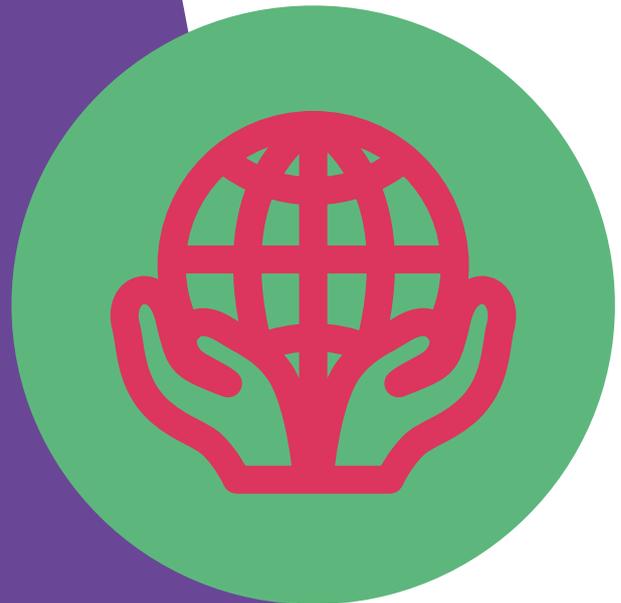


**WOMEN'S  
EQUALITY NOW:  
THE POSITION  
IN WALES  
TODAY ON  
= DIVERSITY**





# FOREWORD

WEN Wales was founded in 2010 to represent and support the numerous organisations and individuals working to progress the rights of women and promote equality across Wales. Since then we have gained presence on both on a local and global platform, providing a united voice on the issues important to women and girls in Wales.

We both, as all women do, have faced adversity. We've found our personal voice and built the confidence to lead the way for the future of all women in Wales in our role as Co-Chairs. Our vision for women and girls in Wales is to have a voice on issues important to them. To make this a reality, we commissioned a series of research briefings highlighting issues where women feel they are most affected by inequality.

This research provides an opportunity for a direct dialogue between women and decision makers in Wales. It effectively highlights matters of inequality which still exist in Wales today, to bring them to the forefront of debate and enable change.

We envisage the series to continue as a staple part of WEN's work to continually address the most pertinent needs of women in Wales.

*Sarah Rees & Monika Borkowska*

(Co-Chairs, WEN Wales)





# INTRODUCTION

As a charity, the WEN Wales mission is to act as the coherent voice for all women in Wales. Diversity most often encompasses what is known as the 'protected characteristics' as per the 2010 Equality Act, and includes age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. It was important to WEN Wales that as the representative network for all women in Wales, that we define exactly what the make-up of our female society is.

We were keen to know where women are across Wales, to learn what makes us unique and why in 2015 we, as 51% of the population, are still fighting to achieve an equal status with men. This briefing informs us of the multiple barriers that women face in Wales and will enable us to effectively target our communications, campaigns and projects in order to tackle the issues that matter most and facilitate change effectively.

It is important to add that we, as many organisations collecting research and data, often struggle to obtain a breakdown of gender data for Wales alone. Quite often when split between gender, information is collected for the UK as a whole, but not as individual countries. This is an issue which we aim to address in future research.

## What is diversity?

Women are often thought of as a single, homogeneous group, with references to 'women's interests', 'women's representation' or 'women's needs'. But women are diverse, with their experiences shaped by other characteristics such as their age, disability, ethnicity, sexuality or religion as well as their gender. Very often, the 'intersection' of these characteristics with gender bring additional and distinctive forms of discrimination and disadvantage.

This briefing highlights the key aspects of women's diversity in Wales.<sup>1</sup>



## GENDER & GENDER IDENTITY

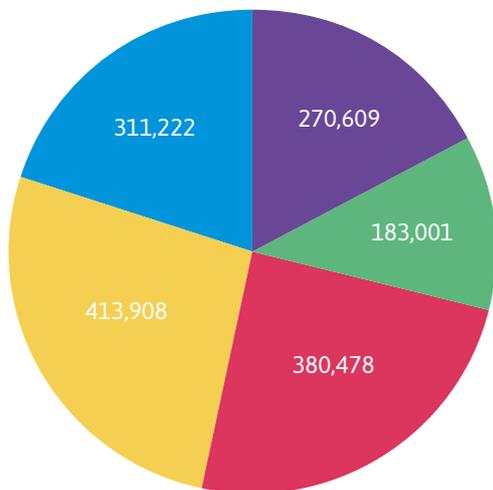
**In 2011 there were nearly 1.6 million women and girls living in Wales, slightly more than the number of men and boys.**

The number of people who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth is not known, but it is estimated that in Wales about 90 people a year experience gender dysphoria and seek treatment, the majority being people who were assigned as boys at birth and are now trans women.<sup>2</sup>

### Women in Age Groups, Wales 2011

(Fig 1)

- 0-15
- 16-24
- 25-44
- 45-64
- 65+



## AGE

**Women's lives cover more than 100 years of experience. In 2011, nearly one in five women (19.9%) was aged 65 or older, with one in ten of all women being aged 75 or over.**

More than 50,000 women were aged 85 and over. There are now more older women (aged 65 and over) in Wales than there are girls aged 0-15 (Fig. 1). Age has one of the most striking impacts on women's lives of all, shaping their economic activity, health, relationships and living arrangements. Projections of the population to the year 2037 suggest that the number of women and girls in Wales will increase by 5.8% or 90,000, bringing the total female population to 1.65 million.<sup>3</sup>

A very small increase in the number of 0-15 year olds is forecast, along with a slight decrease in the number of 16-64 year olds. In contrast the number of women aged 65 and over is forecast to increase very substantially – by 2037 there could be one and a half times more older women than there were in 2012. The most striking increases of all are amongst the very oldest women – by 2037 there could be five times as many women aged 100 years and over than there are today.





# DISABILITY

**In 2011, nearly one quarter (24.1%) of all women in Wales said that their day-to-day activities are limited by a long-term health condition or disability.**

One in twelve women (12.6%) said that their activities are limited a lot. Women and men in Wales are more likely to be affected by a limiting health condition or disability than elsewhere in the UK when age is taken into account. <sup>4</sup>

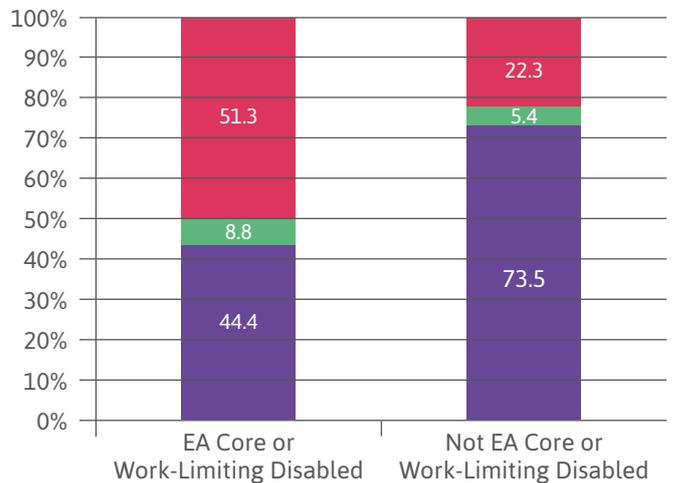
There were very striking differences in the prevalence of disability in different age groups. Disability or long-term illness is relatively uncommon amongst younger adults, with 5.2% of 16-49 year olds saying that they have a condition or impairment that limited their day-to-day activities a lot. The proportion of women affected by a limiting condition rises to 15.5% among women aged 45-64.

Amongst over 65 year olds, more than six out of ten women said that their lives were affected by a long-term health condition or disability – for older women, some form of limitation on daily life is the norm.

Disability has a very strong impact on the likelihood of being in employment, with less than half of disabled <sup>5</sup> women in Wales (44.4%) being in employment in 2014 compared with 73.5% of non-disabled women – see Fig 2.

## Economic Activity of Disabled & Non-Disabled Women, 2014

(Fig 2)





# ETHNICITY

**In 2011, Wales had a relatively small proportion of women of Black, Asian and minority ethnic origin compared with other parts of the UK.**

One in twenty-five women in Wales (4.1%) was of a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic group, and a further one in forty (2.4%) was of White but not Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish or British origin. Being of Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic origin is associated with inequalities in education, employment and health. <sup>6</sup>

Wales' largest female minority ethnic group is Asian or Asian British and the second largest is of mixed origin. The great majority of White women in Wales were of Welsh, English, Scottish or Northern Irish origin. Only 2.5% of White women were of Irish, Gypsy Traveller or other White origin.

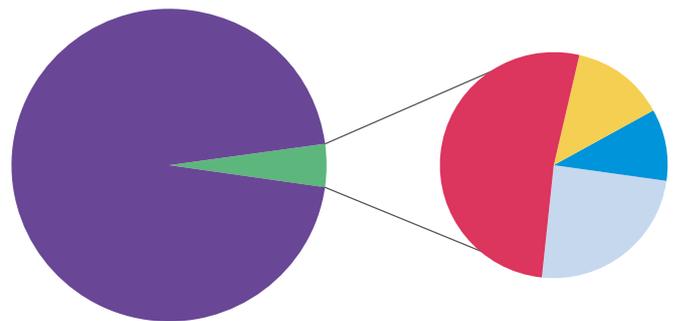
There are significant variations within Wales. Some places have much greater numbers of women from minority ethnic groups, reflecting their history as ports with long-standing ethnic minority communities and their current popularity with international students. In Cardiff nearly one in seven women (14.3%) was of Black, Asian or other minority ethnic origin, with nearly 40% of all of Wales' women of these groups living in the capital. In contrast, five local authorities (Anglesey, Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire and Torfaen) had fewer than 1,000 Black, Asian and minority ethnic women living in their areas.

Girls and young women were much more likely to be of Black, Asian or minority ethnic origin than older women – 7.2% of 0-15 year olds and 6.6% of 16-24 year olds where from these ethnic groups compared with less than 1% of women aged 65 and over.

In terms of their identity, two thirds (64.3%) of women in Wales thought of themselves as Welsh or Welsh British. A further one in six (17.2%) thought of themselves as British and one in eight (12.8%) thought of themselves as English or English and British.

## Ethnic Origin of Women in Wales, 2011

- White
- Mixed/multiple ethnic group
- Asian/Asian British
- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British



Ethnic Group	Number	%
White	1,495,401	95.9
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group	15,652	1
Asian/Asian British	33,775	2.2
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	8,261	0.5
Other Ethnic Groups	6,139	0.4



## RELIGION

**Nearly three in ten women (28.9%) in Wales have no religious faith, compared with 35.4% of men.**

Women aged 44 and under are more than twice as likely to say that they have no religion as women aged 45-64 and nearly six times as likely to say this than women aged 65 and over.

Of women who do have religious beliefs, Christianity is by far the most common, being held by 96% of women with religious beliefs. Just one in fifty women who stated their religious beliefs say they are Muslim (2.1%), just 20,500 women in the whole of Wales. For women and girls, the intersection of race and religion is associated with distinctive forms of discrimination and harassment.<sup>7</sup>

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION

**The most recent survey found that 1.2% of Welsh women say they are lesbian, gay or bisexual – some 14,700 women.<sup>8</sup>**

More than half of lesbian, gay or bisexual women (53%) say they are bisexual, compared with 19% of men.

## LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

**The 'traditional' household of a married couple, or couple in a civil partnership, with dependent children is in a minority in Wales today – just 23.3% of women and girls in Wales live in this type of household.**

Lone parents with dependent children account for a further 11.1% of women and girls, with cohabiting couple households accounting for a further 7.3% of women.

One in seven women (14%) lives alone, with more than half of all single female households consisting of a woman aged 65 and over.

Approximately 25,000 women in Wales live in communal establishments that are managed, such as care homes, student halls of residence, military barracks or hotels. Nearly a third of people living in communal establishments are women aged 85 and over – a total of 8,300 women.

## RURILITY

**According to the 2011 Census, just under one third of Welsh women (32.7%) live in rural areas. Of these, nearly half (48%) live in rural towns and their fringes.**

A further three in ten (31%) live in rural villages, and nearly one in five (20%) live in hamlets or isolated dwellings. The 263,000 women who live in rural villages, hamlets or isolated dwellings face much greater difficulty accessing the facilities and services, such as childcare or advice services, that women in urban areas and rural towns may take for granted.



# WHAT NEXT?



**What issues of multiple disadvantage are most commonly experienced by women in Wales?**



**Does Wales take facilities and services for granted which women in rural areas struggle to access?**



**What is Wales doing to tackle the fundamental change to the composition of our ageing population, as many young people leave Wales to find work whilst the number of older women dramatically increases?**

<sup>1</sup> All data are drawn from the 2011 Census of Population unless otherwise stated.

<sup>2</sup> Phillips, D. (2012) Specialised Gender Identity Services Project Final Report. At: [http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/898/AI%201%20Final%20Report%20Specialised%20Gender%20Identity%20Services%20Project%20\\_2\\_.pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/898/AI%201%20Final%20Report%20Specialised%20Gender%20Identity%20Services%20Project%20_2_.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Stats Wales, 2012 – based national population projections for Wales, 2012-2037, by age and gender.

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics (2013) Differences in Disability Prevalence by Socio-economic Occupational Groupings in England, Wales, English Regions and Local Authorities, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010 core definition or a work-limiting disability.

<sup>6</sup> Disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010 core definition or a work-limiting disability.

<sup>7</sup> Crawley, H (2012) A report on Race Equality and Racism in Wales. Race Council Cymru.

<sup>8</sup> Welsh Government (2011) Sexual identity in Wales, April 2009-March 2010. Statistical Bulletin SB104/2010R.