

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol ar Anabledd a Chyflogaeth

This response was submitted to the Equality and Social Justice Committee consultation on Disability and Employment

DE10

Ymateb gan: Sefydliad y Peirianwyr Sifil: Cymru | Response from: Civil Engineers Wales Cymru (ICE Wales Cymru)



**The Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF**


30 August 2024

By email: SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

Institution of Civil Engineers
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Cambrian Buildings
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Bae Caerdydd CF10 5FL

Dear Committee Chair,


www.ice.org.uk/wales

Inquiry into disability and employment.

On behalf of the Institution of Civil Engineers Wales Cymru (ICE Wales Cymru), we are delighted to have the opportunity to give our comments into the inquiry into disability and employment. We have shown our general responses on behalf of ICE Wales Cymru together with some additional personal comments.

As a committee, our mission is to raise the profile and share best practice around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and support the embedment of EDI in all activities undertaken by our members across Wales and beyond. We educate and support our members by ensuring all aspects of diversity including age, race, gender, disability, religious belief, and sexual orientation are given due and appropriate regard and respect. We advise and assist our members to identify and remove discrimination and barriers (intended or unintended) and help companies value diversity that individuals with differing backgrounds and abilities bring to the industry.

Education around these topics is paramount for a growing industry but a great deal of time and effort needs to be given to educating line managers and leaders in a company to make their staff feel comfortable to disclose their disabilities or challenges to their wider teams. The number of employees in Wales to date who do not want to disclose conditions such as hard of hearing, colour blindness, chronic fatigue, or neurodiversity is staggeringly high for 2024. This is often due to the concerns around capped progress or the impact this might have on how one's skills are measured. To make Wales as innovative and progressive as other neighbouring countries, we must consider the talent and skills individuals hold beyond their disabilities and this starts with righting historic preconceptions that our disabilities limit our greatness and the skills we bring to our workplace.

Yours sincerely



Tara Sirati BEng (Hons) MSc CEng MICE

**Chair ICE Wales Cymru Fairness, Inclusion
and Respect Committee**



**Eur Ing Keith Jones BSc DMS CEng CEnv
FICE FCIHT FCMI**

Director Cyfarwyddwr ICE Wales Cymru



Individual comments:

Tara Sirati

Since the beginning of the pandemic back in 2020, I have been part of a team working on intersectionality of the deaf and hearing communities with a not-for-profit organisation that has led a shift in this paradigm in South Wales. One of the key findings is that intersectionality is about understanding and educating communities about barriers to accessibility and providing adequate tools for meaningful engagement. As the chair of ICE Fairness, Inclusion and Respect committee (FIR), I have been applying my findings within my industry which has led to the realisation that intersectionality needs to happen a lot more in our place of work. Our industry focuses on major climate and inclusive engineering solutions however, our workforce does not truly represent our society and that is because companies are not always equipped to deal with disabilities, mental health matters and true inclusion. We have focused a great deal on unconscious bias and what inclusion means, but topics such as hidden disabilities, neurodiversity and mental health still need to be discussed openly. This mainly stems from openness to having “uncomfortable” conversations and challenging our preconceptions. We have a whole pool of talent we could be nurturing from a young age to help shape Wales’s future.

Keith Jones

I am passionate about Fairness Inclusion and Respect issues and the need to eliminate exclusion and maximise equality. The institution of Civil Engineers has long battled for equality. There is a poor gender imbalance in the sector, and we are seeking to have a better gender balance and greater representation from some sectors. I am a member of the ICE FIR Group, the ICE Wales Cymru FIR Committee and the UK Government APPG: Women and Work plus the Equity in STEM Industry Sub-group.

Notes:

Founded in 1818, the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) is a UK-based international organisation with over 93,000 members, ranging from students to professionally qualified civil engineers. As an educational and qualifying body, with charitable status under UK law, we support our members throughout their careers, and help society to have trust and confidence in infrastructure professionals. Under our Royal Charter, ICE has become recognised worldwide for its excellence as a centre of learning, a public voice for the profession and a leading source of expertise in infrastructure and engineering policy.