

Agenda – Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – The Senedd

Meeting date: 23 May 2018

Meeting time: 11.30

For further information contact:

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Committee Clerk

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The Committee will be launching its report on making the economy work for people on low incomes.

Pre-meeting (11.15 – 11.30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

2 Inquiry into pregnancy, maternity and work in Wales – evidence session 9

(11.30 – 12.30)

(Pages 1 – 16)

Huw Irranca-Davies AM, Minister for Children and Social Care

Julie James AM, Leader of the House and Chief Whip

Jo-Anne Daniels, Director, Communities & Tackling Poverty, Welsh Government

Owain Lloyd, Deputy Director, Childcare, Play and Early Years Division, Welsh Government

3 Papers to note

(Page 17)

3.1 Letter from the Llywydd in relation to Senedd@Delyn

(Page 18)

3.2 Letter from the First Minister in relation to human rights in Wales

(Pages 19 – 24)



- 4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting and from item 1 of the meeting on 7 June 2018

- 5 Inquiry into pregnancy, maternity and work in Wales – discussion of the evidence received under item 2
(12.30 – 12.40)

Document is Restricted

Introduction

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide written evidence to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee in respect of the inquiry into *Pregnancy, Maternity and Work in Wales*.
2. This evidence paper reflects the work being undertaken across the Leader of the House and the Minister for Children and Social Care policy portfolios to promote equality in terms of pregnancy, maternity and work. This work aligns fully with Prosperity for All – the national strategy which embodies the Welsh Government’s commitment to create a Welsh economy which delivers individual and national prosperity through equal opportunity for all. This includes tackling pregnancy and maternity discrimination and disadvantage as part of a wider programme of work addressing gender inequality in our society.

Childcare Offer

3. The Childcare Offer is a key government commitment as set out in Taking Wales Forward and expanded upon in Prosperity for All. The Offer will provide 30 hours of government-funded early education and childcare to the working parents of three and four year olds for up to 48 weeks a year. Our Offer is intended to support the Welsh economy by helping parents, particularly mothers, return to work or increase their hours of employment and is therefore targeted at working parents. Childcare is frequently cited as the reason why some parents work where they do, work the hours they do, or don’t work at all. We want to ease the burden on hard working parents and a fundamental aim of the Offer is to give families the financial support they need to help with their childcare costs and allow them to have employment choices.
4. We know that the majority of children in Wales living in relative income poverty are from households where at least one person is working. The evidence clearly demonstrates that well-paid employment is not only the best route out of poverty but is also the greatest defence against poverty. We have a range of programmes designed to address the issue of in-work poverty by helping parents to both gain and retain full-time employment.
5. The Offer includes the existing universal early education entitlement delivered through the Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) provision, with additional hours of funded childcare available to the children of qualifying working parents. A working parent is defined as someone earning more than 16 hours per week at the national minimum wage or national minimum wage, up to a maximum of £100,000. Parents who are away from work on maternity, paternity, adoptive or parental leave are eligible for the Offer.
6. FPN is delivered by local authorities and, although there is some variation in entitlement, all children are entitled to a minimum of 10 hours of FPN provision from the term after their third birthday until the September after they turn 4. At this point most children then begin full time school. Entitlement to the childcare element of the Offer has been aligned with the FPN entitlement.

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7. Alignment with the Foundation Phase Nursery provision also means that during school term times, calculated at 39 weeks per year, the Offer comprises of 30 hours of combined early education and childcare provision. Outside of school term times, the Offer consists of 30 hours of childcare alone. Parents can access up to 9 weeks of funding outside of school terms, taking us to the 48 weeks available per year.
8. We are currently testing the Offer through our programme of early implementation. Testing is currently underway in Anglesey, Gwynedd, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Flintshire, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Swansea, and we are in discussions with local authorities across Wales about expanding these tests. It is our intention that the offer will be available in at least part of each local authority in Wales ahead of the national roll-out in September 2020. An independent evaluation of the early implementation arrangements is underway with the final report of progress in this first year due in October.
9. During early implementation local authorities are undertaking the eligibility checks to confirm a family's entitlement to the Offer. In the longer term the intention is to develop a primarily digital platform that will be administered by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. The Childcare Funding (Wales) Bill was laid on 16 April. It is a technical Bill that will support the Childcare Offer in setting up an easy-to-use, national system to allow parents to both check their eligibility and apply for free childcare. This will be a mainly digital system and will be run by HMRC.
10. Entitlement to the Offer is, however, only part of the picture and we are also considering delivery arrangements. Any childcare provider registered with and inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales (or Ofsted if they are in England) can deliver the childcare aspect of the Offer. A rate of £4.50 per hour has been set for the pilots and we are testing the sustainability of this rate with those providers currently delivering the Offer. We are also working with the sector to gain a better understanding of their capacity to deliver the places needed, and in particular the capacity to deliver Welsh medium childcare and care for children with special educational needs.
11. Alongside this we are also taking forward a range of wider support activities for the sector including action on business rates, support to improve business planning and changes to qualifications. Our vision for the childcare sector was set out in our Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce Plan published in 2017.
12. We also recognise that for some parents, affordable childcare is not the only thing preventing them from returning to or staying in work. Reluctance to use formal childcare, a lack of confidence about returning to work or concerns about financial stability are also cited as reasons why parents are not employed. We are exploring these issues through our #TalkChildcare campaign and the Offer itself is part of a wider suite of programmes we have in place to support parents into work.

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13. Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) is a £13.5m project jointly funded by the European Social Fund and Welsh Government, working in partnership with DWP. PaCE is specifically aimed at parents who are out of work and cite childcare as their main barrier to accessing training or work opportunities. Up to the end of March 2018, the project had engaged 2883 participants and supported 896 into work. Over 90% of participants are women.
14. Support is also available under Tax Free Childcare, which is available across the UK and provides financial support towards childcare costs for children up to the age of 12.

Equality Duties

15. The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination for everyone, with regard to nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and pregnancy and maternity. In Wales, our equality duties are set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and came into force in April 2011. We are proud to have been the first government to bring in specific equality duties in order for public bodies to better perform and demonstrate their compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. To do this the Welsh Government has embedded Equality Impact Assessments into our approach to policy and decision making over several years.

Promoting Equality in the Workplace

16. We fund Chwarae Teg who focus specifically on the sustainable economic contribution of women in areas such as employment, skills and entrepreneurship, including work-life balance, flexible working and girls' and young women's academic and career choices. In December 2017, Chwarae Teg launched the FairPlay Employer Benchmark - a new service to support employers and organisations across the private, public and third sector to deliver gender equality in their business. Organisations that subscribe to the service will be benchmarked in terms of gender equality in their sector and will qualify for one of four levels of FairPlay Employer award. The Welsh Government has recently signed up to the benchmark.

Gender Pay Inequality

17. As with the other protected characteristics, all public sector employers in Wales must publish the required employment information on gender giving a snapshot of its employee profile at 31 March each year.
18. The information requirements in relation to gender go further than other protected characteristics in the detail of what is published. A listed body must publish a breakdown of the number of female and male employees by job, grade, pay, contract type and working pattern. This should give a clear

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indication of how jobs are distributed throughout an authority and at what levels. This will help not only to identify gender pay differences, but other gender equality issues such as occupational segregation.

19. Public bodies in Wales that identify a gender pay difference must either set a gender pay equality objective to address the causes of the pay difference, or explain publicly why they have not done so. If it appears likely that the reason for the difference is related to the fact that those employees share a protected characteristic, an action plan to address gender pay difference is also required.
20. Welsh public bodies are not presently required to publish information about their gender pay gaps on the UK Government website, although they are free to do so if they wish. I am pleased to see that a number of our public bodies have voluntarily made use of this opportunity.
21. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) will shortly be gathering and analysing evidence of the work undertaken across key sectors to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty legislation in Wales, including the gender pay gap. We will be working with them closely on this and on any further action that is required as a result, including reviewing the reporting arrangements for Welsh organisations.

Eradicating Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Within the Welsh Government

22. As an organisation, we are working in partnership with the EHRC to identify effective interventions to address pregnancy or maternity discrimination in the workplace. These interventions will be aligned to the Welsh Government's revised Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan. The Action Plan contains a number of commitments relating to the protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity.
23. We have also pledged to make our organisation the best it can be for pregnant women and new mothers as part of the EHRC Working Forward Campaign. Women often feel while on maternity leave they are isolated from work and to help address this we have changed our processes so women going on maternity leave can keep their IT kit and profile, if they wish. We have also set up a team site intranet page for pregnant women and new parents as an informal network/forum.
24. The Women Together network has set up a focus group to identify the main challenges facing pregnant women and new parents in the organisation and made recommendations to HR. The network is working closely with HR to revise policies and processes for pregnant staff and new parents (which will go through formal consultation with TUS) and has audited breastfeeding and expressing facilities across our estate. Work is now ongoing to ensure the same good facilities are in place across all the offices. Guidance for line managers and staff will be drafted and communications with people on maternity/ adoption/ parental leave improved. A coffee morning for women on

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maternity leave to attend with their babies is currently being planned. The network is also looking at improving outcomes and opportunities for women who work part-time. Awareness raising sessions on job sharing have been held for the Senior Civil Service. HR are looking at how they can support women (and men) who want to work part-time and job share. Welsh Government staff are entitled to work flexibly and our policies and processes are designed to enable this.

Promoting Equality in the Workplace and in Public Life

25. One of the strategic aims of the Welsh Government's Equality and Inclusion funding programme 2017-20 is to help to deliver a more diverse pool of decision-makers in public life. All of the lead agencies for this programme have committed to supporting this work, through working with their own members, networks and stakeholders, to help us identify and nurture Welsh leaders now and for the future. The Women's Equality Network Wales (WEN Wales) which represent the views of women and girls in Wales is helping to inform national policy, by promoting and raising wider awareness of women's rights and the issues that affects them.
26. Our partners also provide advice and analysis to the Welsh Government on issues such as occupational segregation, the persistence of the gender pay gap and under-representation of women in senior and decision-making roles.

Rapid Review of Gender and Equality Policies

27. In addition to work set out above and to bring a new impetus to our work, the First Minister announced on 8 March, International Women's Day, the Rapid Review of Gender and Equality policies. We are working closely with Chwarae Teg and other partners on this review which will include an assessment of the available evidence on gender equality and consideration of what further research and action may be needed in this area, including in relation to the gender pay gap.
28. The terms of the review have been finalised. They set out our intention to put considerations of gender at the forefront of all our decision-making, our ways of working and conduct. All issues raised will need to be considered from an intersectional and inclusive perspective. Two initial stakeholder events will form the start of a national conversation where stakeholders will identify their priorities for the review. The first stakeholder event took place on 26 April in south Wales and the second was held on 3 May in north Wales. Phase One of the Review is expected to be complete by July 2018, to be followed by Phase Two which will run until summer 2019.

Julie James
Leader of the House and Chief Whip

Huw Irranca Davies
Minister for Children and Social Care

Agenda Item 3

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

23 May 2018 – papers to note cover sheet

Paper no.	Issue	From	Action point
ELGC(5)-16-18 Paper 1	Senedd@Delyn	The Llywydd	Letter in relation to the postponed Senedd@Delyn event
ELGC(5)-16-18 Paper 2	Inquiry into human rights	The First Minister	Letter in relation to equality and human rights implications of Brexit

Elin Jones AM, Presiding Officer

National Assembly for Wales

Committee Chairs
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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Your ref:
Our ref: EJ/LPR

15 May 2018

Dear Committee Chair

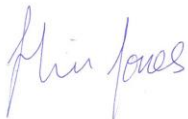
I write to you about our plans to reschedule the postponed Senedd Delyn event for the week commencing 25 June 2018.

As part of our programme we will host a series of activity to promote the Assembly's work, the Welsh Youth Parliament and mark the Centenary of the Women's Suffrage Movement. This will be complemented by outreach and education sessions with schools, colleges, youth groups, community groups, businesses and charities in the area. We will also have a presence at Mold Market during the week.

During previous Senedd@ initiatives, committees have held formal meetings and informal engagement sessions in community locations, to encourage people to participate in their work. Senedd Delyn provides an opportunity to raise your Committee's profile, and directly engage with local stakeholders and citizens. I appreciate that on this occasion there is limited notice to make arrangements but if you would like to get involved we are happy to assist. I intend on ensuring that greater notice is provided on upcoming Senedd@ programmes in future to allow as much opportunity to co-ordinate activity.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely



Elin Jones AM
Llywydd

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Y Gwir Anrh/Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AC/AM
Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister of Wales

Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
ELGC(5)-16-18 Papur 3 / Paper 3

John Griffiths AM
Chair
Equalities, Local Government & Communities Committee

David Rees AM
Chair
External Affairs & Additional Legislation Committee

16 May 2018

Dear John and David

Equality and human rights implications of Brexit

I am writing in response to your joint letter of 5 April. I welcome the work that your Committees have undertaken on the equality and human rights implications of Brexit in Wales. The Welsh Government has been clear that UK withdrawal from the EU should in no way lead to a dilution in equalities and human rights protections, or indeed any other social, environmental or employment protections.

Detailed responses to the questions and recommendations are set out below.

Committees' question: We welcome the inclusion of section 7 in the Law Derived from the European Union (Wales) Bill, which would require EU-derived Welsh law to be interpreted in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Should this Bill not proceed for any reason, we would like the Welsh Government to set out how it will ensure that Charter rights continue to apply in Wales.

The Law Derived from the European Union (Wales) Bill ("the LDEU Bill") has been referred to the Supreme Court by the Attorney General. However, following the Welsh Government successfully securing changes to the UK Government EU (Withdrawal) Bill that protects devolution, it is the expectation that the Attorney General will withdraw his reference. This will enable the LDEU Bill to receive Royal Assent so that the Welsh Ministers can initiate steps to secure the repeal of what will then be the LDEU Act. As a result of these developments, it is the expectation that the UK Government EU (Withdrawal) Bill will apply in Wales going forward.

Our objective is to ensure that Brexit does not result in any dilution of rights and the current position. We therefore support the inclusion of recent non-government amendments to the UK Government EU (Withdrawal) Bill that were passed by the Lords which provide for the

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Charter of Fundamental Rights to continue to apply. We currently await sight of the UK Government response in the House of Commons and hope that the UK will accept them which would allow the inclusion of these amendments within the Bill thereby ensuring status quo in respect of the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in Wales.

In addition, we have also begun discussions with UK Government, via the Government Equality Office ('GEO', now within the Home Office) about entering into a Political Agreement which would endorse the existing framework of equal treatment legislation in force that applies in our nations, namely the Equality Acts 2006 and 2010 and secondary legislation made under those Acts. Our objective is to ensure that no legislative changes will be made that would reduce the existing substantive protections provided by that legislation.

Committees' question: We share the views of our witnesses that the Shared Prosperity Fund proposed by the UK Government should be administered by the Welsh Government in relation to Wales to ensure that it is sensitive to local needs and inequalities. We also think that the Fund should be targeted at tackling inequality and socio-economic disadvantage.

In December 2017 we published a policy paper *Regional Investment in Wales after Brexit*, which reiterated our view that replacement funding for the European Structural and Investment funds should be allocated to, and managed entirely by, the Welsh Government. We have also undertaken an engagement exercise on the policy paper (closed 23 March) to inform future development work and will publish an independent analysis of those findings in the summer. This will continue to strengthen the evidence of demand for a needs-based, made-in-Wales policy in our discussions with the UK Government.

We continue to press the UK Government to confirm devolution will be respected in future arrangements, and that the Welsh Government will retain the ability to tailor future funding to our specific policy and legislative framework. Evidence from National Assembly for Wales Committees is also being presented to the UK Government to emphasise these calls are not just coming from Welsh Government.

We agree that only a Welsh designed approach will be sensitive to local needs and inequalities and the Welsh Government is committed to working in close partnership with communities, businesses and organisations across Wales to deliver this. We have also been clear that we need to better incorporate social and environmental outcomes in any future model, building on the *Wellbeing of Future Generations Act*, alongside more traditional economic outcomes.

Committees' recommendation: We recommend that the Welsh Government should outline its latest position on the introduction of the socio-economic duty, given that the power to do so will be devolved under the new settlement.

The socio-economic duty is a duty on public authorities to address the inequality that arises from socio-economic disadvantage, and to place this objective at the core of their policies and programmes. The duty is included in Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010 but this has not been used anywhere in the UK, until recently in Scotland. The power to enact the duty in Wales has been devolved with effect from 1st April.

In Wales, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act') is our key instrument in the area of addressing socio-economic inequality particularly the well-being goal of a more equal Wales. This places a legal duty on specified public bodies to set and publish well-being objectives that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals, including a more equal Wales. The legislation expressly provides for this as a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their

background or circumstances including their socio economic background and circumstances. Given that we have this positive and progressive legal duty in Wales which addresses socio economic inequality we have not pressed the UK Government recently to commence the duty.

Following public consultation in 2017, the Scottish Government has commenced the socio-economic duty, to be known as the Fairer Scotland Duty. In light of the Scottish Government's decision to implement the socio-economic duty and the opportunity to revisit this area with the new powers provided by the Wales Act, we will be reviewing our position in the context of our Rapid Review of Gender Equality in Wales and exploring the matters that informed the Scottish Government's decision to implement the duty. We will need to consider carefully whether it would be right to impose additional duties and reporting responsibilities on Welsh Public Bodies particularly when we have the ground breaking legal duty within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. We will continue to engage with the Equality and Human Rights Commission as we take this work forward.

Committees recommendation: We also recommend that the Welsh Government should give consideration to the further incorporation of international human rights treaties in Wales, in the same manner as the Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure (for example, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), or the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The Welsh Government will continue to have high regard for international treaties and UN Conventions to which the United Kingdom is signatory, and will seek to reflect both the spirit and the substance of each convention across its policies and programme as appropriate. The actions of the Welsh Government must be compatible with its international obligations, as set out in Section 82 of the Government of Wales Act 2006, including the seven UN Conventions signed and ratified by the UK State party.

We will also continue to monitor the effectiveness of this approach in detail, contribute to progress reports and periodic reviews with Welsh evidence and examples, engage with the relevant UN Committees at periodic examinations in Geneva, and consider how we take forward the recommendations which follow. The Welsh Government works closely with the UK Government and other devolved administrations to ensure Wales is fully represented and engaged with every stage of the reporting process.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act will remain our principle legislative instrument in this regard, given that the Well-being goals set out in that Act are wide-ranging in scope and provide the best framework to enable coordinated action to ensure that human rights are safeguarded in Wales.

Committees' question: We call on the Welsh Government to confirm that the intention of these provisions (section 3(2) and section 4(2)) is to ensure that existing rights and obligations (particularly equality and human rights standards in devolved competence) are not eroded or removed as a result of Brexit - either by the UK Government acting under the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, or by Welsh Ministers acting under the Assembly Bill.

Since your joint letter of 5 April, it has been agreed that the Welsh Government will take steps to repeal the Law Derived from the European Union (Wales) Bill, once enacted, pursuant to an agreement with the UK Government on the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill. As a result, the focus of this response will now be on the powers contained in the UK Bill.

The Welsh Government has a strong record for legislating to protect equalities and human rights standards in Wales. This is evident from examples such as the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. We intend to continue this Government's commitment to these important issues as we undertake the task of implementing the EU (Withdrawal) Bill.

We note with interest, and support, the principles put forward in non-government amendments passed in the House of Lords to the UK Bill which limit the scope of powers to modify EU law to what is necessary.

Committees' recommendation: Should the Bill be enacted, we ask the Welsh Government to use this power to prioritise equality and human rights protections (as far as is possible). We also reiterate the ELGC Committee's call for the Welsh Government to "establish a formal mechanism to track future developments in human rights and equality in the EU to ensure that Welsh citizens benefit from the same level of protection as EU citizens". We believe that such a mechanism should be publicly available.

The intention is that the LDEU Bill will soon be repealed and therefore the power in that Bill to make subordinate legislation to keep pace with EU law, including those relating to equality and human rights, will not be available. However, other legislative mechanisms exist, including primary legislation passed by the Assembly, to ensure that Brexit does not result in the people of Wales seeing their rights fall behind those of other European countries.

The Welsh Government will continue to work with the UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to monitor the progress of human rights and equality in Wales, taking note of developments in the EU and elsewhere. The Commission is best placed to assess developments in this regard. The Welsh Government works closely with their Wales Committee and Office to consider the position in relation to Wales.

The EHRC's five point plan includes action to ensure the UK is a global leader on equality and human rights by ensuring our laws and policy keep pace with future equality and human rights standards coming from the EU, after we exit, such as the EU Accessibility Act, as well as other comparator countries.

Committees question: We request the Welsh Government to outline its views on: what assessment it has made as to the possibility of introducing a form of freestanding right to equality in Wales, generally or within particular sectors or contexts, and

the UK Government's proposal to establish a non-legislative framework to deal with EU-based equal treatment law across devolved and non-devolved areas, and how it will approach discussions with the UK Government on that subject.

Firm commitment to promoting equality and safeguarding human rights has been built into the DNA of the Welsh Government since devolution. This has been clearly reflected in successive Government of Wales Acts, up to and including the Wales Act 2017. It is also reflected in a wide range of other Welsh legislation as well as the policies and programme of Welsh Government across all devolved areas.

Specifically, we have the Welsh public sector equality duty which enables the better performance of the public sector equality duty in Wales. The specific Welsh duties are progressive and expansive, requiring for example, the publication of equality objectives, engagement, impact assessments, strategic equality plans together with pay and action

plans and gender pay difference. These Welsh specific duties seek to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. In addition the Welsh specific duties advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and those who do not and also foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

In Wales, we also have the Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 (“the 2015 Act”) which further reinforces our resolve to maintain and drive forward our commitment to equality placing a legal duty on specified public bodies to set and publish well-being objectives that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals, including a more equal Wales. The 2015 Act expressly provides for this as a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances, which includes their socio economic background and circumstances. This ground breaking legal duty places Wales in a unique position and further demonstrates the commitment to ensuring equality in Wales. In light of this, there are no plans at present to provide for an additional, freestanding right to equality which might duplicate or cut across existing provision.

As indicated above, we have begun discussions with UK Government, via the Government Equality Office (GEO, now within the Home Office) about entering into a Political Agreement which would endorse the existing framework of equal treatment legislation in force that applies in our nations, namely the Equality Acts 2006 and 2010 and secondary legislation made under those Acts. Our objective is to ensure that no legislative changes will be made that would reduce the existing substantive protections provided by that legislation.

Committees’ recommendation: We recommend that in its discussions with the UK Government, the Welsh Government seeks a commitment from the UK Government that it will not enter into trade agreements whose implementation would erode any part of the Equality Act or Modern Slavery Act.

We have been clear in our recent paper *Trade Policy: the issues for Wales* that we believe in a fair and effective system of social protection to help people when they need it and that trade policy should support not undermine our social model. Furthermore we have called for the development of overarching principles for trade policy which include maintaining important environmental, economic and social protections, supporting well-being for all in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, recognising our responsibilities on the world stage and promoting fair and ethical trade.

Committees’ Recommendation: We recommend that the Welsh Government update the Community Cohesion Plan before summer 2018 to take account of recent rises in hate crime and new challenges to community cohesion in Wales.

The Welsh Government plans to publish the community cohesion plan and tackling hate crimes delivery plan. We recently updated our community cohesion plan to reflect the spike in hate crime as a result of Brexit.

We use our working document when working with partners, and this has enabled us to focus on a number of priority areas in the last few months. For example:

- Working with a wide range of partners to develop our Equality and Inclusion communications network, to try to increase our collective impact in countering negative rhetoric.

- Working with Police Forces and Cardiff University on an exciting project to develop and improve community tension monitoring systems that incorporate multi-agency working.
- Working with education colleagues as they update their Respecting Others anti-bullying guidance so that it supports teachers to be more confident in handling cases of hate-related bullying in schools.
- Working with members of the Hate Crime Criminal Justice Board Cymru to drive forward work to tackle hate crimes, for example this year we are focusing on “attrition rates” (the pathway and drop-off of cases between first report, through police handling, to prosecution), disability hate crime, and also age-related and misogyny hate crime.

The Welsh Government funds eight Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators (RCCCs) to facilitate regional working. The RCCCs are monitored against their delivery of actions in the working document. These actions are grouped under four objectives:

- Work at a strategic level to break down barriers to inclusion and integration across marginalised groups
- Work at a local level to break down barriers to inclusion and integration for particular groups and communities
- Supporting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and settled communities during the integration process
- Supporting communities in preventing hostility and extremism and managing consequences

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carwyn Jones', written in a cursive style.

CARWYN JONES