



Comisiwn  
Cydraddoldeb a  
Hawliau Dynol

Equality and  
Human Rights  
Commission

Children, Young People and  
Education Committee  
Senedd Cymru

Via email only

Friday 27 February 2026

Dear Chair,

**Subject: Wales Impact Reports and Legacy Report**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is Britain's equality and human rights regulator for Great Britain and an 'A' status National Human Rights Institution for Wales and England, and for reserved matters in Scotland. We have worked closely with the Children, Young People and Education Committee during the Sixth Senedd and thought we would support your legacy reporting by linking you to our Wales Impact Reports.

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Bydd y Comisiwn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg.

The Commission welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English.

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[Wales Impact Report 2024 to 2025 | EHRC](#)

[Wales Impact Report 2023 to 2024 | EHRC](#)

[Wales Impact Report 2022 to 2023 | EHRC](#)

[Wales Impact Report 2020 to 2021 | EHRC](#)

Some examples, relevant to the work of the Committee, in our Impact Reports include:

- Our [evidence and recommendations](#) to the Committee were strongly reflected in your report and inquiry on access to education for disabled children and implementation of reforms. Our advice to the Committee in advance ensured the inquiry used the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as a frame of reference.
- The Committee's consultation report on peer-on-peer sexual harassment in schools reflected our evidence and recommendations. This included the need to update statutory guidance to local authorities on data collection

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and analysis.

## **Monitoring Welsh Government progress towards its international human rights obligations**

Our [Human Rights Tracker](#) is an online tool that monitors how effectively the Welsh and UK governments are meeting their human rights obligations. It currently contains more than 70 assessments of the Welsh Government's actions in response to recommendations issued by UN Human Rights Committees. We believe this evidence base is a valuable resource for informing the Committee's legacy report, providing an up-to-date picture of the state of human rights in Wales across a broad range of thematic areas.

Our briefing, [Monitoring Welsh Government progress towards its international human rights obligations](#), provides the background and information regarding monitoring processes. This briefing introduces the process for monitoring compliance with international UN treaties which will be useful for future Committees

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## **Additional Information : Briefing - Equality and human rights in Wales.**

This briefing provides a robust evidence-based snapshot of the most pressing equality and human rights issues in Wales, taken from our state of the nation [Is Wales Fairer? 2023](#) report. This highlights what has been achieved during the Sixth Senedd, in addition to the equality and human rights issues that will need to be addressed during the next Senedd.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Children, Young People and Education Committee for your work during the Sixth Senedd. If there is anything you would like us to clarify, or would like any further information, please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Coombs  
Head of Wales

**Direct telephone:** 029 2044 7710

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Briefing

# Equality and human rights in Wales

August 2025

EHRC Wales

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# Introduction

## Who we are

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is the equality regulator for Great Britain and the National Human Rights Institution for Wales and England, and for reserved matters in Scotland. We have a statutory mandate to advise the Welsh Government and the Senedd on matters relating to equality and human rights.

The Equality Act 2006 places duties on the Commission to provide advice to governments on equality and human rights enactments.<sup>1</sup> Find out more about the Commission's work on our [website](#).

As an A-status National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) we are assessed against the [Paris Principles](#). The Commission was last re-accredited as an A-status NHRI in May 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> [Equality Act 2006](#), section 11 [accessed 22 November 2024]

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# About this briefing

## Purpose

This briefing provides a robust evidence-based snapshot of the most pressing equality and human rights issues in Wales today. It will help prospective candidates and political parties understand the challenges ahead as they prepare themselves for the election and the new Senedd term, and develop their own plans for 2026 and beyond.

It provides a summary of some key aspects of our Equality and Human Rights Monitor: Is Wales Fairer? 2023, set out in the key domains of life. This overview draws on data to measure progress on equality and human rights in Wales. It is intended to support evidence-based decisions.

Our aim is to drive action and meaningful change, to make life fairer for everyone.

## Approach taken

The evidence for this briefing has been taken from our Equality and Human Rights Monitor: Is Wales Fairer? 2023. Where specific Welsh evidence is not available, for example where data are missing or are not sufficiently disaggregated, we have used relevant evidence from our Great Britain report “Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023”.

The Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023 is our state of the nation review for Britain. How we assess equality and human rights for this review is set out in our [Measurement Framework](#). This explains how we examined different areas of life, which we call domains. This briefing captures our findings for the key domains of interest to candidates and political parties ahead of the next Senedd.

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You can read further detailed analysis in the [Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023: Is Wales Fairer?](#) and the [Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023](#).

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# Cross cutting/framework

## Summary

This chapter reports on important overarching findings on equality and human rights in Wales that are not necessarily related to a specific protected characteristic and / or domain.<sup>2</sup> Data and evidence gaps in Wales limit our ability to undertake a comprehensive assessment of progress of equality and human rights in Wales.

Data gaps exist across all protected characteristics and there is a lack of disaggregated data by protected characteristic across policy areas that would strengthen evidence-based policy and decision making. Data collection methods should allow for intersectionality and include both qualitative and quantitative methods.

It is imperative that data and evidence gaps continue to be filled to gain a clearer national, regional and sectoral understanding of equality and human rights issues in Wales. Such evidence is also critical to better understand the impacts of both COVID-19 and increases in the cost of living.

## Key findings

The proportion of Welsh residents aged three or over that had any skills in Welsh decreased slightly from 2011 to 2021, as did the proportion who reported being able to speak Welsh. (The number of Welsh residents born outside the UK has increased by 28.3% since 2011).

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<sup>2</sup> The domains we use are outlined in our measurement framework (EHRC, 2017)

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A smaller proportion of children who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) achieved 5 GCSEs grade A\*-C (52.5%) in 2020/21 compared to those who are not eligible (79.8%). The attainment gap has not changed since the last report and remains higher than the gap in England.

In 2021/22, 57.2% of people in Wales aged 16 and over were in employment. However, pre-pandemic employment growth has stagnated since our last statutory review, with gains in employment tailing off.

In Wales adult and child poverty rates have been variable. It is too soon for the data to show the full effect of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis but in 2020/22 over one-in-five people (adults and children), and over one-in-four children, were living in relative income poverty.

Between 2020 and 2022 the number of families in temporary accommodation nearly doubled in Wales from 2,324 to 4,465 households.

Life expectancy at birth estimates for Wales suggest that improvements in life expectancy have been slowing, with suggestions that COVID-19 mortality contributed to a drop in life expectancy in the most recent figures. Average life expectancy in Wales is lower than England but higher than Scotland.

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# Education

## What has improved?

Between 2018/19 and 2020/21, attainment at GCSE for pupils with a disability / Special Education Need (SEN) improved at a higher rate than for those without a disability / SEN. However, there remains a large gap between the two groups.

Ethnic minority pupils consistently achieve higher rates of attainment at GCSE than White British children, a difference that has increased slightly since 2015/16. However, there are variations in attainment between ethnicities.

Between 2012 and 2017, in early years' development, the attainment gap reduced between those eligible for FSM and those who are not eligible. The early years' attainment gap between those eligible for FSM and those who are not narrowed from 21.4 percentage points to 17.0 percentage points for boys and from 15.3 percentage points to 11.5 percentage points for girls.

There has been an increase in the proportion of Christians and those with No Religion obtaining a degree, from 22.9% and 23.7% respectively in 2012/13 to 32.3% and 31.0% in 2021/22. Despite this, they remain the religious groups least likely to have a degree.

Analysis of Annual Population Survey (APS) data on Wales found people aged 55–64 are least likely to have done any learning activity in the previous three months. However, the number of people of this age who participate in learning activities has steadily grown between 2010/11 (12.6%) and 2021/22 (16.6%).

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## What has got worse?

In early years attainment, children with a disability / SEN in Wales are falling behind children without a disability / SEN at a faster rate than in England or Scotland.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children experienced large drops in early years development decreasing from 56.2% in 2016/17 to 48.8% in 2018/19.

Permanent and fixed school exclusion rates have been rising, and rates remain significantly higher for boys than for girls.

There was an increase of young people aged 16–18 who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) at the end of 2021 at 13.6% (14,200) compared with 11.7% (11,900) at the end of 2020. There was also a slight increase of young people aged 19–24 who were NEET in 2021 at 16.3% (37,800) compared with 15.8% (37,700) in 2020.

## Persistent inequalities

In 2018/19, the attainment gap in early years development for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children compared with White British children was the largest of all ethnic groups at -35.0 percentage points.

Girls are more likely than boys to achieve expected outcomes at early years. 2018/19 there was an 8.8 percentage point gap in the proportion of girls and boys achieving a good level of development in early years. The gap was narrowest in 2016/17 (at 7.1 percentage points).

Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are excluded at higher rates overall than White pupils, but there are variations between ethnicities. For example, Chinese students are permanently excluded at the lowest rate and Asian students at the highest.

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There are racial disparities in experiences of bullying in Welsh schools. According to findings from the Schools Health Research Network (SHRN), in 2017/18 Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and White Irish children reported the highest rates of both being bullied in person (45% and 48% respectively) and cyberbullying (33% and 27%). They also reported as being most likely to have bullied another person.

The persistent disadvantage gap has remained unchanged since 2011. Pupils who experience persistent disadvantage were about 29 months behind in educational progress in 2019.

At the time of the 2021 Census, there were approximately 8,200 young carers in Wales (1.8% of 5–17-year-olds). The demands of caring can affect educational attainment and prevent young carers from fulfilling their potential.

Analysis of Welsh Government data for 2021 suggests that men are slightly more likely (8.9%) than women (7.3%) to hold no qualifications. There are higher proportions of men than women with no qualifications in all age groups up to ages 50–59 and 60–64. Women are more likely than men to hold qualifications at or above level 4 (GCSE).

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# Work

## What has improved?

Employment rates for those aged 16 and over have increased between 2011/12 (57.6%) and 2019/20 (61.3%), while both unemployment and economic inactivity rates fell.

All major ethnic groups have seen employment growth between 2010/11 and 2019/20, with particularly large growth for Black (from 54.0% to 63.6%) and Pakistani (43.9% to 54.5%) ethnic groups. The employment gap between White British and Black groups has completely closed, and the White British/Pakistani gap has narrowed significantly. However, change varies between Black African and Caribbean groups, and between sexes within the Black ethnic group.

Between 2013/14 and 2020/21, disabled adults' employment rates grew from 31.7% to 40.1%, and subsequently, the employment gap with non-disabled adults narrowed. However, evidence suggests that higher employment rates for disabled people may partially be driven by an increasing prevalence of disability in Britain.

In Wales (but not in England or Scotland), the proportion of ethnic minority workers in insecure employment has declined between 2010/11 and 2019/20. However, ethnic minority workers are still more likely to be in insecure work than White British workers.

## What has got worse?

During the pandemic, previous trends reversed. Between 2019/20 and 2021/22, employment rates dropped, unemployment rates rose, while economic inactivity rates rose from 36.2% to 37.1%. The pandemic period affected groups differently:

- 
- White ethnic groups (as a whole) have shown decline in employment and growth in economic inactivity. However, non-white ethnic minorities (as a whole) showed unchanged economic inactivity during the pandemic.
  - Adults aged 55–64 have shown significant decline in employment and increase in economic inactivity and unemployment.

In Wales, disabled workers' insecure employment rate showed a significant increase in 2021/22, creating a significant gap between disabled and non-disabled workers.

Although disabled workers' earnings have grown, the earnings gap between disabled and non-disabled workers has widened over time, from 12.0% in 2013/14 to 15.6% in 2019/20.

Between 2013/14 and 2019/20, disabled workers became increasingly more likely than non-disabled workers to be in a low paid occupation, as the gap between the percentage of disabled and non-disabled workers in a low paid occupation has widened.

Black workers (38.4%) are more likely than any other ethnic group to work in a low paid occupation and this has remained similar since 2011/12 (despite most other ethnic groups showing decline). This means that the gap between the percentage of Black and White British workers in a low paid occupation has widened.

Despite long-term growth in employment among the 55–64 age group, their earnings have not grown in real terms between 2010/11 and 2019/20. This has created a 10.9% wage gap with workers aged 45–54, who saw 52% growth in median hourly earnings during the same period.

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## Persistent inequalities

Several groups continue to earn less in 2019/20:

- Disabled workers compared with non-disabled workers (15.6% earnings gap). Earnings gaps are particularly large for workers with learning difficulties or disabilities (31.3% earnings gap).
- Bangladeshi workers compared with all other ethnic groups (16.7% lower earnings than White British) followed by Pakistani workers (10.5% lower than White British).
- Muslims workers have lower wages than all other religious/belief groups (15.8% lower than workers with No Religion).

People aged 16–24 and 55–64 continue to have lower rates of employment than all other groups aged under 65. Both these groups show higher rates of economic inactivity (even when excluding students) and younger people also continue to have higher rates of unemployment. Furthermore, workers aged 16–24 and workers aged over 70 are more likely than other workers to be in insecure employment. Evidence from the CIPD suggests that young people are also overrepresented in zero-hour contracts.

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# Living standards

## What has improved?

Relative poverty after housing costs in Wales declined between 2015/16 and 2019/20 for:

- adults aged 25–34 from 28.5% to 20.0%
- adults aged 45–54 from 24.8% to 17.6%
- non-disabled adults from 22.4% to 17.9%
- men from 25.2% to 20.0%

Severe material deprivation declined over the long-term for working age adults, from 26.1% in 2010/11 to 14.2% in 2019/20. Between 2015/16 and 2019/20 severe material deprivation declined for:

- adults aged 25–34, from 28.1% to 19.9%
- disabled (40.5% to 24.3%) and non-disabled adults (15.3% to 11.0%), although it remains higher among disabled adults than non-disabled adults

## What has got worse?

Relative poverty after housing costs in Wales rose for:

- adults aged 65–74, from 10.4% in 2010/11 to 18.0% in 2019/20
- Christian adults, from 15.0% in 2011/12 to 20.2% in 2018/19

The number of households in temporary accommodation has risen from 2,324 in March 2020 to 4,465 in March 2022, according to data from the Welsh Government.

Poverty rates rose among people aged 65–74 from 10.4% in 2010/11 to 18.0% in 2019/20. In 2021, 41% of all fuel-poor households were headed by someone aged 65 or over.

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## Persistent inequalities

Relative poverty after housing costs has not seen a statistically significant change in the long-term for the adult or child population overall, which was 20.9% and 31.3% respectively in 2019/20. Some groups with a consistently high poverty rate were:

- adults aged 16–24 (27.6%) and 35–44 (27.8%)
- disabled adults (27.3%) who remain more likely to be in poverty than non-disabled adults (17.9%)
- single-parent households. According to Welsh Government analysis, from 2020 to 2022, 38% of single-parent households were in poverty. Data from the Census 2021 shows that most (89.1%) single-parent households are headed by women

There was no statistically significant change in severe material deprivation between 2015/16 and 2019/20 for adults aged 35–44 (16.4% to 17.7%).

There remains a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller caravan pitches. The number of pitches on sites provided by local authorities increased by just 10 between July 2018 and July 2022 (from 399 to 409), according to data from the Welsh Government.

Single-parents and adults from Black and Other ethnic minority groups continue to be over-represented among homelessness applications:

- In 2018/19, single-parent households comprised 32.3% of homelessness cases according to analysis by the Welsh Government
- In 2021/22, 2.8% of applicants who were threatened with homelessness or found themselves homeless were Black, and 5.1% were from another ethnic group according to data from StatsWales

Research suggests 18% of dwellings in Wales have at least one category 1 hazard, putting older people's health at particular risk.



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# Health and social care

## What has improved?

The proportion of disabled people reporting good or very good health increased from 35.8% to 37.7% between 2016/17 and 2019/20, however this was still much lower than non-disabled (89.2% in 2019/20).

Office for National Statistics (ONS) data show that there was some improvement in the suicide rate for those aged 15–24 as this decreased between 2016 and 2019, from 11.7 to 7.5 deaths per 100,000 people. There has been no significant change in all other age groups.

The proportion of social care users who agreed that care and support services have helped them to have a higher quality of life increased for those aged 65–74 years (from 76.0% in 2018/19 to 85.7% in 2020/21) and for Christian social care users (from 71.6% in 2018/19 to 84.3% in 2020/21).

## What has got worse?

ONS analysis shows life expectancy decreased between 2018 and 2020 by 0.9 years to 82.1 years for females and 1.2 years to 78.3 years for males. This is linked to increased mortality from COVID-19.

In 2019/20, women were less likely to report being in good or very good health than men (69.9% compared with 72.9% respectively). Women's health has deteriorated from 2016 when they reported similar levels to men (72.9% for women compared with 73.2% for men).

The period of the COVID-19 pandemic saw negative trends for a number of groups' mental health:

- 
- A Welsh Government review found that 69% of lesbian, gay and bisexual people reported depression, rising to 90% among those who had experienced homophobia or transphobia.
  - The School Health Research Network found that children and young people with very high symptoms of poor mental health increased from one in five to one in four between 2019 and 2021.
  - A Wales Fiscal Analysis found that women reported a deterioration in mental health between April 2020–March 2021 compared with 2009–2019. Average symptom levels of poor mental health among women increased the most in January 2021 (by 16.2% compared with the same month pre-pandemic).
  - This analysis also found that ethnic minorities were disproportionately affected by the loss of factors that were protective of mental health, such as stable, secure employment. For example, workers of Bangladeshi ethnicity were over three times as likely to work in an industry that shut down over COVID-19 compared with White workers.

The rate of children looked after by local authorities had been increasing substantially from 5,160 in 2010 to 5,610 in 2015.

## **Persistent inequalities**

In 2018/19 some groups reported poorer mental health:

- More lesbian, gay and bisexual adults reported poorer mental health (31.8%) than heterosexual adults (20.9%)
- Women reported poorer mental health outcomes than men (22.6% compared to 20.3%)
- 34.3% of disabled adults stated they had poor mental health, compared with 15.4% of non-disabled people

The Schools Health and Research network found that 41% of Gypsy and Traveller children reported very high levels of symptoms linked with poor mental health in 2021.

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Research by the NHS benchmarking network found that demand for mental health services for children and young people is high, but some groups are under-represented:

- Between 2020 and 2022 there was a 39% increase in demand for community mental health services.
- Asian, Asian Welsh and Asian British children are under-represented in community caseloads, while Black children are over-represented in in-patient beds.

The NHS benchmarking network also found that waiting times for child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) in Wales is higher than the UK average. In 2021/22, one in four patients in Wales, compared to one in five patients in the UK, waited for over 18 weeks.

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# Justice and personal security

## What has improved?

Youth Justice Board data show that the number of children in youth detention has decreased. There were on average 450 children aged 10–17 in custody in England and Wales in 2021/22, a 47% decrease since 2018/19 and the lowest number on record.

The estimated prevalence of hate crime in the Crime Survey for England and Wales has fallen between 2007–2009 and 2017–2020, though not across all monitored strands. Over this period:

- sexual orientation hate crime has fallen 67%, though this decline has slowed since 2012–2015
- disability hate crime has fallen 38%
- race hate crime has fallen 31%, though this appears to be levelling off since around 2012–2015, when differences are no longer statistically significant

Data from the Home Office shows that recording of hate crime by the police has generally increased over the last few years. This is believed to be due to improvements in the reporting of these crimes and recording practices among police forces. Recorded hate crime for all strands was at its highest level in 2021/22.

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## What has got worse?

Data from the Home Office shows a total of 20,919 people entered immigration detention in the year ending March 2025 under immigration powers, 10% higher than the previous year. This increase continues an upward trend seen since 2023 which followed a longer-term downward trend since 2015<sup>3</sup>.

Home Office analysis of police-recorded crime data shows genuine spikes in racially and religiously aggravated offences around key trigger events, including the EU Referendum and Black Lives Matter protests and far right counterprotests.

Religiously motivated hate crime did not fall between 2007–2009 and 2017–2020, in a similar way to other hate crimes.

Charges for rape offences have fallen. Our analysis of police outcomes data in England and Wales found that between 2015/16 and 2020/21, the proportion of rape offences for female victims aged 16 and over fell from 10.5% to 2.6%, while for male victims aged 16 and over it fell from 5.1% to 1.0%.

Some cases do not end in a police charge because victims withdraw their case. Female victims have consistently been more likely to withdraw their case when the suspect is identified than male victims.

Our analysis of police outcomes data found that the proportion of female victims aged 16 and over who withdrew their cases when the suspect was identified increased from 35.4% in 2015/16 to 42.0% in 2020/21 while for male victims it stayed relatively stable, only increasing from 21.5% in 2015/16 to 23.6% in 2020/21.

Our inquiry into disabled people's experience of the criminal justice system found the increased use of remote links impeded effective participation and neurodivergent defendants found it particularly difficult to follow and participate in proceedings.

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<sup>3</sup> How many people are detained under immigration powers in the UK? Home Office 25 June 2025 [accessed 28 July 2025]

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## Persistent inequalities

Home Office statistics show that in England and Wales Black people are more likely to be arrested, have force used against them by police, and be subject to stop and search.

- The arrest rate in 2021/22 was 2.4 times higher for Black people than White people and 1.3 times higher for people from the mixed ethnic group. The arrest rate for Asian people (0.8) and other ethnic groups (0.9) was lower than White people for the first time.
- Police used force against Black people at a rate 3.5 times higher than against White people in 2021/22 (3.0 when excluding the Metropolitan Police).
- At the end of March 2022, Black people were stopped and searched 4.9 times as often as White people, down from 5.6 in 2020/21.

Ministry of Justice data shows Black individuals continue to be overrepresented in prisons in England and Wales. In 2022, 13% of prisoners in England and Wales declared themselves as being from a Black or Black British ethnic group (compared with 4% in the population). This has remained stable since 2013.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons surveys found that disabled prisoners in England and Wales were more likely to say they did not feel safe.

ONS analysis of the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 121,000 women experience rape and 103,000 experienced assault by penetration a year, compared with 7,000 and 16,000 men experiencing rape and assault by penetration respectively. This has remained stable over time.

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# Participation

## What has improved?

In the 2021 Senedd election (for the Sixth Senedd) 43.3% of elected assembly members were women, an increase from 41.7% in the 2016 elections (for the Fifth Senedd). However, due to membership changes during the Fifth Senedd the number of women in post in the Senedd had increased to 48.3% prior to the 2021 election.

The 2022 Local Government Candidates Survey in Wales found only 4% of elected county and community councillors were from an ethnic minority (excluding White minority) background, compared to 6.2% in the overall Welsh population. However, the proportion of councillors from ethnic minority backgrounds has increased compared with the 2018 survey.

Representation of women and ethnic minorities has improved among public appointees in Wales. Data from the Commissioner for Public Appointments shows that in Wales:

- The proportion of public appointments and reappointments of people from ethnic minority backgrounds increased from 3.9% in 2015/16 to 12.7% in 2021/22.
- In 2021/22, 58.8% of new appointees in Wales were women, compared with 55.6% in 2020/21.

The proportion of adults in Wales in all age groups who feel they belong in their local area has increased. In 2020/21, people aged 65–74 (89%) and 75 and over (90%) are more likely to feel they belong in their local area than those in younger age groups.

Welsh Government data shows that between 2018/19 and 2021/22 in Wales, the proportion of households with internet access at home improved for people aged 65–74 (83% to 88%) and 75 and over (54% to 71%).

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## What has got worse?

Analysis of the National Survey for Wales found that women are significantly less likely to feel safe in their local community than men. Women felt less safe in 2021/22 than they did in 2016/17. In 2021/22, 51% of women felt safe at home and walking or travelling in the local area (56% in 2016/17) compared with 81% of men (82% in 2016/17).

Public Health Wales analysis shows that in 2016/17, 18.3% of young people reported they did the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day in the past seven days, compared with 16.2% in 2021/22.

## Persistent inequalities

People aged 75 and over were the most likely to have voted (80.8%) in the 2019 general election, and those aged 18–24 (53.6%) and 25–34 (53.6%) were the least likely.

In 2018/19, 72.6% of heterosexual adults in Wales agreed that they belonged to their local community compared with 63.2% of adults who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or 'other' sexual orientation.

Data from the National Survey for Wales shows that in 2021/22:

- People aged 65–74 (40.5%) and 75 and over (17.2%) were less likely than other age groups to have participated in any sport or physical activity.
- Men are consistently more likely to participate in sport than women in Wales, at 60.7% compared with 51.5% respectively in 2021/22.

Findings from Sports Wales show that in 2021/22, 42% of adults with a longstanding illness, disability or infirmity (compared with 68% without) participated in at least one sport or physical activity.

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Older adults are at greater risk of digital exclusion and disadvantage. Those aged 65 or over are still significantly less likely than younger age groups to have internet access at home. Furthermore, only 24% of those aged over 70 are likely to use digital technology to support their health compared to 87% of people aged 16–19.

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# Conclusions

The data in our Equality and Human Rights Monitor: Is Wales Fairer? 2023 form the basis for the evidence in this briefing and show a mixed picture since our 2018 report.

There are some areas of progress. These include:

- greater diversity in public appointments
- a narrowing of the gender pay gap
- a narrowing of the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people

There is significant work to be done to address some longstanding issues, and to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.

We have seen little progress in several areas. For example, educational attainment for disabled learners in Wales is falling behind England and Scotland. Poverty remains a persistent problem. We have seen an increase in racially and religiously aggravated offences at the same time as a reduction in the number of offences resulting in a charge. Emerging challenges include artificial intelligence and climate change.

There are data and evidence gaps in Wales. They limit our ability to make a comprehensive and detailed assessment of progress. These gaps were exacerbated by the interruption to the flow of data caused by the pandemic. The gaps exist in the collection of data generally and in data broken down by region and protected characteristic.

We welcome the establishment of new national data units. It is vital that the data units and others continue to address data gaps to ensure access to better, disaggregated and consistent data. This can inform strategic decision making and achieve impact.

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This briefing contains a snapshot of key findings from our *Is Wales Fairer? 2023* report, drawing on our data and evidence. We urge all parties and candidates standing for election to the Senedd in May 2026 to consider the full report as they develop their own plans for Wales.

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# Contacts

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Telephone 0808 800 0082

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