



University of South Wales

Annual Equality Report

1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

Should you require this document in an alternative format or if you have any queries relating to this report, please contact:

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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg
This document is available in Welsh

Contents

Introduction.....	4
Our legal duties	4
Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010	5
USW Equality Commitment.....	6
Who we are	6
How we monitor our progress.....	7
Strengthened Sub-Groups for Targeted Action.....	7
Governance Structure Overview	8
Identifying, Collecting & Using Relevant Information	8
The Steps Taken to Identify and Collect Relevant Information	8
Equality Monitoring for Colleagues	9
Equality Monitoring for Students	9
Reporting and Analysis.....	9
Reasons for Not Collecting Relevant Information	9
Statement on the Effectiveness of Arrangements for Identifying and Collecting Relevant Information	9
Annual Equality Progress Report 2023-2024	10
Development of USW Strategic Equality Plan 2024 – 2028.....	10
Key Features of the New Approach	11
A Data-Driven and Equity by Design focused Strategy.....	11
Integration and Sustainability	11
The Vision: Impact and Belonging.....	12
EDI pan University initiatives, events, workshops and sponsorship activity	13
EDI initiatives	13
EDI-Related Events	14
EDI-Related Workshops	16
EDI Community Sponsorship	18
Differential Outcomes Action Plan (DOAP) 2024-2027.....	19
Race Equality Charter Survey	20
Key Staff-Related Themes	21
Key Student-Related Themes	22
Internal Race Equity Qualitative and Quantitative data gathered between 2020 - 2024.....	22
University of Sanctuary update	23
Report & Support identity-based discrimination, bullying, harassment and or violence reporting update	24

Conclusion.....	25
Appendix 1 – Staff EDI Data (narrative to be completed).....	26
Appendix 2 – Student EDI Data (narrative to be completed).....	26
Appendix 3 EDI Events and Campaigns.....	26
Appendix 4 – EDI Events delivered by Faculty of Business and Creative Industries	30

Introduction

Welcome to the University of South Wales (USW) Annual Equality Report, covering the reporting period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

This report showcases the significant strides made by the University in embedding Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) into its core values and practices. Central to this progress is the development of our new Strategic Equality Plan, initiated in January 2023, which sets the foundation for long-term impact.

In addition to broader EDI achievements, this report places a special emphasis throughout on the University's Race Equity journey during the reporting period, reflecting our commitment to addressing systemic inequalities and fostering an inclusive environment for all.

It is important to note that while the University of South Wales Group includes USW and its two subsidiaries—the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and The College Merthyr Tydfil—both subsidiaries produce their own Annual Equality Reports.

Our legal duties

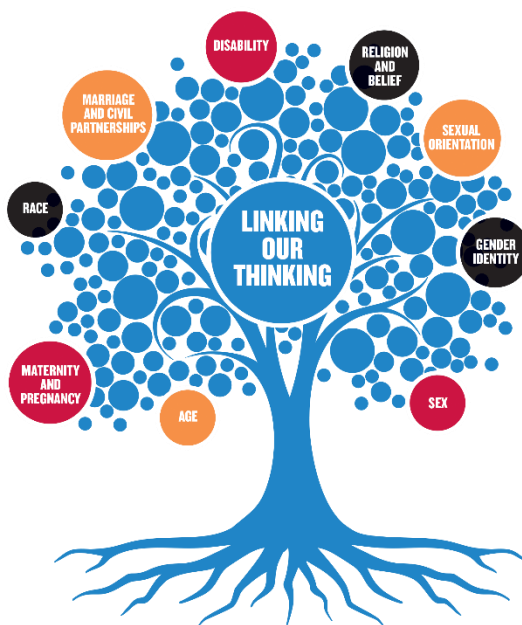
Under the Public-Sector Equality General Duty, public bodies must:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protective characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

And to have due regard for advancing equality by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010



Here at USW, we use the term Gender Identity as it is a more inclusive term and includes people who do not see themselves as having their gender reassigned. We use gender identity rather than gender reassignment throughout this document. Someone's gender identity is a person's internal, deeply held sense of their own gender.

As well as the general duty, we must meet the specific duties, which are set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties), and the (Wales) Regulations 2011.

These duties came into force in Wales on 6 April 2011 and include:

- developing four yearly Strategic Equality Plans.
- involving and engaging stakeholders including the public when developing plans, policies and shaping services.
- undertaking appropriate equality impact assessments.
- collecting and publishing information about equality, employment and differences in pay.
- promoting equality-based staff training.
- considering equality when buying services and agreeing contracts.
- publishing our Annual Equality Report.
- reviewing our equality plans and objectives to make sure they are current.
- making sure people can access the information we provide.

USW Equality Commitment

We are committed to transforming our approach to equity and inclusion through self-reflection, active challenge, meaningful engagement, and robust scrutiny. We recognise that this journey requires courage, including sitting with discomfort to address difficult issues, engaging in brave conversations, and taking purposeful actions to achieve true equity for all.

Our commitment is rooted in collaboration and co-production with our students, colleagues, and communities. Together, we will create equitable spaces where individuals are valued beyond the constraints of labels or boxes. Our goal is to ensure that equality and equitable outcomes are embedded at the heart of everything we do.

Inspired by the lived experiences of our students, colleagues, and communities, we are dedicated to breaking down barriers and challenging stigmas. We will foster a shared sense of belonging within the USW family, uniting us in our mission. While we have made progress, our data shows that we still have significant work to do to achieve genuine equity and inclusion for all.

We aspire to maintain an inclusive learning and working environment where diversity is celebrated, equity is advanced, and everyone has access to success and progression. By adopting a zero-tolerance stance on discriminatory behaviours and practices, we will invite challenge and scrutiny from within and beyond the organisation. We will work in partnership with the Student Union, Trade Union, staff networks, and the Critical Friends Group chaired by Sanjiv Vedi OBE, along with Newport's pioneering Youth Development Project, Urban Circle, to ensure a transparent and accountable approach to tracking our progress.

Our commitment is more than words. Grounded in evidence-based research and enriched by consultation and engagement, our action plan aligns with the USW 2030 strategy, embedding equity and inclusion into the fabric of our institutional business plans. We are determined to be measured by meaningful change, holding ourselves accountable every step of the way.

Who we are

The University of South Wales (USW) is one of the UK's most dynamic and forward-thinking universities, committed to creating a brighter future for our students, communities, and partners. With a focus on innovation, sustainability, and real-world impact, we thrive on empowering individuals and transforming industries economically, socially, and culturally.

Collaboration is at the core of everything we do. USW works closely with business leaders, industry professionals, and social enterprises to co-create solutions that meet real-world challenges and deliver exceptional outcomes for both learners and organisations. From energy and health to security and sustainability, our research and innovation drive progress on some of the world's most pressing issues.

As a vocationally driven university, USW is dedicated to preparing students for the demands of today's workforce and the challenges of tomorrow. Employers actively shape our curriculum to ensure it aligns with their future needs, creating a seamless

pipeline of skilled graduates ready to contribute meaningfully to key industries. This close partnership means that our graduates consistently meet the expectations of employers and make an immediate impact in their chosen fields.

USW is proud of its role as an inclusive, multi-disciplinary university. Almost half of our students come from the most disadvantaged areas in Wales, reflecting our commitment to widening access and fostering success for learners from all backgrounds. This achievement sets us apart, significantly exceeding the average for higher education institutions across Wales and the UK.

Our campuses in Cardiff, Newport, and Pontypridd provide vibrant and diverse environments for learning and growth. At USW, we are not just a university; we are a hub of innovation, collaboration, and opportunity, driving positive change for our students, partners, and the wider world.

How we monitor our progress

To ensure the USW EDI agenda is monitored effectively, governance and reporting structures have been significantly strengthened during this reporting period. Key improvements include the creation of a new Executive position, Chief People and Inclusion, with direct responsibility for EDI within their portfolio. Reporting by the EDI Team has also been enhanced, with bi-annual direct updates to the USW Board of Governors and quarterly reporting to the Executive Team.

This enhanced governance is supported by the continuation of the University's Equality & Diversity Steering Group (EDSG), which meets quarterly. The EDSG includes representation from all departments, faculties, Trade Unions, the Students' Union, The College Merthyr Tydfil, and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. For impartiality, the group remains chaired by the University's Secretary. The EDSG oversees compliance with the Equality Act 2010, considers equality issues across all protected characteristics, and provides strategic direction for the USW Group's equality agenda. It also holds overarching responsibility for ensuring monitoring, implementation and review of the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP).

Strengthened Sub-Groups for Targeted Action

In alignment with the recommendations from the 2022 EDI audit and as part of this strengthening exercise, USW has re-established the following **Equality Sub-Groups**, each with a specific focus:

- **Race Equality Sub-Working Group and Self-Assessment Team**
Responsible for developing and implementing the University's Race Equity initiatives, aligning with the Welsh Government's Anti-Racism Action Plan. This group also oversees the AdvanceHE Race Equality Charter submission planned for March 2025.
- **Gender Identity Equality Sub-Group and Self-Assessment Team**
Tasked with advancing the University's Gender Equity work, including achieving renewal of the AdvanceHE Athena Swan Charter. To note Athena Swan requires institutions to address gender inequality inclusive of sex and gender identity.
- **Sexual Orientation Equality Sub-Group**
Focuses on driving Sexual Orientation Equity work in accordance with the

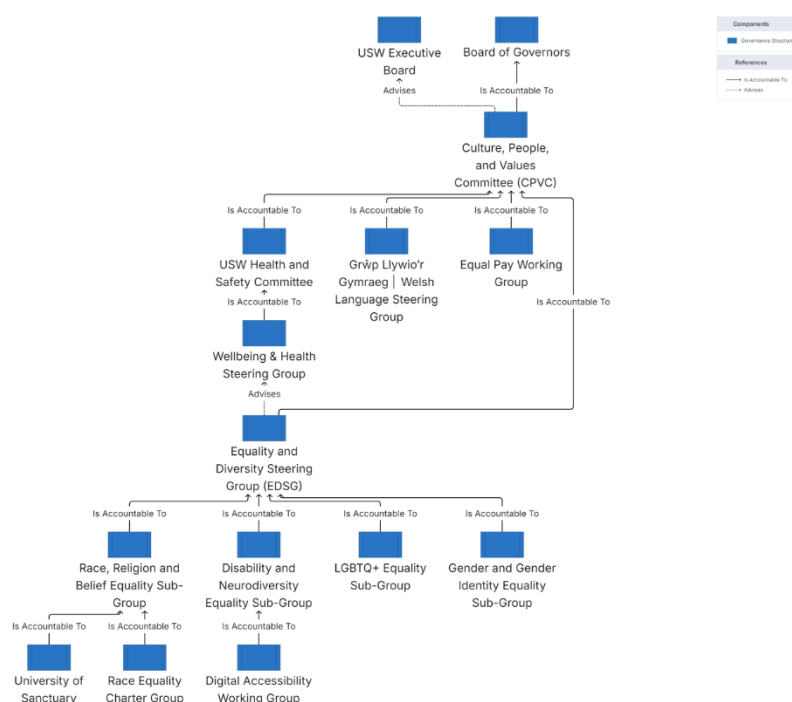
Welsh Government's Action Plan and underpinned by the Stonewall Workplace Index requirements.

- **Disability Equality Sub-Group**

Supports the development and implementation of Disability Equity initiatives, guided by the Welsh Government's updated Disability Action Plan (expected early 2025) and the UK Disability Confident Scheme.

Governance Structure Overview

The governance structure diagram below illustrates the relationships between the EDSG, sub-groups, and working groups tasked with advancing EDI initiatives across USW. While all groups emphasise their respective focus areas, intersectionality remains a guiding principle in their decision-making and impact assessments. Further details below will highlight key groups, particularly those driving race equity efforts, demonstrating how these groups contribute to the University's holistic EDI framework.



Identifying, Collecting & Using Relevant Information

The Steps Taken to Identify and Collect Relevant Information

Under the Equality Act's statutory duties for Wales, equality monitoring data for colleagues and students is considered "relevant information" to support the Strategic Equality Plan.

Equality Monitoring for Colleagues

USW collects equality data for all protected characteristics of colleagues through its online recruitment and HR systems. Applicants confidentially provide their equality data as part of the recruitment process, enabling HR to generate annual anonymised reports on candidate success rates across all recruitment stages, segmented by protected characteristics. Existing colleagues can update their equality data at any time through the HR system's "self-service" option. This data is summarised and presented in Appendix 1.

Equality Monitoring for Students

Student enrolment, conducted annually through an online system, also includes equality monitoring for all protected characteristics. The collected data is stored securely and used to generate anonymised reports on the representation of different equality groups within the student population. These findings are detailed in the Student Equality Data Report, included in Appendix 2.

Reporting and Analysis

The Employment Information and Student Equality Data reports are submitted annually to the Equality, Diversity, and Safeguarding Group (EDSG), the USW Executive Team, and the Culture, People, and Values Committee. These reports provide critical insights into trends and imbalances, informing the development and progression of the equality agenda at USW.

Reasons for Not Collecting Relevant Information

The University collects all protected characteristics for colleague and students, with the exception of the following:

Pregnancy and Maternity: Information on pregnancy/maternity for students is not collected during enrolment. However, USW supports students who are pregnant or have recently given birth through its guidance for students on pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption and through the Student Advice Zones. Human Resources holds information on colleague on pregnancy/maternity for the purposes of administering maternity and paternity leave.

Marriage and Civil Partnership: Data on marital and civil partnership status is currently collected for colleagues, but not for students. As marriage and civil partnership is not a protected characteristic for the higher education provisions, there are no plans at present to introduce monitoring of this characteristic for students. For both colleagues and students, the gender-neutral title 'Mx' is available for use in both systems.

Statement on the Effectiveness of Arrangements for Identifying and Collecting Relevant Information

The University demonstrates a strong commitment to identifying, collecting, analysing, and utilising relevant information. Existing arrangements are both effective

and dynamic, with regular reviews and updates to incorporate innovative methods for information use.

Robust equality governance structures underpin this process, ensuring a comprehensive and focused approach to examining the evidence base for equality and inclusion priorities. These structures enable thorough analysis of the impact of actions taken, while also fostering the integration of research findings and best practices into institutional policies and practices.

Annual Equality Progress Report 2023-2024

This section highlights the major Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives, events, workshops, and sponsorship activities undertaken during this reporting period.

Key developments include:

- **Strategic Equality Plan (2024–2028):** Introduction of a new approach and ongoing development of the USW Strategic Equality Plan, designed to align with institutional priorities and future needs.
- **University-Wide EDI Activities:** A range of pan-University EDI initiatives, events, workshops, and sponsorships aimed at fostering an inclusive culture across USW.
- **Differential Outcomes Action Plan:** Progress on the development of USW's action plan to address differential outcomes and enhance equitable student success.
- **Race Equality Charter Survey:** Summary of the University's 1st full Race Equality Charter Survey as part of the University's commitment to the W23/20HE and AdvanceHE requirements
- **University of Sanctuary:** Progress on the University's efforts to strengthen its position as a University of Sanctuary, emphasizing support for refugees and asylum seekers.
- **Report & Support System:** Update on the implementation of the Report & Support platform, enabling reporting and action on identity-based discrimination, bullying, harassment, and violence.

Additional Information:

- **Appendix 3:** A detailed list of EDI communications shared through external and internal channels by the Corporate Communications Team.
- **Appendix 4:** A snapshot overview of EDI-related activities within the Faculty of Business and Creative Industries (FBCI).

Development of USW Strategic Equality Plan 2024 – 2028

The development of the University's new **Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2024–2028** embodies a fresh, collaborative, and data-driven approach. This innovative methodology integrates sector best practices with USW's core mission to drive meaningful change.

Key Features of the New Approach

- **Early Executive Engagement:** Secured the support and ownership of the Executive team early in the process to align the strategy with institutional priorities, ensuring top-down commitment and strategic coherence.
- **Inclusive Leadership Participation:** Engaged the wider USW senior leadership team in shaping equality commitments and action plans, fostering shared responsibility and accountability for outcomes.
- **Extensive Stakeholder Consultation:** Conducted robust consultations with a diverse range of stakeholders, facilitated by internal and external experts. This inclusive process involved representatives from trade unions, the Student Union, community groups, and the newly formed Critical Friends Group to ensure balanced and comprehensive input.
- **Simplification and Focus:** Streamlined existing equality activities into three core impact areas to promote clarity, coherence, and efficiency in addressing institutional priorities.
- **Alignment with Organisational Metrics:** Integrated the plan with USW's established performance measures, notably the Critical Success Factors, to enhance accountability and monitor progress effectively.

A Data-Driven and Equity by Design focused Strategy

Informed by extensive sector research, data analysis, and internal reviews, the planning process identified three primary areas of impact: Students, Colleagues, and Communities (internal and external).

- **Pinpointing Challenges:** Analysis of internal equality data highlighted specific challenges affecting the experiences and outcomes of both students and staff.
- **Equity by Design:** Adopted an equity-focused approach utilising equality impact assessment to align equality data with USW's Critical Success Factors. This approach was reinforced by comprehensive Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) data produced by USW Planning, Performance, and Transformation.

This strategic alignment also supports USW's equality accreditations, including Race Equality and Athena Swan, ensuring the University's actions are both impactful and measurable.

Integration and Sustainability

Efforts to integrate the SEP with USW's core business and overarching organisational strategy aim to:

- Unify planning processes, action plans, and data capture mechanisms for consistency.
- Focus on addressing the needs of underrepresented groups to close gaps in opportunities and outcomes.
- Foster sustainable diversification and inclusive practices, creating a shared sense of belonging grounded in an intersectional perspective.

The Vision: Impact and Belonging

The SEP aligns with the **USW 2030 mission**:

"Changing lives and our world for a better tomorrow: USW will be a leading UK university, maximising positive impact for our students, partners, and communities."

This vision underpins the **Three Pillars of Impact**:

1. **Students**
2. **Colleagues**
3. **Communities**

These pillars guide the University's equality objectives, driving transformative change with the overarching goal of fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment for all. With the overall objective of:

'Ensuring a clear focus upon under-represented groups to proactively close gaps and outcomes. Achieved through sustainable diversification and inclusive practice creating a shared sense of belonging.'



WE WILL COMMITMENTS

Under each Equality Objective through collaboration and co-production we have set a number of We Will commitments utilising and aligning to our CSFs data.

Highlighting pinch points and areas of work required if we are to:

Create an equitable and inclusive environment where our students, colleagues, and partners can collaborate, innovate, and thrive.

EDI pan University initiatives, events, workshops and sponsorship activity

EDI initiatives

- **Development of the Critical Friends Equality Group**

The establishment of the Critical Friends Equality Group (CFEG) at the University is designed to drive meaningful cultural transformation, strengthen relationships with diverse communities, and tackle systemic and structural inequities within the institution.

The CFEG will play a pivotal role in fostering positive change by reviewing and recommending new strategies, policies, and practices that promote inclusivity and equity. By providing valuable insight, guidance, and constructive challenge, the group will support the University in its ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive environment for all.

The CFEG will bring together individuals with lived experience alongside senior policymakers to create spaces for open, progressive dialogue. These interactions will focus on developing resources and fostering collaborative engagement that leads to tangible, actionable outcomes. The group's work will also ensure that the University remains aligned with its commitment to robust equality and diversity objectives, helping to advance the institution's plans and strategies for a fairer, more inclusive community.

- **USW and Urban Circle Newport sign first Memorandum of Understanding**

In January 2023, USW and UCU agreed to establish a strategic partnership, marking a pivotal moment in USW's history by forming a strong foundation with one of Wales's leading, Black-led organisations.

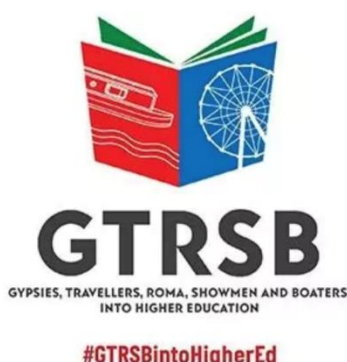
During this reporting period, UCN has been an active and integral partner in supporting USW's Anti-Racism journey. Key contributions include:

- **Development of Resources and Workshops:** UCN has supported the creation of key materials and workshops to advance anti-racism education within USW.
- **Engagement with the Critical Friends Equality Group:** UCN has provided a participative voice within the USW Critical Friends Equality Group, offering constructive feedback, sharing valuable insights, and drawing from lived experiences to foster meaningful discussions on equality.
- **Leadership in Critical Conversations:** UCN played a pivotal role in developing and delivering USW's Critical Conversations series, which focused on essential topics such as White Privilege and Intersectionality, encouraging reflection and dialogue on these complex issues.
- **Partnership with USW Education Director:** Collaborating with the USW Education Director, UCN has supported USW on Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Wales External Accountability Group, thus securing an opportunity to influence and shape anti-racist policies across Wales.

- **Securing Funding for Increased Diversity:** Through efforts led by the Education Director, funding was secured from Welsh Government to expand the recruitment of Black and Ethnic Minority candidates into Initial Teacher Education. This initiative enabled UCN to further collaborate with staff and students on anti-racist training and practices.

These efforts reflect USW and UCN's commitment to fostering a more inclusive and anti-racist environment both within USW and across Wales.

- **Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater (GTRSB) Pledge**



In July 2023, the University of South Wales (USW) committed to the Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater (GTRSB) Higher Education Pledge, aligning itself with the Welsh Government's Anti-Racism Action Plan. This pledge is designed to enhance access, representation, and outcomes for the GTRSB community by focusing on comprehensive data collection, fostering an inclusive institutional culture, and implementing targeted outreach initiatives.

The Pledge was developed through a consultative process that included input from the GTRSB community, civil society organisations, university representatives, and education policy experts. It is grounded in research findings and best practices for widening participation, aiming to better support members of these communities in entering and thriving within higher education.

Key initiatives outlined in the University's Pledge include:

- **Data Collection:** Enabling students and staff to self-identify, ensuring robust data integration into annual equality reports for improved monitoring and accountability.
- **Culture Building:** Developing decolonised curricula, establishing clear and accessible anti-bullying procedures, and offering bespoke support services tailored to the needs of GTRSB students.
- **Outreach:** Engaging in targeted outreach programs with schools and third-party organizations to actively promote higher education opportunities to underrepresented communities.

These measures reflect USW's ongoing commitment to advancing equity and inclusion, providing a supportive environment for all members of the GTRSB community to succeed and thrive.

EDI-Related Events

- **USW and USWSU Pride Cymru March:** USW Student Union proudly participated in the Pride Cymru March in June 2023, showcasing a strong partnership and sponsorship support for the event, with students walking together in unity under the "Walk with USW" banner.



- **USW 1st International Cultural Festival:** Over 300 students participated in the inaugural International Cultural Festival in June 2023, celebrating diverse cultural expressions through dance, dress, and music. The event was an opportunity for students to share their heritage, fostering inclusivity and mutual respect.



- **Launch of iBelong Series Talk Show and Tequila Radio:** A new media platform was launched to encourage inclusivity, equality, and diversity. The iBelong Series Talk Show, alongside Tequila Radio, engaged over 50 students in lively discussions about student life, emphasising the importance of creating inclusive spaces for all voices.
- **Celebrating USW MBA Global Students:** The end-of-year celebrations for the USW MBA Global students took place at the Newport Campus in June and November 2023. The events, which welcomed students and their

families, attracted over 100 students at each celebration, promoting a sense of community and inclusion within the USW Global network.



- **Development of USW 2nd EDI video:** video showcasing 4 USW graduates' journey at USW as part of We are USW series.



- **Development of USW's 1st Annual Online Inclusion Calendar:** Launched in October 2023, the calendar includes important holidays and equity dates, offering recognition and support to our diverse student and colleague body. The calendar serves as a valuable resource for promoting inclusivity year-round.

EDI-Related Workshops

- **Implicit Bias and Cultural Reflection Sessions:** As part of the EDI learning needs analysis and in response to requests from across the organization, the EDI team developed and delivered three in-person sessions aimed at helping colleagues navigate the psychological and emotional implications of race and

equity discussions. In addition, the EDI Team co-produced Neurodivergent training, piloted during this reporting period.

- **Advance HE “Enabling a Racially Inclusive Curriculum” Workshops:** In collaboration with the USW Centre for Education, Learning, and Teaching (CELT), AdvanceHE delivered two half-day workshops targeting key staff responsible for curriculum development. The workshops focused on addressing racial inequity in Higher Education and providing participants with:
 - A deeper understanding of racial inequity in the academic context and how to foster inclusive teaching practices.
 - Practical strategies to enhance inclusivity in the curriculum, ensuring responses to racial exclusion are clear and effective.
 - Pedagogical tools and resources to facilitate ongoing discussions around racially inclusive curriculum design within subject teams.
- **Race Equity and EDI Workshop for Football in Society Module (Year 1 Undergraduate Students):** As part of the Football in Society module in the USW Football course, the EDI Team introduced first-year students to key concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion, with a focus on addressing inequities within sport and society.
- **Critical Conversations Series:** Launched in October 2023 in partnership with the USW Deputy Vice Chancellor, Donna Whitehead, the Critical Conversations series invited community activists to engage in candid discussions on challenging topics such as White Privilege, Intersectionality, and Terminology. These panel events fostered a brave space for meaningful dialogue between colleagues and students (October 2023, January 2024).



- **External Guest Speakers Sharing Best Practices:**
 - **Understanding the International Student Experience with Strathclyde SU:** A session focusing on the challenges and opportunities faced by international students.
 - **Understanding Intersectional Data with Network Rail Wales/Southwest:** A workshop exploring the importance of

intersectional data and how it can drive meaningful change in the workplace.

- **USW Hosted Cultural Benchmarking 10KV Forum:** A collaborative event involving the Hydra Foundation, Gwent Police, and Black and Ethnic Minority community leaders, focused on cultural benchmarking and strengthening relationships between institutions and diverse communities.
- **Anti-Racism Workshops:** A total of 34 anti-racism workshops were delivered during the reporting period, engaging over 600 staff members. These sessions provided a platform for critical discussions on unconscious bias, white privilege, microaggressions, and active allyship. Participants acknowledged the need for a mindset shift to dismantle structural barriers to race equity, and the importance of moving from passive bystanders to active allies in creating inclusive spaces.

Participant quote:

While it was uncomfortable, it was good to be challenged and to be reminded about the privilege I have as a white person. The statistics used from USW were truly shocking and definitely made me think more about how much more difficult it can be for people from ethnic minorities. It made me more determined to be a good ally and to become more thoughtful of my Black and Ethnic Minority colleagues

EDI Community Sponsorship

- **Urban Circle – Brave Spaces Resources:** In partnership with DARPL, sponsorship was provided to Urban Circle, Newport, enabling them to transform their award-winning documentary *HumanITree* into bite-sized educational resources. These resources, designed for schools in Newport, are a part of the Welsh Government's new Multi-Cultural Curriculum, aimed at fostering inclusivity and understanding of diverse cultures among students.
- **Ethnic Minority Welsh Women's Achievement Association (EMWWAA) – Young Achiever of the Year Award:** The University proudly sponsored the *Young Achiever of the Year* award. The award ceremony was attended by USW Dr Louise Bright, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Enterprise, Engagement and Partnership who had the honour of presenting the prestigious award.



- Pride in the Port – Newport:** The University also sponsored the *Pride in the Port* Community Stage at Newport’s annual Pride celebrations. The stage was officially opened by Professor Donna Whitehead, Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University. This sponsorship underscores the University’s commitment to supporting and celebrating LGBTQ+ communities in Newport and beyond, contributing to the inclusivity and vibrancy of the event.



- Pride Cymru Fun Run - Cardiff:** Kicking off Pride Month and the Pride Cymru weekend this vibrant 5k run through Bute Park was organised by the Albany Road Run Club and led by USW Digital Support Officer David Sinclair, celebrated diversity and community spirit.



These initiatives, events, workshops and community sponsorship provide a highlight of USW’s ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive, equitable, and diverse learning environment, enriching the student and staff experience and promoting active engagement with key social issues.

Differential Outcomes Action Plan (DOAP) 2024-2027

It is well-established across the Higher Education sector that students experience differential outcomes throughout their educational journey—from recruitment through to employment. These disparities are particularly evident in areas such as access,

retention, and attainment. The Welsh Government, in its February 2024 statement on strategic priorities for tertiary education and research, has called on all tertiary providers in Wales to take more decisive action to tackle these inequities. Specifically, the Government has urged institutions to:

"Use data to identify inequities in the tertiary system and implement responses that include setting ambitious targets and actions to reduce access disparities, improve diversity in intake where it is underrepresented, and close attainment gaps."

At the University of South Wales (USW), we recognise that we are not immune to these challenges. The data presented in the table below highlights the extent of the differential outcomes observed within our institution, underscoring the importance of implementing targeted strategies and interventions.

USW Level Good Honours Differential Gaps	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
USW Overall Good Honours Rate	69.5%	75.6%	75.9%	70.5%	71.3%
USW Awarding gap: Female to Male	2.3%	3.2%	6.1%	7.9%	4.4%
USW Awarding gap: International to UK Domicile	-12.5%	-0.7%	-4.8%	-11.3%	-13.7%
USW Awarding gap: BAME to White (UK DOMICILED STUDENTS ONLY)	-14.0%	-12.5%	-11.6%	-8.6%	-10.9%
USW Awarding gap: Black to White (UK DOMICILED STUDENTS ONLY)	-32.1%	-33.6%	-16.8%	-27.1%	-20.3%
USW Awarding gap: Asian to White (UK DOMICILED STUDENTS ONLY)	-10.7%	-5.9%	-6.7%	-6.1%	-9.8%
USW Awarding gap: Mixed to White (UK DOMICILED STUDENTS ONLY)	-6.7%	-3.4%	-14.8%	0.9%	-3.8%
USW Awarding gap: BAME to White (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY)	-30.6%	-20.6%	-24.6%	-29.7%	No longer reportable
USW Awarding gap: Known Disability to None Known	-5.5%	-8.6%	-3.4%	-1.1%	0.8%
USW Awarding gap: WIMD1&2 to WIMD3-5	-6.2%	-5.6%	-7.7%	-3.8%	-6.3%

To address this, the USW launched its three-year DOAP on April 1, 2024, building on efforts that began in 2022 and gained momentum in 2023. This comprehensive, pan-university action plan is designed to tackle disparities in student outcomes across the entire academic journey, from recruitment to employability. Key initiatives include inclusive recruitment practices, curriculum enhancements, targeted student and learning support, data-driven interventions, timely responses to retention challenges, and focused employment initiatives.

Race Equality Charter Survey

In January 2024 as part of the University's Race Equality Charter application the University undertook its first full Race Equality survey. The survey was divided into two separate questionnaires, specifically designed for Staff and Students provided in both Welsh and English.

The survey developed by AdvanceHE included 12 core question areas that focused on key themes:

- Sense of Belonging (SoB),
- Speaking Up and Communicating (SU&C), and
- Culture and Climate (C&C).

Additionally, there were 17 optional questions, allowing participants to expand on these themes, as well as open-ended questions to capture qualitative feedback. The questions were designed to examine the institutional racial landscape through a thematic lens, considering both external (societal, sectoral, national) and internal (institutional, unit-level, subject-level) contexts.

The survey was officially launched on January 25th, 2024, and closed on the April 2nd, 2024, running for a total of 71 days. Both staff and student surveys comprised 12 core questions, along with optional and demographic questions.

A total of 305 staff members (4 in Welsh) and 110 students (1 in Welsh) participated in the anonymous survey. Of these, 109 student responses were in English, and 1 was in Welsh (less than 1%); 301 staff responses were in English, and 4 in Welsh (approximately 10% response rate).

It was recognised that although the sample size was limited and may not fully represent the entire institution, it provided a rich qualitative data on key issues. The results have been particularly valuable in understanding participants experiences, especially in relation to ethnic and campus-based differences. The small sample size might suggest reluctance or avoidance in engaging with race-related topics, particularly among predominantly white staff and students, and a possible lack of trust from Black and Ethnic Minority staff and students.

The survey was conducted following extensive engagement with both staff and students at USW and RWCMD on Race Equality issues. This engagement included anti-racism workshops, and a series of critical conversations events focused on race equity. These initiatives aimed to challenge predominantly white staff demographics while providing a safe space for Black and Ethnic Minority colleagues to share their lived experiences. USW EDI Team used these events to build a mailing list for survey outreach. However, it is notable that despite direct engagement with 693 staff members who attended these training events, the expected higher engagement with the REC survey did not materialise. Specifically, participation was low among Black and Ethnic Minority staff and students.

Key Staff-Related Themes

- **Recruitment and Selection:** Staff highlighted concerns about a lack of diverse representation, particularly at senior leadership levels. There were calls to address unconscious bias and implement positive action strategies.
- **Career Development and Progression:** Academic staff expressed limited opportunities for professional development and noted a lack of transparency in career progression processes. Despite this, most staff felt comfortable providing feedback to their line managers, and many reported that leaders encouraged idea-sharing in meetings.
- **Connection and Value:** Many staff members reported feeling disconnected from the institution, yet a strong sense of being valued by USW was evident. Despite this contradiction, most staff felt comfortable being their authentic selves at work.
- **Racist Incidents and Addressing Racism:** While respondents generally believed their managers would support them in addressing racial abuse or

discrimination, there was widespread uncertainty about where or how to report such incidents. Approximately half of staff were confident that proper investigative action would be taken. A significant disparity was noted between white and Black and Ethnic Minority staff responses, with the latter group indicating more frequent exposure to or awareness of racist incidents.

Key Student-Related Themes

- **Student Events and Socialising:** Students expressed a desire for more events that celebrate the multicultural aspects of the institution. Overall, the sentiment was positive, with students feeling that events and activities at USW were inclusive of all ethnicities and races.
- **Lack of Diverse Representation:** A majority of students, across all ethnicities, noted that both the student and staff demographics were overwhelmingly white, which they considered a negative reflection on the institution.
- **Communication:** Many students cited a lack of awareness regarding the institution's race equity initiatives, and there was a general misunderstanding of their purpose and impact.
- **Course Culture and Climate** Most students felt that tutors encouraged a diversity of ideas during lectures and that they were comfortable providing feedback. However, concerns about consistency and clarity, particularly regarding IT systems and assessments, were prevalent.
- **Assessment and Support:** Respondents noted a lack of awareness from staff regarding the challenges faced by Black, Ethnic Minority international students in terms of course content and assessment design. Many students felt that student services could be improved, especially in terms of helpfulness.
- **Racist Incidents and Addressing Racism:** Similar to staff responses, students were unsure about where to report racist incidents, and many questioned whether appropriate action would be taken. However, students generally felt their tutors would support them in taking action if they experienced or witnessed racial bullying or discrimination. There were noticeable disparities between white and Black and Ethnic Minority students regarding their exposure to racist incidents on campus.

In summary, the REC survey offers valuable insights, particularly through qualitative feedback. However, limited engagement from key groups highlights ongoing challenges in addressing race equity among both staff and students. Combined with existing qualitative and quantitative data (outlined below), this feedback will play a crucial role in shaping the University's race equity initiatives, providing a strong foundation for future actions and strategies to enhance race equity at USW and RWCMD.

Internal Race Equity Qualitative and Quantitative data gathered between 2020 - 2024

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report into the lived experience of Black and Ethnic Minority Staff and Students 2020 • Executive Meetings 2021 - ongoing |
|--|

- Race Equality Charter Champion Meetings 2021 - ongoing
- Race Equality Pulse Survey 2023
- Organisational Review 2023
- Anti-racism training sessions including quarterly reports from trainers 2023-2024
- Critical Conversations 2023 - ongoing
- Workshop: Advance HE: Enabling a Racially Inclusive Curriculum 2023
- Workshop: on ESOL with FCBI 2023
- Inclusion workshop FCES 2023
- Senior Leadership Team Meetings 2023- ongoing
- Cultural Festival - Treforest 2023
- USW Town Halls 2023 – ongoing
- Student Union Meetings 2023 - ongoing
- Various sessions on Differential Outcomes, Racially Inclusive project work (i.e. Listening Rooms), Holtse project work, CELT research support
- Module Review of “Football in Society” with students

University of Sanctuary update

During this reporting period the University made significant strides in supporting displaced individuals and advancing refugee-related initiatives. The university doubled the number of scholarships it offers, expanding from 2 to 4, and launched its first affiliated Student Action for Refugees (STAR) society in 2024.

Building on this momentum, USW also introduced an innovative Fellows Scheme for displaced Syrian academics in 2023. This program welcomed 34 CARA Fellows from Syria, providing them with access to library support, academic networks, and opportunities to contribute to the rebuilding of higher education in Syria. These Fellows, who are affiliated with USW, can use the university's library resources for the next five years, enabling them to continue their academic work. Additionally, USW has collaborated closely with the Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA) to support an Iranian scholar pursuing a PhD in Wales.

USW's commitment to promoting social justice extends beyond academia. The university continues to work with a wide range of third-sector organizations, local and national government bodies, and educational institutions to advocate for forced migration issues, integration, and humane asylum policies. Notable efforts include USW staff representation on the Cardiff City of Sanctuary steering group, consultancy on the Welsh Government's migrant integration framework, participation in the migrant language education steering group, and collaboration with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to provide ESOL classes for refugees.

In a further demonstration of leadership, USW has spearheaded the creation of the "Sanctuary in Tertiary Education Cymru" group. This new collaboration between colleges, universities, schools, and third-sector organizations across Wales aims to streamline and promote educational initiatives—including scholarships for refugees

and asylum seekers—ensuring better communication and coordination among all parties involved.

Report & Support identity-based discrimination, bullying, harassment and or violence reporting update

During this reporting period, a total of 129 reports were submitted through the Report & Support Platform. Of these, 75 reports included contact details, while 54 were submitted anonymously. Among the reports, 110 were filed by students and 19 by staff members.

Key insights about who is reporting and what they are reporting:

1. **Students report more frequently than staff**
 - Across all categories, students have significantly more reports compared to staff.
 - The highest reported issue among students is **Harassment (41 reports)**, followed by **Bullying (33 reports)** and **Discrimination (37 reports)**.
2. **Staff reports are lower in number**
 - The most commonly reported issues by staff are **Bullying (8 reports)** and **Harassment (8 reports)**.
 - Other categories have very few reports from staff, with **some categories having zero reports (Hate crime, Assault, Drink and needle spiking)**.
3. **Discrimination and Harassment are top concerns for students**
 - **Harassment (41 reports)** and **Discrimination (37 reports)** are the most frequently reported issues among students.
 - This suggests that these concerns are particularly prevalent among students.
4. **Uncertainty in reporting**
 - Some reports are categorized as **"I'm not sure" (14 reports by students, 6 by staff)**, indicating a level of uncertainty in how to classify incidents.

Key insights on why people choose to report anonymously:

1. **Fear of Repercussions is the Top Concern** – The most common reason for anonymous reporting is fear of repercussions for themselves or others (40 responses).
2. **Authority and Credibility Concerns** – Many people report anonymously because they feel the perpetrator has more authority (33 responses) or worry they won't be believed (29 responses).
3. **Career and Reputation Fears** – Concerns about career impact (29 responses) and fear of being labelled a troublemaker (25 responses) are significant factors.
4. **Emotional Barriers** – Feelings of embarrassment or shame (19 responses) contribute to the choice of anonymity.

5. **Previous Inaction Leads to Anonymity** – Some respondents had reported issues before but were either not taken seriously (15 responses) or saw no action taken (18 responses).
6. **Desire for Privacy** – A notable portion (10-13 responses) wanted to keep the incident private, did not want to cause trouble, or preferred not to disclose the details themselves.
7. **Other Reasons Exist** – Some respondents (11 responses) cited different reasons beyond those listed.

Overall, the data highlights that fear—whether of retaliation, disbelief, or harm to one's future—is a major driving force behind anonymous reporting.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while significant strides have been made in this reporting period to adopting a fresh approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) at the University—shifting from mere compliance to a desire to deeply embed EDI within our strategic dialogue and commitments—we acknowledge that much work still lies ahead. In an era marked by financial constraints and socio-political unrest, it is crucial that we stay steadfast in our dedication to EDI. Only through this unwavering commitment can we continue to place our staff, students, and community at the centre of all we do, ensuring a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

Appendix 1 – Staff EDI Data (narrative to be completed)

Appendix 2 – Student EDI Data (narrative to be completed)

Appendix 3 EDI Events and Campaigns

External – Website		
Date	Title	Link
10/04/23	Dyslexia Awareness Week: USW celebrates a decade with prestigious educational partner	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/october/dyslexia-awareness-week--usw-celebrates-a-decade-with-prestigious-educational-partner/
23/04/23	Welcoming refugees with inclusive language education	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/april/welcoming-refugees-with-inclusive-language-education/
05/05/23	Lecturer crowned Coronation Champion	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/may/lecturer-crowned-coronation-champion-in-recognition-of-voluntary-work/
16/05/23	ESOL classes are crucial for migrant integration, yet challenges remain	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/may/esol-classes-are-crucial-for-migrant-integration-yet-challenges-remain-unaddressed/
15/06/23	Pride Month: Using photography to explore queer identity	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/june/pride-month--using-photography-to-explore-queer-identity/
20/06/23	Refugee Week: Syrian academics gain AdvanceHE fellowships from USW	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/june/refugee-week--syrian-academics-gain-advancehe-fellowships-from-usw/
22/06/23	Refugee Week: Welsh lessons proving popular with refugees	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/june/refugee-week--welsh-lessons-proving-popular-with-refugees/
26/06/23	Pride Month: Pride should be celebrated no matter your identity	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/june/pride-month--pride-should-be-celebrated-no-matter-your-identity/

26/06/23	We need to be acknowledged: how Caribbean elders navigate belonging in the UK	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/june/we-need-to-be-acknowledged-how-caribbean-elders-navigate-belonging-in-the-uk/
28/06/23	Pride Month: Aston advocates for LGBTQIA+ patients in healthcare	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/june/pride-month--aston-advocates-for-lgbtqia-patients-in-healthcare/
26/10/23	Black History Month: USW graduate's acclaimed theatre show returns to Wales	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/october/black-history-month--usw-graduates-acclaimed-theatre-show-returns-to-wales/
30/10/23	How substance use services can better support LGBTQ+ people	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/october/how-substance-use-services-can-better-support-lgbtq-people/
16/11/23	How the Welsh language is being promoted to help migrants feel at home	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/november/how-the-welsh-language-is-being-promoted-to-help-migrants-feel-at-home/
16/11/23	Global Entrepreneurship Week: How Stiwdio helped Amber build her sustainable and inclusive fashion line	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/november/global-entrepreneurship-week-how-stiwdio-helped-amber-build-her-sustainable-and-inclusive-fashion-line/
06/12/23	Cranogwen statue unveiled for pioneering welsh sailor poet and gender equality campaigner	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/june/cranogwen-statue-unveiled-for-pioneering-welsh-sailor-poet-and-gender-equality-campaigner/
14/12/23	Disability History Month: USW and Cwm Taf People First team up to amplify the voices of people with learning disabilities	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2023/december/disability-history-month--usw-and-cwm-taf-people-first-team-up-to-amplify-the-voices-of-people-with-learning-disabilities/
25/01/24	Honorary Fellowship for Chair of Welsh Refugee Council	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2024/january/honorary-fellowship-for-chair-of-welsh-refugee-council/
25/01/24	Graduation Tales: Lynne uses experience of menopause to help others	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2024/january/graduation-tales--lynne-uses-experience-of-menopause-to-help-others/

08/03/24	International Women's Day: The constantly evolving culture of public service	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2024/march/international-womens-day--the-constantly-evolving-culture-of-public-service/
22/03/24	We can work together for a more inclusive world for women': Jane Hutt MS addresses gender equality at USW event	https://www.southwales.ac.uk/news/2024/march/we-can-work-together-for-a-more-inclusive-world-for-women-jane-hutt-ms-addresses-gender-equality-at-usw-event/
Social media – X		
Date	Title	Link
21/04/23	Ramadan 2023	https://x.com/UniSouthWales/status/1649344916735098880
22/04/23	Stephen Lawrence Day	https://x.com/USWEquality/status/1649720493665026049
05/04/23	Deaf Awareness Week	https://x.com/UniSouthWales/status/1654048551389765634
17/05/23	IDAHOBIT Day 2023	https://x.com/UniSouthWales/status/1658760054550478849
18/05/23	Global Accessibility Awareness Day	https://x.com/USWEquality/status/1659132021396893698
19/06/23	USW Family Pride parade	https://x.com/UniSouthWales/status/1670708598463160320
22/06/23	National Windrush Day	https://x.com/UniSouthWales/status/1671801378895691776
18/07/23	Black Leaders Awareness Day	https://x.com/USWEquality/status/1681242218110021633
18/07/23	South Asian Heritage Month	https://x.com/USWEquality/status/1681242876200591363
23/08/23	Abolition of the slave trade	https://x.com/USWEquality/status/1694288304718446707
09/02/23	Sponsor of community stage Pride in the Port	https://x.com/USWEquality/status/1697938773793734897
15/9/23	World Afro Day	https://x.com/USWEquality/status/1702504393596182879
10/10/23	Black History Month	https://x.com/UniSouthWales/status/1708768218750300392
10/10/23	World Mental Health Day	https://x.com/USWEquality/status/1711673476816294255
11/12/23	Diwali	https://x.com/UniSouthWales/status/1723611796748017831
18/12/23	Celebrate the impact, contribution and importance	https://x.com/USWEquality/status/1736690482586030287

	of international migrants in the UK	
29/01/24	Holocaust Memorial Day Trust	https://x.com/USWEquality/status/1751889698111230408
02/01/24	World Hijab Day	https://x.com/USWEquality/status/1752994299652812871
02/06/24	Race Equality Week	https://x.com/USWEquality/status/1754856158718726624
03/08/24	International Women's Day	https://x.com/UniSouthWales/status/1766026269563486327
21/03/24	International Day of Elimination of Racial Discrimination	https://x.com/UniSouthWales/status/1770756291180302500

Appendix 4 – EDI Events delivered by Faculty of Business and Creative Industries

Title of event	Date	Synopsis	Lead organiser	Number of Attendees (if known)
Business insights series: Women in Business with Donna Whitehead	10.05.23	Donna Whitehead shares her experience and career path	Sian Jenkins	18
Research at 4: Welsh Research	22.06.23	Showcasing areas of Welsh Led Research at USW, with Steffan James, Dr Helen Davies and Dr Sera Moore Williams.	Susan Wood	16
Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) and the Arts	13.07.23	This free to attend morning session will explore the role of the arts in working towards an end to all forms of VAWDASV and will include a performance from the play <i>No Name</i> by GJ Kalic, followed by an expert panel discussion.	Emily Underwood-Lee	29
Film Masterclass with Dr Mena Fombo	20.09.23	Dr Mena Fombo shares her experience as a black film maker	Samo Chandlar	29
Student film discussion with Berwyn from Iris Prize	03.10.23	Students share their films with Berwyn Reynolds (founder of the Iris LGBTQIA+ film prize)	Samo Chandlar	42

Research at 4: Self Heritage- With Christina Papagiannouli	08.11.23	Dr Christina Papagiannouli explores theatre in Vlach and Pontic Greek Endangered Languages.	Susan Wood	7
Work in Progress: Bevin Magama – Poking the Crocodile	22.11.23	Through spoken word and song, Bevin Magama tells his remarkable life story, from a child growing up in Zimbabwe under apartheid rule to arriving in Wales as a refugee and asylum seeker.	Emily Underwood- Lee	20
Work-in-Progress: Chandrika Joshi	06.12.23	Chandrika will be presenting a show based on her life experiences and incorporating traditional stories. She came to live in Wales in 1972 when as a teenager she was expelled from Uganda.	Emily Underwood- Lee	20
Sera Williams Book Launch – Lansiad Llyfr: Dramau Rhosys Cochion	12.12.23	Celebrating the launch of Dramau'r Rhosys Cochion plays of Sharon Morgan (edited by Dr Sera Moore Williams), published by Honno With live reading by Sharon Morgan	Sera Williams	34

Beautiful creatures: an african safari	13.12.23-15.12.23	An inclusive musical performance for 4–7-year-olds from local primary schools	Michale Carlin	545 total
Photography and Community Practice in Wales with David Barnes	24.01.24	David will present an overview of his PhD research into community engaged photography in Wales and ideas of national identity.	Mark Durden	10
Research at 4: Women and the workplace	08.03.24	Pannel discussion on the latest research about women in the workplace. With Dr Rachel Lock-Lewis, Dr Lauren Thomas, Dr Shehla Khan and Dr Chibuzo Amadi	Susan Wood and Lauren Thomas	10
Research@4/small nation/storytelling and gender with Michael Brown	12.03.24	Michael Brown explores ethnographic and participatory film practice, engaging with marginalised, disadvantaged or declining people and their cultures, species, places and ecosystems, to promote dialogue in search of positive transformation.	Susan Wood	14

Beijing 95 reunion	20.03.24	This event brings together members of the UN-affiliated Wales Assembly of Women to explore the significance of the 1995 conference, the resultant Platform for Action, and the work of Wales Assembly of Women to secure its implementation in Wales. Jane Hutt MS and Minister for Social Justice will give a keynote speech on the progress towards gender equality in Wales, and Dr Rachel Lock-Lewis (USW) will give present her research findings on Wales Assembly of Women and the Beijing conference.	Diana Wallace and Rachel Lock- Lewis	15
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