



**Ombwdsmon  
Ombudsman**  
Cymru · Wales

## Public consultation



## Our Equality Plan 2023-2026

**Closing date: 16 October 2023**

[ombudsman.wales](https://ombudsman.wales)

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

## About us

We have three main roles:

- We investigate complaints about public services
- We consider complaints about councillors breaching the Code of Conduct
- We drive systemic improvement of public services and standards of conduct in local government in Wales.

We are independent, impartial, fair and open to all who need us.

Our service is free of charge.

We can provide a summary of this document in accessible formats, including large print.

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## Context

Our previous Equality Plan covered the period from 2019 to 2022. It identified 11 Equality Objectives, related to how we deliver our complaints service, how we embed equality considerations into our improvement work and how we work as an employer. You can [find that Plan here](#).

In 2020, we also developed our 'Race and Ethnicity at Work Charter'. We did that against the backdrop of the Black Lives Matter Protests, to strengthen our contribution to race equality, justice and inclusion in Wales. The Charter included some further and more detailed steps to support our complainants and our staff from ethnic minority backgrounds. You can [find that Charter here](#).

In 2022, we extended the Plan and the Charter for a year, as we started to work on our new Strategic Plan, setting the direction for the office for 2023-2026.

We completed many actions that we had committed to under the Plan and the Charter. For example, we improved how we collect equality data and started new and useful conversations with organisations across Wales representing communities that rarely complain to us. We updated our Equality Impact Assessment procedure and started to apply it when planning our investigations on our own initiative. We significantly reduced our mean and median gender pay gaps. We also increased the ethnic diversity of our workforce and our Advisory Panel.

However, we did not see the impact that we wanted to see in all respects. The profile of our complainants did not change noticeably during the lifetime of the Plan. Some groups remain under-represented among our staff – for example, very few people identify as disabled. We also know that there is more for us to do to ensure that no groups face barriers when using our service.

## Our new Equality Plan

We developed our new Equality Plan to support the delivery of [our new Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#) and its mission: **to have a positive impact on people and public services in Wales.**

We want to structure our work under the new Equality Plan based on the following principles:

Targeted and focused	We do not have the capacity or resources to reach all communities or to address every area that we could potentially improve. We must target and prioritise our work under this Plan, based on our understanding of areas that require most attention and where we can have most impact.
Impact-oriented	We understand that it is sometimes difficult to capture the impact of our work and that, in many areas, we may be able only to influence change. However, we will be transparent about the intended impact of our work under this Plan and clear on how we intend to measure it. Every year, we will include the relevant actions and targets under this Strategy in our Business Plan and we will monitor our performance.
Streamlined	Our Equality Plan is aligned to and, in some respects, reiterates the steps under our other strategic documents – for example, our People Strategy and our Communications and Engagement Strategy. This ensures that we embed attention to equality across our work, but do not duplicate our efforts. Our new Equality Plan will also integrate some actions from our current Race and Ethnicity at Work Charter.

We are proposing **7 Equality Objectives** aligned with the Aims of our Strategic Plan:

Strategic Aim 1: Delivering justice with a positive impact for people and public services

1. Ensure that we support people with additional access needs to use our complaints service.
2. Help to improve our services and impact through better engagement with equality groups.

Strategic Aim 2: Increasing accessibility and inclusion

3. Raise public awareness of the office and its role and powers among groups under-represented among our complainants.
4. Maintain and develop more accessible information explaining who we are and how we work.

Strategic Aim 3: Increasing the impact of our proactive improvement work

5. Through our Complaints Standards role, seek to influence positively the accessibility of local complaints processes.

Strategic Aim 4: Ensuring that we are a healthy, efficient and accountable organisation.

6. Work to improve representation of target groups among our workforce.
7. Continue to monitor our gender pay gap and identify any opportunities to reduce it further.

To find the full proposed Plan, click [here](#).

For an Easy Read version, click [here](#).

## Consultation questions

1. Do you agree with the principles guiding our new Equality Plan (targeted and focused; impact-oriented; streamlined)?
  
2. Do you agree with the Objectives that we have identified? Please include any comments or feedback on each Objective.
  - Ensure that we support people with additional access needs to use our complaints service
  - Help to improve our services and impact through better engagement with equality groups
  - Raise public awareness of the office and its role and powers among groups under-represented among our complainants
  - Maintain and develop more accessible information explaining who we are and how we work
  - Through our Complaints Standards role, seek to influence positively the accessibility of local complaints processes
  - Work to improve representation of target groups among our workforce
  - Continue to monitor our gender pay gap and identify any opportunities to reduce it further
  
3. Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to how we will:
  - monitor our work under this Plan
  - identify, collect and publish relevant information
  - assess and monitor the impact of policies and practices and publish any assessment reports



