

LLAIS STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024-2028



ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

This document is available in Welsh.

If you would like this publication in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us.

You can download it from our website or ask for a copy by contacting our office.

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Foreword



Welcome to our Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2028.

We developed this plan in keeping with our values of:

- Being people centred
- Working together
- Being an organisation with high integrity

We explain what these values mean to us within the plan. Llais believes in a healthier Wales where people receive health and social care services in a way that works for best for them.

As the independent body for health and social care we understand that our approach must reflect the individual needs of the people of Wales. We know that some people find it easier to access services and get their voices heard than others. We want to change that.

By working together with health and social care bodies, those who make policies, the voluntary sector and community groups, we want to raise your voice so that your voice is heard and acted upon to improve your lived experience of services and to make outcomes fair in Wales, now and in the future.

Our plan describes the objectives that we have set for the next 4 years, to help Llais to become a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive organisation. We are committed to challenging inequity, discrimination, and prejudice, and to fully playing our part in making Wales an anti-racist nation.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group
Llais

Who We Are

We are an independent body that was set up by the Welsh Government to give the people of Wales a stronger voice in their health and social care services.

We represent your views on health and social care in Wales making sure that we listen, working with NHS bodies, Welsh Local Authorities, and others to shape and improve services for everyone.

Our Staff

We have around 100 staff and a growing team of volunteers that work across all our regions.

We have a national team and 7 regional teams that gather your experiences, they cover:

- Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg
- Gwent
- Neath Port Talbot and Swansea
- North Wales
- Powys
- West Wales



Our Board

Our Board sets our strategy, and provides scrutiny, oversight, and governance across all our work. They hold the executive team to account on delivering our aims, objectives, and priorities to meet the requirements set out in the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020 and our wider public sector duties.

We are here to help and provide advice for anyone that has feedback on health and social care in Wales and to support you to make complaints if things go wrong.

Our Values

- **People-centred** – our work is driven by the concerns of the people in Wales.
- **Working together** – by working together across our regions, with the public and others we can help reduce inequalities and make people's voices heard.
- **Integrity** – we make sure that we are honest and accountable for all that we do and the 'why' behind our decision-making is clear.

Why We Have an Equality Plan

We help to make sure that your voices are heard. It is important to us that our organisation is accessible to all. We understand that it is easier for some people to access support and feel heard than it is for others. We want to change that and make sure that everyone feels able to give their feedback to help shape services and improve health and well-being for people living in all parts of Wales.

The purpose of this Equality plan is to help us make sure that we deliver high quality services to our regions by taking a person-centred approach, promoting equity of opportunity for all. This plan also allows us to fulfil our commitment to our staff, volunteers, and our Board, so they can bring their true selves to work and help shape our organisation.

This Equality plan links to our 'Strategic Plan' and our duties under the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.

Consultation

Our Equality plan has been developed by having conversations with the people who our work affects, all these things helped us to shape our plan.

We;

- Spoke with the people of Wales to find out what was important to them and their health and social care needs.
- Heard from our staff and volunteers about what matters to them through our staff conferences.
- Consulted with other public sector, community, and voluntary organisations.
- Looked at statistics and reports from other bodies.

Well-being– means a person is happy, healthy and is comfortable with their life and what they do.

Equality– everyone should be treated in the same way and given the same opportunities.

Equity– recognising that we do not all start in the same place, and we may have to change to make things more balanced for everyone.



Our Legal Duties & Responsibilities

Equity, diversity and human rights are at the centre of everything we do. As an organisation we want to go beyond just our statutory duties to make sure that your voices are heard as patients and as people. This plan aims to deliver progress against both our legal duties and wider responsibilities.



Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 applies to all employers. It contains a series of duties that seek to protect individuals, employees, and others against direct and indirect discrimination.

The Equality Act lists a set of characteristics that must not be used to treat some people worse than others. These are called 'protected characteristics' and are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Maternity/Pregnancy
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

This means that we must try to stop discrimination, increase opportunities and good relationships between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not.

As part of this duty, we must show that we have considered the likely impact on protected groups when we create or review policies and practices. We do this using an Integrated Impact Assessment.

We also have Wales-specific duties that we must meet.

Socio-Economic Duty

The Socio-Economic duty aims to “deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage.” We recognise the importance in reducing inequalities of outcome that mean that people are at a disadvantage because of their income or because of less opportunities.

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

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 aims to improve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. This means that as a public body we must think more about the long term, finding better ways of working with our communities, our people, our networks, and partners and help to prevent problems by taking a more joined-up approach, working towards the 7 well-being goals for Wales.



Welsh Language Standards 2016

Welsh is an official language in Wales and should be treated no less favourably than English. As an organisation and as an employer we have the responsibility of making sure that anyone can speak with us in Welsh and that we continue to encourage use of the Welsh language. Our compliance notice for the Welsh Language Standards can be found [here](#).



Discrimination.

This means treating some people unfairly or differently to other people because of their race, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, marital or maternity status.

Socio-economic disadvantage.

This means that there are some people that will not have the same access to opportunities as others because of things like low income, fewer qualifications, or poor-quality housing.

Welsh Government action plans and guidance

Our strategies and plans will continue to reflect our responsibilities within the Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2028, the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan.

We will continue to be an active partner in developing future action plans which address inequity across Wales.

Our Equality Objectives 2024–2028

Our objectives are shaped by our vision, our values, and our consultation. This plan will be delivered across the organisation over the next 4 years. We are all responsible for making sure that our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion is at the heart of everything we do.

Our objectives are split in to 4 areas:

Our Services

Our People

Our Culture

Our Engagement



Our Services – Equality Objective 01:

Develop the way we work together with health and social care boards and bodies in Wales to help create a more connected health and social care service.

Reason

- The people of Wales feel that change works better together, and they want radical changes to help improve services¹.
- A lack of joined-up working, joint working and person-centric care approaches means worse health outcomes for individuals².
- Health and social care services are facing many complex challenges, we understand that we need to be a part of a wider conversation around what a centralised healthcare system looks like.
- By connecting with each other and working together, we can promote a healthier and more cohesive Wales reducing inequality of outcomes.

1 A Conversation with the Public: Report – Bevan Commission

2 A Conversation with the Public: Report – Bevan Commission

Planned Actions

- Establish and/or improve relationships with all health and social care boards and bodies in Wales to connect networks. Working together to increase the chances of success in reducing inequality and inequity for the people of Wales.
- Work with others to reduce 'consultation fatigue' and gain valuable feedback, with a focus on engaging with those who are less heard. Work with experts and those with lived experience when developing services that may affect any protected characteristic or under-represented group to ensure good practice.
 - Embed Integrated Impact Assessments by 2026 to make sure our decision-making is fair, and our services are accessible using a range of evidence to support our work. Additional training and guidance will be provided to make sure our people are confident on how to complete them.

Expected Equality Outcomes



Llais and other health and social care agencies are positioned to set up a connected group which can inform cross-network equality objectives and shape future services.

Our policies and practices have an Integrated Impact Assessment and show that we have considered how our decision-making is meeting our statutory duties. Any assessments that show substantial impacts in our ability to meet our duty will be published on our website and accessible in alternative formats upon request.

We have a national collaboration register that anyone can access to make sure we are helping each other and working together to create a fairer, more equitable Wales.

Our People – Equality Objective 02:

By 2028 we will review our policies, practices, and approaches to make sure that our people, now and in the future, are given the right support and tools they need to succeed in a fair and accessible workplace.

Reason

- Our staff have told us that we need to make some changes to our processes when people join our organisation to help them feel more supported.
- We know there are different barriers for different people in the workplace. For example, disabled adults are less likely to be employed than non-disabled adults and there is a fear among people with ethnic minority backgrounds of being unreasonably dismissed by their employer. We want to make sure we remove those barriers.
- As a new organisation, Tîm Arwain and our Board know that our policies and practices need to suit who we are and that they are fit for purpose.



Planned Actions

- Design and deliver scheduled training to all staff and volunteers with a focus on equity, inclusion, and wellbeing e.g., unconscious bias, cultural sensitivity, neurodiversity etc.
- Provide training to our managers to make sure our policies are applied consistently and our people receive the support they need.
- Make sure our own routes to raise concerns are clear and accessible to our people and our communications encourage our staff to speak up.
- Review and redesign our 'Onboarding' package to make sure that all new starters know what we do, what they can expect from us and what we expect of them as part of a unified, 'One Llais' culture.
- Encourage the use of 'Welsh Language first' thinking, supporting each other to learn and develop new skills.
- Ensure all staff have regular personal reviews that focus on their wellbeing, development, and experiences within the workplace in line with our values and behavioural framework.
- Create opportunities for staff to access internal or external coaching and/or mentoring to encourage both personal and professional development.
- Review our policies and procedures to make sure they are easy to understand and include good practice, working with experts to make sure they are inclusive for different people.

Expected Equality Outcomes

Training records show an increase in the Welsh language skills of our staff. Feedback from our translation team and the Welsh Language Commissioner tells us that our staff are following the correct processes.

Records show an increase, year after year, of staff completing personal reviews.

A coaching and mentoring programme has been established. Regular communications are sent to all staff and volunteers on how they can speak up and raise their concerns.

Our new starters tell us that our Onboarding process is a positive experience and any feedback is used to monitor and address any areas for further development.

Our Culture – Equality Objective 03:

Establish a 'One Llais' culture that is inclusive in all regions, one that promotes equity and empowers a representative workforce.

Reason

- Our regions may have different priorities because our communities are diverse, but it is important that we have a unified 'One Llais' culture, where our standards and behaviours are upheld by everyone.
- The people of Wales want to have different people, with different experiences, in different jobs to make a difference in the health and social care sector. We want to diversify our people; we understand the importance of having good representation and the range of skills and different points of view that it brings.
- Everyone has a part to play in creating a positive culture and we need champions across our organisation to encourage important conversations that improves psychological safety for all.

Planned Actions

- Review how we capture data across the organisation to make sure it is consistent and can help us monitor, find, and address poor outcomes for both our service users and our people.
- Scheduled campaigns to keep our information up to date and that help staff to understand the importance of capturing internal and external equality data to shape our organisation, now and in the future.
 - Work with others to make sure that they have clear routes for people to raise concerns that raise people's voices and what matters to them.
- Promote our services in a range of ways to make sure that people know who we are, how we can help them and how they can communicate with us in a way that suits them.

Expected Equality Outcomes

Feedback from the public and others tells us that we are providing high-quality, accessible services for the people of Wales.

We hold data that can be analysed and directly compared with national statistics to improve equity of outcomes.

We have a wider variety of Welsh Language resources available to our service users.

Our publications are available in alternative formats/languages on request, across all regions. Key publications will be available in Welsh, English, Polish and Arabic, Braille, British Sign Language and Easy Read formats. Alternative formats and languages will be available on request.



Our Engagement – Equality Objective 04:

Redesign how we capture and use the data that we hold about our people and our service users by 2027, to find gaps (in what we know and who we are speaking to) and develop our services, encouraging new ways of working that improve equity of opportunity for all.

Reason

- People in Wales face barriers when trying to access support services .
- People have told us that they would like us to consider those that may be socio-economically disadvantaged, Welsh speakers, older people, asylum seekers and people living in rural areas.
- Improving how we capture data will help us understand who our services are reaching and find areas that we need to focus on so that those who are less heard get a chance to have their say. We can also help others to improve routes for people who need to raise a concern and access support.
- Capturing the right data about our people and making sure we use it well can help us to make sure our employees have fair access to opportunities. It will also help us to increase the diversity of our people, making sure different voices are guiding our work, helping us build a stronger, engaged and empowered 'One Llais' culture.

Planned Actions

- Review how we capture data across the organisation to make sure it is consistent and can help us monitor, find, and address poor outcomes for both our service users and our people.
- Scheduled campaigns to keep our information up to date and that help staff to understand the importance of capturing internal and external equality data to shape our organisation, now and in the future.
- Work with others to make sure that they have clear routes for people to raise concerns that raise people's voices and what matters to them.
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Expected Equality Outcomes

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Monitoring and Reporting

Our ongoing progress will be checked by our Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee through regular updates.

We will publish an Annual Equality Monitoring Report which will detail how we are delivering the general and specific equality duties and report progress against the equality objectives set out in this plan.

The Annual Equality Monitoring Report will contain equality information about our people and our service delivery. This is to show how we are meeting our general duties and to highlight any differences between different groups.

Information about our Gender Pay differences can be found in our Annual Report and any differences identified over time will be addressed under Objective 2 of this plan. Any outcomes will be published in our Annual Equality Monitoring Report.

This plan may change over time and will be updated to reflect the needs and requirements of our regions and our people.



Contact Us

If you would like to give us feedback on this plan or wish to receive this information in an alternative format or language, please contact us at:

enquiries@llaiscymru.org

Llais, 3rd Floor, 33–35 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9HB.

02920 235 558

We welcome telephone calls in Welsh.

If you write to us in Welsh, we will answer in Welsh. This will not lead to a delay in responding to your correspondence.

Thank you

We would like to thank the public, our staff, our partners from the public and voluntary sectors and community groups who helped us to create this plan. We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure that we meet our equality objectives over the next 4 years.



List of Terms

Discrimination – this means treating some people unfairly or differently to other people because of their race, sex, age, disability, marital or maternity status.

Equality – everyone should be treated in the same way and given the same opportunities.

Equity – recognising that we do not all start in the same place, and we may have to change to make things more balanced for everyone.

Psychological Safety – this means that our staff and volunteers feel safe to admit, talk about and learn from mistakes, raise problems and concerns, get help and feedback, trust their colleagues, and feel valued as a member of their team and the wider organisation.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage – this means there are some people that will not have the same access to opportunities as others because of things like low income, fewer qualifications, or poor-quality housing.

Upstander – means someone who stands up for a person that is being bullied, harmed, or being treated unfairly. An upstander can ask if the person is OK, report the behaviour to someone else or if it is safe, they can say that they do not think the behaviour should be happening.

Well-being – means a person is happy, healthy and is comfortable with their life and what they do.