MINISTERIAL AND STAKEHOLDER UPDATE

Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units: Ministerial Update

The Evidence Units continue to work closely with colleagues in our wider Equality, Poverty and Children's evidence and support division and Knowledge and Analytical Services to improve the availability, quality, granularity and accessibility of evidence about individuals with protected and associated characteristics, so that we fully understand the level and types of inequalities across Wales. See Table A for a list of the Evidence Unit's completed, current and future priorities.

On-going key priorities: Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan Evaluation Framework

The Race Disparity Evidence Unit (RDEU) are developing an overarching impact evaluation framework for the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. This sets out how RDEU expect change to occur from the actions that are being carried out and whether those actions are delivering a change and by how much. As well as using numbers to measure change, RDEU will gather people's stories or lived experiences to help describe the value or experience of any change that is taking place.

RDEU have commissioned several small-scale lived experience evidence projects to provide further evidence to evaluate the impact of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. These projects focus on the key common themes emerging from the delivery of the Plan e.g. bullying and harassment, and several have an intersectional focus.

Disability Rights Taskforce

The Evidence Units are working with the Disability Rights Taskforce (DRT) and the Internal Research Programme within Knowledge and Analytical Services to co-produce evidence that will test and strengthen the feasibility of some of the DRT priorities. Chairs of the Working Groups have been invited to co-design and deliver the research alongside Welsh Government analysts and policy officers. The Evidence Units aim to use learning from this project to facilitate future evidence co-production work across the Welsh Government. The aim is to publish in Autumn/Winter 2024.

Social Model of Disability

Existing evidence is all based on the medical model of disability which focusses on impairments instead of the social model of disability which asserts that environmental and societal barriers disadvantage individuals, not their health conditions. The Disability Disparity Evidence Unit has commissioned research to develop and test questions that can be used to collect data to

identify people with health conditions who experience societal barriers that disable them. This will support Welsh Government to understand the impact of policies on disabled people and how policies can reduce or remove barriers for people with health conditions. The research has been awarded to the National Centre for Social Research, and the contract began in March 2024.

LGBTQ+ Action Plan Evaluability Assessment

The Equality Evidence Unit has commissioned Alma Economics to deliver an Evaluability Assessment of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan, which will recommend how to evaluate the impact of the plan. This will ensure the plan is delivering for LGBTQ+ people. The Equality Evidence Unit worked closely with policy colleagues across the organisation to ensure that policy needs are met and engagement with external partners and LGBTQ+ communities was undertaken sensitively. The fieldwork has been completed and the report is being quality assured, with a view to being published in Autumn 2024.

Feasibility of minorities sample boost for the National Survey for Wales

The National Survey for Wales (National Survey) is a key data source for the National Well-Being indicators which monitor progress and is a key source of information for policy decisions. In its current design state, the National Survey cannot provide sufficiently granular information for small populations such as protected characteristics. The Race Disparity Evidence Unit commissioned a professor of Quantitative Social Science at the London School of Economics to assess the appropriateness of different sampling approaches to boost the survey. This was completed in 2023. Based on recommendations from this, the Evidence Units are exploring the options in more depth with a view to publish findings from both research projects in Autumn 2024.

Evidence Units Work Programme

Table A below provides a full list of the projects the Evidence Units have completed in the financial year 23/24 and are delivering and scoping in the financial year 24/25. These have been informed by policy needs as part of the evidence planning process across the three Evidence Units.

Annex A

Projects completed in 2023-24

Project	Aim	Publication	Impact
Well-being of Wales report: More Equal Wales chapter	To collate the published equality statistics for the More Equal Wales chapter in the annual Well- Being of Wales report, which helps us to assess whether we are making progress across the National Indicators.	The <u>Well-Being of</u> <u>Wales 2023 report</u> was published on 28 th September 2023. An <u>ethnicity sub-report</u> was published alongside the main report.	The Well-being report is a key source used by Welsh Government stakeholders, including citizens and the media to understand the key trends and challenges facing Wales. It is used by Senedd Cymru, the Commissioners and Wales Audit Office, to provide scrutiny against Wales' performance against the goals.
			The ethnicity sub-report will be one of the baselines to measure the success of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.
Macro-level inequality rapid evidence assessment	To provide evidence for the Budget's Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment on inequalities across Wales, focusing on who is most disadvantaged.	Internal review: was shared with Cabinet for discussion <u>18th</u> <u>Sept. 2024</u> on 23/24 budget cuts, informed the <u>Strategic</u> <u>Integrated Impact</u> <u>Assessment</u> for the Draft Budget 24/25.	Welsh Government's budget allocation has considered within its prioritisation resources to support people who are at most risk of being disadvantaged.

Covid Inquiry – assessment of evidence for the Covid-19 inquiry.	To provide peer review of reviews commissioned by England Covid- 19 inquiry to assess whether the Wales evidence base was sufficiently covered.	Pre-existing inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ groups Inequality, later life and ageism	Welsh perspective and evidence was fully reflected in evidence presented as part of the Covid-19 Inquiry.
Development of the alignment framework to support Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028	An internal mapping tool to be used by colleagues across the Equality and Human Rights division to track alignment between equality policy areas.	An internal tool for use by equality policy officials.	The alignment framework has aided development of the draft Strategic Equality Plan to identify interactions between the equality action plans and draw out opportunities for greater consideration of intersectionality across all the equality action plans.
Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan Impact Evaluation and Monitoring Framework	To evaluate the success of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.	Draft of high-level summary of the framework was shared with wider External Accountability Group by end of February 2024. Publication is expected by Spring 2024.	The impact of the evaluation framework is to influence and embed anti-racist approaches through our approach to measurement of ARWAP and track whether it is achieving its aim of making Wales an anti-racist country by 2030.
Census analysis on ethnicity	To undertake further analysis of Census 2021 on ethnicity by life outcomes.	<u>Ethnicity bulletin</u> was published 5 th July 2023.	Informed policy decision making that has sought to address socio-

			economic inequalities in society for ethnic minority communities in Wales.
			To be a baseline in measuring the impact of the ArWAP.
Anti-Racism and Further Education Qualitative Research on lived experiences of further education students	To provide advice and guidance on Anti-Racism and Further Education Research on lived experiences of post-16 learners and staff.	The <u>Anti-Racism and</u> <u>Further Education</u> final report was published on October 5 th 2023.	Implement more anti-racist approaches throughout policy decisions in Further Education in Wales e.g., enhancing early career support provisions for ethnic minority staff.
Migration Integration Framework	To develop a Migration Integration Wales Indicator Framework.	The <u>Migrant</u> Integration Framework was published in December 2023.	Inform policy decisions in Wales e.g., service development that enable migrants to better integrate in Wales.
Census analysis on disabled people	To undertake further analysis of Census 2021 on disabled people by life outcomes.	Disabled people bulletin was published 6 th December 2023.	Improved understanding of the barriers to employment disabled people face to inform ongoing work of Disability Rights Taskforce / Disabled Peoples Employment Champions.
Census sexual orientation and gender identity analysis	To undertake further analysis of Census 2021 on sexual orientation and gender identity.	The bulletin was published in early March 2024.	Improved evidence base on sexual identity and gender identity in relation to inequality of outcomes.
Rapid evidence review on gender inequalities.	To support an evidence-informed approach to gender equality action-planning.	Internal review, will be presented at the Gender Equality Forum.	Informed policy decisions on the implementation of the Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan.

Project	Aim	Progress	Expected Publication	Intended Impact
Wales Equalities Data Audit	To examine what equality data and evidence on those with protected and associated characteristics is currently collected and analysed in Wales. To identify available statistical data, gaps in data and recommend improvements to sources and outputs.	Conducted an initial assessment of the data sources and outputs that contain equality information that are used and produced by Statistical Services. Currently working with each policy subject area in turn within KAS to update the audit working with colleagues to build our understanding of the challenges regarding data gaps while identifying opportunities for immediate fixes.	Autumn-2024	To be able to influence and hold producers of data within and beyond Welsh Government to account about the quality and availability of their data for use informing policy decisions.
Well-being of Wales report: More Equal Wales chapter	To collate the published equality statistics for the More Equal Wales chapter in the annual Well-Being of Wales report which helps us to assess whether we are making progress across the National Indicators.	Initial thinking has started for the annual Wellbeing of Wales - More Equal Wales chapter has commenced.	September 2024	The Well-being report has impact in a variety of ways, and is a key source used by Welsh Government stakeholders, citizens and the media to understand the key trends and challenges facing Wales. It is used by Senedd Cymru and others to provide scrutiny against Wales' performance against the goals.

Projects being delivered in 2024-25

Project	Aim	Progress	Expected Publication	Intended Impact
Evidence reviewing and advice to support the Welsh Government budgeting process	Carry out rapid reviews and provide advice on the evidence on equality to highlight who would be the most impacted by budget setting to inform decisions on budget allocations.	Currently confirming the support required for the 2025-26 budgeting process. Supporting with the review of the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment.	Ongoing	The evidence will be used in the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment of the 2025-26 Draft Budget and will help to ensure financial resources are aligned appropriately to ensure the goal of 'A More Equal Wales'.
A review of the National Survey: equality pooled analysis	To analyse National Survey for Wales data and explore the feasibility of using pooled data to produce robust estimates by equality characteristics.	A report summarising findings and outlining recommendations to improve the collection of protected and associated characteristics in the National Survey for Wales, will be published in Spring 2024.	Autumn 2024	To shape the future of the National Survey for Wales to aid policy areas Welsh Government wide in being better able to understand trends/impacts of their decision making on a range of equality groups in priority areas captured on the survey.
Feasibility study of minorities sample boost for the National Survey for Wales	To examine feasibility to boost National Survey sample for minority groups and cognitive testing work.	Have undertaken two single tender procurement exercises to commission independent expert review and recommendations. Findings from these reviews will be published in Autumn 2024.	Autumn 2024	Greater data granularity for different protected characteristics across National Survey topics improving the equality evidence base overall, including greater granularity for the National Wellbeing of Wales indicators.
				This will in turn enable better decision making across a range of portfolio areas covered in the

Project	Aim	Progress	Expected Publication	Intended Impact
				National Survey. In addition, improved measurement to assess the success of the various equality action plans e.g., ArWAP.
Feasibility assessment of more granular equalities pay gaps including ethnicity and disability for Wales	To examine how and whether data on pay gaps can be collected and published for different protected and associated characteristics at a more granular level than currently published.	 With Administrative Data Research Wales the teams are currently exploring access to HMRC PAYE data and developing a legal basis for Welsh Government to acquire the data. If we are successful, we can link PAYE data to other admin sources (e.g. Census 2021) that have data on protected characteristics. Utilised learning from a similar feasibility project the Office for National Statistics undertook where they combined multiple admin data sets for 2018. 	Ongoing – unable to estimate publication from analysis until data has been secured within SAIL	Policy makers can be more confident in using findings on ethnicity and disability pay gaps to inform their policy decisions. This work could overcome some of the limitations of the Annual Population Survey pay gap analysis, for example, there would be less volatility around the data which would enable monitoring of trends overtime. Inform decision making on addressing economic inequalities in society and to allow Welsh Government to publish a more granular level ethnicity pay gap (ArWAP goal) and disability pay gap (National Milestone).

Project	Aim	Progress	Expected Publication	Intended Impact
Public Sector Bodies Wales data collection 2022-23	To aid delivery of future data collection on diversity data on workforces in public sector bodies.	Two pilot Surveys gathering information on Board and workforce diversity were issued to Public Sector Bodies regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.	Autumn 2024	Inform policy decisions on how to improve the diversity and inclusion within public bodies, particularly at leadership level.
	To begin to understand the diversity of board members across Public Bodies regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Wales.	The surveys have now closed, and responses are being collated and findings summarised.		
Public Sector Bodies Literature Review	To understand the value of diversity in Public Bodies' workforces and identify appropriate Public Sector strategies to increase diversity in unrepresented groups in workforces and senior management.	A literature review is being undertaken internally. The project is currently in the review phase with the writeup scheduled to be completed by the end of February 2024.	Autumn 2024	Inform policy decisions on how to improve the diversity and inclusion within public bodies, particularly at leadership level.
Prototyping an approach to co- producing evidence in Government	To test and develop an approach to co-producing evidence for analysts in Government using the	An initial approach has been developed for co-producing Social Research, with the Disability Rights Taskforce to	Autumn/ Winter 2024	To ensure lived experience is embedded throughout the evidence cycle in social research

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	Disabled Peoples' Action Plan recommendations as feasibility studies.	support the evidence needs of the upcoming Disability Rights Action Plan.		across all Welsh Government portfolio areas.
		The Evidence Units have partnered with the Welsh Government's Internal Research Programme to deliver this.		To inform policy decisions on how to ensure important recommendations emerging from the Disability Rights Taskforce to inform the Action Plan are actionable and in turn increasing the impact of the plan for disabled people in Wales.
Barriers and enablers to collecting and using equality data	To research and collect evidence on the barriers and enablers to collecting and using equality data.	An in-house proposal for the research has been developed which involves a survey with government analysts, small scale qualitative research and an accompanying literature review.	Spring 2025	Ability to identify the solutions to barriers in collecting equality evidence in Welsh Government and increase evidence quality, granularity, availability, and accessibility.
		The literature review search has been undertaken and documents are in the process of being reviewed. The questionnaire is being developed alongside the literature review.		

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Guidance for Welsh Government officials collecting equality data	To provide guidance to analysts on how to collect data on protected and associated characteristics, including general considerations and suggested questions and response options for each characteristic that reflect Welsh Government policy.	Draft interim guidance on recommendations for equality survey questions has been drafted. Draft guidance is being refined prior to sharing with colleagues beyond the Evidence Units for feedback.	Document for publication on internal intranet in Summer 2024	To give Welsh Government analysts and appointed contractors clear advice in collecting data on protected and associated characteristics, and ultimately improve the availability, quality, and consistency of data on protected and associated characteristics across all Welsh Government outputs in turn improving policy decisions across all portfolio areas.
Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan Impact Evaluation and Monitoring Framework	To evaluate the success of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.	The Race Disparity Evidence Unit has developed a framework for measuring the overall impact of the plan and is assessing the feasibility of using this framework with members of the External Accountability Group through an evidence sub-group. This group has been shaping the development of measurement indicators and how to incorporate lived experience research.	Autumn 2024	The intended impact of the evaluation framework is to influence and embed anti-racist approaches through our approach to measurement of ArWAP and track whether it is achieving its aim of making Wales an anti-racist country by 2030.

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Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP) indicator mapping	To collect together all indicators that may be used to feed into the evaluation and monitoring framework and map them against policy areas of concern, and provide an indication of their current status in terms of the availability and quality of the data. Key indicators across policy areas will then be identified.	Collected and mapped indicators from policy frameworks and other data sources across policy areas, assessed their status and included links to the data/analysis where available. Started the process of speaking to policy areas about identifying key indicators.	Ongoing	The impact of the evaluation framework is to influence and embed anti-racist approaches through our approach to measurement of ArWAP and track whether it is achieving its aim of making Wales an anti- racist country by 2030.
Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP) lived experience research	To collect qualitative data on the lived experiences of people in Wales and their experiences of racism by commissioning small research projects focusing on different research areas. These areas will support evidence requirements for the key common themes emerging as the implementation of the ArWAP develops.	Five small-scale lived experience projects have been commissioned and projects have commenced the fieldwork design phase. These projects cover a wide range of key themes emerging from the implementation of ArWAP and are intersectional in nature.	Autumn 2024	The impact of the evaluation framework is to influence and embed anti-racist approaches through our approach to measurement of ArWAP and track whether it is achieving its aim of making Wales an anti- racist country by 2030.

Project	Aim	Progress	Expected Publication	Intended Impact
Anti-racist language guidance for statistics and research	To provide guidance to Welsh Government analysts on using anti- racist language in research and statistical reports, releases, and documents.	Draft nearly ready for sharing for review outside of the immediate team.	Document for publication on internal intranet Summer 2024	To give Welsh Government analysts and appointed contractors an understanding of anti-racism and how it applies to the language used in publications and ensure all Welsh Government analytical outputs are anti-racist and role model best practice.
Research on how information can be collected to reflect the social model of disability.	To develop a suite of questions, response options, and guidance that reflect the Social Model of Disability, to incorporate into future social research and enable a standardised, consistent approach.	The contract has been awarded to NatCen and commenced in early March 2024.	Interim report August 2024 Final report - Winter 2025 -	To enable a standardised, consistent approach to collecting impairment and disability data for statistics and social research, that aligns to Welsh Government's commitment to the social model and to achieve better outcomes for disabled people across Wales.

Project	Aim	Progress	Expected Publication	Intended Impact
The social model of disability language guidance for statistics and research	To provide guidance to analysts and researchers on using social model language in research and statistical reports, releases, and documents, including recommendations on terms that should and should not be used.	Reviewing 2 nd draft.	Document for publication on internal intranet Summer 2024	To give analysts and researchers a better understanding of the social model of disability and how to apply the language in publications to ensure analytical and research outputs are in line with this view of disability.
LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales evaluability assessment	To create theories of change to support the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales and identify how to evaluate the Action Plan.	The Equality Evidence Unit has been working closely with an external contractor to deliver this project. A draft report has been delivered.	Autumn 2024	To lay the foundation for a robust and effective evaluation of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales and identify opportunities for improved monitoring and evaluation in the LGBTQ+ policy area.
Developing harmonised standards for data collection on sex and gender identity by public sector organisations in Wales	To develop evidence- based harmonised standards and guidance on the collection of data about sex and gender identity, including trans status, by public sector organisations in Wales.	An evidence review is being carried out and interviews with stakeholders are due to be scheduled.	Spring 2025	Influencing development of standards and guidance by ONS and OSR and/or providing evidence to inform development of Wales-specific standards and guidance.

Project	Aim	Progress	Intended Impact
Equalities in School Health Research Network	Improving equalities data collection and reporting in School Health Research Network (SHRN).	Ongoing: Documentation on SHRN has been reviewed. Meeting is arranged with the Welsh Government analytical lead for SHRN to agree next steps to undertake the analysis.	To scope the potential use of the Student Health and Wellbeing Survey in understanding inequality of outcome for school aged children. To improve the evidence base relating to equalities in relation to children and young people.
Debt data by equality characteristics	Explore feasibility of collating and publishing annual data on debt in Wales, broken down by protected characteristics.	Ongoing: Early scoping stages exploring potential data sources. The family resources survey will arrive from April 2024, which will have a boost to the Wales sample so additional analysis could be performed.	Set out the feasibility of collating and publishing annual data on debt in Wales and publish new analysis by protected characteristics. Increased understanding of how debt differentially impacts specific characteristic groups.
		Additional data sources are being explored that may enable more granular analysis, this includes working with the Administrative Data Research teams to identify sources held by other government departments Welsh Government could seek to acquire.	

Projects being scoped in 2024-25

Project	Aim	Progress	Intended Impact
Welsh Government lead on ONS Inclusive Data Taskforce	To monitor and report on the commitments to assess whether we are on track to sustainably deliver progress across all Inclusive Data Principles over the next three years, and beyond.	Annual report published on 31st May 2023. Annual report for 2024 in progress – several meetings with the IDTF team and provided Welsh Government updates for all relevant commitments and recommendations. Awaiting draft report from ONS to review.	To ensure consistency and coherence to inclusive evidence developments across the Government Statistical Service.
Monitoring equality and socio-economic duty	Developing overall framework and performance indicators to monitor implementation of equality and socio- economic duty action plans and strategies for the Strategic Equality Plan.	 Ongoing: A rapid literature review is being undertaken to understand what approaches to evaluating a series of equality actions plans or strategies have been adopted elsewhere. This includes understanding how the plans themselves: 1. bridge the implementation gap between having plans and actual impact 2. build in intersectionality effectively 	Inform decisions across all Welsh Government portfolio areas that will aim to reduce inequality.
Intersectional analysis of Census 2021 'life-outcomes' data	To identify what Census 2021 data can tell us about how outcomes can vary at the intersections between protected characteristics.	Initial consideration has been started.	To identify and inform decisions around who are the most at risk from experiencing disadvantage in society.

Project	Aim	Progress	Intended Impact
Impacts of Cost of Living on equality groups	To understand the ongoing impact of the Cost-of-Living crisis on people according to protected and associated characteristics.	Initial scoping work has been undertaken and an options paper drafted. Further discussions are ongoing to determine how the evidence would be used by policy. The planned intersectional Census analysis may meet this policy need.	To identify who are the most at risk from experiencing disadvantage in society and inform decisions to better support those people in Wales.
National Survey for Wales: Socio- economic analysis using pooled survey data	To provide statistical analysis on a range of policy areas captured within the National Survey for Wales across various equality groups.	Initial analysis has been undertaken, awaiting resources for quality assurance and report drafting.	To identify who are the most at risk from experiencing disadvantage in society and inform decisions to better support those people in Wales.
Census and SAIL equality analysis	To undertake an initial analysis of Census and SAIL (Secure Anonymised Information Linkage) databank equality data with ADR Wales to examine what is available and what further research is required. For example, compare characteristics	A programme of work to undertake further analysis of Census 2021 data by protected and associated characteristics is being developed which will consider opportunities to provide linked analysis via the SAIL databank.	To identify who are the most at risk from experiencing disadvantage in society and inform decisions to better support those people in Wales.

Project	Aim	Progress	Intended Impact
	across 2011, 2021. Analysis of sexual orientation for first large scale survey including this data.		
Digital One Stop Shop of Wales equality and diversity data, readily available and accessible online	Centralised web page where evidence on equality can be collated to increase accessibility of evidence across Welsh Government and external stakeholders.	Ongoing: Regular contact has been established with Digital, Data and Technology teams within Welsh Government and Office for National Statistics to assess opportunities to align with the new StatsWales platform. A programme of user research is being undertaken to assess the needs of an audience for the one stop shop.	Public Sector, Third Sector and others can use Welsh Government equality evidence within their own planning and decision making for example, when developing services or targeting resources.
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller evidence	Developing a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller evidence plan.	Initial scoping work will be undertaken with the policy area and options for priority research and analysis will be considered.	To improve the evidence base in Wales, helping to identify issues and evaluate policies to improve outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Project	Aim	Progress	Intended Impact
Official statistics relating to disabled people and employment	To develop a data pack of official statistics relating to disabled people in Wales.	Analysis of relevant Census 2021 datasets has been undertaken. Further analysis of Annual Population Survey data scheduled.	Improved understanding of the barriers to employment disabled people face to inform ongoing work of Disability Rights Taskforce / Disabled Peoples Employment Champions.
Barriers to employment for disabled people	To explore work and employment experiences for disabled people in Wales since the coronavirus (COVID-19).	Ongoing: Several meetings with the Disability Rights Taskforce (DRT) about the scope of the project which is now focused on what life is like now for disabled people in terms of work and employment experiences since COVID-19. A specification is being edited and refined based on stakeholder feedback.	To understand barriers to employment and reasons for different employment outcomes for disabled people in Wales, in turn informing decisions that will better support disabled people in gaining and sustaining employment.
LGBTQ+ Action Plan Evaluation	To take forward the recommendations from the LGBTQ+ evaluability assessment in preparation for evaluating the impact of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan	Initial scoping work will be undertaken with the policy area and options for evaluation will be considered following a presentation to policy by Alma Economics on the results of the Evaluability Assessment.	The intended impact of the evaluation is to influence and embed measurement of sexual orientation and gender to understand whether the LGBTQ+ action plan is achieving its aim of making Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe.