

Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament
Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg, Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol /
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee
Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd / Priorities for the Sixth Senedd
CCWLSIR PSS14
Ymateb gan Diverse Cymru / Response from Diverse Cymru

Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations: Priorities for the Sixth Senedd

Diverse Cymru submission

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We are writing to provide evidence on the forthcoming strategic priorities for the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, and in particular how the focus of the committee relates to, and can build commitments to a fair and equal Wales for all.

Diverse Cymru promotes equality for all. We work across all protected characteristics and with other people who experience discrimination and disadvantage, such as carers and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. We believe that we can work together to challenge discrimination in all its forms and create an equitable future for the people of Wales.

We believe that equality and human rights should be at the heart of every decision the Senedd make affecting Wales. Equality, diversity and inclusion must be a cross-cutting theme, central to all inquiries and work of every Senedd committee and policy area.

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We would welcome any opportunity to work with you to build commitments to a fair and equal Wales for all into your policies and work as the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee.

A copy of our Manifesto for 2021 is available, in both English and Welsh, here:

<https://www.diversesecymru.org.uk/a-manifesto-for-a-fair-and-equal-wales-2/>

What is the current impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your sector, and what further support is needed from the Welsh and UK Governments both to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and enable the post-pandemic recovery?

As we recover from Covid-19 it is vital that all political parties in Wales place equality and human rights front and centre of all legislation, strategies, policies, programmes, and actions. The impact on all different communities and groups in Wales must be monitored and action taken to ensure that we emerge from this crisis stronger and more equal, rather than equality and human rights being detrimentally affected. Older, younger, disabled, and Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic people and women are already disproportionately impacted in terms of socio-economic position and access to appropriate and inclusive culture and sport. The current crisis has deepened and highlighted these inequalities.

A 'one size fits all' approach will not meet the equalities requirements of people with one or more protected characteristics. We need to recognise and act on the voices and experiences of people in Wales, including intersectional issues. Failure to make this fundamental shift in the way we address equality and diversity will leave many people in Wales at risk of discrimination, poverty and injustice.

Legislation, policy and practice must be co-produced with individuals representing the diversity of the Wales across all characteristics to ensure that it respects every individual and advances equality for all. There is significant evidence that legislative compliance is not reflected in people's experiences of barriers to accessing services, including culture and sport, and in discrimination in Wales. This implementation gap must be closed. Effective monitoring and ensuring that the public are directly involved in continually evaluating the effectiveness of steps taken to advance equality and human rights are vital.

What issues should the committee prioritise in planning our work programme for the immediate and longer term?

Issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion are often missing from conversations and initiatives in relation to Welsh language and culture. There are many Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic Welsh speakers in Wales, as well as disabled and LGBTQIA+ Welsh speakers. Their experiences and requirements are often missing from initiatives in relation to Welsh language and culture. It is vital that the committee investigates and works towards ensuring accessible and inclusive Welsh language communication and services. Tackling the perceived tension between equality and Welsh language and culture is also vital.

In relation to communications the lack of Plain English and Cymraeg Clir as the standard format for public information, inaccessible documents and websites, and difficulty requesting information and documents in accessible formats should form part of the Committee's programme of work. This should include assessing inclusion and appropriate information in relation to other communities including LGBTQIA+ people and culturally appropriate communication, alongside community languages.

Additionally progress towards embedding the BDA charter and embedding BSL as an official language with rights to access all services through the medium of BSL should be part of the committee's programme of work.

In relation to culture and sport, progress towards delivering a range of cultural and sport offerings that are inclusive, accessible, and reflect the wide-range of people and cultures in Wales should be a key part of the committee's work programme. This should include assessing how inclusive the new Cultural Contract is and how this could be enhanced to promote equality and diversity and embed progress towards a fair and equal Wales for all.

How does Brexit and the new UK-EU relationship affect you or your organisation? What support have you received to respond to the changes? What further support, if any, is needed from Welsh and UK Governments?

We believe that there is a need to enshrine human rights and equality for all in Welsh law, policy and action. People with lived experience of discrimination and disadvantage

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in Wales tell us that they do not feel that they have access to their human rights and that there is a significant implementation gap between legislation and policy and their experiences. They and we are concerned that international protections will be diminished after Brexit, exacerbating this gap between legislative and policy intentions and their lived experiences. Legislation, guidance and policy must address specific issues and experiences of people with each of the protected characteristics and carers in Wales. This must include highlighting and addressing intersectional disparities and experiences. All Human Rights treaties, conventions and principles should be translated directly into Welsh legislation and practice. This includes CEDAW, CERD, and CRDP alongside the Principles for Older People and agreements on LGBTQI+ rights. There are a range of areas which should be addressed to ensure that legislation improves the lives of people who experience discrimination and disadvantage in Wales. The committee should investigate, working with other committees, the possibilities of implementing improvements to equalities legislation and practice in relevant areas and incorporating human rights treaties into Welsh legislation.