

Comisiwn
Cydraddoldeb a
Hawliau Dynol

Equality and
Human Rights
Commission

The workplace

Who do you see?

Living together in Wales



Key findings

- There is a strong feeling that being treated unfairly at work because you're a woman is a **not** a 'thing of the past'.
- A significant proportion of the Welsh population support being able to work past the official age of retirement.
- The evidence suggests that there is a long way to go before positive action intervention receives widespread support in Wales.
- Welsh adults were evenly split in their views on Welsh language and recruitment into jobs.

The workplace

Introduction

This document provides the findings from a series of statements about the workplace on positive action, gender and age topics as well as Welsh language issues. These questions were included within the EHRC Wales attitudinal survey.

Gender issues in the workplace

There was overwhelming agreement that ‘fathers should be just as able as mothers to take time off work when their children are ill’. Ninety per cent of Welsh adults agreed (72 per cent agreed strongly) and just 7 per cent in disagreed. Broadly similar results were observed in the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2006 (85 per cent in agreement, 9 per cent in disagreement).

Notably, there was no significant difference in the level of agreement by gender, but age did have an impact. Younger adults (96 per cent) were more likely to agree with the statement than those aged 55-64 (85 per cent) or those aged 65 or more (76 per cent).

Those who were working or not working were more likely to agree with the statement than those who were retired (95 per cent and 94 per cent compared with 78 per cent respectively).

Households with children were more likely to agree than those without. A very high proportion of those (96 per cent) in a couple with children or in single parent households agreed with the statement compared with 87 per cent of households with no children.

Non-white adults were slightly more likely to be in agreement than white adults (96 per cent compared with 90 per cent).

There was little variation in levels of agreement by social grade, although DE¹ adults were less likely than average to agree with the statement. See table below (1.1).

¹ Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers or on state benefit/unemployed

Table 1.1 Agreement with statement ‘fathers should be just as able to take time off work when their children are ill’ by sub-group

	<i>Unweight ed base, n=</i>	<i>Weighted base, n=</i>	<i>Agree (strongly or tend to) (per cent)</i>
Total	1,589	1,589	90
Male	744	768	89
Female	845	821	91
Age: 16-34	385	413	97
35-54	598	581	96
55-64	262	248	85
65+	344	347	76
White British/Welsh	1438	1555	90
Other	151	34	96
Working	899	876	95
Retired	428	432	78
Not working	262	281	94
Couple with children	404	392	96
Couple, no children	542	524	87
Single with children	115	126	96
Single, no children	522	541	87
AB ²	382	376	91
C1 ³	533	538	93
C2 ⁴	242	241	90
DE	428	431	86

² Higher and intermediate managerial/administrative/professional households

³ Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial/administrative/professional households

⁴ Skilled manual workers

These findings are encouraging and provide further evidence for a desire for fairer terms of employment for both genders in relation to childcare⁵. However, gender discrimination in the workplace is still thought to exist. Just four in ten Welsh adults (42 per cent) agreed that 'being treated unfairly at work because you are a woman is a thing of the past', whilst half (49 per cent) disagreed.

In this instance, levels of agreement differed between the sexes. Men were more likely to agree (46 per cent) with the statement than women (39 per cent). Age analysis showed that those aged 16-34 were much more likely to agree with the statement than older adults - 49 per cent agreed compared with 41 per cent or less in other age groups.

Notably, it was younger women that were driving this difference: 47 per cent of women aged 16-34 agreed that being treated unfairly on the basis of gender was a thing of the past. This compared with 36 per cent of those aged 35-54 and 30 per cent of those aged 55-64. The findings may be evidence of positive changes in the workplace as perceived by newer members of the workforce. Or they may reflect women in their thirties and beyond having experienced or witnessed discrimination at later stages of their careers.

Those in social grade AB were much less likely to agree with the statement than those in lower social grades: 33 per cent of AB adults agreed with the statement compared with 42 per cent of C1 adults, 51 per cent of C2 adults and 46 per cent of DE adults.

Those who left education at age 19 or older (34 per cent) were less likely to agree with the statement than other adults (44 per cent or more, and notably almost half (49 per cent) of those still studying).

There were no differences in levels of agreement by ethnicity, working status or household make up.

⁵ See also discussion of fathers' attitudes in relation to paternity leave: Thompson et al, 2005, *Dads and their babies: leave arrangements in the first year*, EOC Working Paper Series No. 37

Table 1.2 Agreement with statement ‘being treated unfairly at work because you are a woman is a thing of the past’ by sub-group

	<i>Unweight ed base, n=</i>	<i>Weighted base, n=</i>	<i>Agree (strongly or tend to) (per cent)</i>
Total	1,589	1,589	42
Male	744	768	46
Female	845	821	39
Age: 16-34	385	413	49
35-54	598	581	40
55-64	262	248	39
65+	344	347	41
Males 16-34	172	193	50
Males 35-54	297	298	43
Males 55-64	128	125	49
Males 65+	147	153	42
Females 16-34	213	220	47
Females 35-54	301	284	36
Females 55-64	134	123	30
Females 65+	197	194	40
White British/Welsh	1438	1555	42
Other	151	34	48
Working	899	876	44
Retired	428	432	40
Not working	262	281	40
Couple with children	404	392	42
Couple, no children	542	524	39
Single with children	115	126	47
Single, no children	522	541	44
AB	382	376	33
C1	533	538	42
C2	242	241	51
DE	428	431	46

Age issues in the workplace

There was overwhelming support amongst Welsh adults (94 per cent) that people should be able to continue working after the official age of retirement if they so wished. Just 4 per cent disagreed. (Interestingly, however, the research findings from this survey in the 'Everyday Encounters' document show that 40 per cent of Welsh adults felt that those aged 70 or over would be unsuitable to be a primary school teacher.)

There were no significant differences in levels of agreement by gender, age or working status. Levels of agreement were also largely similar between social grades as 92 per cent was the lowest level of agreement and this was among DE adults.

Table 1.3 Agreement with statement 'people should have the right to continue working after 65 if they wish to' by sub-group

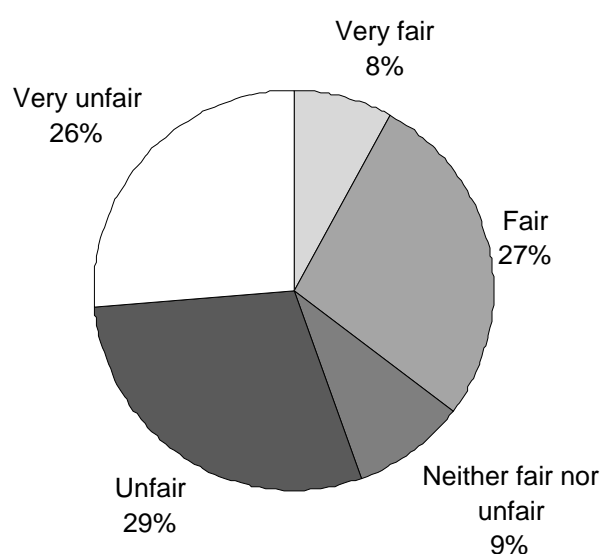
	<i>Unweight ed base, n=</i>	<i>Weighted base, n=</i>	<i>Agree (strongly or tend to) (per cent)</i>
Total	1,589	1,589	94
Male	744	768	94
Female	845	821	95
Age: 16-34	385	413	95
35-54	598	581	95
55-64	262	248	92
65+	344	347	93
White British/Welsh	1438	1555	94
Other	151	34	89
Working	899	876	95
Retired	428	432	93
Not working	262	281	95
Couple with children	404	392	95
Couple, no children	542	524	94
Single with children	115	126	97
Single, no children	522	541	93

AB	382	376	95
C1	533	538	96
C2	242	241	94
DE	428	431	92

The questionnaire explored perceptions of young people, and in particular Welsh adults' views on a lower minimum wage for workers aged 21 and under⁶.

Views were mixed on this matter. Approximately a third of Welsh adults (35 per cent) thought that a lower minimum wage for younger workers was fair or very fair while just over half (55 per cent) thought this was unfair or very unfair.

Figure 1.1 Fairness of a lower minimum wage for workers aged 21 and under



Base: All respondents (1,589 unweighted; 1,589 weighted). Don't know not shown (1%)

⁶ Respondents were asked: "Employers are allowed to pay workers aged 21 and under a lower rate of pay than older workers. Some people think this is fair, while others think it is unfair. What about you - do you think it is... ?" [scale: very fair to very unfair]

There were few gender differences, although males were slightly more likely than females to think that the situation was *very fair* (10 per cent compared with 6 per cent respectively).

Those aged 65+ were much more likely than those aged 16-34 and 35-54 to think that the situation was fair (43 per cent compared with 31 per cent and 33 per cent respectively). Women aged 16-34 were much *less likely* than women in all other age groups to think that the payment of a lower minimum wage to younger workers was fair (24 per cent compared with 34 per cent or more in other age groups).

Analysis by social grade revealed that AB adults were more likely than those in all other social grades to think that a lower minimum wage for young people was fair (42 per cent compared with 33 per cent in other social grades).

Those who finished their education at 19 or older were also more likely to agree that the current situation is fair (42 per cent compared with 34 per cent or less amongst those who finished education before 19 or were still studying).

Regional differences were also in evidence. Adults in Mid and West Wales (41 per cent) and North Wales (42 per cent) were more likely to support the current minimum wage levels for younger people than those in South East (29 per cent) or South West Wales (29 per cent).

Table 1.4 Fairness of a lower minimum wage for workers aged 21 and under by sub-group

	<i>Unweighted base, n=</i>	<i>Weighted base, n=</i>	<i>Very fair or fair (per cent)</i>
Total	1,589	1,589	35
Male	744	768	37
Female	845	821	33
Age: 16-34	385	413	31
35-54	598	581	33
55-64	262	248	36
65+	344	347	43
White British/Welsh	1438	1555	35
Other	151	34	31
AB	382	376	42

C1	533	538	33
C2	242	241	33
DE	428	431	33
Terminal education age	**78	92	24
- still studying			
- 16 or under	638	651	34
-17 to 18	327	334	31
- 19+	544	511	42
Mid & West Wales	290	292	41
North Wales	336	344	42
South Wales Central	366	348	34
South Wales East	324	327	29
South Wales West	273	278	29

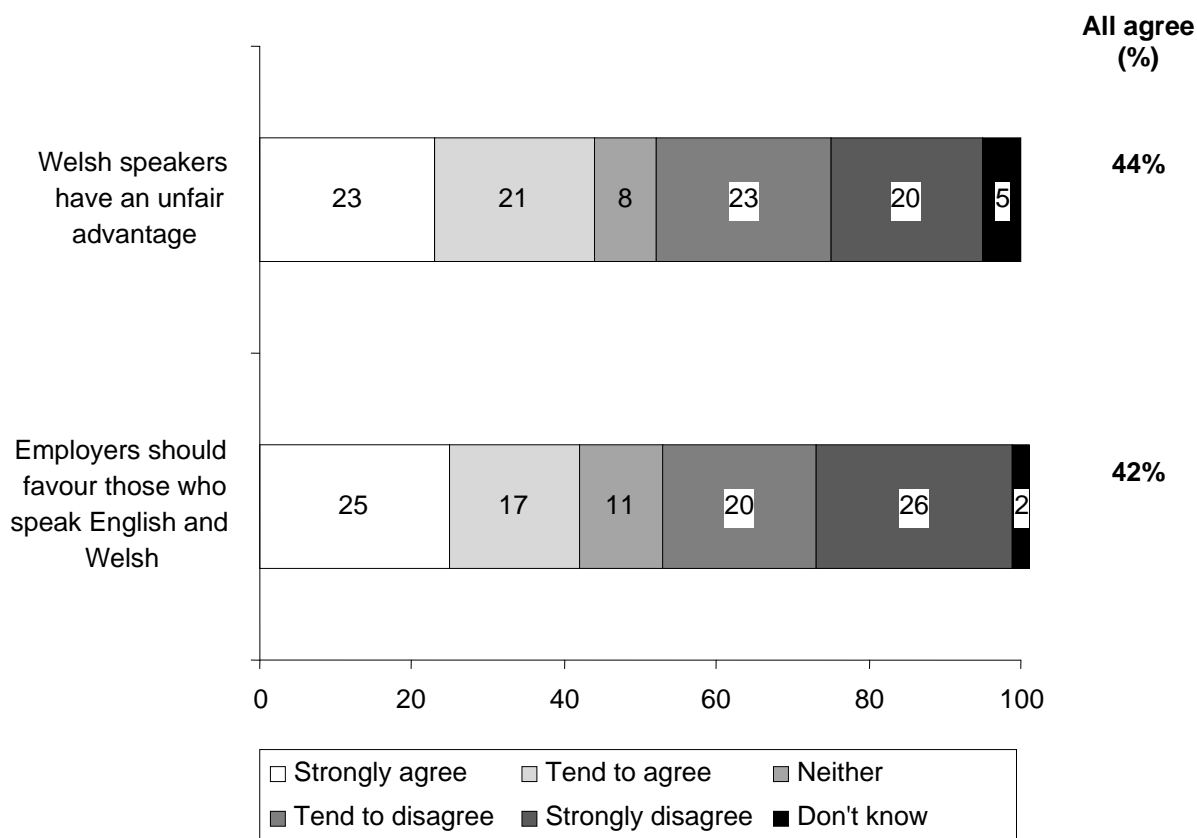
Note: ** denotes small base (unweighted base less than 100)

Welsh language and workplace recruitment

The Commission wished to gain insight into people's perceptions of whether Welsh speakers were advantaged or disadvantaged in a recruitment situation and the perceived fairness of this.

For both statements, views were still split with similar proportions (around four in ten) agreeing and disagreeing with each statement, as shown in figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2 Welsh language and recruitment



Base: All respondents (1,589 unweighted; 1,589 weighted)

We found that the language spoken at home, linked with identity, influenced people’s responses. Welsh speakers were far more likely than English speakers to agree that ‘employer should favour those who speak both Welsh and English when filling jobs’ (76 per cent compared with 38 per cent).

In the case of whether adults believe that ‘Welsh speakers have an unfair advantage when accessing jobs’ the reverse was true. English speakers were more likely (45 per cent) than Welsh speakers (29 per cent) to agree that Welsh speakers had an unfair advantage.

Those who identified themselves as Welsh were far more likely than those who described themselves as English or British to agree that ‘employers should favour those who speak English and Welsh’ (48 per cent compared with 32 per cent and 34 per cent respectively). Yet, the same groups were much less likely to agree that ‘Welsh speakers have an unfair advantage when accessing jobs’ (39 per cent compared with 51 per cent and 51 per cent respectively).

Those in Mid and West Wales were more likely than those in other regions to agree that ‘employers should favour those who speak both

Welsh and English when filling jobs' (52 per cent compared with 44 per cent or less respectively). This relates to the distribution of adults whose first or main language was Welsh - 36 per cent were living in Mid and West Wales.

Social grade had little impact on whether people believed 'Welsh speakers had an unfair advantage when accessing jobs.' AB adults, however, were much less likely than C2 and DE adults to agree that 'employers should favour those speaking English and Welsh' (36 per cent compared with 45 per cent and 46 per cent respectively). This pattern was reflected in and linked to working status: those not working were *more* likely to agree with the statement than those in employment (47 per cent compared with 40 per cent respectively).

Men were more likely (47 per cent) than women (41 per cent) to feel that 'Welsh speakers had an unfair advantage in accessing jobs.' Those aged 65+ were more likely to agree that Welsh speakers had an unfair advantage than those aged 54 or younger (50 per cent compared with 43 per cent or less). It should be noted that older adults were less likely to speak Welsh in their home than their younger counterparts.

Age and gender, however, had no consistent impact on agreement levels regarding whether employers should favour English and Welsh speakers during recruitment.

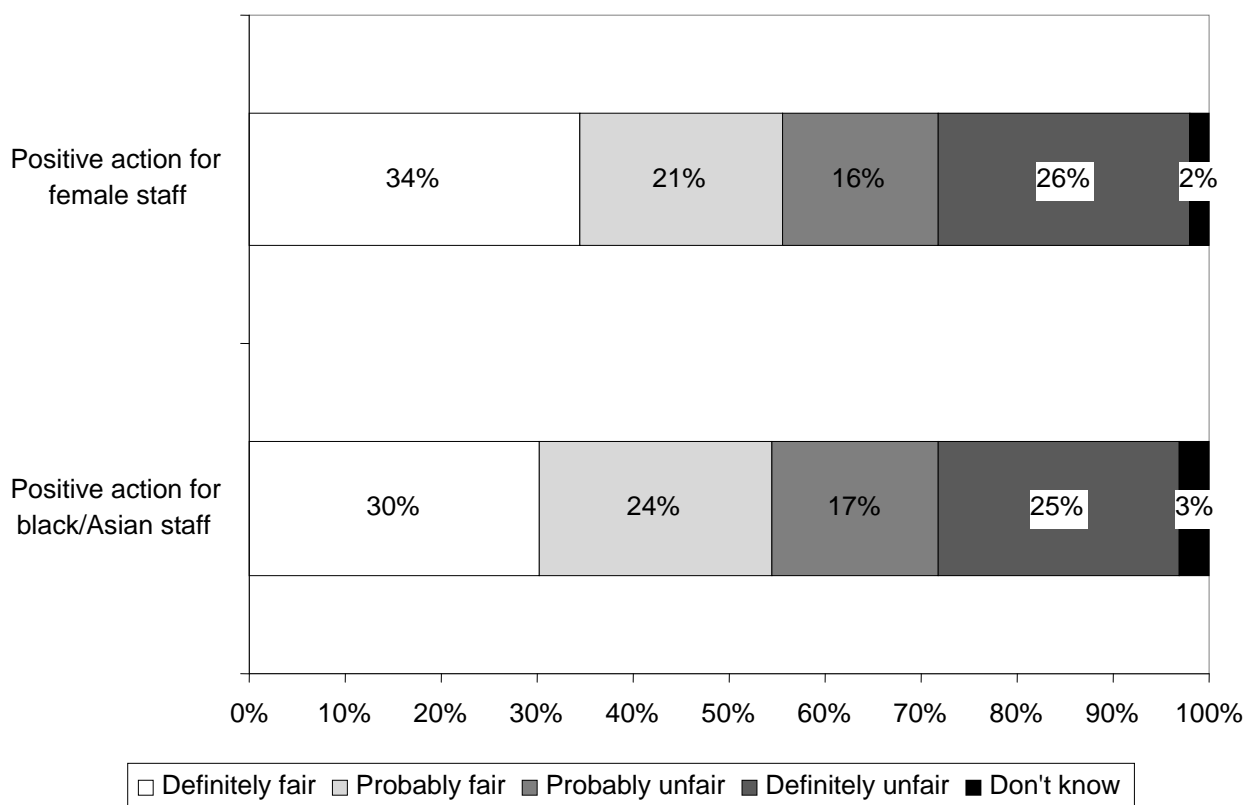
Positive action in the workplace

The issue of positive action in the workplace was investigated by way of two scenarios. The first described a company in which fewer women than men held senior jobs. The second described a company in which very few Black and Asian people held senior jobs. Respondents were asked whether it was fair or unfair for extra opportunities for training and qualifications to be given to the 'minority' group.

In each case a slight majority felt that offering such training opportunities to those who were underrepresented in senior positions was fair; 55 per cent felt that way in the case of women, 54 per cent felt it was fair in the case of Black and Asian individuals. Broadly similar results were observed in the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2006⁷. However, in Wales a slightly smaller proportion of adults thought that positive action in relation to women was fair (55 per cent compared with 63 per cent in the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2006).

⁷ Op cit. Please note comparisons between the two surveys are made with caution due to differences in methods used

Figure 1.3 Fairness of positive action scenarios



Base: All respondents (1,589 unweighted; 1,589 weighted)

The analysis of who was less likely to think that positive action was fair demonstrated that:

Men were more likely to think it unfair than women. This was particularly pronounced in the case of positive action for women in senior positions: 49 per cent of men thought this was fair compared with 61 per cent of women).

Those aged 16-34 were less likely than those aged 65+ to think the scenarios were fair. Almost half (49 per cent) of those aged 16-34 thought that positive action for Black and Asian people in senior jobs was fair. Whereas 62 per cent of those aged 65+ agreed that it was fair.

Whether or not a person was working had an impact. Of those who were working 50 per cent thought that positive action for women in senior positions was fair compared with 61 per cent or more of those not in employment/retired.

A difference in social grade was also in evidence. Fewer people in higher social grades thought it was fair - 53 per cent or fewer of those in

social grades AB, C1, C2 thought positive action for women was fair compared with 62 per cent of DE individuals.

Just over half (53 per cent) of white British/Welsh individuals thought that positive action in relation to Black and Asian people in senior jobs was fair, as opposed to 67 per cent of non-white adults.

Those who left full time education aged 19 or older (49 per cent) were less likely to believe that positive action in the case of women in senior positions was fair. Yet, 58 per cent or more of those who left education before they were 19 did see the issue as fair.

Table 1.5 Fairness of positive action scenarios by sub-group

	<i>Unweighted base, n=</i>	<i>Weighted base, n=</i>	<i>Positive action is definitely or probably fair...</i>	
			<i>...for women in senior positions (per cent)</i>	<i>...for Black/Asian people in senior positions (per cent)</i>
Total	1,589	1,589	55	54
Male	744	768	49	47
Female	845	821	61	60
16-34	385	413	49	49
35-54	598	581	55	52
55-64	262	248	58	56
65+	344	347	62	62
White British/Welsh	1438	1555	55	53
Other	151	34	64	67
Working	899	876	50	48
Retired	428	432	62	62
Not working	262	281	61	60
AB	382	376	52	50
C1	533	538	53	51
C2	242	241	52	50
DE	428	431	62	62
Terminal	**78	92	53	55

education age				
- still studying				
- 16 or under	638	651	60	58
-17 to 18	327	334	58	55
- 19+	544	511	49	48

Note: ** denotes small base (unweighted base less than 100)

The characteristics of those who were less likely to think positive action fair may be summarised as: typically belonging to higher social grades, in employment, and more likely to have terminated full time education at age 19 or older. In contrast, the characteristics usually observed amongst those with a tendency towards discriminatory attitudes have been summarised as: typically being older and those with lower levels of educational attainment (this links with terminal education age and social grade)⁸.

This demonstrates that a proportion of those we would typically expect to be in favour of anti-discriminatory measures oppose positive action. Is this because they can more readily relate to the employment setting and perceive such interventions as unfair when it might impact their own careers? Or, as suggested by Bromley et al⁹, those who already have qualifications or senior positions may be reluctant to see others helped to obtain the same advantages.

The findings suggests that there is a long way to go before positive action interventions receive widespread support, even amongst more liberal members of the Welsh population.

⁸ For example, see Bromley, C. et al (2007), op cit

⁹ ibid

Summary

The findings reveal mixed perceptions in relation to gender, age and recruitment issues in the workplace. Whilst there is unanimous agreement on some issues, others provoke a more varied response. Welsh adults were evenly split in their views on Welsh language and recruitment into jobs.

Positive action in the form of additional qualifications and training for women and Black or Asian people under-represented in senior positions was deemed to be fair by a slight majority of Welsh adults. Substantial proportions felt such interventions were unfair. The findings indicate that there is a long way to go before even the more liberal quarters of the Welsh public are fully convinced by such means of delivering equality of opportunity in the workplace.

Notes

Further information on the research is available on the Commission in Wales pages on our website at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com

About the attitudinal survey

EHRC Wales commissioned GfK NOP to undertake research into people's attitudes towards discrimination, human rights and social cohesion in Wales. The research seeks to explore people's attitudes towards discrimination relating to gender, ethnic minority groups, disabled people, gay men and lesbians, issues on age, religion and faith and also the Welsh language. These results establish a baseline measurement of attitudes which could be repeated at future intervals.

The overall sample was 1,589 respondents. The survey was carried out by telephone. All respondents were offered the option of completing the survey in Welsh. Access issues were addressed by offering those with hearing impairments the opportunity to use a TypeTalk service. Those who found it difficult to communicate in English were offered the chance to have the interview interpreted using Language Line.

The sampling method used in the survey combined the selection of Random Digit Dial (RDD) numbers with the application of quotas to control the profile of those taking part in the survey. Quotas were set by region within Wales (five regions), by gender interlocked with working status, by age band and by ethnic origin based on demographic information derived from the 2001 Census. These were set to ensure that the sample would be representative of the Welsh population by these factors.

An interviewing boost was carried out in areas with higher proportion of ethnic minority people in the population.

Comparisons with Scotland and GB

Comparisons have been drawn with the findings from the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2006 and the perceptions audit carried out by GfK NOP. It should be noted that only broad comparisons are possible because different methodologies were used in both these surveys. Therefore, any similarities or differences between the findings from these surveys and the results of the EHRC Wales survey must be treated as indicative rather than absolute.