

Safon Cydraddoldeb Hil y Gweithlu (SCHG)

Gweithlu cynhwysol sy'n darparu'r gofal gorau

Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES)

An inclusive workforce provides the best care

Workforce Race Equality Standard

Integrated Impact Assessment

Title of proposal:

Workforce Race Equality Standard

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Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Eluned Morgan

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Section 1

What action is the Welsh Government considering and why?

Background

During 2020 and 2021, the Welsh Government consulted on a draft Race Equality Action Plan: An Anti-Racist Wales following calls from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and feedback provided through a previous consultation on the Welsh Government Strategic Equality Plan and a recognition that failure to address racism threatens the possibility of future generations living in a diverse, safe and cohesive Wales.

During the consultation, the health actions received the most consultation responses. Responses highlighted systemic issues within NHS Wales, with stakeholder engagement¹ providing evidence that racial and ethnic minority healthcare staff in Wales similarly experience both covert and overt racism and are disproportionately affected by disciplinary procedures. Further stakeholder responses to the consultation period also gave voice to the racism within systems. In regard to social care, similar concerns were raised, and some responses highlighted the need for additional structures to make sure employers are accountable.

It was clear that urgent action needed to be taken to address the variation in how Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people engage with health and social care in Wales, both as staff and as people who seek care and support. In particular, consultation responses highlighted the racism that Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic staff experienced, such as:

- Recruitment and promotion is often discriminatory toward ethnic minority groups.
- Barriers to ethnic minority staff progressing into leadership and lack of representation in leadership.
- Unacceptable racist language going unchallenged.
- Ethnic minority staff are more likely to have formal complaints made against them for trivial matters which are escalated quickly in comparison to white colleagues.
- Higher proportion of ethnic minority staff reporting bullying harassment or racial abuse.
- Lack of confidence in addressing racism/ racist practice by all staff and service users. Action is not taken when complaints are made.
- Staff do not feel safe and confident to provide ethnicity data.
- Staff do not feel safe to speak up against racist discrimination and practices.

¹ Ogbonna, E. (2020). First minister's BAME COVID-19 advisory group: report of the socioeconomic subgroup. Retrieved from: <https://gov.wales/black-asianand-minority-ethnic-bame-covid-19-socioeconomic-subgroup-report>

- Race related incidents not recorded.
- Proportion of complaints and disciplinary referrals against ethnic minority staff not reviewed regularly.
- Not clear who is responsible or where accountability for workforce race equality lies.
- Lack of appropriate anti-racist mandatory training.

The lived experiences of people from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds shaped the final goals and actions published in the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP) in June 2022, aimed to address the areas of concern raised in the consultation based on the following values:

- To be open and transparent in all we do
- To use the strengths of lived experiences in decision making
- To take a rights based approach

The then Minister for Health and Social Services committed to make an appropriate level of resources available across Welsh Government, to deliver the goals and actions in this Plan. Funding has been made available, within the Welsh Government's budget, to support this.

The health and social care goals and actions directly support the Welsh Government strategy: 'A Healthier Wales: Our Plan for health and social care' which outlines our vision to have an 'equitable whole system approach' focused on the health and wellbeing of both the workforce and communities, and on preventing illness. This in turn contributes directly to the wellbeing goals for Wales.

Moreover, both A Healthier Wales and the resulting Workforce Strategy outline our aspiration that the NHS in Wales is an exemplar employer in employee wellbeing, and that roles within health and care provide people with opportunities for fulfilling and socially valuable work. We want to attract a diverse range of individuals into careers in health and care and support the ambitions of 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales: A Plan for Employability and Skills' and enable the NHS to act as a key employer in the foundational economy across Wales.

To meet these ambitions, data is needed to accurately measure workforce experience of racism and discrimination in order to ensure timely and targeted interventions.

WORKFORCE RACE EQUALITY STANDARD (WRES)

The NHS and Social Care Sector is the largest employment sector in Wales with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people making up a significant proportion of the workforce. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the disparities and health and care inequities that face Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in Wales.

The ArWAP renews the commitment to ensure our staff work in safe, inclusive environments, confident of support to meet their potential and of visible ally-ship. This in turn will provide Black,

Asian and Minority Ethnic citizens with access to services appropriate to their needs, without fear of racism and will help address historic health inequalities.

Both the health and social care chapters in the ArWAP include an action to introduce a Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) for Wales. This is in recognition that historically, collection and analysis of workforce data is poor and prevents our ability to spotlight areas for change, instigate and measure change.

In 2014, NHS England introduced a WRES which became mandated in the standard NHS contract for health trusts in England the following year. The intention was to provide data to allow trusts to take action to correct inequalities. Colleagues from NHS England have worked closely with both the WRES scoping and implementation groups to share their experiences in developing and implementing the WRES.

The WRES will measure disparities in the experience of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workforce in progression, leadership, bullying, harassment and discrimination. It will provide an evidence base to make and measure targeted structural change and provide and change levers to create an anti-racist Wales workforce both within the NHS and Social Care Sectors.

The proposal for a WRES for Wales was established in social partnership and co-created with Black, Asian and minority ethnic health and care staff. Approved in July 2022 by the Health and Social Services Group (HSSG) Executive Directors Team (EDT) in Welsh Government, the proposal is being implemented in social partnership with input across NHS and Social Care. Through the WRES, officials will work in collaboration with partners to create a more inclusive environment for the workforce and catalyse successful delivery of the Health and Social Care Goals within ArWAP. This will in turn improve the experiences and outcome for people who seek care and support.

Section 8: Conclusion

How have people most likely to be affected by the proposal been involved in developing it?

The introduction of a WRES for the health and social care sector in Wales is an action in both the health and social care chapters of the ArWAP. It directly contributes to the vision of the ArWAP of 'Wales as an anti-racist nation' and the purpose which is 'To collectively, make a measurable difference to the lives of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people.'

The introduction of a WRES is a result of a strong mandate through the consultation period for the ArWAP with many citing the poor quality and availability of workforce data against ethnicity.

During 21-22, the Workforce Race Equality Standard Scoping Group led discussions in social partnership to agree the development of a standard that will identify and measure progress in NHS and Social Care workforce race equality. The Scoping Group included Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals who represented the health and care workforce.

Now in implementation phase, the WRES is being developed working collaboratively with key stakeholders and centering the lived experiences and expertise of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people who are most likely to be affected by the implementation of the WRES.

The co-construction process to develop the WRES has maximised our ability to fulfil our Public Sector Equality Duty² (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), and the contribution to our well-being objectives and seven well-being goals through trying to tackle discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

What are the most significant impacts, positive and negative?

The development of a WRES for Wales is a key enabler to tackle racism and discrimination faced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic people working in health and social care in Wales. It will provide rich data to enable health and care organisations to implement targeted interventions to address systemic and deep-rooted discrimination and bias and seek to end the disadvantages facing Black, Asian and minority ethnic people in Wales.

The data, collected and reported on an all-Wales basis, will also allow Welsh Government in social partnership to implement national projects that will positively impact cultural change in health and social care across Wales, not only for the workforce, but also for those seeking care and support. This will reduce health inequities resulting from the variation in the ways that Black,

² Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales, 2015, Accessed 3 March 2020

Asian and minority ethnic access and engage with health and care services, and how these lead differences in health and care outcomes.

Initiatives as a result of WRES data will catalyse and contribute to many of the ambitions that we have for health and social care workforce development and service delivery in Wales as outlined in 'A Healthier Wales', the National Workforce Implementation Plan and 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales: A Plan for Employability and Skills.' Given the NHS's role in Wales as an anchor institution and largest employer in Wales, eradicating racism and discrimination is key in enabling it to meet its potential in being an exemplar employer in workforce health and wellbeing, which, in turn, will maximise its potential in providing timely and quality care for the people of Wales. Anti-racist health and care workplaces will have healthy, well, productive colleagues and will have decreased sickness and absence rates and find it easier to retain staff.

Children and their representatives.

The roots of inequality often lie in childhood and a health and social care sector rooted in anti-racism will improve the life chances of the children of today and tomorrow. Whilst focused on health and social care workforce, the WRES will catalyse a broader anti-racist approach for service delivery which will benefit all children and young people including Black, Asian and minority ethnic children.

People with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Throughout the scoping and development stages for the WRES, the importance of intersectionality in data reporting has been at the centre of considerations, in line with the principles of the ArWAP.

In light of the impacts identified, how will the proposal:

- **maximise contribution to our well-being objectives and the seven well-being goals; and/or,**
- **avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

The introduction of a WRES for the health and social care sectors in Wales will contribute to all seven of the wellbeing goals and will improve the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of Wales.

Most prominently, given the number of people working in health and social care in Wales, it will be crucial in creating a more equal Wales, where everyone has the opportunity to participate, reach their full potential and is able to contribute fully to the economy. This will enable Wales to be more prosperous and cohesive. It will also be a key enabler to ensure A Healthier Wales by

providing data to support health and care organisations to ensure fair and equitable, high-quality care and support.

Additionally, the development of the WRES has been in line with the 'five ways of working' in section 5 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Most importantly, through involvement and collaboration, lived experience of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people will be central to the development of the WRES.

A focus on anti-racism could be negatively perceived and communication and engagement methods to ensure the broader positive impacts are understood are being developed.

How will the impact of the proposal be monitored and evaluated as it progresses and when it concludes?

The Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) is not a finite project; rather, it is an ongoing standard designed to systematically assess disparities within the Health and Social Care sectors over the long term. While the standard itself does not undergo direct monitoring or evaluation, it serves as a crucial tool for such purposes.

The WRES generates annual reports by leveraging data sourced from various sources within the health and social care systems in Wales, including HR records, staff surveys tailored to WRES objectives, recruitment, and career progression data, as well as information pertaining to disciplinary actions and staff capabilities.

This standard represents a significant departure from previous equality reviews, by providing quantitative evidence alongside qualitative narrative of workforce experience within health and social care.. The inaugural year's data (2024) establishes the baseline for measuring racial equality within the workforce. Subsequent years, such as Year 2 (2025), mark the commencement of monitoring and evaluating organisational progress through their respective interventions. By Year 3 (2026), a more in-depth analysis can be conducted, examining improvements over multiple years, with this iterative process continuing indefinitely.

Over time, the WRES will accumulate data that enables the identification of trends, which will empower organisations to scrutinise their own systems, policies, and training initiatives to achieve sustained positive outcomes. Furthermore, it will help to facilitate collaboration among organisations, allowing them to leverage shared experiences and lessons learned across the sector to enhance their own outcomes.