

A report to Welsh Government outlining recommendations for furthering LGBTQ+ equality in Wales

Recommendations of the Independent
LGBTQ+ Expert Panel

March 2021

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Foreword from the Independent LGBTQ+ Expert Panel

The Independent LGBTQ+ Expert Panel was convened in January 2021 to develop recommendations for a draft Welsh Government LGBTQ+ Action Plan. The Panel consists of a number of community and LGBTQ+ group leaders from across Wales, providing independent expertise and experience. Through taking a cooperative approach to the development of the draft LGBTQ+ Action Plan, the Welsh Government are putting in place the systems to produce an Action Plan which is fit for purpose and which has the potential to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Wales. On behalf of the Expert Panel we would like to show our appreciation at the outset of involving us in the process to this point.

The Expert Panel fully endorse the Welsh Government's decision to produce a comprehensive LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales. This represents a tangible commitment to working towards equality for all in Wales. We also appreciate the opportunity to prepare these recommendations, and doing so has provided the chance for LGBTQ+ people from across Wales to be involved in the process of drafting this plan. The Expert Panel are confident that the recommendations presented here represent a consensus of the opinions and experiences of LGBTQ+ people across Wales, having been generated through an extensive engagement with LGBTQ+ people representing a number of different identities and localities. These recommendations are by and for LGBTQ+ people in Wales.

The engagement process provided a real insight into the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Wales today, illuminating their experiences as well as what they would like to see the Welsh Government commit to as part of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan. Many voiced their opinion that life as an LGBTQ+ person in Wales has improved in recent years. It is important to acknowledge the positive steps that the Welsh Government has made in recent years, including improvements to make the national curriculum more diverse and Relationships and Sexuality Education statutory for all learners (age 3-16), reviewing the policy of blood donation deferral for men who have sex with men, launching the Welsh Gender Service and vocally defending the rights of trans people in Wales. These truly are successes to be celebrated.

Yet despite these advances, the outreach process revealed how LGBTQ+ people in Wales continue to face significant barriers to participating fully and equally in Welsh society. A survey commissioned to support the plan found that 78 per cent of LGBTQ+ people in Wales have avoided being open about their sexual orientation or gender identity for fear of a negative reaction from others. Further to this, 46 per cent of LGBTQ+ people in Wales have experienced verbal harassment in the last year. Such findings show the experiences that LGBTQ+ people continue to go through in Wales today and display how far we still have to go to achieve equality. The recommendations made below aim to address these problems, providing suggestions for tangible action to be taken to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Wales.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss these recommendations with the Welsh Government as we work towards the goal of achieving a more equal and prosperous Wales for all.

Introduction

The below recommendations from the Independent Expert Panel for the Welsh Government's draft LGBTQ+ Action Plan take place after a scoping exercise was undertaken by Stonewall Cymru and presented to the Welsh Government, receiving their approval. The recommendations included below set out how the Welsh Government can make real improvements to the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Wales, in areas where they have a direct responsibility and role to play. The recommendations encompass all areas of Welsh Government, providing a plan of clear and achievable steps to further LGBTQ+ equality in Wales. The LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales should serve as a long-term commitment to tackling the systemic problems which still face LGBTQ+ people.

While the recommendations presented here are on behalf of the Independent Expert Panel, it is important to acknowledge that they are the work of numerous LGBTQ+ organisations from across Wales, as well as many individual LGBTQ+ people in Wales who were generous in sharing their experiences and their recommendations via focus groups, individual meetings and a survey.

The recommendations have been broken down thematically into the policy areas identified during the outreach exercise with LGBTQ+ people. These areas are as follows: Human Rights and recognition; safety; home and communities; health and social care; education; workplace; and considerations for Wales's COVID-19 recovery. In drafting the recommendations, the Expert Panel sought to take a 'life course' approach by offering recommendations which encompass experiences of LGBTQ+ people at each stage of their lives and recommendations for an LGBTQ+ inclusive Wales.

Methodology

The evidence collected to inform the report encompassed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure that both the broader and in-depth picture of what being a LGBTQ+ person in Wales today is like and how this can be improved by the Welsh Government.

Stonewall Cymru were commissioned by the Welsh Government to author and publish a survey, to capture statistics on LGBTQ+ people in Wales's experiences. This survey also included the opportunity to capture individuals' recommendations for a future LGBTQ+ Action Plan. These suggestions have been reflected, and in some cases included directly, into the Expert Panel's recommendations. The survey was promoted on a number of social media channels from organisations across Wales (encompassing both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ organisations). The survey received 532 respondents.

Stonewall Cymru were also commissioned to undertake twelve focus groups with ninety attendees representing the Welsh LGBTQ community, crossing a number of intersectional identities. An overview of the outreach process can be seen in the section entitled "Outreach Overview," which follows the recommendations.

The Expert Panel feels that the methodology represents a comprehensive engagement with LGBTQ+ people and organisations. During the process, the Expert Panel gained a detailed snapshot of LGBTQ+ life in Wales, which has fed directly into the recommendations below. The Expert Panel hope these insights will be duly considered when designing the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales.

Before commencing with the recommendations some important considerations are listed below, which provide the context in which this report was produced and should be read. The Expert Panel feel it is vitally important to make these considerations available at the beginning of the report to frame the recommendations and how they should be implemented in policy terms by the Welsh Government over the coming years.

The Life Course

The approach taken throughout the following recommendations to the Welsh Government have been generated through considering a whole-life perspective of LGBTQ+ people in Wales. This means that within each section of the recommendations, due consideration has been taken to consider LGBTQ+ people at different stages of the life course and as such where different experiences within these areas are likely to be. For example, when considering recommendations for education, this encompasses all elements of learning, from school, college, university and post compulsory education and training. The action plan should thus be considered to act as a support system throughout the life of an LGBTQ+ person in Wales - attempting to limit inequalities and discrimination whilst taking the time to also celebrate their identity at all stages of their lives.

This enables the work to better align with Welsh Government strategies on Older People, Children and Young People and the Future Generation Commissioner, all of whom have begun to shape policy around a life course model in Wales. This should enable the Action Plan to work in conjunction with existing policy frameworks and strategies more seamlessly.

Intersectionality

An intersectional approach is taken throughout the Expert Panel report, in accordance with other Welsh Government Equalities Plans, such as the plan to advance gender equality in Wales.¹ By intersectionality, we mean recognising the way in which power structures based on factors such as sex, gender, race, sexuality, disability, class, age, language and faith interact with each other and create inequalities, discrimination and oppression. Crucially, it is about understanding the ways in which such characteristics can interact and produce unique, but often multiple experiences and disadvantages in specific situations. One single form of discrimination cannot and should not be understood in isolation from another. A truly intersectional approach ensures that this does not happen. The Expert Panel feel that the need to take an intersectional approach is vital to provide a plan which works for all LGBTQ+ people in Wales. This links to research which states that the UK Government LGBT Action Plan fails to account for a number of LGBTQ+ people, including those seeking asylum, and ignores “pressing equality issues in [the] devolved UK states”.² The Expert Panel thus want to create an Action Plan that goes above and beyond the UK Government Plan in terms of protections and the furtherment of LGBTQ+ rights.

¹ Welsh Government, 2020, Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan, Available Online at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-03/advancing-gender-equality-plan.pdf>

² Lawrence, M and Taylor, Y. The UK Government LGBTQ Action Plan: Discourses of progress, enduring stasis, and LGBTQ+ lives ‘getting better’. Available Online at: https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/69597/1/Lawrence_Taylor_CSP2019_The_UK_Government_LGBTQ_Action_Plan_discourses_of_progress.pdf

Overarching Recommendations

The overarching recommendations below seek to provide a strategic and common thread running throughout the more specific recommendations which follow. These are an attempt at the outset to identify the commonalities shared by recommendations in the plan as a whole.

- The Welsh Government should build on intentions to strengthen equality and introduce legislation that fully incorporates international human rights treaties into domestic law. The Welsh Government should also work with the UK Government to strengthen as far as possible the recognitions and protections afforded to trans and non-binary people under the law, including refugees and those seeking asylum.
- The Welsh Government should ensure that the rights of LGBTQ+ people are recognised and mainstreamed across the public sector in Wales. A Minister for Equalities or an inter-Ministerial committee should oversee the plan to ensure effective inter-departmental coordination and sufficient integration with other plans including the Race Equality Action Plan, Gender Review Implementation, Disability Framework, and the Nation of Sanctuary Action Plan.
- The Independent Expert Panel welcomes the Welsh Government's commitment to develop a Plan for Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality in Wales. However, the plan should be sufficiently funded and resourced (staffing) to maximise its contribution to creating a more equal Wales.
- The Welsh Government should ensure that comprehensive equalities training and professional development programmes are introduced for all public services. This should focus on understanding LGBTQ+ needs, intersectional experiences and addressing unconscious bias. Such training should be developed and delivered in collaboration with partner organisations and expertise with lived experience.
- The Welsh Government should help to challenge heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions and require public bodies to appropriately identify and record LGBTQ+ identities at the point of access. The needs of LGBTQ+ communities should be made visible in service design and population-level analysis. The Welsh Government should ensure national indicators allow for regular, sufficient and disaggregated data collection, which identifies the discrimination and wellbeing disparities experienced by our LGBTQ+ communities.
- The Welsh Government should appoint a National Advisor for LGBTQ+ Equality and continue to support the Independent Expert Panel to guide, monitor and evaluate implementation of the plan. The Welsh Government should provide an annual report updating progress on the implementation of the plan.

Thematic Recommendations

Human Rights and Recognition

- **Building on its positive recent engagement, the Welsh Government should continue to vocally defend and promote the rights and dignity of trans and non-binary people in Wales to take a full and equal role in Welsh society at all levels.**

Trans people who fed into the engagement process appreciated the Welsh Government statement of support for trans people in Wales. This was felt to be a meaningful gesture in deviating from a UK policy approach and media discourse that was increasingly hostile to trans identities. The reaction to this statement provides an indication that such statements of support for the trans communities in Wales is a meaningful way to ensure that trans people to feel the Welsh Government is supportive of their rights.

- **The Welsh Government should provide recognition of non-binary people throughout devolved policy areas, including education, housing and health as far as possible under the law.**

A problem continually brought up in both focus groups and in the survey commissioned for this plan was the lack of recognition of non-binary people. Non-binary people consistently highlighted how they felt their identity is erased due to the fact that they cannot be recognised as non-binary. Whilst legal gender recognition is a reserved area, the Welsh Government should take positive practical steps by providing recognition of non-binary identities at all occasions where legal gender is not required. Practically, the Welsh Government should explore options such as reviewing record keeping and data management to ensure that open-ended non-binary options are included in these scenarios, as well as the option to have 'Mx' as a title or no title at all. Making these changes trickles down into improving the wellbeing and social acceptance of non-binary people, who can identify with their true identities rather than being placed in gender binaries. Such an acknowledgement can act as an immediate means of combatting the feelings of erasure from public life that is experienced from non-binary people in Wales that engaged with the outreach process. This work can take place in the form of a cross-departmental review of how the Welsh Government, and the public sector in Wales more widely, collect such data. It is important to note that as sensitive personal data, information about gender should only be collected in contexts where it can be justified, and not unnecessarily.

- **The Welsh Government should continue to make representations to the UK Government to reform the Gender Recognition Act in accordance with the principle of self-determination and international best practice and explore action which can be taken within Welsh Government powers to make progress in this area.**

Trans people in Wales would like to see the Welsh Government go above and beyond the actions of the UK Government in protecting and furthering trans people's rights. Although legal gender is a reserved area, the Welsh Government is able to make representations to the UK Government on the importance of reform. Such representations should focus on enshrining the principles of self-determination and autonomy, as in Malta, Ireland, Norway, Argentina and many other countries. Many

trans people consulted in the process stated how they generally trusted the Welsh Government more than the UK Government to act in their interests and making representations on their behalf in this manner is a powerful statement of support.

- **The Welsh Government should ban conversion therapy in Wales and should continue to work with the UK Government to eradicate conversion therapy, through a legislative ban.**

LGBTQ+ people across the UK continue to be subject conversion therapy.

Conversion therapy includes medical, psychiatric, psychological, religious, cultural or any other interventions which seek to erase, repress or change the sexual orientation and/or gender identity of a person. Research states³ that one in twenty LGBTQ+ people (five per cent) have been pressured to access services to question or change their sexual orientation when accessing healthcare services. LGBTQ+ people in Wales are thus also subject to such practices. The Welsh Government should take the lead on banning conversion therapy in Wales and continue to do all they can to encourage the other devolved nations and Westminster in offering a full legislative ban on conversion therapy across the UK.

- **Explore ways unnecessary personal identifications such as name, age and gender markers can be removed from documentation.**

Focus group attendees highlighted how unnecessary gender markers further reinforce cisnormative expectations and practices. Gender markers in a great number of instances serve no further purpose than to reinforce existing inequalities as well as erasing and ostracising non-binary people and people who have a fluid sense of their own gender. While there are some instances where the collection of data on gender serves an important purpose, where it does not it should be removed. Where data on gender is collected, non-binary people should be provided with open-ended options to describe their identity. The Welsh Government should take an intersectional approach to this issue and further remove all unnecessary personal identifications such as name, age, qualifications; this is especially the case for, but not limited to, recruitment practices.

- **Provide LGBTQ+ people with a greater understanding of their human rights, what they mean, how they intersect, or when they have been infringed, as well as how to seek redress when this happens.**

Many LGBTQ+ people are unaware of their rights and thus can be oblivious to discrimination they are experiencing. Consequently, any attempt to promote safety must begin with explaining citizens' rights and responsibilities to one another. This is particularly important for individuals from protected groups. Any advice should be provided in multiple languages and in accessible versions to be truly inclusive and accessible to all. This recommendation reinforces long terms aims and objectives set out in the Welsh Government's Strategic Equality Plan.⁴ This work should go hand in

³ Stonewall, 2018, LGBTQ in Britain: Health Report: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/LGBTQ-britain-health>

⁴ Welsh Government, 2020, Strategic Equality Plan, 2020-2024, Available Online at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-04/strategic-equality-plan-equality-aims-objectives-actions-2020-2024.pdf>

hand with work the Welsh Government are undertaking on strengthening and advancing equality and human rights.⁵

⁵ Welsh Government, 2020, Research on strengthening and advancing equality and human rights in Wales: workshops, Available Online at: <https://gov.wales/research-strengthening-and-advancing-equality-and-human-rights-wales-workshops-html#content>

Safety

Through the primary research supporting this report, it was discovered that, although there have been improvements in some areas, many LGBTQ+ people in Wales continue to feel unsafe and at a high risk of abuse or discrimination.⁶ With recorded hate crime against LGBTQ+ people continuing to rise, notably amongst trans people (instances have more than doubled since 2017 – the equivalent of 106 per cent⁷), it is vital that government action is taken to address this and to guarantee the safety of LGBTQ+ people in Wales. The recommendations below attempt to make Wales a safer place in which to be LGBTQ+.

Hate Crime

- **Police and Crime Commissioners should build on existing ongoing engagement activity with marginalised communities, to ensure that their relationship with the police is more reflective of their needs. This will include LGBTQ+ communities, disabled communities and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.**

During the outreach process many LGBTQ+ people consistently retold adverse experiences with the police, subsequently indicating that this made them less likely to report hate crimes to the police in the future. Individuals expressed a “lack of understanding” with the police, leading to a lack of trust. This lack of trust was particularly expressed in outreach with LGBTQ+ people of colour. An LGBTQ+ person of colour responding in a focus group stated that the police are “not doing their jobs” when it comes to hate crime, that this led to a “feeling of powerlessness”, and that it was felt to be based on “systemic and racial profiling”. Another LGBTQ+ person of colour stated that they “regularly experience hate crime”, and detailed an inadequate response from the police who were acting in accordance to their “unconscious bias”. Some focus group participants felt that more must be done at devolved government level for police to earn the trust of LGBTQ+ people of colour. The problem of the underreporting of hate crime cannot be tackled until these relationships are mended, especially for LGBTQ+ people of colour. More needs to be done to understand how different forms of hate crime intersect.

- **Police and Crime Commissioners to review the under-reporting of LGBTQ+ hate crimes with the aim of acting to further improve the levels of reporting.** In the community outreach, instances of hate crime experienced by LGBTQ+ people going unreported were frequently noted. The survey produced for this report found that of the 532 respondents who stated that they had experienced a hate crime in the last year, 71 per cent did not report the incident. Experiencing hate crime, stated one respondent, explaining their reason for not reporting, has become “part of the ‘norm’ of being LGBTQ+, you get used to it, [there is] nothing they can do”. To tackle fully the problem of hate crime, we must know its true scale as well as identifying current

⁶ LGBTQ in Wales - Hate Crime and Discrimination report, 2018, https://www.stonewallcymru.org.uk/system/files/LGBTQ_in_wales_-_hate_crime_stonewall_cymru.pdf

⁷ Hate Crime Figures Available Online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2017-to-2018>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2019-to-2020>

barriers to reporting. This can only be achieved through increasing LGBTQ+ people's confidence that their experiences and identities will be respected and dealt with in a serious and respectful manner. Some focus group attendees indicated that they often feel more comfortable reporting their experiences to third parties such as Victim Support, rather than the police, which could be a means of increasing reporting.

- **The Welsh Government should work with UK Government and social media platforms to investigate resolutions that can be taken to prevent and tackle online hate crime.**

During community outreach there was an acknowledgment that online abuse and harassment have increased, particularly during lockdown. This was reinforced by the survey data which found that 26 per cent of responders experienced online abuse or harassment in the last year. Individuals and organisations consistently said they felt reporting of online hate crimes was often not followed up or taken seriously by the police. One focus group attendee said they had experienced an increase in online hate crimes during lockdown, but felt unprotected from this in terms of legislation, and unsure of who to report it to. The Welsh Government should take ownership of the issue by making representations to the UK Government and social media platforms to explore resolutions to online hate.

- **The Welsh Government should work alongside Police and Crime Commissioners to ensure all police officers and 111/999 police responders alongside other staff have received comprehensive training on hate crime, human rights and how those with protected characteristics are targeted.**

In line with a rise in recorded hate crime in Wales,⁸ the responses gathered as part of the outreach process revealed major problems, with many LGBTQ+ people responding that they feel even the most basic level of safety is lacking. The disparity in how hate crime is dealt with and victims supported across different police forces in Wales was also highlighted. Experiences were inconsistent and, in effect, amounted to a 'postcode lottery'. In particular, trans people reported being the most at risk from a lack of understanding from police officers and 111/999 call handlers. As a focus group attendee reported, they had had to explain what transphobia was to a police officer when reporting a hate crime and that this was a "very distressing thing to do when you have experienced discrimination." This is more so the case in rural communities. A focus group attendee described there being "very little understanding of the impact [of transphobia] from police [and] no understanding of threats and [the impact] living in a small community where there is little diversity." Such experiences leads to a distinct lack of trust between LGBTQ+ people and the police. It must, however, be acknowledged that the work of dedicated Diversity Officers has been at the forefront of effective policing in Wales. The goal must now be for front-line staff to replicate the approach of Diversity Officers. All police officers and 111/999 police responders should not only receive comprehensive equalities training on commencing their career, but also should be required to attend comprehensive refresher training to uplift standards. Importantly, this training should not be used as a punishment for poor conduct but as a preventative means to improve relationships between marginalised communities and the police. Such

⁸ Hate crime figures available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2017-to-2018>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2019-to-2020>

training requires ring-fenced centralised funding which is available to all forces in Wales.

Domestic Violence and Abuse

- **The Welsh Government should specifically target violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) in the LGBTQ+ community - to better understand the reasons for historically low reporting from the community, ensuring all literature, messaging and awareness raising initiatives are inclusive, and where necessary specific to the LGBTQ+ community. Data collection from VAWDASV service providers, along with professional and public services, including police data should capture LGBTQ+ reporting, referrals, incidences etc**

We know that services in Wales cater to the LGBTQ+ community, but under reporting and a lack of data recording hinders our ability to evidence fully the scale of the problem in Wales. Most recognised studies indicate up to 40% of the LGBTQ+ population will experience domestic abuse in some form during their lives, this rises to approx. 80% for the trans community⁹. Stonewall's LGBT in Britain: Home and Communities report¹⁰ highlights how more than one in ten LGBT people (11 per cent) have faced domestic abuse from a partner in the last year in comparison to six per cent of women and three per cent of men in the general population that have experienced domestic abuse from a partner. Stonewall's research further shows that the number of trans and non-binary people whom have faced domestic abuse from a partner in the last year is significantly higher (19 per cent).

⁹ <https://www.kssrc.co.uk/2020/04/30/research-domestic-abuse-in-lgbt-communities/>

¹⁰ Stonewall, LGBT in Britain: Home and Communities (2018), <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/lgbt-britain-home-and-communities>

Home and Communities

Wales is made up of diverse communities, languages, identities and cultures. LGBTQ+ people exist in all our communities: from rural and urban communities to communities of faith, culture and the arts. All people, including LGBTQ+ people, should be able to feel a sense of belonging both to their community and to Wales. Although the majority of LGBTQ+ people in Wales do live fulfilling and positive lives, we also know that too many live in fear of discrimination and prejudice. The comprehensive outreach supporting this report revealed that LGBTQ+ people in Wales continue to face discrimination at home and in their respective communities. Nearly half of survey respondents (46 per cent) stated they had been subjected to verbal harassment, 26 per cent had suffered online abuse or harassment and 13 per cent experienced the threat of physical or sexual harassment and violence in the last year. These findings show how much more must be done to make homes and communities in Wales safe for all. Having safe communities will allow LGBTQ+ people to thrive and live without fear.

- **The Welsh Government should support and resource LGBTQ+ community groups and organisations across Wales to combat regional inequalities that people experience when accessing services. Targeted intervention is also needed to increase the Welsh medium support services available to LGBTQ+ people.**

As part of two Welsh language focus groups run to support this report, the need to make LGBTQ+ spaces and resources accessible to those who speak Welsh was consistently raised. This is further reinforced by the stark difference reported between being LGBTQ+ in rural Welsh communities compared to living in larger urban areas. This support for Welsh language groups works towards Welsh Government commitments to supporting the development of "a Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language" as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act, 2015.¹¹

- **The Welsh Government and Local Authorities should increase their funding for LGBTQ+ youth support services accessed beyond the school.**

LGBTQ+ young people from across Wales in focus groups highlighted the importance of local LGBTQ+ social groups. It is suggested that there needs to be a centralised resource which helps both schools and students in setting up support groups for LGBTQ+ students. **The Welsh Government should also find a long-term funding solution to the currently underfunded and typically voluntary organisations which provide valuable support for LGBTQ+ young people, especially in more rural areas of Wales. Future strategies including the work of the Interim Youth Work Board¹² should consider the needs of LGBTQ+ young people.**

- **The Welsh Government should utilise – and encourage the use of – LGBTQ+ awareness events in the annual calendar as opportunities to uplift LGBTQ+ voices, particularly from under-represented sections of the community. These include, but are not limited to, Pride events, LGBTQ+ History Month (February), IDAHOBIT (17 May), Bi Visibility Day (23 September), Trans Day of Remembrance (20 November), and World AIDS Day (1 December).**

¹¹ Welsh Government, 2015, The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Available Online at: <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

¹² <https://gov.wales/interim-youth-work-board>

Focus group participants and representation from Bi Cymru additionally stated that bi people are often not recognised. It is important for the Welsh Government to ensure bi experiences are fully represented when celebrating LGBTQ+ identities, and the **Welsh Government and other public bodies should support bi people with shows of support, such as flying the bi pride flag.**

- **The Welsh Government should provide resource and access to diverse role models with intersectional identities in order to promote LGBTQ+ people to stand for political office, at all levels, in Wales.**

With three out LGBTQ+ Members of the Senedd in the 5th Senedd, progress has been made in political representation of LGBTQ+ people in the highest levels of elected office in Wales (although to date there has been no out trans Member of the Senedd). Council statistics, however, indicate that more needs to be done to make local government a place where LGBTQ+ people are welcome. As recent studies by the Electoral Reform Society¹³ and the Wales Governance Centre¹⁴ have shown, LGBTQ+ candidates standing for election face additional barriers, such as the threat of abuse and harassment. The Welsh Government needs to undertake targeted work to overcome these barriers and work towards political representation which is truly representative of Welsh society. This is in line with one of the aims established in the Welsh Government's Strategic Equality Plan¹⁵ and should work in conjunction with other efforts to further the diversity of those that seek to represent Wales such as the Diverse 50:50 campaign,¹⁶ acknowledging that those of intersecting minority identities will face further barriers to standing for public office, as stated in race Alliance Wales's Do The Right Thing report.¹⁷

Sport and physical activity

- **The Welsh Government should support governing bodies in developing a joint LGBTQ+ inclusion strategy for Welsh sport to tackle lack of diversity and to encourage participation in sport and physical activity.**

During community outreach, LGBTQ+ people stated that they felt out of place in an organised sporting environment. The barriers to participation are particularly high for trans people. A trans man who participated in a focus group stated that that he has had issues with access in local gyms with no adequate facilities and was forced to use disabled toilets. This led him to state that he "haven't felt comfortable enough to be involved in team sports," highlighting the need for better guidance on trans inclusion in sport at all levels. Prior research on LGB people in Wales states that whilst participation rates were high, discrimination in these environments was also

¹³ Electoral Reform Society, 2018, New Voices: How Welsh politics can begin to reflect Wales, Available Online at: <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/latest-news-and-research/publications/new-voices-how-welsh-politics-can-begin-to-reflect-wales/>

¹⁴ Awan-Scully, R et al, 2018, Unpacking Diversity: Barriers and incentives to standing for election to the National Assembly for Wales, Available Online at: <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/113128/1/REPORT-Unpacking-Diversity-July-2018.pdf>

¹⁵ Welsh Government, 2020, Strategic Equality Plan, 2020-2024, Available Online at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-04/strategic-equality-plan-equality-aims-objectives-actions-2020-2024.pdf>

¹⁶ WEN Wales, 2020, Diverse5050, Available Online at: <https://wenwales.org.uk/campaign/diverse5050/>

¹⁷ Race Alliance Wales, 2021, Do The Right Thing: achieving equity in racialised representation in public and political life in Wales, Available Online at: <https://racealliance.wales/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/RAW-Research-paper-160121-2.pdf>

high.¹⁸ Further research suggests that trans people are particularly underrepresented in sport and physical activity.¹⁹ All sporting organisations have an obligation to uphold a zero-tolerance approach to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse and discrimination. The Expert Panel consider the Welsh Government to have the ability to play a leadership role in promoting good practice in this area.

Research shows that seven percent of LGBTQ+ people who attended a live sporting event in the last year experienced discrimination because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.²⁰ Focus group participants stated how the problem goes much further than experiences at live sporting events. Participants expressed how this should be addressed through enabling LGBTQ+ people to access and participate in sport at all levels.

Faith

- **The Welsh Government should examine and report on how it can provide support to faith groups to ensure that all religion and faith-based environments are open and accessible for LGBTQ+ people, and to promote inter-community dialogue.**
- **The Welsh Government should strengthen LGBTQ+ representation on equality forums, including the Wales Faith Community Forum, Wales Race Forum, Disability Equality Forum and the Strategic Equality Board.**

Research finds that a third of LGBTQ+ people of faith (thirty two per cent) are not open with anyone in their faith community about their sexual orientation, with one in four trans people of faith (twenty five per cent) not open about who they are in their faith community.²¹ It is important to acknowledge that there is a large intersection of LGBTQ+ people of faith and that faith is an important part of many LGBTQ+ people's lives, however such figures show that more is needed to make sure that faith communities are open to LGBTQ+ people.

Arts and Culture

- **The Welsh Government should support the development of Wales's vibrant LGBTQ+ arts and culture sector, providing funding where appropriate.**
- **The Welsh Government should support museums, archives, and libraries to encourage investigation in, and exhibition of, LGBTQ+ histories and digital cultures in Wales, providing funding where appropriate.**

Focus group attendees expressed how important LGBTQ+ arts and culture are to their sense of identity and wellbeing. One focus group attendee stated that "arts

¹⁸ Stonewall Cymru & Sport Wales, 2012, Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) People in Sport: Understanding LGB sports participation in Wales, Available Online at: https://www.stonewallcymru.org.uk/system/files/LGB_people_in_sport.pdf

¹⁹ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans People and Physical Activity: What You Need to Know, National LGB&T Partnership, 2016, referencing Health Survey for England, 2012, and the Partnerships own survey of LGBTQ people, 2015

²⁰ Stonewall Cymru, 2017, LGBTQ in Wales: Hate Crime Report: https://www.stonewallcymru.org.uk/system/files/LGBTQ_in_wales_-_hate_crime_stonewall_cymru.pdf

²¹ Stonewall, 2018, LGBTQ in Britain: Home and Communities, Available Online at: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/LGBTQ_in_britain_home_and_communities.pdf

saved my life... when I joined art groups, I found a community and I found a purpose, it is proven that arts and mental health go hand in hand, I found a place to express myself". Arts and culture also provide the opportunity to break down barriers, promote understanding and challenge perceptions more widely, ensuring that the Wales we leave to future generations is 'a Wales of Vibrant Culture and a Wales of Cohesive Communities', aspirations enshrined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.²² The threat to LGBTQ+ arts and culture, and meeting spaces and venues is particularly stark in a post-pandemic economy.

LGBTQ+ Homelessness

- **The Welsh Government should ensure that all homelessness services sensitively capture people's sexual orientation and trans status to tailor appropriate and safe pathways.**

This is vital to ensure LGBTQ+ people accessing homelessness services are adequately supported and are not put in further harm due to a lack of inclusive and tailored interventions. Data collection is also important to capture the proportion of LGBTQ+ people in the Welsh homeless population, and to ensure that their experiences are known. Whilst the available data shows that LGBTQ+ young people in Wales are four times more likely to become homeless than their peers and that nine per cent of the young people accessing Llamau's supported housing services identify as LGBTQ+, this data is not collected systematically and is thus patchy.²³ This data needs to be collected in a consistent and systemic manner in order to underpin Welsh Government action on homelessness and coordinate specific action for identities who are overrepresented in this population. More broadly, UK-wide data suggests that LGBTQ+ young are grossly over-represented within youth homelessness populations.²⁴ This strengthens the case for targeted prevention led by accurate data collection in Wales.

- **The Welsh Government should commit to future funding of specific services for LGBTQ+ homeless young people across Wales following the success of Tŷ Pride.**

One year on from Llamau's report on LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness,²⁵ the LGBTQ+ specific supported living project Tŷ Pride has proven a success receiving over ten times more referrals than it has the capacity to house. This clearly illustrates the need for bespoke support for LGBTQ+ young people who are at risk of homelessness. That Tŷ Pride has received such interest, including from neighbouring local authorities to Denbighshire (where Tŷ Pride is based), also shows the need for similar services across Wales. This first-of-its kind project has been successful in supporting LGBTQ+ young people and providing them with the specific support they so badly need through the assistance of local LGBTQ+ support group Viva. With this project being so successful, the Welsh Government should commit to funding

²² Welsh Government, 2015, The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Available Online at: <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

²³ Llamau, 2019, Out On The Streets: LGBTQ+ Homelessness in Wales: <https://www.llamau.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=1ab2fc66-c571-44f0-8ceb-2d1346f38303>

²⁴ The Albert Kennedy Trust, 2014, LGBTQ Youth Homelessness: A UK National Scoping of Cause, Prevalence, Response and Outcome, Available Online at: https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/basw_31219-10_0.pdf

²⁵ Llamau, 2019, Out On The Streets: LGBTQ+ Homelessness in Wales: <https://www.llamau.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=1ab2fc66-c571-44f0-8ceb-2d1346f38303>

specific services for LGBTQ+ young people in each of the six Regional Housing Support Collaborative Groups regions of Wales, to ensure that LGBTQ+ young people at risk of homelessness have access to the support they require, wherever they are from in Wales.

LGBTQ+ Refugees and People Seeking Asylum in Wales

As identified in the Welsh Government policy guidance for the health and wellbeing provision for refugees and asylum seekers,²⁶ the Equality Act (2010) places a duty on public authorities in Wales to “eliminate discrimination and victimisation” of populations with protected characteristics, such as LGBTQ+ people and people of colour. This can include the “removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by RAS [refugees and asylum seekers] due to their protected characteristics; Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different to other people.” Research by Rania Vamvaka of Cardiff University suggests that the Welsh Government are failing to adequately adhere to the Equalities Act in the processes put in place during the arrival and settlement of LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers in Wales.²⁷ The research also provides examples of discrimination against this sizeable population (5.4 per cent of all asylum applications in the UK are based on sexual orientation). The outreach process has reinforced the experiences faced by LGBTQ+ refugees and people seeking asylum in Wales.

The Expert Panel recommend the following specific support for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees:

- **The Welsh Government should call on the UK Government to sensitively identify LGBTQ+ people throughout the asylum claim, starting with making amendments to the ASF1²⁸ form.**

The ASF1 form does not request information regarding the sexual orientation/gender identity of the applicant. The only mention of sexual orientation appears on the “Relationship Status” section which includes the option of “same-sex partner”. As indicated by the Home Office’s Experimental Statistics, the majority of LGBTQ+ asylum seekers start the process as “Single”. On the same form, under the section “Gender”, the Home Office provides only two options “Male” or “Female”, thus excluding transgender, non-binary, gender queer, and gender fluid people. Research indicates that LGBTQ+ applicants may be in denial about their sexuality, may fear the contact with authorities, or may not be aware of Western linguistic approaches to the queer community.²⁹ As a result, they often conceal their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at this initial stage of the asylum process. In order for LGBTQ+ applicants not to fall through the net, and to receive the most appropriate support, the UK Government should take a culturally-sensitive, consistent and proactive approach in identifying this marginalised group throughout the asylum process, starting by including a section on Sexual Orientation and a section on Gender Identity in the ASF1 form, as well as provide clear guidance on LGBTQ+ culturally-specific language/terminology to those providing asylum and refugee services/to UKVI caseworkers and Migrant Help when filling out the ASF1 with the applicant.

²⁶ https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/health-and-wellbeing-provision-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers_0.pdf, 2018

²⁷ Ourania Vamvaka-Tatsi, (2019), BAME LGBTQ Refugee Arrival and Settlement Experiences: A South Wales Case Study, Cardiff University

²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-asylum-support-form-asf1>

²⁹ Ourania Vamvaka-Tatsi, (2019), BAME LGBTQ Refugee Arrival and Settlement Experiences: A South Wales Case Study, Cardiff University

- **The Welsh Government should work with the UK Government to provide and improve housing referral pathways for LGBTQ+ refugee and asylum seekers settling in Wales.**

Currently referral pathways for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees around specific housing needs are inconsistent. LGBTQ+ asylum seekers report that being referred to local LGBTQ+ support organisations and referrals made on account of housing needs often do not happen and if they do, require much support from supporting organisations, rather than being accessible to the individual. Referrals can and should be made when LGBTQ+ asylum seekers are in unsuitable and unsafe asylum accommodation, and the Welsh Government should fight for consistency in this matter: how safeguarding referrals can be made, what accommodation provision is available for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and how referrals are made by the housing provider to Microrainbow for example and other organisations. Upon gaining their status, many LGBTQ+ refugees will come under priority need under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 on account of being vulnerable for a specific reason.³⁰ However, local authority Housing Options are not always aware of the needs of LGBTQ+ refugees and such rights are not being accessed by individuals alone, but with the support and relentless pushing from support organisations. The Welsh Government should regularly approach each local authority to ensure consistency and ensure that frontline workers are fully trained in asylum and refugee issues and the specific needs that LGBTQ+ individuals may have.

The contracted housing provider for asylum accommodation in Wales is Clearsprings Ready Homes. Their statement of requirements notes that the ‘Safe’, ‘Habitable’, and ‘Fit for Purpose’ Accommodation standards are based on guidance from The Welsh Quality Homes Standard (WQHS).³¹ Under Part 5 of the WQHS, it states that “housing should be fairly, efficiently and well managed to address the needs of tenants as individuals and as part of a community.”³² Under Part 7, it also states that “accommodation provided within the dwelling should, as far as possible, suit the needs of the household. The dwelling should provide sufficient space needed for everyday living and be appropriate for household numbers (Appendix 2)”³³

While asylum accommodation remains under the remit and jurisdiction of the Home Office and therefore the UK Government, the WHQS plays a role in ensuring accommodation standards are met in Wales. The Welsh Government should ensure that, within these standards, asylum seekers who identify as LGBTQ+ have the same housing standards met. Many LGBTQ+ asylum seekers report not being able to wash or use shower facilities in houses where they must hide their identity, and report hate crime and fear for their lives. Although not all LGBTQ+ asylum seekers require specific housing conditions, some do, and they should be able to access the same housing standards as other individuals with consideration of their needs.

- **The Welsh Government should ensure that relevant public services receive training and are inclusive of LGBTQ+ refugee and asylum seekers.**

The intersecting stigmas attached to LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers create a unique set of barriers to those settling in Wales. Evidence suggests that there is a

³⁰ Section 70, (1) (c) [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

³¹ B.1.3 AASC Schedule 2 Statement of Requirements, p.85

³² The Welsh Housing Quality Standard, Housemark Cymru, July 2008. (p.24) Accessible from: [welsh-housing-quality-standards-guidance-for-social-landlords.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales)

³³ WHQS, p. 28.

lack of understanding of the extent of the barriers by those in public services. This highlights that there is a need for training and, when relevant, public services should signpost individuals to relevant LGBTQ+ specific support groups, such as Glitter Cymru, Hoops & Loops and UKLGIG.

- **The Welsh Government should work with specialised LGBTQ+ asylum and refugee support services, such as Glitter Cymru and Hoops & Loops to ensure that these services are sustainable.**

Develop and build relationships with these organisations to ensure the provision of the most fit for purpose support for these individuals. It should also be acknowledged that these organisations have limited capacity to provide comprehensive support to individuals. These organisations require funding and resources to adequately provide the support needed for LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum across Wales.

- **The Welsh Government should ensure its commitments to making Wales a *Nation of Sanctuary*³⁴ is inclusive of LGBTQ+ people** who are not mentioned once in the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan published in 2019.

- **The Welsh Government should ensure that appropriate mental health support is provided to LGBTQ+ refugees and people seeking asylum.**

LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum in Wales who took part in our focus groups highlighted how they often feel a lack of adequate mental health support. Given the trauma experiences by many (prior to, during and post settlement in Wales), it is vital that accessible support is available and that such support is understanding of the cultural nuances of those individuals.

Health and Social Care

Outreach which informed the Expert Panel recommendations found that LGBTQ+ people in Wales continue to face significant inequalities when accessing health and social care services. The Expert Panel survey found that, whilst improvements are being made and that 85 per cent of responders indicated that there was no effect (69 per cent) or positive effect (16 per cent) when disclosing their LGBTQ+ identity to healthcare staff, experiences of discrimination continue at an unacceptable rate. 22 per cent of survey responders indicated that they had been subject to inappropriate questions or curiosity when disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity, whilst 18 per cent felt their specific healthcare needs were ignored or not taken into account and 12 per cent stating they had avoided treatment or accessing services for fear of discrimination or intolerant reactions. Research also suggests that LGBTQ+ people face distinct inequalities when accessing social care.³⁵ Previous reports show that LGBTQ+ disabled people continue to face discrimination on the basis of

³⁴ Welsh Government, 2019, Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan, Available Online at: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/nation-of-sanctuary-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-plan_0.pdf,

³⁵ Health and Social Care and LGBTQ Communities, House of Commons, Women and Equalities Committee - <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201919/cmselect/cmwomeq/94/94.pdf>

their sexual orientation and/or gender identity from those providing personal care.³⁶ During the formation of this report, the Panel also considered research on the experiences of LGBTQ+ older people in care homes, where it is often noted that their needs are not always met.³⁷ Each of these findings display that work must be done to ensure that LGBTQ+ people in Wales are safe and confident in accessing the health and social care system. Further reading on the experiences of LGBTQ+ people of all ages accessing and using health services can be found in Stonewall's LGBTQ in Britain – Health report.³⁸ There are also several areas where LGBTQ+ people are disproportionately affected, such as depression and suicidal thoughts, sexual health conditions and substance use.³⁹ The Welsh Government needs to better understand and mitigate for these disproportionalities through targeted action.

- **The Welsh Government should undertake targeted public health work to combat issues where LGBTQ+ people are disproportionately at risk, including substance use, sexual health and mental health.**

Research suggests that LGBTQ+ people have higher levels of drug and alcohol use than the general population and are at a disproportionately high risk of experiencing depression and suicidal thoughts and are more likely to experience poor sexual health.⁴⁰ It is important to stress here that the reason that LGBTQ+ people are disproportionately at a high risk of these health concerns is as a result of often facing social stigma, discrimination and other challenges not encountered by those who identify as heterosexual and cisgender. The Welsh Government should thus ensure that LGBTQ+ people are highlighted as a particularly at-risk group in their strategies to combat each of these health issues. The Welsh Government should also ensure that there is an intersectional crossover of strategies when it comes to combatting these issues. For example, the Suicide Prevention Strategy for Wales, which fails to mention LGBTQ+ people being a particularly at-risk group despite many risk factors identified being higher for LGBTQ+ people.⁴¹ UK wide research from 2018 suggests that almost half of trans people (46 per cent) and 31 per cent of LGBTQ+ people who are not trans have thought about taking their own life in the last year.⁴² When the next Welsh Government Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Strategy is produced, it must identify that LGBTQ+ people are a particularly at-risk group. As identified by Samaritans Cymru, more also needs to be done to improve knowledge and

³⁶LGBTQI+* Disabled People and self-directed social care support
<https://www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk/PDF/Findings/RF77.pdf>

³⁷ Developing inclusive care homes for older people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBTQ)
<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/policybristol/policy-briefings/inclusive-care-homes/>

³⁸ Stonewall, 2018, LGBTQ in Britain: Health Report: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/LGBTQ-britain-health>

³⁹ Stonewall, 2018, LGBTQ in Britain: Health Report: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/LGBTQ-britain-health>

⁴⁰ Stonewall, 2018, LGBTQ in Britain: Home and Communities, Available Online at: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/LGBTQ_in_britain_home_and_communities.pdf ; Stonewall, 2018, LGBTQ in Britain: Health Report: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/LGBTQ-britain-health> ; Public Health Wales, 2018, Sexual Health Service Specifications 2018, Available Online at: <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/888/SH%20service%20spec%202018%28Nov%29.pdf>

⁴¹ Welsh Government, 2015, Talk to me 2: Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Strategy for Wales 2015-2020, Available Online at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-08/talk-to-me-2-suicide-and-self-harm-prevention-strategy-for-wales-2015-2020.pdf>

⁴² Stonewall, 2018, LGBTQ in Britain: Health Report: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/LGBTQ-britain-health>

understating of what works in supporting particular groups and communities when it comes to self-harm, including LGBTQ+ people and, Black Asian and Minority Ethnic people and people from socio-economically disadvantaged households in Wales.⁴³ These instances highlight how services currently fail in identifying areas where LGBTQ+ people at a disproportionate risk as well as when this intersects with other elements of a person's identity and thus fail to undertake the targeted preventative work required to meet their needs. Instances where this is particularly stark are in targeted prevention on substance use, sexual health and mental health.

- **The Welsh Government should ensure that NHS Wales appoint a National LGBTQ+ healthcare advisor to lead on improvements to LGBTQ+ healthcare across NHS Wales.**

The outreach process uncovered a number of health inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ people, building on the existing research base of similar findings UK wide.⁴⁴ The Expert Panel propose the appointment of an LGBTQ+ healthcare advisor as has been appointed in NHS England. The latter appointment has been successful, proving an effective source of strategic leadership when it comes to tackling LGBTQ+ health inequalities. This individual should sit within Public Health Wales and report to the Welsh Government on equalities outcomes. Appointing such a figure would provide accountability and strategic direction to the tackling of all LGBTQ+ health inequalities, as has been seen in England's National LGBTQ+ Health Advisor's work on setting LGBTQ+ health priorities.⁴⁵

- **The Welsh Government should take action to ensure that maternity and fertility services are accessible and straightforward to use for LGBTQ+ people.**

Whether it is for same sex couples, or respectful care for pregnant trans men, more must be done to ensure that maternity services work for LGBTQ+ people seeking to access them. Centralised action is required to ensure that changes made to services are reflected across the whole of Wales and that all LGBTQ+ couples have access to the services they require in an inclusive environment. No additional barriers, financial or otherwise, should be placed on a couple looking to have a child, whatever their sexuality or gender identity. Explicit guidance should be developed on ensuring equality of access, with healthcare staff held accountable if these are infringed upon by the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales.

- **The Welsh Government to work alongside NHS Wales and Social Care Wales to embed comprehensive and ongoing LGBTQ+ specific healthcare training to all staff. Health Inspectorate Wales should act to ensure compliance with best practice.**

A number of people engaging with the Expert Panel highlighted the need for comprehensive LGBTQ+ specific healthcare training. Several experienced an inability to access services or had negative experiences in healthcare. For example, one individual reported being "judged on what they see", that their pronouns were

⁴³ Samaritans Cymru, 2021, The right support at the right time? Improving the availability and quality of support after self-harm in Wales, Available Online at:

<https://media.samaritans.org/documents/SamaritansCymru-self-harm-report-English-version.pdf>

⁴⁴ Stonewall, 2018, LGBTQ in Britain: Health Report: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/LGBTQ-britain-health>

⁴⁵ NHS England, N.d, LGBTQ Health, Available Online at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/LGBTQ-health/>

ignored and that “they don’t respect your identity”. Whilst the initial training of medical professionals was recognised as an opportunity to provide equalities training, this must run alongside ongoing and regular training to ensure that LGBTQ+ people have unfettered access to the care they require. This training should address intersectionality, specifically referencing the experiences of LGBTQ+ people. As reported in outreach conducted to support the development of Disability Wales’s Disabled People’s Manifesto, disability equality training in Wales is often one-size-fits-all and has limited accommodations for LGBTQ+ people.⁴⁶ The Welsh Government, in conjunction with local health boards and healthcare staff, must ensure that disability equality training is not only mandatory, but directly addresses intersectionality, with specific reference to LGBTQ+ disabled people. The Welsh Government should also stipulate to Social Care Wales that support staff are required to have LGBTQ+ awareness and inclusion training. During a focus group with LGBTQ+ disabled people, the barriers facing them in social care services was highlighted. For a number, their LGBTQ+ identity was ignored in favour of their identity as a disabled person. A focus group attendee explained that “I ran into a lot of problems ... when I was accessing social care. People didn’t know anything about LGBTQ issues, and I found that knowledge varied a lot”. This leads to care services not providing adequate support for LGBTQ+ disabled users. Indeed, it was reported that it is as if LGBTQ+ disabled people are only “allowed one identity”. This leads to some LGBTQ+ disabled people being desexualised in a manner that can impact wellbeing and place an unnecessary barrier on the quality of life an LGBTQ+ disabled person is able to have by inhibiting this element of their identity. Accordingly, Care Inspectorate Wales should explicitly check on LGBTQ+ inclusive services when inspecting carers.

- **The Welsh Government should develop a new code of practice under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, which specifically examines the needs of LGBTQ+ older people, this should be supported by ongoing professional training.**

Being an older LGBTQ+ person isn’t always easy, research from the International Longevity Centre UK, which included contributions from Cardiff University, found that LGBTQ+ men and women aged 50+ have poorer self-rated health and are more likely to have other conditions which impacted their health and wellbeing.⁴⁷ As suggested by the study, action is needed to address these health inequalities, through improving the inclusivity of mainstream and health and care provision, strengthening the training of health and care staff and through enhanced data collection around older LGBTQ+ people and their health and care needs. This code of practice should provide a centralised resource for health and social care providers in Wales on the experiences and needs of LGBTQ+ older people accessing their services. A comprehensive report by Age UK details good practice in this field, acknowledging barriers to good practice in service delivery including not understanding the relevance of gender identity and sexual orientation; not acknowledging that LGBTQ+ people will access services; and difficulty in asking

⁴⁶ Disability Wales, 2020, Bring Us Our Rights: Disabled People’s Manifesto, Available Online at: <https://www.disabilitywales.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/DW-Manifesto-2020-E.pdf>

⁴⁷ International Longevity Centre UK, 2019, Raising the equality flag: Health inequalities among older LGBTQ people in the UK, Available online at: <https://ilcuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ILC-Raising-the-equality-flag.pdf>

necessary personal questions.⁴⁸ Providing a centralised resource which details best practice in supporting LGBTQ+ older people accessing health and social care is vital to ensure that LGBTQ+ older people can flourish in older age. Providing an approved and centralised resource would be particularly valuable.

Mental Health

- **The Welsh Government to conduct a review of mental health services in relation to their focus on and efficacy for LGBTQ+ people including young people and act upon its findings.**

A lack of funding and inadequacy of support from mental health services was raised repeatedly during outreach with LGBTQ+ people of all ages. Due to the high volume of responses testifying to the inadequacy of mental health services, it appears that these services need urgent improvements to work effectively for LGBTQ+ people in Wales. It should be noted that often LGBTQ+ people will not find it necessary to disclose their LGBTQ+ identity due to its lack of relevance to the reason for accessing mental health services. However, with LGBTQ+ people being more at risk of depression and suicidal thoughts than the wider population, according to Stonewall's Health Report,⁴⁹ and wider evidence of mental health inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ people,⁵⁰ the lack of adequate mental health services has a disproportionate and distinct impact on the welfare of LGBTQ+ people in Wales. A particular point of tension identified by LGBTQ+ young people was in the transition between Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the equivalent services for those post-18. The report of the Senedd Committee on Children, Young People and Education on emotional and mental health support for children and young people in Wales highlights how current provision is too limited and requires urgent action.⁵¹ Whilst it is acknowledged that this transition can be complex for any young person, the experiences of LGBTQ+ service users suggest this transition is particularly anxiety inducing and leads to uncertainty around new mental health practitioners' attitudes and aptitudes to providing inclusive services. This transition also often results in young people having to 'come out' repeatedly to different services (if indeed their LGBTQ+ identity is in any way related to their reason for accessing the service). That LGBTQ+ young people are not referred to in the Senedd's Children Young People and Education Committee's report on the step change needed in emotional and mental health support in Wales is telling by its omission.⁵² More must be done to ensure that these services are open to all and proactively designed to be accessible

⁴⁸ Age UK, 2017, Safe to be me: Meeting the needs of older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people using health and social care services, Available Online at:

https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/booklets/safe_to_be_me.pdf

⁴⁹ Stonewall, 2018, LGBTQ in Britain: Health Report:

https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/LGBTQ_in_britain_health.pdf

⁵⁰ LGBTQ Health & Wellbeing et al, 2018, LGBTQI Populations and Mental Health Inequality, Available Online at: <https://www.LGBTQhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/LGBTQI-Populations-and-Mental-Health-Inequality-May-2018.pdf>

⁵¹ National Assembly for Wales, Children, Young People and Education Committee, 2018, Mind over matter: A report on the step change needed in emotional and mental health support for children and young people in Wales, Available Online at: <https://senedd.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld11522/cr-ld11522-e.pdf>

⁵² National Assembly for Wales Children, Young People and Education Committee, 2018, Mind over matter: A report on the step change needed in emotional and mental health support for children and young people in Wales, Available Online at: <https://senedd.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld11522/cr-ld11522-e.pdf>

to all, especially when an identity is from a distinctly at risk group. The Welsh Government should therefore conduct a comprehensive review of mental health services and their ability to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ service users, with particular attention paid to LGBTQ+ young people.

Sexual Health and HIV

- **The Welsh Government should publish and act on a new HIV and Sexual Health Action Plan which includes a focus on prevention, education and equitable service provision.**

Urgent action is required to make sexual health services fit for purpose in Wales. The latest Sexual Health and Wellbeing Action Plan for Wales was published in 2010 demonstrating the need for more focus on this area over the course of the next Senedd⁵³ The 2010 Action Plan fails to mention LGBTQ+ identities and as such is not fit for purpose when it comes to supporting LGBTQ+ people. This is similar to the Public Health Wales Sexual Health Review 2017/18, which acknowledges that there are some more at risk groups who are not being reached adequately by services, but fails to acknowledge the distinct experiences of LGBTQ+ people.⁵⁴ The Welsh Government must firstly ensure that, pan-Wales, sexual health and related conditions such as HIV are put on the same footing as other long-term conditions, with associated public information campaigns. Such work should act to tackle widespread HIV related stigma, which research from Fast Track Cardiff suggests is worse in Wales than the rest of the UK.⁵⁵ This research also states that such stigma is largely a consequence of misinformation rather than hostility.⁵⁶ Further research from Terrence Higgins Trust finds that stigma is still prominent, with almost half of survey respondents (48 per cent) indicating that they would feel uncomfortable kissing someone with HIV.⁵⁷ A refocus on the issue of sexual health is thus required to provide services that are fit for purpose. The need to educate health practitioners on stigma and how to combat this, should form a part of the healthcare professionals education recommendation highlighted above.

Secondly, as part of this Action Plan, the Welsh Government should review and properly resource the development of Public Health Wales' online resources and public information messaging about HIV and sexual health to ensure they reflect 21st century realities of testing and treatment and support easy access to the national sexual health postal testing programme. The Action Plan should also tackle regional differences in access to sexual health services. Attendees at a number of focus groups commissioned to aid the development of the present report highlighted how different the experiences of accessing sexual health services varied across the

⁵³ Welsh Assembly Government, 2010, Sexual Health And Wellbeing Action Plan for Wales 2010-2015, Available Online at: [http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/documents/485/Strategy%20\(English\)1.pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/documents/485/Strategy%20(English)1.pdf)

⁵⁴ Public Health Wales, 2018, A Review of Sexual Health in Wales, Available Online at: [www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/888/A Review of Sexual Health in Wales - Final Report.pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/888/A%20Review%20of%20Sexual%20Health%20in%20Wales%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf)

⁵⁵ Fast Track Cardiff, 2019, Bringing Fast Track Cities to Cardiff & Vale and to Wales, Available Online at: <https://fasttrackcardiff.files.wordpress.com/2020/07/ftc-report.pdf>

⁵⁶ Fast Track Cardiff, 2019, Getting to Zero: Survey Report, Available Online at: <https://fasttrackcardiff.files.wordpress.com/2020/11/ftc-reportv.2.pdf>

⁵⁷ Terrence Higgins Trust, 2019, Almost half of Brits would feel uncomfortable kissing someone with HIV, Available Online at: <https://www.tht.org.uk/news/almost-half-brits-would-feel-uncomfortable-kissing-someone-hiv>

regions of Wales, with particular barriers faced by those living in more rural areas. The production of materials should therefore be considerate of the different experiences of those accessing sexual health services across Wales.

The Welsh Government can also more effectively engage with existing HIV awareness campaigns, an element which should be highlighted in the Action Plan. They should pledge to support European Testing Week, a trans-European initiative to promote awareness and benefits of testing, specifically for earlier diagnosis of HIV and viral hepatitis infections and promote effective links to treatment and care whilst respecting the principle of confidentiality.⁵⁸ Becoming actively involved in this public awareness campaign would show that Wales are serious about awareness of the need to manage sexual health, for LGBTQ+ people and more widely. The Welsh Government should also support the Fast-Track Cities campaign for Welsh cities beyond Cardiff.⁵⁹ The Fast-Track Cities campaign in Cardiff has been effective in promoting the provision of postal HIV kits. More must be done to promote these services across Wales. The Welsh Government should aim to support areas that are looking to expand the campaign. Promotion of this work also must act to support community groups campaigns to tackle HIV stigma. Focus group attendees stated how this is particularly badly needed in both LGBTQ+ and Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, where stigma is especially present.

- **The Welsh Government should support the moves to telemedicine for sexual health appointments and postal testing where possible and desired by the patient.**

Sexual health services need to be made available and accessible to all. A current trial of delivering sexual health consultation and testing online was highlighted as a successful project by youth workers and LGBTQ+ young people who were part of the outreach process.⁶⁰ This finding was reinforced by disabled LGBTQ+ people, with one contributor in a focus group stating that the service was a “life-saver”. There was an appetite for the temporary service provision of remote testing to become a permanent option. The Welsh Government should more broadly analyse the outcomes of its telemedicine policies in light of the Covid crisis, which should inform planning in this area in the future. This should work alongside a promotional campaign to support the availability of remote sexual health testing. Despite the reported success of the remote testing rollout, the degree to which focus group attendees were aware of the services was inconsistent. Those who were aware of the service had accessed it and were pleased with it, yet some indicated they had never heard of it, but indicated they would look into accessing the services. With there being an appetite to use this service and with the remote service working well, there needs to be a communications campaign to ensure that all are aware of the service. Such a campaign should particularly target LGBTQ+ young people and LGBTQ+ disabled people, both of whom have barriers which could be overcome by a remote Test at Home Service. It is important to state that whilst moves to remote testing and telemedicine are accessible to some, for others these services are inaccessible to them, adequate provision should be maintained for those for whom accessing services by post or remotely at home will be inaccessible.

⁵⁸ European Testing Week, details available online at: www.testingweek.eu

⁵⁹ Fast Track Cities, details available online at: www.fast-trackcities.org

⁶⁰ Frisky Wales, N.D, Test and Post, Available Online at: <https://www.friskywales.org/chlamydia-and-gonorrhoea-home-testing-pilot.html>

Trans specific Healthcare

- **The Welsh Government should commit to establishing an NHS Wales Gender Identity Service for children and young people, providing an affirmative approach to care in line with international clinical standards.**

Since the establishment of the Welsh Gender Service, specialist transition-related care for adults is now available in Wales. However, under 18s are still reliant on the NHS England Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS), provided by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust based in London. Trans and gender-diverse children and young people face a complex, long and stigmatising pathway to access care in England. They are required to be referred to GIDS via local CAMHS, which inappropriately pathologises gender diversity and wrongly treats being trans as a mental health issue.⁶¹ Waiting lists for CAMHS can be long themselves, and further delay access to specialist support. Focus group participants stated how they feel that trans young people are currently stuck in a system which does not acknowledge their experiences.

The NHS England Gender Identity Development Service has a waiting list of over 4,600 young people, with some waiting over two years before a first appointment. The Care Quality Commission rated the service inadequate in January 2021, principally due to the issues caused by lengthy waits.⁶² The wait times create particularly acute issues for children and young people experiencing distress from gender dysphoria triggered by pubertal changes, for whom prompt access to specialist care is essential.

Affirmative care: this refers to the way in which care is provided. Affirmative care models take the child or young person's lead and orient themselves toward understanding and appreciating their gender experience in a supportive and non-stigmatising environment. This approach aligns with a children's rights approach to care and is endorsed by the American Academy of Paediatrics.⁶³

Puberty blockers: GnRH analogues (commonly known as 'puberty blockers') have a long-standing use in clinical practice to pause the onset of puberty, including for children experiencing precocious puberty. For trans youth, puberty blockers are prescribed to prevent the irreversible physical effects of puberty that can cause significant distress and may require them to undergo more invasive procedures such as surgery as an adult. Authoritative international clinical guidelines support the use of puberty blockers for trans youth, as one component of a holistic model of care.⁶⁴ Many

⁶¹ BBC, 2019, Transgender no longer recognised as 'disorder' by WHO, Available Online at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-48448804>

⁶² Care Quality Commission, 2021, Gender identity services (Tavistock and Portman Trust): Inspection Report. Available online at: <https://api.cqc.org.uk/public/v1/reports/7ecf93b7-2b14-45ea-a317-53b6f4804c24?20210301173155>

⁶³ American Academy of Pediatrics, October 2018, *Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents*. Available online at: <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/4/e20182162>. **See also** Human Rights Campaign/American Academy of Pediatrics, September 2016, *Supporting and Caring for Transgender Children*. Available online at: https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/soLGBTQ_resource_transgenderchildren.pdf.

⁶⁴ Endocrine Society, 2017, *Endocrine Treatment of Gender-Dysphoric/Gender-Incongruent Persons: An Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guideline*. Available Online at: <https://www.endocrine.org/clinical-practice-guidelines/gender-dysphoria-gender-incongruence#2>. **See also** World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), 2012, *Standards of Care for*

recent studies identify a positive relationship between access to puberty-suppressing treatments and improved mental health for trans young people.⁶⁵ We are concerned by the High Court's judgment in *Bell v Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust*⁶⁶ in December 2020 and subsequent measures to restrict access to these critical medications at GIDS, include requiring decisions about treatment for under-16s to be subject to a court order.⁶⁷ These measures risk further undermining the health and wellbeing of trans young people, and have been condemned by expert medical bodies.⁶⁸ The Court of Appeal has granted permission to appeal and the restrictions at GIDS appear to go beyond what is required by the High Court judgment. These developments underscore the need for care for children and young people to be provided by an NHS Wales service, ultimately accountable to the Welsh Government in line with its devolved responsibility for health.

- **The Welsh Government should commit to developing the Welsh Gender Service into a primary-care led model, with GPs able to initiate hormone therapy.**

The Welsh Gender Service is a very welcome development in the landscape of trans healthcare in Wales, and feedback from those who had accessed the service was largely positive. However, it is clear that more must be done to make the service fully sustainable.

Primary care-led models of trans healthcare provision operate successfully in many different countries⁶⁹ and are currently being trialled by NHS England to address chronic waiting list issues. Many stakeholders described their support for a primary care-led service. Trans individuals in focus groups stated that they felt it was discriminatory to withhold the power of GPs to prescribe hormone therapy to their patients, when GPs can prescribe treatments with far higher clinical risks than these treatments, with one saying that their own GP had said they were 'disgusted that GPs are not allowed to handle hormones when they can control other more harmful medicines.' In a primary-care led model, GPs and local gender teams should be trained and supported to initiate hormone therapy and other local services (such as voice therapy or NHS-funded hair removal treatments), supported by the expertise of Welsh Gender Service clinicians. There would be three particular advantages for trans people in Wales:

the health of transsexual, transgender, and Gender-Nonconforming people (7th Ed.), Available Online at:

https://www.wpath.org/media/cms/Documents/SOC%20v7/SOC%20V7_English2012.pdf?t=1613669341

⁶⁵ See e.g. *DeVries et al.* (2014), *Costa et al.* (2015), *Turban et al.* (2020), *Van der Miesen et al.* (2020), *Achille et al.* (2020).

⁶⁶ *R (on the application of) Bell and A v Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust and others* [2020] EHW 3274 (Admin). Available online at: <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Bell-v-Tavistock-Judgment.pdf>

⁶⁷ NHS England, 1 December 2020, 'Amendments to service specification for Gender Identity Development Service for Children and Adolescents'. Available online at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Amendment-to-Gender-Identity-Development-Service-Specification-for-Children-and-Adolescents.pdf>

⁶⁸ WPATH, 2020, Statement Regarding Medical Affirming Treatment including Puberty Blockers for Transgender Adolescents. Available online at:

https://www.wpath.org/media/cms/Documents/Public%20Policies/2020/FINAL%20Statement%20Regarding%20Informed%20Consent%20Court%20Case_Dec%2016%202020.docx.pdf?t=1608225376

⁶⁹ For examples, see the Equinox Gender Diverse Health Centre in Australia (<https://equinox.org.au/>), Trans Care BC (<http://www.phsa.ca/transcarebc>) and Rainbow Health Ontario (<https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/TransHealthGuide/>) in Canada.

Firstly, it would address the waiting list for the Welsh Gender Service the current waiting list for referral to the Welsh Gender Service currently sits at an unacceptable 24 months.⁷⁰ Trans people who provided evidence to the Expert Panel highlighted how the waiting time is far too long, with one person commenting that “the service is OK but waiting times are horrendous and there is very little support during the waiting time,” while another described the waiting time was “excruciating”. Primary care-led models are effective in dealing with waiting lists because they decentralise treatment provision, increase the number of care providers and prevent gender identity clinics acting as a bottleneck.

Secondly, it would bring care closer to home for those outside of south-east Wales, tackling regional inequalities of access. A number of users of the Welsh Gender Service residing in North Wales reported going to London to access gender identity services due to the Cardiff clinic being further away and less accessible. However, it was recognised that telemedicine pioneered by the Welsh Gender Service during lockdown had had a positive impact on care and should be continued.

Finally, it would promote a de-pathologised and human rights-based approach to care. Historically, gender identity clinics have been designed around the premise that being trans is a mental disorder, requiring specialist psychiatric diagnosis. This is now recognised as an inaccurate, stigmatising, and outdated approach to trans identities, which are a common and culturally-diverse human phenomenon which should not be judged as inherently pathological or negative.⁷¹ In light of this, treatment protocols should move away from the traditional psychiatric approach, which assumes that clinicians can diagnose whether someone really is trans and can involve intrusive and degrading questioning. Collaborative, patient-led approaches which start from the premise that trans people understand our identities and needs best and focus on establishing informed consent for different treatments are critical to improving trans people’s experiences of gender identity services. Primary care providers, supported by specialist training and the Welsh Gender Service, are best equipped to do this work.

- **The Welsh Government should take steps to address public perception that there is disparity of access to gender identity services for non-binary people.** During the outreach process it was indicated that gender identity services did not acknowledge the experiences and complexity of non-binary identities, not offering adequate guidance for these individuals. A fit-for-purpose gender service must offer a space for non-binary people to achieve the health outcomes they are aiming for. The service should collaborate with non-binary communities in Wales and make the most of international expertise on care for non-binary people to improve patient experiences.
- **The Welsh Government should establish an NHS Wales-wide review on trans people’s medical records, led by trans communities, to promote trans people’s engagement with healthcare services, privacy, and quality of healthcare.** It was regularly stated during the outreach process that trans people are often addressed in correspondence with NHS Wales with their birth name after they have

⁷⁰ Welsh Gender Service, Available Online at: <https://gender.wales/> [Accessed 04.03.2021]

⁷¹ WPATH, 2010, De-psychopathologisation statement. Available online at: <https://www.wpath.org/policies>. See also BBC, 2019, Transgender no longer recognised as 'disorder' by WHO, Available Online at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-48448804>.

changed their name (deadnamed), or are misgendered. Other issues include non-binary people being required to be identified as female or male, information about trans status being shared inappropriately and/or non-consensually, and inaccurate assumptions by healthcare staff. The review needs to be a collaborative process with trans communities and should seek to promote trans people's engagement with healthcare services, patient privacy, autonomy, and quality of healthcare. Access to screening programmes continues to be a problem, despite guidance produced by Public Health Wales,⁷² which emphasises the importance of training and improving the knowledgeability of frontline healthcare staff on trans people's health needs as well as improving systems.

⁷² Public Health Wales, 2021, breast cervical and bowel screening information for transgender service users, Available Online at: <https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/breast-screening/breast-public-information/leaflets/screening-information-for-transgender-service-users/>

Education

In March 2017, an expert Sex and Relationships Education panel was established by the Welsh Assembly's Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams. The panel was tasked with reporting on how teachers could be supported to provide high quality sex and relationships education more effectively in schools in Wales. Drawing on a wide range of national and international research,⁷³ one of the key findings of the panel was that there is a gap between children and young people's lived experiences of relationships and sexuality (online and offline) and the content of RSE provision. This gap is widened for LGBTQ+ young people. Drawing on Stonewall Cymru's survey which found that there remains a lack of discussion in educational environments about sexual orientation and/or gender identity, with 44 per cent of those in education in the last three years stating that neither of these topics was discussed, the expert panel concluded that rarely is RSE LGBTQ+ inclusive, and provision is too heteronormative. These findings have been confirmed by teachers' own evaluative audits with their students in a recent professional learning programme with primary, secondary and special schools⁷⁴ – practices supported by the published commitment and promise of new statutory guidance for schools, in which LGBTQ+ inclusivity is an underpinning principle.⁷⁵

However, despite all the panel's accepted recommendations for ensuring that RSE provision will be LGBTQ+ inclusive, which includes establishing an RSE research-practice network, 'comprehensive guidance' and 'professional learning pathways' for in-service and pre-service teachers, progress has been very slow. Thus while the LGBTQ+ people who engaged with Stonewall Cymru's outreach process were largely optimistic about the opportunities of the new Welsh curriculum,⁷⁶ specifically the commitment to teach inclusive RSE (Relationship and Sexuality Education) for all learners (age 3-16), concerns were raised around the implementation of the commitments on a truly inclusive curriculum. These concerns have been shared by the chair and members of the expert panel in the recent written and oral submissions to the Children and Young People's Education Committee scrutinizing the bill.⁷⁷

Compulsory Education

- **The Welsh Government should provide strategic, comprehensive investment in professional learning and training on designing a fully LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum. This should include delivering LGBTQ+ inclusive RSE for all.**
In order to reap the benefits of the new Curriculum for Wales, significant strategic investment is required to ensure that teachers are informed and empowered to create a co-produced whole school approach to LGBTQ+ inclusiveness, including

⁷³ Renold, E. and McGeeney, E. 2017a. The Future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales. Wales: Welsh Government. AND Renold, E. and McGeeney, E. 2017b. Informing the Future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales. Cardiff: Cardiff University.

⁷⁴ Renold, E.J., Ashton, M. and McGeeney, E. (2020) *CRUSH: Transforming Relationships and Sexuality Education*. Cardiff: Cardiff University. Available Online at: www.agendaonline.co.uk/crush/

⁷⁵ Welsh Government. 2020a. *Cross-cutting themes for designing your curriculum*. Hwb. [Online] Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/cross-cutting-themes-for-designing-your-curriculum>

⁷⁶ Welsh Government, Available Online at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales>

⁷⁷ Welsh Parliament, 2021, Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill, Available Online at: <https://business.senedd.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=402&RPID=500169648&cp=yes>

RSE. LGBTQ+ young people who attended focus groups attested to the inadequacy of current procedure and shared their hopes that the new curriculum will right the wrongs of their own experiences, highlighting that professional learning and training is vital in order to embed a whole school approach to inclusion, as evidenced by the expert panel.⁷⁸ In order to achieve the opportunities afforded in the new curriculum, professionals must also be given access to quality assured, co-produced case studies and learning materials to support their learning and curriculum design.

- **The Welsh Government should ensure that training must also act to empower professionals to adequately support LGBTQ+ young people and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, by embedding a rights based approach.**

Young people engaging with the focus groups suggested that they often felt a lack of support from members of staff in educational institutions, feeling the need to 'educate the educator' on matters of LGBTQ+ life. Estyn's report on celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion highlights how, often, LGBTQ+ pupils do not receive the support they need to cope with additional pressures they face from wider society.⁷⁹ There has been a comprehensive new statutory guide - "Challenging bullying: rights, equalities and respect"⁸⁰ - which addresses HBT bullying, supporting schools, local authorities and regional consortia in implementing the guidance. However, more must be done to provide support for LGBTQ+ young people in educational settings, who often experience homophobic, biphobic or transphobic abuse and discrimination from teachers and pupils alike.⁸¹ The Expert Panel agree with the EHRC, who identify that ensuring the education system promotes good relations with others and respect for equality and human rights is a priority in Wales.⁸² A good example of resources which can support the training of teachers in supporting LGBTQ+ pupils has been generated by Safer Schools⁸³ and the AGENDA resource⁸⁴ which has rights, equalities and social justice at its core. Importantly, this training must be made available in all compulsory learning environments, including home-schoolers, pupil referral units and alternative provisions. At its best the promotion of an inclusive whole school environment empowers students to not accept hate speech and to challenge this with the safety provided by a whole school ethos. This can be seen in the work of Digon in Ysgol Plasmawr.⁸⁵

⁷⁸ Renold, E. and McGeeney, E. 2017a. The Future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales. Wales: Welsh Government. AND Renold, E. and McGeeney, E. 2017b. Informing the Future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales. Cardiff: Cardiff University.

⁷⁹ Estyn, 2020, Celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion, Available Online at:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales>

⁸⁰ Welsh Government, 2019, Challenging Bullying: Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for local authorities, Available Online at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/rights-respect-equality-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf>

⁸¹ Stonewall Cymru, 2017, School Report: <https://www.stonewallcymru.org.uk/schoolreportcymru>

⁸² Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020, Wales impact report: 2019-2020, Available Online at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/wales_impact_report_2019-20.pdf

⁸³ Safer Schools, N.d, Contextual Safeguarding Factsheet & Resource Pack, Available Online at: <https://oursaferschools.co.uk/2020/06/10/contextual-safeguarding-factsheet-resource-pack/>

⁸⁴ Renold, E.J., Ashton, M. and McGeeney, E. (2020) *CRUSH: Transforming Relationships and Sexuality Education*. Cardiff: Cardiff University. Available Online at: www.agendaonline.co.uk/crush/

⁸⁵ St David Awards, 2017, DIGON, Nominated for Young Person award, Available Online at: <https://gov.wales/st-david-awards/digon>

- **The Welsh Government should provide a centralised suite of resources to help the families of LGBTQ+ young people.**

The new RSE advocates a whole school approach, which includes supporting parents and carers. An issue flagged during outreach is that parents and carers of LGBTQ+ young people often feel unsupported and ill-equipped when discussing LGBTQ+ issues. In this regard, the charity Fflag (Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) offers resources for family and friends of LGBTQ+ people and are currently in the process of launching their Welsh (and Welsh language) resources. The need for this information suggests that such resources should be made available to all in Wales and this is best achieved when it is made from a centralised government level.

- **The Welsh Government to provide statutory national trans guidance for schools and local authorities.**

There is a need for a trusted national information resource, which provides schools with practical information and tools for supporting trans young people. Every child has the right to access these valuable resources and to be educated in an environment that inexplicably supports their rights. Such a resource should provide guidance on how to allow trans students to participate fully in school life, as exemplified in the guidance produced in 2015 by Wrexham County Borough Council.⁸⁶ The design of these resources should be developed in conjunction with organisations with expertise in this area, such as Umbrella Cymru, Viva LGBTQ and Gendered Intelligence, and build upon inclusive co-produced resources such as the AGENDA resource (www.agendaonline.co.uk). Such an approach would show in action attempts to take a Children's Rights and Equalities based approach to learning, as specified in the Children's Commissioner for Wales's' guide on the subject⁸⁷ and as specified in the draft Children's Rights Scheme put forward by the Welsh Government⁸⁸ with reference to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁸⁹

- **The Welsh Government should continue to invest in hate crime prevention programmes in schools across Wales.**

The Welsh Government should continue its commitment to embedding anti-hate crime and pro-human rights programmes in schools and education providers across Wales. Tackling future hate crimes by creating a culture of inclusion, equality and respect in school at an early age are an effective prevention against a more polarised and discriminatory society. With UK Government taking away grants which support anti-bullying lessons, this would provide Wales with the opportunity to send a starkly different message, one that aims to eradicate hate crimes by educating the next generation. This can be achieved in practice through programmes such as police liaison programmes or working with external practitioners to deliver workshops on

⁸⁶ Wrexham Country Borough Council, 2015, Transgender Guidance for Wrexham Schools 2015, Available Online at: http://www.schools-out.org.uk/wp-content/files_mf/1470607662TransGenderGuidanceSchoolsFinal.pdf

⁸⁷ The Rights Way – A Children's Rights Approach in Wales, Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2017, Available Online at: <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/The-Right-Way.pdf>

⁸⁸ Welsh Government, 2021, Draft Children's Rights Scheme 2021, Available Online at: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2020-12/consultation-document_3.pdf

⁸⁹ United Nations, 1989, Conventions on the Rights of the Child, Available Online at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

hate crime prevention. The Welsh Government can have a role in this environment through highlighting the importance of this work.

Higher and Further Education

- **The Welsh Government should explore how they can support Colleges and Universities in Wales to develop and maintain LGBTQ+ inclusive environments, potentially through establishing an Excellence Mark to recognise best practice.**

Research suggests that some LGBTQ+ people in colleges and universities have felt isolated and unsupported.⁹⁰ More than two in five (forty two per cent) LGBTQ+ university students hid or disguised their LGBTQ+ identity in the academic year prior to 2018.⁹¹ This is particularly true for trans university students, more than a third of whom have faced negative comments or conduct from university staff in the year prior to 2018.⁹² More must be done in order to ensure that all LGBTQ+ students are able to reach their full potential in higher and further educational settings. The Welsh Government should consider what action they can take to support higher learning environments to become more supportive. One means through which this can be achieved is by encouraging Welsh colleges and universities to ensure their access and participation plans explicitly include LGBTQ+ students, including LGBTQ+ students with other protected characteristics (such as Black Asian and minority ethnic LGBTQ+ students and LGBTQ+ disabled students). This can be achieved in conjunction with ongoing participation efforts which seek to create access paths for those who are from marginalised communities. Further examples of action that could be taken by the Welsh Government is by creating an Excellence Mark to establish best practice in cultivating inclusive environments. Current good practice can be seen at Cardiff University, who offer a comprehensive set of support and groups for LGBTQ+ students and staff alike⁹³, which can be seen through their consistent high achievement in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index.⁹⁴

- **The Welsh Government should consider options for the targeted funding of academic research into the experiences of the LGBTQ+ population of Wales.** The Expert Panel notes that there remains a number of significant research gaps in regard to LGBTQ+ people's experiences in Wales. In order to produce future policymaking decision which have the most impact on LGBTQ+ people's lives in Wales, more needs to be done to understand said lives. Such research gaps are evident on a UK wide basis, as has been established in the academic literature.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Stonewall, 2020, Shut Out: The experiences of LGBTQ young people not in education, training or work. Available Online at: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/shut_out_2020.pdf

⁹¹ Stonewall, 2018, University Report:

https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/LGBTQ_in_britain_universities_report.pdf

⁹² Stonewall, 2018, University Report:

https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/LGBTQ_in_britain_universities_report.pdf

⁹³ Cardiff University, N.d, Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans(gender)+, Available Online at:

<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/student-life/student-support/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender>

⁹⁴ Stonewall, 2020, The Full List: Top 100 Employers 2020, Available Online at:

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/full-list-top-100-employers-2020>

⁹⁵ National Institute of Economic and Social Research, 2016, Inequality among lesbian gay, bisexual and transgender groups in the UK: a review of evidence. Available Online at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/539682/160719_REPORT_LGBTQ_evidence_review_NIESR_FINALPDF.pdf

Particularly fruitful areas for academic research of this population include the intersection between class, economic status and LGBTQ+ identity, the distinct experiences of LGBTQ+ people of colour in Wales and the disparity in experience between rural and urban LGBTQ+ population particularly considering the role of Welsh language within this.⁹⁶

Children and Young People not in education, employment, training or work

- **The Welsh Government should work with Careers Wales to improve the delivery of specific careers support for LGBTQ+ young people.**

As uncovered in Stonewall's Shut Out Report, LGBTQ+ young people face specific challenges in addition to wider factors that lead young people in general to be shut out of education, employment, training or work.⁹⁷ The Welsh Government should thus work alongside Careers Wales to eradicate barriers facing LGBTQ+ young people shut out of work or training.

Lifelong Learning

- **The Welsh Government should examine how well LGBTQ+ people can access lifelong learning opportunities.**

As laid out in the Adult Learning report, the Welsh Government is committed to lifelong learning as a means to develop skills, improve health and wellbeing and to act as a catalyst for social engagement and wider socio-economic equity.⁹⁸ In this report, the need to ensure that provision is fair and equitable is highlighted. Prior research attests to experiences of LGBTQ+ young people being shut out of education and training, a pattern which could continue into adulthood.⁹⁹ For older generations, learning opportunities provide a means of intersectional reflection and the sharing of personal experiences – these are of particular value to older LGBTQ+ people who do not necessarily see themselves represented in history books or other social mirrors.

⁹⁶ Although indicative research includes Osborne, H (ed), 2016, *Queer Wales: The History, Culture and Politics of Queer Life in Wales*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press. AND Leeworthy, D, 2019, *A Little Gay History of Wales*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press. AND Leeworthy, D, 2022, *The Women's Movement: A Little Welsh History*. Cardiff, University of Wales Press.

⁹⁷ Stonewall, 2020, *Shut Out: The experiences of LGBTQ young people not in education, training or work*. Available Online at: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/shut_out_2020.pdf

⁹⁸ Welsh Government, *Adult Learning*, 2017, Available Online at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-08/adult-learning-in-wales.pdf>

⁹⁹ Stonewall, 2020, *Shut Out: The experiences of LGBTQ young people not in education, training or work*. Available Online at: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/shut_out_2020.pdf

Workplace

While progress has been made on making workplaces more equal, this remains dependent on the type of industry and the level of commitment shown by the employer. More and more organisations are taking pride in their commitment to LGBTQ+ staff, customers and service users. Yet, discrimination in the workplace remains widespread, requiring action and Government commitment to drive change. The outreach process found that whilst 45 per cent of people reporting that those in the workplace reacted only positively when aware they were LGBTQ+, 24 per cent reported un-permissible exposure of their LGBTQ+ identity in the workplace and 10 per cent recounted experiencing verbal harassment. Focus group attendees also stated that they experience workplace inequalities and discrimination, particularly those in more precarious employment. Workplaces in Wales have improved, yet we need to go further to eradicate discrimination and empower all those in employment to be themselves as well as championing the positive impact diversity can have in all types of organisation.

- **The Welsh Government should create a more homogenised approach to private workplace training resources for workplaces to become more LGBTQ+ inclusive.**

The Welsh Government can play a role in combatting workplace inequalities in Wales by providing and promoting a centralised source of training resources available to employers in order to tackle workplace discrimination. Providing access to these resources would enable the Welsh Government to take leadership of the issues proactively. The lack of education of LGBTQ+ issues in the workplace should be addressed through advice on employers on how to: show visible commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace, produce LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and training, and how to create employee-facing workplace systems that are modernised to enable non-binary identities to be recognised and recorded. A trans woman participant in a focus group for this project reported that they were forced to use men's changing rooms and bathrooms in their workplace as it made her colleagues "uncomfortable". She reported that she felt powerless to combat this issue due to feeling that she has "no rights" as she was in precarious agency employment. We cannot continue to allow such violations to take place in workplaces in Wales.

- **The Welsh Government should provide a resource detailing employment protections as well as employer responsibilities for upholding the rights of trans staff working in the private sector.**

Trans people in particular reported high levels of workplace discrimination with some cases being especially egregious, this is reinforced by existing research.¹⁰⁰ Access to accurate information on trans identities is thus vital to ensure that the private sector cannot continue with discriminatory practices.

- **The Welsh Government should promote the importance of the collection of diversity data to businesses in Wales.**

The collection of accurate data from a workforce is a vital means to uncover how discrimination in the workplace. Meaningful change in the workplace is far easier to

¹⁰⁰ Stonewall Cymru, 2018, LGBTQ in Wales, Work Report: <https://www.stonewallcymru.org.uk/system/files/LGBTQ%20in%20Wales%20Work%20Report%202018.pdf>

achieve when accurate monitoring data is available to inform decision making. Conversations in the focus groups uncovered that many continue to face every day discrimination in the workplace, with many denying their LGBTQ+ identity in order to progress in their career. The collection of data and the monitoring of potential biases and inequalities in the workplace can aid the process of making LGBTQ+ people in Wales to be treated more equally in their places of work. The Welsh Government has a role to play in promoting the importance of the collection of demographic data to businesses in Wales to combat the layers of workplace inequalities. Indeed, this action would combat wider inequalities beyond those facing LGBTQ+ people, such as those based on gender, race, religion, socio-economic status and disability. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has enshrined ensuring equal access to the labour market and fair treatment at work as one of their five priority areas for Wales, highlighting the need to eradicate significant inequalities in this area facing people of a number of identities.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020, Wales impact report 2019-20, Available Online at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/wales_impact_report_2019-20.pdf

Considerations for Wales's COVID-19 Response

As uncovered by recent research conducted by the University College London and the University of Sussex into the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Britain during the coronavirus lockdowns has provoked a mental health crisis among the LGBTQ+ community, with 69 per cent of respondents suffering depressive symptoms, rising to 90 per cent of those who had experienced homophobia or transphobia.¹⁰² This evidence is supported by further research on the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on LGBTQ+ people conducted by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner,¹⁰³ LGBTQ Foundation,¹⁰⁴ and by Human Rights Watch.¹⁰⁵ These findings are reinforced by the results of the survey commissioned for the project here in Wales, with many reporting experiences of isolation as a result of COVID-19. One respondent highlighted how “COVID-19 has cut me off from my LGBTQ network and support,” while another commented that COVID-19 has resulted in “feelings of isolation, anxiety and depressions, cut off from seeing other queer people and therefore feeling less of a sense of community has impacted wellbeing”. With social isolation and some LGBTQ+ people being forced back into unsupportive or openly-hostile households, the impact of coronavirus has been stark. As such it is important to recognise and consider the experiences of LGBTQ+ people in Wales when responding to the crisis and to consider the impact it has had on LGBTQ+ people of different ages and identities.

- **When investigating the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people, the Welsh Government must consider the distinct impact the pandemic has had on particularly vulnerable young people, including, explicitly, LGBTQ+ children and young people.**

Any research on the experiences of children and young people during the pandemic must consider the experiences of LGBTQ+ children and young people. With schools, youth clubs and support services for young people all having experienced periods of closure, it is vital that how this has impacted the wellbeing of potentially vulnerable children are understood. As attested in the State of Children's Rights in Wales report, the impact of COVID-19 has not been identical for all children and has to date served to exacerbate pre-existing inequalities.¹⁰⁶ There is thus a need to understand how the pandemic has impacted not only LGBTQ+ children and young people but also children in low-income households, disabled children and Black Asian and minority

¹⁰² The mental health and experiences of discrimination of LGBTQ+ people during the COVID-19 pandemic: Initial findings from the Queerantime Study:

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.08.03.20167403v1>, 2020

¹⁰³ United Nations Human Rights – Office of the High Commissioner, 2020, Report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the human rights of LGBTQ persons, Available Online at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SexualOrientationGender/Pages/COVID19Report.aspx>

¹⁰⁴ LGBTQ Foundation, 2020, Hidden Figures: The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on LGBTQ communities in the UK, Available Online at: <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/LGBTQ-website-media/Files/7a01b983-b54b-4dd3-84b2-0f2ecd72be52/Hidden%2520Figures-%2520The%2520Impact%2520of%2520the%2520Covid-19%2520Pandemic%2520on%2520LGBTQ%2520Communities.pdf>

¹⁰⁵ Graeme Reid, 2020, Human Rights Watch: LGBTQ Inequality and Vulnerability in the Pandemic, Available Online at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/18/LGBTQ-inequality-and-vulnerability-pandemic>

¹⁰⁶ Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group, 2021, Wales Civil Society Report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to inform their List of Issues Prior to reporting (LOIPR), Available Online at: <https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CIW-EHRC-Report-English.pdf>

ethnic families.¹⁰⁷ Diverse Cymru similarly note that the coronavirus pandemic has served to highlight existing inequalities and that any attempts to ‘build back better’ as we recover from COVID-19 must therefore address these by understanding its distinct impact on different communities.¹⁰⁸

- **The Welsh Government should consider the distinct experiences of LGBTQ+ people as Wales comes out of lockdown and plan the post-COVID-19 recovery.** Research shows that more than half of LGBTQ+ people have experienced depression and three in five having experienced anxiety in the last year.¹⁰⁹ Such figures of poor mental health are disproportionately higher than the general population. This displays the need to consider the experiences of LGBTQ+ people when planning a recovery response to COVID-19, particularly on the mental health impacts of lockdown and social distancing. The need to combat social isolation is additionally particularly acute for LGBTQ+ people.
- **The Welsh Government should undertake a thorough investigation into how LGBTQ+ people in Wales have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.** Due to a number of higher risk factors, such as being at a higher risk of domestic abuse, LGBTQ+ people in Wales are likely to be impacted by the coronavirus pandemic in a distinct way. More needs to be done to analyse the impacts of COVID-19 on the LGBTQ+ population of Wales. It is particularly important to understand the ways in which LGBTQ+ identities intersect with other groups more at-risk to COVID-19, such as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people or older people, as have been investigated elsewhere.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Public Health Wales, 2020, How are we doing in Wales: A Focus on Ethnicity, Available Online at: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/how-are-you-doing/how-are-we-doing-in-wales-reports/how-are-we-doing-in-wales-a-focus-on-ethnicity/>

¹⁰⁸ Diverse Cymru, 2021, A Manifesto for a fair and equal Wales, Available Online at: <https://www.diversewymru.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Diverse-Cymru-2021-Manifesto-for-a-fair-and-equal-Wales.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ Stonewall, 2018, LGBTQ in Britain: Health Report: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/LGBTQ-britain-health>

¹¹⁰ Older People’s Commissioner for Wales, 2020, Leave no-one behind: Action for an age-friendly recovery, Available Online at: https://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/Publications/pub-story/20-08-18/Leave_no-one_behind_Action_for_an_age-friendly_recovery.aspx ; First Minister’s BAME Covid-19 Advisory Group, 2020, Report of the BAME Covid-19 Socioeconomic Subgroup, Available Online at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-06/first-ministers-bame-covid-19-advisory-group-report-of-the-socioeconomic-subgroup.pdf>

Summary

The Independent Expert Panel put forward the above recommendations as an attempt to inform the drafting of a comprehensive plan which works for all LGBTQ+ people in Wales, whatever their identity or the stage of their life. The Report aimed to set out recommendations which are achievable, and which will make a real impact on the lives of all LGBTQ+ people in Wales.

We encourage the Welsh Government to take the time to consider each of these recommendations in turn, as being recommendations which have come from LGBTQ+ people in Wales to sit in this document. These asks are therefore an attempt to bridge the gap between the lived experience of LGBTQ+ people in Wales and Government policy.

We look forward to seeing how the Welsh Government take forward the recommendations in the coming months and aiding their effective implementation if through future input. We recommend that the Expert Panel convened for the authoring of this report is kept together to scrutinise the implementation of these recommendations.

Finally, The Expert Panel would like to once again acknowledge the wealth of people who provided their experiences and ideas for consideration in these recommendations. We are thankful for both your time and your frankness. We hope that these recommendations offer hope to LGBTQ+ people in Wales, that in the coming years life as an LGBTQ+ person can be improved, especially for future generations of young LGBTQ+ people.

Annex 1: Table of recommendations

Overarching Recommendations	
1	The Welsh Government should build on intentions to strengthen equality and introduce legislation that fully incorporates international human rights treaties into domestic law. The Welsh Government should also work with the UK Government to strengthen as far as possible the recognitions and protections afforded to trans and non-binary people including refugees and those seeking asylum.
2	The Welsh Government should ensure that the rights of LGBTQ+ people are recognised and mainstreamed across the public sector in Wales. A Minister for Equalities or an inter-Ministerial committee should oversee the plan to ensure effective inter-departmental coordination and sufficient integration with other plans including the Race Equality Action Plan, Gender Review Implementation, Disability Framework and the Nation of Sanctuary Action Plan.
3	The Independent Expert Panel welcomes Welsh Government's commitment to develop a Plan for Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality in Wales. However, the plan should be sufficiently funded and resourced (staffing) to maximise its contribution to creating a more equal Wales.
4	The Welsh Government should ensure that comprehensive equalities training and professional development programmes are introduced for all public services. This should focus on understanding LGBTQ+ needs, intersectional experiences and addressing unconscious bias. Such training should be developed and delivered in collaboration with partner organisations and expertise with lived experience.
5	The Welsh Government should help to challenge heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions and require public bodies to appropriately identify and record LGBTQ+ identities at the point of access. The needs of LGBTQ+ communities should be made visible in service design and population-level analysis. The Welsh Government should ensure national indicators allow for regular, sufficient and disaggregated data collection, which identifies the discrimination and wellbeing disparities experienced by our LGBTQ+ communities.
6	The Welsh Government should appoint a National Advisor for LGBTQ+ Equality and continue to support the Independent Expert Panel to guide, monitor and evaluate implementation of the plan. The Welsh Government should provide an annual report updating progress on the implementation of the plan.
Human Rights and Recognition	
7	Building on its positive recent engagement, Welsh Government should continue to vocally defend and promote the rights and dignity of trans and non-binary people in Wales to take a full and equal role in Welsh society at all levels.
8	Welsh Government should provide recognition of non-binary people throughout devolved policy areas, including education, housing and health as far as possible under the law.

9	Welsh Government should continue to make representations to UK Government to reform the Gender Recognition Act in accordance with the principle of self-determination and international best practice and explore action which can be taken within Welsh Government powers to make progress in this area.
10	Welsh Government should ban conversion therapy in Wales and should continue to work with the UK Government to eradicate conversion therapy, through a legislative ban.
11	Explore ways unnecessary personal identifications such as name, age and gender markers can be removed from documentation.
12	Provide LGBTQ+ people with a greater understanding of their human rights, what they mean, how they intersect, or when they have been infringed, as well as how to seek redress when this happens.
Safety	
13	Police and Crime Commissioners should build on existing ongoing engagement activity with marginalised communities, to ensure that their relationship with the police is more reflective of their needs. This will include LGBTQ+ communities, disabled communities and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.
14	Police and Crime Commissioners to review the under-reporting of LGBTQ+ hate crimes with the aim of acting to further improve the levels of reporting.
15	Welsh Government should work with UK Government and social media platforms to investigate resolutions that can be taken to prevent and tackle online hate crime.
16	Welsh Government should work alongside Police and Crime Commissioner's to ensure all police officers and 111/999 police responders alongside other staff have received comprehensive training on hate crime, human rights and how those with protected characteristics are targeted.
17	Welsh Government should specifically target violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) in the LGBTQ+ community - to better understand the reasons for historically low reporting from the community, ensuring all literature, messaging and awareness raising initiatives are inclusive, and where necessary specific to the LGBTQ+ community. Data collection from VAWDASV service providers, along with professional and public services, including police data should capture LGBTQ+ reporting, referrals, incidences etc
Home and Communities	
18	Welsh Government should support and resource LGBTQ+ community groups and organisations across Wales to combat regional inequalities that people experience when accessing services. Targeted intervention is also needed to increase the Welsh medium support services available to LGBTQ+ people.
19	Welsh Government and Local Authorities should increase their funding for LGBTQ+ youth support services accessed beyond the school.

	Welsh Government should also find a long-term funding solution to the currently underfunded and typically voluntary organisations which provide valuable support for LGBTQ+ young people, especially in more rural areas of Wales. Future strategies including the work of the Interim Youth Work Board ¹¹¹ should consider the needs of LGBTQ+ young people.
20	Welsh Government should utilise – and encourage the use of – LGBTQ+ awareness events in the annual calendar as opportunities to uplift LGBTQ+ voices, particularly from under-represented sections of the community. These include, but are not limited to, Pride events, LGBTQ+ History Month (February), IDAHOBIT (17 May), Bi Visibility Day (23 September), Trans Day of Remembrance (20 November), and World AIDS Day (1 December). Welsh Government and other public bodies should support bi people with shows of support, such as flying the bi pride flag.
21	Provide resource and access to diverse role models with intersectional identities in order to promote LGBTQ+ people to stand for political office, at all levels, in Wales.
22	Welsh Government should support governing bodies in developing a joint LGBTQ+ inclusion strategy for Welsh sport to tackle lack of diversity and to encourage participation in sport and physical activity.
23	Welsh Government should examine and report on how it can provide support to faith groups to ensure that all religion and faith-based environments are open and accessible for LGBTQ+ people, and to promote inter-community dialogue.
24	Welsh Government should strengthen LGBTQ+ representation on equality forums, including the Wales Faith Community Forum, Wales Race Forum, Disability Equality Forum and the Strategic Equality Board.
25	Welsh Government should support the development of Wales’s vibrant LGBTQ+ arts and culture sector, providing funding where appropriate.
26	Welsh Government should support museums, archives, and libraries to encourage investigation in, and exhibition of, LGBTQ+ histories and digital cultures in Wales, providing funding where appropriate.
27	Welsh Government should ensure that all homelessness services sensitively capture people’s sexual orientation and trans status to tailor appropriate and safe pathways.
28	Welsh Government commit to future funding of specific services for LGBTQ+ homeless young people across Wales following the success of Tŷ Pride.
29	The Welsh Government should call on the UK Government to sensitively identify LGBTQ+ people throughout the asylum claim, starting with making amendments to the ASF1 ¹¹² form.
30	The Welsh Government should work with the UK Government to provide and improve housing referral pathways for LGBTQ+ refugee and asylum seekers settling in Wales.

¹¹¹ <https://gov.wales/interim-youth-work-board>

¹¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-asylum-support-form-asf1>

31	Welsh Government should ensure that relevant public services receive training and are inclusive of LGBTQ+ refugee and asylum seekers.
32	Welsh Government should work with specialised LGBTQ+ asylum and refugee support services, such as Glitter Cymru and Hoops & Loops to ensure that these services are sustainable.
33	Welsh Government should ensure its commitments to making Wales a <i>Nation of Sanctuary</i> ¹¹³ is inclusive of LGBTQ+ people.
34	The Welsh Government should ensure that appropriate mental health support is provided to LGBTQ+ refugees and people seeking asylum.
Health and Social Care	
35	The Welsh Government should undertake targeted public health work to combat issues where LGBTQ+ people are disproportionately at risk, including substance use, sexual health and mental health.
36	The Welsh Government should ensure that NHS Wales appoint a National LGBTQ+ healthcare advisor to lead on improvements to LGBTQ+ healthcare across NHS Wales.
37	The Welsh Government should take action to ensure that maternity and fertility services are accessible and straightforward to use for LGBTQ+ people.
38	Welsh Government to work alongside NHS Wales and Social Care Wales to embed comprehensive and ongoing LGBTQ+ specific healthcare training to all staff. Health Inspectorate Wales should act to ensure compliance with best practice.
39	Welsh Government should develop a new code of practice under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, which specifically examines the needs of LGBTQ+ older people, this should be supported by ongoing professional training.
40	Welsh Government to conduct a review of mental health services in relation to their focus on and efficacy for LGBTQ+ people including young people and act upon its findings.
41	Welsh Government should publish and act on a new HIV and Sexual Health Action Plan which includes a focus on prevention, education and equitable service provision.
42	Welsh Government should support the moves to tele-medicine for sexual health appointments and postal testing where possible and desired by the patient.
43	Welsh Government should commit to establishing an NHS Wales Gender Identity Service for children and young people, providing an affirmative approach to care in line with international clinical standards.
44	Welsh Government should commit to developing the Welsh Gender Service into a primary-care led model, with GPs able to initiate hormone therapy.

¹¹³ Welsh Government, 2019, Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan, Available Online at: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/nation-of-sanctuary-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-plan_0.pdf,

45	Welsh Government should take steps to address public perception that there is disparity of access to gender identity services for non-binary people.
46	Welsh Government should establish an NHS Wales-wide review on trans people's medical records, led by trans communities, to promote trans people's engagement with healthcare services, privacy, and quality of healthcare.
Education	
47	Welsh Government should provide strategic, comprehensive investment in professional learning and training on designing a fully LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum. This should include delivering LGBTQ+ inclusive RSE for all.
48	Welsh Government should ensure that training must also act to empower professionals to adequately support LGBTQ+ young people and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, by embedding a rights based approach.
49	Welsh Government should provide a centralised suite of resources to help the families of LGBTQ+ young people.
50	Welsh Government to provide statutory national trans guidance for schools and local authorities.
51	Welsh Government should continue to invest in hate crime prevention programmes in schools across Wales.
52	Welsh Government should explore how they can support Colleges and Universities in Wales to develop and maintain LGBTQ+ inclusive environments, potentially through establishing an Excellence Mark to recognise best practice
53	Welsh Government should consider options for the targeted funding of academic research into the experiences of the LGBTQ+ population of Wales.
54	Welsh Government should work with Careers Wales to improve the delivery of specific careers support for LGBTQ+ young people.
55	Welsh Government should examine how well LGBTQ+ people can access lifelong learning opportunities.
Workplace	
56	Welsh Government should create a more homogenised approach to private workplace training resources for workplaces to become more LGBTQ+ inclusive.
57	Welsh Government should provide a resource detailing employment protections as well as employer responsibilities for upholding the rights of trans staff working in the private sector.
58	Welsh Government should promote the importance of the collection of diversity data to businesses in Wales.
COVID-19 Response	
59	When investigating the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people, Welsh Government must consider the distinct impact the pandemic has had on particularly vulnerable young people, including, explicitly, LGBTQ+ children and young people.
60	Welsh Government should consider the distinct experiences of LGBTQ+ people as Wales comes out of lockdown and plan the post-COVID recovery.

61	Welsh Government should undertake a thorough investigation into how LGBTQ+ people in Wales have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.
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Annex 2: Glossary of Terms and Key Concepts

LGBTQ+

For the purposes of the report the Expert Group have used the term LGBTQ+ to refer to lesbian, gay, bi and trans people and in addition to any number of further identities. The + in this acronym is used as a shorthand to include and acknowledge the diverse terms people identify with and use to describe their identities and their gender and sexuality.

Trans

Trans is used in this report as an umbrella term to refer to people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic

The term Black, Asian and minority ethnic has been chosen to use throughout the report, this is in line with the Race Equality Plan for Wales being developed alongside this report.

Bi

Bi is an umbrella term used to describe a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender.

Bi people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including, but not limited to, bisexual, pan, queer, and some other non-monosexual and non-monoromantic identities.

Gay

Refers to a man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality – some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.

Lesbian

Refers to a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.

Gender Identity

A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

Non-Binary

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying or hate crime is bullying or hate crime directed at someone who is perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans

Queer

Queer is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It can also be a way of rejecting the perceived norms of the LGBTQ+ community (racism, sizeism, ableism etc). Although some LGBTQ+ people view the word as a slur, reflecting its historic use as an insult, it was reclaimed in the late 1980s by the queer community who have embraced it.

Annex 3: LGBTQ+ Expert Panel – Membership

Dr Daryl Leeworthy	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Swansea University
Lu Thomas	Independent
Kate Hutchinson	Pride Cymru
Ourania Vamvaka-Tatsi	Glitter Cymru
Rahim el Habichi	Glitter Cymru
Numair Masud	Glitter Cymru
Iestyn Wyn	Stonewall Cymru
Joe Rossiter	Stonewall Cymru
Lisa Cordery-Bruce	NHS Wales
Dr Sophie Quinney	Trans Health Services
Cath Burton	Chair of Race Equality First
Belinda Davies	Former Regional Commander, South Wales Police
Professor EJ Renold	School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University

Advice was also provided by Crash Wigley to the Expert Panel.

Annex 4: LGBTQ+ Expert Panel – Terms of Reference

LGBTQ+ Action Plan

Expert Panel

Terms of reference

Statement of purpose

1. The primary purpose of the Expert Panel is to provide expert advice and guidance to Welsh Government supporting the work of the policy team developing the LGBTQ+ Action Plan.
2. The group will provide advice and support engagement to ensure that the Plan adequately reflects the needs and lived experience of the diversity of LGBTQ+ throughout Wales.

Scope and functions

3. The Expert Panel will perform an independent advisory role in relation to the content of the Plan. Decisions to implement or accept suggestions of the group remain with Welsh Government and Welsh Ministers.
4. The Expert Panel will:
 - Provide expert advice and guidance to inform the development of an LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales;
 - Provide evidence and reports to the Welsh Government policy team where relevant;
 - Support the collation of evidence by the policy team;
 - Provide feedback on reports and evidence collected and produced by the policy team; and
 - Support engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders, representing the often intersectional needs of LGBTQ+ people.
5. Members of this group are seen as experts in their field with experience of service delivery, lived experience, and an understanding of the strategic framework for equality in Wales.
6. Members perform a representative role on behalf of their sectors, stakeholders and clients.

Arrangements for meetings

The Expert Panel will be held once a month between January and March 2021 with information shared more frequently electronically as required.

The secretariat for the advisory group will be provided by Welsh Government. This will include:

- Organising meetings and inviting attendees;
- Issue of agenda and papers;
- Taking a record of meetings, issuing minutes and record of actions;
- Maintenance of membership list; and
- Liaison between the Expert Panel and broader Welsh Government policy areas.

The chair will agree an agenda for the Expert Panel in advance, in order for the agenda and papers to be circulated at least one week prior to meetings. Members will be consulted on draft agenda items and supporting papers a week in advance of meetings.

Following each meeting, confirmed minutes and actions will be distributed to members within two weeks.

Annex 5: Outreach Overview and Summary of Consultation Process

An overview of the outreach and engagement process is included below to demonstrate the broad range of individuals and stakeholders that have been involved in developing the above recommendations:

- Stonewall Cymru facilitated twelve focus groups – this included 90 individuals. Two focus groups were conducted in Welsh with eleven attendees and ten in English with seventy-nine attendees.
- The above focus groups involved individuals with multiple different sexual orientations and gender identities as well as including individuals who face multiple intersectional inequalities, such as LGBTQ+ people of colour, LGBTQ+ disabled people, LGBTQ+ younger people and LGBTQ+ older people. This has enabled Stonewall Cymru to generate proposals that are more representative of Wales's diverse LGBTQ population.
- The focus groups engaged with LGBTQ people in regions across Wales, including North and mid-Wales to ensure that the recommendations above are relevant and applicable on a pan-Wales basis. As such, some of the recommendations explicitly address the often-stark differences in the experiences of LGBTQ people living in Wales's urban centres and those living in more rural areas.
- The focus groups included individuals from the following organisations in addition to those that were 'unaffiliated': Hidayah, Glitter Cymru, Bi Cymru, Welsh Equality Alliance, Pride Cymru
- 532 LGBTQ+ people responded to the Stonewall Cymru survey.
- Interviews and meetings held with stakeholders: Llamau, End Youth Homelessness Cymru, Hidayah, Glitter Cymru, Fflag, Umbrella Cymru, Unique, Welsh Equality Alliance, UKLGIG, University of South Wales Students' Union, Viva LGBTQ, Bi Cymru, Chwarae Teg, WEN Wales, Children in Wales, TUC, GMB and Welsh Women's Aid.

Disclaimer: Views expressed in this report may not reflect the opinions of the organisations/individuals listed above.

Annex 6: Trans Specific Recommendations

In accordance with discussions with trans communities across Wales, the Expert Panel proposes that specific elements relating to improvements to the Welsh Transgender Action Plan (published in 2016¹¹⁴) should be included in this comprehensive LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales, rather than as a separate plan of action. Trans people who engaged with the outreach process indicated that trans-specific elements should be incorporated as part of this plan to provide a comprehensive set of commitments to protect and further the rights of all LGBTQ+ people across Wales. Using the evidence gathered from focus groups, surveys and meetings with other organisations, we propose the below commitments are necessary to improve the lives of trans people specifically in Wales. These top line asks are drawn out from the rest of the plan to highlight the trans specific recommendations which have been included within the plan.

Healthcare: gender identity services

- **Establish an NHS Wales gender identity service for children and young people, providing an affirmative approach to care in line with international clinical standards**
- **Develop the Welsh Gender Service into a primary-care led model, with GPs able to initiate hormone therapy.**
- **Ensure parity of access to gender identity services for non-binary people.**

Healthcare: general healthcare needs

- **Establish an NHS Wales-wide review on trans people's medical records, led by trans communities, to promote trans people's engagement with healthcare services, privacy, and quality of healthcare.**

Rights and Recognition:

- **Provide recognition of non-binary people throughout devolved policy areas, including education, housing and health as far as possible under the law.**
- **Continue to vocally defend the rights and dignity of trans people in Wales to take a full and equal role in Welsh society at all levels.**
- **Make representations to UK Government to reform the Gender Recognition Act in accordance with the principle of self-determination and international best practice**
- **Explore ways unnecessary gender markers can be removed from documentation.**

¹¹⁴ Welsh Government, 2016, Written Statement - Launch of the Welsh Government Action Plan to advance equality for transgender people, Available Online at: <https://gov.wales/written-statement-launch-welsh-government-action-plan-advance-equality-transgender-people>