

Medr

Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

Medr's Strategic Equality Plan

April 2024 – 2028

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg |

This document is also available in Welsh

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Noddir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
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Foreword

We are proud to publish the first Strategic Equality Plan for Medr, Wales's Commission for Tertiary Education and Research. The Strategic Equality Plan sets out our equality objectives and responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion for Medr as an employer, as well our work with the tertiary education and research sectors, their staff, learners and students.

Medr and what we do

The [Tertiary Education and Research \(Wales\) Act](#) (2022) established the [Commission for Tertiary Education and Research](#), now known as Medr, a new Welsh Government Sponsored Body.

Medr, which commenced its responsibilities in August 2024, is responsible for the funding, oversight, quality and regulation of all tertiary education in Wales. This includes:

- further education (FE), including colleges and school sixth-forms;
- higher education (HE), including research and innovation;
- adult education and adult community learning; and
- apprenticeships and training.

We have taken the decision to publish our Strategic Equality Plan before the submission of our first Strategic Plan to the Welsh Government in December 2024.

We are committed to ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion informs all our strategic planning. Equality, diversity and inclusion will be at the heart of our organisational culture, values, systems, policies, processes and ways of working.

As a new organisation, Medr is committed to ensuring that staff recruitment process that we are developing will attract applicants that bring a diversity of thought, skills and experiences.

We recognise that publishing our Strategic Equality Plan now presents us with some challenges. These include aligning our Strategic Equality Plan with our Strategic Plan, using our own organisational evidence and data to inform planning and our ability to undertake proper engagement when setting equality objectives.

To address these challenges, we will review the Strategic Equality Plan regularly to ensure it is further developed and enhanced, as our Strategic Plan develops. In reviewing the Plan, we will ensure that we listen and respond to the voices and lived experience of our staff, the tertiary sector, external organisations supporting people with protected characteristics, trades unions, learners, students, employers, partner organisations and stakeholders.

Our Strategic Equality Plan

Our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 and equality objectives take account of the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED). The Equality Act requires public sector bodies such as Medr to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Our Strategic Equality Plan will contribute to us meeting the Welsh Government's ambitions for an integrated and equitable tertiary education and research system in Wales that tackles inequalities and promotes equality of opportunity, as set out in Welsh Government's Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) [Strategic Vision](#).

The Strategic Equality Plan is also informed by [The Well-being of Future Generations](#) Act's sustainability principle, goals, ways of working and corporate change areas. Alignment of our Strategic Equality Plan with the Well-being of Future Generations Act will support decision-making by ensuring that we take account of the long term, help to prevent problems occurring or getting worse, take an integrated and collaborative approach, and consider and involve people of all ages and diversity.

Delivering against our equality objectives will contribute to meeting our eleven strategic duties¹, including the promotion of equality of opportunity and many of the priorities set by Welsh Government in its [Statement of strategic priorities for tertiary education and research and innovation](#) (February 2024).

In publishing this first plan now we are confirming how we aim to incorporate equality of opportunity in all we do as an organisation, in how we will work with the tertiary sector and with our partners. Medr stands ready to contribute to a more equal Wales and to the well-being of current and future generations.

Simon Pirotte OBE
Chief Executive

¹ Promoting life-long learning; Promoting equality of opportunity; Encouraging participation in tertiary education; Promoting continuous improvement in tertiary education; Promotion of research and innovation; Promoting collaboration and coherence in tertiary education and research; Contributing to a sustainable and; innovative economy; Promoting tertiary education through the medium of Welsh; Promoting a civic mission; Promoting a global outlook and Promoting collaboration between providers of tertiary education and trade unions.

Medr's Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2028

Our Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) objectives are aligned with our key strategic duties as a regulator and funder of tertiary education and research.

The 2024-2028 plan sets out two high-level equality objectives and underpinning priorities. The plan will be supported by a strategic equality action plan, designed to be a living document that will evolve over time. We will review the Strategic Equality Plan regularly to ensure it is further developed and enhanced, as our Strategic Plan develops.

During this strategy period 2024-2028 we have set the following priorities:

Objective One: We operate as a highly effective organisation providing stability and leadership during this time of transition to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of all we do as an organisation.

We will:

1. Develop systems and approaches to meet our equality-related regulatory requirements taking account the duties on Medr, including the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) (2011), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and working in the spirit of the Socio-economic duty (Wales) (2021) including:
 - i. Publish our 2024 Strategic Equality Plan, conduct ongoing involvement, review objectives and monitor progress against it.
 - ii. Develop and implement an integrated impact assessment process².
 - iii. Ensure strategic alignment between Medr's Corporate Plan, Well-being Statement objectives and our Strategic Equality Plan objectives.
 - iv. Collect and use relevant employment information for all of Medr's staff to inform policy developments.
 - v. Conduct a pay difference/gap analysis for all Medr's staff and review potential pay gaps regularly.
 - vi. Ensure equality and diversity considerations are taken into account when we procure goods, services and products.
 - vii. Promote equality, diversity and inclusion by securing ongoing training for Medr's staff and Medr's Board.
2. Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion informs Medr's development of its organisational values, culture and ways of working.

² Integrated impact assessment includes: Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 well-being goals and ways of working and The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 including Medr's Welsh Language Standards.

Objective Two: We fund, regulate and collaborate to promote equality of opportunity and the welfare of learners, students and staff across tertiary education and research.

We will:

1. Engage a range of stakeholders to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are fully considered in the development Medr's Corporate Plan.
2. Consult on the register of tertiary education providers, taking account of relevant regulations as they relate to people with protected characteristics.
3. Fund, review and monitor a range of priorities, programmes and activities to meet the needs of staff, learners and students, to further improve equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion.
4. Promote and share effective practice in equality, diversity and inclusion for staff, applicants, learners, students and employers across the tertiary and research system.
5. Develop data to identify inequities in the tertiary system and use this data to develop and understanding of the underlying reasons for inequalities and the interventions that are effective in addressing them.

Informing our Strategic Equality Plan

In developing our 2024 Strategic Equality Plan we considered the following:

- The [Equality Act 2010 \(Statutory Duties\) Regulations 2011](#)
- The [Tertiary Education and Research \(Wales\) Act 2022](#)
- The [Equality Act \(Authorities subject to the Socio-economic Inequality Duty\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2021 Statutory Guidance](#)
- The [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#). In developing the revised 2022-2024 SEP, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales considered the implications of the Act's well-being goals, ways of working and the sustainable development principle.
- [The Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#)
- The [Social Partnership and Public Procurement \(Wales\) Act 2021](#)
- The updated [Welsh Government Programme for Government 2022](#)
- The Welsh Government:
 - [Statement of strategic priorities for tertiary education and research and innovation](#)
 - [Age friendly Wales: our strategy for an ageing society and delivery plan](#)
 - [Children and young people's plan](#)
 - [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#)
 - [Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan \(Nation of Sanctuary\)](#)
 - [Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan](#)
 - [Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: strategy](#)

[LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](#)
[LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales: progress update](#)
[Child Poverty Strategy for Wales](#)
[Draft Strategic Equality Plan consultation](#)
[Draft mental health and wellbeing strategy](#)
[Peer-on-peer sexual harassment in education settings action plan](#)

Additional data sources include, but are not limited to:

- [Advance HE statistical data](#)
- Colegau Cymru publications
- Equality and Human Rights Commission publications
- HE race equality data monitoring
- [HESA Data](#) (monitored across all protected characteristics where possible)
- International, UK and Wales-wide equality and diversity-related research and data
- Is Wales Fairer 2023: [Equality and Human Rights Monitor: Is Wales Fairer?](#)
- Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) (monitored across all protected characteristics where possible)
- [Post-16 learning statistics by learners' ethnic group, 2017-2021](#)
- [Pupils eligible for free school meals by local authority, region and year](#)
- The Welsh Parliament Children, Young People and Education Committee [Mental Health support in Higher Education report 2023](#)
- UCAS data
- Universities governing body data
- Universities UK publications
- University and College Union (UCU) [Equality research and policy](#)
- Welsh Government: [violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: national advisers annual report 2022 to 2023](#)
- Welsh Government's [TER Bill equality impact assessment](#)
- [Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation data](#)

Data gap and future considerations

We are aware that Medr as a new Welsh Government Sponsored Body has data and evidence gaps, including:

- Employment data once established
- Learner, student and staff intersectional data.

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