

Education Workforce Council

Strategic Equality Plan 2020–2024

Revised 2023



Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Introduction

The Education Workforce Council (EWC) is bound by the Wales specific public sector equality duty (the equality duty) set out in the Equality Act 2010. This obliges us to produce a strategic equality plan, equality objectives, action plans, and annual monitoring reports.

This plan sets out the EWC's commitment to equality and diversity and explains how we will work to promote these principles, both inside our organisation, and (within our remit) across the wider education workforce in Wales.

Covering the period to 2024, this document sets out how, through our role and remit, we will comply with the Equality Act 2010 (general and specific duties) and establishes a series of strategic objectives to support this. The accompanying action plan details how we will work towards these objectives and how our success will be measured.

Revised 2023 version

As outlined in the guidance on equality objectives and strategic equality plans published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), listed bodies in Wales are permitted to 'revise or remake' their equality objectives at any stage. This refreshed version of the SEP, published in April 2023, updates the previous document in order to clarify some of the introductory sections that outline the EWC's role. Some cosmetic changes have also been made to the strategic equality objectives in order to sharpen the language through which these are outlined. The strategic equality action plan, included as [Appendix A](#), has also been modified to make its presentation clearer and to highlight particular actions that have been completed.



The legal context

We have a statutory duty to publish a strategic equality plan that outlines our commitment to tackling discrimination. This stems from the Equality Act 2010, which includes a public sector equality duty covering the following protected characteristics:

- age
- gender reassignment
- sex
- race – including ethnic or national origin, colour, or nationality
- disability
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation
- religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- marriage and civil partnership

The EWC is bound by the general duty to carry out our public functions in such a way as to contribute to the development of fairness through:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 set out further specific duties with which the EWC must comply, relating to:

- objectives
- strategic equality plans
- engagement
- assessing impact
- equality information
- employment information
- pay differences
- staff training
- procurement
- annual reporting
- publishing
- Welsh Ministers' reporting
- review
- accessibility

Our role and remit

The Education (Wales) Act 2014 formally sets out our role as the independent, professional regulator for the education workforce in Wales and the obligations we have to our registrants, learners, parents/guardians, and the public.

Our principal aims under the Act are summarised below and detailed further in secondary legislation. These are to:

- contribute to improving the standards of teaching and the quality of learning in Wales
- maintain and improve standards of professional conduct amongst teachers and persons who support teaching and learning in Wales
- safeguard the interests of learners, parents, and the public, and maintain public trust and confidence in the education workforce

Our commitment to equality, diversity, and respect

Our [Strategic Plan 2023-26](#) outlines our commitment to equality and diversity and states that these principles are integral to how we approach our role as an independent, professional regulator.

We will work to ensure that our policies and procedures promote equality and diversity, both within our organisation, and, where our statutory remit allows, across the wider education workforce. We also have an important role to play in reviewing and highlighting wider equality issues within the education workforce and working with Welsh Government and other stakeholders to resolve these matters.

"Our commitment to equality and diversity is integral to how we approach our role as an independent, professional regulator and implement our strategic objectives ...we will work to promote these principles, both inside our organisation, and (within our remit) across the wider education workforce in Wales."

EWG Strategic Plan 2023-26.

Strategic equality objectives

Our approach to equality and diversity will be guided by four strategic objectives which are set out below. The objectives are underpinned by a detailed action plan ([Appendix A](#)) which outlines the specific activities that we will undertake to advance equality and diversity.

Objective 1: monitor our employment practices to identify barriers to recruitment and career progression



We will monitor our employment practices. This will include examining staff remuneration and looking at staff, Council, and committee/panel members¹ recruitment processes and career progression, with the aim of identifying and addressing any barriers that exist to the development of a diverse workforce and governance structure.

We will:

- review and, where necessary, improve recruitment processes for staff, Council, and committee/panel members¹, to help deliver a diverse workforce, ensuring fairness to all under-represented groups
- analyse remuneration for all staff, to understand whether any pay gap exists, taking measures to rectify any issues that are uncovered
- identify barriers for staff, Council, and committee/panel members¹ in accessing training and development opportunities and take steps to remove these

Objective 2: develop an inclusive EWC workforce culture



We will work to ensure that our organisation is inclusive, welcoming, and understanding to all employees, Council, and committee/panel members¹, in order that they are able to be themselves and can perform to the best of their ability.

We will:

- support staff who have caring responsibilities
- foster greater awareness of equalities amongst our employees
- ensure that our bullying and harassment policies remain up to date
- work to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination, in line with the EWC's mental health and well-being policies, and our commitment to the Time to Change Pledge

¹ Including members of the Fitness to Practise (FtP) Committee, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Accreditation Board and the Youth Work Quality Mark (YWQM) Board

Objective 3: ensure our services meet the needs of diverse registrants and stakeholders (including those with protected characteristics) and support our registrants to implement fair and inclusive professional practice

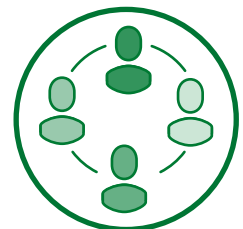


As the independent, professional regulator for the education workforce in Wales, we must ensure that we identify any barriers that our registrants and other stakeholders might face when interacting with us. This includes learners and parents/guardians. We also need to support our registrants to implement fair and inclusive professional practice.

We will:

- consult with registrants and stakeholders regarding whether our services meet their diverse needs
- identify any barriers faced by registrants and stakeholders when interacting with the EWC and take steps to remove these, as appropriate and proportionate
- review and publish fitness to practise data in order to monitor the appropriateness of guidance and inform training needs
- promote awareness of equality and diversity issues within the education workforce to enhance professional practice

Objective 4: promote the development of a diverse education workforce in Wales



Our regulatory responsibilities include promoting careers in the education professions and advising Welsh Government on matters related to the education workforce and teaching and learning. We will use our influence in this area to help promote the development of a more diverse education workforce.

We will:

- use our data to monitor and highlight issues relating to equality and diversity across all of our registrant groups
- promote diversity within the education workforce as part of a broader campaign to promote careers within the workforce

Our equality processes and procedures

To underpin our commitment to equality and diversity, all relevant policies will be kept up to date, taking account of any changes in law, or, of internal or external circumstances. We will therefore take measures to:

- review our monitoring and reporting processes, and implement any necessary improvements
- ensure our equality objectives remain relevant (and refresh them where necessary)
- ensure procurement policies serve to advance equality

Monitoring arrangements

The equality objectives will be subject to detailed monitoring and reporting processes, principally through the publication of a strategic equality plan annual report by 31 March each year (reporting on performance for the previous year). Progress will also be subject to the scrutiny of the senior management team at its monthly meetings, and the oversight of the Executive Committee and Council through quarterly reports. Detailed mechanisms for monitoring progress are outlined within the action plan ([Appendix A](#)).

Publishing equality information

We will publish equality data on our website, including:

- Annual Education Workforce Statistics reports, providing important data on the composition of the education workforce in Wales, and other discrete analyses
- equality data on applicants for registration and registrants who have been subject to fitness to practise procedures, as part of the Fitness to Practise Annual Report
- a gender pay analysis, reporting salary information of our employees by gender

Equality impact assessments

As required by the Equality Act 2010, an equality impact assessment (EqIA) will form part of the development and approval process for any new (or reviewed) policy. This will help us to ensure that decision making is evidence-based and has specific regard to equalities. EqIAs will also outline the nature of any ongoing evaluation that policies, procedures, and practice may be subject to. For new or amended HR policies, an EqIA will be submitted (alongside the policy) to the Employee Forum as part of the whole-staff consultation process. The senior management team will also consider the assessment as part of the adoption process. A repository of completed EqIAs will also be retained centrally. However, the extent to which EqIAs will be relevant to different projects and initiatives will vary and our approach to their use will be proportionate.

Equality training and development

We will provide regular training for all staff in relation to the equality duty. This will include the provision of an overview of the duty for new members of staff when they are appointed, as part of the induction process. This will be complemented by regular all-staff training. Training will also be arranged for Council and committee/panel members². This training will cover the equality duty and their respective roles in setting the strategic direction of the EWC, reviewing its performance, and ensuring that strong governance arrangements are in operation.

2 Including members of the Fitness to Practise (FtP) Committee, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Accreditation Board and the Youth Work Quality Mark (YWQM) Board

Engagement

We conduct a rolling programme of meetings with key stakeholders and interest groups, including regular meetings with unions that represent members of the education workforce, where equalities issues appropriate to our remit are amongst the matters that are discussed.

We also engage with diverse audiences through our promotion of careers team (responsible for promoting careers within the education workforce in Wales), which develops specific campaigns relating to protected characteristics. The team also includes an officer with specific responsibility for Black, Asian, and minority ethnic recruitment.

We continue to highlight relevant equalities related information to our registrants and other stakeholders and will continue to ensure that our website and other publications are accessible to all.

We participate and engage with a range of equalities networks and groups, these include:

- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Wales Equality and Human Rights Exchange
- Public Sector Equalities Network
- UK Government 'Policy Profession Unit'
- South East Wales Equalities Network (SEWEN)
- BAMEed Network Wales
- DARPL (Diversity and Anti-Racist Professional Learning)
- Colegau Cymru Equality and Diversity group
- Cardiff Council race equality taskforce
- South Riverside Community Development Centre
- BAME Mental Health Service
- Ethnic Minorities Youth Support Team (EYST) Wales

We also maintain informal professional relationships, and identify opportunities to collaborate, with a range of other organisations that promote equalities. These include the EHRC, Show Racism the Red Card, Diverse Cymru, and Stonewall. Such engagement helps to ensure that EWC employees and the senior management team are aware of a range of issues and perspectives relating to equalities.

Appendix A – Strategic equality action plan (updated April 2023³)

Objective	Actions		Protected characteristic	Timescale	Lead
Objective 1: monitor our employment practices to identify barriers to recruitment and career progression					
Monitor and (where necessary) improve staff and member recruitment processes to help deliver a diverse workforce	1.1	Collect and analyse equalities information relating to staff recruitment, using findings to improve our processes, if relevant.	All	Annually in April, on year to 31 March	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
	1.2	Analyse the composition of the EWC’s Fitness to Practise (FtP) Panel, ITE Accreditation Board, and Quality Mark for Youth Work (QMYW) in Wales assessors. If necessary, take pro-active and targeted measures to improve diversity.	All	Annually by 31 March	Director of Professional Development Accreditation and Policy, and Director of Qualifications Registration and Fitness to Practise
	1.3	Analyse the composition of the Council and use results to inform discussions Welsh Government regarding appointment of new Council members.	All	By 31 March 2023 Completed in 2022	Director of Finance and Corporate Services

³ This action plan covers the period 2020-24 but has been refreshed in order to ensure that that actions and timescales remain up to date.

Objective	Actions		Protected characteristic	Timescale	Lead
Analyse remuneration for all staff to understand whether any gender pay gaps exists, taking measures to rectify any issues that are uncovered	1.4	Publish gender pay analysis, including job, contract type, and working pattern each year and commit to developing an equal pay action plan (depending on the nature and extent of any pay differences identified and their causes).	Gender	Annually on year to 31 March	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Identify barriers for staff in accessing training and development opportunities, taking measures to remove any barriers that are identified	1.5	Gather equalities data through our annual staff data collection form to inform impact assessment, policy development, training plans, etc.	All	Annually by 31 March	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
	1.6	Continue to analyse training completed each year for equality monitoring purposes.	All	Annually by 31 March	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
	1.7	Use the Performance and Development Review (PDR) process to identify individual training and development needs, review progress, and discuss any barriers to access.	All	Review every six months	Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Objective	Actions		Protected characteristic	Timescale	Lead
Objective 2: develop an inclusive EWC workforce culture					
Support staff who have caring responsibilities	2.1	Continue to offer flexible working for all employees, particularly in order to support those with caring responsibilities.	Age, sex, disability, pregnancy and maternity	Ongoing	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Foster greater awareness of equality issues amongst our employees, Council, panel, and board members	2.2	Deliver an engaging and accessible programme of training on equality issues for all employees. This will include at least one mandatory training session each year for all staff, focusing on the experiences and needs of particular groups with different protected characteristics.	All	Annually by 31 March	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
	2.3	Ensure that equality issues are included in annual training for FtP Panel members, Council members, ITE Accreditation Board members, and QMYW assessors.	All	Annually by 31 March	Director of Professional Development Accreditation and Policy, and Director of Qualifications Registration and Fitness to Practise
	2.4	Ensure that our office is visually welcoming for people with different identities and protected characteristics.	All	Review annually by 31 March	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
	2.5	Deliver EqIA training to relevant staff.	All	Annually by 31 March	Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Objective	Actions		Protected characteristic	Timescale	Lead
Develop policies to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace	2.6	Review our Dignity at Work policy (every two years) to ensure it is up to date with respect to preventing and responding to sexual harassment.	All	By April 2024	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Work to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination in line with our mental health and wellbeing policies, and our commitment to the Time to Change Pledge	2.7	Review our mental health and wellbeing policy every two years to ensure that the workplace is supportive of individuals with mental health problems.	Disability	By January 2024	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
	2.8	Run internal anti-stigma campaigns, including using Time to Change materials and inviting professionals to deliver anti-stigma training.	Disability	Review annually by 31 March	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
	2.9	Develop a programme of wellbeing activity/ opportunities for staff and begin to implement.	Disability	Annually by 30 April	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
	2.10	Continue to provide our employees with access to and raise awareness of the employee assistance scheme with the opportunity to access counselling services, including support for individuals experiencing mental health problems.	Disability	Ongoing	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
	2.11	Continue to offer Mental Health First Aider training, aiming to ensure that two staff members receive this training each calendar year.	Disability	Review annually by 31 March	Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Objective	Actions		Protected characteristic	Timescale	Lead
Objective 3: ensure our services meet the needs of diverse registrants and stakeholders (including those with protected characteristics) and support our registrants to implement fair and inclusive professional practice					
Consult and engage with registrants and stakeholders regarding their needs/any barriers when interacting with the EWC and review channels as appropriate	3.1	Analyse outcome of survey and make recommendations for improved accessibility to our services. Implement changes as appropriate.	All	By 31 March 2023 Completed	Director of Professional Development Accreditation and Policy
	3.2	Develop and engage with a diverse network of registrants and stakeholders (including under-represented groups) to inform the development of process, policy, and services.	All	Ongoing	Director of Professional Development Accreditation and Policy
	3.3	Review our website and other publications and act upon feedback from users, as necessary, to ensure that they are accessible and inclusive for registrants and the public.	All	Initial review to be completed by 31 March 2023, thereafter review annually with consideration of engagement and feedback (gathered continuously)	Director of Professional Development Accreditation and Policy
Review and publish fitness to practise data to monitor the appropriateness of guidance and inform training needs	3.4	Continue to gather equality data through the case management system and publish an equality and diversity report on FtP activity as part of the FtP Annual Report. This data will also inform FtP guidance and procedures, and annual training undertaken by panel members.	All	Annually on year to 31 March	Director of Qualifications Registration and Fitness to Practise

Objective	Actions		Protected characteristic	Timescale	Lead
Promote awareness of equality and diversity issues within the education workforce	3.5	<p>Promote messages to our registrants through our communications channels to increase awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues and issues of race and racism for education professionals. Activity will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a wellbeing webinar • a series of workshops dealing with issues of race and racism • a series of registrant lived experiences blogs 	Disability and race	Review annually by 31 March	Director of Professional Development Accreditation and Policy
	3.6	Promote awareness of the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for EWC registrants, which includes a requirement for registrants to demonstrate a commitment to equality and diversity.	All	Ongoing	Director of Professional Development Accreditation and Policy

Objective	Actions		Protected characteristic	Timescale	Lead
Objective 4: promote the development of a diverse education workforce in Wales					
Use our data to monitor and highlight	4.1	Ensure that the Register is accurate, to provide a high quality evidence base in relation to equality and diversity issues.	All	Ongoing	Director of Qualifications Registration and Fitness to Practise
	4.2	Continue to highlight relevant equality and diversity matters by producing and disseminating robust, evidence-based insights which highlights data and statistical releases, including the Annual Education Workforce Statistics for Wales, containing equalities data on current registrants and those applying for registration.	All	Ongoing	Director of Qualifications Registration and Fitness to Practise
Promote diversity within the education workforce as part of a broader campaign to promote careers within the workforce	4..3	Through Educators Wales, develop and deliver a campaign to promote careers within the education workforce in Wales to a diverse audience, including developing specific campaigns relating to protected characteristics.	All	Ongoing	Director of Professional Development Accreditation and Policy
	4.4	Provide an advice and advocacy service through Educators Wales to support individuals from diverse backgrounds to enter the education workforce.	All	Ongoing	Director of Professional Development Accreditation and Policy

