

Dawn Bowden
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip

Dear Dawn

Thank you for your recent letter and for the time you have been able to give us whilst we deal with the challenges we face. You and your team have been a great source of advice and we look forward to continuing to work with you and our other partners to build a WRU we can all be proud of.

As the Chair of the WRU, I've been humbled by what I have heard, particularly the impact on our female staff and players. I think we all know that we can always do more to make the game and our organisation more inclusive, but I was shocked by the personal stories highlighted by our former staff in the programme. I can only apologise to them and say that I will work night and day to ensure all of our staff feel safe and valued.

As you know, things have moved quickly and we have been in discussion with Sport Wales and others to set up the external taskforce that will help us ensure our culture is welcoming and inclusive and fit for the future.

You are right to highlight that we should not wait until the taskforce completes its work before we make changes, specifically to ensure that our staff feel safe, supported and valued, and that we tackle incidents and behaviours in a robust and consistent manner. I understand you remain concerned about current workplace policies and clearly we have more to do in terms of engaging with staff and with partners on that issue.

That said, I wanted to make sure you were aware of progress that we have made recently on this matter. I am pleased to be able to tell you that we appointed a new People Director a year ago and we have invested in new procedures and widespread mandatory training to make sure that we work together to develop every day working culture which is professional, inclusive and welcoming.

- Our HR team has been restructured and a further two team members, including an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager to provide more dedicated support to our teams.
- The HR Team has sought external expertise to provide advice and support in reviewing all of its people policies in 2022, which includes our EDI, whistleblowing and grievance policies, to ensure these are as robust as possible.
- We have an internal working group focused on inclusion and diversity conversations and EDI sponsors at Board and Executive level.
- Since 2021, all staff and board members have completed EDI training with external partners.
- We engaged with Chwarae Teg last October and have staff currently on their Inclusive Leadership Programme.

- We put in place six months ago an anonymous, external whistleblowing line for staff to be able to raise any issues in a safe and supported way.
- We have a suggestion box in place where staff can make anonymous suggestions in an informal manner, alongside a new area on our internal intranet where staff can look up how to report any concerns and access support resources.
- Our induction has been renewed so that new joiners are now given information on who their HR contact is and how they support and an introduction from our EDI Manager alongside other relevant information when starting.
- We carried out a staff survey in September 2022 which has given us valuable insight into our current staff views on the organisation and areas for improvement. We also offered all staff the opportunity to participate in EDI focus groups in August 2022, to gain their feedback on experiences and thoughts on our future priorities.
- This is an ongoing process and we have further mandatory EDI training for board members and community game representatives.

Changing culture takes time, but we're determined to do it, and in addition to the work of the taskforce, we're looking at immediate things that we can do, and have done to support our staff. I will copy this letter to the Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee.

I look forward to continuing our dialogue and thank you again for your advice and challenge.

Yours sincerely,

Ieuan Evans
Chair