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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg  
University Health Board

# Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives 2017-2020

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## Foreword

We were delighted to partner with the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Wales Committee for an open forum meeting in March 2017. This was held as part of our Stakeholder Reference Group meeting.

We shared how fairness, dignity and respect are an integral part of our Values and Behaviour Framework and our focus on becoming a rights respecting organisation. As ABMU Chairman, I was proud to accept the invitation from the Commission to speak about our human rights based approach at their annual conference in July 2017.

There is a clear commitment from Board Members to promote equality and human rights. They lead the work programme supporting the delivery of our Equality Objectives. We incorporated these Objectives into our Annual Plan 2017/2018, which signposts to plans that will help their delivery.

We have taken a different approach to our second Equality Plan in that it is purposefully strategic and sign posts to the range of specific activities that will help deliver our Equality Objectives. This is along similar lines to the approach taken to develop the Welsh Government Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020.

As a rights-respecting organisation, Board Members are delighted to support the No Bystanders anti-discrimination campaign in our workplace. The campaign is being run by Calon, ABMU's LGBT+ and Allies Network, with support from ABMU's graduate trainee managers.

No Bystanders is the Stonewall campaign which encourages others to challenge all forms of hateful language and abuse when they can. It encourages people to be photographed putting their name to the pledge.

Their campaign encourages staff to take a stand against any hateful language and bullying – not just through homophobia, biphobia or transphobia but also because of faith, gender, ethnicity, disability, age, nationality or anything else that makes people different.

We are committed to challenging in our workplaces any intolerance and prejudice or any form of discrimination. We need everyone to stand with us and pledge their support for our campaign.



Chairman Andrew Davies and interim Chief Executive Alex Howells are pictured holding the signed pledge, along with Calon's founders and some of the graduate trainee managers

**Andrew Davies  
(Chairman)**

**Alexandra Howells  
(Interim Chief  
Executive)**

## Introduction

ABMU Health Board is a rights-respecting organisation and is committed to treating everyone fairly. People should not be put at a disadvantage because of their age, disability, religion or belief, gender, race, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity or because they are transgender, married or in a civil partnership.

This is our second Strategic Equality Plan which sets out a plan of the work that we are doing to help ensure that everyone is treated fairly. We have equality objectives set within our plan. These were developed working together with our communities and staff. We want to be always improving and review progress each year against the objectives. This plan supersedes our previous Strategic Equality Plan 2012-2016.

## How we developed our equality objectives

We published our first Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives in 2012. As a public body, we are required to review and refresh our Equality Objectives every four years to ensure that we continue to address the areas of greatest inequalities.

We engaged and consulted with stakeholders, public and third sector organisations and staff to gather views on the priority areas of inequality to be addressed over the next four years. On the basis of this feedback and the evidence contained within the **Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report 'Is Wales Fairer'**, we developed our seven Equality Objectives in 2016. Appendix 1 shows how the equality objectives cover the different groups of people that may have one or more 'protected characteristics'.

Three of the revised objectives refine the previous objectives. There are four new Equality Objectives. We have brought our work to improve Accessible Communication and Information under the umbrella of the Equality Objectives. We have new objectives to improve access to mental health services, including child and adolescent mental health services.

# How equality links with other policy areas

## Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Act gives an opportunity to embed equality over the longer term. There is provision for a more equal Wales in the Act through a specific well-being goal, which is described as including socio economic inequalities. The Act has seven well-being goals and public bodies must work to achieve all goals. Equality does not only connect with the more equal Wales goal but is a component of the six other well-being goals.

The Health Board developed draft Wellbeing Objectives designed to maximise our contribution to achieving all of the well-being goals. Our draft Wellbeing Objectives have been informed by:

- The Wellbeing Assessments carried out by us as a core partner of the three Public Service Boards in the ABM area.
- The Population Assessment carried out as part of the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act.

Our draft Wellbeing Objectives are linked to our Values and Corporate Objectives. We formatted our draft Wellbeing Objectives into a draft Wellbeing Statement and published this by 31 March 2017 as required by the Act. These objectives will also be incorporated into the final version of the Health Board's One Year Plan. Our Wellbeing Objectives will be formally engaged on over the spring and summer of 2017. They will be amended to reflect the views from the consultation so that they can be finalised ready for final publication in September 2017. Our Wellbeing Objectives will then form a central part of the Health Board's Integrated Medium Term Plan 2018-21.

## Human Rights

We are a rights-respecting organisation and human rights influence the way in which we work. Equality, fairness, dignity and respect are core values of human rights. These core values can be seen in our Strategic Equality Action Plan. This shows the close links between equality and human rights.

## **United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

We are the first health organisation in the United Kingdom to launch a Children's Charter. It sets out the rights of children and young people when they use our services. The Charter is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is part of our policy of being a rights-respecting organisation.

Youth Councils from the Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea areas helped develop the Charter. Children and young people receiving care also contributed to its development along with paediatric nursing, play and community staff. Information, safety, respect and privacy and confidentiality are among the rights covered by the Charter.

For further information and the Charter is available on our website:  
<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/863/page/91176/>

## **United Nations (UN) Principles for Older Persons**

ABMU is in the process of developing an Older Persons Charter. This will be based on the United Nations Principles for Older Persons and the Declaration of Rights for Older People in Wales. The Charter will clearly set out how older persons can expect to be treated when using any of our services.

The public and staff have already been consulted on what the Charter should include. The Charter will be launched later this year.

## **Welsh Language**

Our Welsh Language Scheme promotes our vision for bilingual services and is based upon the following principles:

- People are able to express themselves more effectively and comfortably in the language of their choice;
- The public should be positively encouraged to use their chosen language as a matter of good practice rather than it be seen as a concession;
- Patients/service users have the right to choose the language they wish to communicate in.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 created a procedure for introducing language standards which explain how organisations are expected to deliver bilingual services. An increasing number of organisations will have to adhere to the Welsh language standards over time. Once the regulations are approved by Welsh Ministers, we will be required to comply with the Standards which will replace our Welsh Language Scheme.

## **Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015**

The purpose of the Act is to improve prevention, protection and support for people affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. It is a statutory requirement under the Act to implement the 'Ask and Act' Project across Wales. 'Ask and Act' is a structured process of targeted enquiry to be practised across public services to identify violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Our Health Board has been a pilot site for the implementation of 'Ask and Act' prior to national rollout across Wales. The pilot was a collaborative initiative with the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and Welsh Government. Our plans include the required support to rollout 'Ask and Act' across the Health Board and ensure that this essential Ministerial priority is delivered.

## **How we will deliver the Equality Objectives through our Action Plan**

We have set out the high level actions that the Health Board will take to deliver the equality objectives over the next four years within the following Action Plan.

### **Equality Objective 1**

**Reduce health inequalities through ensuring access to services for people according to their individual needs.**

## **Rationale**

This objective brings together two of the previous ABMU objectives on health inequalities and access to services. The new objective captures all groups of people who are protected from unfair treatment under the Equality Act 2010. The objective has been widened to include a stronger focus on meeting the specific needs of individuals.

## **Evidence**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission highlighted the need to reduce health inequalities between different groups of people ('How fair is Wales', EHRC, 2011). This identified socio-economic and gender health inequalities, especially those affecting older and younger men. The former Disability Rights Commission reported health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities and/or mental health conditions (Equal Treatment: Closing the Gap', 2006).

The objective strongly links to the key challenge in the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) 'Is Wales Fairer' Report 2015 to improve access to mental health services. This EHRC Report highlighted that some groups of people have greater difficulty than others accessing health care of all kinds, including mental health care. These groups include gypsies and travellers, homeless people and migrants (Bishop, 2013; Grove-White, 2014; Royal College of General Practitioners, 2013).

## **Actions**

1. Review and refresh our Three Year Framework for Prevention and Health Improvement, taking account of the statutory needs assessments for the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 and Social Services Wellbeing Act 2014.
2. Promote the health and well-being of children, young people and families through improving ante-natal and post-natal care, including breast feeding and child development.
3. Implement the 'Ask and Act' project across the Health Board to meet our statutory obligations under the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015  
<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and->

[communities/communities/safety/domesticabuse/?lang=en](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/863/Final%20Quality%20Strategy%20-%20%2013%20February%202015.pdf) (external web link)

4. Ensure our patients achieve excellent outcomes and experiences and better access to care through implementing the priorities in our Quality Strategy

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/863/Final%20Quality%20Strategy%20-%20%2013%20February%202015.pdf>

## **Equality Objective 2**

**Provide accessible advice and information to enable people to understand and make informed choices.**

### **Rationale**

There was strong support for prioritising this new objective from our stakeholders. Appropriate and timely advice can make a big difference to the patient as it helps them to make informed decisions about their health and improves their well-being. The focus of this objective will be on ensuring documents being produced for the public, patients and families are more accessible. The Health Board will be advised by ABMU Health Board Advisory Groups.

### **Evidence**

The objective links to the All Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss (NHS Wales, 2013).

### **Actions**

1. Work with partners to improve accessibility information for disabled patients and visitors using our services.
2. Work with partners to ensure healthcare information is communicated in a variety of formats to suit people's needs.

## **Equality Objective 3**

**Communicate with patients, families and carers according to their individual needs.**

### **Rationale**

This is a new objective. It reflects the feedback from the listening events held to develop our values together with patients and staff in 2014. The new objective has been reworded to ensure that it is inclusive of all people.

The objective also takes account of the enhanced provision for carers' right to support in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. This includes the availability of easy access to information and advice.

### **Evidence**

The objective links to the All Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss. The Standards highlight that evidence demonstrates ineffective communication is a patient safety issue and can result in poorer health outcomes.

### **Actions**

1. Work with partners to implement and embed the All Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss  
<http://gov.wales/topics/health/publications/health/guidance/standards/?lang=en> (external web link)
2. Work with partners on the Health Board's Carers Partnership Board to meet carers' rights for more information and advice.

## **Equality Objective 4**

**Work with partners to promote mental wellbeing and improve access to mental health services for people who are most in need of support.**

## **Rationale**

This is a new objective. The strategy for mental health and wellbeing services is aimed at ensuring the delivery of the best possible care for the ABMU Health Board area through taking a whole system approach. This starts with health promotion and self-care and extends through to the delivery of more specialist services.

The Health Board shares a common objective with partners to shift our focus for delivery to population wellbeing and prevention to enable people to take greater control of their own mental wellbeing at an earlier stage. There will be a continued need to deliver safe, quality based interventions and support for those who are most in need and particularly vulnerable due to severe mental illness or disability.

## **Evidence**

This objective strongly links to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's challenge to improve access to mental health services.

## **Actions**

1. Engage with the public and partners to develop a strategic framework for mental health in year one.
2. Deliver a transformation programme with partners for the modernisation of mental health services within this framework over the next five years.

# **Equality Objective 5**

**Work in partnership to improve emotional and mental health services for children and young people in the ABMU area.**

## **Rationale**

This is a new objective and is one of main priorities within ABMU Health Board's Integrated Medium Term Plan 2016/2019. The objective will focus on developing and agreeing a service model for emotional and

mental health services for children and young people in the ABMU area. The Children and Young People's Commissioning Board supported by the multi-agency Children and Young People Emotional and Mental Health Planning Group is overseeing the service improvement programme.

## **Evidence**

This objective strongly links to the EHRC's challenge to improve access to mental health services. Difficulties accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are reported in the EHRC 'Is Wales Fairer' Report. This was reinforced by feedback from engagement and consultation with stakeholders on ABMU Health Board's draft equality objectives for 2016-2020.

## **Actions**

1. Over the next three years, we will develop our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Strategic Framework and ensure that it is delivered. This will include the actions relating to child and adolescent services set out within the Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2016-2019 and delivery of the 'Together for Children and Young People' Programme.
2. As commissioners, we will continue to plan, monitor and review the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services provided to our population by Cwm Taf University Health Board.

# **Equality Objective 6**

## **Improve the wellbeing and experience of our staff.**

### **Rationale**

This objective brings together two of the previous ABMU objectives on staff wellbeing and the quality of working lives. There was strong support for continuing to prioritise this objective, particularly in light of the programme of work to embed values and behaviour into the core business of the Health Board. ABMU will continue to maintain the focus on providing a fair and inclusive environment, where everyone has the opportunity to be themselves and fulfil their potential.

## Evidence

This is in line with the key challenge set by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the 'Is Wales Fairer Report' to encourage fair recruitment, development and reward in employment. Evidence highlights that staff perform better when they can be themselves at work ('Unhealthy Attitudes', Stonewall). The aim of ABMU Health Board is to be an exemplary employer which promotes equality of opportunity and values diversity.

## Actions

1. Implement the Staff Experience Strategy 'In Our Shoes' action plan <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/863/9.%20Staff%20Experience%20Strategy.pdf> This sets out how the organisation will aim to be an exemplary employer for staff from all the protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>.
2. Develop a flexible working project to support flexible working practices across the organisation. This will provide opportunities for staff with caring responsibilities and staff who need reasonable adjustments.
3. Consider what steps need to be taken to improve our readiness for an ageing workforce and support staff to work longer safely.

## Equality Objective 7

**Develop a fuller understanding of the reasons for any pay differences.**

### Rationale

There was strong support for retaining this objective. There will need to be an increased focus on improving the collection of equality workforce data. ABMU Health Board will need to use a cross-cutting approach to look at the many factors related to employment and pay inequalities.

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<sup>1</sup> The Protected Characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This includes encouraging people from different backgrounds and circumstances into roles where they are under-represented as well as challenging gender stereo typing.

## **Evidence**

This Objective reflects the EHRC challenge to encourage fair recruitment, development and reward in employment. The EHRC highlighted the need to increase the employment rates of young people, disabled people and Muslims. It also identified the need to close pay gaps for young people, ethnic minority people and women.

## **Actions**

1. Support all working-age people into employment opportunities and to gain and maintain sustainable employment, particularly under-represented groups.
2. Ensure our Apprenticeship Programme is accessible to everyone by taking forward action to support disadvantaged groups into Apprenticeship places.
3. Aim to increase the diversity of public appointments to the Health Board.

## Strategic Equality Objectives 2016-2020

## Appendix 1

This table sets out how the ABMU Health Board equality objectives relate to different groups of people that may have one or more 'protected characteristics'

Objectives	Protected Characteristics								
	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
1. Reduce health inequalities through ensuring access to services according to their individual needs	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
2. Provide accessible advice and information to enable people to understand and make informed choices	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
3. Communicate with patients, families and carers according to their individual needs	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
4. Work with partners to promote mental wellbeing and improve access to mental health services for people who are most in need of support	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
5. Work in partnership to improve emotional and mental health services for children and young people in the ABMU area	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
6. Improve the wellbeing and experience of our staff	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
7. Develop a fuller understanding of the reasons for any pay differences	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√