diverse cymru

Promoting equality for all
Hyrwyddo cydraddoldeb i bawb

# Annual Report

April 2015 - March 2016

www.diversecymru.org.uk

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# Charity Information



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| Registered Name: | Diverse Excellence Cymru Limited |
| Charity number: | 1142159 |
| Company number: | 07058600 |
| Registered Address: | 307-315 Cowbridge Road East<br>Cardiff<br>CF5 1JD |

**Contact Information**

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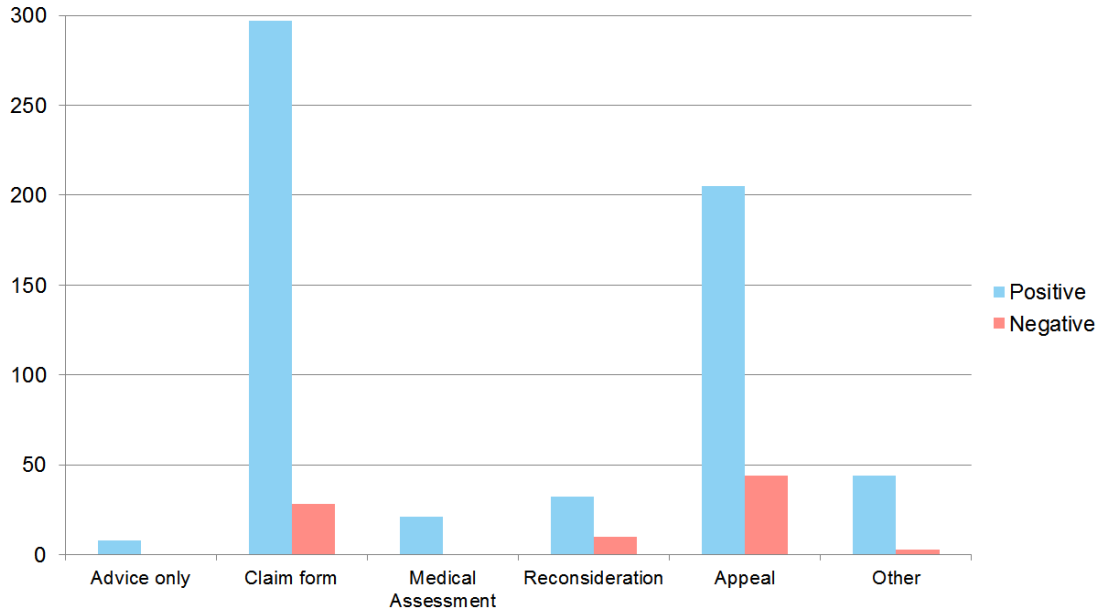
**Trustees** (As of March 31st 2016)

Helen Bennett - Chair
Gaynor Legall - joint Vice Chair
Jeff Champney-Smith (Resigned)
Joel Williams
Joseph Anyiake
Keith Dewhurst (Resigned)
Martin Gabriel
Martin Price
Mervyn Harris - Treasurer
Sally Fowler - joint Vice Chair

# Advice

The Advice Team consists of four different contracts: Cardiff Advice, a consortium led by Citizens Advice; Families First, led by Action for Children; Advocacy for the Vale of Glamorgan Council, and Benefits Advice with the Bridgend Carers' Centre.

Unfortunately we were unable to continue funding the post which provided the services to carers and their families in the Bridgend and the post ended in November 2015.




The Advice Team opened 869 new cases in addition to the ongoing caseload from the previous year. Of these, 297 clients were awarded their benefit with help on their first application.

The Advice team represented clients at 226 tribunals (appeals - above) and won 186 which constitutes an 83% success rate.

Our advisors continue to provide specialist advice on disability benefits and benefits for carers and older people for those either living or working in Cardiff.

The team worked very hard throughout the year to increase referrals to ensure as many people as possible received the benefits they were entitled to. They attended events, and organised an Open Day to give information to other client based organisations to improve partnership working and cross-referrals.

We wrote to all local Assembly Members, Members of Parliament and Councillors to update them on our service and invite them to refer their constituents to us should they come to them with worried about benefits.

Much of our contact with clients was in their own home, saving them the time and expense of visiting our office. We felt this was a very important gesture, as clients would feel more comfortable, without the perception of an intimidating, 'official' feeling office environment.

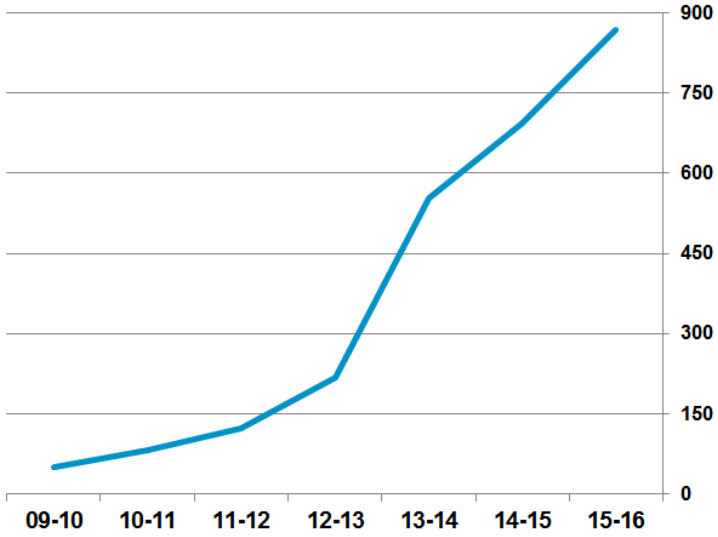
We also recruited a number of new volunteers to support the team's increasing administration work, who worked with great enthusiasm, and without whom the team would not have been able to support as many clients as it did.

Unfortunately, such was the emphasis on home visits from our funders, the

# Advice



contract lead, we eventually stopped attending medical assessments with clients, which had long been a key part of our service.




The chart above shows the extraordinary growth of the number of new cases since the team's inception in 2009.

Despite the pressure of an increasing workload, the team achieved spectacular results, claiming benefits for clients worth over £2.5million. We believe this offered exceptional value for money as this was all money being reinvested into the local economy.

Total value of benefits claimed including ongoing awards

**£2,585,385**

However, Cardiff Council ended its funding for home visits and Citizens' Advice decided to take over all other work being carried out as part of Cardiff Advice.

**Families First**

This contract continued to be delivered by three part-time officers: a Welfare Benefit Advisor providing services to families with a disabled child/ren; a Welfare Benefit Advisor providing service to support young, disabled people, including those with mental ill health, to live independently; and an Advocacy Officer providing advocacy support on a wide range of issues to parents of disabled children.

**519** people received help from the Families First Advice Team and benefit gains reached **£785,726.75**.

In addition to supporting numerous parents with disabled children with different matters three families received support at Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings, Core Meetings and Case Conference for children placed on the "at risk" register. In all three cases the children were removed from the register.

**74%** of families considered themselves better off after receiving support

**Vale of Glamorgan**

Diverse Cymru continued to provide an Advocacy service to people in the Vale of Glamorgan with critical or substantial care needs. However, our funding was reduced and the new target was easily reached, thus securing the contract on the same terms for the financial year 2016/17.

# BME Mental Health

This has been another successful year for all the BME Mental Health Projects that Diverse Cymru has, which have all made a positive difference for our client groups and practitioners across Wales.

Five BME Mental Health Awareness sessions were delivered at Whitchurch Hospital, as well as sessions to Cardiff & Vale College lecturers, to Social Work students in Bridgend College and Agored accredited BME Mental Health training sessions in North Wales and Cardiff which all received positive feedback.

We have continued our partnership with Hafal, Bipolar UK and the Mental Health Foundation as the 'High Needs Collaborative', working together to run campaigns and produce information to improve mental health services in Wales.

This year's campaign was called 'All Together Now!' which was a challenge to tackle loneliness and social isolation among people with a serious mental illness and their carers in Wales. Run by service users and carers and supported by the High Needs Collaborative, the 'All Together Now!' roadshow travelled across Wales with music festivals and events taking place in each of the 22 counties.

This year saw the **Comic Relief project** move into it's final year of operation. After a challenging first year, which included successfully recruiting 3 BME Mental Health Community Champions, promoting the project and ensuring that networks of communities, agencies and organisations know how to find us, this stage of the project has been about putting those networks to good use.

We've delivered training and awareness raising to both BME individuals and groups, as well as professionals working within the Mental Health field and those broadly coming into contact with vulnerable BME people as part of their work. This included 'Introduction to BME Mental Health Issues', a free Agored Cymru Level 2 accredited training course, to 75 professionals across Wales. Of these, 22 have opted for accreditation.

48 people have been trained in 'How to Access Mental Health and Social Care'. This training was well-received as it was informal and it gave participants the opportunity to have a dialogue of sharing experiences of the barriers that they faced in accessing mental health services.

Project staff attended information days, events and conferences across Wales, sharing information about BME mental health and providing the opportunity to book training or awareness sessions, and complemented their presence with project leaflets.

**"I can really see now how people are discriminated against just because they come from a minority background. I mean, it seems so unreal, doesn't it? That your nationality or the colour of your skin can affect how you're treated – today in a civilised country. We all have our part to play in making Wales more fair and I'll be actively looking to be more inclusive in my work from now on."**

- training attendee

# BME Mental Health



It's sad to see such a vital piece of work come to an end, but with 417 individual beneficiaries, 262 of them BME people, we know that the **BME Mental Health and Social Care Advocacy Project** has left a legacy of improved awareness, understanding and confidence in BME individuals. We also know that we've contributed to agencies and organisations being better equipped to support BME people with their mental health.

Since April 2015 the **Get Your Kicks On project** has been making connections with young BME men in Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham.

The project has worked with African, Jamaican, Indian and Pakistani youths and also from dual heritage BME background, as well as asylum seekers and refugees.

This is a challenging group to engage, and so our Youth Worker has been working in youth clubs, community centres, music studios as well as making home visits. She has worked innovatively to keep sessions quick and informal, using current music and TV shows to help her clients relate.

A key part of this work has been to break down the stigma attached to mental health, which is particularly prevalent in BME communities, and this has been explored via music and poetry.

Using questionnaires from over 200 participants from the target group, or Youth Worker developed information leaflets explaining common mental health illnesses, signs and symptoms, who can help and what to do.

The **BME Mental Health Support** team continued their work providing support and advice to black and minority ethnic people in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

This work is recovery based, holistic and one to one, which is an approach that focuses on empowerment and self-discovery for people affected by mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorders etc.

The team worked with 63 clients this year, 60 of which classified themselves as refugees or asylum seekers.

Every client is treated individually and so their plans and outcomes can differ greatly.

While our advice is very practical and helps people gain access to services, a major component is emotional support. Our support workers can be a friend who will listen, offer reassurance, and give confidence.

This is absoutely vital to let people know that they are not alone, and that asking for help is not a weakness.

**"They are lovely people and supportive. Samira helps me to solve my problem... because I am asylum seeking... Edna gives to me big support, respect, love and helps me in everything. I feel that two persons like they are close part of my family."**

- A, from Albania

# Co-Creating Healthy Change

During the past year the Co-Creating Healthy Change Project at Diverse Cymru has continued to promote opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to have their say on health, well-being and social care services and to work with service providers to improve service for everyone.

In that time the project has held more than 25 events, meetings and training sessions bringing together project members and service providers.

Guest speakers at our Cardiff and Vale forums covered a range of topics such as the Hospital Discharge Service, Cardiff Council Social Services, Vale of Glamorgan Council Social Services and Mental Health Services. We held training sessions on Understanding the Health Board, Dementia Friends Awareness; Universal Credit Awareness and Demystifying Commissioning.

Other activities included coffee mornings with Maria Battle, (Chair of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (CVUHB)), the team from the Older Peoples Commissioner for Wales and volunteering with various organisations. We also held workshops with CVUHB on 'Shaping our Future Well-being' and the Welsh Ambulance Service. We also arranged two visits to the Senedd where members found out how the National Assembly for Wales works.

Members have also been involved as service user and carer representatives on the social work degree programmes at Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University.

C3SC Cardiff Third Sector Council Cyngor Trydydd Sector Caerdydd
Co-Creating Healthy Change
CRONFA LOTERI FAWR BIG LOTTERY FUND
ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI LOTTERY FUNDED
GVS

# Communications



As stated in last year's report, we started this year with the plan to build a new website to incorporate all of our services. Unfortunately, as our contract for our previous website ran out, we spent some time during the year with only an interim website which wasn't regularly updated. This accounts for the first yearly dip in users we have experienced.

However, our new website was launched on September 14th 2015 and saw an immediate increase in users and views. In fact, the overall page views soared by nearly 40% overall due to all the new information available.

The new website is also more accessible to those using mobile devices, which our analytics show to be around 35%, a number we know will only rise in the coming years.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Unique users** | 18,227 | -16.55% |
| **Page views** | 111,415 | +38.46% |
| **Social referrals** | 2,612 | +20.59% |
| **Mobile (Phone or tablet)** | 34.98% | +10.70% |

The website was built entirely in-house at a relatively low cost and we are very pleased to be able to have full control and understanding of the site, which we have been able to regularly update and improve.

Both Twitter followers and Facebook likes increased over the year by almost precisely the same amount to 4,958 and 790 respectively.

Individual Twitter engagements (clicks/likes/retweets/replies) have more than doubled though the engagement rate as a percentage has dropped as followers have increased. We have, however, increased referrals to the website via our social media channels by over 20%.

Our show on Radio Cardiff finished with the 150th show on March 29th 2015. In its three year run, we spoke to around 250 guests representing charities and equality organisations from all over Cardiff and often operating across Wales. It has been a fantastic way to find out about the amazing work done by the third sector and also a chance to spread our work to a new audience.

An online archive of the shows is available at **mixcloud.com/diversecardiff**.

The team has also started working much closer with the Policy Team to ensure our messages and positions on important subjects become more well known.

The aim of the Communications Team is to make Diverse Cymru the first point of contact for equality issues in Wales. By reacting to events as they happen and posting statements to our website and social media we can set out who we are and what our values are.

This is something we're still working on and we hope to expand on in the future to encourage more media interest in our equalities expertise.

TOGETHER
NOW!
hafal

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Age of Justice
#ageofjustice
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Promoting equality for all / Hyrwyddo cydraddoldeb

diverse cymru
Age of Justice
#ageofjustice

nafal

cymru
Promoting equality for all
Hyrwyddo cydraddoldeb i bawb
Black & Minority
Mental Health

diverse cymru
" RESPECT! "
#ageofjustice

Iney Alexander

STOP HATE CRIME

# Community Involvement

**Family Point**
We were contacted by Family Point (then 'Informed Families') to support their work and help diversify the consultation group that fed into shaping the service. We were keen to extend the reach of the consultation and travelled around Wales to speak to people in their own homes. We discovered families were reluctant to come out to venues for set events, so by engaging them in a place they felt safe we received more valuable and honest feedback, which proved to be a decisive factor in redesigning the Family Point website.

**Hynt**
Hynt is an Arts Council of Wales initiative managed by Creu Cymru in partnership with Diverse Cymru. It is a national access scheme that works with theatres and arts centres in Wales to make sure there is a consistent offer available for visitors with impairment or specific access requirement, and their carers or Personal Assistants. If a Hynt applicant is not automatically eligible they can opt to go to arbitration. We are responsible for this process calling upon advisors across Wales should the need arise. The Hynt Project Advisory Group is made up of disability group representatives and meets regularly to monitor progress.

**Our Museum**
The Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) funded 'Our Museum' project based at St Fagans National History Museum came to an end this year. St Fagans invited community groups to assist making an application to PHF to fund a unique approach to volunteering. Over the last four years the result has been a completely new volunteering dynamic that includes disabled people pan-impairments, BME people, people experiencing homelessness, Refugee and Asylum Seekers, people who are experiencing or recovering from mental ill health.

The project concluded with a Peer Review to the PHF board in London where we presented the project alongside the Director of the National Museum of Wales

**Breaking the Barriers**
Following on from the Breaking the Barriers conference, the reports in Welsh, English, Braille, Easy Read and large print were published in August. There is a lot of work to do to ensure that Cllr. Groves' recommendations are taken forward by Welsh Government, Cardiff Council and Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. Diverse Cymru continues to attend the ITV Diversity Panel forwarding views to the News Editorial team.

We were also contacted to help resolve a disability access issue at a supermarket in Bridgend. The supermarket was responsive and now ensures that wheelchair users can easily access the card machines at the checkouts.

Diverse Cymru remains an active member of the All Wales Learning Disabilities Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Action Steering Group.

# Consultancy



The year started with us taking a new approach, as we decided to concentrate our resources on delivering in-house and bespoke equality and mental health training services. These services are delivered by expert staff members and several associates. During the year we received 63 training, consultancy and advice enquiries, some of which, where appropriate, were referred onto other organisations.

**In-House Training**

- 2 bespoke courses 'The Social Care Needs of Protected Characteristic Groups' were delivered to managers at Care Council for Wales;
- 4 Cultural Diversity Awareness sessions for staff at Cardiff & Vale College;
- BME Mental Health Awareness session and a Cultural Diversity Awareness session for social work students at Bridgend College;
- Diversity Awareness for senior managers at Wales Millennium Centre;
- Diversity leadership class for Powys County Council;
- Equality Impact Assessment course for Pembs Coast National Park Authority;
- Mental Health Awareness was held for 90 members of the Diocese of Llandaff;
- 6 Mental Health Awareness courses with North Wales Police staff.

**Research and Advice**

We provided assistance to the Medical Fitness Panel of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service; the Equality & Diversity Critical Friends Group of Sport Wales; the Wales Centre for Equity in Education; Cardiff & Vale NHS Trust, on reasonable adjustments for disabled staff; LGBT Sport Cymru on developing an accredited transgender unit; the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Sport Wales and Cardiff Council on their draft Strategic Equality Plans; Empower and Ffilm Cymru.

We carried out **Equality Impact Assessments** for:

- Unison;
- the Remuneration Board of the National Assembly for Wales
- the National Assembly Member Support Service

**Involvement**

These included facilitating four involvement events for Sport Wales in Cardiff, Wrexham, Caernarfon and a report on our findings to help inform their Strategic Equality Plan and continuing with our service level agreements with Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University providing social care service users and carers to assist in the training of social work students.

**Staff Awareness**

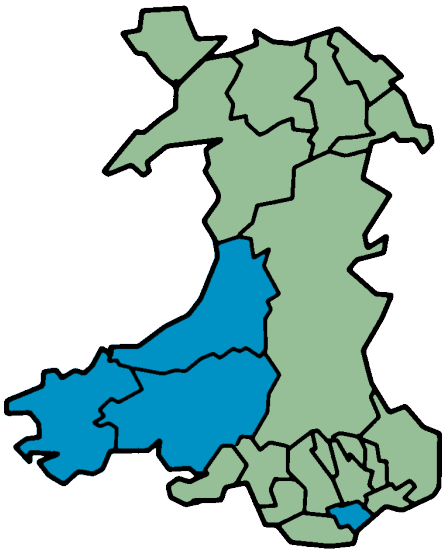
Cardiff University held an awareness session for our staff on the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The EHRC held an awareness and discussion session on their 'Is Wales Fairer?' report.

**Accredited Learning**

Several staff members attended Agored Cymru's Introduction to Assessment course and delivered the BME Mental Health Awareness unit.

# Direct Payments

2015 saw our first new Direct Payments contract outside of Cardiff and we were extremely excited to take on this new challenge.



We took over direct payments support services on 30th November 2015 in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire making us the largest single provider in Wales, covering more than a quarter of Wales by area and population.

We retained local staff familiar with the area and their service users to continue delivering support, but with the benefit of our custom direct payments software.

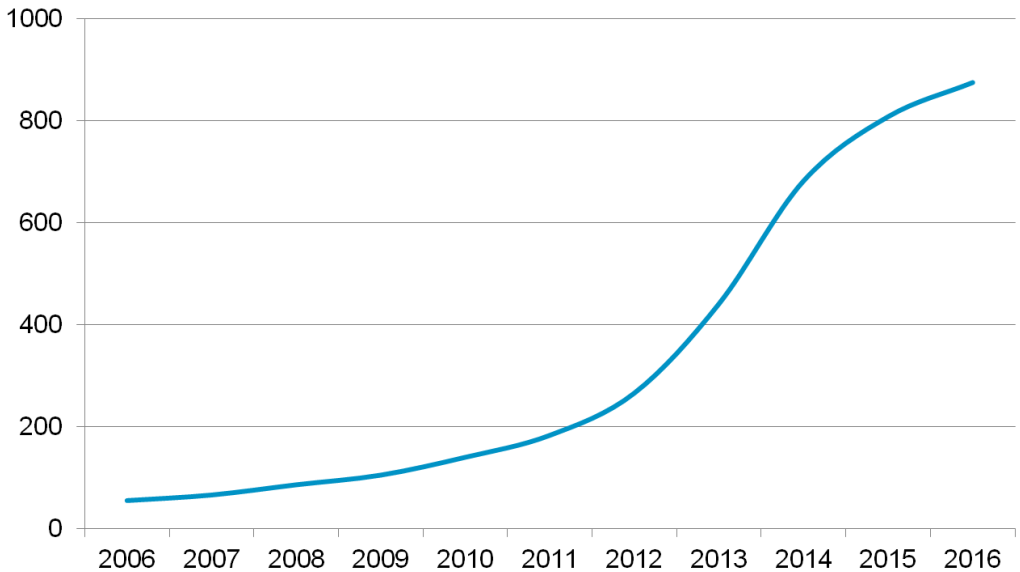
At times, the workload was colossal to ensure a smooth transition, but with staff in Cardiff and West Wales working tirelessly together we managed to get the system up and running and working to a satisfactory level by the end of the period.

Direct Payments in Cardiff continued to be our single largest area of operation, and the staff have worked extremely hard to maintain their exceptional level of service under increasing pressure.

The increase in service users by 68 to 875 is modest relative to our last few years of exploding growth. We believe this is due to a natural plateauing of reaching most of the potential service users in Cardiff, but does not mean we are not still trying to access as many new recipients as possible.

To this end, we have engaged various organisations such as the Welsh Government and Cardiff University's Health and Social Care students as well as improving our PA training course by consulting with Agored and spending half a day learning about the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.

We were also happy to continue our partnership with Volda University College, Norway, by accepting two student work placements for three months to work alongside the team and share experiences.



# Policy



The policy and research department involves gathering views of people affected by inequalities in Wales through our other teams and feeding in views and concerns in relation to equality into public sector organisations and into consultations, inquiries, calls for evidence, and policy across Wales.

We carry out research into key inequality issues in Wales, and are supported by a team of volunteers, including Lucyna Ratka, who has moved on to pursue her education. We've also hosted placements for two university students, supporting them to complete their dissertations.

We prioritise responses that have the greatest impact on people from protected characteristic groups, especially where it affects the whole of Wales. Our priority areas are equality, diversity and human rights; health and social care; welfare reform, advice and tackling poverty; and criminal justice and community safety.

We're always keen to gather people's views and experiences on any services, organisations, or policies in Wales. You can email **ele.hicks@diverse.cymru** with your experience or views or to comment on consultations on topics of your choice.

We developed research and published reports on Crimes Against Older People this year. Our Age of Justice project looks at solutions.

Key meetings attended this year include:

- Arts Council for Wales equalities monitoring group
- Welsh Government voluntary bus standards equality group
- National Assembly for Wales Cross Party Group on Disability
- EHRC equality exchange events and annual conference

17 responses were submitted to consultations and policy between April 2015 and March 2016. We also contributed to meetings, engagement events, and through the Equality Assessment Group.

Key responses included:

- Cardiff Council mental health services scrutiny
- Cardiff Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Neath Port Talbot Council and West Wales Councils on their equality objectives
- Welsh Government Together for Mental Health Action Plan
- Welsh Government equality objectives
- Statutory Guidance on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- House of Lords Select Committee inquiry on the Equality Act 2010 and Disability
- The Work and Pension committee (UK) inquiry into benefit delivery
- Law Commission electoral law reform project

# diverse cymru

Promoting equality for all
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Diverse Cymru is a unique Welsh charity committed to supporting people faced with inequality and discrimination because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

**www.diversecymru.org.uk**

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**info@diverse.cymru**

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