

## Consultation questions

The Action Plan has six main themes: Human Rights and Recognition; Safety; Home and Communities; Health and Social Care; Education; and the Workplace. We would like your thoughts on the proposed actions within each theme. You may want to comment on one or all of these areas.

Please use the following questions as the basis of your response. You are welcome to add additional comments or information if you wish.

### Question 1

**Do you think the Action Plan will increase equality for LGBTQ+ people and what do you think the priorities should be?**

While the Action Plan certainly appears as if it will increase equality for LGBTQ+ people, a number of voluntary sector organisations have expressed concern to WCVA about the length of time they fear this will take. This could be ameliorated were the final version of the Plan to include specific timescales for actions. The Race Equality Action Plan included these, so it is odd that the LGBTQ+ Action Plan does not. There is also little information about how said outcomes will be measured. If Welsh Government do not measure the impact of the plan, it is difficult to understand how it could be proclaimed a success or otherwise. The immediate priority should be for the Plan to include timescales and measurements for success.

The Plan should also recognise that members of the LGBTQ+ community are all different. The Plan must acknowledge the differences between people and should not seek to take a 'one size fits all' approach.

### Question 2

### **Do you agree with the overarching aims? What would you add or take away in relation the overarching aims?**

That the Plan makes no explicit link to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act is a huge oversight. The wellbeing goals can only be enhanced by increasing equality for LGBTQ+ people, particularly 'a more equal Wales', 'a Wales of cohesive communities' and 'a healthier Wales', but there is not a single Goal that could not conceivably benefit were the Plan enacted successfully. For the sake of the Act, Welsh Government must start explicitly demonstrating how its decisions give Wales a greater chance of achieving the Goals.

The Plan should explicitly specify that the Independent Expert Panel will include members of the LGBTQ+ community.

The Plan should include an aim regarding addressing misinformation within the media and social media around transgender people.

'Improving data collection' is not specific enough as an aim. More detail must be given as to how this data will be gathered and what it will be used for. Much personal information within the LGBTQ+ community is extremely sensitive, and safeguarding concerns should be paramount.

### **Question 3**

#### **Do you agree with the proposed actions? What would you add or take away in relation the actions?**

On Action 12 – at a time when UK Government have announced plans to 'overhaul' the Human Rights Act, it is more important than ever that people are reminded of their human rights. The LGBTQ+ Action Plan is a great place to start, but it would be useful to see Welsh Government do more work around the importance of human rights going forward.

On Action 17 – the action's aim is to 'better understand the reasons for historically low reporting' of domestic violence from the LGBTQ+ community. Although the majority of domestic violence is certainly against women, it would be useful to see an addendum to this action, or another separate action, looking at domestic violence against men in the

community too, to ensure that they too are able to receive the services they require.

On Action 19 – clarity is required as to whether the funding referred to here is only for LGBTQ+ youth organisations, or wider voluntary sector youth organisations.

On Actions 13 and 16 – There is no mention of strategies for diversification and attraction of people from diverse backgrounds volunteering for the police. Special Constabulary and Police Support Volunteers especially could be the missing link between communities and the police force. This sort of change could be brought about through volunteering pathways, strengthening LGBTQ+ people's safety and relationship with law enforcement.

On Action 23 – organisations within the sport and culture sectors will need guidance on improving LGBTQ+ representation, and should be involved in co-production of any strategy development.

On Action 26 – 'national, local and voluntary organisations will work cohesively to develop good practice that can be scalable and shared as appropriate'. We welcome this, but the sector needs know how it will be facilitated and ensured, and how organisations will be engaged in this process. Funding may need to be provided.

Potential additional actions:

- Disability Sport Wales have suggested to WCVA that the Plan gives additional thought to 'active recreation' as a component of physical activity. This would sit outside of sport and more within the arena of public health. Conversations could be had with Pride Cymru around its Get Out, Get Active programme.
- Improving trans healthcare for under-18s should be an action. Wait times to see mental health professionals can be extremely long, and the lack of a GIDS service in Wales means patients must travel to Leeds or London.
- The plan should set out clear protocols to tackle any aggression and hate speech that LGBTQ+ people may suffer while accessing public services.

- There are numerous recommendations about professional training of teaching staff and work with colleges and universities. There is an opportunity here to build voluntary youth-to-youth teaching and support, and for youth volunteering to complement the delivery of the actions under the education section. See this [case study](#) for an example of how this could be achieved.
- WCVA welcomes the inclusion of volunteering as a key element for community building and the consideration given to providing greater focus on equality, as well as collaborative work with the voluntary sector to achieve the aims of the action plan. However, research from NCVO has highlighted that during the pandemic, some LGBTQ+ volunteers, particularly those not 'out of the closet' at home, felt they had lost their 'safe space' to volunteer due to restricted opportunities to volunteer in-person. An action should be added to assess and monitor the effects and aftereffects of Covid on LGBTQ+ volunteering and the ability of LGBTQ+ individuals to connect as a community through that means; and also to provide support as needed to restore the sector and the availability for safe spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals to connect with their peers.

We also welcome the commitment to providing funding to aid organisations in working towards the goals of the action plan. However, this funding must be long-term to best ensure the Plan's chances of success.

## **Question 4**

### **What are the key challenges that could stop the aims and actions being achieved?**

Given that it is closer than any other sector to communities and hard-to-reach individuals, the voluntary sector has a key role to play in ensuring the Plan is a success – and the Plan must be explicit about the role of the sector in service provision. The sector will require support, training and financial resource:

- To ensure that volunteers and staff understand the aims and actions of the Plan

- To ensure that volunteers and staff understand the issues facing the LGBTQ+ community
- To ensure that organisations have the capacity to take actions forward
- To ensure that it does not work with any organisations that are anti-LGBTQ+
- To ensure that LGBTQ+ organisations are not sidelined from discussions around cross-cutting issues that affect the entire sector
- To ensure that organisations' equality policies are up to date and adhered to

If successfully supported, the Plan offers a number of opportunities for the sector:

- To encourage more LGBTQ+ people to volunteer
- To ensure that volunteering is a safe space for everyone
- To get involved with funding related to LGBTQ+ volunteering
- To help wider society understand that all voices must be heard and that all people have a contribution to make
- To ensure that LGBTQ+ have access to the services they need
- To show that Wales is a diverse, welcoming nation

However, we reiterate here that for the Plan to be a success, it must include timescales and measurable outcomes.

## Question 5

**What resources (this could include funding, staff time, training, access to support or advocacy services among other things) do you think will be necessary in achieving the aims and actions outlined?**

This was previously discussed in our answer to Question 4. However, in addition, Welsh Government and the sector must make sure to take note of the opinions and lived experiences of the LGBTQ+ community. The Measuring the Mountain programme, to discover people's stories of accessing health and social care services and how the Social Services and Wellbeing Act has been implemented, was successful. Perhaps once the

Plan is enacted, a similar programme could be considered to understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ people. Something could also be set up to track the success of the Race Equality Action Plan.

A Code of Best Practice for working with LGBTQ+ communities could be explored.

## **Question 6**

**Do you feel the LGBTQ+ Action Plan adequately covers the intersection of LGBTQ+ with other protected characteristics, such as race, religion or belief, disability, age, sex, and marriage and civil partnership? If not, how can we improve this?**

The Plan must ensure not to 'silo' individuals and communities into compartments. Many people have multiple different protected characteristics and the Plan must make sure this is understood at all levels of government, as well as cross-sectorally. Discussions with group representing other protected characteristics would help further shape the Plan into something that can be a success.

The Action Plan could consider how to reduce racial profiling within LGBTQ+ communities, considering the Black Lives Matter movement.

## **Question 7**

**We would like to know your views on the effects that these proposals would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.**

**What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?**

There is an opportunity to better teach LGBTQ+ terminology in Welsh.

## **Question 8**

**Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy approach could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.**

Public services must be offered in Welsh, the Plan shouldn't have any negative impacts on Welsh language use.

## **Question 9**

**This plan has been developed in co-construction, and discussions around language and identity have shown that the acronym LGBTQ+ should be used. This stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning people, with the + representing other sexual identities. As a result we refer to LGBTQ+ people in the Plan.**

**What are your views on this term and is there an alternative you would prefer? Welsh speakers may wish to consider suitable terminology in both languages.**

WCVA believes that LGBTQ+ is commonly used and that there is no need for alternative terminology. However, further work should be undertaken to ensure that it is clear that both gay and trans communities are included in this terminology. Welsh Government must be explicit at all times about the meaning of LGBTQ+, to help ensure that people recognise that 'LGBTQ+' doesn't simply mean 'gay'. It should also encourage its partners to do the same. This work will help ensure the public have a full understanding of the term 'LGBTQ+'.

## **Question 10**

**We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:**

Throughout the action plan an Expert Panel is mentioned as the source of many recommendations. Welsh Government also say separate consultations have taken place with the likes of Wales TUC, WEN Wales and LGBT Helpline Cymru. WCVA believes it should also have been consulted with at this stage. The voluntary sector, as noted earlier, works very closely with communities and hard to reach individuals, and the Third Sector Partnership Council could have been employed to gather and report back intelligence that could have made a valuable contribution to the Action Plan. Not involving WCVA and the TSPC contradicts the reference to 'the need for improved strategic coordination on LGBTQ+ issues' referenced within the Plan.

We believe the Expert Panel should include someone representing LGBTQ+ and volunteering, if it does not already.

WCVA thanks those individuals and organisations who have contributed to this response, including Wildlife Trusts Wales, SNAP Cymru, Disability Sport Wales, Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services, Glamorgan Voluntary Services, Stonewall Cymru, Diverse Cymru and Cytun.

WCVA, alongside many other prominent organisations across Wales, has co-signed a statement, which has already been presented to Welsh Government. It says: 'We support the inclusion of non-binary people within the provisions of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan. We support both women's rights and trans rights and do not believe there is any inherent contradiction between them.' During our engagement process around this consultation, we received a small handful of opinions that went very much against this statement. We acknowledge these contributions, but have not used them in this document.

WCVA will be happy to discuss these and any other relevant points with Ministers, officials or Committees if requested.



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