



**Snowdonia National Park Authority
Strategic Equality Plan
2024 – 28**

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

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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 24,400 people live in the National Park which receives an estimated 10.5 million visitor nights each year.

Approximately 57% 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 Cynllun Eryri (The Park Management Plan), Eryri 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 Eryri National Park boundary, where 57.2% of the population are Welsh speakers (2021 Census).

In line with the Authority's commitment to protecting, enhancing and promoting the Welsh language (as one of the special qualities of Eryri), each time a new or revised procedure, policy, strategy or plan is introduced by the Authority, part of the process will include an assessment to analyse in full its impact on the Welsh language. This will ensure that the Authority's actions does not discriminate either directly or indirectly against people who speak Welsh. The assessment will also consider ways in which we can promote the use of the Welsh language through the new or revised procedure, policy, strategy or plan.

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 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.

During 2023, numerous activities and events were undertaken across north Wales as part of the public consultation process to review and revise our current shared Equality Objectives. These included open days, workshops, community and stakeholder meetings and specific organised events such as coffee mornings with groups of people with protected characteristics.

In addition, an online public questionnaire was promoted widely by all partners across the summer months of 2023 which attracted 69 responses.

Along with the analysis of local and national research (outlined below), the north Wales shared Equality Objectives were revised and changed accordingly, and adopted by the Network for the period 2024 – 28.

Information from Local and National Research

During the year the Authority analysed the 2021 census data for the residents of the National Park as and when the data sets became available. Data for the estimated 24,418 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 September 2022, the National Wellbeing Indicators for Wales were updated. These are designed to represent the outcome for Wales and its people that will help demonstrate progress towards the 7 Well-being Goals.

In November 2023, The Equality and Human Rights Commission published The Equality and Human Rights Monitor: Is Wales Fairer? This is an updated report on the state of the nation in Wales in terms of equality and human rights.

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 revision of 7 high level objectives, which will be the 7 adopted objectives for North Wales for the period 2024 - 2028.

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. Outcomes in educational attainment and well-being in schools are improved.
2. We will take action to ensure we are an equal opportunities employer and reduce pay gaps.
3. We will take action to improve the living standards of people disadvantaged by their protected characteristics.
4. We will improve health, well-being and social care outcomes.
5. We will improve personal security and access to justice.
6. Increase access to participation to improve diversity of decision making.
7. Tackle socio-economic disadvantage by offering inclusive services to minimise inequalities of outcome in line with the Socio-economic Duty.

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

Over the coming year, the Authority will review and assess how its current equality action plan will make positive contributions towards addressing each of these Equality Objectives. New and upcoming projects and workstreams will also be evaluated and added to the action plan and reported on in full to the Authority's Members in due course.

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 template has been produced which now includes analysing the socio-economic impact of strategic decisions. This template is revised, updated and improved each time new statutory requirements, updated national guidance or relevant tribunal and court cases are published or become available.

Monitoring the Plan and Publishing Information

The accompanying action plan which is currently being reviewed and updated and 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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