

Easy Read



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Equal Wales

What should we do to make Wales a fairer place to live and work? 2020-2024

## Response Form



Please tell us what you think by 19 November 2019

This is an easy read version of the questions from **Welsh Government Strategic Equality Objectives 2020 – 2024 Consultation**.

September 2019

## About this response form



These questions are about our ideas for making Wales a fairer place to live and work.



Before you answer the questions, please read the main easy read document: **'Equal Wales – What should we do to make Wales a fairer place to live and work? 2020-2024'**.



Please try to explain your answers. And give your own thoughts and ideas too.



You may need support to read and understand this document. Ask someone you know to help you.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Where the document says **we**, this means the **Welsh Government**.

Please send this form back to us by **19 November 2019**.



**By post:**

Equality Team  
Communities Division  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ



**By e-mail:**

[StrategicEqualityPlanObjectives2020@gov.wales](mailto:StrategicEqualityPlanObjectives2020@gov.wales)



The response form is also on our website:

<https://gov.wales/consultations>

# How we use the information you give us



Welsh Government will be looking at your answers in this response form to make decisions about how to support people in the best way.

Sometimes we ask other organisations to help us make decisions. They may also see the answers that people gave in the response forms.



We will make sure we follow the law when you use your information.



We will write a report about what people said.



We might write some people's answers in full with their names and addresses in the report or on the internet.



When you send us your answers, please tell us if you do **not** want us to write your name and address in the report or on the internet.



The **data protection laws** give you the right to:

- Know what information we have about you and how you can see it.
- Make us change any mistakes in the information about you.
- Ask us not to use the information in some cases.
- Ask us to delete the information we have about you in some cases.
- Move the information about you somewhere else in some cases.
- Complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.

If you would like to know more about how your information is kept and used please contact us at:



Data Protection Officer  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
CARDIFF  
CF10 3NQ



Email: [DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales](mailto:DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales)

You can also contact the **Information Commissioner's Office:**



Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF



Tel: 01625 545745 or 0303 123 1113



Website: <https://ico.org.uk>

## About you

Your name:

Beth Evans

The organisation you are answering for or with:

Carers Wales

Your email address:

Beth.evans@carerswales.org

Your address and phone number:

Unit 5  
Ynysbridge Court  
Gwaelod-y-Garth  
Cardiff  
CF15 9SS

Do you want your answers to be shown on the internet and in a report?

Yes

No

# Questions

## 1. Do you agree with our Equality Objectives on Page 17 - 18?

Yes  No  Not sure

### If you said no please tell us why not:

Consideration should have been given to **unpaid carers** who may, because of their association with a person or persons with a protected characteristic or characteristics face discrimination at work, in the provision of public services and society more generally.

#### Facts about carers in Wales

There are 370,000 carers in Wales

181,135 of carers in Wales are in work<sup>1</sup>

6% of carers have given up work

3% have reduced working hours. This equates to 149,812 people in Wales who have given up work and 74,906 have reduced working hours to part-time because of unpaid caring responsibilities.

7% have said that unpaid caring has had a negative impact on their work.<sup>2</sup>

49.9% of carers are in employment

More women care than men.

This is an opportunity for Welsh Government to lead the way and support those with caring responsibilities to have a life alongside caring. A life alongside caring is a key Welsh Government national priority for carers. The Ministerial Advisory Group for Carers provides a national forum to oversee the delivery of the Welsh Government priorities for unpaid family carers.<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Census 2011

<sup>2</sup> Juggling work and unpaid care – a growing issue – Carers UK January 2019

## 2. Do you think there is something missing from our Equality Objectives?

Yes  X No  Not sure

### If you said yes please tell us what you think is missing:

In developing the equality objectives, consideration should have been given to carers who are often discriminated because of their association with a person or persons with a protected characteristic/(s). There are many carers who have one or possibly more protected characteristic but they may also face discrimination because of their caring association with an older person, or a person with a disability.

Many carers, along with employers and service providers are unaware that carers are afforded protection through their association with a disabled person or persons which should be highlighted to ensure that policy makers are able to give it due consideration.

Carers are not a homogenous group and we would argue that they should be a protected characteristic in their own right.

At the last census there were 370,000 carers in Wales (although this figure is likely to be a lot higher as carers generally do not recognise the caring responsibility they undertake for families and friends). As people live longer with more life limiting illnesses by 2037 the number of unpaid carers in Wales is expected to increase to over 500,000. It would be remiss of Welsh Government and public bodies not to consider the socio-economic impact that an unpaid caring role has on individuals and the contribution they make to the health and social care system in Wales and society in general.

If carers decided they were not 'able or willing to care' which is their right under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 it would potentially cost the health and social care system £8.1 billion a year to replace the care that they provide with statutory services.

The Well-being of Future Generations Wales Act seven well-being goals should enable all people (including carers) to fulfil their potential and consider what their long term goals may be including being able to stay in employment, being able to save for a pension, being able to look after their own health and well-being and to prevent them from becoming ill. The Public Sector Equality Duty should consider the often unintentional inequality that carers face and carer's overall well-being

within the Sustainable Development principle when creating a more equal Wales. This should include equality proofing local well-being plans prepared by Public Service Boards and ensure that unpaid carers are properly engaged in the process in the development of the plans.

## **Long Term Aims**

### **Aim 1 - Elimination of inequality caused by poverty**

Carers Allowance is the lowest benefit at a rate of £66.15 per week 2018/19 and the threshold for earnings is £123 per week (you cannot claim any Carers Allowance if you earn over a penny more). We have plenty of research that evidences the poverty that carers face when they take on or have a caring role. Many carers are unable to juggle work along with their caring responsibilities or are having to either give up work altogether, reduce working hours, or take lower paid jobs. Many are reliant on state welfare assistance because they feel they have no other option other than to care for loved ones for various reasons including a lack of affordable, quality replacement care services or they feel duty bound to provide loved ones with the best care possible.

Carers need to be considered at risk of having to live on low incomes because of a number of factors associated with caring for a person with a protected characteristic.

- Lack of affordable replacement care services
- Unsympathetic employers and lack of flexible working opportunities
- Carers not knowing their right to assessment, information, advice and assistance under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act
- The additional costs of caring for a person with a disability
- Lack of social care services and other services in the community to which an older or disabled person could have access

To improve outcomes for carers, more must be done to recognise the roles that they take on and that carers are given the right information about their rights at the right time to ensure that they are able to find the help and support that they need. These could be rights in employment so that carers do not have to give up work, welfare rights information so that carers receive all the benefits to which they may be entitled, and rights to be assessed under the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 because they care for someone with one or more protected characteristic. Carers should not be put at a disadvantage and should be able to make informed choices as to whether they are able to and/or willing to care (as is their right under the Social Services Act).

### **Aim 2 - Strong and progressive equality and human rights protections for everyone in Wales**

## **Article 1 - The right to life**

This is an absolute right but we know that carers are delaying medical treatment which could cost them their lives due to not being able to get services for themselves or the person they care for. Carers tell us time and time again that they are delaying medical appointments and treatment to the detriment of their own health.

The Human Rights Act is not currently being considered adequately by professionals during assessment under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act or when services are being planned or designed by public bodies. Both Acts (HRA and SSWBA) are also not being adequately considered by services that put care packages in place or when considering or providing support packages for carers.

Many carers may face human rights violations and the social care system too often seems incapable of balancing the rights of carers with the rights of those that the carers support.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 has put carers on an equal footing with those that they care for but this is not being translated into making any real difference for those carers in most need.

Only 4% of carers said they had a support package in their own right from an assessment and 85% of carers have not had a carers' needs assessment in the past 12 months.<sup>3</sup>

*“Emergency support from the council needs 5 days notification”*

*“When I asked about emergency care, I was told that social services is not a babysitting service”*

*Track the Act respondents 2018-19*

Not being able to plan adequately for emergencies or even routine medical appointments is potentially placing carers in life threatening situations. In worse case scenarios a threat to life can happen if carers are not being sufficiently supported to attend medical appointments or to attend hospitals in emergencies. Clearly this puts carers at a disadvantage because they are unable to leave the person for whom they care. It is essential that public bodies therefore consider carers needs under both Acts to enable them to protect their own lives and well-being.

## **Rights to be free from inhuman or degrading treatment**

May carers face risks to health because of the pressure of their caring

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<sup>3</sup> Carers Wales Track the Act briefing 4 - 2018

responsibilities which are not implicit in the lives of others who do not care. Carers who suffer mental and physical health problems could argue that statutory services should have taken steps to prevent this when health and social care professionals were aware of the problem. Failing to take account of risks to a carers' health, failing to put in services to meet a need to prevent carer's health declining or failing to put in a service to enable carers to access medical treatment might in some circumstances violate this human right.

- 75% of carers in Wales have suffered mental ill health as a result of caring
- 61% of carers in Wales have suffered physical ill health as a result of caring<sup>4</sup>

*"The assessment seemed to be focussed on my husband's main needs but not mine. I thought the assessment was for me the carer, was a bit confused"*

*"I have had to give up my caring responsibilities due to the strain it was putting on my health. I was at breaking point"*

*"My mental health has suffered considerably. I now take anti-depressants to cope with stress and anxiety on a daily basis. I don't sleep and worry constantly"*

*State of Caring Respondents 2018*

### **Right to respect for family life**

Caring can lead carers (particularly women who are more likely to care than men) being unable to continue work, to develop a family and other relationships, to pursue outside interests and even to rest.

Many carers still face assumptions from statutory services that they will take on caring responsibilities despite the Social Services and Well-being Wales Act 2014 being explicit in a carers' willingness or unwillingness to take on a caring responsibility when receiving a Carers' Needs Assessment under the SSWBA. A local authority should also be proactive in offering assessments to carers and have a duty to consider the well-being needs and the outcomes the carer wants to achieve in day-to-day life. It should also provide carers with information, advice and assistance, enable carers to make decisions. It could be argued that all of this interferes with a carer's private and family life.

### **Right to an education**

Where young carers are concerned many are not adequately supported in education which is also potentially a human rights violation as is it is for other carers not being able to take up educational opportunities because of a lack of support around their

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<sup>4</sup> Carers Wales State of Caring report 2018

caring role.

**Carers need to be considered and references in all the key Strategic Equality Objectives as a group who are potentially being discriminated against because of their association with a person or persons with protected characteristics.**

Carers save the Welsh economy 8.1 billion a year, if the care they provided had to be replaced by statutory services, yet they continue to face discrimination and less favourable treatment across all walks of life including employment.

**Guidance should be issued by Welsh Government to all departments with responsibility for health and social services to set out the extent the Human Rights Act can potentially impact on carers and make their responsibilities clear under this Act, the Equality Act, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act when planning for future generations and the well-being of the population in Wales.**

### **3. What problems with fairness do you think we should deal with first in Wales?**

Carers are not a homogenous group and come from all walks of life, many of whom will also have one or more overlapping protected characteristic. Carers are also afforded protection through their association with an individual with a protected characteristic.

Carers currently save the Welsh economy £8.1 billion pounds annually if the care they provide had to be replaced by statutory services.

At the last census there were 370,000 carers in Wales (although this figure is likely to be a lot higher as carers generally do not recognise their caring role for families and friends). As people live longer with more life limiting illnesses by 2037 the number of carers are expected to increase in Wales to over 500,000.

It is vital that public services recognise carers role in society and work to support them now and in the future to enable them to continue to care while having a life alongside caring, which is a Ministerial priority for carers. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act is not the only piece of legislation that should be considered when dealing with carers. Carers cut across all walks of society and due regard should be given to them under the Equality Act, The Human Rights Act, The Well-being of Future Generations Act along with other legislation.

Welsh Government recognises the importance that carers in our society have and is

committed to supporting them. A Ministerial Advisory Group for carers was established in 2018 to take forward a programme of work to support carers in Wales.

The needs and rights of carers should be given due consideration in the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and any unintended consequences where carers may be discriminated against by association should be given due consideration.

When developing policies and workstreams any positive or negative indirect consequences for carers should always be considered along with potential for carers to be discrimination by association.

Refreshed guidance around discrimination by association is needed, in order to understand how carers' rights should be understood in this context.

The Gender Equality Review should consider the inequality that exists for female carers with more females taking on a caring responsibility than males.

**4. Do you think it is a good idea to say what we will do to achieve our Equality Objectives?**

Yes  **X** No  Not Sure

**If you said no please tell us why not:**

**5. Do you think our Equality Objectives will change things for people speaking Welsh?**

Yes       No       Not Sure

**Please explain why you think this:**

**6. How could we change our Equality Objectives to give more people more chances to speak Welsh?**

**7. Is there anything else you would like to say? If so please write it in the box below.**

Carers Wales and Carers UK has a vast range of research that demonstrates how being a carer or taking on a caring responsibility disadvantages people. If you would like to discuss further or want sight of research, please do get in touch.

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<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/the-ministerial-advisory-group-for-carers-201819-annual-plan.pdf>