

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i weithredu diwygiadau addysg](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into Implementation of education reforms](#)

IER 58

Ymateb gan: Mark Pryce Williams, Prifysgol Metropolitan Caerdydd

Response from: Mark Pryce Williams, Cardiff Metropolitan University

Nodwch eich barn mewn perthynas â chylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad. | Record your views against the inquiry's terms of reference.

My doctoral research was titled 'Exploring teachers' perceptions of embedding LGBTQ+ history within Curriculum for Wales' and was based upon questionnaires and interviews with teachers across Wales. **Thus LGBTQ+ inclusion is the focus of my response.**

Below are a series of recommendations based upon the key themes which emerged from the data collection process.

1. Stronger Welsh Government Support to ensure parity with BAME history

The data collection for this study took place at a particular moment in time for education in Wales: the period between publication of the Curriculum for Wales Framework (Curriculum for Wales 2020) and its implementation in 2022/3. As with many changes in education, it make take several years for the ethos of the new curriculum to be fully embedded by schools. The lack of specific guidance upon what to teach and how to teach it appears to have been a challenge for the more experienced participants in this study, having relied for most or all of their teaching career upon the delivery of a prescribed curriculum. The more experienced respondents had identified and gravitated towards what appeared to be recommended content with reference to the What Matters statements. For example, the recommendation to include BAME history appears to have been taken onboard by all participants in this study. The publication of the Professor Williams report and the formation of the Diversity and Anti-Racist Professional Learning (DARPL) team have both created an impetus for teachers and trainers of teachers to develop an

anti-racist and inclusive ethos in schools in Wales. The research, reporting, and training available for teachers and trainee teachers, along with the Welsh Government commitment show through initiatives such as the Anti-Racist Action Plan (Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, 2021) reveal a clear commitment to making Wales a more inclusive society. This ties in well with the new curriculum which seeks to develop 'ethical, informed citizens' (Curriculum for Wales, 2021) with an understanding of the diverse society of Wales. The commissioning of the Professor Williams report, the work of DARPL and the commitment of Welsh Government to making Wales an anti-racist country provide a template for the effective introduction of a similar programme for making Wales a leader in the development of an LGBTQ+ friendly nation.

The introduction to the report proclaims that Welsh Government has 'pushed forward with curriculum reform, embedding LGBTQ+ inclusive education.' However, the contributors to this study would suggest that this is not the case, with a lack of training and a lack of resources for teachers to deliver an LGBTQ+ curriculum. The vagueness of the language used within the report is also a concern. On a number of occasions, the terms 'gender identity' and 'sexuality' are misused as if both terms have the same meaning. In the Estyn response to the consultation (estyn.gov.wales, 2021) it states, 'The lack of clear wording and intended meaning further complicate how progress towards these actions will be monitored and measured'. The response also states 'Overall, the plan needs to be strengthened to sufficiently demonstrate intersectionality with other protected characteristics' (estyn.gov.wales, 2021).

Within the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales: Consultation Analysis (2022) some responses cited the need to look beyond RSE curriculum for LGBTQ+-inclusive education, either within the wider school curriculum, beyond dedicated teaching and learning time. This echoes the views of a number of respondents in this study where the need for an LGBTQ+ curriculum which threaded through all subjects throughout the year was identified as important to ensure LGBTQ+ content had sufficient status and parity with other key issues.

2. Training Opportunities for Teachers and ITE Students to improve teacher knowledge and teacher confidence

The lack of available training and a lack of confidence in being able to answer unexpected questions were identified as key issues for respondents in this study.

The only provision available was offered by charities such as Stonewall, and then not specifically examining history or Welsh history. In comparison, all teaching staff in Scotland are expected to complete a two-stage national professional learning course with each stage comprising of sixty to ninety minutes of training (<https://lgbteducation.scot>, 2023).

There was a concern that incorrect terminology could be used, important questions could not be answered effectively and that knowing how much depth to go into during discussions could each be a problem. Again, the work already initiated by Welsh Government in the creation of DARPL could act as an excellent template for the development of programmes to imbed LGBTQ+ topics across all subjects / AoLEs including history. Only one respondent identified training which had taken place to support LGBTQ+ inclusion in their school – and that was led by students and not attended by all staff. In order to ensure all stakeholders are aware of their responsibility to support LGBTQ+ students, staff, parents, and other stakeholders a comprehensive programme of training is needed for teachers and ITE students.

The same may be true the lack of LGBTQ+ focus within Curriculum for Wales. A specific network was set up in Spring 2022 to discuss ‘Welsh History, including Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic histories’(2023 hwb.gov.wales). However, no similar network was created to discuss LGBTQ+ histories. This is despite the Welsh Government’s report titled ‘Response to Estyn’s Report on Recommendations and Provision for LGTB Pupils’ (2020) which identified a lack of training as an issue in schools and criticising the ‘bolt-on’ nature of LGBTQ+ teaching and focus upon LGBTQ+ issues within PSE lessons, ‘Learners in general do not see positive LGBT role models as part of their curriculum or around their school or college. This increases the likelihood that they will develop negative views of LGBT people and that LGBT learners will not appreciate that they can be equally successful as others. Addressing LGBT issues is a bolt-on part of the school or college’s provision, for example with teachers addressing them only as part of personal and social education (PSE) sessions. This may reinforce the sense that LGBT people are a special issue that needs discussing rather than part of everyday life’ (2020). Recommendation 1 stated ‘schools and colleges should review their curriculum and individual course content to consider how well the teaching of diversity and inclusion, including LGBT issues, is integrated into learning experiences. Recommendation 3 called on schools and colleges to ensure that all staff engage in regular training in addressing discrimination and promoting diversity, including

issues around LGBT people. Recommendation 4 stated that LAs (Local Authorities) and consortia should work with external partners to deliver relevant professional learning opportunities for staff in schools across primary and secondary sectors' (2020). However, since the publication of the recommendation no local authority / consortia training has been made available to schools in Wales. A Welsh Government audit of training provision could be a useful prompt to prioritise LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching the forthcoming academic year.

3. Resourcing to deliver an LGBTQ+ inclusive history curriculum

The lack of teaching and learning resources was a concern for many of the respondents in this study. With the emphasis upon creating new programmes of study within schools in the response to the freedom of the new curriculum, this seems an ideal time to prioritise the development of new teaching and learning resources. As previously stated, there are no resources on HWB for teachers to use to deliver an LGBTQ+ inclusive programme of study. There are no co-construction groups developing teaching and learning resources to address this issue – possibly because of the lack of government emphasis upon the importance of developing an LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum. At present, there is only one history textbook designed to support the delivery of a Curriculum for Wales 11–14 programme of study, and that makes no reference to LGBTQ+ history.

4. Fully integrated into GCSE specifications to recognise the significance of LGBTQ+ history

At present, state schools in Wales are expected to deliver only WJEC GCSE courses. Consequently, state schools in Wales have a very limited number of history topics to choose from to teach at GCSE. Qualifications Wales produced the approval criteria in December 2022 which included the need to include 'Black, Asian and minority ethnic history, identity and culture and the contributions made by Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups on a national scale as well as globally' (Qualifications Wales, 2022). However, no such requirement was made for the teaching of LGBTQ+ history within the approval criteria. LGBTQ+ history is not referred to throughout the document. As previously stated, there are opportunities to include LGBTQ+ history within current GCSE history lessons, through a comparison of the Civil Rights and Gay Rights movements, and studies of individuals involved in both movements. However, there is no reference to LGBTQ+ movements in the current WJEC History specification, nor within any of their training materials for teachers, online

resources, or approved GCSE textbooks. In contrast, Oxford and Cambridge (OCR) GCSE History specification A requires schools to cover both the Stonewall Riots and the Gay Rights movement as part of the Civil Rights movement within the USA. Parity between BAME and LGBTQ+ history within the WJEC examination specification could significantly raise the profile of LGBTQ+ history and provide examples of positive LGBTQ+ role models as recommended by Estyn's 2021 report, *Celebrating Diversity* (Estyn, 2021).

5. Address the challenges of delivering LGBTQ+ history within communities. Welsh Government engagement with religious bodies

Curriculum for Excellence was implemented in schools in Scotland in 2010, six years after the publication of the guidelines for schools (Scottish Government, 2004) and eight years after the commissioning of the initial report. There are many elements within Curriculum for Excellence that will appear familiar to teachers in Wales currently implementing Curriculum for Wales. In 2014 the Scottish Government published 'Dealing with Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Schools - Teachers' Toolkit' (2014). This was an extensive resource for teachers to use to tackle homophobia and homophobic bullying, available on the Education Scotland website to download. The Toolkit included teaching and learning resources on LGBT issues and anti-homophobia work in the curriculum through lesson plans that support Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and development of the four capacities (successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors). Thus, within four years of the introduction of the new curriculum the Scottish government had begun to commission the creation of resources to support LGBTQ+ inclusive education. In the same year the Scottish Government introduced a CPD Staff development programme which focused upon equality issues including anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia, recognised as essential and not peripheral to training needs and part of teachers' on-going CPD programme. This was linked to the General Teaching Council of Scotland's professional standards (similar to the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership in Wales), ensuring awareness of the programme across the profession from initial teacher education student teachers to established classroom practitioners. The creation of a similar youth network in Wales, and the development of a similar toolkit and set of teaching resources should be a priority for Welsh Government in order to support LGBTQ+ inclusion in schools.

6. Acknowledge and respond to the positive reception of pupils / students to LGBTQ+ history

A number of respondents commented positively upon the attitude of students in their classrooms when discussing LGBTQ+ issues or individuals. Typically, respondents suggested students were more aware of LGBTQ+ contemporary culture and issues than many members of teaching staff. It was also suggested that students were keen to access more information concerning LGBTQ+ issues, events and individuals when examining 'big stories and big issues'(Riley, 1997) such as prejudice, reliability and significance, key historical concepts as discussed in both the National Curriculum for England and Curriculum for Wales. The use of LGBTQ+ examples when discussing 'big stories and big issues' helps to normalise LGBTQ+ history, providing students with an understanding of the importance of studying these topics alongside BAME history, Feminist history, and other key schools of historical research. Responding to the needs of LGBTQ+ students and their advocates provides students with a real-life example of ethical democracy. All schools in Wales have student councils and these would be the ideal forum to discuss the ways in which schools could become more responsive to the wishes of the pupils / students and provide better coverage of LGBTQ+ events and individuals.