GIG CYMRU NHS WALES | Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru Public Health Wales	**Name of Meeting** People and Organisational Development Committee **Date of Meeting** 15 October 2026 **Agenda item:** 9.3

Workforce Equality Standard (WES)

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Approval/Scrutiny route:	BET (7 October 2026)

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of the findings from Public Health Wales' Workforce Equality Standard (WES) Report 2026, highlight the areas that require focus and provide assurance that actions are being taken to address them.

Recommendation:

APPROVE	CONSIDER	RECOMMEND	ADOPT	ASSURANCE
☒	☐	☐	☐	☒

The People and Organisational Committee is asked to:

- Take **assurance** from the 2026 organisational-level Workforce Equality Standard report that Public Health Wales demonstrates a strong and well-balanced equity profile, with high performance across three of the six domains.
- Take **assurance** that existing workplans target the areas requiring focus to drive improvement.
- Commit to making time to **consider** the review of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) data and accompanying proposal for EDI indicators.
- **Note** the intended publication of the 2026 WES and accompanying communication on the PHW intranet and weekly staff bulletin.

Link to Public Health Wales Strategic Plan

Public Health Wales has an agreed strategic plan, which has identified seven strategic priorities and well-being objectives.

This report contributes to the following:

Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective	All Strategic Priorities/Well-being Objectives

Summary impact analysis	
Equality and Health Impact Assessment	An EHIA is not required as this is an update paper and no decisions are required.
Risk and Assurance	
Health and Care Standards	Identifying areas for improvements and addressing them links to the Health and Social Care Act, in particular: Equitable – This work aims to move us to our equality goals and beyond, both as a public sector organisation and as an employer. Identifying areas for improvements and addressing them links to the Health and Social Care Act, in particular:
Financial implications	There are no financial implications as this is a summary of the report.
People implications	People implications include leadership and progression practices, disciplinary processes and workplace conditions to support our staff.

1. Purpose / situation

The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of the findings for the Public Health Wales' Workforce Equality Standard (WES) Report 2026.

2. Background

The Workforce Equality Standard (WES) was developed from the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES). It is an annual report with equity-focused analysis for each NHS organisation. It highlights where staff experience differs by protected characteristic, where intersections deepen disadvantage, and where PHW has the strongest opportunities to act.
Organisation-level reports are created for each NHS organisation, as well as a national summary report (not yet published).

The data presented in the report is taken from ESR, staff survey results, internal disciplinary and capability records and our recruitment system, TRAC. It is broken down by workforce diversity indicators and protected characteristics including race, sex, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, maternity and menopause, unpaid carers, zero-hours contracts (bank workers) and socio-economic background.

To better describe organisational culture, the WES indicators are grouped into six domains, aligned to contributors influencing workplace experience. These are: –

- Leadership and Progression
- Professional Development
- Disciplinary and Capability
- Workplace Behaviours
- Wellbeing and Safety
- Workplace Conditions

3. Description/Assessment

The 2026 Workforce Equality Standard (WES) report concludes that Public Health Wales has a generally strong and well-balanced workforce equity profile, with positive outcomes across most domains. The data shows equitable access to professional development, low levels of harassment, discrimination and workplace harm, and strong staff confidence in speaking up. Flexible working and workplace adjustments are also well embedded across the organisation.

The report identifies three areas requiring greater organisational focus:

1. **Leadership and Progression** – the report notes that inequities remain in appointment outcomes and progression into senior roles for some groups, particularly ethnic minority staff.
2. **Disciplinary Processes** – low case numbers overall, but some evidence of disproportionate entry into formal processes for ethnic minority staff.
3. **Workplace Conditions** – high levels of burnout and pressure to attend work when unwell persist despite strong access to flexibility and workplace adjustments.

Overall, the report concludes that our principal challenge is ensuring that workforce processes consistently deliver equitable outcomes and that existing support mechanisms translate into sustainable workforce experiences.

What is working well (Green)

- Professional development processes are mature and consistently applied across protected groups.
- Workplace behaviours indicators are significantly better than national benchmarks, with low levels of harassment and discrimination.
- Staff report strong confidence in speaking up and very low levels of physical harm at work.
- Flexible working and workplace adjustments are widely accessible and positively experienced.

Areas requiring continued focus (Amber)

- Recruitment and progression outcomes do not yet consistently translate workforce diversity into leadership representation.
- Disciplinary processes require ongoing scrutiny to ensure equitable application and confidence in decision-making.
- Workforce wellbeing data indicates sustained workload pressures, burnout and presenteeism, suggesting support arrangements alone are insufficient to address underlying pressures.

Areas requiring oversight (Red)

There are currently no domains assessed as 'Red' within the WES report.

Public Health Wales demonstrates a predominantly green WES profile, with strong foundations in inclusion, professional development, staff safety and workplace culture. Current priorities should focus on improving equity in recruitment and progression, strengthening assurance around formal workforce processes, and addressing workforce sustainability challenges associated with burnout and workload pressure.

The full details of the Workforce Equality Standard (WES) report can be found here in appendix 2.

3.1 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015



The actions that have been undertaken so far, together with those planned enable us to strive towards a long-term aim of a fully inclusive and supportive culture where everyone can be their best.



The actions help to create an environment free of discrimination, thus preventing problems in the future.



The work focuses on all the Well-being goals, in particular, a more equal Wales. They also align with our 2024-28 SEP objectives.



Diverse stakeholders from across the organisation collaborate to support this work.



Collaboration is key to ensure we build an inclusive culture and progress the equality agenda.

4. Recommendation

The People and Organisational Committee is asked to:

- Take **assurance** from the 2026 organisational-level Workforce Equality Standard report that Public Health Wales demonstrates a strong and well-balanced equity profile, with high performance across three of the six domains.
- Take **assurance** that existing workplans target the areas requiring focus to drive improvement.
- Commit to making time to **consider** the review of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) data and accompanying proposal for EDI indicators.
- **Note** the intended publication of the 2026 WES and accompanying communication on the PHW intranet and weekly staff bulletin.

5. Appendix

Appendix 1: Actions being taken to target areas requiring continued focus for assurance.
Appendix 2: Full WES Org Report PHW