethnic minority staff. |
| Migration Integration Framework | To develop a Migration Integration Wales Indicator Framework. | The Migrant Integration Framework was published in December 2023. | Inform policy decisions in Wales e.g., service development that enable migrants to better integrate in Wales. |
| Census analysis on disabled people | To undertake further analysis of Census 2021 on disabled people by life outcomes. | Disabled people bulletin was published 6 th December 2023. | Improved understanding of the barriers to employment disabled people face to inform ongoing work of Disability Rights Taskforce / Disabled Peoples Employment Champions. |
| Census sexual orientation and gender identity analysis | To undertake further analysis of Census 2021 on sexual orientation and gender identity. | The bulletin is planned for publication in early March 2024. | Improved evidence base on sexual identity and gender identity in relation to inequality of outcomes. |

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Projects being delivered in 2024/25

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| Project | Aim | Progress | Expected Publication | Intended Impact |
|--|---|--|----------------------|---|
| Wales Equalities Data Audit | To examine what equality data and evidence on those with protected and associated characteristics is currently collected and analysed in Wales. To identify available statistical data, gaps in data and recommend improvements to sources and outputs. | <p>Conducted an initial assessment of the data sources and outputs that contain equality information that are used and produced by Statistical Services.</p> <p>Currently working with each policy area in turn within KAS to update the audit working with colleagues to build our understanding of the challenges regarding data gaps while identifying opportunities for immediate fixes.</p> | Summer-2024 | To be able to influence and hold producers of data within and beyond Welsh Government to account about the quality and availability of their data for use informing policy decisions. |
| Well-being of Wales report: More Equal Wales chapter | To collate the published equality statistics for the More Equal Wales chapter in the annual Well-Being of Wales report which helps us to assess whether we are making progress across the National Indicators. | Initial thinking has started for the annual Wellbeing of Wales - More Equal Wales chapter has commenced. | September 2024 | The Well-being report has impact in a variety of ways , and is a key source used by Welsh Government stakeholders, citizens and the media to understand the key trends and challenges facing Wales. It is used by Senedd Cymru and other fora to provide scrutiny against |

Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Work Plan (March 2024)

| Project | Aim | Progress | Expected Publication | Intended Impact |
|--|---|---|----------------------|--|
| | | | | Wales' performance against the goals. |
| A review of the National Survey: equality pooled analysis | To analyse National Survey for Wales data and explore the feasibility of using pooled data to produce robust estimates by equality characteristics. | A report summarising findings and outlining recommendations to improve the collection of protected and associated characteristics in the National Survey for Wales, will be published in Spring 2024. | Spring 2024 | To shape the future of the National Survey for Wales to aid policy areas Welsh Government wide in being better able to understand trends/impacts of their decision making on a range of equality groups in priority areas captured on the survey. |
| Feasibility study of minorities sample boost for the National Survey for Wales | To examine feasibility to boost National Survey sample for minority groups and cognitive testing work. | Currently undertaking single tender procurement exercise to commission independent expert review and recommendations. | Summer 2024 | <p>Greater data granularity for different protected characteristics across National Survey topics improving the equality evidence base overall, including greater granularity for the National Wellbeing of Wales indicators.</p> <p>This will in turn enable better decision making across a range of portfolio areas covered in the National Survey. In addition, improved measurement to assess the success of the various equality action plans e.g., ArWAP.</p> |

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| Project | Aim | Progress | Expected Publication | Intended Impact |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Feasibility assessment of equalities pay gaps including ethnicity and disability</p> | <p>To examine how and whether data on pay gaps can be collected and published for different protected and associated characteristics at a more granular level than currently published.</p> | <p>Currently exploring access to HMRC PAYE data and developing a legal basis for Welsh Government to acquire the data. If we are successful, we can link PAYE data to other admin sources (e.g., Census 2021) that have data on protected characteristics. Utilised learning from a similar feasibility project the Office for National Statistics undertook where they combined multiple admin data sets for 2018.</p> | <p>On going – unable to estimate publication until data has been secured within SAIL</p> | <p>Policy makers can be more confident in using findings on ethnicity and disability pay gaps to inform their policy decisions. This work could overcome some of the limitations of the Annual Population Survey pay gap analysis, for example, there would be less volatility around the data which would enable monitoring of trends overtime.</p> <p>Inform decision making on addressing economic inequalities in society and provide data to allow Welsh Government to publish an ethnicity pay gap (ArWAP goal) and disability pay gap (National Milestone).</p> |

Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Work Plan (March 2024)

| Project | Aim | Progress | Expected Publication | Intended Impact |
|--|---|--|----------------------|--|
| Public Sector Bodies Wales data collection 2022-23 | <p>To aid delivery of future data collection on diversity data on workforces in public sector bodies.</p> <p>To begin to understand the diversity of board members across Public Bodies regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Wales.</p> | <p>Two pilot Surveys gathering information on Board and workforce diversity were issued to Public Sector Bodies regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.</p> <p>The surveys have now closed, and responses are being collated and findings summarised.</p> | Spring/summer 2024 | Inform policy decisions on how to improve the diversity and inclusion within public bodies, particularly at leadership level. |
| Public Sector Bodies Literature Review | To understand the value of diversity in Public Bodies' workforces and identify appropriate Public Sector strategies to increase diversity in unrepresented groups in workforces and senior management. | A literature review is being undertaken internally. The project is currently in the review phase with the writeup scheduled to be completed by the end of February. | Spring/summer 2024 | Inform policy decisions on how to improve the diversity and inclusion within public bodies, particularly at leadership level. |
| Prototyping an approach to co-producing evidence in Government | To test and develop an approach to co-producing evidence for analysts in Government using the Disabled Peoples' Action | An initial approach has been developed for co-producing Social Research. with the Disability Rights Taskforce to support the evidence needs of | Autumn/Winter 2024 | To ensure lived experience is embedded throughout the evidence cycle in social research across all Welsh Government portfolio areas. |

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Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Work Plan (March 2024)

| Project | Aim | Progress | Expected Publication | Intended Impact |
|---|--|--|----------------------|--|
| | Plan recommendations as feasibility studies. | the upcoming Disability Rights Action Plan. The Evidence Units have partnered with the Welsh Government's Internal Research Programme deliver this. | | To inform policy decisions on how to ensure 4 key disability rights action plan recommendations are actionable and, in turn, increasing the impact of the plan for disabled people in Wales. |
| Barriers and enablers to collecting and using equality data | To research and collect evidence on the barriers and enablers to collecting and using equality data. | An in-house proposal for the research has been developed which involves a survey with government analysts, small scale qualitative research and accompanying literature review. The literature review search has been undertaken and documents are in the process of being reviewed. The questionnaire is being developed alongside the literature review. | Spring 2025 | Can identify the solutions to barriers in collecting equality evidence in Welsh Government and increase evidence quality, granularity, availability and accessibility. |

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Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Work Plan (March 2024)

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| Project | Aim | Progress | Expected Publication | Intended Impact |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| Guidance for Welsh Government officials collecting equality data | To provide guidance to analysts on how to collect data on protected and associated characteristics, including general considerations and suggested questions and response options for each characteristic that reflect Welsh Government policy. | Draft interim guidance on recommendations for equality survey questions has been drafted. Draft is being refined prior to sharing with colleagues beyond the evidence units for feedback. | Document for publication on internal intranet by late Spring 2024. | To give Welsh Government analysts and appointed contractors clear advice in collecting data on protected and associated characteristics, and ultimately improve the availability, quality and consistency of data on protected and associated characteristics across all Welsh Government outputs in turn improving policy decisions across all portfolio areas. |
| Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan Impact Evaluation and Monitoring Framework | To evaluate the success of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. | The Race Disparity Evidence Unit has developed a framework for measuring the overall impact of the plan and is assessing the feasibility of using this framework with members of the External Accountability Group through an evidence sub-group. This group has been shaping the development of measurement indicators and how to incorporate lived experience research. | The high-level summary of the framework will be published by Spring 2024. The full framework including what will be measured will be published | The intended impact of the evaluation framework is to influence, embed anti-racist approaches through our approach to measurement of ARWAP and track whether it is achieving its aim of making Wales an anti-racist country by 2030. |

Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Work Plan (March 2024)

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| Project | Aim | Progress | Expected Publication | Intended Impact |
|---|--|--|----------------------|---|
| | | | in the Summer 2024. | |
| Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP) indicator mapping | To collect together all indicators that may be used to feed into the evaluation and monitoring framework and map them against policy area and concern, and provide an indication of their current status in terms of the availability and quality of the data. Key indicators across policy areas will then be identified. | Collected and mapped indicators from policy frameworks and other data sources across policy areas, assessed their status and included links to the data/analysis where available. Started the process of speaking to policy areas about identifying key indicators. | Ongoing | The impact of the evaluation framework is to influence, embed anti-racist approaches through our approach to measurement of ARWAP and track whether it is achieving its aim of making Wales an anti-racist country by 2030. |
| Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP) lived experience research | To collect qualitative data on the lived experiences of people in Wales and their experiences of racism by commissioning small research projects focusing on different research areas. These areas will support evidence requirements for the key common | Scoping out the areas that the research will cover. Conducting initial meetings with potential partners/organisations. | Spring 2024 | The impact of the evaluation framework is to influence, embed anti-racist approaches through our approach to measurement of ARWAP and track whether it is achieving its aim of making Wales an anti-racist country by 2030. |

Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Work Plan (March 2024)

| Project | Aim | Progress | Expected Publication | Intended Impact |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| | themes emerging as the implementation of the ArWAP develops. | | | |
| Anti-racist language guidance for statistics and research | To provide guidance to Welsh Government analysts on using anti-racist language in research and statistical reports, releases and documents. | Draft nearly ready for sharing for review outside of the immediate team | Document for publication on internal intranet by late Spring 2024 | To give Welsh Government analysts and appointed contractors an understanding of anti-racism and how it applies to the language used in publications, and ensure all Welsh Government analytical outputs are anti-racist and role model best practice. |
| Research on how information can be collected to reflect the social model of disability | To develop a suite of questions, response options, and guidance that reflect the Social Model of Disability, to incorporate into future social research and enable a standardised, consistent approach. | The contract has been awarded to NatCen and will commence early March 2024. | Interim report. - August 2024 Final report - Winter 2025 - | To enable a standardised, consistent approach to collecting impairment and disability data for statistical and social research, that aligns to Welsh Government's commitment to the social model and to achieve better outcomes for disabled people across Wales. |

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Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Work Plan (March 2024)

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| Project | Aim | Progress | Expected Publication | Intended Impact |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| The social model of disability language guidance for statistics and research | To provide guidance to analysts and researchers on using social model language in research and statistical reports, releases and documents, including recommendations on terms that should and should not be used. | Reviewing 2 nd draft | Document for publication on internal intranet by late Spring 2024 | To give analysts and researchers a better understanding of the social model of disability and how to apply the language in publications to ensure analytical and research outputs are in line with this view of disability. |
| LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales evaluability assessment | To create theories of change to support the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales and identify how to evaluate the Action Plan. | The Equality Evidence Unit has been working closely with an external contractor to deliver this project. A draft report has been delivered. | Summer 2024 | To lay the foundation for a robust and effective evaluation of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales and identify opportunities for improved monitoring and evaluation in the LGBTQ+ policy area. |
| Developing harmonised standards for data collection on sex and gender identity by public sector organisations in Wales. | To develop evidence-based harmonised standards and guidance on the collection of data about sex and gender identity, including trans status, by public sector organisations in Wales. | A research contract has been awarded to Laurel Research Consulting The contract will commence in March 2024. | By end of 2024 | Influencing development of standards and guidance by ONS and OSR and/or providing evidence to inform development of Wales-specific standards and guidance. |

Projects being scoped in 2024-25

| Project | Aim | Progress | Intended Impact |
|---|---|---|---|
| Equalities in Student Health Research Network | Improving equalities data collection and reporting in Schools Health Research Network (SHRN). | <p>Ongoing: Documentation on SHRN has been reviewed.</p> <p>Meeting is arranged with the Welsh Government analytical lead for SHRN to agree next steps to undertake the analysis.</p> | <p>To scope the potential use of the Student Health and Wellbeing Survey in understanding inequality of outcome for school aged children</p> <p>To improve the evidence base relating to equalities in relation to children and young people.</p> |
| Debt data by equality characteristics | Explore feasibility of collating and publishing annual data on debt in Wales, broken down by protected characteristics. | <p>Ongoing: Early scoping stages exploring potential data sources.</p> <p>The family resources survey will arrive from April, which will have a boost to the Wales sample so additional analysis could be performed.</p> <p>Additional data sources are being explored that may enable more granular analysis, this includes working with the Administrative Data Research teams to identify sources held by other government departments Welsh Government could seek to acquire.</p> | <p>Set out the feasibility of collating and publishing annual data on debt in Wales and publish new analysis by protected characteristics</p> <p>Increased understanding of how debt differentially impacts specific characteristic groups.</p> |

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| Project | Aim | Progress | Intended Impact |
|---|--|---|---|
| Monitoring equality and socio-economic duty | Developing overall framework and performance indicators to monitor implementation of equality and socio-economic duty action plans and strategies. | Ongoing: A rapid literature review is being undertaken to understand what approaches to evaluating a series of equality actions plans or strategies have been adopted elsewhere. This includes understanding how the plans themselves: 1. bridge the implementation gap between having plans and actual impact; 2. build in intersectionality effectively. | Inform decisions across all Welsh Government portfolio areas that will aim to reduce inequality. |
| Financial Sustainability for the Evidence Units | To explore funding opportunities external to Welsh Government for the Units to increase their evidence budget and sustainability of the teams. | Ongoing: A strategy document outlining criteria for prioritising opportunities, potential funders and funding schemes, and assessing opportunities according to eligibility and suitability has been drafted. Advisory meetings with ADR Welsh Government colleagues have been organised to discuss collaboration opportunities. | Reduced reliance on Welsh Government budget as funding secured elsewhere. |
| Intersectional analysis of Census 2021 'life-outcomes' data | To identify what Census 2021 data can tell us about how outcomes can vary at the intersections between protected characteristics. | Initial consideration has been started. | To identify and inform decisions around who are the most at risk from experiencing disadvantage in society. |

Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Work Plan (March 2024)

| Project | Aim | Progress | Intended Impact |
|---|---|--|--|
| Impacts of Cost of Living on equality groups | To understand the ongoing impact of the Cost-of-Living crisis on people according to protected and associated characteristics. | Initial scoping work has been undertaken and an options paper drafted. Further discussions are ongoing to determine how the evidence would be used by policy. The planned intersectional Census analysis may meet this policy need. | To identify who are the most at risk from experiencing disadvantage in society and inform decisions to better support those people in Wales. |
| National Survey for Wales: Socio-economic analysis using pooled survey data | To provide statistical analysis on a range of policy areas captured within the National Survey for Wales across various equality groups. | Initial analysis has been undertaken, awaiting resources for quality assurance and report drafting. | To identify who are the most at risk from experiencing disadvantage in society and inform decisions to better support those people in Wales. |
| Census and SAIL equality analysis | To undertake an initial analysis of Census and SAIL (Secure Anonymised Information Linkage) databank equality data with ADR Wales to examine what is available and what further research is required, for example Compare characteristics across 2011, 2021. Analysis of sexual orientation for first large scale survey including this data. | A programme of work to undertake further analysis of Census 2021 data by protected and associated characteristics is being developed which will consider opportunities to provide linked analysis via the sail databank. | To identify who are the most at risk from experiencing disadvantage in society and inform decisions to better support those people in Wales. |

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| Project | Aim | Progress | Intended Impact |
|---|--|---|---|
| Digital One Stop Shop of Wales equality and diversity data, readily available and accessible online | Centralised web page where evidence on equality can be collated to increase accessibility of evidence across WG and external stakeholders. | <p>Ongoing: Regular contact has been established with Digital, Data and Technology teams within Welsh Government and Office for National Statistics to assess opportunities to align with the new StatsWales platform.</p> <p>A programme of user research is being developed to assess the needs of an audience for the one stop shop.</p> | Public Sector, Third Sector and others can use Welsh Government equality evidence within their own planning and decision making for example, when developing services or targeting resources. |
| Official statistics relating to disabled people and employment | To develop a data pack of official statistics relating to disabled people in Wales. | Analysis of relevant Census 2021 datasets has been undertaken. Further analysis of Annual Population Survey data scheduled. | Improved understanding of the barriers to employment disabled people face to inform ongoing work of Disability Rights Taskforce / Disabled Peoples Employment Champions. |
| Barriers to employment for disabled people | To explore work and employment experiences for disabled people in Wales since the coronavirus (COVID-19). | <p>Ongoing: Several meetings with the Disability Rights Taskforce (DRT) about the scope of the project which is now focused on what life is like now for disabled people in terms of work and employment experiences since COVID-19.</p> <p>A specification has been developed and is out for review.</p> | To understand barriers to employment and reasons for different employment outcomes for disabled people in Wales, in turn informing decisions that will better support disabled people in gaining and sustaining employment. |

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Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Work Plan (March 2024)

| Project | Aim | Progress | Intended Impact |
|---|---|--|---|
| Welsh Government lead on ONS Inclusive Data Taskforce | To monitor and report on the commitments to assess whether we are on track to sustainably deliver progress across all Inclusive Data Principles over the next three years, and beyond | Annual report published on 31st May 2023. Quarter 2 (June 2023) update for key commitments complete. | To ensure consistency and coherence to inclusive evidence developments across the Government Statistical Service. |
| Evidence Review on gender inequalities | To support an evidence-informed approach to gender equality action-planning. | Ongoing: Initial conversations held to shape light-touch rapid review on key priority areas. | Informing policy decisions on the implementation and development of the Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan. |

Agenda Item 2.5

JANE HUTT MS
Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a'r Prif Chwip
Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

19 March 2024

Dear Jenny,

I am writing to you in your role as Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee.

My Oral Questions session on 21 June 2023 included a discussion on the strip searches of children by Welsh police forces. I committed to providing the Senedd with an update on this important issue when Policing in Wales had completed and provided me with information based on an analysis of their internal processes and data.

Policing is a reserved issue and the responsibility of the UK Government. However, police strip searches of children is an issue we take seriously given the importance of the wellbeing of Welsh children. I have had several discussions with the lead PCC, Andy Dunbobbin in our regular catch-up meetings and Policing in Wales have provided me with the below information and confirmed this can be shared with Senedd members.

Policing in Wales has advised that a review of their procedures and processes found all four Welsh Forces have strict governance procedures in place, are compliant with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 requirements around strip searches of children which includes external, independent scrutiny in the form of the Independent Advisory Group, Regional Safeguarding Boards and The Children's Commissioner for Wales.

Forces have a range of scrutiny and governance frameworks in place to support the wellbeing of children being searched, including the use of body worn cameras and custody suite CCTV; Appropriate Adults in attendance in nearly every area; panels and advisory groups. All Forces have adopted trauma informed practice into their stop and search procedures and make safeguarding referrals where appropriate.

The term 'strip search' covers a wide range of practice, from the removal of an outer piece of clothing like a jacket through to much more intimate searches. Although all of this activity needs to be conducted sensitively and appropriately, the figures provided by the police highlight that the vast majority of these searches were much less invasive than the term 'strip search' might imply, with the vast majority involving only outer clothing being removed.

The police review found that a total of 5,428 strip searches of children were undertaken in Wales over the two-year period between 2021-22 and 2022-23. All but six of the 5,428

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

cases involved children aged 13 or older. These searches were predominantly linked to the carriage of offensive weapons or illicit drugs. It should be noted the number captures the number of searches as individual incidents, as opposed to the number of children searched.

Whilst they fall in the definition of strip searches as outline above, for most of these searches children had no clothes removed, or only had a standard search undertaken – i.e. where a coat, jacket or gloves were removed. Of the 5,428 searches, 85 involved a more thorough search, or a search requiring the exposure of intimate areas.

The information also shows the number of children from black and minority ethnic backgrounds that had strip searches:

- Gwent 12
- North Wales 1
- Dyfed Powys 3
- South Wales 51

DCC Rachel Williams holds the portfolio for Child Centred Policing across Wales and is working with all four Welsh Forces to better understand any and all improvements that can be made in this area of policing, alongside the inspection and expectations by Police and Crime Commissioners and His Majesty's Inspectorate for Policing and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The Welsh Government will continue to engage with policing on this issue.

In line with my commitment during Plenary I am copying this to response to all Members of the Senedd.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line above the first name.

Jane Hutt AS/MS

Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a'r Prif Chwip
Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip

**Equality and Social Justice
Committee**

Sarah Rees
Oxfam Cymru

Dear Sarah,

8 April 2024

Little Steps, Big Struggles: Childcare in Wales

Thank you for your letter and your interest in the Committee's follow-up work on childcare. Please accept my apologies for the delay in replying to you. Since noting your correspondence at our meeting on 5 February, uncertainty with regards to our forward work programme has prevented me from responding to you meaningfully until now.

We are grateful to you for highlighting your latest report and for sharing with us details of your engagement work with grassroots organisations including parents and families. In your letter you offer to give evidence formally to our inquiry. While some Members were keen to accept your offer, having considered your request further I have reached the view that we should politely decline on this occasion.

There were several factors that have lead me to this conclusion. They include the status of this work as a follow-up to the original inquiry and the need to ensure that the Committee focuses on potential solutions rather than re-rehearsing the challenges faced by working parents and the sector. These challenges, while valid and of considerable concern, are fairly well-understood and were covered at length by the original inquiry hence our decision to focus on solutions. Furthermore, the decision to postpone most of this inquiry in order to look urgently at shocking allegations of mis-conduct within the Fire and Rescue Service has reduced the amount of time available to us and therefore it would be difficult to accommodate additional panels without delaying the inquiry further.

I appreciate that you and the organisations you work with may be disappointed by this decision. There are, however, other ways in which your report could have an impact and I would be happy to arrange a meeting in person, to discuss your findings in more detail. If you are interested in meeting please speak to the Clerking Team to arrange a convenient date.

Thank you again for your interest in this matter and for bringing this work to our attention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jenny Rathbone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



For the attention of Jenny Rathbone MS, Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee.

I am writing with regard to the Equality and Social Justice Committee consultation on childcare and parental employment. Oxfam Cymru's strategy makes a strong commitment to sharing our platform, amplifying the voices of partners, and ensuring a diverse range of perspectives are duly acknowledged and heard. As part of this commitment, we are keen to extend our platform to grassroots organisations, (and the working parents they support), with whom we work closely. Our mission is to support and mentor them to become confident to contribute substantively to the consultation process.

We are encouraged by the positive feedback we received thus far regarding our collaborative approach. Notably, during the recent launch of our research, [Little Steps, Big Struggles: Childcare in Wales](#) you may have had the pleasure of meeting representatives from Mother's Matter CIC. They informed us that it was the first time they had visited the Senedd or participated in a campaign of this nature. The feedback we received underscores the importance of our support in nurturing their understanding of political processes and advocacy efforts.

With due respect, we kindly request your consideration in allowing us to present oral evidence to the committee, alongside our grassroots partners. Given the dynamic nature of the subject matter and the rapid developments therein, we believe that our insights could offer valuable nuances and recent updates to inform your inquiry.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and considering the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to your vital work.

Kind regards

Sarah Rees

Head of Oxfam Cymru

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By virtue of paragraph(s) vii of Standing Order 17.42

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