



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Strategic Equality Plan

2020 – 2024

Purpose

The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) set out the duties that public bodies have to undertake to meet their Equality and Human Rights responsibilities, an important part of which is that they publish their equality objectives every four years; this document sets out our Equality Objectives for the period 2020-2024.

We welcome feedback on our objectives and will be pleased to discuss suggestions on how we might enhance our objectives and develop supporting actions.

Summary of Equality Objectives

We have identified two key equality objectives for 2020-2024.

Objective 1:	We will promote equal opportunities and ensure fair treatment for our entire workforce, staff and contracted inspectors, tackling bullying and discrimination whenever it occurs.
Objective 2:	We will evaluate issues relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion during inspection and in our thematic work, sharing good practice and making recommendations for improvement where needed.

Who we are

Estyn is Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.

Our vision is to improve the quality of education and training and outcomes for all learners in Wales. Our mission is to support education and training providers to develop a self-improving and learning culture through our advice and inspection.

Our [Annual Plan 2020-2021](#) details more about our work.

We promote equality and diversity through the delivery of our strategic objectives, by drawing the attention of providers to their own duty to promote equality. Our equality objectives cover how we consider equality when we inspect and regulate and how we will ensure that our own staff and those we contract with have equality of opportunity and are treated equally.

The Equality Act 2010

Further information on the Equality Act 2010 and how the legislation applies to listed bodies, including Estyn, can be found following the links below:

Equality Act 2010

Specific Duties and Listed Bodies in Wales

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out a shared purpose to achieve a better and lasting quality of life for us all. The shared purpose is represented by an integrated set of seven well-being goals. The Act also puts in place a sustainable development principle.

Although the duty does not apply to Estyn (we are not a listed public body for the purposes of the Act), we nonetheless support the spirit of the Act and seek to build the necessary wellbeing components and sustainable development principle into our planning, governance and operational delivery.

We do this by incorporating the goals into our strategic objectives and therefore into decision making throughout our organisation including the development of this Strategic Equality Plan.

We also apply the sustainable development principle meaning we 'act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

See the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 The Essentials for more information.](#)

How we developed our equality objectives

Our equality objectives have been developed in consultation internally with staff, and externally, through the following activities:

- Engagement with Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC); this engagement followed their review of the work undertaken by public bodies in meeting the Equality Act 2010 duty in Wales and how public bodies can work together to improve the impact of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the opportunities for using the PSED to drive change by tackling key inequalities
- Consideration of the recommendations in the following publications:
 - EHRC report "[Is Wales Fairer - The state of equality and human rights 2018](#)"
 - "[Experiences of Racism & 'Race' in Schools in Wales – A Collaborative Paper by Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team Wales, Show Racism the Red Card, Race Council Cymru, Tros Gynnal Plant](#)" March 2018
 - "[School Report Cymru - The experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Wales' schools in 2017](#)" by Stonewall
 - [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)
- Participation in Welsh Government events considering the areas for improvement identified in the above review and the resulting vision for equality and diversity development in Wales

- Discussions with other Welsh Government sponsored bodies on the development of equality objectives
- Engagement with stakeholders, including hard to reach groups on our inspection framework and how our inspectors review equality and diversity issues during the inspection
- Consideration of any early evidence of the impact of COVID-19 on groups with protected characteristics, including our own work with local authorities in relation to support for vulnerable learners
- Findings from our thematic work
- Review of equality and diversity “Best Practice”
- Operation of the Equalities and Wellbeing Group, formed to establish a corporate view of and plan our response to issues around equity and inclusion across the education system including:
 - a. special educational needs/additional learning needs
 - b. equality and diversity
 - c. poverty and disadvantage
 - d. wellbeing

Equality Objectives 2020-2024

We have identified two objectives that we will specifically focus on. For each objective, we have also set out key actions we will take to deliver them and our success criteria.

Objective 1:

We will promote equal opportunities and ensure fair treatment for our entire workforce, staff and contracted inspectors, tackling bullying and discrimination whenever it occurs.

- 2.1 We will continue to explore ways to increase the diversity of our workforce including within our Senior Civil Service (SCS) and board membership.
- 2.2 We will tackle any unfair treatment and inappropriate behaviour to reduce discrimination, bullying and harassment of our staff particularly those with protected characteristics.
- 2.3 We will continue to ensure that Equality and Diversity is embedded in discussions and decision-making groups within our organisation.
- 2.4 We will work collaboratively with other bodies to address the impact of equality and diversity themes, e.g. work with the Education Workforce Council to look at producing a more diverse workforce.

Actions

- Sign up to “Time to Change”
- Continue to limit the impact of unconscious bias in our recruitment practices through the continued use of blind sifting for recruitment
- Ensure all policies are equality impact assessed prior to implementation
- Continue to advertise all posts externally and widely, including the use of social media, to raise awareness of our vacancies to candidates from under-represented groups
- Offer development opportunities, such as shadowing inspections, to senior leaders and future senior leaders, seeking to improve diversity through targeting groups that are under-represented in our inspector workforce
- Continue to increase awareness of equalities, diversity and inclusion matters through communications in staff newsletter and intranet and training, including all induction programmes
- Make communication methods and reports more accessible to a wider audience and easier to understand
- Create opportunities for practitioners from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, who meet the qualification criteria, to become Peer Inspectors, working with EWC to better understand the barriers to creating a more diverse education workforce
- Ensure that all new employees undertake equality training and all managers undertake training in unconscious bias on a rolling programme
- Ensure that all staff are aware of our Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy identifying good practice on how to tackle bullying, harassment, and discrimination, where it occurs
- Undertake internal surveys of staff and external surveys of job applicants, on a regular basis to identify the movement in the diversity of our workforce and potential workforce
- Require all our suppliers to demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity and use Government frameworks and portals to ensure we take advantage of agreed public sector protocols when applying equality to the contracting process
- Create opportunities for under-represented groups to shadow non-executive directors on Estyn’s Strategy Board
- Ensure that risk assessments consider any particular impacts for different groups of staff, including attention to higher risks for certain groups from a pandemic

Success criteria

- Improved representation of under-represented groups across grades and roles, including our Board and Committee
- Reduction in discrimination, bullying and harassment as reported in the annual People Survey

Objective 2:

We will evaluate issues relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion during inspection and in our thematic work, sharing good practice and making recommendations for improvement where needed.

- 1.1 We will consider how those we inspect fulfil their duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 and, where appropriate, the extent to which they promote equality and diversity.
- 1.2 Where relevant, we will comment on outcomes for children and learners with protected characteristics and highlight the importance of expecting high expectation of equality and inclusion.
- 1.3 We will continue to engage with groups who champion specific protected characteristics in order to consider how we and those we inspect can improve our policies and work processes to become more diverse.
- 1.4 We will provide training to inspectors on equality, diversity and inclusion and how to assess it on inspection with reference to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission Guide to Regulators and Inspectorates](#).
- 1.5 We will ensure that we consider those with protected characteristics and resulting issues when agreeing and carrying out our thematic work.
- 1.7 We will highlight and seek to address the issues raised in “Is Wales Fairer”:
 - The attainment of children with some types of impairment, such as a hearing impairment, has worsened
 - Attainment gaps at school-leaving age persist for children with ALN and those eligible for free school meals
 - Poorer children, children with ALN, white children and children of mixed ethnicity have higher than average exclusion rates
 - Certain groups of children are more at risk of being bullied than others; sexist bullying tends to be targeted at girls, while lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children, and children with ALN are also more likely to be victims of bullying
 - Overall participation in higher education but men and those from ethnic minorities experience attainment gaps

- Subject and career choices remain highly gendered, with girls being much less likely to continue studying science and maths after school

Actions

- Publish and promote effective practice on our web site
- Undertake an equalities impact assessment on our new inspection arrangements
- Consider how well inspected providers:
 - Provide for personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the provision of learning support
 - Help learners to understand issues relating to equality and diversity and develop the values of respect, empathy, courage and compassion, for example
 - Challenge stereotypes in learners' attitudes, choices and expectations, and how well it promotes human rights
 - Ensure the progression of all learners and particular groups
 - Develop a curriculum that fully reflects the local context, including designing learning activities that reflect the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of Wales and the provider's local area
- Continue to undertake an ongoing programme of thematic inspections considering equality and diversity including support for LGBT learners, support for vulnerable learners during COVID-19, the teaching of Welsh history (including BAME history) and promotion of emotional resilience
- Undertake an equality impact assessment of our new inspection arrangements prior to piloting from September 2021
- Ensure that our ongoing programme of professional learning for inspectors continues to build understanding of issues relating to equality and diversity with a particular focus on preparation for ALN reform, and promoting issues and effective practice raised in relevant thematic reports
- Ensure that the work of the Equalities and Inclusion Group and feedback from stakeholders with an interest in equality and diversity influences future work planning including inspection development, inspector training and the forward thematic inspection programme
- Follow up on recommendations to the Welsh Government in thematic reports

Success criteria

- Impact of equality and diversity factors are clearly drawn out within published thematic reports
- Evidence from inspection reports is highlighted and shared, e.g. to show good practice and identify areas for improvement related to equality and diversity issues
- The number of recommendations accepted/ implemented from joint working groups