



**Ombwdsmon
Ombudsman**
Cymru • Wales

Annual Equality Report 2023/24

September 2024



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Annual Equality Report 2023/24





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Foreword

I am very pleased to present this annual report on our equality, diversity and inclusion work during 2023/24.

Our focus this past year has been on developing our new Equality Plan, which we published in November 2023. The Equality Plan contributes to the delivery of our new Strategic Plan 2023-2026, and aims to be targeted and impact orientated, focusing on areas where we can make and influence change.

We are working differently to build awareness of our service with people from groups that have been underrepresented in our complainants. I am pleased to report that as a result of our targeted approach of directly engaging with our prioritised communities, we are starting to see an increased awareness among these groups.

This awareness is translating into an

uplift in the proportion of complaints we receive for many of our prioritised groups- Welsh language speakers, disabled people and people from diverse ethnicities. I now want to see this increase reflected in our complaints from young people, people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and those from diverse nationalities.

I am delighted that for another year we had no median gender pay gap, and our mean gender pay gap also reduced. This is a testament to our commitment in being an equal opportunities and fair employer, but we are also conscious that we must continue to improve equality, diversity and inclusion across our organisation.

There remain areas for us to work on.

As a small organisation, one or two changes in staff can have a significant impact. But through regular monitoring of equality data we can take swift and responsive action to reconcile this, as shown by our innovative Welsh speaking graduate scheme whose purpose is to increase the people working for us from diverse communities.

We will continue to champion equality across the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued.

Michelle Morris

**Public Services
Ombudsman for Wales**
September 2024



Our Equality Objectives

In 2023, we adopted our new Equality Plan. Its mission is to have a positive impact on people and public services in Wales and will contribute to all four 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 target groups.



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.

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

Equality Objective 1: Ensure that we support people with additional access needs to use our complaints service.

87% of people who had used our services said we were easy to get hold of.



79 people requested extra help using our service, the same number as last year.



More people from our target groups felt they could approach us if needed.



61 people asked us to communicate with them in Welsh, more than double than the number from the previous year, but this is still very low.



Equality Objective 2: Help to improve our services and impact through better engagement with equality groups.



Welsh language speakers told us they are worried their complaint would not be considered a quickly if they submitted it in Welsh.



We increased the number of Welsh language speakers in our workforce.

Strategic Aim 2: Increasing accessibility and inclusion

Equality Objective 3: Raise public awareness of the office and its role and powers among target groups.

Our target groups are:

- young people
- people from diverse ethnic and national backgrounds
- disabled people
- Welsh speakers
- people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage

Young people, diverse ethnicities and those facing socio-economic disadvantage are less aware of services than others

8% more people from diverse ethnicities made a complaint to a public body in 2024 than in 2022

Last year we attended more events to promote our work to our target groups



31% of people who make a complaint to us are disabled

Strategic Aim 2: Increasing accessibility and inclusion

Equality Objective 4: Maintain and develop more accessible information explaining who we are and how we work.

Our new website was accessibility tested by neurodivergent testers, from All Wales People First



We trebled the number of accounts we reach with our Facebook posts



Advice and advocacy bodies say we are easier to get hold of

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

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

**More public bodies
under our Complaints
Standards are
collecting equality
data from their
complainants after we
asked them about it.**



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

Equality Objective 6: Work to improve representation of target groups among our workforce.

As a small organisation, our data is significantly affected with one or two changes in staff



77% of our staff are women and **4%** identified with diverse sexual orientations, both exceeding population proportions

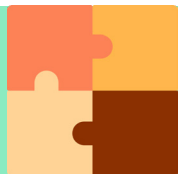
We have increased the number of staff who are disabled to **6%**, but this is still much lower than we would want



4% of staff identified with diverse ethnic backgrounds, much lower than last year



7% of our applicants were from diverse ethnicities, compared to **5.3%** in the working age population



People from our target groups applying for jobs with us did not perceive any barriers for them in our recruitment process



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

Equality Objective 7: Continue to monitor our gender pay gap and identify any opportunities to reduce it further.



Our mean gender pay gap dropped to **8%** from **12%** last year



We do not have a median gender pay gap

Our Race and Ethnicity at Work Charter

We also continue to work to the aims and objectives of our Race and Ethnicity at Work Charter:

We will listen	We will engage proactively with ethnic minority communities to determine and break down the barriers to access our service, recognising intersectionality.
	We will continue to be an inclusive organisation and will provide ethnic minorities staff with support, listen to their experiences and learn to make positive changes.
	We will listen to our staff, including ethnic minority staff and allies and use their knowledge and experience to support a positive organisational culture. We will support staff wishing to establish or be part of staff networks at PSOW and support their development.
We will learn	We will ensure continued anti-racism learning and awareness for all staff.
	We will hold events throughout the year to celebrate ethnic minority cultures, increase learning and raise awareness of differences, including the issues of racism and discrimination.
	We will reinforce our learning from the unconscious bias training.
We will act	The Ombudsman will become the Executive Sponsor from the Leadership Team to provide visible leadership on race and ethnicity in our organisation.
	We will ensure ethnic minority representation on our Advisory Panel and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee by April 2022.
	We will take proactive measures to secure a more diverse workforce that is more representative of the communities we serve. We will do this by increasing awareness of our role and recruitment opportunities to potential ethnic minority candidates, with the aim of achieving that 8% of those shortlisted for interview are from ethnic minorities.

Background



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.

Our ambition:

- People of Wales feel that public services treat them fairly and respond when things go wrong.
- Welsh public services listen to individuals and use their complaints to learn and improve.
- Welsh local government is trusted to deliver the highest standards of conduct.
- The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales continues to be an influential and respected voice in public service improvement.



Our equality duties and commitments

We must comply with general and specific duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to protected characteristics. We are also committed to acting in the spirit of the socio-economic duty and to supporting the Welsh language.

General equality duty

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a public sector equality duty (the 'general duty'), replacing the separate duties on race, disability and gender equality.

Under the general duty, we must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The general duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- race (including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality);
- religion or belief (including lack of belief);
- pregnancy and maternity and
- marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination).

Specific equality duties

The general equality duty is not prescriptive about the approach a public authority should take in order to comply with their legal obligations. Listed bodies in Wales also have specific duties to help them in their performance of the general duty.

Under the specific duties in Wales, we must set Equality Objectives and prepare Strategic Equality Plans.

We must also

- collect and monitor equality data (including in relation to employment and pay differences);
- assess impact of our policies and procedures on equality;
- engage with protected groups;
- provide training on equality for staff and
- consider equality in procurement.

Socio-economic duty

Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010 requires specified public bodies to consider how their strategic decisions may help to reduce socio-economic inequalities – resulting, for instance, from differences in occupation, educational opportunities or place of residence. This is referred to as the socio-economic duty.

The Welsh Government published Guidance on the Socio-Economic Duty in March 2022. The duty requires public bodies to consider how their strategic decisions can help reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage. Strategic decisions are those key decisions that affect how a public body fulfils its statutory purpose.

We are not bound by the Act; we are committed to its principles and have already taken steps to strengthen the consideration of socio-economic inequalities in our work.

Welsh language

We are committed to ensuring that the Welsh language is welcomed and treated no less favourably than English in all aspects of our work and that we meet the needs of Welsh speakers.

Under our new Act, we are required to comply with Welsh Language Standards. The details of the Standards that we are required to comply with can be found on our website ([click here](#)). You can read our [updated Welsh Language Policy here](#).

We give more details of our performance under the Standards during 2023/24 in a separate Welsh Language Standards Report, published in September.

How we manage our Equality Plan

Our **Management Team** has the overall responsibility for the strategic direction and governance of the office and ensures that operational management complies with all legal, statutory and good practice guidance requirements. The Management Team receives quarterly reports on the implementation of the Plan and planning, moving forward.

The **Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** is responsible for the coordination of the implementation of actions under the Plan; the evaluation and review of the Plan; the preparation of annual equality reports and the formulation of new actions, moving forward. They also assist staff in completing Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).

All staff assigned responsibility for actions are responsible for the actions assigned to them and progress monitored on an ongoing basis at team level.

All staff receive information about actions under the Plan and are encouraged to contribute ideas and feedback and participate, as relevant.

The Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is supported by an internal **staff Equality Group**. The Group:

- helps monitor the implementation of the Equality Plan
- helps to formulate proposals for actions under the Plan
- acts as a sounding board for equality projects and initiatives within the office
- offers feedback and advice on Equality Impact Assessments.

How we prepared this Report

In developing this Report, we drew on our own performance and equality data about our service users, staff and people who apply to join us.

We analysed this data in the context of broader statistics available through the Office for National Statistics; the Welsh Government; the UK Government Equalities Office; and many others.

We also drew on the data published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in its next 'Is Wales Fairer?' Report 2023. Unfortunately, there is very little research available on the experiences of different groups when using public services and on their experiences of the administrative justice system.

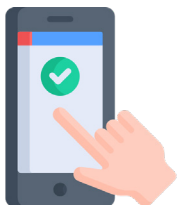


We must comply with general and specific duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to protected characteristics. We are also committed to acting in the spirit of the socio-economic duty and to supporting the Welsh language.

Our performance in 2023/24



Strategic Aim 1: Deliver justice



Objective 1: Ensure that we support people with additional access needs to use our complaints service.

This Objective is especially relevant to people who may experience barriers to access complaints services, such as older people, disabled people, people from diverse ethnic and national backgrounds, Welsh speakers and people who experience socio-economic disadvantage. To achieve this we will:

- create new resources to raise public awareness of support that we can offer and of our Welsh language service
- revise our internal process guiding how we monitor additional needs and offer support
- organise regular training for staff to raise awareness of how best to support different equality groups.

Accessibility

We want to know if people agree that we are accessible. Every year, we commission research to check what people think about the service they have received from us. We also conduct a survey of the general public every two years to see how many people in Wales know about our services. This second survey breaks down the people who responded into different groups, such as age, social group and ethnicity, and was last carried out in January 2024.

This year's results tell us that people are more aware about the work that we do and there is a high level of understanding and trust in our Office.

87% of people who had used our services said we were easy to get hold of, and an average of 81% said we treated them with courtesy and respect - this figure rose to 99% for people who were satisfied with their outcome, and dropped to 71% for

those who were not.

A larger proportion of people from all our target groups felt they could approach us if they needed to than in 2022, although these figures are still slightly lower than they were before the pandemic.

Additional support

We want to increase the number of requests for additional support that we get from complainants. When someone contacts us, we ask how they prefer to communicate with us: by phone, email, or post, and if they need us to adjust our service to better meet their specific needs. This year, 79 people requested extra help using our service, the same number as last year.

Welsh language users

It is important to us to see an increase in the use of our Welsh language services. This year, 61 people asked us to communicate with them in Welsh, more than double than the number from the previous year. However, we remain concerned with the low number of people choosing to communicate with us in Welsh.

Providing additional support

We reviewed our internal policy on additional support. We also provided training for our staff on learning disabilities and the specific access support that learning disabled people might need. 75% of our staff feel confident they can accommodate reasonable adjustment requests. This is a reduction from 80% in 2023, despite the training we have provided. However, we believe this results from changes in the people who work for us.

As a small organisation of 71 employees, changes in two or three staff members can have a big impact on the results of the survey. In 2023, a few knowledgeable people left the organisation, and we have been able to replace them with talented new members of staff but who have less experience of our work. They have received training on our policies and we expect their confidence to grow on offering additional support in the coming year.



Objective 2: Help to improve our services and impact through better engagement with equality groups.

Feedback from service users with specific access needs or from our target groups helps us understand how to better target our services and support people to access our services. We have committed to engaging with people from under-represented groups to understand how they feel about our service and the barriers they may be facing.

This year we chose to undertake focused research and engagement with Welsh language users of our service.

Most told us they had submitted their complaint in English, despite being confident in their ability to speak, read and write in Welsh. The main reasons for using English related to concerns they had that the complaint would not be considered as quickly and that their correspondence with public bodies, relating to their complaint, was in English.

If we are aware a complainant speaks Welsh we will allocate a Welsh speaking case worker, who will use conversational Welsh in meetings or telephone calls but, at present, we do not record this type of activity.

We are exploring how we can evidence the use of conversational Welsh with complainants in the future and are continuing to promote our services at key Welsh events and campaigns such as the National Eisteddfod and #DefnyddiaDyGymraeg campaign. We have also increased the number of caseworkers and call-handlers who can communicate in Welsh, by taking a pro-active approach to our recruitment of Welsh speakers.

Strategic Aim 2: Increasing accessibility and inclusion



Objective 3: Raise public awareness of the office and its role and powers among target groups.

Our ambition under this objective is to ensure that diverse communities in Wales know about our service and understand what we can and cannot do. We want to see a change in the profile of our complainants, with diverse communities being noticeably better represented.

We do not have the capacity to reach all communities in equal measure. We are focusing on specific groups, identified as priorities through our review of research and equality monitoring. These groups of people are:

- young people
- people from diverse ethnic and national backgrounds
- disabled people
- Welsh speakers
- people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

Awareness of our service

Our bi-annual awareness survey told us that 49% of the general population

knew about our services. However, proportionately fewer people from some of our target groups have the same level of awareness. These groups were:

- younger people,
- diverse ethnicities and
- those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

Whilst we would prefer these figures to be higher, they have increased from the previous survey and, welcomingly, more people from these groups are making complaints to public bodies.

Our awareness survey shows that 8% more people from diverse ethnicities made a complaint to a public body in 2024 than in 2022

We took a pro-active approach to increasing awareness of our service to people in our target groups, focusing our outreach work on events and areas where our target communities are especially well-represented. Last year, we attended several events to promote our work, including the Minority Ethnic Communities Health Fair and the Mastering Diversity Conference.

Representation of our target groups

We ask all those who make a complaint to us to complete an equality questionnaire. We provide a variety of channels for people to return their completed questionnaires to us. As well as being able to complete forms online or on paper, we will also call people, with their permission, so they can complete them verbally, too. As a result, we have a relatively high return rate of 42%.

We are pleased to see that equality data for disabled people, women and those that identify as members of the

LGBTQ+ communities, remain higher in our survey returns than the reported population rates. We have also seen increases in the proportion of Welsh speakers, older people, retired people and people from diverse ethnicities, but these remain below population proportions.

The rates of young people and people from diverse nationalities accessing our services remained stubbornly the same as the previous year. Of concern, our data suggests that the proportion of those facing socio-economic disadvantage may have decreased. This does not reflect the results from the Awareness survey, which suggest that awareness of the PSOW's services in both these groups have increased.

31% of people who make a complaint to us are disabled

The equality profile of our complainants and its analysis can be found in Appendix 1.



Objective 4: Maintain and develop more accessible information explaining who we are and how we work.

It is essential that our communications channels and content are accessible. We tailor our communications to the needs of specific groups, including producing EasyRead and video versions of our key reports. We developed an ambitious work plan to expand our use of social media platforms, increasing and improving promotional resources and improving the accessibility of our digital content.

Analytics

We launched our new website in March, with additional features to enhance accessibility and improve the user experience. The site was accessibility tested during its development by a group of neurodivergent testers, from All Wales People First. We incorporated the feedback into the new site. Next year we will be able to report on how well people are interacting with our resources.

We want to use social media to help us reach out to more people, especially younger audiences. We opened an [Instagram](#) account in 2023 and have

trebled the number of accounts we reach from our [Facebook](#) posts. Our reach with our Facebook account far exceeded our expectations.

Sounding Boards

For several years, we have held 4 Sounding Boards with local authorities, health boards, housing associations and Advice and Advocacy bodies. We also invited them to complete a feedback survey. Last year, the Sounding Board attendees asked us to improve our accessibility, so we were pleased to see that proportionally more bodies said we were easy to contact.

The Advice and Advocacy bodies raised questions about our work with veterans and how we were creating safe spaces for veterans to discuss complaints. They also wanted to understand more about the systemic impact of our work.

We were able to share information about the impact from our public interest reports, special interest reports and Own initiative investigations.

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



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

We want to support better collection and analysis of equality data by organisations under our Complaints Standards. This not only helps these organisations to better support complainants, but also helps us to understand to what extent the profile of people using our service reflects the profile of people complaining about Welsh public services.

We asked public bodies subject to our Complaints Standards what equality data they collected from people who had complained about their services. A significant number of respondents said that they did not collect, or had stopped collecting, this data. As a result, many have now started requesting this information from their complainants.

We will continue to ask for this information in ongoing years.

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



Objective 6: Work to improve representation of target groups among our workforce.

We want our workforce to be representative of the Welsh public. For us to reflect the diversity in society, our aim is to attract more applicants from diverse backgrounds and target people from communities that are under-represented in our workforce.

Representation

As an organisation with a relatively small workforce, our data can be significantly affected with one or two changes in the number of staff. This has been the case this year, when representation in some of our key equality groups has reduced.

In 2023/24, some groups remain well-represented among our workforce.

+ 77% of our staff were female. This continues to be a positive trend, since men in Wales are more likely than women to be in employment (StatsWales 2020).

+ At 15%, the proportion of staff

between 55 and 64 is above the Welsh average of 14%¹.

+ 4% of our staff told us that they identified with diverse sexual orientations. This exceeded the representation of this group according to the 2021 Census (3%).

However, some groups have become or remain under-represented:

- 6% of our staff identified as disabled – compared with 4% in 2019. This is the second year we have seen an increase in the proportion of disabled people who work for us. However this is still significantly lower than figures for disabled people in the general population. For comparison, in 2023, 11% of the population in Wales identified as disabled and economically active².

- The proportion of staff under the age of 25 years old dropped to 0%.

- 8% of our staff told us that

¹ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Estimates/Local-Authority/PopulationEstimates-by-LocalAuthority-Age>

² Figure obtained from 2021 Census data and March 2024 Annual Population Survey (ONS) <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Disability>

Welsh was the first language of their household. However, the proportion of people who had fluent or fairly good Welsh language skills was much higher – between 21% and 24%. This is a reduction from last year, as a result of two Welsh speakers resigning or retiring.

- Only 4% of our staff said they identified with diverse ethnic backgrounds. This is a significant drop from 2022/23's figure of 9% and lower than general population rates. For comparison, 5.3% of the Welsh population of working age identified with diverse ethnic backgrounds, whilst 4% identified with diverse ethnic backgrounds and were economically active (StatsWales 2023).

- 2% of staff told us that they identified with diverse religions, a reduction of 4% and this is now lower than the Welsh average of 4% (2021 Census).

- Only 3% of our staff identified with diverse national backgrounds (this measure is different to ethnic backgrounds). This was compared to 6.9% of Welsh residents estimated to be born outside of the UK (Welsh Government) and 7.5% of Welsh full-time workers (Wales Centre for Public Policy 2019).

- No staff member identified as trans.

In response to this evidence, we have pro-actively recruited 4 Welsh-speaking members of staff and younger members into our teams and expect to see these figures rise in next year's report.

Recruitment

We are proud to be an equal opportunities employer and we seek to ensure that, in our recruitment, we do not discriminate against any group in society. We gather equality data from applicants, to see if we need to make improvements to ensure our processes are fair.

In 2023/24, 7% of our applicants were from diverse ethnicities, compared to 5.3% in the working age population. Whilst only 5% of applicants said Welsh was their main language, between 13 and 15% of applicants said that they communicated in Welsh fluently or fairly well.

However, 7% of the applicants for our open positions were disabled, compared with 11% of working aged people who are both disabled and economically active in Wales³. Only 2% of applicants identified with nationalities other than Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish or British, compared to 6.9% of the wider population⁴.

We had 4% applicants from people aged below 25 years old and no one who identified as being trans.

We asked people who had applied for a position with us about any barriers that they might have faced. The response was very positive and did not suggest that problems exist within our recruitment approach, but within the pipeline of potential candidates.

We also responded quickly when two Welsh speaking members of staff left. We took a pro-active approach, establishing an innovative Welsh-speaking graduate programme and now have even more people working for us that can deliver our services in Welsh.

³ Figure obtained from 2021 Census data and March 2024 Annual Population Survey (ONS) <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Disability>

⁴ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Census/2021/country-of-birth>



Objective 7: Continue to monitor our gender pay gap and identify any opportunities to reduce it further.

In line with the trends in previous years, women among our job applicants and workforce consistently outnumber men, by a significant margin. 77% of our current staff identified as female (compared to 75% last year).

Under specific duties in Wales, we must look at the Gender Pay Gap in our organisation. In 2019, when we prepared our last Equality Plan, our mean Gender Pay Gap was 23% and our median Gender Pay Gap was 21%.

This year, we continued to reduce our mean gender pay gap, from 12% to 8%.

We can report, once again, that we do not have a median gender pay gap. For comparison, Chwarae Teg (the former charity supporting the economic development of women) estimated that the median Gender Pay Gap in Wales in 2021 was 12.3%.

Our median gender pay gap figure reflects the fact that more senior appointments were filled by women. However, the higher mean figure shows that male staff are still less represented in positions that are lower paid, with more in positions that attract a higher salary.

	March 2023	March 2024
% of staff female*	75%	77%
Median Gender Pay Gap	0%	0%
Mean Gender Pay Gap	12%	8%

*The information presented in this table is based on assumed gender identity, so that it reflects the full workforce.

Gender breakdown by salary and role, contract type and working arrangement can be found in Appendix 4.

Appendices

In this section, we present our equality monitoring data. Percentages in this section may not total 100, due to rounding of figures.



Appendix 1: Equality profile of our complainants

The following tables present the equality profile of our complainants in 2023/24, compared to 2022/2023. In 2023/24, 42% of our new complaints were accompanied by equality data.

Please note, due to rounding, the sum of the percentages may not equal exactly 100%. This is a common occurrence when decimal points are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

Age	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under 25: 3%• 25-34: 16%• 35-44: 20%• 45-54: 19%• 55-64: 20%• 65-74: 12%• 75 or over: 4%• PNS (prefer not to say): 8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under 25: 3%• 25-34: 17%• 35-44: 22%• 45-54: 19%• 55-64: 17%• 65-74: 10%• 75 or over: 4%• PNS: 8%

People under 25 remained significantly under-represented – compared with 12% of the Welsh population aged 15-24. Although others may complain on behalf of young people, we would expect this group to be better represented.

We saw a slight increase in the proportion of older people contacting us, but figures still remain low, as this age group comprises 21.3% of the Welsh population. Although others may complain on behalf of older people, we would expect this group to be better represented—especially given that people in this age group are more likely than average to access health services ([National Survey for Wales 2018/19](#)).

Gender	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female: 53% Male: 41% PNS: 6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female: 51% Male: 40% PNS: 9%

The proportion of females amongst our complainants was in line with the Welsh average.

Gender reassignment	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified with the gender assigned at birth: 89% Did not identify with the gender assigned at birth: 2% PNS: 9% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified with the gender assigned at birth: 87% Did not identify with the gender assigned at birth: 2% PNS: 11%

Reassigning your gender does not require any specific treatment as this is considered a personal process rather than a medical one ([EHRC 2019](#)). Population data about people who have undergone gender reassignment is limited ([Diverse Cymru](#)). The scarcity of data makes it difficult to assess the representation of this group among our complainants. It significantly exceeded the representation of this group, according to the 2021 Census (0.4%), although 6.3% of people did not respond to that Census question.

National identity	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh: 50% English: 10% Scottish: <1% Northern Irish: <1% British: 25% Other: 3% PNS: 9% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh: 50% English: 12% Scottish: <1% British: 24% Other: 3% PNS: 11%

The representation of people of diverse nationalities was in line with the figures in 2022/23. This group is under-represented, compared to 5.4% of the Welsh population, according to the 2021 Census. We would expect this group to be better represented, given the research indicating that migrants may face barriers in accessing healthcare ([2016 EHRC](#)).

Ethnicity	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White (all backgrounds): 88% Mixed or multiple ethnic group: 2% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British: 1% Asian or Asian British: 2% Gypsy or Irish Traveller: <1% PNS: 8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White (all backgrounds): 87% Mixed or multiple ethnic group: 2% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British: 0.5% Asian or Asian British: 1.3% Other: 0.5% PNS: 9%

The representation of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds was similar to 2022/23. It remains well below the demographic profile of Wales (6.3%, according to the 2021 Census).

Main language	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English: 86% Welsh: 5% Other: 1% PNS: 8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English: 86% Welsh: 4% Other: 1% PNS: 9%

At 5%, the proportion of people who state that Welsh is the first language of their household is a small increase from 2022/23. This group is under-represented compared to 17.8% of people in Wales who identified as Welsh speakers in the 2021 Census. However, this question, as currently asked is flawed, as Welsh is not the first language of many Welsh speakers. The representation of users of other languages remains very low.

Disability	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes: 31% No: 55% PNS: 15% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes: 30% No: 55% PNS: 15%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited by a health problem or disability a lot or a little: 44% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited by a health problem or disability a lot or a little: 42%

We saw a small increase in the proportion of disabled people who complained to us. We would expect to see a higher representation of disabled people among our complainants, given that this group is more likely to access health services and to face difficulties in access ([National Survey for Wales 2018/19](#); [Welsh Government 2015](#)). The proportion of our complainants who identified as disabled remained much higher than the Welsh proportion of disabled people (21%). The proportion of people who said that they were limited, a lot or a little, because of a health problem or disability was higher again.

Marriage and civil partnership	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am married: 37% • I am single: 32% • I am in a civil partnership: 4% • Other: 9% • PNS: 17% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am married: 37% • I am single: 32% • I am in a civil partnership: 4% • Other: 9% • PNS: 19%

The proportion of our complainants who were married or in a civil partnership remained the same as last year. Still, it appears to be lower than the Welsh average of 47%, in 2011 (2011 Census), and falls short of later estimates of 50% ([National Survey for Wales 2018/19](#)).

Sexual orientation	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heterosexual or Straight: 80% • Gay or Lesbian: 4% • Bisexual: 2% • Other: <1% • PNS: 14% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heterosexual or Straight: 78% • Gay or Lesbian: 3% • Bisexual: 2% • Other: 1% • PNS: 17%

The proportion of our complainants who identified with diverse sexual orientations was about the same as last year. At 6%, it significantly exceeded the representation of this group, according to the 2021 Census (3%), although 7.6% people did not respond to this Census question. However, it falls short of the other available estimates of the size of this population in the UK (10%) ([YouGov 2019](#)). Note also the very high 'prefer not to say' response rate to this question.

Research in 2018 suggested that 13% of LGBTQ+ people have experienced some form of unequal treatment from healthcare staff because of their sexual orientation ([Stonewall 2018](#)). [Stonewall data](#) also shows that people who identify as LGBTQ+ are often apprehensive of disclosing their identity in the workplace or when using services, for fear of discrimination. The high rate of no responses to this question points to concerns around sharing this information that we need to address.

Religion or belief – including lack of belief	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian (all denominations): 35% • No religion: 45% • Muslim: 1% • Buddhist: 1% • Hindu: <1% • Jewish: <1% • Other: 2% • PNS: 15% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian (all denominations): 34% • No religion: 45% • Muslim: 1% • Buddhist: <1% • Hindu: <1% • Jewish: <1% • Other: 2% • PNS: 17%

The proportion of our complainants who identified with 'no religion' is nearing the Welsh average (47%) ([StatsWales 2017-19](#)). The proportion of people who identified with diverse religions matched the results of the 2021 Census (4%). However, note a very high 'prefer not to say' response rate to this question.

Working status	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed or self-employed: 49% • Retired from paid work: 19% • Otherwise not in paid work: 16% • PNS: 17% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed or self-employed: 49% • Retired from paid work: 17% • Otherwise not in paid work: 15% • PNS: 17%

Education	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree as the highest qualification: 41% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree as the highest qualification: 38%

Just over 49% of our complainants were in employment. This was lower than the Welsh average of 72.8% in December 2020, for people aged 16-64 in Wales (73.5%) ([StatsWales 2021](#)) but higher than in 2019/20.

People with education qualifications at degree level or above continue to be over-represented, compared to the Welsh average of 31%.

Pregnancy and maternity	
We do not currently monitor this characteristic for complainants.	



Appendix 2: Equality profile of our workforce

Our workforce equality monitoring is conducted through an anonymous, voluntary internal staff survey. In 2023/24, 97% of our employees completed the survey. Of the two people who did not, one was on long term sick leave and one was on secondment.

Please note, due to rounding, the sum of the percentages may not equal exactly 100%. This is a common occurrence when decimal points are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

Age	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 25: 0% • 25 to 34: 18% • 35 to 44: 38% • 45 to 54: 28% • 55 to 64: 15% • 65 and over: 0% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 25: 1% • 25 to 34: 12% • 35 to 44: 36% • 45 to 54: 35% • 55 to 64: 14% • 65 and over: 3%

The proportion of our staff who were under the age of 25 has continued to decrease. This group remain significantly under-represented, compared with 17% of the Welsh population aged 16-24.

Gender	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female: 77% • Male: 23% • PNS: 0% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female: 74% • Male: 24% • Prefer to use own term: 1%

The proportion of females in our workforce significantly exceeded the proportion of this group in the Welsh population overall. This continues to be a positive trend, since men in Wales were more likely than women to be in employment⁵ ([StatsWales 2020](https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Employment/Persons-Employed/employmentrate-by-welshlocalarea-year-gender)).

⁵ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Employment/Persons-Employed/employmentrate-by-welshlocalarea-year-gender>

Gender reassignment	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not identify as trans: 97% • PNS / did not respond: 2% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not identify as trans: 97% • PNS: 3%

Reassigning your gender does not require any specific treatment, as this is considered a personal process and not a medical one ([EHRC 2019](#)). Population data about people who have undergone gender reassignment is limited ([Diverse Cymru](#)). Of the LGBT or intersex respondents to a [UK Government survey](#) in 2019, 13% said they were transgender. The scarcity of data makes it difficult to assess the representation of this group among our workforce. Arguably, in a small organisation, it is not unlikely that no one will identify as trans. Nevertheless, we know that we need to continue to create at PSOW an inclusive environment where colleagues feel they can talk about their gender identity, should they wish to do so.

National identity	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh: 56% • English: 4% • British: 34% • Other: 3% • Prefer not to say: 1% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh: 55% • English: 5% • British: 33% • Other: 4% • Prefer not to say: 3%

Only 3% of our staff identified with diverse national backgrounds (this measure is different to ethnic backgrounds). This was compared to 6.9% of Welsh residents estimated to be born outside of the UK ([Welsh Government](#)) and 7.5% of Welsh full-time workers (Wales Centre for Public Policy 2019).

Ethnicity	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White (all backgrounds): 95% Asian / Asian British: 1% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British: 3% Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups: 1% Other: 0% PNS: 0% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White (all backgrounds): 90% Asian / Asian British: 3% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British: 3% Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups: 3% Other: 0% PNS: 3%

5% of our staff said they identified with diverse ethnic backgrounds. For comparison, 5.3% of the Welsh population of working age identified with diverse ethnic backgrounds and 4% identified with diverse ethnic backgrounds and were economically active⁶. This is a significant drop from the previous year.

Main language	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English: 89% Welsh: 8% Other: 1% PNS: 1% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English: 83% Welsh: 14% Other: 1% PNS: 1%

Welsh language skills - fairly good or fluent	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaking: 21% Reading: 24% Writing: 21% Understanding: 32% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaking: 26% Reading: 31% Writing: 27% Understanding: 32%

The proportion of people in our workforce with their main language as Welsh dropped last year. It remained lower than the percentage of Welsh speakers in the population overall⁷. However, the proportion of staff who had fairly good or fluent Welsh language skills was higher than the Welsh figures from the [National Survey for Wales 2019/20](#).

Disability	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: 6% • No: 80% • Did not respond: 14% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: 5% • No: 90% • PNS: 5%

6% of our staff identified as disabled – a higher proportion than 5% last year. Still, for comparison, in 2023, 11% of the population identified as disabled and economically active⁶. Research showed that the Welsh disability employment gap stands at 32.3 percentage points ([Senedd Research](#)), and we know that we need to do more to attract disabled people to join our organisation.

Marriage and civil partnership	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: 63% • No: 34% • PNS: 3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: 62% • No: 36% • PNS: 3%

The proportion of people who were married or in a civil partnership among our workforce has increased slightly, compared to 2021/22, and still exceeds the Welsh average of 46.6% in 2011 (2011 Census) and 50% in 2018/19 ([National Survey for Wales 2019/20](#)). This is, overall, a positive trend, since, in 2018, single people were more likely to be employed than married people ([EHRC 2018](#)).

⁶ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Ethnicity/summaryofeconomicactivity-by-area-ethnicity>

⁷ <https://www.gov.wales/welsh-language-wales-census-2021-html#:~:text=On%20Census%20Day%2C%2021%20March%202021%2C%20an%20estimated,2011%2C%20or%20a%20decrease%20of%201.2%20percentage%20points.>

⁸ Figure calculated from 2021 Census data and March 2024 Annual Population Survey (ONS) <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Disability>

Sexual orientation	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gay or Lesbian: 3% Heterosexual or Straight: 90% Bisexual: 1% Prefer to use own term: 0% PNS: 6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gay or Lesbian: 3% Heterosexual or Straight: 88% Prefer to use own term: 1% PNS: 8%

The proportion of people who identified with diverse sexual orientations has remained the same as last year. It equalled the estimates of 4% in the [National Survey for Wales 2019/20](#), though was lower than other available estimates of this population in the UK (10%) ([YouGov 2019](#)).

Religion or belief – including lack of belief	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No religion: 52% Christian (all denominations): 31% Muslim: 1% Other: 1% Did not respond: 14% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No religion: 49% Christian (all denominations): 38% Muslim: 3% Other: 3% PNS: 8%

The proportion of people in our workforce who identified with no religion has increased since last year and is now above the Welsh average of 47%. The proportion of people who followed diverse religions decreased to 2% and is lower than the Welsh average of 4%⁹.

Caring duties	
2023/24	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes: 58% No: 37% PNS: 6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes: 58% No: 37% PNS: 5%

Most of the staff who indicated that they had caring duties were carers for a child or children. 14% percentage of carers indicated that they were primary carers for someone because of disability, health condition or problems related to old age. carers for someone because of disability, health condition or problems related to old age.

Appendix 3: Gender breakdown by salary and role, contract type and working arrangements

As we have a large number of grades, some with a single post holder, the table below provides the gender breakdown of staff by salary and role:

Role	Salary (FTE)	Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female
Administrative and frontline staff	£26k - £38k	4	17	21	19%	81%
Investigation Officers and Support Service Managers	£38k - £50k	5	27	32	16%	84%
Team Managers	£51k - £60k	6	9	15	40%	60%
Senior Managers	£61k +	1	3	4	25%	75%
	Total	16	56	72	22%	78%

* The total number of employees in this table does not include the Ombudsman

Overall, women were far better represented than men across all roles within our organisation.

At 31 March 2024, 22 members of staff worked part-time (21 female and 1 male).

⁹ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Religion/census-2021>



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