

MANIFESTO FOR A GENDER EQUAL WALES





Introduction

In this manifesto we have set out a vision for an equal Wales. A Wales where women, of all backgrounds and experiences, are able to achieve and prosper. A Wales where we work together to dismantle structural barriers, and where we can all benefit from the economic value of gender equality, which could add £13.6 billion to our economy. In these times of global uncertainty, it is even more crucial that we invest in our fight for equality and reap the benefits of it.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the entrenched inequalities that have long existed within our society. But as we recover from the pandemic, we have an opportunity to rebuild to a more caring, fair and equal Wales. The next Welsh Government must seize this opportunity to bring about long-term structural change; to be innovative and to create policy designed for the people it aims to serve.

When we talk about achieving gender equality, we are unequivocal that this means equality for **all women in Wales**. In order to achieve this, we need to focus on the most marginalised first; the women who face the greatest barriers and disadvantage. This means **taking an intersectional approach**.

An intersectional approach is critical to driving structural change and ensuring equality of outcome for all

A look behind the headline figures for gender inequality quickly reveals the significant differences in experience and outcomes among different groups of women.

While the gender pay gap narrows slowly overall, for women of colour and disabled women, it lags behind not only men but also white, non-disabled women revealing the intersectional barriers they face.

While many women can go about their daily lives without fear of overt discrimination, for women of colour, racism and oppression remain an unacceptable reality. The events of 2020, with Black Lives Matter protests across the globe, have made clear that racism remains deeply ingrained in our society, our economy and our institutions.

Disabled women continue to face discrimination in the labour market and the social security system, which prevents them from living independent lives. And trans women continue to face oppression as they fight for much needed reform of the Gender Recognition Act.

Wales cannot call itself a gender equal nation until all women are able to live their lives free from discrimination, violence and oppression, and are able to experience fair, equitable outcomes. Embedding a truly intersectional approach into policy-making is imperative. An approach that recognises how characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, sexuality and class continue to shape access to power, influence, resources and privilege.

"I am not free while any woman is unfree, even if her shackles are very different from my own"

Audre Lorde

Making Wales a world leader for gender equality

A desire to do things differently has been a central principle of a devolved Wales, with equality as a guiding focus of the establishment of the now Welsh Parliament. Twenty years on, we need to ask ourselves what progress we have made towards achieving this vision for Wales.

Until everyone in Wales is able to thrive, and benefit from fair, equitable outcomes, we have not achieved this vision of a fairer Wales. The next five, and twenty, years are an opportunity for much more radical action, innovation and commitment to deliver long-term, structural change.

The Gender Equality Review set out an ambitious programme of change, not only to what we do but **how** we do it. At its core is a radical vision for achieving gender equality for **all** women in Wales:

A gender equal Wales means an equal sharing of power, influence and resources between women, men and non-binary people

This vision looks beyond securing **equality of opportunity**, which in reality leaves many people with little chance to achieve their full potential. Instead, it focuses on securing **equality of outcome**, to ensure that we seize every opportunity to tackle the structural inequities that hold women and others back.

To be successful, the programme of change outlined in the Gender Equality Review report *Deeds not Words* will need to span multiple Senedd terms. Central to this programme of change is the adoption of equalities mainstreaming, to support evidence-led policy design, delivery and evaluation that delivers fairly for all communities throughout Wales. It's imperative that we continue on this journey throughout the next Senedd term, which is why we are calling for all parties to commit to placing gender equality at the heart of their policy proposals and to continued implementation of the Gender Equality Review recommendations should they form the next Welsh Government.

1

Place gender equality at the heart of government:

- Adopt and embed the vision for gender equality set out in *Deeds not Words*
- Adopt and implement the principles for a feminist government set out in *Deeds not Words*
- Commit to delivering the recommendations set out in the Gender Equality Review in full to achieve a fundamental shift in the way that Welsh Government functions and develops and delivers policy

Laying the foundations: the importance of equalities evidence

Good data and evidence is key to achieving our ambitions for a gender equal Wales. How do we know where we are starting from, where we are going or how well we are doing if we don't have the right evidence?

The collection, analysis and publication of robust, equalities disaggregated evidence must be a top priority at all levels of government. We know that some groups are not well represented in larger national data sets, but that cannot be an excuse for not seeking to understand their experiences and whether policies and programmes are delivering fairly.

A better balance of quantitative and qualitative evidence, coupled with an approach to policy-making that engages with those with lived experience can fill these gaps and deliver better public policy.

Robust equalities evidence provides the foundations for better policy-making. As such there are a number of places in this manifesto where we call for improved collection, presentation and use of data and evidence, to aid policy-making, scrutiny and accountability, and to help drive change.

Women in the Economy

We need a gender equal Welsh economy – where women are able to fully participate in work, where their work is valued and where we have eradicated income inequality. If we can achieve this vision, the Welsh economy could benefit from an additional £13.6 billion in GVA by 2028.¹ But we have much progress to make.

The Gender Pay Gap (GPG) is a crucial tool to understand the state of gender inequality. It reflects the inequality between women and men in work, by measuring the difference in their earnings across an organisation, a sector or locality. It highlights the disparities in average earnings between women and men, and the gender segregation in different types of roles. The GPG reveals the structural inequality that women experience, with the roles and patterns of work that women typically occupy being lower paid and less economically valued. For example, sometimes this disparity comes from average pay for part-time roles being much lower than full-time roles.

The GPG is also helpful in identifying where barriers exist to women progressing into more senior roles. Therefore, understanding and monitoring the gender pay gap is an important way for organisations and Government to spot areas where action is needed, and assess progress.

The GPG could be closed by lowering men's average pay, however that would not improve equality. To meaningfully close the gender pay gap, we must tackle the root causes of gender inequality in our economy, drive a more equal sharing of unpaid care work, adopt new, flexible ways of working and ensure that women can enter and progress in work across all sectors of the economy.

The gender pay gap in Wales currently stands at 15%, providing an indication of the inequality within our labour market.² Behind this figure we see a variety of unequal outcomes for women; who continue to be less likely to be employed, more likely to be out of paid work as a result of caring responsibilities and more likely to work in part-time, low paid roles.

The employment rate for women in Wales is 70% compared to 77% for men³

28% of women are economically inactive as they are looking after the family or home compared to 7% of men⁴

Women earn on average, £11,20 per hour compared to £13.10 for men⁵

41% of women work part-time compared to 12% of men⁶

These inequalities are at risk of increasing as we continue to navigate the Covid-19 crisis and economic repercussions of the pandemic. Women are among the groups predicted to be hardest hit by the crisis, given their dominance in sectors that were shut down for the longest and are likely to take longer to recover.⁷

Gender inequality in the economy is not inevitable. We can achieve a Wales where women can fully access, and participate in the labour market, and their balance of work and care is based on genuine choice.

There is an opportunity for Wales to do things differently. We have the potential to create an economy that is focused on equality and well-being. An economy that is centered around the importance and value of care; with a government that recognises that money spent on social infrastructure such as childcare, is an investment in our own economy. An economy that supports women's financial independence, and that fairly rewards women for the work they do across all sectors. Wales can and should be a nation where our economy supports everyone to thrive, where racism, sexism and discrimination are a thing of the past and where work provides the necessary financial security to eradicate poverty and inequality.

Addressing gender inequality within the economy must be a central priority for the next Welsh Government. The start of the next Senedd term should mark a radical shift in how we organise and structure our economy. The actions below are those we believe are critical to closing the gender pay gap, to tackling inequality in the labour market and ensuring that all women in Wales are able to prosper.

1 Economic Development

Wales needs an economic approach that translates words into action, that aligns with the Gender Equality Review and that delivers economic independence for women.

This will require new principles and foundations on which economic decisions are made, refocusing on equality as an economic as well as social goal and making full use of the levers available, such as tax and procurement. We will need new structures to support effective implementation of such a strategy, new ways of working that mainstream equality and new measures that assess progress against a more rounded understanding of economic success.

Traditional approaches to economic development are not working for women, or many others. Existing inequality is being reinforced and recreated through economic policy that focuses predominantly on GDP as a measure of success and that focuses investment on traditional, "dirty" sectors, high value manufacturing and technology, all of which are dominated by men.

Vital sectors of the economy, such as care, have been continually overlooked and ignored by economic strategies, leaving many thousands of mainly women, stuck in low paid, undervalued jobs on which we all depend.

Economic strategies provide the framework in which much of the work of government is designed and delivered. It's therefore critical to avoid gender-blind economic policy and to ensure that equality is pursued as a goal in and of itself.

Economic decision-making should be guided and informed by new principles and foundations:

- The current economic strategy must be revised and include a commitment to a number of guiding principles and foundations including genuine inclusive growth, tackling inequality, fair work, well-being and the values of being caring human beings

A new economic strategy should refocus on equality:

- Recognise gender equality as an economic imperative and strengthen levers to ensure that those in receipt of public money demonstrate how they will tackle inequality
- Make care a key sector in Wales' national economic strategy to recognize it as central to our wellbeing and focus investment and support
- Invest in state infrastructure, including childcare, social care, health care and education, to enable people to engage with the economy and deliver fair work within these sectors
- Deliver sustainable, multi-year funding for specialist equality organisations who can support the delivery of an inclusive economic strategy
- Use taxation as a lever to advance equality, ensuring independent taxation of income and consider reform of council tax
- Simplify and consolidate procurement guidance that mainstreams gender equality and delivers the principles of prosperity, equality, inclusion and resilience

New structures should be put in place to support implementation of a new economic approach:

- Diversify the advice boards into government by ensuring that existing, and new, advisory groups and committees on economic development at all levels (national, regional and local) include feminist perspectives
- Expand the remit of the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales to include social infrastructure and ensure feminist perspectives are around the table

Processes and ways of working should be developed that mainstream equality:

- Embed gender budgeting across Welsh Government and the Welsh public sector
- Develop economic policies in collaboration with diverse groups and ensure mechanisms for engagement and involvement are adequately resourced and value the expertise that comes from lived experience

Economic measures should be expanded beyond only traditional, growth focused indicators:

- Adopt economic measures that include well-being and equality
- Measure economic policies using disaggregated equalities data
- Incorporate unpaid care into economic measures

2 Women in Work

Women's unequal position in work is one of the most significant contributing factors to gender inequality in Wales. This inequality is likely to be exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis and its economic impact.

Women dominate in sectors and jobs associated with low pay, insecure contracts and poor working conditions. They are more likely to work part-time or fewer hours, and less likely to hold managerial or director positions. In Wales, 41% of women work part-time, nearly four times more than men, and women make up only 39% of managers, directors and senior officials.⁸

Women still experience barriers and discrimination in the workplace due to pregnancy, maternity and other sexual or reproductive health related issues, including menopause. EHRC found that 11% of mothers had been unfairly dismissed from their jobs, and one in five had experienced harassment or negative comments related to motherhood.⁹ A TUC survey found that more than two thirds of women said menopause affects their working life.¹⁰ Throughout Covid-19 in particular, there has been a lack of clarity on guidance and protections for pregnant women in the workplace. Any approach to improve working conditions for women must urgently address pregnancy, maternity and menopause discrimination.

In order to see women succeed in work we need a dual approach:

Improve the quality of work:
Address and improve conditions and quality of work within the vital sectors that women currently dominate: health and care, cleaning and administrative services, retail and food and drink.

Get women into work:
Simultaneously, enable women to enter and progress into higher paid, high productivity sectors like STEM and new emerging technologies.

These goals cannot be viewed separately from childcare. Looking after children and/or the home remains a primary reason for women being outside the labour market. Efforts to improve the quality of women's work and the number of women in work must therefore be coupled with effective childcare infrastructure and efforts to rebalance unpaid care within households.

Changing the way in which we structure work and workplaces is also a key part of the solution. Ways of working rapidly adapted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, with hundreds of thousands of workers transitioning to working from home. This is a crucial opportunity to adapt, improve and incentivise modern working practices that support people to enter and progress in work while maintaining a healthy, work-life balance. In particular this is an opportunity to enable people to access the workplace who have previously been locked out; including disabled women, women with complex caring responsibilities and other marginalised groups. Now is the opportunity to embed a move towards flexible, inclusive working practices.

Supporting women to enter and progress in decent, fair work should be a priority for the incoming Welsh Government in 2021.

1 Employment programmes must understand and respond to gender inequality in the labour market, including how issues such as caring, labour market segregation, low pay and poor quality work affect women and men differently. Any future employment programme must:

- Be accessible to women and directly address the barriers women face to entering and progressing in work
- Take a person-centred, individualised approach to employment support
- Develop specialist support, in conjunction with representative organisations for women who face additional barriers to employment and who have been absent from the labour market for a prolonged period
- Include specific, measurable gender targets and success measures, which measure both hard and soft outcomes and are regularly monitored and reviewed
- Integrate employment interventions alongside any childcare offer to ensure childcare provision supports people to access work

2 Improve the quality of work for women:

- Improve fair work practices in Wales, with equality at the core and a renewed focus on the foundational sectors that are central to sustaining our communities
- Publish clear guidance for employers on what constitutes Fair Work, with gender equality mainstreamed throughout. This should include clear requirements for monitoring and reporting
- Require all those in receipt of Welsh Government funding - whether directly, through formal procurement exercises or through institutions such as the Development Bank of Wales - to demonstrate how they meet fair work requirements

3 Support employers to adopt and further implement modern working practices to create more inclusive, modern workplaces:

- Create a central hub of information for employers on modern working practices, including best practice, guidance, networks, and signposting to expertise and support services such as Chwarae Teg's Fair Play Employer service
- Make funding available to employers to support them to invest in infrastructure related to modern working practices; whether it be physical infrastructure like technology, or investment to support training of staff and managers to pivot to new ways of working.

4 Work with sector bodies and businesses to set out clear career pathways within foundational sectors and support improved staff progression, particularly for women and other diverse groups who are under-represented in senior positions:

- Work with sector bodies and businesses to identify sector specific barriers to progression
- Work with specialist organisations to develop interventions that will ensure new progression pathways are inclusive and accessible

3 Women in Business

Self-employment offers rewarding opportunities for women, providing greater flexibility and freedom for many. However, women and men's experiences of self-employment differ and these differences must be taken into account to ensure that women looking to pursue self-employment have access to the right support.

- 9% of women in Wales are self-employed compared to 17% of men.¹¹

- Women are more likely to run smaller businesses and are less likely to employ other people.¹² Women lead just 16% of the 'fastest growing' businesses in Wales.¹³

- They also take home lower wages, with the self-employment gender pay gap across the UK standing at 43%.¹⁴

While there is an appetite for self-employment, barriers and challenges still remain for women hoping to enter entrepreneurship including:¹⁵

- Access to business support and finance – women typically have less capital than men making it difficult to invest. Women who do enter self-employment are more likely to live in couple households where there is another income to depend on.
- The lack of basic employment rights like parental leave and sick leave – this can be a particular barrier for disabled women when entering a time away from the workplace, and fluctuating income when entering entrepreneurship can also affect social security eligibility and income.¹⁶
- While the power to change this still lies with the UK Government, any future Welsh Government should seek to work collaboratively to improve support for self-employed women.

- Access to formal and informal networks, which can be crucial in setting up and creating a successful business.

These barriers are particularly acute for women with additional protected characteristics; our own research with BAME and disabled women concluded that in order to support these groups specifically, targeted, tailored intervention is needed.¹⁷

To effectively support women in business and close the gender gap in self-employment, the incoming Welsh Government in 2021 must ensure that programmes and interventions are designed specifically for women, that are responsive to the unique barriers and challenges that they face.

1 Improve advice and support around self-employment for women:

- Create a central hub for women in self-employment, sign-posting business support funds, application processes and business advice, with targeted interventions to improve women's access to finance and support
- Improve careers advice around self-employment, with information about entering entrepreneurship, networks, accessing finance, mentoring programmes and case studies about self-employed women's journeys. This is crucial for young girls, but provision must be improved both within compulsory education and throughout adult life

2 Improve data collection related to self-employed women, and women-led businesses in Wales to understand trends and monitor progress:

- Publish an annual report on the state of entrepreneurship in Wales, including a specific section on equality, and the numbers of people with protected characteristics, including women in self-employment.

3 Develop tailored support programmes informed by the experiences and needs of diverse women in Wales, to support women to enter self-employment:

- These should include pre-start-up business support, action to build women's confidence as they enter self-employment and access to women mentors from diverse backgrounds

4 Incentivise public bodies and recipients of public funding to commission services and products from women-led businesses:

- Encourage organisations to think outside of the 'usual suspects' when commissioning to ensure public bodies are benefiting from diversity in leadership throughout their supply chains

4 Childcare

A lack of affordable, accessible childcare continues to be a critical barrier to women entering and progressing in work. It is widely accepted that the "full labour participation of women requires childcare to be available full-time and to meet the demand of work during the parents' working hours and school holidays."¹⁸

Childcare is as critical a part of our infrastructure as roads and rail; this must be recognised in public policy. Yet, money spent to provide or subsidise childcare, is still often seen as 'spend' rather than investment.

Currently, childcare in Wales is a patchwork of provision that is too often complex, inaccessible, inflexible and expensive. Eligibility is linked to the age of your child, whether you work and where you live. This creates confusion and there have been issues reported with parents being left with unexpected childcare bills as a result.¹⁹

The current Childcare Offer focuses support around children aged three to four. By this point, many parents have already made decisions about how to change their working patterns to accommodate caring responsibilities. This often results in women reducing their hours or leaving the workforce entirely, as childcare for children under three remains prohibitively expensive.

Delivery of the Offer has been further complicated as a result of the two components – early years education through the Foundation Phase and formal childcare – being delivered in different ways across different local authority areas.²⁰

These issues can be particularly acute for women on low incomes. Our research into women's poverty in 2019 found that up to the age of three the costs of childcare are prohibitive for all but women with above average earnings.²¹ We also found that for many women in low-paid occupations, working is not an option unless they have family to provide care, and that while the Childcare Offer is valued by women who work 30+ hours a week, with only four out of ten women working part-time, it's not always a good fit and is simply not available for women on the lowest incomes.²²

Investment in childcare has the potential to be transformational, but impacts on issues such as maternal employment will not necessarily be immediate. Decisions about family and work are often made years in advance and can be difficult to change. It's therefore imperative that parents have long-term confidence in the childcare system. The incoming Welsh Government in 2021 can provide this by delivering an integrated early childhood education and care system that ensures high educational attainment while being affordable and accessible to support women to enter and progress in work.

1 Deliver an integrated Early Childhood Education and Care System:

- Bring responsibility for early years education and care into a single department within Welsh Government to provide policy coherence and strengthen ministerial oversight
- Align qualifications, regulation and inspections across early years and childcare provision
- Create a clear progression pathway for those entering the early years and childcare workforce culminating in degree level qualifications
- Invest in childcare infrastructure to support the co-location of early years and childcare provision in a single setting

2 Reform childcare provision:

- Deliver, free, good quality full-time childcare for all children aged 0-4 for 48 weeks of the year
- Invest in wraparound childcare and holiday care to ensure it is available and affordable to all

3 Improve access to information about childcare support:

- Develop a one-stop-shop for information so parents can get clarity on the childcare support available to them, regardless of whether it's a Welsh Government, UK Government or Local Authority administered scheme

5 Social Care

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted just how critical the social care sector is to our health and well-being. Despite how essential social care is to our sustenance and survival, we do not value it as a society and we do not value those who work within it. There remains a perception of care work as low skilled and being of low value. Care workers are more vulnerable to being paid below the legal wage floor and are four times more likely than average to be employed zero hours contracts.²³ These poor working conditions have a clear impact on the workforce, contribute to recruitment and retention issues and have been linked to the quality of care provided.²⁴

Women's dominance in frontline care roles, which are characterised by low pay, insecure contracts and a lack of progression, contributes to the gender pay gap and leaves women at a higher risk of poverty.

The health and social care workforce is the largest in the economy of Wales, employing over 180,000 people in 350 different roles.²⁵ The workforce is dominated by women – 83% of those working for commissioned care providers in Wales are female and 48% are over 50.²⁶

There is broad agreement that commissioning is a key issue to driving change. Current commissioning practice that is based on a time and task model, and that is weighted toward cost, leads to poor working conditions, as terms and conditions are undercut to meet lower unit prices.²⁷ "In the past some procurement practices have (unintentionally) undermined our ability to deliver personalised, outcomes focused services provided through a good quality and sustainable workforce."²⁸

Investment in social care offers a number of benefits. It will improve the wellbeing of people in Wales, it will improve access to fair work and it is also compatible with sustainability as care jobs are green jobs. Delivering a new deal for social care workers should therefore be a central focus for the next Welsh Government.

1 Make social care a key sector at the centre of economic strategy to recognise its national, strategic importance and ensure the sector benefits from fair investment and initiatives such as fair work and skills development.

2 Deliver a "new deal" for care workers that ensures employment terms and conditions are improved:

- This must include as a minimum payment of the real Living Wage, limits on zero hours contracts, improved job security, improved collective bargaining, improved access to training and better progression pathways
- Additional revenue raised for social care must result in an improvement in working conditions in the sector.

3 Put in place an ethical commissioning charter for social care to ensure a consistent approach to commissioning throughout Wales that looks beyond cost as the most important criteria and drives low quality and unethical providers out of the market

6 Transport

Adequate transport infrastructure on a local and national basis is essential for enabling women to access work and essential public services and stay connected with their communities. However, the transport needs and requirements of women and men differ due to the way they interact with the labour market, their position as carers and their roles within their local community.

Women are more dependent on public transport; they are less likely to have access to a car, particularly if they are economically inactive, and are twice as likely as men to use buses.²⁹ Women are also more likely to need shorter, more frequent, local journeys due to their increased caring responsibilities, and their increased likelihood to work closer to home.³⁰ Poor transport services that don't suit women's needs can cut them off from higher-paid, better quality jobs, contributing to broader inequality.

Transport use may well change as we continue to recover and rebuild from the Covid-19 crisis. A long-term shift in ways of working is likely, as more employers and employees realise the benefits of more agile and remote working. This will likely change the way in which people use public transport.

Throughout our engagement with women across Wales for the Gender Equality Review, transport was identified as a key area of importance to improving the position of women in Wales.³¹ The women we spoke to, particularly those in rural communities, said they have seen services they relied upon – particularly bus services – downgraded and cut back, until they no longer met their needs.³² This was particularly acute for those working irregular or part-time hours, and those with caring commitments.

Safety on public transport and at stations was also a concern raised by women we spoke to, and evidence suggests it can affect women and girls' behaviour as transport users. A YouGov survey found that 55% of young women and girls avoided using public transport due to experiences of sexual harassment.³³

Women's needs should be core to transport provision and design; from buses and trains, to active travel settings and stations. It is essential that gender is considered in order for transport to meet the needs of women and men. Investment in public transport that works for women must be prioritised during the 2021-2025 Senedd term.

1 Develop policies for public transport in conjunction with communities, based on their needs as transport users:

- Ensure that all bodies involved in decision-making about public transport demonstrate how solutions have been developed in collaboration with communities
- Require public transport providers and local authorities to collect disaggregated data on user behaviour to inform continued service development
- Improve safety of public transport vehicles and stations, informed by women's needs, to make them safer. Improving public spaces and providing safe reporting mechanisms will help ensure that women can travel safely without fear

Ensure that public transport provision, ticket fares and discounts do not only favour "traditional" working and travel patterns which tend to mainly suit men, and are available for shorter, multi-stop journeys and part-time hours which suit women's needs better

Ensure that safe and easy access to local transport is a key consideration of planning for new developments, particularly new workplaces, schools and health services

Roll out training for Transport for Wales, Welsh bus providers and other public transport providers on sexual harassment in public spaces, and train staff members to be active bystanders including how to monitor, report and prevent incidents of sexual harassment or abuse on public transport

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6 Transport

Adequate transport infrastructure on a local and national basis is essential for enabling women to access work and essential public services and stay connected with their communities. However, the transport needs and requirements of women and men differ due to the way they interact with the labour market, their position as carers and their roles within their local community.

Women are more dependent on public transport; they are less likely to have access to a car, particularly if they are economically inactive, and are twice as likely as men to use buses.²⁹ Women are also more likely to need shorter, more frequent, local journeys due to their increased caring responsibilities, and their increased likelihood to work closer to home.³⁰ Poor transport services that don't suit women's needs can cut them off from higher-paid, better quality jobs, contributing to broader inequality.

Transport use may well change as we continue to recover and rebuild from the Covid-19 crisis. A long-term shift in ways of working is likely, as more employers and employees realise the benefits of more agile and remote working. This will likely change the way in which people use public transport.

Throughout our engagement with women across Wales for the Gender Equality Review, transport was identified as a key area of importance to improving the position of women in Wales.³¹ The women we spoke to, particularly those in rural communities, said



Women Represented

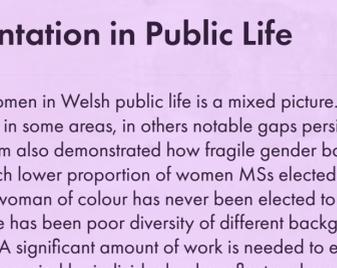
Women's representation matters. When women are in the room, different issues are addressed, and having visible and diverse role models helps breakdown barriers to leadership and raise the aspirations of young women.

Analysis of the Welsh Parliament found that women account for between two-thirds and three-quarters of all interventions using key terms such as childcare, domestic abuse and equal pay.³⁴

Within the workplace, companies with more diverse leadership have been seen to be more profitable, and benefit from better decision-making due to a broader range of perspectives, experiences and opinions.³⁵ Research found a number of business benefits of diversity including creating better outcomes for customers, better business returns, greater innovation and creativity and improved reputation and brand.³⁶ Other studies have linked diversity as a key driver of innovation, financial performance and better decision-making.³⁷

While progress has been made in some areas, women continue to be under-represented in positions of influence across public life and in business. We cannot afford for this to continue.

Wales has the power to ensure that in the future diverse women are fairly represented in all walks of life, and enjoy an equitable share of power and influence. We can have a Senedd that is truly representative of the diversity of Wales' communities; we can have a pipeline that supports diverse, gender-balanced workforces in all sectors of our economy and we can provide young people with an education system that broadens horizons and challenges any and all stereotypes that might limit aspirations and career goals.



7 Representation in Public Life

Representation of women in Welsh public life is a mixed picture. While women are well represented in some areas, in others notable gaps persist. The 2016 Senedd electoral term also demonstrated how fragile gender balance in politics is, with a much lower proportion of women MSs elected than currently sit in the Senedd. A woman of colour has never been elected to the Welsh Parliament, and there has been poor diversity of different backgrounds amongst male MSs. A significant amount of work is needed to ensure that Welsh public life is occupied by individuals who reflect and represent our diverse communities.

- Women make up 47% of MSs, 35% of Welsh MPs and 28% of Welsh local councillors³⁸
- Leadership in local councils remains largely male dominated with just 23% of council leaders and 32% of council cabinet members being women³⁹
- Women accounted for 64% of public appointments in 2018-19 and 56% of chairs. Representation of other groups remain woefully low with just 3% of public appointments in 2018-19 being BAME

Diversity in our politics and governance, not only ensures diversity of voice and opinion to inform decision-making, but also ensures that our democracy is representative of the community it serves. Steps should be taken at the outset of the next Senedd term to improve and sustain diversity in Welsh politics and public life.

1 Implement the recommendations from the Expert Panel on Assembly Reform in full:

- Increase the size of the Senedd to 90 members elected on the basis of STV, with an integrated gender quota⁴⁰
- Call on the UK Government to commence Section 106 of the Equality Act or request powers transferred to Welsh Ministers
- Enable people to run for election to the Senedd on the basis of job-sharing

2 Continue implementation of Reflecting Wales in Running Wales, the strategy for improving representation in public appointments. Priority should be given to:

- Developing targeted schemes to build the pipeline, bringing coherency to existing successful schemes such as Step to Non-Exec, WEN and EYST mentoring and developing schemes for other under-represented groups.
- Recruiting a new cohort of independent appointment panel members and training them together with Chairs and key civil servants in up-to-date recruitment methods and ways of challenging unconscious bias
- Developing and rolling out a range of training and development opportunities to Boards on diversity, inclusion, the value of lived experience, and legislation, both as a group offer and as an option for individual development

8 Representation in Work

Women are still under-represented in decision-making positions across most sectors and significant segregation persists in sectors such as care or engineering, where workforces are overwhelmingly dominated by either women or men.

Women account for 39% of managers, directors and senior officials.⁴¹

Women lead 16% of the fastest growing businesses in Wales.⁴²

19.6% of men in Wales work in skilled trades occupations compared to 2.7% of women.⁴³

13% of the construction workforce, 22% of the manufacturing workforce and 29% of the IT workforce are female

80% of the human health and social work workforce and 66% of the education workforce are female.⁴⁴

This segregation contributes to the gender pay gap and acts as a barrier to achieving gender equality. To address these imbalances action needs to be taken at multiple points, including interventions focused on pathways into work. We need to support young people to consider broader career options and challenge the gender stereotypes that are formed at a very young age. This is an area where current devolved levers can be maximised to drive change at a faster pace.

9 Education

The inequality and segregation that we see within our workforce is shaped by the choices that are made early on in our lives. Girls' and boys' experiences at school have a huge impact on the choices they make, their potential and their aspirations for the future. These early experiences and choices forge paths that can be difficult to shift later on in life.

While action within the labour market is essential to break down stereotypes and tackle segregation, early intervention is key to ensure girls and boys are equally able to access a range of skills, jobs and sectors. Interventions within education, and provision of lifelong learning have a direct impact on addressing inequality in the economy, and are crucial tools to aid economic recovery.

We need long term, generational change to ensure that we have sustainable pipelines of women and diverse groups coming into work across different sectors in Wales. We have seen positive moves within the last electoral term to embed gender equality and cultural understanding within the school curriculum, the results of which we will see in the coming years. However, there are further steps we can take immediately to further embed gender equality across education, particularly within higher and further education.

Efforts to improve equality of outcome in compulsory education must come alongside interventions around lifelong learning, careers advice, provision of training, and workplace and economic measures. We have made further recommendations in this manifesto specifically relating to these areas.

1 Make gender equality a central measure of educational success:

- Require schools, higher and further education institutions and Universities to collect data and report on data and report on the gender breakdown of subject take up in order to recognize and address barriers, particularly in STEM subjects. Ministers should be required to report on this data annually in a Senedd statement
- Require HEFCW, and in time the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, to monitor progress towards gender equality in post-16 education institutions and use their role as a funding body to require action across the post-16 sector. This must go over and above existing interventions, and assess outcomes rather than intentions

2 Protect women and girls within educational institutions:

- Ensure that schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions take all possible steps to prevent and protect women and girls from sexual harassment
- Ensure that education providers and support staff are trained and equipped to respond to instances of sexual harassment appropriately, and that pastoral and mental health support is available

9 Education Careers Advice

Career choices continue to be shaped by gendered assumptions and stereotypes. This compounds, or recreates, the inequality in the labour market that contributes to income inequality between men and women, evidenced by the gender pay gap.

- 55% of young women feel their career options are limited by their gender compared to 37% of young men⁴⁵
- Young men aspire to a median salary of £1063 more than young women⁴⁶
- There is an 18 point difference between how likely young men are to say they are considering a job in engineering or IT and a 17 point difference in how likely young women are to consider teaching compared to young men⁴⁷
- 87% of young women surveyed in Wales said that gender stereotypes affect women's career choices⁴⁸ 77% stated this was due to stereotypes affecting women's confidence and freedom of expression and 68% said it affects women's opportunities at work in the future⁴⁹
- International survey data shows that 30% of teenagers are interested in just ten occupations and that aspirations are heavily shaped by socio-economic status, gender and migrant background⁵⁰

Careers Advice and Guidance should be an important element in supporting the career planning and decision-making of young people, and can help to challenge gendered assumptions and therefore broaden horizons. However, young women in Wales reported a number of challenges with careers advice provision in Wales, when surveyed in 2018⁵¹:

- 71% of young women (16-25) do not have a career plan
- Of those that do have a career plan, 42% are working on it in isolation
- 64% of young women have not used formal careers advice services
- Of those that are, or have used careers advice services the majority have accessed via their school and 54% say it was helpful

Improving access to, and the quality of careers advice must be a central priority during the 2021-2025 Senedd term.

1 Ensure that careers advice provision is required to actively challenge gendered assumptions and unequal outcomes:

- Include gender equality in high-level outcomes and remit letter for Careers Wales
- Train all careers advisors to identify and challenge gendered assumptions in an effective way
- Evaluate current delivery models to assess how effectively they are tackling gender stereotypes

2 Improve the availability, accessibility and relevance of careers advice, particularly at key transition points:

- Increase the availability of face-to-face provision and support for those who have completed Key Stage Four and compulsory education
- Ensure a smooth transition for individuals between Careers Wales and Working Wales beds in as the point of access for adults
- Guarantee all pupils at least one opportunity for work experience to ensure equity of access and broaden career aspirations

9 Education Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a key pathway into work. In 2018/19 there were 25,945 apprenticeship starts in Wales.⁵² Overall, women accounted for around 60% of those embarking on apprenticeships. However, apprenticeship pathways remain notably segregated on the basis of gender. In 2018/19⁵³:

5% of construction apprentices were female

7% of engineering apprentices were female

84% of healthcare and public service apprentices were female

85% of hair and beauty apprentices were female

This segregation results in an apprenticeship gender gap of around 8% across the UK.⁵⁴ This income inequality also persists throughout people's careers, for example engineering professionals earn an average salary of £25,985 while hairdressers and barbers earn £13,373.⁵⁵

1 Tackle gender segregation in apprenticeships:

- Set stretching targets, linked to funding, for all training providers delivering apprenticeships to address gender imbalances across apprenticeship pathways

³⁴ P. Chaney *Women and Policy-making: Devolution, Civil Society and Political Representation, in Our Changing Land: Revisiting Gender, Class and Identity in Contemporary Wales* (ed. Mannay D.). University of Wales Press: Cardiff. (p.220-238), 2016

³⁵ McKinsey & Co (2016) *The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in the United Kingdom*

³⁶ PwC (2018) *Diversity is the solution, not a problem to solve: The Diversity Project*

³⁷ Studies referenced in Lyons, S. *The Benefits of Creating a Diverse Workforce* Forbes Sep 9, 2019 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/>

³⁸ Chwarae Teg (2020) *State of the Nation 2020*

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Gender quotas should require parties to present candidate lists of at least 50% women or have their list rejected by local Returning Officers

^{41, 42, 43, 44} Chwarae Teg (2020) *State of the Nation 2020*

⁴⁵ World Skills UK (2018) *Closing the Gender Gap*

^{46, 47} Ibid

⁴⁸ Chwarae Teg (2018) *Bright: Young Women's Career Aspirations*

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ UNESDOC (2019) *Investing in Career Guidance*

⁵¹ Chwarae Teg (2018) *Bright: Young Women's Career Aspirations*

⁵² Stats Wales Apprenticeship learning programmes started by quarter, sector and programme and type 2018/2019 <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/aprenticeship-learning-programmes-started-by-quarter-sector-programme-type> Accessed July 2020

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Young Women's Trust (2017) *Young Women and Apprenticeships: Still not Working*

⁵⁵ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/nssccontent/dvc205/index.html> Accessed July 2020



Women at Risk

In order to achieve gender equality in Wales, we need to first address the greatest risks to women's prosperity. Women continue to face greater risk of poverty, social isolation and financial hardship due to the different position they occupy in work and society. Women also remain at significant risk of violence, abuse and harassment, which is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality.

These issues are linked to deep-rooted, cultural and structural issues but are also the result of policy failure. We have a social security system that no longer affords an adequate safety net, an economy that is overly reliant on low paid, insecure work and a criminal justice system that fails to offer protection to women who experience violence and abuse.

While the levers to directly affect change in some of these areas are not yet devolved, there is more that can be done to reduce the risks that women continue to face.

Poverty must become part of our history and not our future. Women should be able to enjoy financial security, and our social security system must provide an adequate safety net that upholds people's dignity and human rights.

We must ensure that Wales is a nation where women can live free from the fear of harassment, violence and abuse, and can expect to be believed and treated with respect should they need to report any incidents.

And Wales must be a nation where you can have a second, third or tenth chance, should you need. Lifelong learning is a lifeline for many, and we must ensure that in a post-Brexit Wales people have better access to skills, education and training, at any point in their lives.

Until all women are able to live safe, secure and fulfilling lives we will fail to deliver a fair and equal society.



10 Tackling Poverty

Poverty has been a persistent issue in Wales for a number of decades. The poverty rate remains stubbornly high with around a quarter of households living in relative income poverty.⁵⁶ There is a real risk that the long-term impacts of the Covid-19 crisis could further hinder efforts to tackle poverty and see more households falling into poverty as unemployment increases.

The risk, experience and impact of poverty can be very different for women than men, partly as a result of their often very different positions in the labour market and in households. However, the full extent of these differences can be hidden by households measures of poverty that assume an equal sharing of resources.

Our research into women's poverty, *Trapped*, considered five measures of poverty – relative income, material deprivation, assets and debt, homelessness and food security. Across all five, women are seen to be slightly more at risk, but crucially the data demonstrates how women's poverty is shaped, and sometimes masked, by their relationships with a partner and that for women with children the risk of poverty is particularly stark.⁵⁷

A number of key drivers of poverty amongst women can be identified including work and the labour market, the social security system, childcare, access to essential services and household financial arrangements.⁵⁸ Action is required in all of these areas during the next Senedd term to reduce poverty amongst women in Wales.

⁵⁶ Chwarae Teg (2020) *State of the Nation 2020*

⁵⁷ Winkler, V. (2020) *Trapped: Poverty Amongst Women in Wales Today*, Chwarae Teg

⁵⁸ Ibid

1

Tackle the root causes of poverty among women:

- Put in place an effective, cross-government strategy focused on addressing the root causes of poverty, that recognises the different characteristics, circumstances and barriers facing people in poverty
- Require all Ministers to report annually on progress against robust indicators that are measured using disaggregated evidence

2

Request the UK Government devolve administrative powers over Universal Credit to give women choice and flexibility in managing their own finances

3

Create a coherent Welsh benefits system based on principles of equality, dignity and fairness:

- Create a single point of access that provides clarity of eligibility, information and guidance
- Reform existing Welsh benefits, including free school meals, Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the Discretionary Assistance Fund to expand eligibility and improve take-up



11 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment has a significant impact on the way that women and girls live their lives; it affects how they behave, when and how they travel, how they use public spaces and how they interact in public life.

Sexual harassment is endemic, and in order to properly tackle it we need to be honest with ourselves about how prevalent it is within society. Research by Plan UK found that 52% of teenagers in Wales had been sexually harassed in public.⁵⁹ Across the UK, one in eight girls said that their first experience of unwanted sexual attention in a public place was when they were aged twelve or younger.⁶⁰

Sexual harassment can be subtle and insidious in nature, and is often hidden in outdated cultural attitudes; it is well understood that there is a significant relationship between belief in traditional norms and acceptability of public sexual harassment.⁶¹ There are also areas where sexual harassment is normalised and deemed as an inevitable part of life, such as within the night-time economy.⁶²

There are aspects of tackling and preventing sexual harassment that are currently beyond the competency of Welsh Government, such as employment regulations and the criminal justice system. However, it's imperative that the next Welsh Government work with the UK Government to ensure all levers are being maximised to address the causes and consequences of sexual harassment.

Action to prevent sexual harassment, ensure effective reporting mechanisms for women who report abuse and to make our public spaces safe must be a central priority for the next Welsh Government.

⁵⁹ ITV Wales, "More than half of young women in Wales experienced unwanted sexual attention" 20th May 2019 <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2019-05-20/more-than-half-of-young-women-in-wales-experienced-unwanted-sexual-attention/> Accessed June 2020

⁶⁰ Plan UK (2018) *It's not ok*

⁶¹ YouGov on behalf of the House of Commons, *Women and Equalities Committee Harassment Questions*, 2018. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/701/701.pdf>

⁶² House of Commons, *Women and Equalities Committee, Sexual Harassment of Women and Girls in Public Places*

1

Challenge the cultural attitudes that allow sexual harassment to take place, and educate and empower citizens to recognise and challenge sexual harassment:

- Ensure that the curriculum is tackling harmful gender stereotypes amongst young girls and boys; nurturing conversations about masculinity, femininity and traditional gender norms, as well as facilitating and encouraging conversations about respect and consent from an early age
- Raise public awareness of what constitutes sexual harassment and the harm it causes. Lead campaigns within and across communities in Wales focusing on calling out sexual harassment and not being a bystander, and addressing cultural and generational differences in attitudes

2

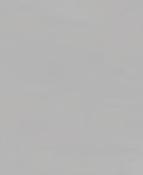
Improve reporting mechanisms and processes around sexual harassment, to gain a better understanding of the problem and its causes:

- Make misogyny a hate crime in Wales, to encourage reporting of incidents and enable better categorisation of crime to understand the scale of misogyny and identify hotspots
- Collect Welsh specific data on sexual harassment to understand the extent of the problem, monitor trends and patterns, identify key at risk groups, and improve prevention

3

Improve safety in public spaces, on local transport, within educational institutions and settings and in the night-time economy to prevent and tackle sexual harassment:

- Embed tackling and preventing sexual harassment into any strategy for Wales' night-time economy. Roll-out and incentivise campaigns like the 'Wales' Angela' campaign, which was started in Lincolnshire and is used in some bars and clubs in Cardiff, across Wales
- Produce guidance for planning bodies to ensure women's safety is a central consideration in the design of public spaces, such as well-lit streets, parks, train stations and bus stops, including
- Pursue all Welsh transport providers, including Transport for Wales and Welsh bus providers, have robust sexual harassment policies in place and train staff to identify and safely and respectfully respond to incidents
- Work with Transport for Wales to pilot a bystander system on public transport, with a contact number or social media profile advertised on public transport for women to report incidents of sexual harassment or concerns to. This would provide a reporting mechanism and could act as a preventative measure
- Ensure that education settings take a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and abuse, with clear reporting procedures in place, and training to equip staff to respond safely to instances of sexual harassment



12 Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is "instrumental in women's reintegration into the labour market following a career break" and a "catalyst for greater gender equality".⁶³ However, the lack of adult learning and apparent shortage of advice and support for women wanting to return to work in Wales helps to trap women in their domestic roles and low paid work.⁶⁴

Part-time education provision has fallen by 70% in recent years, with local authority community learning also hard-hit.⁶⁵ The decrease in the number of women learners has been more than 20% as great as that of men learners, down 14,140 compared with 4660 for men between 2021/13 and 2017/18.⁶⁶ If a woman does not manage to secure five good GCSEs at age 15, there are precious few opportunities for her to escape poverty through learning when she is older.⁶⁷

Women also encounter additional barriers to accessing lifelong learning, which are often linked to caring responsibilities. 40% of women in the EU-28 who face obstacles to participating in education and training activities could not take part due to family responsibilities compared to 24% of men.⁶⁸

Investment in lifelong learning, with a central focus on tackling inequality must be a key priority during the 2021-2025 Senedd term.



⁶³ EIGE (2019) *Gender Equality Index 2019 report*

^{64, 65, 66, 67, 68} Winkler, V. (2019) *Trapped: Poverty amongst women in Wales today*, Chwarae Teg

1

Invest in lifelong learning and ensure a strategic focus on tackling inequality:

- Double investment in lifelong learning with a focus on increasing and improving delivery in the community and addressing digital poverty for adults
- Improve national coordination of adult learning and require strategic bodies involved in the planning and delivery of adult learning to set out ambitious gender equality objectives

2

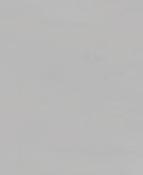
Improve access to lifelong learning:

- Ensure that childcare support is available to those for whom caring responsibilities are a critical barrier
- Invest in flexible delivery, including modular approaches, with clear pathways to further learning and recognised qualifications

3

Provide financial support to learners:

- Evaluate the impact that the existing Personal Learning Accounts pilot has had on women and tackling inequality
- Expand Personal Learning Accounts to new sectors with equal focus on sectors that are mainly occupied by women and mainstream gender equality into service design, delivery and evaluation



13 Brexit

Brexit poses a significant risk to women in Wales. The EU has provided an invaluable legislative and financial framework for Wales that has enabled the delivery of programmes aimed at tackling inequality while also adding impetus to the wider policy agenda. Membership of the EU has supported, and in some cases driven, campaigns across the UK to tackle structural causes of inequality, to strengthen and protect women's rights and to focus on advancing equality not only preventing discrimination.

Without this framework, there are concerns that rights and protections for women may roll-back, or fail to keep pace with changes made across the EU. While equality and employment legislation is not devolved, there are steps that can be taken in Wales to safeguard rights and protections. If these hard-won rights and protections are deemed to be at risk during the next Senedd term, the Welsh Government must make full use of all existing levers, and consider whether there is a need to call for further devolution of powers to safeguard women and other disadvantaged groups.

The loss of EU funding, such as the European Social Fund is another significant risk of Brexit. European Structural Funds have supported a number of programmes over the past decade that are focused on supporting women and reducing inequality. As the UK leaves the European Union, there has been much debate about what will replace EU funding. To date, there remains significant uncertainty about what form a UK Shared Prosperity Fund, as proposed by the UK Government, will take. Whatever form this funding takes, it's imperative that steps are taken in the design and administration of funds to maintain a focus on tackling poverty and inequality.

1

Deliver a single, multi-annual fund focused on tackling inequality and poverty across Wales:

- This fund should be administered in Wales, and make use of existing national infrastructure and planned regional infrastructure to enable effective spending

2

Ensure that replacement EU funding maintains horizontal themes of equality and gender mainstreaming and is aligned with the vision and recommendations of the Gender Equality Review

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