
Cross Party Group on Women

Creating a Caring Economy in Wales
&
Annual General Meeting

Sponsored by Siân Gwenllian MS and Suzy Davies MS
15th October 2020
Zoom 14:00-15:00

Attendees:

Sian Gwenllian MS (Chair)
Suzy Davies MS (Chair)
Catherine Fookes, WEN Wales
Hilary Watson, WEN Wales (minutes)
Tash Davies, Women's Budget Group (speaker)
Patience Bentu, First Minister's BAME Covid-19 Advisory Group (speaker)
Duncan Fisher, Women's Budget Group (speaker)
Jackie Jones, Women in Europe (Wales) (speaker)
Rachel Minto, Women in Europe (Wales)
Jenna Norman, Women's Budget Group
Alison Parken, Cardiff Business School
Ruth McKie, Soroptimists Int. Wales South
Jessica Williams, WCVA
Lynne Tedik, Soroptimists Int. Wales South
Debbie Shaffer, Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales
Rachel Cable, Oxfam Cymru
Ele Hicks, Diverse Cymru
Sarah Thomas, NFWI
Jenny Ramsay, Office of Paul Davies MS
Abi Thomas, Plaid Cymru Women's Officer for Carmarthen & South Pembrokeshire constituency
Julie Richards
Claire Thomas, Bevan Foundation

Apologies:

Helen Mary Jones MS
Llyr Gruffydd MS
Katie Cooke
Sophie Weeks, Welsh Women's Aid
Jordan Brewer, Welsh Women's Aid
Krista Powell Edwards
Diana Stirbu, London Met University
Leena Farhat

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| 1 | <p>Welcomes, Introductions, Apologies – <i>Chairs</i></p> <p><i>Minutes from last meeting. Correction needed on reference to the Conference on the Future of Europe – this is a European Union Conference (not United Nations).</i></p> <p>❖ <i>Action: Secretary to correct</i></p> |
| 2 | <p>AGM Business – <i>Chairs</i></p> <p><i>Catherine Fookes proposes Sian Gwenllian MS and Suzy Davies MS re-elected as chairs. Seconded by Rachel Minto. WEN Wales re-elected as secretariat. Sian Gwenllian MS thanks group for re-election and will continue the work of the group until the 2021 elections.</i></p> |
| 3 | <p>Update from the Women in Europe (Wales) Group – Jackie Jones</p> <p>Jackie Jones is now working as part of the Women in Europe (Wales) Group. Jackie reiterated that we need to remember that we are coming to the end of the transition period for Brexit. Brexit will have distinct implications for gender equality and women’s rights. We need to not take the eye off the ball because of Covid-19.</p> <p>1) Conference on the Future of Europe. Need to lobby to have Welsh representation at this conference. We have a direct route in. Whether Civil Society or Government is up for discussion.</p> <p><i>Jackie mentioned this to First Minister Mark Drakeford, Minister Jeremy Miles and Deputy Minister and Chief Whip Jane Hutt in March – there have been some portfolio changes since so it would be beneficial to write to them again.</i></p> <p>❖ Action: Write to Jane Hutt MS and Eluned Morgan MS to ask Welsh Government to make sure Wales has a seat at this conference.</p> <p>2) European Council starting today. Angela Merkel says she wants a fair deal – this weekend is important.</p> <p>3) Covid and Brexit – during Covid we had our shops full, everything available. Once Brexit happens that might not be the case. Facing many issues. Very important to have a clear and united messaging around Brexit.</p> <p>4) Race Equality Action Plan has been passed by the European Union.</p> <p>5) 4th November – EU Equal Pay Day.</p> <p>6) 18th October – Anti Slavery Day this Sunday. Week of Activities – Council for Europe law. Pay attention that the UK legislation is narrow and the Council for Europe convention is much wider.</p> <p>7) Jackie Jones has asked Jeremy Miles whether there has been an Equality Impact Assessment for the Withdrawal Bill. She hasn’t had a response yet.</p> <p>8) African Union is talking about passing a treaty to end violence against women</p> |

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| | <p>and girls. They need Wales' support. It is Africa Week at the European Union – Every Woman Campaign. Commonwealth Women's Organization and WCIA may want to also be involved.</p> <p>❖ Action: Letter to Welsh Government (Eluned Morgan MS) on the African Union Treaty.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Patience Bentu from the COVID-19 BAME Advisory Group on report '<u>First Ministers BAME COVID-19 advisory group report of the socioeconomic subgroup</u></p> <p>Patience is happy to hear from Jackie Jones that the Race Equality Action plan has been passed in the EU – look forward to seeing the same happen in Wales.</p> <p>At the start of lockdown in Wales, Patience and colleagues started engagement with 250 grassroot community groups – from Windrush elders to youth groups. The feedback they received was that many families and people were suffering. Not the only BAME organization doing this – others were also getting very similar feedback and feeding this back to Welsh Government. The First Minister convened the BAME Advisory Group to advise the Welsh Government. Report of the subcommittee has been shared with the Cross Party Group. In summary:</p> <p>Specifically identify socio-economic affected adverse social care and health outcomes for BAME people, showing disproportionate outcomes. It suggests short term options to minimize any exacerbations of inequalities identified; challenges in the community; language or cultural barriers for discrimination of info to BAME communities; potential research questions for long-term or medium-term analysis.</p> <p>The group is made up of BAME NHS workers; EHRC; Welsh Government officials; third sector and community leaders with expertise from academia, youth, Third Sector specialist knowledge. It looks at mental health, Equality, Human Rights, Housing, Social Justice. Unions not officially represented but union officers were part of the subgroup. Scope involved wide engagement within BAME communities with evidence or perspective from lived experiences through a variety of sources – with well over 400 individuals.</p> <p>Race inequalities persist in Wales. COVID19 – lack of or poor quality of ethnicity data has led to poor health outcomes. Other exacerbation: effectiveness of communication of health information; income and unemployment insecurity; multi-generational home; financial burden created by migration status and hostile environ from Home Office; Violence against women and children; structural and systemic racism.</p> <p>Additionally, some evidence related to BAME young people and rising anxieties about their futures. Lot of anxieties related to not having access to digital technology and also the exam predictive scoring. Overall theme: impact of longstanding racism and disadvantages and lack of BAME representations. Patience emphasized that many things highlighted aren't new but haven't been addressed appropriately.</p> |

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| | <p>The report contains short-term, mid-term and long-term recommendations and is being used in Welsh Government work on the race equality action plan.</p> <p>Regarding women, this report identified that Chwarae Teg's Gender Equality Review offered an opportunity to advance this agenda for BAME women as the Gender Equality Review findings clearly laid out that gender equality policies in Wales had to have intersectional considerations.</p> <p>Patience discussed the importance of the Diverse 50:50 campaign – a partnership between the Electoral Reform Society Cymru, Race Council Cymru, EYST Wales and WEN Wales. Race Council Cymru wants inclusion of more ethnic minority women. Women's Budget Group report – to be discussed below – discusses gender equality and wellbeing. Achieving these objectives is to see an increased inclusion of ethnic minority women in all sectors of Wales.</p> <p>Siân Gwenllian mentioned the cross-party motion in Senedd last week on the report, with recommendations accepted by the whole Senedd, including Race Equality Action Plan. These recommendations really need to be delivered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Action: Letters reiterating our support for the recommendations – to the First Minister, emphasizing that we want to see recommendations in place as soon as possible; and to DMCW Jane Hutt MS, as Equalities Deputy Minister – with specific points around gender. <p>Catherine Fookes states that Diverse 50:50 campaign is really important – we need to see a woman of colour elected to the Senedd.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Action for group: Anyone not signed up to the Diverse 50:50 campaign can sign up to the three asks. ❖ Action: Suzy Davies MS requested Diverse 50:50 group send her what Paul Davies MS has sent regarding Diverse 50:50. |
| 5 | <p>Welsh Launch of Women's Budget Group report '<u>Creating a Caring Economy</u>'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced by Tash Davies, Commissioner for Women's Budget Group. <p>Background – the Commission was launched in Spring 2019, with 17 Commissioners from across civil society, academia, business, trade unions and journalists. They were asked to consider what changes need to be made to ensure our economy is one that brings about gender equality, which led to the publication of a four nations report. The Commission visited each nation and used an intersectional approach.</p> <p>It became quite clear as the Commission developed their thinking that care is critically important to our well being as individuals and as a society. The project found evidence of entrenched inequality and neglect of people and planet and that the current approach is not working for women, people of colour, disabled people, people</p> |

on low incomes. The Covid-19 crisis has further emphasized this. The report calls to move to a caring economy. By pursuing a caring economy, we can pursue gender equality, sustainability and increased wellbeing at the same time. A caring economy means putting people and the planet first so that everyone has time to care and time free from care. Men can share provision of unpaid care equally and the report also looks at caring about pay and conditions of work.

The headline steps with focused recommendation, which cut across reserved and devolved areas, are:

- 1) Re-envision what we mean by 'the economy'
- 2) Invest in social as well as physical infrastructure
- 3) Transform the worlds of paid and unpaid work
- 4) Invest in a caring social security system based on dignity and autonomy
- 5) Transform the tax systems across the UK
- 6) Refocus fiscal and monetary policy on building a caring economy
- 7) Work to develop a trade system that is socially and environmentally sustainable
- 8) Work to transform the international economic system

Relevance in Wales and right now:

COVID19 highlighted how urgently we need change; we need to not return to business as usual. With Senedd elections around the corner there is an opportunity to deliver a caring economy within Wales. While we might feel we are limited with our powers in Wales, we shouldn't. The next Welsh Government could put this at the heart of their economic policy. We already have strong foundations in Wales with: the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, the Gender Equality Review, the Fair Work agenda

There is appetite for this. Political parties should include recommendations in their manifestos for 2021 Senedd elections.

- ❖ Action: Secretary to circulate the report again
- **Reflections on report from Duncan Fisher, Commissioner for Women's Budget Group**

Duncan introduced himself and outlined his 25 years of experience working on this policy areas of caring and gender around fatherhood, which started when his first child was born. He campaigned for shared parental leave without success and was on the Equal Opportunities Committee when it existed. He was invited onto the Women's Budget Group commission to bring men's perspective.

He discussed:

- 1) that it was really exciting to reframe gender equality around a caring economy – this hadn't been intentional to call this a caring economy going into the work but it emerged through the research. Focusing on how care is unequally

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| | <p>shared opens up other aspects of inequality and shared solutions</p> <p>2) the way that the report has brought the agenda together with wellbeing is exciting for Wales. The Commission met people from Wellbeing Economy Alliance in Scotland in a really inspiring meeting. Duncan discussed that they are now setting up a Wellbeing Economy Alliance in Wales and said if attendees are interested in being involved, please let him know.</p> <p>❖ Action: If attendees interested in being involved in a Wellbeing Economy Alliance in Wales, let Duncan Fisher know.</p> <p>3) what's in this for men – polling figures were men as well as women. Men and women want roughly the same thing – more time to care and more time free from relentless work. There is much to be gained for men as well as women in this agenda. The report contains a whole section on this and presents a policy around parental leave – shared parental leave in UK is currently terrible. It includes radical proposals for equal entitlement (Icelandic/Nordic Model). Duncan has always been trying to engage men into this agenda – this report is accessible and new generation of men particularly should be able to engage with this.</p> |
| | <p>Discussion and questions from attendees</p> <p>A member of the audience asked Tash Davies for list of areas we can look at in Wales specifically. Tash stated that section of report are devolved – e.g. social infrastructure. There is an increased investment in childcare in Wales, while there are well documented issues with childcare offer in Wales. She emphasized that we shouldn't stick with an approach that isn't working because it was in an election manifesto.</p> <p>Regarding social care, there are opportunities to make changes through commissioning.</p> <p>❖ Action: Tash to ask Women's Budget Group if there is a monetary figures for Wales of the value of a caring economy.</p> |
| 5 | <p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch-up on Stage 2 of Local Government Bill following last meeting ❖ Action: Suzy Davies MS will get a note from research team about the LG Bill. Will circulate to group. • Debbie Shaffer – thanked Suzy Davies for her contribution on yesterday's debate on endometriosis. • WEN Wales updates: |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Friday Oct 23rd – WEN Café with Black History Wales and RCC – Education in Wales. Uzo to chair.○ November 6th – WEN Wales AGM. <p>❖ Action: WEN Wales to circulate reminders for the above events</p> |
| 6 | <i>Close</i> |