

Mudiad Meithrin's response to the inquiry by the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee into the implementation and delivery of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan

Response on behalf of: Mudiad Meithrin (www.meithrin.cymru)

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The aim of Mudiad Meithrin is to provide every young child in Wales with the opportunity to take advantage of early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh, thereby contributing to the creation of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. This is because we know that the early years – which include encouraging parents to introduce, use and pass on the Welsh language and supporting them to that end – are key for children in the process of becoming confident Welsh speakers. Mudiad Meithrin believes that all children have a right to quality provision in respect of care and early education, and also that they have a practical right to convenient Welsh-medium provision.

Mudiad Meithrin is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the consultation, as we are fully committed to the vision in the plan to create an anti-racist Wales. As an organisation, we have stated that we will not tolerate racism of any kind. The aim of our strategy, policies and plans is to move us towards being an anti-racist organisation, and that is reflected in how children and families experience our services on the ground.

Our website states:

'Mudiad Meithrin's vision is that every child in Wales should have the opportunity to play, learn and grow through the Welsh language. Wherever there are young children in Wales, Mudiad Meithrin (and therefore the Welsh language) should also be present.'

We believe that the emphasis on *every* child makes anti-racism a central part of our vision, and we are proud to be collaborating with the Welsh Government on delivering the aim of creating an anti-racist Wales.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to attend meetings regarding the Childcare and Play Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and meetings of the Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Subgroup of the Welsh Language Partnership Council. Mudiad Meithrin submits a quarterly report about its work to the Welsh in Education Unit and as part of a report on CWLWM's activity, which includes goals linked to the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.

The Childcare and Play Committee (under the Childcare and Play Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan) has created three sub-groups to focus on different areas of work, and it has appointed 10 community mentors – individuals with lived experience who are a core part of the implementation of the Action Plan. The Minimum Childcare Standards published in 2023 also refer to the Action Plan, which is a step in the right direction in terms of embedding the plan across the sector.

Here are some further comments under relevant sub-headings, which are relevant to the further research that the committee wishes to undertake in the area of education policy.

Professional learning

The partnership between CWLWM and Diversity and Anti-Racist Professional Learning (DARPL), along with the partnership between Mudiad Meithrin and DARPL, has ensured that standardised professional learning provision is available for practitioners and leaders in childcare and play settings regarding the introduction of anti-racism.

Mudiad Meithrin has been offering live, face-to-face sessions on anti-racist professional learning, led by Rachel Clarke, and a series of online sessions led by Rachel Clarke and Liz Pemberton (*The Black Nursery Manager*).

We note the following:

- We do not know the extent to which local authorities provide anti-racist professional learning or emphasise its importance. A number of advisory teachers have attended the sessions that Mudiad Meithrin has organised. It is important to ensure that advisory teachers are trained in this area and are able to look at settings through an anti-racist lens and advise on race-related issues in childcare, play and foundation learning settings.
- Childcare qualifications should be reviewed to ensure that diversity and anti-racism are essential elements of these courses.

Data and data gaps

There is a serious lack of data on race and ethnicity in the childcare sector, including information on the race and ethnicity of practitioners and children. In response, Mudiad Meithrin has started gathering information about children who are being registered in Cylchoedd Meithrin, although this process depends on the information that is volunteered by the children's parents or carers.

- The Childcare and Play group, which is looking at the implementation of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, has identified information gaps relating to bullying or cases of race-based discrimination or harassment occurring in these settings. In response, the Welsh Government is planning an anti-racist best practice resource for the childcare and play sector.
- As is demonstrated by *The Changing Demography of Ethnicity and the Welsh Language*, a paper produced by Dafydd Trystan and Yasmin Begum, two-thirds of Welsh speakers from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds are under the age of 16. This underlines the fact that urgent attention is needed to ensure that organisations that work with this age group take into account their lived experiences in relation to the Welsh language (education policy area).

Communication

It would be useful to share an annual update regarding the Action Plan in a way that is easy to read, in order to show the progress that has been made and the challenges that have arisen. Having more conversations about the challenges (which

may be common to a number of sectors) would be beneficial in terms of learning about the different methods of overcoming them. For example, Mudiad Meithrin succeeded in recruiting three apprentices as part of the apprenticeship scheme for individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. It would be useful to hear about the experiences of other organisations in this area, and it would be useful for those who wish to pilot this intervention in order to create more diverse workforces to share good practice or guidelines.

Further interventions

One of the issues that has been highlighted through our anti-racist professional learning sessions is that anti-racism needs to be considered as a safeguarding issue in the area of education and childcare. Practitioners should adopt an approach towards challenging racism in the same way as they would approach a safeguarding issue. We believe that safeguarding policies and procedures should be reviewed to include cases of racism, and that there should be clear procedures regarding how to report incidents of racism, in the same way as incidents that could cause harm or abuse to a child would be reported. Thinking about racism as a safeguarding issue would change attitudes regarding the seriousness of this issue, and regarding the need for clear and decisive action when practitioners encounter racism.

Delivering actions

Education and the Welsh language:

Mudiad Meithrin has contributed to a number of these targets:

- In order to increase access to Welsh language education for minority ethnic communities, Cylchoedd Ti a Fi were set up for refugee parents in Newport and Cardiff, and a [Cylch Ti a Fi was set up on a Traveller, Gypsy and Roma site](#) in Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent.
- We have started to gather information about the race and ethnicity of children who attend Cylchoedd Meithrin, and the aim is to analyse the information and conduct further research when we have a more reliable data set.
- We continue to prepare and publish resources for Cylchoedd Meithrin that represent the diversity of the people of Wales. For example:

- **A learning resource to accompany the Black History 365 campaign:** the [‘Our Wales’ \(‘Cymru Ni’\)](#) resource series was published, which introduces small children to stories about black people of the past and present, including John Ystumllyn (by Natalie Jones), Colin Jackson, Betty Campbell and Maggie Ogunbanwo (Emily Pemberton).
- **Celebrating the multicultural heritage of Wales** and introducing it to the early years: [Nature Notes and Nature Notes 2](#).
- The [AwDUra scheme](#) for prospective Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority writers (which attracted 10 applicants), to encourage Welsh-language story-writing for children, together with the [AwDUron scheme](#), where children's stories by Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority authors were translated into Welsh jointly with 'Lily Translates'.

Childcare and Play

Progress has been made in relation to all of the targets identified in this policy area:

- It would be good to see more collaboration with local authorities in order to understand more about the experiences of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and individuals in relation to childcare and play, and about their access to services and the barriers that they face.