

EHRC Monitoring of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales

Universities report

April 2014

Our intention is to monitor objectives that:

- impact directly on people
- were identified as priorities in the EHRC assessment of inequality in Wales
- linked with Welsh Ministerial priorities

Following consultation with the Education Minister, we decided to continue to monitor actions arising from the specific duty to address gender pay differences in higher education and to find out what actions have been taken to widen access and increase student diversity. Every university has at least one objective related to this.

We asked Welsh Universities to provide examples of work arising from their PSED objectives in these two areas.

Measuring progress

Widening access

Every university was able to report at least one initiative to widen access and increase student diversity.

Some universities have focussed on increasing access for disabled students. As a first step they are encouraging students to tell the university if they are disabled and to provide information about their specific needs. By gathering and analysing the student data universities have begun to offer tailored support.

Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities are providing advice, guidance and practical support. Cardiff University identified lower progression rates for disabled students and is offering support to assist progression.

Cardiff Metropolitan told us about its initiative to increase access for refugees. Cardiff University is tailoring support to people from different religions and Swansea University is taking steps to increase support to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Evidence was provided of initiatives to attract students who are socio-economically disadvantaged into further and higher education. Cardiff Metropolitan, Glyndwr, South Wales and Trinity St David Universities are participants in partnership projects offering pre-university courses to under-represented groups. These are largely organised on a regional

basis. Glyndwr developed courses for unemployed people and this resulted in two students from the project starting degree courses.

Equal pay

Most universities have built on the foundations laid by their work last year. They were able to report some progress to narrow gender pay differences although the pace is slow and this will only increase if equal pay is given a greater priority.

Most universities are gathering and analysing pay roll and human resources data to identify and understand the causes of the pay gap in their institution. This underpinning work is a continuation of the activity they reported last year.

Universities are addressing the three causes of the pay gap - discrimination in pay systems, job segregation and the balance between work and home - in different ways.

In terms of discrimination in pay systems most universities are focussed on specific aspects of the pay structure where there are gender gaps or a lack of transparency. Last year some universities reported that they were reviewing the professorial salary band, overtime and start salaries. Some reported job evaluation exercises and equal pay reviews taking place. This year Aberystwyth and Cardiff Metropolitan universities reported that new salary bands have been implemented as a result of the work undertaken previously.

Aberystwyth and South Wales Universities told us they had implemented new promotion procedures and career pathways to tackle job segregation and increase the gender balance in more senior positions.

Cardiff University gave a specific example of addressing the balance between work and home and this was the introduction of a scheme to assist women returning to work after maternity leave.

Glyndwr told us it will be carrying out an equal pay review following a restructure at the university. Trinity St David reported, as it did last year, that progress on equal pay had slowed because of mergers and it intends to revisit the issue as part of the process to harmonise terms and conditions.

Identifying trends

From the individual university reports it is possible to identify some specific trends relating to widening access. These include:

- collecting and analysing of student data to identify people with protected characteristics and their specific needs

- support for disabled students and students with learning differences
- extending participation to people who are socio-economically disadvantaged or under-represented

Trends in relation to addressing gender pay differences include:

- engagement with various stages of job evaluation and equal pay reviews
- measures to address job segregation
- monitoring promotion data and reviewing promotion criteria

Sharing effective practice

Some universities are working in partnership with external organisations in their locality to build and share effective practice in widening access, particularly increasing the numbers of socio-economically disadvantaged students.

No specific examples of sharing effective practice in narrowing gender pay gaps were provided but some universities told us they are working with external organisations that encourage good practice such as Athena Swan and the Women Adding Value to the Economy project.

Ministerial reporting

Welsh Ministers have a specific duty to publish a report on how devolved public authorities in Wales are meeting their general duty. They are required to publish a report no later than 31 December 2014 and every four years following that, with an interim report every two years.

These reports must set out an overview of the progress made by public authorities in Wales towards complying with the general duty and proposals to coordinate action by public authorities in Wales to bring about further progress on the general duty.

One aim of EHRC monitoring is to assist Welsh Ministers to fulfil their statutory duty.

Progress Report on Universities Actions to Tackle Unequal Pay and to Widen Access

April 2014

Report on Individual Universities

Aberystwyth University told us that to widen access and increase student diversity one initiative has resulted in the appointment of two Student Support Accessibility Advisors. They work with Departmental Disability Coordinators and provide advice and information about services to support specific needs to applicants and students. This includes care leavers, disabled students and people with learning difficulties. The advisors are proactive in identifying student needs as part of the admissions process.

Currently Aberystwyth University is reviewing and consulting on the potential for a multi faith reflection space within the university to support religious and international students and foster good relations between different faiths.

Aberystwyth University told us that to address its equal pay objective it has built upon its work from last year. In 2012 as part of the equal pay action plan academic promotions were reviewed. Previously they were based solely on research credentials, which acted as a barrier to women whose careers had often centred on teaching and/or leadership, and as a result were unable to devote additional time to research. The university changed its promotion criteria to include and recognise research, teaching and leadership, which the university is confident will enable fairer access to promotion opportunities.

Aberystwyth University is the first university in Wales to implement a professorial salary band which they say will ensure transparency and equity in the pay system. The University's Equal Pay Audit is scheduled to take place later this year.

Bangor University told us that to widen access it has a joint Widening Access Strategy with Aberystwyth University and a Widening Access Centre that coordinates activities. It said the Public Sector Equality Duty and the University's Strategic Plan are drivers in promoting widening access and increasing student diversity. The university proactively supports students with access needs. The Disability Service provides guidance on disability related matters to ensure the full inclusion of disabled students within the academic and social community.

The Bangor Access Centre provides study needs assessment for students by identifying disability-related barriers and recommending support strategies and equipment. The Miles Dyslexia Centre provides all-round support for students with dyslexia, and other specific learning differences.

The university's disability services ensure that the needs of current and future disabled students are met. The aim is to identify and remove barriers, embedding effective practice and inclusive practice. The university says this creates a flexible and accessible environment, enhancing student learning opportunities. The disability disclosure rate of students at Bangor remains consistently higher than the Wales average.

Bangor University told us that to address its equal pay objective over the last year it has built on previous years work. The university undertakes annual equal pay audits, which are reported to an Equal Pay Working Group and the Human Resources and Equality and Diversity Task Groups. The Senior Remuneration Committee also receives gender related data and there is a commitment to implementing a new starting salary policy. An action plan has been developed and work is ongoing around expanding the single spine to include Professorial roles and to develop policies on allowances.

Cardiff University told us that its work to widen access and increase student diversity included a review of student monitoring data arrangements. Previously religion or belief and sexual orientation were not monitored. The university decided this data would be helpful to enable effective support to these groups. Identifying the number and study subject of students that may be effected when Ramadan falls during the university examination period, enables support to be provided.

The last monitoring data report identified there may be lower progression rates for disabled students so the university is identifying actions to support them. Cardiff University's commitment to increasing disability disclosure has resulted in disclosure rates increasing annually.

Cardiff University told us that to address its equal pay objective it built on work from the previous year aimed at addressing the differences in gender representation in senior grades and non-traditional subjects. The university received Athena Swan awards for promoting gender equality in STEM subjects. (e.g. Maths and Science) The university monitored the impact of targeted training and mentoring for female staff via promotions data. This indicates there has been an increase in applications and successful applications from women in the last 3 years.

The university implemented a pilot scheme within the Business School to support academic staff on a relevant career pathway, returning to work following a period of maternity, additional paternity or adoption leave. Staff applying for this leave could request a period of 'protected research time' without any teaching or administrative duties, or a reduction in one or both of these elements of their job. This scheme supports the career progression of female academics within the Business School. One female academic has taken (and completed) her leave, with an additional three applications received since the scheme began.

Cardiff Metropolitan University told us that to widen access and increase student diversity courses have been set up in Communities First areas, to encourage people from disadvantaged communities to engage with higher education. Refugees have been taking IELTS exams. If level 6 is achieved in this academic English qualification, refugees would have free access to higher education.

Over the last year the Clink project has provided transferable business skills to prisoners from the Clink restaurant in Cardiff Prison, with the aim of improving their soft skills in a hospitality environment. The university has piloted a scheme to mentor one prisoner who graduated from The Clink, focusing on supporting his education and training choices.

Seven prisoners have over the last year attended the Transferable Skills course. Several are scheduled for release shortly, with the mentored prisoner already having been released. This prisoner has continued in employment, secured accommodation, enrolled on an Access to HE course with a local FE college, and has not reoffended.

Cardiff Metropolitan University told us that to address its equal pay objective it has built on initiatives from previous years. A job evaluation exercise has taken place for Level 3 management and Professors and as a result a new pay structure has been agreed, contracts for professors reviewed and are currently being reissued.

Glyndwr University told us that to widen access and increase student diversity it has started a Learning for Employability Module as part of the FdA Professional Education and Training course. The course is delivered within the community, and is predominantly aimed at disabled people, young people who have been in care, and ethnic minority groups in Communities First areas. The module provides 20 university credits, which can count towards further and higher learning opportunities.

Delivered in Communities First buildings, the course is mainly made up of people who are NEET or unemployed. The courses are designed to increase aspirations and encourage higher education participation. The aim is to improve skills including presentation skills, team work and CV writing. Courses also include visits to the university to meet students, look around, discuss fees and financial options. There are visits to local industry to speak to current employees, discuss working conditions, how to apply and what employers are looking for in potential employees. A key part of the course is a mock interview to develop essential skills to provide the students with a better chance of finding employment.

Twelve local residents enrolled for the first course with eight completing. Four went on to immediately access further courses and two applied to enter the university in September. The widening access courses are being rolled out across North Wales.

Glyndwr University told us that to address its equal pay objective it had committed to conducting an Equal Pay Review in April 2014. However, it was agreed by the Human Resources Committee to postpone until completion of the University restructure.

Swansea University told us that to widen access and improve student diversity it has undertaken a range of projects. The Gay by Degree Stonewall University Guide for prospective students, is a 10 point checklist that provides a rating for how supportive the university is to LGBT students. Over the last 12 months the university has made progress increasing its score from 6 out of 10 to 8 out of 10. This puts the university in the top three gay friendly universities in Wales.

In terms of employment the university engaged with the Stonewall Workplace Equality index. This is a benchmarking tool for employers to measure their efforts to create inclusive workplaces for lesbian, gay and bisexual employees.

As an employer the university moved 78 places up the Stonewall index last year. The university told us that this is reflective of the amount of work done on the LGBT agenda. 94% of people who applied to work at the university in 2013 disclosed their sexual orientation, demonstrating that potential employees see the university as a LGBT friendly employer.

The university has told us it has made progress in relation to the LGBT agenda across students and staff in the university as a result.

Swansea University told us that to address its Equal Pay Objective it has participated in the Women Adding Value to the Economy (WAVE)

project. WAVE is an equal pay partnership project of the University of South Wales, the Women's Workshop and Cardiff University. The aim is to understand and 'interrupt' the ways in which gender pay inequalities are built in to employment.

The University of South Wales told us that to widen access and increase student diversity one project it is leading is the University Heads of the Valleys Institute (UHOVI) project. This aims to increase participation in higher and further education of underrepresented groups, particularly those from disadvantaged communities. It was set up to tackle the low participation in higher education by heads of the valleys communities. In 2012/13 there were 1663 new learners as a result of this project, jumping to 3305 in the current academic year. The project is backed by Welsh Government, and the University works with further education colleges, training providers, local authorities, businesses, schools and voluntary organisations to enable it to succeed. Its success should contribute to the regeneration of the South Wales Valleys, promoting social inclusion and increasing self worth, helping to improve job prospects and quality of life for those living and working there. The project won the commitment to widening participation' category at the Guardian University Awards in 2013.

The University of South Wales told us that to address its equal pay objective it has largely built upon previous work to develop training and awareness. The Equal Pay Audit found that the university does not have a significant pay gap, but it recognised there are issues within the workforce around occupational segregation and overtime. The university has taken steps to ensure overtime opportunities are offered fairly to all staff.

New work to address the university's pay objective relates to the route for staff to achieve Readership and Professorships. This has been revised to provide clear career pathways in research and development, teaching and learning and innovation and engagement. The aim is to assist more women to reach the highest level. Since the changes were introduced last year, 4 female professors and 8 female Readers have been awarded titles.

University of Wales Trinity St. David told us that mergers with other universities and colleges between 2010 and 2013 has led to considerable change within the University. The new Teaching and Learning Block on the Carmarthen Campus has improved accessibility,

and Accessibility Aids have been introduced on the Mount Pleasant campus to support disabled students.

University of Wales Trinity St David told us that to address its equal pay objective it has worked closely with trade unions, and a major Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) has been undertaken across the various job families. This has been part of a wider harmonization exercise of all aspects of the employment contract. The university was able to report that the mergers have not adversely impacted the gender balance of the management structure.