

EQUALITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN WALES: OUR MANIFESTO



In partnership with:





INTRODUCTION

Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales, Chwarae Teg, Women Connect First and Welsh Women's Aid have a vision of a Wales where every woman and girl is treated equally, lives safe from violence and fear and is able to fully participate in the economy. We want to ensure that Wales is the safest country in Europe to be a woman, where women and girls can flourish and actively participate in their communities. This document sets us on the path to achieve this.

Achieving gender equality and women's rights will have a positive impact on the well-being of everyone living in Wales. It is good for our economy, our society and our culture.

Women, girls and women's organisations are absolutely crucial to lead change. We recognise the diverse experiences of women and that women and girls can face multiple forms of discrimination as our identities intersect. We are united in our demands to do more to recognise the rights of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), migrant, disabled, working-class, and LGBTIQ+ women. We are united too in our demands for greater recognition of the multiple forms of discrimination and abuse experienced by trans women as women. We also want to work with men and boys as collaborators, who can understand how women's inequality impacts on their lives and actively take a role to stop it.

Now is a crucial time for us to work together, to call out the problems that women and girls face in Wales and create the solutions. This document names the violence, the harassment, the gender inequality that we experience, hear about and see. It also spells out the actions that need to happen in Wales to end gender inequality and ensure women's rights are realised. It will not be easy and we share bold, ambitious actions to achieve our ten aims:

- 1. Gender equality education for all:** Everyone in Wales understands gender inequality and is actively promoting gender equality.
- 2. Promoting BME women:** BME women in Wales feel that they are active citizens of Wales.
- 3. Equal leadership:** Women's full and active participation with equal opportunities for leadership within political, economic and public life.
- 4. End violence against women and girls:** Women and girls to live free from violence, abuse and intimidation with access to specialist services and justice.
- 5. Close the gender pay gap and access to fair work:** Women have access to fair and fulfilling paid work.
- 6. Women have independent lives:** All women and girls have access to the resources they need to live independent lives.
- 7. Care work is valued and shared:** Create a caring economy in Wales.
- 8. Women's health and well-being is prioritised:** High quality sexual reproductive health services available across Wales and reproductive rights.
- 9. Women's rights maintained and advanced post-Brexit:** Ensure that women's legal rights are protected and advanced after leaving the EU.
- 10. Welsh Government accountable to women and girls:** Women's rights and gender equality is integrated within Welsh Government.



This Manifesto for gender equality and women's rights is written to improve the lives of women and girls living in Wales, but we recognise that to do that we need to deliver actions as individuals, as communities, within local authorities, Welsh Government, UK Government and internationally.

We are proud of the ways that Welsh Government has already used its powers to write legislation and policy that takes forward our country's commitment to gender equality. However, we are asking for Welsh Government to do more, to speed up implementation to deliver positive results for women and girls in Wales. To further protect women's rights and advance equality through legislation and policy, calling for greater devolution where it is necessary to achieve women's equality, to challenge the UK Government on policy and legislation that has negative impacts on gender equality and women's rights, and to actively mitigate the consequences.

We want the National Assembly for Wales and Welsh Government to represent the needs of women and girls in Wales at a UK and international level: we want to be global leaders on women's rights to end gender inequality.

This is a calling card. We cannot achieve gender equality and women's rights without you.

EQUALITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN WALES

Wales has a new policy and a legislative framework that aims to put the promotion of equality and human rights at the centre of Welsh politics. New laws including the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provide us with the foundations to build an equal and safe country for women and girls to flourish.

The National Assembly for Wales has a strong reputation for gender equality and in 2003 there was a gender balance within the Assembly.

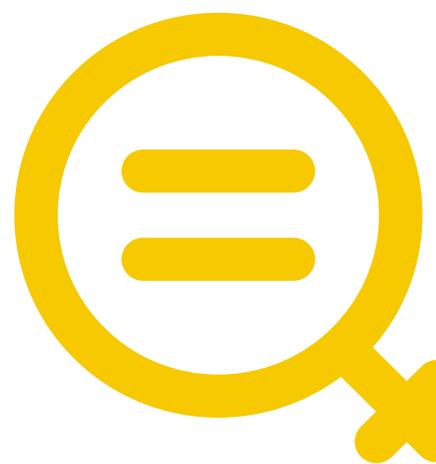
However, LGBTIQ+, BME and disabled women face multiple barriers to participation in political and public life in Wales and we need to focus our attention on creating a more diverse democracy. Currently there are no BME women in the National Assembly and women's representation has fallen to 43%.

International law and UN declarations push forward gender equality and women's rights across the world. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) provides a global framework for women's human rights.¹ The UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 aims to 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'.² The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 maps against the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Wales well-being goals address the global challenge of gender equality and women's rights. Wales can play an important role within this global movement.

Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales, Chwarae Teg, Women Connect First and Welsh Women's Aid now want to see Wales move from laws with good intentions to actions that deliver real change for women and girls in Wales.

To deliver our Manifesto for gender equality and women's rights in Wales will take time, resources and sustained practical action. This Manifesto of ten priority areas is designed to support Welsh Government, policy makers, women's organisations and civil society to focus our efforts and actions.

Deeds not words.





GENDER INEQUALITY IN WALES: THE PROBLEMS

55% of girls aged 7-21 say that gender stereotypes affect their ability to say what they think.

0% BME women Assembly Members in National Assembly.

43% Women and **57%** Men in National Assembly for Wales.

26% Women and **74%** Men Councillors.

52% of women report being sexually harassed in the workplace.

15% gender pay gap. Average hourly pay for women in Wales is £10.57 compared to £12.75 for men. For part-time workers, who are predominantly women, average pay is even lower at £8.12 per hour, compared with £12.26 for full-time workers.

£22BN cost to women from changes to welfare.

1/4 more than a quarter of women (26%) in their 50s and early 60s provide unpaid care.

1. Social norms, stereotypes and lack of knowledge on gender inequality.

Social norms, stereotypes and expectations on gender, race, sex, sexuality, class, age and ability can intersect to hold women and girls back from equality. A survey across the UK by Girl Guiding found that 37% of girls aged 11 to 21 say their confidence would be better if there were no gender stereotypes.³ It also found that 55% of girls said that gender stereotypes affect their ability to say what they think.⁴

Stereotypes and social norms around women and girls being better at caring impacts on women and girls' subject and career choices where 83% of apprentices in health, public services and care are women⁵ and 9% of apprentices in engineering and manufacturing technologies are women.⁶

This then has a further impact on women's earning power with people working within STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) occupations earning on average 20% more than in other sectors.⁷

Gender norms and stereotypes within our society create male-dominated power structures, industries and institutions, as well as perpetuating patterns of abuse whereby men hold power over women. Sexism still exists within our institutions in the form of structural oppression and discrimination.

2. Sexism and racism intersect to compound inequalities.

BME women face sexism and racism that can intersect with other inequalities and oppressions to create bigger barriers to achieving equality, leave women more at risk of violence and further exposed to cuts in public spending.



BME women face persistent structural inequalities in education, employment, health and housing.⁸

BME women are less represented across apprenticeships in Wales,⁹ although it is difficult to determine the extent of this under-representation as data is not disaggregated by gender and race. Things appear to be getting worse, not better, with a 76% rise in racist hate crime in the summer of 2016.¹⁰

Support services for BME women are also facing severe funding cuts and insecure futures. Regional needs assessments often fail to identify the needs of BME women¹¹ meaning that services that are run by and for BME women are not being appropriately commissioned at a local level.

It is difficult to have a full understanding of the situation for BME women and girls as there is a lack of data available and current data sets are not further disaggregated.

3. Unequal leadership.

Women form 52% of the population in Wales, yet do not hold an equal share of power within Welsh life. Only 18% of council leaders in Wales are currently women and women make up 43% of Assembly Members.¹² In Wales 6% of chief executives or equivalent of top 100 businesses are women.¹³ LGBTIQ+, disabled, working-class and BME women face additional barriers to accessing power and representing themselves in Welsh political and public life. Disabled or BME people hold less than 4% of public appointments¹⁴, although again we do not have the data to fully understand the experiences of BME and disabled women.

Inequality and discrimination remains within our political institutions and public life in Wales. EHRC research found that disabled people faced negative attitudes and obstacles to accessing public life.¹⁵ A recent Fawcett Society report¹⁶ found that one third of female councillors reported experiencing sexist comments from other councillors and half of disabled councillors reported facing multiple discrimination.¹⁷

Political institutions also lack the policies and facilities to encourage greater participation. The Fawcett Society report found that only 4% of councils had appropriate parental leave policies or flexible working.¹⁸

Increasing women's participation and leadership makes a positive impact on politics and businesses. Research by McKinsey & Co. found that in the UK, greater gender diversity on a senior management team corresponded to higher performance with an increase in financial performance.¹⁹ With equal representation of women in the National Assembly for Wales, women will be in a better position to shape the political agenda to advance gender equality. Research has found that woman Assembly Members are much more likely to raise issues, ask questions and intervene on equal pay, domestic abuse, women's health and child care.²⁰

4. Violence against women and girls.

Violence against women and girls includes different forms of violence – female genital mutilation (FGM), domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence, sexual harassment, 'honour' based violence and forced marriage, trafficking for sexual exploitation including prostitution. Welsh Government recognises: "Violence against women is a violation of human rights and both a cause and consequence of inequality between women and men, and it happens to women because they are women and women are disproportionately impacted by all forms of violence."²¹





1 in 3 women in Wales will experience physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives.²² Disabled women are more likely to experience domestic violence, emotional abuse, and sexual assault than non-disabled women.²³ In 2016/17, 14,129 survivors of abuse were supported by specialist services in Wales, including 1,596 women, 1,221 children and young people and 31 men supported in refuges in Wales.²⁴ 24% of survivors accepted into refuges identified as BME and 61% reported having a mental health issue.²⁵

Sexual harassment is prevalent within our workplaces, public places and institutions. The TUC found that more than half of the women they asked had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace²⁶ and the End Violence Against Women coalition found that 85% of women aged 18-24 had experienced unwanted sexual attention in public places.²⁷ Girl Guides' research found that 64% of girls experienced sexual harassment in schools in 2017.²⁸

5. Gender pay gap.

Occupational segregation, low paid part-time work, women's responsibility for unpaid care and more women working in low-paid, feminised sectors contribute to a persistent gender pay gap and a greater risk of poverty for women. Average hourly pay for women in Wales is £10.38 compared to £12.19 for men.²⁹ For part-time workers, who are predominantly women, average pay is even lower at £8.80 per hour, compared with £12.52 for full-time workers.³⁰ The gender pay gap in Wales is currently 15%. Closing the gaps in our labour market that contribute to the gender pay gap has the potential to create an additional £150bn for the UK economy.³²

BME and disabled women face multiple barriers within the workplace, often experiencing discrimination at every stage of the recruitment process.³³ The Runnymede Trust found that BME women are more likely to be unemployed than their White counterparts, even when qualifications are taken into account.³⁴

Research by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) found that disabled people are less likely to be employed than non-disabled people and when employed are lower paid.³⁵ The current gender pay gap between disabled and non-disabled women is 22%.³⁶ Despite qualifications, disabled women have lower participation rates in higher skilled jobs and work fewer hours than non-disabled women.³⁷

Women still face direct discrimination within the workplace. Research by the EHRC found that one in five mothers said they had experienced harassment or negative comments related to pregnancy or flexible working from their employer.³⁸ The TUC found that 52% of women reported being sexually harassed in the workplace in 2016.³⁹

6. Changes to welfare and tax that restrict women's lives.

Since 2010 cuts to public spending on social security payments and public services have meant that women are unable to access the resources needed to live independent lives. Between 2010-15 there were £26 billion of welfare cuts, £22 billion worth were borne by women.⁴⁰ On average, women will suffer an annual loss of £940 as a result, almost double that of men.⁴¹ Single mothers, who make up 90% of all single parents, are predicted to face an average loss of £5250 per year, while disabled single parents who have at least one disabled child will face average losses of £10,000 per year.⁴² A Runnymede Trust report⁴³ in the UK found that BME women are more likely to live in poverty, to have dependent children and larger families, and are therefore more likely to be impacted by cuts to public spending.

A recent EHRC report found that cumulative changes to tax and social security had the biggest impact on those with the lowest incomes.⁴⁴ The report also found that there is a disproportionately negative impact on disabled people, certain BME people, and women.⁴⁵ Households with at least one disabled adult and a disabled child will face an average annual cash loss of just over £6,500.⁴⁶



Welfare reforms are having dire consequences for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse and are controlling low-income women's reproductive rights. With one in five British adults having experienced financial abuse in a current or past relationship⁴⁷ the change to Universal Credit being made as a payment to one member of the household will increase the control that one partner has over the other. Changes to Child Tax Credits have limited payments to two children with a 'rape clause' creating an exemption when a parent can prove that a child was conceived through rape. Welfare changes reduce the amount of money that a woman can access to support her family on her own: this means women will face additional barriers to leaving a relationship.

Migrant women face an increase in risk of destitution due to recent changes to the Immigration Act 2016 and the introduction of Universal Credit. The Immigration Act 2016 made changes to create a 'hostile environment' for those without a legal right to reside in the UK through restricting access to accommodation, financial support, employment, bank accounts, driving licences, civil partnership and marriage. The introduction of Universal Credit will potentially delay welfare payments for six weeks, increasing gaps in provisions for refugees, whose support ends within 28 days of being granted status. An estimate of those becoming destitute each year in Wales is between 500 to 1,000 individuals.⁴⁸

7. Care work is unpaid, undervalued and disproportionately delivered by women.

Our economy and society cannot survive without the paid and unpaid care and household work that is done by women across Wales. Unpaid care work for disabled, seriously ill or older people is mainly done by women and amounts to £8.1 billion a year in Wales – almost doubling in the last 15 years.⁴⁹ In 2011 more than a quarter of women in their 50s and early 60s provided unpaid care.⁵⁰

Women remain the primary carer for children with 94% of UK Child Benefit Claims are paid to women,⁵¹ and nearly half of mothers in Wales say they are solely or mainly responsible for child care (compared with just 4% of fathers).⁵² In the UK, women do 70% of household chores.⁵³

Women's ambitions, achievements and health can be curtailed by a lack of affordable and flexible childcare and social care. Young women carers, especially those providing 50 hours or more of unpaid care, are less likely to participate in further and higher education than non-carers.⁵⁴ Women aged 45-54 were over twice as likely as other carers to have reduced their working hours as a result of caring responsibilities.⁵⁵ Women disproportionately take responsibility for unpaid child care and this inequality has been identified as a contributory factor to the gender pay gap.⁵⁶

Fathers and second parents report that they want to spend more time caring for their children but face financial, cultural and workplace barriers to taking a more equal role in childcare.⁵⁷ Policy and legislation has not caught up with this social change. There has been a low uptake of shared parental leave with just 250 men in 2016/17 in Wales taking up shared parental leave, according to HMRC statistics obtained by BBC Wales.⁵⁸ The right to request flexible working has not yet changed our workplace cultures⁵⁹ and men's ability to access support for childcare responsibilities within the workplace is restricted.⁶⁰

Women dominate the care work sector where they do low paid jobs, often with insecure hours and with proportionally fewer women in senior positions. In Wales, nearly two thirds (63%) of women and men employed as carers say they are struggling to afford household bills and nearly one third cut back on heating and food.⁶¹ Low pay is common within the care sector with 56% of care workers in Wales on zero-hour contracts.⁶² With an ageing population, there will be increased demand for care in the near future. Public Health Wales estimates there will be 184,000 people in Wales aged 85 or over by 2036, an increase of 145% since 2011.⁶³



8. Women and girls face health inequalities.

Women and girls live longer but face more health issues throughout their lifetime and there is often a lack of understanding of specific health issues experienced by women and girls. WEN Wales' research into the menopause found that there was an inconsistency in information, advice and support for women experiencing the menopause.⁶⁴ WEN Wales also found anecdotal evidence that women and girls with endometriosis are being ignored and their health needs not recognised by health professionals.⁶⁵

Across Wales there are currently inequalities in access to abortion, with women facing long waiting lists and women forced to pay for private terminations. The British Pregnancy Advisory Service reported that across Wales, 52% of women accessing an abortion through the BPA receive funding from NHS Wales, compared to 98.9% across the UK.⁶⁶

Disabled women living in Wales do not have equal access to health care and disabled people are more likely to die younger, experience health inequalities and major health conditions, than other people.⁶⁷ Disability Wales found that almost half (42%) of Deaf British sign language users say communication at their appointments is not adequate because they do not have an interpreter.⁶⁸ Action on Hearing Loss found that over a quarter (29%) of people surveyed said that they have to ask a family member, friend or support worker to call their GP surgery on their behalf.⁶⁹ The Committee for the UN on the Rights of Disabled People noted that in the UK, disabled women and girls faced multiple barriers when accessing sexual and reproductive health services, with a lack of accessible information.⁷⁰

Research conducted by Stonewall⁷¹ shows that two in five trans people (41%) said that healthcare staff lacked understanding of specific trans health needs when accessing general healthcare services in the last year. This number increases to half of trans people (51%) living in Wales. In addition, 7% of trans people said they have been refused care because they are LGBT, while trying to access healthcare services in the last year.⁷²

Welsh Government has committed to providing Wales' first transgender healthcare clinic in Cardiff, which will be supported by a network of GPs with specialist interest in gender care.⁷³ Prior to this, all trans people accessing support through NHS Wales were referred to the Gender Identity Clinic in London, with referral times of up to two years for an initial appointment and the additional barrier of travel.

9. Threats to equalities and human rights legislation post-Brexit.

We are concerned that the impact of leaving the EU will mean a roll-back of legal rights for women, reduce funding for women's organisations and put extra pressure on specialist services. As the UK exits the EU, Wales looks set to lose around £680m annually of EU funding. If the UK Government does not replace these funds it will have a massive impact on equality and the Welsh economy, including our growth, job creation and retention.⁷⁴ We are also concerned that there will continue to be a rise in hate-crime against BME women and that women will be turned away from the services that they need.

No longer being a signatory to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights will create gaps in human rights protection.⁷⁵ For example, it includes 'a free-standing right to non-discrimination, protection of a child's best interests and the right to human dignity.' It will also mean there is less power to protect women's rights.

Losing the protection and arbitration of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) will mean an end to our current safeguards to equalities legislation. EU equalities legislation that has not been finalised or incorporated into UK law will be lost – for example the EU is currently considering new legislation that further protects parental leave, flexible working and breast feeding in work.⁷⁶

It will also limit our ability to stay at the forefront of global equalities legislation and policy as we will no longer be taking an active role to help shape EU equalities law and automatically incorporating this within UK law.



GENDER EQUALITY IN WALES: THE SOLUTIONS



Education

By 2020 all public-sector staff to have been trained to 'Ask and Act'.



BME Women

By 2020 develop strategy and agree an action plan to get more BME women into employment, political and public life.



Equal Leadership

By 2021 at least a 50:50 National Assembly for Wales, and Welsh Government (Cabinet).



End Violence Against Women

By 2020 no one is turned away from specialist services in Wales.



Close The Gender Pay Gap

By 2028 halve the gender pay gap from 15% to 7%.



Independent Lives

By 2020 produce an action plan to mitigate impact of welfare reform on women.



Childcare

By 2021 affordable and subsidised childcare for all parents (not just those working) from the age of 6 months.



Women's Health

By 2021 make the menopause a specific health issue within the National Quality Framework.



Post-Brexit

Women's rights maintained and advanced post-Brexit and enshrined in Welsh law.



Accountability

Appoint a Cabinet Secretary for women by 2021.

1. Gender equality education for all: Everyone in Wales understands gender inequality and is actively promoting gender equality.

For the long-term and for sustainable prevention of gender inequality we need to change our education system. The new curriculum for Wales and relevant national training frameworks must include statutory opportunities for people to increase their understanding of gender inequality and violence against women. We must also address gender stereotypes within our education system that have become structural barriers to women and girls fulfilling their aspirations and ambitions, particularly when it comes to careers within science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

We understand that gender inequality is both a cause and consequence of violence against women and girls. We know that to prevent violence we need to educate, challenge and change our unequal culture and society.

We want Welsh Government to:

- By 2020 make Sexuality and Relationship Education (SRE) a statutory part of the new Welsh curriculum and develop new SRE statutory guidance that includes a whole-school approach to its delivery and to ending violence against women and girls, with all education staff trained and knowing how to deal with disclosure.



- By 2021 review and create targets for publicly funded Apprenticeships and Traineeships to reduce gender segregation in different sectors and occupations.
- By 2020 all public-sector staff to have been trained to 'Ask and Act' to recognise and respond to disclosures of violence against women, and sustainable investment into specialist services so that women and girls impacted by abuse can be supported to continue their education.
- Year on year, communicate clear messages to promote gender equality through campaigns and work with the media to challenge gender inequality and to diversify the workforce.
- Continually strive to understand the impact of gender inequality by thorough equality impact assessments, desegregating data by gender, race, disability and sexuality and supporting a Wales gender research centre.
- Hold procured services and local authorities to account on their promotion of gender equality so that it is in line with the public sector equality duty.

We want action in other areas:

- Estyn to establish an assessment tool for education institutions in Wales on their delivery of a whole-education approach to ending violence against women.
- EHRC to review the implementation of the Public-Sector Equality Duty and to enforce the delivery by public services, including education institutions.
- Public service boards to be committed to gender equality, to train board members and actively promote gender equality.
- Business and religious leaders and the media to use their influence to actively promote gender equality with training programmes for their staff, communications campaigns and setting targets to achieve gender parity on boards.

- Gender awareness training to form part of Continual Professional Development (CPD) training for careers professionals.

2. Promoting BME women: BME women in Wales feel that they are active citizens of Wales.

In the past, decisions have been made that mean BME women are not at the forefront of the women's movement, the workforce or political life in Wales. We are united to change this. We need to reflect on the structural barriers that BME women face and recognise the racism and discrimination inherent within our communities and country. We must work together with BME women to ensure that we listen and find solutions to the intersection of inequalities.

We want Welsh Government to:

- By 2020 develop a strategy in collaboration with BME women to identify the barriers that women face to equality and agree an action plan that delivers more BME women into employment, political and public life.
- By 2020 produce a review of equality impact assessments and the public-sector equality duty to specifically look at the impact on gender and race as they intersect in women's experiences of inequality. This needs to take into consideration the visibility of BME women in rural Wales.
- By 2020 review gaps in current funding and increase funding to ensure that BME women's organisations, workers and leaders are recognised, included and resourced to deliver work that reaches out to support women and girls within our communities.
- Publish and analyse data that is disaggregated by gender and race.
- Review the Apprenticeship frameworks to make it accessible to asylum seekers and to include indicators to ensure men and women benefit equally from the creation of 100,000 apprenticeships.



We want the UK Government to:

- Stop detaining women and children in immigration centres.

We want action in other areas:

- Third sector organisations, local authorities and businesses to review their practices to identify if particular groups of women are not engaging with the service or organisation and to develop a strategic approach to ensure BME women are engaged and actively participating.
- Further education institutions to provide funding and grants for asylum seekers and refugees to access education.

3. Equal Leadership: Women's full and active participation with equal opportunities for leadership within political, economic and public life.

Over the next few years Assembly electoral reform could provide a crucial opportunity to make substantial changes to the gender balance within Welsh politics. International evidence shows that the most effective means of delivering political change is the implementation of positive action measures such as statutory quotas. Of the 33 countries with 30 per cent or more women in parliament today, 26 have quotas in place that helped to ensure this outcome.⁷⁷

We want from Welsh Government and all political parties:

- By 2021 at least a 50:50 National Assembly for Wales, and Welsh Government (Cabinet), this includes increasing representation of BME, LGBTIQ+, disabled and working-class women.
- By 2021 Welsh Government should commit to long-term funding to increase the representation and active participation of BME, LGBTIQ+, disabled and working-class women in public and political life in Wales. Projects could be delivered in collaboration with the third sector and an Access to Elected Office fund should be set up and include measures to ensure that disabled women have equal opportunities to benefit from the fund.

- By 2020 a commitment from all Welsh political parties to appoint a gender balanced cabinet if elected within Local Councils and Welsh Government.
- Change the National Assembly electoral system by implementing all the Assembly Electoral Reform Expert Panel's recommendations:
 - By 2021 gender quotas integrated into the electoral system so that all political parties put forward at least 50% women candidates to support and encourage a gender-balanced parliament for Wales.
 - Job sharing: electoral law should be changed to enable candidates to stand for election based on transparent job-sharing arrangements.
 - Compulsory publication regarding candidate diversity: the Assembly should request that the Secretary of State commences Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to Assembly elections, or transfers the powers to do so to Welsh Ministers, so that information on the diversity of all candidates from all parties is openly available.
- By 2020 Welsh Government to set the agenda and support businesses in Wales to increase the number of women in leadership positions.
- By 2019 Welsh Government to review the potential of new legislation in Wales on 'Gender Representation on Public Boards' as recently enacted through Scottish legislation.⁷⁸

We want action in other areas:

- By 2020 all public appointments onto boards to achieve 50:50 gender balance.
- Business boards and public service boards to agree positive action to create 50:50 gender balance and be required to set targets for achieving them.
- By 2025 all local authorities to introduce reasonable adjustments policies for disabled councillors.



4. End violence against women and girls: Women and girls to live free from violence, abuse and intimidation with access to specialist services and justice.

Ending violence against women will take a strategic and co-ordinated approach. In Wales, the Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Act 2015 provides the framework for this and now we must push forward with delivery.

It is crucial that the doors of essential support services remain open. Sustainable, long term funding must be allocated from across national and local government funding streams. There is a significant risk to the sustainability of sexual violence services, refuges and specialist services for BME women⁷⁹ and children.

We want Welsh Government to:

- By 2020 ring fenced, cross-departmental national and local sustainable funding identified and allocated for women's organisations and third sector violence against women and girls services so no one is turned away. This includes funding to support children who have experienced violence and support for women experiencing multiple disadvantage.
- By 2019 a robust 'Dignity and Respect' policy must be in place at the National Assembly for Wales including:
 - A clear set of sanctions for those that breach the policy.
 - Mechanisms to allow complaints that date back over 12 months to be investigated.
 - Those dealing with complaints having the expertise and experience to deal with sexual harassment cases.
 - All Assembly staff must be trained to understand and implement the policy.
- By 2021 Welsh Government to successfully implement, across all departments, the VAWDASV National Strategy commitments including delivering the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women (the 'Istanbul Convention') state obligations that are relevant to Wales.⁸⁰

- Ensure the provision of support and advocacy through the family courts for survivors of abuse, and delivery of safe child contact for children impacted by VAWDASV. This will protect from re-victimisation within the court system.
- By 2019 ensure adequate funding is available to support disabled women and girls seeking support for domestic abuse services. This funding will provide communication support or adaptations to ensure services and buildings are accessible to disabled women and girls.
- Ensure there is adequate provision for violence against women and girls prevention initiatives to create more supportive, resilient communities that are knowledgeable about violence against women and girls. These should include the creation of spaces where people who have experienced abuse can feel safe to access vital information and be directed to the help that they need the first time around.

We want the UK Government to:

- Work with Welsh Government to develop an action plan for the distribution of housing benefit funds to specialist services in Wales so that services receive the resources they need to stay open.
- End the practice of sexual history being used in sexual violence legal cases, including reform of Section 41⁸¹ and allowing survivors to have legal representation if it is utilized.
- Address commercial sexual exploitation by decriminalizing and providing support/ financial independence for women to exit the sex industry and criminalise buying people for sex to reduce demand that drives the sex industry/trafficking.
- Strengthen sexual harassment law to cover harassment from customers, clients and co-workers.

We want action in other areas:

- All Public Service Boards to develop and deliver an effective model of commissioning across all areas, with the prioritisation and mainstreaming of VAWDASV prevention, protection, and provision of specialist services for survivors.



- Employers to put in place robust processes to deal with disclosure of all forms of violence against women, including sexual harassment with a clear code of conduct for staff.
- Delivery of awareness raising campaigns, training and information on what constitutes sexual harassment, the help available and how to prevent it, within workplaces, education and public institutions.

5. Close the gender pay gap and access to fair work: Women have access to fair and fulfilling paid work.

Fair and fulfilling work is central to tackling poverty in Wales and can also help to address some of the economic inequalities women continue to face. We define fair work as being flexible and secure with no zero-hours contracts, with a decent wage, access to parental leave, flexible and affordable childcare and with no gender pay gap. Welsh Government can use procurement as a powerful lever to encourage businesses to follow fair work principles.

We want Welsh Government to:

- By 2028 halve the gender pay gap from 15% to 7%.
- By 2020 all Welsh Government contracts to local government and procured businesses to be delivering to the fair work standards.
- By 2021 a framework for monitoring indicators on decent and fair work for women in Wales, including national well-being indicators.
- Include specialist employability services for women within the employability Delivery Plan and the development of Working Wales programme, including specifically addressing issues faced by disabled women.
- Include flexible provision, networking, confidence building, and actively encourage women into careers in IT, science, technology, maths, construction and engineering.
- Provide education and training programmes for asylum seeker and refugee women to help women back into the work place, such as the Oxfam 'Skills for Life' project.

We want the UK Government to:

- By 2025 lower the threshold for statutory gender pay gap reporting to companies with 100+ employees.

We want action in other areas:

- Local authorities to consider incorporating the principles outlined in the Economic Action Plan on fair work into their own procurement processes so that they monitor fair work of businesses.
- Businesses to commit to paying staff a living wage (as calculated by the Living Wage Foundation⁸²) and to facilitate flexible working practices.
- Businesses to publish gender pay gap data and details of actions that will be taken to address any identified gaps.

6. Women have independent lives: All women and girls have access to the resources they need to live independent lives.

Welsh Government must strengthen its commitment to reducing poverty in Wales. To do this we have to work together to mitigate the impact of UK Government welfare changes. We must collaborate to find innovative and long-term solutions to enable women to live independent lives.

The UK Government has the responsibility for tax and social security changes, therefore our asks are also focused on actions for the UK Government.

We want Welsh Government to:

- By 2020 produce an action plan to mitigate the impact of welfare reform that is cross-departmental and linked to devolved policies on equality, poverty, employment, housing, social care and childcare. This needs to take specific consideration of the impact of welfare cuts on survivors of violence, rural, disabled, older, migrant, refugee and BME women, single mothers and unpaid carers.



- By 2021 develop a model of support for destitute migrant women that is based on grants and improvements to specialist support. This will ensure women have access to advocacy and resources, reducing a destitute woman's risk of exploitation and enabling her to leave a violent relationship.
- By 2019 finalise and publish the revised Framework for Action on Independent Living, and ensure it is integrated across Welsh Government policies and aligned to the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRDP).
- By 2019 distribute clear information on the rights of migrants, including EU citizens to access support services in Wales.
- Publish cumulative equality impact assessments of tax and social security changes, with additional resources to boost data collection where the sample size is currently small.

We want the UK Government to:

- By 2019 conduct a detailed and cumulative equality impact assessment on the impact of all tax and social security changes to ensure that households that receive social security payments have an adequate standard of living.
- By 2020 provide a 'bridging' pension as an income for women impacted by recent changes to the state pension arrangements. This will be provided to all women until their State Pension Age, it will not be means-tested and with compensation for losses for those women who have already reached their State Pension Age.
- By 2021 review the impact of the changes to Child Tax Credits to specifically understand the impact of the 'rape clause' and consider how women can access child benefit payments for all their children.
- By 2021 review the legal aid criteria to ensure women can have equal access to legal aid across civil and family court systems.

7. Care work is valued and shared: Create a caring economy in Wales.

Caring for others can be immensely rewarding at the same time as being a heavy responsibility. We want women's unpaid care work to be valued and the responsibilities to be shared. Men and second parents need more ambitious changes to parental leave to enable them to play an equal role in child care. We must change our culture to recognise the enormous value of care and redistribute responsibilities.

Women run our care economy in Wales. We want fair wages, career development and safe and secure work. It is time for us to take forward our new policy agenda, including the early years and child care workforce ten-year plan, the employability and economic action plan and work that is already being done on the professionalisation of the care sector. We must invest in the care economy of Wales.

We want Welsh Government to:

- By 2021 provide childcare that meets the needs of parents or carers by ensuring guaranteed flexible, affordable and subsidised childcare for all parents from the age of 6 months (rather than from 3 years for parents currently in employment).
- When rolled out the Welsh Government's 30 hours of free child care scheme allows registered childminders to care for their relatives.
- By 2021 invest in the carers workforce by delivering training and development for staff. This needs to be co-ordinated across different policy areas to develop the professionalisation of the sector and can extend the existing work of Social Care Wales to develop new qualifications, register workers and develop career pathways.
- By 2021 review the commissioning framework of social care to ensure that local authorities change the weighting used when awarding contracts for the delivery of care, so that quality is considered at least equally with cost and that care contracts are delivered to an agreed set of terms and conditions for workers.



- Review social care provision for women, including the dignity and safety of women in care homes and supported housing.
- Include social infrastructure in the role of the National Infrastructure Board and review the share of investment in physical and social infrastructure in Wales.

We want the UK Government to:

- By 2021 increase paternity leave pay to 90% of full pay and give fathers 12 weeks of non-transferable paternity leave to enable both parents to take their full share and the opportunity to care for their children.
- Ensure that self-employed people have equal access to maternity and paternity leave.
- Increase the budget for social care to match the rising demand for care services.
- Investigate how unpaid care work can be recognised through new ways of measuring the GDP and productivity, as well as initiatives such as Universal Basic Income for all that will recognise the currently unpaid care and household work of women.
- Review the potential for legislation for workers to have 5-10 days paid care leave entitlement a year.

We want action in other areas:

- Local authorities to review and amend the local out-of-hours grant for schools to provide wrap around child care.
- Businesses to offer enhanced parental leave payments for men and women.
- Men to start sharing the responsibilities of care for the young, older, disabled and sick in our communities.
- Local authorities to ensure that all companies that submit bids for contracts do so based on agreed set of working conditions for staff, including living wage and flexible working, to prevent companies from squeezing terms and conditions to offer a lower cost.

8. Women's health and well-being is prioritised: High quality sexual reproductive health services available across Wales and reproductive rights.

Health commissioning and service delivery must recognise and respond to the needs of women and girls in Wales. We need to know more about women and girls sexual, reproductive and maternal health, ensuring that health information and services are available and accessible to all.

We want Welsh Government to:

- By 2028 review and improve mental health services and therapeutic care for women and children who have experienced trauma and to improve access to long term support to improve well-being and mitigate the impact of adverse childhood experiences.
- By 2025 abortion services to be available for all women, regardless of where they live in Wales through an access to abortion national framework that includes measures to eliminate the harassment that women and girls face when attending abortion centres like the buffer zones introduced by Ealing Council.
- By 2025 review national and regional commissioning of services by local health boards to ensure that disaggregated data is collected, services are accessible, and services are being delivered to respond to the needs of women. This includes sexual health, eating disorder services, transgender services, trans-aware health screening, better treatment of endometriosis and menopause, an FGM clinic, and specialist maternity Mother and Baby Units available in Wales.
- By 2021 take measures to remove the barriers that disabled women and girls face in accessing healthcare in Wales, particularly in respect to mental health, sexual and reproductive services and information.
- By 2021 provide training and invest in research into endometriosis.



- By 2019 make the menopause a 'specific health issue' within the Corporate Health Standard, Welsh Government's national quality framework and work with employers to improve health and well-being in the workplace.
- By 2021 improve training for GPs and healthcare information available for women experiencing the menopause, including psychological symptoms.

We want UK Government to:

- Strengthen health and safety protections and enforcement to ensure that employers cannot get away with ignoring the health, safety and welfare of women with menopausal symptoms.

We want action in other areas:

- Local health boards to recognise gender inequality within their own commissioning of services and work to ensure that women's health needs are responded to.
- Employers to support women going through the menopause and have a clear workplace policy in place and training for staff.

9. Women's rights maintained and advanced post-Brexit: Ensure that women's legal rights are protected and advanced after leaving the EU.

Welsh Government must use its powers to continue to create policy and legislation that holds institutions, organisations and individuals accountable to deliver gender equality and protect women's human rights. We can strengthen the Equality Act 2010 and adopt International and EU conventions into Welsh legislation.

The UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund must focus on addressing inequality and poverty and be distributed in Wales. The legacy of past EU funding to Wales with successful programmes supporting women's employment and addressing gender inequality must be maintained.

We want Welsh Government to:

- By 2020 work closely with the UK Government to ensure that women's legal rights are protected post-Brexit and there are no reductions in rights following the UK's exit from the European Union.
- By 2026 the principles of CEDAW, the 'Istanbul Convention' and the EU Charter of Human Rights should be incorporated into Welsh legislation.
- Agree to a 'constitutional right to equality' that will need further devolution agreements to ensure this applies to the National Assembly for Wales and will require any bills to be assessed to determine if they are compliant to the 'right to equality'.

We want the UK Government to:

- By 2021 ensure that the Shared Prosperity Fund is administered in Wales, is re-distributive and maintains a focus on tackling poverty and inequality.
- Cement promises that Wales will continue to receive identical financial support as provided by the EU, through the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund.
- By 2022 strengthen the Equality Act 2010 to put a duty on the UK Parliament to assess new legislation and policy to ensure that it has a positive impact on equality. The amendment must also ensure that UK courts take account of the Equality Act when interpreting legislation.
- By 2022 develop a UK equality strategy that is cross-departmental and provides a platform for engagement with civil society organisations.
- Carry out consultations with key stakeholders and beneficiaries of structural funds in Wales as soon as possible to understand the benefits and impact of this funding so that it can be replicated using UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund post-Brexit.



We want action in other areas:

- The Welsh Affairs Committee to carry out an inquiry into post-Brexit funding in Wales, including consideration of the impact this will have on gender equality.

10. Welsh Government accountable to women and girls: Women's rights and gender equality is integrated within Welsh Government.

A strong accountability mechanism is needed to ensure the delivery of the actions outlined within this manifesto. This needs to happen within the machinery of Welsh Government and throughout the women's movement in Wales.

We want Welsh Government to:

- By 2019 work with women's organisations in Wales to conduct a rapid review of the policy and legislative framework in Wales to strengthen action on gender equality and women's rights.
- By 2020 produce a set of national gender equality indicators with the desegregation of data and a review of the national well-being indicators.
- By 2021 a Cabinet Secretary for Women should be appointed.

We want action in other areas:

- Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales, Chwarae Teg, Women Connect First and Welsh Women's Aid will continue to hold Welsh Government to account with an annual review of these policy asks.
- Third sector organisations and individuals to use this manifesto to call for the change we want to see.

CONCLUSION

Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales, Chwarae Teg, Women Connect First and Welsh Women's Aid are committed to reviewing this plan annually to see how progress has been made.

We believe that by taking the above actions we can achieve equality in women's economic, political and social lives. We call on Welsh Government and other actors to review our recommendations and put them in to place as soon as possible. Working together, gender equality in Wales can become a reality in our lifetimes.





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ABOUT WEN WALES

WEN Wales is a network of organisations and individuals working to advance the rights of women in all spheres of Welsh life. WEN Wales aims to create a fairer society in which women live free from sexism and gender discrimination and enjoy equality in all aspects of their daily lives. WEN Wales is funded by Welsh Government under the Equality and Inclusion Programme 2017 – 2020.

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