

United Welsh Anti-Racist Action Plan

January 2025 - January 2026

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Contents

Foreword	1
Introduction	2
Representation	3
Service provision.....	7
Communication and engagement.....	11
Summary.....	16



Foreword

“The United Welsh Group provides homes and services across South Wales, and we are very proud to be a part of culturally rich communities.

“This is the fourth year that we are publishing our actions and progress for tackling racism, with the long-term vision of becoming an anti-racist organisation.

“We are pleased to see greater representation of colleagues at United Welsh from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared with last year’s report. However, we recognise that we have more work to do to bring more ethnically-diverse colleagues into more senior roles.

“Improving the collection, recording and use of our data also continues to be an area of significant focus for us. This is not a quick fix, but laying the groundwork to obtain more accurate reporting and customer insight is a crucial step for us to create more meaningful change across our service areas.

“Ultimately, we want to do our best for our customers, staff and communities, so they feel they belong in the places they live and work.

“Inclusion is a guiding principle for United Welsh, and we remain committed to our approach of open learning and monitoring so that we can continue to play our part in creating a more equal Wales.”

Richard Mann

Group Chief Executive



Introduction

Welsh Government launched its Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan in June 2022.

After consulting with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people about how to make Wales a stronger, fairer nation, the government said that an anti-racist approach was required to “look at the ways that racism is built into our policies, formal and informal rules and regulations and generally the ways in which we work.”

In creating the plan, Welsh Government has outlined its vision for Wales to become anti-racist by 2030. The plan speaks to all aspects of public life – housing, education, health, employment and more.

As a provider of homes and services in diverse communities across South Wales, United Welsh has an important role to play. We currently provide almost 6,700 homes and we aim to build 1,300 within our current five-year strategy. Our services also support thousands of people to live happily and independently.

United Welsh’s Anti-Racist Action Plan consists of three focus areas:

1. Representation
2. Service delivery
3. Communication and engagement.

The plan will be updated and published each year, and we will include information about how we are progressing our actions.



1. Representation

What?

We will work to continuously improve the ethnic diversity of the United Welsh Board and staff at all levels.

Why?

Because we need to represent the communities that we serve. We want to be able to relate to and understand our customers' perceptions and experiences. Being a diverse workforce will strengthen our ability to provide more accessible, compassionate services.



Outcome	What we did in 2024	Actions for 2025
<p>Improve the diversity of Board membership, advisory groups, and the wider workforce (including senior leadership positions)</p>	<p>We advertised to recruit new Board members, and the importance of a diverse membership was a focal point of the recruitment campaign.</p> <p>One new member was recruited from Pathway to Board; an initiative led by housing association partners to support ethnically diverse people into Board member roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to deliver the Pathway to Board project with housing association partners to support ethnically diverse people into Board member roles • We will seek feedback from Board members who join us through Pathway to Board, to improve the recruitment process • We will continue to monitor recruitment and retention data to identify under-represented groups
<p>Provide anti-racist training to Board members and senior leaders as a priority, and across the wider workforce</p>	<p>EDI and unconscious bias training is mandatory for all United Welsh staff and Board members, including refresher training.</p> <p>In 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 223 people completed an online Introduction to Equality Action module • 220 people attended Equality and Diversity and Unconscious Bias training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will include anti-racism and unconscious bias training in inductions for new staff and Board members • All staff will be required to complete mandatory refresher training about anti-racism and unconscious bias • In October 2024, we implemented a new Board portal for Board members to access information in one place. We will explore how the portal can be used as a training platform, which will include anti-racist refresher training

Report annually and act on the findings for pay gap, recruitment, promotion and retention data for ethnic minority groups

We calculated and published our 2023/24 minority ethnic median pay gap for colleagues in our Annual Report, based on data up to April 2024.

The median pay gap is the difference in hourly pay between the middle-paid (the person at the mid-point if you were to line all colleagues up from low to high pay) White colleague and middle-paid Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic colleague.

This showed that the pay gap based on median hourly pay is 16% (2023: 13%). 7% of our workforce are ethnically diverse (2023: 6%).

For the United Welsh Group (United Welsh and Celtic Offsite), the pay gap based on median hourly pay is 7% (2023: 14%) and 6% of the total workforce is ethnically diverse (2023: 6%).

These figures show that we have some work to do to bring more people from ethnic minority backgrounds to more senior roles.

We report information about the diversity of our workforce, staff development and culture in our Board Newsletter. These reports include ethnic pay gap results and the demographic of recruitment applicants and new starters.

We also provide base data about recruitment and retention for Executive team discussion.

- We will continue to report recruitment, retention and pay gap data for discussion at Executive Team and Board meetings
- We will publish new communications to encourage staff to share their diversity data to improve reporting and subsequent action-planning. This will also help us to achieve a longer-term goal of voluntarily publishing an annual staff diversity report

<p>Invest in our recruitment channels to attract candidates of different ethnic minorities</p>	<p>In 2023/24, 35 job applicants asked for their applications to be considered under the Rooney Rule. Five of the applicants were hired.</p> <p>Any staff member can volunteer to join a recruitment panel and support Employing Managers with the hiring process.</p> <p>This helps to make recruitment more inclusive, as a more diverse group of people shape the assessment and make decisions. It also means that seeking people that contribute positively to our culture is an integral part of our recruitment assessments.</p> <p>We have also continued to fulfil our pledge obligations with the Community Jobs Compact to help tackle under-representation within our staff group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to monitor the number of job applications from ethnic minority people and subsequent appointments • We will scope the feasibility of United Welsh voluntarily adopting a ‘positive action’ approach to recruitment and promotion
<p>The leadership team proactively champions and monitors progress for tackling racial inequality</p>	<p>Quarterly monitoring of progress regarding our Deeds Not Words pledge actions within United Welsh Executive team meetings has helped to keep anti-racism high on our agenda.</p> <p>At least one member of United Welsh’s Executive team attended every EDI forum held in 2024. These meetings are held bi-monthly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will monitor and report our progress for tackling racial inequality in line with our Anti-Racist Action Plan, within quarterly Executive team meetings • The Executive team and other leaders in the business will continue to attend our staff EDI Forum and will be ambassadors for our anti-racism work

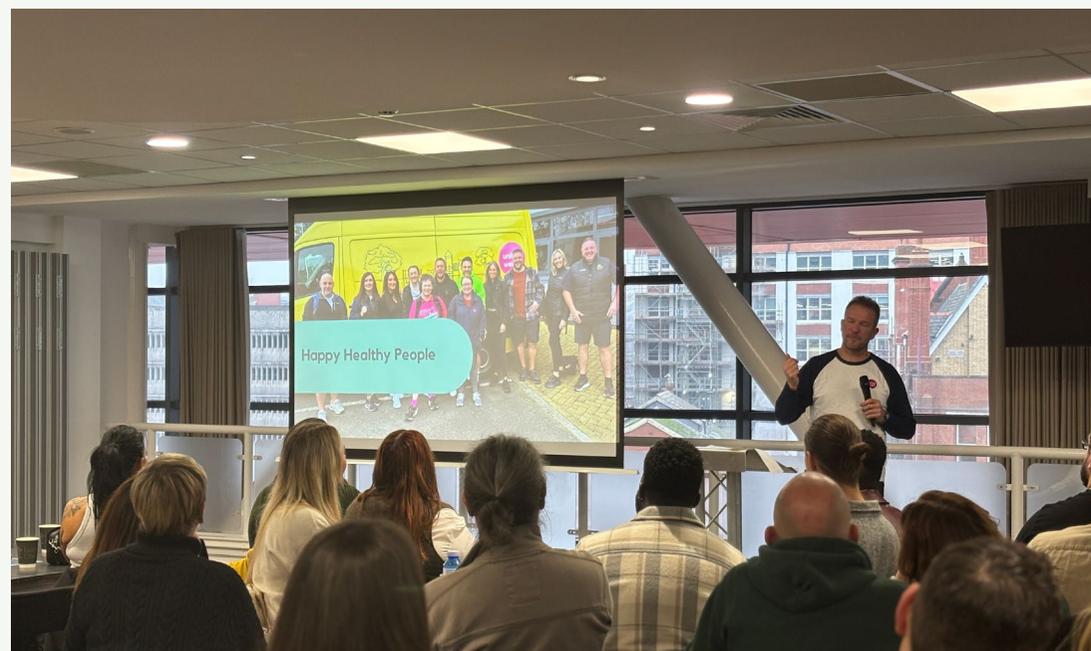
2. Service provision

What?

We will embed anti-racism and race equality throughout our service design and delivery.

Why?

To be a part of the solution. To become anti-racist, we must look at our structures and services through the lens of race, and 'design out' racism from our systems.



Outcome	What we did in 2024	Actions for 2025
<p>Improve data collection, analysis, usage, and publication across service delivery.</p>	<p>We previously started an EDI Data Working Group to identify what EDI data we hold, and to consider where gaps and inconsistencies lie.</p> <p>From this we have developed a two-year action plan which focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data storage development • Collection of new data • Data maintenance <p>The purpose is to improve how we consistently collect, maintain and use data overall to evolve our services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will appoint a new Data Quality Analyst. An aspect of their role will be to progress the EDI data project • We will create a new EDI data depository in Venue, our Microsoft Office 365 platform, for ease of data recording, access and reporting across our service areas. This will support staff to conduct more thorough EQIAs and person-centred service improvements
<p>Review policies and processes for reporting racism and discrimination including hate crime and harassment and monitor regularly</p>	<p>The majority of our staff-related policies and procedures, including the Bullying and Harassment Complaints Procedure, were reviewed and re-promoted in May 2024.</p> <p>Our Marketing Communication policies were rewritten and re-promoted in February 2024, with new EQIAs completed. The policies and EQIAs received a secondary review and scrutiny from Tai Pawb.</p> <p>No negative impact was identified from the policies for the protected characteristics of race, religion or belief. The Rent Setting and Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery policies, and their respective EQIAs, were also updated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will create and publish a new hate crime policy to increase understanding about staff responsibilities and what help is available • We will create and launch a new suite of information for residents about how to report incidents of hate crime. This information will be promoted within our organisation so staff know where to access it, and how to provide it, to residents

Commissioning meets the needs of ethnic minority people

We recognised that the quality of EQIAs written for new service areas, service developments and policies was inconsistent within the organisation.

The EDI Forum has started discussions about how the EQIA completion process can be improved, so staff are supported to complete them, and mitigation actions are monitored and considered in system design and service improvements.

We are also discussing how to involve customers in the EQIA process. This year, our Customer Involvement strategy has focused on creating a new customer community who are trained to support United Welsh with service scrutiny and improvements.

One of our longer-term aims is for our customer community to develop EQIAs in partnership with our teams for procuring and commissioning new services in future.

- We will confirm a new governance process for completing and managing EQIAs and raise awareness of the new process with staff through our internal communication channels

Ensure the barriers faced by the full diversity of ethnic minority people are specifically addressed to ensure they have equal access to homelessness services and homes.

In 2023/24, we started to analyse council housing register data to help us to better understand why people who currently rent from us are signed up to council housing lists to find a different property.

Through this data collection, two of our aims were:

- To contact residents to find out what we can do to support them to stay renting with us, or to assist them with their move
- To ascertain if residents who are aiming to move are disproportionately from an ethnic minority background, and if so, what issues or barriers they are experiencing to motivate their decision, such as overcrowding or housing conditions.

We were unable to complete this work in 2024, so it will be reprioritised for this year.

- We will review housing waiting list data with Caerphilly Council and Cardiff Council, identifying current residents from an ethnic minority background who need support to stay in their home or move properties, and why

3. Communication and engagement

What?

We will show our support for racial equality and provide platforms for people from ethnic minority backgrounds to shape, influence and change the services we deliver.

Why?

Because we have a platform to amplify the voices of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and we want to use it. The experiences of ethnically diverse people matter, and we must always actively listen. We can't effectively remove barriers if we don't listen to the people facing them.



Outcome	What we did in 2024	Actions for 2025
<p>Improve communication and engagement with ethnic minority people and reflect diversity within communication strategies and campaigns</p>	<p>We have continued to publicise our support for minority ethnic colleagues and communities. Examples include a blog for Black History Month with a staff member who participated in the Get Into Housing project; a case study for Refugee Week, awareness-raising for Eid Al-Adha, a staff training session with Tai Pawb about housing for Asylum Seekers, and promotional support for the Pathway to Board project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to celebrate multiculturalism and promote our commitment to racial equality through service delivery, case studies, and educational and training content • We will continue to use diverse images and artwork across United Welsh brand communications and consider the needs of ethnically diverse people in our campaign work • We will encourage more residents to join our 'Residents Communications Group', a mutually beneficial group for customers to receive marketing communication skills training, while providing feedback about the communications we deliver. The importance of a diverse membership will be included in our communication messages

<p>Maintain a Delivery Plan to outline how anti-racism and race equality will be embedded throughout service design and delivery</p>	<p>In December 2023, we released our third annual progress report about the actions we have taken since signing the Tai Pawb Deeds Not Words pledge and forming our Anti-Racist Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This plan will be reviewed and updated annually and published on our website • Equality, diversity and inclusion is a standing quarterly agenda item for the Executive Team, and progress on the Anti-Racism Action Plan will be monitored in this forum • The plan will also be discussed by our EDI Forum and re-promoted to staff annually
<p>Build more links and support for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community groups to build their capacity to support local people and bring in community knowledge and challenge to the organisation</p>	<p>United Welsh is a delivery partner of the Get Into Housing project. The project works with people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds to start a career in housing or gain work experience, offering bespoke mentoring, on-the-job experience, and paying at least the Real Living Wage.</p> <p>A new staff member joined us through the project in 2024 and started a new role in January 2025.</p> <p>Two people who joined United Welsh through the programme in 2023, continue to work with us in permanent positions and secondments. One person who joined through the programme in 2022 remains working with us. (continued on next page)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to support the Get Into Housing project with our housing association partners. This will include the delivery of paid six-month work placements for customers from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background • We will continue to grow our customer involvement community, encouraging diverse membership

	<p>In June 2024, we relaunched United Welsh’s volunteering programme, with a clear framework for residents to offer and share their skills and experiences through the programme.</p> <p>Our other Customer Involvement work has focused on developing a customer community group who are engaged with us in scrutinising our services and how we deliver them. We are aiming to grow this group into a membership that reflects the diversity of our communities.</p>	
<p>Promote an inclusive culture where people are comfortable talking about race and can bring their whole self to work, and people we work with are comfortable to voice concerns related to race and are believed when this happens</p>	<p>We continue to hold our EDI Forum; a quarterly voluntary forum with an open-door policy for any staff member to join.</p> <p>We hold all-staff hybrid briefings to keep staff updated and engaged with important information. In January 2024, the subject of the all-staff briefing was our Anti-Racist Action Plan. In March 2024, we re-launched our employee engagement channels to remind staff of how they can voice concerns and shape strategic decisions (continued on next page).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our EDI Forum will continue to identify and lead opportunities for staff conversations about race and racial equity, facilitated in spaces of safety and trust • We will scope and confirm an action plan for replacing anonymous employee engagement software to gain feedback and improve our culture and practice • We will promote how staff can report racism; support available following a racist experience, and what to do if you witness racist behaviour, in conjunction with publishing a new Hate Crime Policy

Later in the year, we also started discussions for replacing anonymous software that was previously used to gain staff feedback to improve culture and practice.

Staff are also encouraged to share blogs about their lived experiences, supported by the Communications team. For example, in October 2024, a staff member's blog about their opinion on reclaiming narratives was published to mark Black History Month.

United Welsh was a finalist in the CIH Cymru Welsh Housing Awards for 'Championing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion'.

Summary

Four years into our anti-racist journey, we understand there is a lot more work left to do, but we are committed to holding ourselves accountable and making meaningful progress.

To achieve some of the desired outcomes in this action plan, we recognised that additional resources are needed for us to take a thorough holistic approach, particularly regarding service provision and design. We have consequently slowed down some project work so that we can act intentionally, rather than reactively; optimising our resources for better quality results.

It is well-documented that the journey to becoming anti-racist is a long-term commitment, and we want to ensure that we get the foundations right.

In 2025, we will embark on the third year of United Welsh's five-year business strategy. Advancing racial equity remains a priority for us, and we look forward to continuing our work with customers and partner organisations such as Tai Pawb, other community landlords, local authorities and Welsh Government, to take positive action and deliver change.





www.unitedwelsh.com

Proud to be part of the United Welsh Group
We **build** homes, **create** communities and **transform** lives