

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Inquiry into : The future of equality and human rights in Wales

Response from : North Wales Public Sector Equality Network

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue. I am writing to you on behalf of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network.

For ease of reference we will respond to each of the themes of the inquiry as set out in your letter.

**1. How well the specific public sector equality duties are functioning in Wales;**

1.1 The public sector equality duties provide a useful and realistic framework that has the potential to underpin the advancement of equality in Wales making the Welsh public sector more accountable for local equality outcomes and for addressing the impact of historic and localised inequality and disadvantage.

1.2 It is too early to determine the true effect of the duties which were introduced in 2011.

**2. The Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales**

2.1 THE EHRC in Wales is well regarded and via their regionally based staff in North Wales played a key role in supporting the development of regional equality objectives.

2.2 A separate EHRC for Wales reflects the different nature of the Equality Act 2010 in Wales and the different needs of organisations subject to the Welsh public sector equality duties.

2.3 Whilst we recognise the importance of the enforcement role undertaken by the EHRC, we would wish to maintain and build upon the advisory element of their responsibilities through the very useful Equality Exchange and other similar events.

**3. The link between poverty and equality and the socio-economic duty;**

3.1 The socio-economic duty could potentially be the most important of all legal duties if introduced; it would be likely to create a focus on a broad range of outcomes rather than processes.

3.2 It would be difficult to identify appropriate local performance measures relating to the socio-economic duty because of the huge impact of welfare reforms.

4. **Accountability for equality and human rights legislation in Wales.**

4.1 Accountability for equality and human rights laws in Wales should be the domain of the Welsh Government.

Mike Townson,  
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Chair, North Wales Public Sector Equality Network