



**Snowdonia National Park Authority
Strategic Equality Plan
2020-24**

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Introduction

Snowdonia National Park

Snowdonia National Park was designated in 1951 under the National Park and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

The National Park covers 213,200 hectares of varied countryside including mountain, moorland, woodland and coast. About 26,000 people live in the National Park which receives an estimated 10.5 million visitor nights each year.

Approximately 60% of the residents of the National Park are Welsh speaking.

Snowdonia National Park Authority

Snowdonia National Park Authority was established by the Environment Act 1995 as a single purpose local authority. It has the following purposes as defined by the Act:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage;
and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the (National) Park by the public.

The Authority has responsibilities for planning, conservation, land management, access and recreation but not for elderly care, schools, highways, emptying bins and other Local Authority duties.

The Act goes on to say that in pursuing National Park Purposes the National Park Authority shall seek to foster the economic and social well being of local communities within the National Park and shall for that purpose co-operate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic and social development within the area of the National Park.

Additionally, under the Environment Act 1995 the Authority is the local planning authority for the whole of the National Park. The Authority is therefore responsible for the production of the Park Management Plan, Local Development Plan and for the determination of planning applications.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is about ensuring a fair deal for everyone and focuses on ending discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and outcome and fostering good relations between different individuals and communities.

It replaces the previous 116 different equality statutes in one all encompassing statute. It simplifies and clarifies the role of public Authorities as leaders in achieving equality improvements for their citizens and communities. Specific duties developed by the Welsh Government provide detailed and challenging requirements for Authorities but an overall emphasis on 'due regard' leaves authorities with greater freedom to produce distinctive local solutions and greater accountability to their communities.

Who is protected under the Act?

The Act sets out a new prescribed list of protected characteristics which replace what have traditionally been referred to as Equality Strands. These groups are protected through the general and specific duties of the Act.

The new general duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- **Age**
- **Gender reassignment**
- **Sex**
- **Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality**
- **Disability**
- **Pregnancy and maternity**
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Religion or belief**

It also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The Welsh Language

Even though the Welsh language is not considered a protected characteristic under the legislation, the Authority believes that the people of Wales should not suffer any discrimination because of either their use of the Welsh language or their wish to communicate through the medium of Welsh. This is especially relevant within Snowdonia National Park boundary, where 58.6% of the population are Welsh speakers (2011 Census).

In line with the Authority's commitment to protecting, enhancing and promoting the Welsh language (as one of the special qualities of Snowdonia), the Welsh language will be included as part of the equality impact assessment toolkit. The template is used to ensure that future

strategies, policies, plans and procedures produced by the Authority does not discriminate against people who speak Welsh, and it will look at ways it can promote the use of the Welsh language.

The General Duty

Public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard for advancing these equality aims involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people;
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Specific Duties

In addition to the general duty, the Welsh Assembly Government has introduced specific duties for public authorities in Wales. These specific duties are outlined in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

The specific duties in Wales cover:

- Objectives
- Strategic Equality Plans
- Engagement
- Assessing impact
- Equality information
- Employment information
- Pay differences
- Staff training
- Procurement
- Annual reporting
- Publishing
- Welsh Minister's reporting
- Review
- Accessibility

How we developed our Objectives

Consultation and Engagement

Since the Equality legislation was introduced in 2010, representatives from the main public sector bodies across north Wales have been working collaboratively to advance the equality agenda, share good practice and to tackle issues on inequality that cut across the public sector in the region, under the collective banner of North Wales Public Sector Equality Network (hereafter referred to as 'the Network').

Along with Snowdonia National Park Authority the Network partners consists of all 6 north Wales Local Authorities, the Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board, North Wales Police, The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the Welsh Ambulance NHS Trust.

Since 2010, the Network has developed and facilitated numerous joint consultation and engagement exercises across north Wales, to develop, adapt and review regional high level equality objectives. Not only has this led to shared resources and reduced costs in this economically challenging time, but it has benefited all the consultees (many of whom work in a voluntary capacity) as they have been able to take part in one north Wales wide consultation rather than in several individual authority consultations. The latest consultation and engagement event which was attended by over 40 people, from 19 different organisations and bodies which represent the protected groups, has resulted in the development of 7 high level joint Equality Objectives. A copy of the report from the engagement event is available on the Authority's website.

As well as working regionally to gather data and views across North Wales, the Authority continues to gather its own information locally.

Information is gathered periodically through questionnaires and surveys, and the Authority continues to engage regularly with a wide range of stakeholders through the Authority's Partnership Forum (Fforwm Eryri), Equality Forum, North and South Access Forums, town and community councils, planning agents, outdoor activities and recreation groups, landowners etc., as well as its own staff and Members.

Information from Local and National Research

The Authority has long since published the 2011 census data for the residents of the National Park on its website. Data for the estimated 25,702 population has been split into various categories including ward profiles, economic activity, housing status, family status and Welsh language skills. The census data provides a picture of life within individual communities within the National Park as well as providing valuable local information. However, it is important to note that the census data does not provide information on all protected characteristics.

In October 2018, The Equality and Human Rights Commission published its third update on the state of the nation: 'Is Wales Fairer? The state of Equality and Human Rights 2018'. This report summarises the evidence on the extent to which equality and human rights have improved (or not) in Wales since 2015. This is primarily the evidence that the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network rely upon to assess whether our shared Equality Objectives are having a wider positive effect across North Wales. In addition, in September 2019 Welsh Government also published their latest data on the National Well-being Indicators.

Although both the EHRC report and the National Well-being Indicators are useful to show the national picture, there can be great variance between regions and counties. Further work was then commissioned by the Public Service Boards to drill down the national data and supplement this with additional local data, to create a clearer picture of the situation in each of the North Wales counties.

Analysis of all the latest available information in combination with the consultation exercise led to the development of 7 high level objectives, which will be the 7 adopted objectives for North Wales for the period 2020 - 2024.

The Network has agreed that each partner whilst having signed up to the objectives, will have the flexibility to choose to contribute to those objectives and associated action areas that each has decided is a priority for their area and based on the services they provide. In addition, partners have the freedom to develop additional objectives which they have identified are important in their area.

Equality Objectives

The 7 adopted North Wales Equality Objectives are:

1. We will improve outcomes in **educational** attainment and well-being in schools.
2. We will take action to ensure we are a **fair employer** and reduced pay gaps.
3. We will take action to improve the **living standards** of people with different protected characteristics.
4. We will improve **health, well-being and social care** outcomes.
5. We will improve **personal security and access to justice**.
6. We will increase access to **participation** to improve diversity of **decision making**.
7. We will develop our knowledge and understanding of the **socio-economic duty** (when guidance becomes available) to identify the key areas of impact to be addressed under the duty.

In addition, this Authority has an additional Equality Objective:

8. We will undertake further work to ensure that **equality is mainstreamed** into the Authority's work.

Due to the specific role and duties of the National Park Authority, we have very little, if any influence on some of these objectives and action areas. However, positive contributions can be made through individual work areas, which will contribute to delivering results across north Wales.

Set below are the equality objectives and action areas which the Authority can contribute to through projects, initiatives and actions.

Objective: We will take action to ensure we are a **fair employer** and reduced pay gaps

Action Areas:

Project / Initiative / Action	How will this contribute?	Protected Characteristics Affected	Lead Officer
Assess, evaluate, monitor and take available steps to address the gender pay gap data on an annual basis.	The data collected will inform any future changes to the Recruitment Policy.	Sex	Head of Personnel
Introduce a policy and / or guidelines on flexible working.	An effective and fair policy will be able to address barriers some people with protected characteristics face to accessing or staying in work.	All	Head of Personnel
We will publish annually relevant employment and training data in an open data spreadsheet on the Authority's website.	Data will demonstrate what progress has been made. Open source spreadsheets allows easier comparison and benchmarking with other public bodies.	All - however employment data is incomplete for all protected characteristics, and where available may not be published due to the small numbers.	Head of Personnel & Head of Admin and Customer Care
Implement an equality training programme.	Assess training needs and arrange training as appropriate.	All	Head of Personnel & Head of Admin and Customer Care
Review the job application form options available from the Authority's website, ensuring that it meets accessibility standards.	Will ensure there are no barriers for disabled people to apply for jobs.	Disabled People	Head of Personnel
Introduce a policy and / or guidelines to help support staff going through the menopause.	Directly supports the well-being of effected staff.	All, especially gender	Head of Personnel
Introduce a policy and / or guidelines to help	Directly supports the well-being of effected staff.	All	Head of Personnel

support staff who are experiencing domestic abuse.			
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Objective: We will take action to improve the **living standards** of people with different protected characteristics

Action Areas:

Project / Initiative / Action	How will this contribute?	Protected Characteristics Affected	Lead Officer
Ensure Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken on all new or revised policies and plans and new projects, and appropriate action is taken to address any negative impacts identified.	Effective assessments will ensure all policies and plans are fair. Assessments will also ensure that new projects consider accessibility issues from the outset.	All	Heads of Service, Project Managers and Lead Officers
Ensure that all events and activities organised for the public by the Authority are inclusive and have been assessed for accessibility.	This will ensure as far as possible there are no barriers to taking part.	All	Event organisers
Increase the supply of affordable housing through effective policies in the Eryri LDP and the Affordable Housing SPG.	The availability of affordable housing is important to support the local community.	All	Director of Planning & Planning Manager
Ensure input from representatives from protected characteristic groups at an early stage, when designing or refurbishing new or existing Authority buildings.	Ensuring that the Authority buildings are accessible for all.	Disabled People	Head of Property and relevant Heads of Service

Objective: We will improve **health, well-being and social care** outcomes

Action Areas:

Project / Initiative / Action	How will this contribute?	Protected Characteristics Affected	Lead Officer
Ensure recently established Staff Health and Well-being group delivers positive actions / changes to support staff.	Positive actions will support the health and well-being of staff.	All	Head of Personnel
As part of the work in delivering outcomes identified within Cynllun Eryri; to work with various partners and Public Service Boards to trial at least 1 social prescribing scheme.	A social prescribing scheme will have direct positive influence on participants.	All, but particularly disabled people.	Lead Officers identified within the Plan.
As part of the work in delivering outcomes identified within Cynllun Eryri; to promote and enable a diverse range of activities that will improve people's well-being, which will include volunteering opportunities.	Increasing opportunities and promoting them widely, will offer more opportunities for National Park residents to improve their own health and well-being.	All	Lead Officers identified within the Plan.
As part of the work in delivering outcomes identified within Cynllun Eryri; to create a plan and focus resources on promoting, developing and maintaining well-marked long distance trails, accessible trails, multi user trails (particularly cycling trails and mountain bike routes), promoted routes and links and loops between towns and villages.	A network of well-maintained paths across the National Park, with their suitability easily identifiable to individuals, increases opportunities for National Park residents to improve their own health and well-being.	All	Lead Officers identified within the Plan.

As part of the work in delivering outcomes identified within Cynllun Eryri; ensure that Right of Way work is effectively prioritised and that responsibilities and standards are clear, with the SNPA focusing its resources and funding on multi-user trails and upland paths.	A network of well-maintained paths across the National Park, with their suitability easily identifiable to individuals, increases opportunities for National Park residents to improve their own health and well-being.		Lead Officers identified within the Plan.
As part of the work in delivering outcomes identified within Cynllun Eryri; improve access opportunities for disabled people and socially excluded groups, by firstly identifying barriers to participation.	Once identified, a Plan can be developed to overcome the barriers and increase participation levels.	Disabled people and socially excluded groups.	Lead Officers identified within the Plan.
As part of the work in delivering outcomes identified within Cynllun Eryri; work with communities to further enhance understanding of the Special Qualities of the National Park	Communities on the boundary of the National Park especially the hard to reach, are identified and engaged to achieve National Park objectives.	All	Lead Officers identified within the Plan
Continue to promote and proactively offer services through the medium of Welsh.	Raise awareness amongst the public that all services are available to them in Welsh.	All	Head of Administration and Customer Care & all staff.
Update the 'Guidance for Organised, Competitive, Recreational and Charitable Events' to include advice, guidance and use of the Welsh language in events.	By raising awareness that the Welsh language is an important part of the culture and fabric of the area, and by encouraging event organisers to incorporate bilingual materials etc., this will assist in the fostering of good relations between residents and visitors.	All, particularly Welsh speakers.	Head of Administration and Customer Care and Access and Well-being Manager.

Objective: We will improve **personal security and access to justice**

Action Areas:

Project / Initiative / Action	How will this contribute?	Protected Characteristics Affected	Lead Officer
Continue to raise awareness about hate crime, particularly during Hate Crime Awareness week with our North Wales partners.	One consistent message, led by North Wales Police and the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner, across North Wales will have a greater impact.	All	Head of Administration and Customer Care
Work with North Wales partners on various campaigns to promote safety online.	Victims of online scams and bullying are often vulnerable people. Raising awareness through a campaign of consistent messages will have a greater impact.	All	Head of Administration and Customer Care

Objective: We will develop our knowledge and understanding of the **socio-economic duty** (when guidance becomes available) to identify the key areas of impact to be addressed under the duty.

Action Areas:

Project / Initiative / Action	How will this contribute?	Protected Characteristics Affected	Lead Officer
Work with other public sector organisations and partners to share best practice.	This will enable the sharing of best practice and ideas to ensure correct implementation of the duty.	All	Management Team & Heads of Service
Review our Impact Assessment process and templates to ensure sufficient consideration is given to the socio-economic and cumulative impact of the Authority's decisions, plans and policies (if appropriate).	Creating an integrated assessment process will ensure all elements are given full consideration.	All	Management Team & Head of Administration and Customer Care

Objective:

Action Areas: We will undertake further work to ensure that **equality is mainstreamed** into the Authority's work.

Project / Initiative / Action	How will this contribute?	Protected Characteristics Affected	Lead Officer
We will put procedures in place that will enable procured services to meet the Authority's commitment and expectations on equality.	The Authority is responsible for meeting the general duty even where relevant works or services are contracted out to an external supplier. It is important to build equality considerations into procurement processes.	All	Head of Administration and Customer Care
We will monitor how many procurement contracts adhere to the new procedures and its effectiveness.	The Authority is responsible for meeting the general duty even where relevant works or services are contracted out to an external supplier. It is important to build equality considerations into procurement processes.	All	Head of Administration and Customer Care
To provide support and (where relevant) training to staff to ensure that they understand their duty towards people with protected characteristics.	This will ensure that all staff know their responsibilities.	All	Head of Administration and Customer Care & Head of Personnel
To provide support and (where relevant) training to staff on ensuring that their Equality Impact Assessments are robust.	This will increase awareness and develop their skills.	All	Head of Administration and Customer Care & Head of Personnel

Equality Impact Assessments

The Authority is required by the legislation to make arrangements in order to assess the likely impact of proposed policies and practices on our ability to comply with the general duty, as well as the impact of any policy or practice that we have decided to review or any proposed revision to a policy or practice.

For each new policy or practice (or revision of an existing policy or practice) the authority will assess the likely impact for its effect on people who share protected characteristics by undertaking an initial screening assessment.

If the policy or practice is likely to have an impact, a full equality impact assessment will be undertaken and an assessment report will be produced. Each assessment report will include the following information:

- the purpose of the policy or practice being assessed whether that is a new policy or an existing policy that is being reviewed or revised;
- a summary of the steps taken to assess the likely impact of the proposed or revised policy or practice;
- a summary of the evidence considered as part of the assessment process;
- the results of the assessment; and
- any decisions taken following the assessment.

An equality impact assessment form has been produced and training has been given to relevant staff on conducting full equality impact assessments. This process is now fully operational, and we will be able to report annually on the outcome of the assessments undertaken.

Monitoring the Plan and Publishing Information

The actions outlined in this plan which contributes to the fulfilment of the equality objectives will be monitored regularly. The results will be reported to the Performance and Resources Committee as an Annual Report.

We are also required by the regulations to report annually and make progress statements on the following:

- the steps that the authority has taken to identify and collect relevant information;
- in respect of the information that it holds, how the authority has used the information for the purposes of complying with the general duty and the duties of the regulations;
- the reasons for not collecting the relevant information that it identifies but does not hold;

- progress made towards achieving the fulfilment of each equality objective;
- a statement about the effectiveness of the arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information , and the steps taken towards achieving the fulfilment of each objectives; and
- the information the authority is required to publish in relation to employment information.

This Strategic Equality Plan will be in place for 4 years, but will be reviewed and amended as necessary on an annual basis.

For further information on any aspects of this Strategic Equality Plan, please contact:

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