

University of South Wales Group
Strategic Equality Plan
2016 – 2020

Mae fersiwn Gymraeg o'r ddogfen hon ar gael.

A Welsh language version of this document is available.

This document can be made available in different formats upon request.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	4
1.0 FOREWORD BY PROFESSOR JULIE LYDON, VICE CHANCELLOR	5
2.0 INTRODUCTION	7
2.1 About USW Group	7
2.2 USW Group Visions, Core Values & Principles.....	8
2.3 University Strategy	8
3.0 USW GROUP EQUALITY & DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	12
3.1 Board of Governors / Board of Directors.....	12
3.2 Equality Champion.....	12
3.3 Equality Committees	12
3.4 Equality Strategy Group.....	13
4.0 USW GROUP EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENT	14
5.0 The EQUALITY ACT & USW GROUP	16
5.1 Protected Characteristics	16
5.2 The General Duty.....	16
5.3 The Specific Duties & USW.....	17
5.3.1 Equality Objectives.....	17
5.3.2 Engagement.....	18
5.3.3 Assessment of Impact.....	19
5.3.4 Equality Information	19
5.3.5 Employment Information	21
5.3.6 Pay Differences.....	21
5.3.7 Staff Training.....	22
5.3.8 Accessibility.....	22

5.3.9 Procurement.....	22
5.3.10 Annual Reporting.....	23
5.3.11 Publishing and Monitoring the Strategic Equality Plan	23
6. STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES	25
1. CULTURE AND GOVERNANCE	25
2. COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT	26
3. DIVERSITY OF STUDENT BODY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE	27
4. ATTRACTING, RETAINING & DEVELOPING STAFF.....	27
5. ACCESSIBILITY	28
6. INCLUSIVITY IN RESEARCH.....	28
7. EQUAL PAY.....	29
8. DATA COLLECTION & MONITORING	29
7. CONTACT DETAILS.....	30

APPENDIX 1 USW EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX 2 RWCMD EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX 3 THE COLLEGE METHRYR TYDFIL EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX 4 CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT REPORT

APPENDIX 5 VOLUNTARY SECTOR ENGAGEMENT EVENT REPORT

ABBREVIATIONS

CiD	College Inclusivity & Diversity Steering Group for The College Merthyr Tydfil
CPI	Critical Performance Indicators
DDESG	Disability & Dyslexia Equality Sub Group
E&D	Equality & Diversity
EDSG	Equality & Diversity Steering Group for USW Group
EIAs	Equality Impact Assessments
GESG	Gender & Sexual Orientation Equality Sub Group
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
LGBTQ*	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning and any other gender identities or sexual orientations that differ from heterosexual
PC	Protected Characteristic
RRBESG	Race, Religion & Belief Equality Sub Group
RWCMD	Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama
SEP	Strategic Equality Plan
SU	Student Union
USW	University of South Wales
USW Group	University of South Wales, Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama and The College Merthyr Tydfil

1.0 FOREWORD BY PROFESSOR JULIE LYDON, VICE CHANCELLOR

The University of South Wales Group is a diverse academic community of all religions and none, united by a common commitment to academic endeavour. The satisfaction we feel in work comes in graduations, lectures, canteens, social spaces, where we see how what we do is transforming the lives and prospects of those individuals who study with us. Our graduation ceremonies look and feel diverse: they are a celebration people of every background and origin, with different life stories, all able to access the tremendous opening up of potential that comes with University study.

Our staff are an equally diverse body of people with different perspectives, values, and attitudes. We seek to promote an inclusive environment where such differences are shared and valued, and where any unfair treatment or discrimination is challenged and eliminated. It is important that we promote inclusivity in all our activities and promote the principles of diversity by ensuring that different perspectives of individuals or groups are respected and celebrated.

This Strategic Equality Plan sets out our response to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. Through this plan, we have set out a clear commitment to not only comply with equality legislation but also to ensure that all those who work or study within the University of South Wales Group are treated with respect and that diverse needs are taken into consideration and responded to. This commitment to equality and diversity is even more important during this current climate of economic uncertainty and substantial change to the education sector. This is a time when it is even more essential to ensure that steps to ensure equality of opportunity in education and work are put in place and actions are prioritised where they are most needed.

This Strategic Equality Plan sets out eight Strategic Equality Objectives for the USW Group between 2016 and 2020. These have been developed using both quantitative and qualitative evidence to inform our decisions about the priorities we need to focus upon and have been subject to consultation with staff and students. We are confident that the priorities we have set address the most pressing equality issues

within our University communities. We will ensure that the Strategic Equality Plan remains a 'live' document that is implemented throughout the Group and the progress, achievements and challenges of doing so are regularly reviewed. While it is the responsibility of the Board of Governors and leadership teams to ensure we are meeting the requirements of equality legislation and we give this task utmost importance, we recognise that embedding equality into everything we do is fundamental to meeting our legal and moral responsibilities. This Plan is therefore important to all parts of our USW Group community, and I commend it to you.

Professor Julie Lydon, Vice Chancellor
University of South Wales

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The University of South Wales Group's Strategic Equality Plan provides a clear framework for promoting equality and diversity and embedding the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 within the workings of the Group. Building upon the work carried out during the lifespan of the Group's previous plan, this Strategic Equality Plan identifies key priorities for achieving improved equality outcomes in a targeted and consistent way. It covers the four year period between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2020.

2.1 *About USW Group*

This Strategic Equality Plan covers the whole USW Group. The Group consists of: the University of South Wales (USW), the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD), and The College Merthyr Tydfil.

[The University of South Wales](#) (USW) was formed in April 2013 by the merger of the University of Glamorgan and the University of Wales, Newport. The University of South Wales is one of the largest in the UK and the largest in Wales with over 30,000 students and over 2000 permanent staff. USW includes the [Universities Heads of the Valleys Institutes](#) (UHOVI), which provides opportunities to study locally, offering a range of part time and full time higher education courses across Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff and Vale, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Torfaen. In 2014/15, UHOVI provided learning opportunities to 1572 part time students and 641 full time students.

[The Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama](#) (RWCMD) is the National Conservatoire of Wales and enables students to enter and influence the world of music, theatre and related professions. The college has over 700 students and employs over 120 permanent staff, with over 400 part time visiting professionals.

[The College Merthyr Tydfil](#) is a well-established further education provider with over 60 years' experience within the locality. In September 2013 the college moved to a brand new building and became a modern tertiary college providing sixth form

education alongside further education vocational courses and higher education foundation degrees. The college has 270 staff and 2,000 students.

This Strategic Equality Plan sets out a series of Strategic Equality Objectives for the next four years. Whilst these Strategic Objectives cover the whole USW Group, three detailed implementation plans have been produced providing the detail of how, and when, specific actions under each objective will be undertaken. These action plans will be reviewed on a yearly basis and will be subject to scrutiny through the yearly Strategic Equality Plan Annual Reports. The three Strategic Equality Action Plans can be found here:

- Appendix 1 – USW Strategic Equality Action Plan
- Appendix 2 – RWCMD Strategic Equality Action Plan
- Appendix 3 – The College Merthyr Tydfil’s Strategic Equality Action Plan

2.2 USW Group Visions, Core Values & Principles

The Strategic Equality Plan outlines the key equality priority areas in line with achieving the USW Group institution’s visions, core values and principles.

RWCMD Vision Statement can be found [here](#).

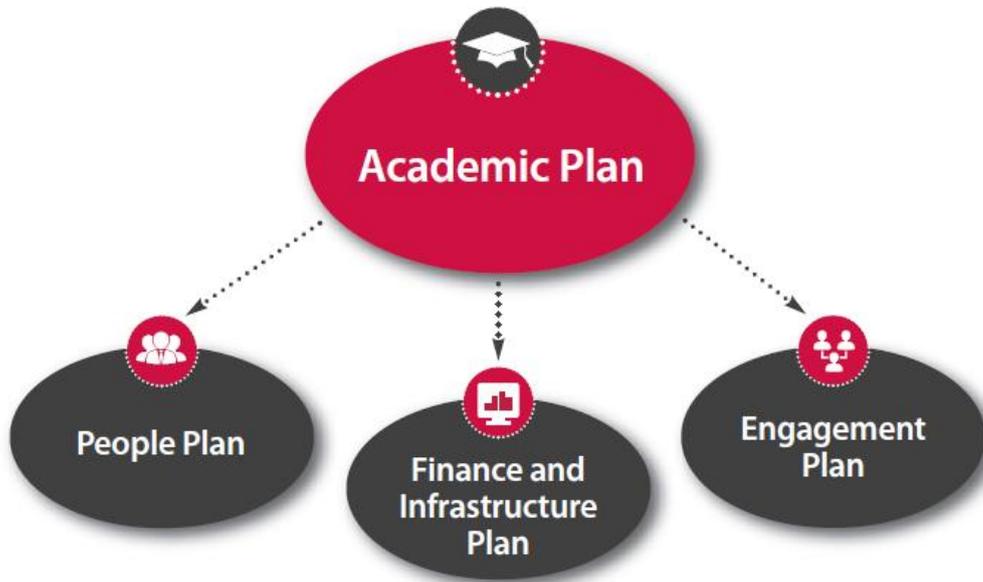
USW’s Vision, Core Values and Principles can be found [here](#).

The College Merthyr Tydfil’s Vision, Mission and Commitments can be found [here](#).

2.3 University Strategy

The University of South Wales has a series of Critical Performance Indicators (CPIs) for 2014 to 2020. These cover students, applied research and innovation, and engagement and sustainability. The Strategic Equality Objectives link directly to these CPIs.

In order to build upon the USW vision, the Academic Plan has been developed to outline USW’s strategic priorities until 2020. The Academic Plan is supported by three underpinning key enabling plans, namely the People Plan, Finance & Infrastructure Plan and Engagement Plan.



The Strategic Equality Plan sits with these four strategic documents, supporting their strategic direction and embedding equality considerations into the key goals and targets within them. The Strategic Equality Objectives link directly to the overarching university wide priority areas set out within these strategies. They also link directly to USW’s Strategic Engagement Planning Document.

Each action contained within the Equality Action Plans highlights a clear link to strategic targets within these strategies through specifying the strategy or target it relates to. This demonstrates that the actions contained within the Equality Action Plans are not separate pieces of work, but are part of core USW Group business and contribute towards the overarching CPIs and strategic direction of the institutions.

Underneath the three key enabling plans, each department and faculty produces a yearly Strategic Operational Plan. There will be four strands to each faculty / departmental Strategic Operational Plan: Resource Management, Process Improvement, Service Excellence and Human Resources. Equality priorities from the SEP will be embedded into the Service Excellence and Human Resources sections of each departmental / faculty Strategic Operational Plan, with each department / faculty being required to provide evidence of performance and metrics for each relevant objective. This will further ensure that the Strategic Equality Objectives are embedded into the work of each section of the institutions.

This approach will be built upon throughout the duration of this four year SEP, thus working towards the mainstreaming of equality into core USW Group business and strategies.

The SEP also links into the USW Prevent Protocol, developed in response to the Prevent Duty which is a new legislative duty placed on HEI's. The University's approach to compliance with the Government's Prevent Duty Guidance is based on the principles of free speech, engagement, inclusion and safeguarding. It is consistent with the University's overall commitment to equality and diversity as outlined in the USW Group Equality & Diversity Policy Statement (see section 4) and the USW Group's response to the General and Specific Duties in the Equality Act (see section 5).

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 requires the University to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" and this is understood as mitigating the risk not only of violent extremism but also of expressions of "non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit". This builds on our Equality & Diversity Policy Statement and Dignity at Work/Study Policies by reinforcing the protection of staff and students from behaviour which can result in the creation of an intimidating and hostile working or studying environment.

The University's Freedom of Speech Code of Practice recognises that the ability of all members to query the positions and views of others and put forward radical ideas that may sometimes be controversial is central to the concept of an academic community. At the same time, it acknowledges that freedom of speech must be within the law and that in the exchange of opinions everyone must treat others fairly and with dignity and respect. This applies not only to those who may be critical of certain groups but also to the way in which members of such groups respond to criticism.

The University's Freedom of Speech Code of Practice, the Prevent Protocol and the External Speakers/Events Policy have been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment to measure the risk of targeting any group of people who share a

protected characteristic in a prejudiced or discriminatory way. Wide consultation was undertaken as part of the development of these documents and they were submitted to the Equality & Diversity Steering Group prior to approval from the Board of Governors.

Welsh language issues are not covered by the Equality Act, but are addressed in the University Group's Welsh Language Scheme and the Welsh Language Standards (No.3) Regulations 2016 under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. Welsh language matters are regularly considered alongside the equality agenda and discussed in tandem with the protected characteristics, particularly when undertaking Equality Impact Assessments. The principle of treating the Welsh language on a basis of equality continues to be developed and implemented across the Group in every aspect of administrative and academic provision.

3.0 USW GROUP EQUALITY & DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

3.1 Board of Governors / Board of Directors

The formal responsibility for ensuring the USW Group meets the requirements of the Equality Act lies with the USW Board of Governors, the RWCMD Board of Directors and The College Merthyr Tydfil Board of Directors.

3.2 Equality Champion

The equality and diversity agenda is championed by the University Secretary and Clerk to the Governors.

3.3 Equality Committees

The University Secretary chairs the Equality & Diversity Steering Group (EDSG), which meets termly and has representation from all corporate departments, faculties, Trade Unions, the Student Union, The College Merthyr Tydfil and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. EDSG provides strategic direction for the USW Group's equality agenda and has overarching responsibility for the planning, development and review of the Strategic Equality Plan.

In addition to EDSG, the USW Group has three Equality Sub Groups that progress the equalities agenda for specific protected characteristics and monitor implementation of the Strategic Equality Plan in these areas:

- **Disability & Dyslexia Equality Sub Group** –this group works to progress the University's equality agenda in relation to disability and dyslexia for both staff and students.
- **Gender Equality Sub Group** - this group works to progress the University's equality agenda in relation to gender, gender reassignment and sexual orientation for both staff and students. The group also acts as the University's Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team and plays a key role in monitoring the USW Athena Swan Action Plan, which outlines actions to advance women's careers in science, technology, engineering, maths, science research and academia.

- **Race Religion & Belief Equality Sub Group** – this group works to progress the University’s equality agenda in relation to religion, belief and non-belief. It also plays a key role in coordinating and driving the USW Group’s application for a Race Equality Charter Mark Bronze Award.

All equality sub groups meet on a termly basis. They are chaired by senior members of staff and have representation from all USW faculties and relevant corporate departments, including the USW Students’ Union and representatives from The College Merthyr Tydfil. The sub groups feed directly into EDSG. The Equality & Diversity Steering Group and Sub Groups are supported by the Equality & Diversity Advisor based in Human Resources who has responsibility for both staff and student issues.

In addition to EDSG and the Sub Groups, The College Merthyr Tydfil has a well-established Inclusivity and Diversity Steering Group (CiD) which meets termly and has wide ranging cross college attendance including student representation. The CiD Steering Group drives the equality agenda at the College and is the overseeing committee for the SEP and accompanying Action Plans. The CiD has a direct link to the College Executive Team and Board of Directors.

At RWCMD the equality agenda and responsibility for the monitoring and development of its Action Plan is embedded into the Operations Group. Attended by Heads of Department/Managers and chaired by the Vice-Principal Resources, this group also reviews Equality Impact Assessments and feeds directly to the College’s Senior Management Team.

3.4 Equality Strategy Group

To develop the Strategic Equality Plan for 2016-2020, an Equality Strategy Group was formed. The Equality Strategy Group consists of the University’s Equality & Diversity Adviser, the University’s Equality champion, the chairs of the three Equality Sub groups, the Director of Student Services, the Head of Student Support at The College Merthyr Tydfil and the Vice Principal (Resources) at RWCMD. The Equality Strategy Group provides an overarching high level strategic direction for the USW Group’s equality work and has supported the development of this plan.

4.0 USW GROUP EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENT

The University of South Wales (USW) Group is committed to mainstreaming equality and diversity throughout all its activities, as well as meeting the general and specific duties imposed on it through the legislation. This policy statement builds upon the Group's vision and strategic priorities.

This policy statement outlines our commitment to ensure that every job applicant, course applicant, student, employee, visitor or contractor should be treated fairly and this protection is extended based on association and perception to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, or sexual orientation. The University of South Wales Group wishes to promote and sustain a culture where mutual trust and respect are the foundation for working relationships while at work or at study. The Group has Dignity at Work and Dignity at Study Policies which can be found on the institutions' web-pages.

The promotion of equality and diversity is a duty and a challenge to everyone, whether student, employee, governor, or any person or organisation which provides services for, or in partnership with, the Group. In practical terms this means that everyone must treat others fairly and with dignity and respect. The Group will address any issues of discrimination or inappropriate practice and will foster staff awareness through a programme of staff development. All staff and students are actively encouraged to challenge and report any incidents of discrimination. All aspects of student or staff life are governed by this statement.

The University of South Wales Group's overall commitment to Equality and Diversity

The USW Group will:

1. Aim to create an environment that is an inclusive place to work and study where an individual's personal characteristics do not create barriers for them in any aspect of their work or study.
2. Ensure that all policies, procedures and strategies reflect the Group's commitment to equality.
3. Expect all staff, students and visitors to treat each other with dignity and respect.
4. Expect committees and other working groups to have due regard to the diversity of their membership and to consider the impact of their decisions on those with protected characteristics.
5. Expect all staff and students to be aware of equality issues and take responsibility for their actions both individually and collectively.
6. Ensure that all of its learning and teaching provision is accessible and inclusive.
7. Not tolerate behaviour which results in the creation of an intimidating and hostile working or study environment.

5.0 The EQUALITY ACT & USW GROUP

The USW Group is fully committed to adhering to the Equality Act 2010 and meeting the requirements of the general and specific duties.

5.1 *Protected Characteristics*

This SEP covers all Protected Characteristics (PCs) in the Equality Act:

- **Age** (including younger and older people)
- **Gender reassignment** (people who have or wish to change their gender, this doesn't have to involve a medical process)
- **Disability** (physical, mental or sensory impairment which affects a person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities, including a wide range of impairments, such as: cancer, HIV, diabetes and depression and other mental health conditions)
- **Marriage & civil partnership** (people who are married or in a Civil Partnership)
- **Pregnancy & maternity** (maternity refers to up to 26 weeks after giving birth, or when a woman returns from maternity leave in a work context)
- **Race** (colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, including Gypsies & Travellers)
- **Religion or belief** (religion, religious or philosophical beliefs, including lack of religion or belief such as Humanism and Agnostics)
- **Sex** (male / female)
- **Sexual orientation** (person's sexual orientation towards people of the same sex, opposite sex or of either sex)

5.2 *The General Duty*

As a public authority, the USW Group has a legal obligation to meet the General Duty (set out in section 149 of the Equality Act) through ensuring that the three institutions have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;

- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having ‘due regard’ to these three aims of the general duty means that the USW Group must:

- remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by students, staff and visitors due to their protected characteristics;
- take steps to meet the needs of staff, students and visitors from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people;
- encourage students, staff and visitors from protected characteristic groups to participate in public life or in other USW Group activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

5.3 The Specific Duties & USW

In addition to the general duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 set out a series of ‘specific duties’ the USW Group must comply with. The specific duties, and USW Group’s response to these, are set out below:

5.3.1 Equality Objectives

Develop & publish equality objectives to meet the general duty every four years.

The Strategic Equality Objectives for the USW Group are set out within section 6 of this Plan. The objectives have been developed based upon:

- consultation and engagement with staff, students and voluntary sector equality organisations;
- institutional equalities data relating to staff and students;
- relevant institutional equality information;
- relevant equalities research.

The objectives represent eight broad priority areas, each impacting upon multiple protected characteristics. All protected characteristics are covered through the USW Group Strategic Equality Objectives, with the action plans indicating which of the PCs each action relates to. In line with the legislative requirement, there is also a specific objective on equal pay. Each of the three USW Group institutions will develop an action plan outlining the steps they intend to take and how long it is expected to take to meet each objective.

5.3.2 Engagement

Involve and consult people representative of one or more protected characteristic in the setting of equality objectives and the preparing and reviewing of the Strategic Equality Plan.

Strategic Equality Objective 2 focuses specifically on engagement, identifying plans for the USW Group to continue to expand its engagement with staff, students and other relevant stakeholders from PC groups over the next four years. Engagement has taken place with representatives from various PC groups during the development of the SEP, as summarised below:

- Engagement with members of all groups outlined in section 3.3 and 3.4.
- Voluntary sector engagement event - June 2015
- USW Staff Equality Survey & Student Equality Survey – October to November 2015
- Equality Challenge Unit Welsh Liaison Group - October 2015
- Engagement with USW SU Sabbatical Officers - October 2015
- External Stakeholders Equality Survey – October to November 2015
- Engagement with USW SU LGBT Officer - November 2015
- USW Student focus groups - November 2015
- Staff Equality Survey & Student Equality Survey at The College Merthyr Tydfil – November to December 2015
- USW Staff focus group - December 2015
- Equality survey at RWCMD – December 2015.

Full details of the SEP consultation are reported within the SEP Consultation & Engagement Report in Appendix 4 and the Voluntary Sector Engagement Event Report in Appendix 5.

5.3.3 Assessment of Impact

Assess the likely impact of proposed or reviewed policies and practices on our ability to comply with the general duty, monitor the impact and publish the assessment where they show a substantial impact.

The USW Group has EIA forms and guidance in place. The process requires the assessor to ensure that consultation with relevant stakeholders is undertaken as part of the EIA and then detailed on the form. This involves engaging with staff, students, Trade Union representatives and external stakeholders, when relevant. Steps have been taken to mainstream EIAs into decision making at the institutions, with a mandatory requirement for all University papers requiring a decision from the Board of Governors, the Executive or Committees to have an accompanying EIA. Further work will be undertaken during 2016 to 2020 to embed EIAs into decision making throughout the USW Group, with refreshed training and guidance to be developed and delivered. EIAs are not currently routinely published externally, but an internal log of EIAs and a resource for staff will be developed.

5.3.4 Equality Information

Ensure that USW periodically identifies relevant information it holds, and identifies and collects information that it does not hold. Consider what relevant equality information is held when deciding upon equality objectives.

USW Group publishes a detailed report of the staff and student equalities data it collects, and does not collect, on a yearly basis through the SEP Annual Reports. A breakdown and analysis of the data is also presented within the Annual Reports and published on the respective websites.

In line with the statutory duty, the USW Group Strategic Equality Objectives have been informed by relevant equalities information held by the institutions and external research. A summary of the relevant information used is below:

University:

- Employment Information Reports for 2012/2013 and 2013/2014
- Student Equalities Data Reports for 2012/2013 and 2013/2014
- Race Equality Charter Mark student data on representation, continuation and achievement in relation to race
- Race Equality Charter Mark data on staff recruitment in relation to race
- Student equalities data on representation, continuation and achievement for all protected characteristics for 2014/2015
- Athena Swan Bronze Award application for 2013
- Women in Academia Focus Groups held in 2014
- Women in Academia Network launch, focus group, meetings and workshop in 2014, 2015 and 2016
- Staff Engagement Survey 2014, results disaggregated by disability, race & sex
- Race Equality Charter Mark Survey for Staff, November 2014
- Race Equality Charter Mark Survey for Students, November 2014
- Results of the 2014 National Students Survey in relation to age, disability, race & sex
- International student Barometer, 2014
- Equal Pay Reviews for 2011 and 2012

RWCMD

- Employment Information Reports for 2012/2013 and 2013/2014

The College Merthyr Tydfil

- Strategic Equality Plan Annual Reports for 2012/13 and 2013/14 (including Employment Information and student equalities data)
- Race Equality Charter Mark data on staff recruitment in relation to race
- Race Equality Charter Mark Survey for Staff, November 2014
- Race Equality Charter Mark Survey for Students, November 2014

External Information

- Is Wales Fairer? The state of equality and human rights in 2015, Equality & Human Rights Commission
- Equality Challenge Unit, Equality in Higher Education Statistical Report for Staff, 2014 and 2015
- Equality Challenge Unit, Equality in Higher Education Statistical Report for Students, 2014 and 2015
- Equality Challenge Unit guidance and best practice
- Census Data 2011

Extracts of relevant information and engagement outcomes are evidenced within the action plans to demonstrate why we have chosen specific actions under each Strategic Equality Objective.

5.3.5 Employment Information

Collect and publish 'Employment Information' by the 31st March each year

The Group will produce and publish the required Employment Information by 31st March each year as part of the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Reports. This information will be used to monitor progress towards achieving the relevant Strategic Equality Objectives.

5.3.6 Pay Differences

Consider having an equality objective to address the causes of any pay differences related to protected characteristics. Identify, collect and publish information about pay differences. Publish a gender pay action plan.

Strategic objective 7 focuses explicitly on equal pay, committing the Group to undertaking Equal Pay Reviews every three years. The Action Plan developed for objective 7 doubles up as the Gender Pay Action Plan, as required by this statutory duty. The Equal Pay Reviews will relate to all PCs for which there is satisfactory levels of staff data held and will examine the causes of any pay differences located.

Each Equal Pay Review will result in the production of an Equal Pay Action Plan that will be implemented and monitored on a regular basis.

5.3.7 Staff Training

Promote knowledge and understanding of the general duty and specific duties amongst our employees. Use performance assessment procedures to identify and address training needs of employees in relation to the duties.

Knowledge and understanding of the Equality Act is currently promoted to USW staff as a mandatory part of induction for all new starters. Student E&D training is run on an annual basis. Strategic Equality Objectives 1 and 4 provide details of the steps that will be taken to further E&D training provisions at the USW Group.

5.3.8 Accessibility

Take steps to ensure that any document or information we are required to publish is done so in a form that is accessible to people from protected characteristics.

We will build upon the work undertaken during the 2014 to 2016 SEP to further develop accessibility through this renewed SEP. Strategic Equality Objective 5 focuses specifically upon accessibility of information, infrastructure and learning opportunities. The steps that will be taken to meet this priority are identified within the action plan.

5.3.9 Procurement

Consider whether it would be appropriate for award criteria for contracts to include considerations to help meet the general duty. Consider whether it would be appropriate to stipulate conditions relating to the performance of the contract to help meet the three aims of the general duty.

Strategic Equality Objective 1 identifies procurement as a priority for the SEP. The work that will be undertaken embed equality into relevant contracts and tenders is set out within the action plan.

5.3.10 Annual Reporting

Produce and publish an annual report by 31st march each year that complies with the requirements of the annual reporting duty.

In line with the statutory duty, Strategic Equality Plan Annual Reports will be produced on annual basis and will be published by the 31st March each year. Two Annual Reports will be produced by the Group; one reflecting upon the progress made by USW and RWCMD and one reflecting upon the progress made by The College Merthyr Tydfil. The first Annual Reports for this Strategic Equality Plan will be published by the 31st March 2018; these will outline the progress made during the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. The Annual Report for USW and RWCMD will be published on the [USW website](#), which is clearly linked through the [RWCMD website](#); the Annual Report for The College Merthyr Tydfil will be published separately on the equality & diversity section of their [website](#).

5.3.11 Publishing and Monitoring the Strategic Equality Plan

Publish arrangements to monitor progress on meeting equality objectives and the effectiveness of the steps we are taking to meet those objectives.

The SEP, Strategic Equality Objectives, Equality Action Plans, Employment Information and relevant equalities information will be published on the USW website and The College Merthyr Tydfil website. It will be linked through the RWCMD website.

Although the USW Group will be formally reporting progress against the SEP on an annual basis, monitoring implementation of the action plan and progress towards achieving the Strategic Equality Objectives will be an on-going process that takes place throughout the year.

The following mechanisms are in place to ensure that the SEP is subject to regular monitoring:

For USW & RWCMD

- Implementation of the Strategic Equality Objectives and the specific actions within the SEP Action Plan will be undertaken through the relevant University Strategy, as detailed in section 2.3.
- 'SEP Progress' will be a standing item on the EDSG agenda, therefore requiring reporting of actions undertaken in relation to the SEP from all EDSG representatives for their respective areas on a termly basis.
- SEP progress in relation to the relevant protected characteristics will be a standing item on each Equality Sub Group agenda. Each Sub Group representative will report progress from their respective department/faculty in implementing the Strategic Equality Objectives.
- Faculty Executive Committees are tasked with overseeing implementation of the SEP objectives within their faculties. Each EDSG and Sub Group representative will attend Faculty Executive on a yearly basis to feedback on the work of their respective groups and obtain feedback on progress on particular actions.
- The Equality & Diversity Adviser will liaise with USW colleagues with specific responsibility for SEP actions on a regular basis to ascertain progress and provide any advice with implementation.
- The Vice Principal (Resources) and Head of Student Experience at RWCMD will liaise with RWCMD colleagues with specific responsibilities for SEP actions.

For The College Merthyr Tydfil

- The CiD will oversee implementation of the Strategic Equality Objectives and the Action Plan. Progress will be detailed and monitored at each termly meeting.
- The Head of Student Support will liaise with The College Merthyr Tydfil colleagues with specific responsibility for SEP actions on a regular basis to ascertain progress and provide any advice with implementation.
- The Head of Student Support, or a representative of, will attend all EDSG and Sub Group meetings to feedback progress of implementation at the College.

6. STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

The key purpose of us setting these equality objectives is for us to drive better outcomes for people with protected characteristics. In setting these objectives, we considered all of the feedback from the consultation process outlined in section 5.3.2, along with all of the relevant information detailed in section 5.3.4. This evidence was used to determine the most pertinent equality issues within the USW Group communities and has shaped the priorities that have been set through the objectives. These objectives aim to remove barriers, promote equality of opportunity, promote good relations and improve performance. We recognise that achieving these objectives is a long-term goal which will require concerted proactive and on-going action in order to evidence change. The Equality Action Plans (Appendices 1 to 3) detail the actions that will be undertaken to fulfil each objective within the next four years and the timescales for doing so. They also highlight how progress against the objectives will be measured and evidenced.

1. **CULTURE AND GOVERNANCE**

To promote dignity, respect, inclusion and fairness within the College and University communities and embed equality into the decision making of the USW Group.

We will do this by:

- ensuring that the USW Group has a culture and environment in which staff and students can be themselves and that promotes fairness, inclusive language, positive attitudes and the value of equality and diversity;
- promoting good relations and understanding between different groups;
- promoting a culture which welcomes and celebrates diversity and the benefits it brings to academic life and the success of institutions;

- proactively integrating equality into all areas of USW Group business, strategies and operational plans, procurement, decision making and leadership;
- ensuring that the USW Group’s strategic committees and boards are able, through their membership and activities, to understand the needs and perspectives of protected groups and address equality and diversity issues;
- ensuring that all new and revised policies and practices are equality impact assessed;
- challenging any discrimination that become apparent within the USW Group and having a system in place to deal with complaints of harassment or discrimination;
- raising the awareness of staff and students about their responsibilities under the Equality Act;
- monitoring compliance with the Equality Act.

2. *COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT*

To ensure that engagement takes place with staff, students and local voluntary sector groups from protected characteristics through collaboration, communication and consultation.

We will do this by:

- ensuring that consultation and engagement with staff and students from diverse groups takes place in the development and monitoring of equality initiatives, including consultation with Trade Unions;
- providing opportunities to consult with and gather feedback from staff and students in the development and review of our policies and practices;
- ensuring that we respond to the feedback we gather from staff and students from PC groups;
- raising the profile and visibility of equality and diversity initiatives across the Colleges/University;
- promoting and celebrating equality and diversity.

3. *DIVERSITY OF STUDENT BODY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE*

To attract, select and retain a diverse range of students to study at the USW Group and create an environment that encourages and supports all students to actively engage with the University and Colleges to realise their full potential.

We will do this by:

- ensuring that the USW Group attract diverse students, including students from non-traditional backgrounds and underrepresented groups;
- actively engaging with students from different protected groups;
- creating a high quality experience for all students, regardless of personal characteristics or background;
- monitoring the progression, achievement and employability of students from protected groups in order to improve the equality of student outcomes, with a specific focus upon investigating the higher withdrawal rates and lower attainment of Black and Minority Ethnic students.

4. *ATTRACTING, RETAINING & DEVELOPING STAFF*

To attract, retain and develop a diverse range of people to work for the USW Group and to enable those that work for the Group to have access to open and transparent career development and progression.

We will do this by:

- aligning all new and revised staff policies and practices with the Group's equality principles by ensuring they are all equality impact assessed;
- ensuring that the proportion of staff from protected groups at all grades in the USW Group reflect fair and transparent recruitment and progression processes;
- providing support for and undertaking engagement with employees from protected groups, including engagement with Trade Unions;

- providing appropriate provision of equality and diversity training and learning opportunities for staff at all levels.

5. ACCESSIBILITY

To ensure USW Group buildings and infrastructure reflect the diverse needs of the University and College communities and provide accessible and inclusive working and learning environments.

We will do this by:

- ensuring that the USW Group campuses and colleges are inclusive and accessible for staff, students and visitors, as far as it is reasonably practical to do so;
- ensuring that University and College communications and information are accessible to staff and students from protected characteristic groups;
- ensuring inclusivity and accessibility of courses and of learning and teaching resources and strategies.

6. INCLUSIVITY IN RESEARCH

To develop an inclusive approach to research conducted by USW Group staff, whereby the involvement of people from protected characteristic groups is promoted and barriers to the participation of people from diverse groups are removed.

We will do this by:

- promoting greater participation in research by those protected groups that are affected by the research;
- using inclusive principles within research conducted by the Colleges/University;
- addressing the inequalities in research careers and outcomes, paying particular attention to inequalities related to gender.

7. EQUAL PAY

To undertake Equal Pay Reviews of the USW Group every three years and implement the actions arising from the resulting Equal Pay Action Plans.

We will do this by:

- identifying, collecting and publishing information about pay differences every three years;
- incorporating the analysis of pay relating to all PCs for which there is sufficient staff data held into the Equal Pay Reviews, and taking action to increase PC employee data where there is not;
- developing Equal Pay Action Plans for the USW Group that include actions to address the causes of any pay differences related to protected characteristics;
- complying with all aspects of the specific duty on pay differences within the Equality Act.

8. DATA COLLECTION & MONITORING

To enhance the collection, analysis and monitoring of equalities data and relevant equalities information.

We will do this by:

- ensuring we increase employee disclosure rates of equality information in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of our workforce compositions and better understand staff needs;
- promoting a culture in which staff and students feel confident to disclose their equality information;
- producing and publishing yearly staff and student equalities monitoring reports;
- enhancing the analysis and use of student equalities data;
- ensuring that USW Group uses a robust evidence base to develop and monitor its equality initiatives and strategies.

7. CONTACT DETAILS

For further information or to provide feedback on the USW Group Strategic Equality Plan, please contact:

Clare Payton-Stagg
Equality & Diversity Adviser
Human Resources
University of South Wales
B19, Brecon Block
Pontypridd
CF37 1DL

Email: clare.payton-stagg@southwales.ac.uk