



DO THE RIGHT THING:

achieving equity in racialised
representation in public and
political life in Wales

A Peer-led Research report by Race Alliance Wales

Leila Usmani et al. January 2021

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RACE ALLIANCE WALES

Race Alliance Wales is a new initiative, established in December 2018, which aims to provide a self-directed space where Black, Asian and other ethnically minoritized¹ organisations and individuals can come together to discuss experiences as ethnic minorities in Wales, share information, and develop new ideas and solutions to the growing challenge of racism in Wales.

Through collaborative work, the group seeks to contribute to a more equal, globally responsible Wales with cohesive communities to make Wales a welcoming place of safety where rights are enjoyed and BAME people can thrive. The group also aims to act as a supportive space for BAME individuals who may face a range of personal and professional challenges. The group commits to always act in the best interest of ethnically minoritized people and communities in Wales, to ensure that our resources are used to best effect, and to speak with a coherent and strong voice on policies and practices affecting minority ethnic people in Wales. The current membership consists of 47 organisations and 114 individuals and this is growing.

For more information please visit:
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If you have any queries in relation to this report, please contact Leila Usmani at Race Alliance Wales (RAW) info@racealliance.wales.

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INTRODUCTION

This research report aims to investigate the status of representation in public and political life in Wales, with attention to people classified as 'BAME', or as we have termed, racialised people and communities.³

Wales has been an officially devolved nation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for over 20 years. Migration to Wales extends back hundreds of years, with reports of migrations from Africa and the Middle East as far back as the early 1800s (Runnymede 2012; 1919 Race Riots Collective 2019), and probably earlier given Wales' involvement in the Atlantic Slave trade from as early as the mid-1600s (Evans 2010). Yet, the nation has never sent a racialised Member of Parliament to Westminster and never hosted a female racialised Member of the Senedd⁴. Even today, 400, 200, 60 years on from historical moments of mass racialised migration to Wales, from Cardiff to Colwyn Bay, the number of racialised people in political positions is eye-wateringly low, even Local Government hosting at best 3% of their total as racialised members. Within public life – this is an even more unknown entity, with not all bodies publicising their board members online, let alone whether they are diverse, racially or otherwise.⁵

After 3 years of extensive engagement across Wales with racialised people from a number of backgrounds and varying intersecting identities, in 2018 the All Wales BAME Engagement Programme, run by Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team (EYST), reported that amongst a number of prevailing issues that racialised people in the country wanted addressed, representation in public and political life was one of the highest scoring (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2018). Picking up this issue on behalf of EYST and the wider membership, Race Alliance Wales (RAW), sought funding to develop the Alliance and undertake in-depth peer-led research into key topics. It was also noted that the resources for policy-based action research to be undertaken in a truly independent fashion with race equality at its core was not currently available in Wales. With this, the concept for this research was born, to plug the cavernous gap, and seek to provide concrete, substantiated recommendations that public and political bodies could take forward to tackle the prevailing issue.

Undertaking in depth desk based research to start with, it became clear that there has never been such research undertaken in the nation to date, with all allusions coming from England and Wales combined research, or research with focus primarily on diversity in regard to women. In addition, it was clear that the vast majority of research available was led by White British people, rather than being peer-led. The team came together to design, develop and undertake an

expansive piece of research, involving surveys, focus groups and interviews, to address the overarching question – Why is there a lack of racialised people in public and political life?

Our findings were vast, with a story unfolding of racism experienced in everyday life, from education to employment, actively impacting the confidence and aspirations of racialised people living in Wales. Perceptions of these areas was broadly negative, with the majority of contributors feeling that their needs were not met by either public or political life, on any level. And for those with aspirations, persistent barriers were reported. The continuous line was that of racialised people living in a country with embedded institutional and systemic racism at its helm. Many people however still felt inspired, motivated and encouraged to enter public and political life, to bring a change to this system and advocate for their communities. And for those who had started, or been successful in their journey, it was clear that a number of things had been helpful, things that could be increased, disseminated to more racialised people, along with active improvements and changes.

Finally, a clear vision for public and political life in Wales was set out – one which embodied fair, diverse representation, going beyond the 7% proportionate to the racialised population in Wales, to encompass the intersecting and disaggregated identities present across the country. And ultimately, although a long way off, a Wales where institutional racism has been eradicated and racialised people have equal power to their White British counterparts. An antiracist Wales, that we all want to see.

We hope that this piece of action research therefore, with the conclusive recommendations will be taken on board, by policy makers, public bodies, politicians, employers, and the general public. 2020 has shone a light on the prevalence of racism across the globe, and in Wales. With the Covid-19 pandemic disproportionately affecting racialised people, the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter campaign in the wake of George Floyd's murder, and the recent death of Mohamud Hassan after leaving police custody, only a week before publication, racism needs to stop. We need increased representation in public and political life so that together we may make the necessary changes to stop this continuing for generations to come. People are dying. We must be given the right to live. Really live.

Scope and Definitions

Public and Political life is broad scope, and people's understanding of what comes under this theme is varied. Public life and Political life are distinct in themselves, however they are regularly seen under the same umbrella in terms of decision-making and power, and a lot of activity, research and recommendations therefore addresses the two together. Undertaking Action Research embodies a focus on producing tangible recommendations and actions that institutions can implement through legislative and policy developments. Therefore, the institutions with the power to implement change, and to whom these recommendations are addressed must be clear. In this literature review we therefore are using the following definitions of public and political life, in line with the research in the field to date.⁶

Public life

Public life refers to the boards of public bodies regulated by the UK Commission for Public Bodies and as distinguished from, for example, a charity board⁷, and encompasses positions that are usually (but not always) voluntary, unpaid, and part-time, with varying time commitments depending on the need of the board. Public life in this instance therefore does not include employed positions within the organisations represented⁸. Boards of charities⁹ and private businesses are not included, as they do not fall under the same regulations.

Currently, processes to obtain a position on a public body board vary dependent on the body itself. In most cases, where a body sits firmly under a government ministerial department, the Minister appointed to that department shall appoint some or all the board members. In other cases, a recruitment process is applied, akin to that for civil service employment, however standardised processes are not yet in place for all public body boards.

Political life

Political life, simply put, incorporates positions to which an individual must be elected by the general public through a democratic voting system. In Wales, two broad categories addressed were political representatives in Welsh government (Members of the Senedd) and Local Government (Councillors):

Firstly, Members of the Senedd (MS') (formerly known as Assembly Members¹⁰), of which we currently have 60 in total. MS' are elected by the general public living in Wales, every 5 years, using a 'first past the post' system for the 40 constituent representatives, and a proportional representation system for the 20 regional member places. Members of the Senedd are paid for their position, and their role is seen as full time. As referenced above, when

elected, the majority party will select and appoint MS' as Ministers¹¹ to lead departments in Welsh Government. In Wales, in addition to the First Minister, who is the leader of Welsh Government, we have designated Ministers for Finance; Minister and Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services; Minister for Environment; Energy and Rural Affairs; Minister and Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government; Minister for European Transition; Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language; Minister and Deputy Minister for Economy, Transport; Minister for North Wales; Minister for Education; and a Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism.¹² As with public life, the definition for the purposes of this paper, defined largely by the desk based research undertaken, as well as the capacity granted to this research, means that employees of the Senedd Commission/ of MS's directly are not included in the definition of political life. However, we do recognise that representation in these groups is again, a steppingstone to opportunity in political life as defined above, and therefore feel it will be important to address this in further research.

Secondly, in terms of local government representation, local councillors are elected in each of the 22 unitary Local Authorities in Wales (also known as Local Governments / Councils) in Wales¹³. The number of Councillors in each varies depending on the number of geographical wards within each Local Authority area (similar to constituencies in the national sense), and relative to the local population figures. In Wales, councillors are elected through a public democratic voting system, and each term lasts 4 years. Councillors are paid for their positions, and their roles are seen as part-time. Many Councillors therefore maintain additional employment alongside their Council position. Once elected as a local councillor, the majority party can directly appoint councillors to positions in the Local Authority including Leader of the Council, their Cabinet Members and specific Chairs to several Committees.

Once elected, at both the national and local level, although limited to their elected position by a fixed number of years (term), elected officials are not limited in how many times they can stand for election or be elected.

However, we found nuances in what political life encompasses in terms of research and evidence, as well as some omissions. Not included in our scope and research are Community and Town Councils, of which there are 730 in Wales, with 8000+ Councillors between them. This is because of the capacity of this research project, which limited the ability to review community and town councils in their current status. It is also due to the limited existing body of research on this topic, and we did not find any evidence papers or reports specifically alluding to community and town councils. There is a clear

opportunity to plug this gap in the future, as due consideration should be taken to the diversity of such councils, given the steppingstone role these positions may offer as a way of moving into public and political life.

Additionally, this does not mean that when applying recommendations, we cannot go beyond or change this scope, and we call on all bodies, whether officially public bodies, local authorities or not¹⁴, as well as other prominent institutions including those staffing political positions, or those in the private or charitable sector, to consider how the actions laid out in the recommendations could be applied to their own organisations or structures.

The current lay of the land

Wales demographic

The racial and ethnic demographic in Wales was last officially recorded in the 2011 National Census. It is highly likely however that the number of people who identify as racialised in the UK would have changed over the last 10 years, follow the trend of the previous 10 years, that evidenced that the percentage of the population that did not describe themselves as White British¹⁵ doubled between 2001 and 2011 (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2019). With an increase of recognition of different ethnic categories both societally and personally, and the inclusion of Asian Welsh and Black Welsh in the 2021 census¹⁶, as we publish this only a few months ahead of the 2021 National Census, we ask readers to consider the new data when reviewing this report.

The current recorded population of Wales stands at 3,063,465, according to the last National Census 2011, and the percentage of the population of Wales describing themselves as White British was 93.2%. The Black and Minority Ethnic population of Wales at the time made up 4.4% of the population, numerically speaking, 133,820 people. (Jackson, 2012). This statistic has been used broadly by many institutions when looking at representation – however, what has been missed are that this 4.4% did not include people who identified as Irish¹⁷, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, or Other White, although in relation to representation, people of these ethnicities are considered as 'BAME' in the mainstream. If we include these figures therefore, the total percentage of people who are racialised in Wales stands between 6.4% and 6.9%.

Additionally, it is extremely pertinent to recognise that language, terminology and understanding in relation to race and ethnicity is changing. Over the last few years, there has been a sharp increase in the pushback against the use of generic terms such as 'BAME' (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic), which is still the most prevalent term used by most public and political institutions, despite

the UK Government Style Guide on Writing about ethnicity categorically calling for this term not to be used¹⁸. What is becoming overwhelmingly clear is that people and communities who fall into the 'BAME' category are vastly divergent in regards to their race/skin colour, religion, nationality/national origin/national identity, language and migration status, with many intersecting identities also falling into the broad category.

Most data currently reported in relation to public and political representation does not look to disaggregate between 'BAME' representatives, and percentages are reported on as a whole. This presents a problem when using statistics and proportionate representation to exemplify good practice or justify need for recourse. Where a statistic may allude to the representative percentage being in line with, or even beyond the percentage of the population who define as 'BAME', no room is given to recognise how colourism, Afrophobia, Islamophobia, Sinophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsyism, xenophobia¹⁹ and other forms of discrimination towards specific 'BAME' communities are played out within these public and political make-ups. By using statistics in this broad way, reports of meeting proportionately representative figures are celebrated, regardless of whether all of the 'BAME' people in an institution are of one race, religion, or nationality.

However, for the purposes of this research, we have worked with the statistics available to use, generally aggregated under the term 'BAME'. We shall however in our free text not be using the term 'BAME', but shall look to use the term racialised / minoritized people and communities, paying homage to the understanding that many people are actively racialised by Welsh and British society not only because of their race/skin colour and other physical body features, but also because of their religion, nationality/national origin, and migration status. We do not support the term minorities, which produces a feeling of inferiority, being marginal, outvoted, the losing side, the less than and the immature, as we recognise that we are the global majority, and again, are being actively minoritized by Welsh society.²⁰

Looking beyond ethnicity, taking into consideration that people in Wales are not only racialised because of their ethnicity, but also because of their religion, in the last Census in Wales in 2011 2.3% percent of the population identified as being either Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim or Sikh, comprising nearly 40,000 people. Regarding other signifiers that lead to people being racialised, the statistics are harder to define, as the questions were not all mandatory. It is therefore difficult to collate a true picture of the total number of people who are racialised in Wales, whether that be because of their race/skin colour, religion, nationality/national origin/national identity, international language, and migration status or a combination of one or more of these. However, for

reference and interest, 4% of the Welsh population did not identify nationally with any of the nations in the UK or as British; 5% were born outside of the UK, 3% held a passport from another country (not the UK); and 3% of households (25,000 households in total) did not have English or Welsh as a main language.²¹

Interestingly, much of the research and evidence reviewed alludes to the 2019 Annual Population Survey Data, calculated by combining birth and death registration data together with estimates of international and internal migration²². This data paints a different picture, suggesting that the 'BAME' population of Wales is 4.3%²³. We hereby recognise therefore that 'proportionate representation' in many publications, including those made by Welsh Government, may not be accurate and we await new data in 2021. Additionally, it is rare to read reports of actual figures, rather than just percentages. Yet it is important to raise that although the percentile figure itself may seem low, when translated into real terms, the number of people in Wales who class themselves as non-White British is substantial. We must remember in statistics that we are talking about real people, and that the impact of disadvantage and underrepresentation is not just affecting an intangible 6.9% of the population, but rather a tangible 207,800 number of people, and counting. Real people, real lives.

As stands, not all public bodies, political parties or political institutions, collect generic let alone disaggregated data and even fewer publish these statistics in relation to the race and ethnicity of their board make up, and the capacity of this research project did not allow for us to undertake this active data collection with boards.

There was additionally disappointingly limited data in relation to racial diversity in comparison to the amount of research and evidence on gender diversity, even by organisations with a formal remit to consider all protected characteristics, such as the EHRC.

We recognise however that in the new Welsh Government strategy for diversifying public body boards, especially in relation to race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and gender identity, a clear focus is being placed on collecting and publishing this data over the next 3 years (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020) and beyond, so that other actions to improve diversity can be monitored properly, and clearer recommendations made, especially in line with positive action initiatives. Additionally, many similar recommendations have been made over the last 5 years to ask for the same in relation to the make-up of political parties and institutions, as detailed further on. We shall build on our views of these existing and historic recommendations around data collection and publication in the recommendations section of this report.

Public life demographics

The most specific and recent data we could access provides evidence about all of the active appointments and re-appointments made to public body boards in Wales. An EHRC report from 2018 states that of the 112 appointments and re-appointments made during 2015/16 (5 years ago), only 3.9% were held by ethnic minorities, the percentage of chair appointments and magistrates were 'low' (no specific data given), and only 1% of court and tribunal judges identified as 'BAME' (EHRC, 2018, pg. 8, 102, 113). However, this only refers to appointments/re-appointments, and does not give a picture of the entire make-up of all board positions that were in place and not actively appointed/re-appointed.

More recent publications provide a slightly clearer picture, stating that 3% of people appointed to boards identify within the 'BAME' category (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020, Pg. 9) – however again it is not clear if this is only in relation to those appointed during a certain period / via a certain method, or if it encompasses data gathered on all board members of public bodies across the nation. It was supported by a statement made by Vaughan Gething MS reported in a BBC News Article in 2019 (BBC News, 2019). However, it would seem that due to regulations on public bodies by the UK Commissioner for Public Appointments, data is routinely reported, and this figure is supported directly by Welsh Government in their response to a number of recommendations made on the matter by Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team in 2019 (Welsh Government, 2019, pg. 36-37). It is important to also recognise that, regardless of percentile figures that come close to the understood 'BAME' population in Wales, they still fall short, and particularly do not demonstrate any broader representation of the multitude of identifiers that fall into the BAME category. It is further reported that 'there is not a single BAME chair of a publicly appointed governing body' (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2019, pg. 3), which is extremely disconcerting.

Political demographics

Similar to public life, the current racial and ethnic makeup of political life in Wales as defined earlier is not clear, due to lack of data collection and reporting by the institutions to which these officials are elected (Blair & Mathias, 2018, pg. 6). Interestingly, this is not only limited to race and ethnicity, but also applies to data around all protected characteristics in political life.

A piece of research undertaken in 2018 by the Electoral Reform Society Cymru, which looked to review and address the issues of political representation in Wales, again, as many, focussed the majority of its efforts on

gender diversity, specifically stating that 'Given the lack of formal statistics ... we have had to make some assumptions around gender, basing these assumptions on names and images, [and that] while our process of measuring gender does make assumptions, it is more accurate than trying to guess someone's age or whether they have a disability from their name or photo.' (Blair & Mathias, 2018, pg. 11-12, 18). Interestingly, although in the same sentence they recognise that 'We often talk solely about gender when it comes to talking about diversity in politics, but diversity represents a huge number of things...' (Blair & Mathias, 2018, pg. 18), they did not find it pertinent to undertake the same exercise of assuming racial or ethnic identity by reviewing names and images of elected officials, nor did they allude to how accurate they thought this would be as they have in relation to disability and sexuality.

The only statistical report of race/ethnicity data in relation to political life that we could find via our desk based research was that 'only two members of the Welsh Assembly have ethnic minority heritage, representing 3.3%... of candidates standing for local authority councillor positions, 98% were White British and 1.8% had ethnic minority heritage.' (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2019, pg. 3) and that '1.8% of county councillors stated they were from non-white ethnic groups' (Welsh Government, 2019, pg. 36), the latter sourced from the most recent Well-Being of Wales report, summarising findings from the 2017 Local Government Candidate Survey. Again, it must be made clear, as Wiegand & Cifuentes do, that this data only alludes to those who were candidates for councillor positions, not those who were elected, and additionally, the terminology used is not clear, with Wiegand & Cifuentes stating that this 1.8% had ethnic minority heritage, but Welsh Government stating that this 1.8% were from non-white ethnic groups. As we know that some people with ethnic minority heritage identify as white there is inconsistency in definitions.

We recognise completely the issues that assuming someone's race/ethnicity based on names and photos present, and recognise similar issues presented with doing the same for gender, as this process seems to disregard the presence of transgender and non-binary gender identities that exist in the world we live in. However, after some discussion, our research team decided to undertake the same process regarding race and ethnicity and political life. We recognise that this is polemic; that for many this is not always seen as an acceptable form of gathering data. However, as laid out in this report, we know that various forms of colourism, as well as other forms of prejudice related to religion and nationality, are prominent elements of racism (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2018, pg. 13) and specifically impact people due to the way they look, denoted and assumed by physical characteristics and clothing, as well as due to the names people have. Therefore, given the nature of this research and the

considerations we are making, we feel justified in making these assumptions to be able to give a figure to the number of visibly racialised people in political life²⁴. We have not applied the same process in our active research or analysis, as we recognise that even for people who are not visibly racialised but do not identify as White British, their personal and lived experience of racism can be as acute as those of others, and that this is compounded especially when their 'background is exposed' (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2018) We hope that in future we will not have to rely on such methods.

Our analysis therefore provides the following figures, that across the 22 Local Authorities referenced, with a total of 1241 Councillor positions, only 37 are held by racialised people, equating to just under 3%. And considering the prevalence of anti-blackness, regardless of the history of migration from African and Caribbean regions, only 3 councillors are visibly Black, equating to 0.24%. This is not acceptable by any means.

Given all of this however, one thing is clear, regardless of data. Political life is not representative of the multitude of ethnicities determined by the Welsh population. Although some percentiles can be seen as close, never has proportionate representation been met, and if taking into consideration disaggregated data by race/skin colour, religion, nationality and migration status, the lack of representation is even more stark.

Finally, we would like to recognise that in all of this, in addition to representation (and statistical evidence) not disaggregated in relation to the multitude of identifiers that fall within the 'BAME' category, other intersectional identities have not been taken into consideration. We have no idea of the representation of racialised people in public and political life who are also minoritized due to their gender, sexuality, age, physical ability, parental status, socio-economic status, and other identifiers that are actively oppressed in society. The only piece of information that is regularly communicated in light of this is that never in the history of devolution has a 'BAME' Female MS been elected.

Although when undertaking our active research we aimed to gather data on a variety of identifiers to enable us to make relative comparisons, this was not possible in most cases due to the small number of respondents with intersectional identities, which did not therefore allow for generalisations. However where pertinent, we have highlighted these specific experiences in quotes, paying homage to a few, but ever so important, lived experiences. Our team at Race Alliance Wales is not an expert in every strand of equity, and although we make effort to recognise and support the fight for intersectional equity in line with anti-racist theories and needs, we cannot do it all. We actively support research, publications and recommendations therein made by

organisations who do focus on these single strands / multiple strands where possible, and stand together in the call for an increased intersectional approach to reviewing issues of inequality and oppression, including lack of diverse and proportionate representation. This approach needs developing and needs an increased amount of resource and capacity to undertake such an endeavour properly, something which has not yet been achieved in Wales by any organisation, even if they purport so. We hope that by making this step with a focus on race, but with allusions to intersecting/multi-strand experiences where possible, that we will add to the wealth of research and evidence to support calls for more funding for intersectional research as is clearly needed, across all equality sectors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Barriers to public and political life

As we can see, with or without clear statistics, it is undeniable that there is lack of adequate representation regarding racialised people in public and political life in Wales. After an initial literature review of research into the topic, some focussed on racial/ethnic diversity and some, as reviewed, focussed on broader 'diversity' or specifically gender diversity, many recurring issues have been identified. Many of these pertain to barriers created by socio-economic disadvantage, discrimination that impacts confidence, self-worth, general lack of representation and systems and processes that do not serve minoritized and oppressed communities across the equality strands. The gap in evidence relating specifically to barriers to racialised people is something the active research phase has attempted to plug. The research questions detailed in the methodology section, have therefore encompassed a review of the barriers highlighted below, as well as created space to explore additional barriers that may not have yet been actively interrogated or recorded in a Welsh context.

Most of the barriers are general and can be applied both to obtaining representation in public and political life, however some are more specific, as the process for entering either is different, as well as the experience once in position. Barriers can also be categorised as external barriers (those created by the current systems in place and the institutions that create them) and internal barriers (the way in which such systems and experiences of oppression impact people's personal confidence and motivation to seek increased representation by themselves moving into public or political life). In no way, shape or form are barriers created by racialised people or communities themselves – all of the barriers are a symptom of a world that feeds off our current and historic structures and systems including capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, and elitism. Without holistic recognition of these barriers, all the while looking to address the roots causes of them, we shall never truly see democratic representation in Wales or beyond.

Institutional and systemic racism

From our review of the literature, one of the most prominent elements reported that directly creates a system which is not representative is institutional racism, from which all of the barriers highlighted in our research stem. Within this however, the cultural racism of public and political organisations, manifested by the people in power, displayed through a clear lack of understanding of the value and benefit of diversity, as well as through micro-aggressions (also seen as covert / indirect racism) are what we will look at first. Additionally, this institutional racism provides the context for

more overt and direct racism, many times categorised as unconscious bias, and unfortunately, often exemplified through racist abuse, primarily found in recent years online. Although racist abuse is more commonly directed towards racialised people in political life, racialised people in public life are not immune, however direct evidence of this was not reported in the evidence we reviewed.

It is important to recognise that institutional racism is prevalent and very much seen and felt by racialised people in Wales. To provide a definition of institutional racism that offers a framework to explore and recognise its prevalence, we work with that produced by Solid Ground and published by Race Equity Tools. We recognise that this is not the only definition of institutional racism and pay homage to the myriad individuals who have taken time to define this in different ways across history, many forgotten or disregarded due to academic practices and policies of copyright and intellectual property.

'Institutional racism can only exist in institutions where the power to enforce and perpetuate policies and practices is invested in white people [meaning that] the default culture for interactions and business... is white culture. This reinforces a single way of doing things that keeps racism locked into our institutions and society'.

(Solid Ground, pg. 1-2)

Working from this definition therefore, as demonstrated above, and clearly visible in Wales, in the majority of public and all of the political institutions in Wales, institutional racism is firmly in place, evidenced by their lack of diversity, and their clear tradition of White [British], older men, dominating these institutions, (Blair & Mathias, 2019, pg. 23-24), followed closely, we would add, by white women.

However, due to its nuanced and intangible nature, institutional racism has also been especially difficult to pinpoint and therefore address. One piece of research undertaken in Wales regularly reported concern with institutional and structural racism and how these systems negatively impacted racialised people in Wales in relation to their confidence. It directly highlighted that although for many who do not face the brunt of institutional racism, and therefore see it as impalpable, it is due to this that it is arguably more dangerous and harder to address than overt racism. (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2018, pg. 3, 18)

As noted, with the default culture of public and political life being White [British] culture, a manifestation of this is a 'blind spot' from those in power to the benefits of, let alone the moral need for diversity and equity, and this then is upheld in society more broadly speaking (Awan-Scully et al, 2018). Despite regular reports about the benefits that institutional diversity brings to improved decision making in public and political life, there is still a lack of understanding about how those institutions can really serve the multitude of people within their geographical landscape, or how to address the internal culture of an organisation (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020; Hackett, 2016). For some reason, the lack of understanding around diversity is still seen by many as something that is difficult to tackle (Awan-Scully et al, 2018, pg. 8-9).

We address this misconception later on, however here would like to respectfully remind readers, especially if someone to which this lack of understanding applies, that it is not difficult to tackle, you are just not trying hard enough, and that, once again, is due to the prevalence of institutional racism reinforcing a single way of doing things. In 2019, Welsh Government produced an in-depth response to several recommendations made by Ethnic Youth and Minorities Support Team. One of these recommendations was to actively recognise institutional and structural racism in Wales, highlighting how it is contrary to legislation and duties therein²⁵. The response was:

'Welsh Government remains committed to tackling structural racism wherever it occurs and recognises that this will require sustained action by many organisations. Welsh Government agrees that structural and institutional racism is contrary to the Public Sector Equality Duty'.

(Welsh Government, 2019, pg. 5)

Once again however, although recognition has been given, the action to which they allude is delayed, and in the meantime, racist culture persists and becomes more prevalent as time passes.

Within this culture, there is continued display of micro-aggressions and racism by omission, either directly towards individuals, or more broadly in the messaging that these institutions provide regarding 'diversity'. On this note, it is clear in the majority of reports that the term 'diversity' is used without definition, even when it is clear, through the persistent use of the term 'BAME' in the same reports, that the diversity being sought is not gender diversity, or increased diversity based on sexuality or the inclusion of disabled people, or younger people, or older people... it is about racial and ethnic diversity. However, the use of this euphemism, and the reluctance to say it as it is further demonstrates

that institutionally, people in public and political life, and those who work for them, do not want to admit or specifically highlight that there exists an issue of racism. Whilst we support the majority of the recommendations and actions proposed by the new Welsh Government strategy to support 'diversity' in public body boards, there is one statement made - 'Working together with protected groups they can achieve far more than protected groups on their own' (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020, pg. 21) - that suggests that we are less than, less able than, can't get things done 'on our own' and promotes a notion of saviourism, akin to assimilationist policy, theory and application as detailed by Ibram. X. Khendi in his book *How to be an Anti-Racist* (Khendi, 2019).

Other examples of micro-aggressions that have been recorded in Wales include visibly racialised people in public and political life being assumed to be waiters by their peers (Rahim 2019) such as being asked where they are from, not listened to, told they're being angry or aggressive, being searched, asked for ID (BBC News 2016; Cousins 2019), and being explicitly questioned why they are standing for election/ applying to a public body board, where there is already a racialised person in place (Awan-Scully et al, 2018). This experience of active tokenisation is rife and is consistently demonstrated by the persistence of proportionally representative percentiles used in figures demonstrating representation according to 'BAME' statistics.

Additionally, evidence papers include examples of the direct behaviour towards people of white minoritized backgrounds, detailing that while being a white minoritized person in Wales allows initially for an opportunity to feel safe from racism, that when ethnic/national background is exposed or highlighted, there is a clear shift in approach and attitude, leaving people not feeling safe from racism at an institutional level (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2018, pg. 13). This again evidences the different experiences of racialised people, as well as the fact that xenophobia is rife within racist structures.

Online racist abuse

Unfortunately, the prevalence of institutional racism across society, including within the media, has created space and justification for direct, overt racism evidenced through direct abuse and harassment of racialised individuals in political life, predominantly, though not limited to, online platforms, records of which directly impact racialised people's motivations for entering political life (Blair & Mathias, 2018 pg. 20, 37, 55; McConnell and Stevenson, 2018, pg. 2). Directly put by Debbie Wilcox²⁶, former elected Councillor and former Leader of Newport Council, as well as head of the Welsh Local Government Association, 'the treatment [Diane Abbot MP²⁷] had... targeting her as a BME woman... is [the] type of thing that puts people off [becoming an elected politician]' (Blair

& Mathias, 2018 pg. 40). It is interesting to note here the intersectionality of this experience, specifically because of Diane Abbott's identity as a Black woman, together with another example provided by Bethan Sayed MS, stating that 'Since I have got married to somebody from India, I've experienced perhaps more racial attacks...than I have obviously never experienced before.' (Blair & Mathias, 2018 pg. 40). Again, unfortunately, not enough in depth research has taken place to understand if the experiences of Diane Abbott MP and other racialised women in public and political life are targeted because they are women as well as because of their racialisation, however the anecdotes and details of the abuse point heavily towards the fact, containing not only explicitly racist language and threats but also misogynistic language and threats (Amnesty 2020). Regarding the experience of Bethan Sayed MS, a White British politician, again, the experience points to the fact that women are targeted even due to their association with racialised people. In contrast no report could be found of racial attacks against White British male politicians who are in relationships with racialised women.

Moving towards some of the more persistently reported barriers to public and political life that racialised people face, we see that these systems and processes led by a predominantly white culture and a single way of doing things, create a landscape in which there is a great lack of understanding of what public and political life entails. This is compounded by the lack of access to relevant networks that racialised people experience, and the lack of role models within public and political life to look to for these, as well as for inspiration. This is also aggravated by the fact that there is a seemingly stark lack of access to, and representation of racialised people in, relevant public and third sector employment at senior levels, which provide a clear steppingstone to public and political life. Combined, this presents a severely unequal playing field in which lived experience is not valued, whether it be lived experience of discrimination (racial or other) or transferable skills obtained through non-professional settings, paving the way for opportunities being accessed by those with the privilege to have been able to develop professional careers in relevant sectors prior to applying for a public body board position or standing for election.

The importance of prior professional experience, especially in the civil service or as an employee of public and political institutions, in relation to obtaining a position in public or political life is evidenced in many reports reviewed. The Senedd Commission (formerly known as the Assembly Commission), which has responsibility for the property, staff and services provided to the Senedd and its members while undertaking national activities, highlights specifically that they have a 'prevalence of BAME staff in the lower pay grades

[and] BAME underrepresentation in senior, decision-making roles' (Assembly Commission, 2019, pg. 20), evidencing this with a shocking ethnicity pay gap of near 40%. This is also highlighted through a report reviewing barriers to political representation in the Senedd, which notes: 'the only ethnic minorities represented ...were the cleaners or the security...in Cardiff Bay, one of the most multi-cultural, multi-diverse communities, and yet there is not one ethnic minority researcher...' (Awan-Scully, 2018, pg. 19).

In a review of leadership development programmes offered by the public sector in Wales, Price et al. give clear recognition to the fact that not only are these programmes limited to staff in senior or managerial roles, but that such roles 'are usually filled based on length of service' (Price et al, 2020, pg. 7), thereby limiting these opportunities to already privileged and powerful people, who are also predominantly White British people. Following from this, it is clearly stated that it is seen to be incredibly important for public bodies to 'have leaders who understand how other organisations and sectors operate and who are comfortable collaborating with them' (Price et al, 2020, pg. 6). With lack of representation in the public sector by racialised people in Wales, this specification is again unlikely to be met. An additional reference that clearly presents disparity in opportunity, was that although Academi Wales, a body created to support 'excellence in leadership and management for public services in Wales'²⁸, is well respected within the public sector for its provision, everyone reviewed in the report stated that their progression and access to Academi's programmes was due to their own initiative and motivation, as well as having a supportive manager (Price et al, 2020, pg. 4, 10, 13-14). Clearly put, 'it appears that future leaders either need to be fortunate enough to have support and a pro-active manager or organisation.' and that this therefore creates a 'self-selecting and tightly-connected cadre of leaders' (Price et al, 2010, pg. 10, 13-14). This again is extremely disconcerting, given the clear lack of racialised people in Wales working in the civil service and in public bodies that Academi's programmes are available to, let alone being in senior positions that present space for this type of continued professional development. Additionally, the emphasis on the need for having a supportive and pro-active line manager is also wrought with problems, as we have already recognised the persistence of cultural racism in public and political institutions, which would therefore lead us to believe that this supportive and pro-active attitude is not always applied equally to employees by said managers. As a final add on to this, and as already alluded to, as long as lived experience is not valued in regards to entering public and political life in Wales (Hackett, 2016, pg. 5; Ladwa-Thomas, 2020, pg. 30), the demographic of employees in public institutions is unlikely to change, and therefore access to these elite programmes shall remain only for the broadly homogeneous few who maintain these positions.

Lack of role models and networks

It is unsurprising therefore that there is a clear lack of role models and relevant networks relevant to racialised people in Wales, these being two of the most reported barriers in research so far. Poignantly put, 'if people don't see themselves in modern politics then we cannot blame them for being disengaged and frustrated with the way it is representing them.' (Blair & Mathias, 2018 Pg. 5).

The pervasiveness of lack of role models has been reported from individuals partaking in specific programmes put in place to support underrepresented people's access to public and political life (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2019; Hackett, 2016), as well as specific research undertaken into political life, noting that the majority of people feel that racialised people are not sufficiently represented, (Awan-Scully, 2018), with elected representatives in the Senedd highlighting that this leads directly to people feeling they cannot identify with representatives and therefore that they could think this is 'not for them.' (Blair & Mathias, 2018 pg. 25, 35). It is understood how this has a knock-on effect, recognising that 'where because people don't see people that represent them in positions of power they don't stand' (Blair & Mathias, 2018 pg. 20), and that 'boardroom culture, including shared habits, language and meaning, ... may be off putting to groups who do not identify in the same way.' (Hackett, 2016, pg. 14)

Another clear element is the presence of affinity bias, being tightly connected to a lack of access to networks made up of people in public and political life. (Awan-Scully et al, 2018) The importance of networks in the current systems of election and appointment must not be ignored. Although there is clarity in our research that these systems need to change, whilst they persist, we must admit that who you know plays a key role in being able to move into a position in public or political life. In regards to public life, for some time it has been well reported that having access to networks and being able to develop relationships with people with this social and professional capital is 'crucial in the road to the boardroom' (Hackett, 2016, pg. 14), a road which currently 'favours those already within the network of professionals privileged to be Board members.' (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020 pg. 20) This does not go unnoticed by racialised people with interest in obtaining roles in public (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020) and political life, with anecdotes of people managing to gain places on specific mentoring programmes alluding to now being assured places on other programmes within Welsh Government due to the relationship with their mentor. (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2019, pg. 11). This unfair system is compounded again by the fact that many board positions are handpicked by Ministers, or at the very least, Ministers are called upon to validate and confirm recommended appointments (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020, pg. 20) leaving the door wide open to racist, seemingly

unconscious, bias to have its say. These barriers therefore perpetuate the chicken-and-egg situation that persists in relation to diverse representation in public and political life. (Blair & Mathias, 2018 pg. 20)

Lack of understanding of what public and political life entails

There is recognition that the system needs to change to counteract the reality that if not a member of the current 'in-group' (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020), you have little chance to obtain a position on a public body board. However, it is also important to note that networks and positive supportive relationships with people in positions of power play an important role in increasing understanding what public and political life entails. (Awan-Scully et al, 2018). This is evidenced in the reports which state that part of the motivations for joining such a programme is the desire to understand what these arenas are like in practice, and that by virtue of developing these networks, their understanding greatly increased. Much of the evidence points to people feeling that processes around entering public and political life feel complicated and intimidating, (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2019, pg. 9) and that the lack of understanding extends beyond what the actual roles entail, but also to what public bodies exist, what the organisation's remit is, (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020, Pg. 10), and what the responsibility is of the Senedd as well as Local Government (McConnell and Stevenson, 2018, Pg. 2). Interestingly, this was reported as being 'particularly so for those not in the traditional loop – often from the third sector' (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020, Pg. 10) – a sector that is not only there to work in line with public bodies and governments but is also regularly funded by such to plug the gap and deliver in areas that they cannot or will not. It is disconcerting to consider that people working in the third sector in Wales, regardless of this direct relationship with public and political life, may not fully understand what said bodies do. As there is no research on the general public's understanding of these arenas, we can only assume that the case is the same for the majority of people living in Wales, highlighting a wider need for public and political bodies to do more to educate people in the way their country, and their lives are run.

Impact on confidence and motivation for standing for public or political life

With this, it is important to note how the combination of these barriers impacts confidence and motivation for standing for or pursuing a role in public or political life. Directly put, 'Racism, both in terms of discrimination in institutions but also the lasting impact that previous experiences of racism have [a tangible impact] on one's psyche, confidence and motivation' (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2018, pg. 20), as well as the psychological impact of lack of

representation and institutional racism on racialised people, especially in terms of their self-belief and motivation (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2018, pg. 24-25), something that is exhausting to tackle (Turkman, 2019, pg. 89). Facing a system that perpetuates lack of confidence and self-belief and emotional exhausts those who try to overcome such barriers, we continue to experience public and political spaces that are persistently white. The current system also clearly expects potential leaders to be 'forthright, or fortunate enough to have a supportive and proactive manager or organisation' (Price et al, 2020, pg. 10), a virtue that is hard to manifest when feeling diffident.

As mentioned earlier, it is also important to recognise the difference between public and political life and therefore some of the more specific barriers to each sector. Many of these barriers are entrenched in the current processes to obtaining either elected or appointed positions. Although work is being done to address some of these, we are still to see the impact of such change, and much of these procedural changes are only being implemented in the year of writing this report. In the section below we look at what changes are being proposed/undertaken, and when we come to make our own recommendations off the back of our active research, we allude to many of these, supporting what is currently happening in Wales, as well as making more developed recommendations around things that are not yet possible due to existing legal structures or are yet to be considered in regards to public and political policy, for which the power to implement change lies in various hands.

Specific barriers to public life

Regarding public life, many of these procedural barriers have clear avenues for recourse and are actively being addressed in Wales by the new diversity and inclusion strategy for public appointment, applicable from 2020-23. The new mechanisms proposed form part of a system to address this pervasive inequality and are outlined in more detail below when reviewing evidence and calls for supportive mechanisms to overcome barriers presented in this section, many of which we have sought to support with the evidence from our active research. It is important to recognise that currently, given the multitude of public bodies governed by this strategy, there is not yet in place capacity to monitor current processes, and therefore although some boards have already taken steps to mitigate these barriers and change their processes, this has yet to happen across the board, and the capacity of this research has not been able to extend to undertake this review of each body specifically.

As already alluded to, until now, many public body board appointments have been obtained through direct selection, rather than through transparent and fair application processes (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020, Pg. 11). With this, people who are

therefore directly invited to sit on public body boards (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020, Pg. 11, 20), are generally part of well-known professional networks, and have gained experience in senior positions in the public or third sector (Hackett, 2016, pg. 20-21). Where racialised people are seen on boards, the view is still that members are reappointed, meaning that a gatekeeping situation is perpetuated, seeing the same people either maintain position on a specific board and/or move to another board. (Turkman, 2019, Pg. 91; Ladwa-Thomas, 2020, pg. 20). Used as a positive example of 'diversity' and representation, this issue of gatekeeping maintains a system similar to that of seat-blocking in politics (detailed below), meaning that with no fixed term, and a system of reappointments, space is not made for the ever-growing population of talented racialised people in Wales (Turkman, 2019, Pg. 91; Ladwa-Thomas, 2020, Pg. 13).

Even where application processes (over direct appointment / reappointment) to join public body boards have been implemented, barriers to fair and representative appointment persist. Evaluation of a specific programme delivered in Wales in 2015-16 to support underrepresented groups into board positions highlighted that appointment opportunities were not well advertised, criteria was vague, access to additional information and development opportunities was scant and impacted by lack of time, and assessment processes were not relevant or suited to those applying. (Hackett, 2016, pg. 14, 22, 28). Following from this, it was raised that decision-making broadly led to 'selection panels to appoint in their own image' (Hackett, 2016, pg. 14), confounded by Ministers validating appointments, favouring 'those already within the network of professionals privileged to be Board members' (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020, pg. 20).

Specific barriers to political life

In relation to political life in Wales, processes are very different, and also differ across political parties. To become an elected Member of the Senedd or Local Councillor, individuals must stand as a candidate for election. In most cases, people stand as candidates for their chosen political party, although in some cases people may stand as independent candidates. Some of the broad scope procedural barriers highlighted in research thus far and outlined below however pertain to steps taken by most of the political parties represented in Wales to date.²⁹ Again, capacity has not necessarily allowed for us to review in specific detail the processes of each party, so generalisations are made from broad understanding.

One process undertaken by many political parties and elected officials is seat-blocking. Seat-blocking is a process where an elected official seeks reappointment for their constituency/ward. Similar therefore to re-appointments

in public life, the fact that any politician does not have a limit on the number of times they can consecutively stand for election means that space is not created for new individuals to pursue a seat at the political table.

Where space is made for new candidates, these are advertised internally to the party branch only. Party processes mean that potential candidates must first go through an internal approvals process/test and then are positioned to apply via application form and/or interview. Greater transparency is needed on who undertakes these processes and how decisions are made on who obtains a place on the constituency shortlist. This is then followed by a local party members ballot, via which the final candidate selection is made (Harman, 2018).

Although these processes may be applied with transparency and in as equitable fashion as possible, when the final decision falls to the party selectorate, bias is rife, leading to a 'tendency to prefer the archetypal candidate (usually white, male, straight, middle class), [leaving] ethnic minority candidates, women, as well as people with disabilities to be especially affected by this.' (Awan-Scully et al, 2018, pg. 8-9). Reports also allude to tokenistic approaches in constituency shortlists, as mentioned earlier, with evidence of candidates from racialised backgrounds being limited to one, due to fears that having more than one would 'split the BAME vote', or that when more than one is presented, questions as to why are poised by the selectorate, as the box has, in their eyes, already been ticked.

Time commitment and financial stability

Following this however, if lucky to be fielded for political election, and something for all potential candidates as well as political party selectorate to consider, is the time needed to campaign, as well as the financial cost (Awan-Scully et al, 2018, pg. 8, Harman 2018, pgs. 18-21) and rules around this, connected to the maintenance of employment and income while running the political campaign. Put candidly by Andrew RT Davies MS, (then) Leader of the Welsh Conservative Party 'One of the big issues for candidates coming forward... is the level of commitment [which means] deflecting you from the job that is... making sure you have an income... I have seen many candidates... gone to the point of financial ruin ... [and] not getting successfully elected.' (Blair & Mathias, 2018 Pg. 50)

Compounding all of these barriers, the general ones and procedural ones, and especially related to minoritized people's motivation to enter or remain in political life, is the experience once in political life in Wales, especially in relation to time commitment and financial stability.

Regarding Welsh Parliament, the time commitment needed by elected Members of the Senedd has been an issue since devolution where all Members must either sit on Committees, take up Ministerial or Shadow Ministerial positions, or a combination of the two, as well as manage their constituent responsibilities (Welsh Parliament, 2020). As detailed, 'Being a politician often involves working at least six days a week from early mornings to late nights... requiring major compromises on family [and personal] life... we should recognise its impact in putting off a lot of people who might be inclined to stand from diverse and different backgrounds.' (Blair & Mathias, 2018 Pg. 44-49, 55)

In the case of local councillors, this is extremely pertinent, and unlike the situation with Welsh Parliament, tangibly linked to remuneration packages. For reference, although beyond full-time hours in application, a Member of the Senedd is currently remunerated at £67,649 per annum³⁰, plus expenses, and once elected, their role is seen as their main, full time occupation. Although this does not excuse the fact that many are working incessantly, including, until recently due to Covid-19, commuting early in the morning and late at night to and from Cardiff Bay for sessions, in the broader economic landscape, this package is not considered insubstantial, and the profits can be used, if Members so wish, to buy more capacity by paying others for their services.

However, as detailed earlier, councillor roles are practically speaking seen as part-time. In practice however, the hours a councillor works while not only undertaking the responsibilities of their role, but also remaining available to their community members, usually amount to much more than formally specified. This is compounded in comparison by the fact that, unless on the local authority cabinet or chairing a committee, the remuneration package works out to be around £13,300 per annum. (Blair & Mathias, 2018 Pg. 20). With this, many councillors must, in addition to their position, maintain other forms of employment, and many times are not granted the privilege of therefore being able to buy capacity as would Members of the Senedd. The number of hours councillors spend on their duties together with the low remuneration package therefore continues to be a barrier to participation in local political life. (McConnell and Stevenson, 2018, Pg. 2)

Although the evidence to date in relation to time commitment and financial stability as a barrier to political life is focused mainly on women with children, here we make connections to the fact that racialised people in Wales are more likely to face socio-economic disadvantage, live in multi-generational households with multiple caring responsibilities, and experience single parent households, all of which therefore have a disproportionate impact on the time capacity available to them (Ogbonna et al.)

These factors are also important to keep in mind when looking at some of the supportive mechanisms alluded to in various reports to date, as well as plans for reform. Given that much of the research is focussed on increasing gender diversity, we cannot be sure that changes in relation to remuneration and time commitment, both in public and political life, will positively impact the representation of racialised individuals in Wales. Although steps in the right direction, as this section has revealed, the general barriers in relation to institutional racism and its symptoms, impacting directly on confidence and motivation, must also be addressed with urgency, if we wish to see a public and political landscape in Wales that truly reflects the myriad ethnicities within our borders.

Policy and Legislation Framework

The hope for this piece of action research is that, by keeping an eye on relevant legislation and policy in place, we will be able to highlight, from a knowledgeable viewpoint, good practice, opportunities for development and therefore tangibly link recommendations to policy/legislation, bolstering our asks with clear reference to that already in place / gaps where issues of race are not considered.

Legislative context

The legislative obligations applied to public and political bodies in Wales include the Equality Act 2010, within which sit the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Socio-Economic Duty (to be enacted in Wales in March 2021) and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Together these seek to not only prevent but also provide avenues for redress of inequalities, with the ultimate aim of creating a fairer Wales.

United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination

This International Convention was ratified by the UK in 1965, the same year in which the first piece of race equality legislation was enacted (Race Relations Act 1965)³¹. The Convention sits alongside a number of other conventions which look to place obligations on nation states to advance equality and human rights in a number of areas³². Within this Convention, there are some specific articles that support the call for racial diversity in public and political life. These detail that, broadly speaking, nation states shall 'take effective measures to review governmental, national and local policies, and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial

discrimination wherever it exists' (Article 2; 1.c); as well as specifically laying out that they must 'undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms, to guarantee the right of everyone... the enjoyment of ... Political rights, in particular the right to ... stand for election-on..., to take part in the Government as well as in the conduct of public affairs at any level and to have equal access to public service' (Article 5. c).³³

This right for racialised people in Wales to be able to stand for election, to take part in Government and the conduct of public affairs, as we can see, is actively infringed upon by the current (non)implementation of policies and regulations as well as institutional and overt racism, something that UK and therefore Wales is mandated to address, and 51 years after ratifying the convention, is seemingly still struggling to do. Supported directly by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which in Article 25 states that every citizen has the right and opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs (directly or via chosen representatives), to be elected and to have equal access to public services³⁴, we nevertheless remain in a state where our public and political bodies continue to fall short.

In relation to some of the other persistent barriers mentioned earlier, the CDESCR includes obligations to nation states to provide education, which must be equally accessible to all, promoting 'understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups' (Article 13; c.) via the means of 'technical and vocational guidance and training programmes, policies and techniques' to enable employment (Article 6,1. 2.) within which they must have access to equal opportunity for promotion, considering only seniority and competence (Article 7, c.), with limitation of working hours (Article 7, d.)³⁵. Again, we see that these obligations have not been met, and by virtue of continuing without due redress, actively impact representation in Public and Political life.

Every 5 years, a process of reporting is undertaken by the UK and each devolved nation in regard to all of the Articles in the Conventions and Covenants mentioned. Reports also include those made by Civil Society organisations (i.e. third sector/non-governmental organisations), after which the UN Committees report back with a number of specific recommendations. We have reviewed and included these later in this section of the report, and make calls for recognition that again, many of our recommendations made are not new or unique, but rather have been made by officials from the United Nations to small civil society organisations for years. We are still waiting for many of these to be taken forward pragmatically and proactively.

Equality Act 2010 (EA2010)

As alluded to above, the Equality Act 2010 consolidated previous race equality legislation and other equality-based legislations into one Act. The Act makes illegal discrimination in various forms³⁶ based on a number of what are called 'protected characteristics', of which race is one, encompassing nationality/ national origin and ethnicity, encompassing any denoting markers related to someone's racial / national identity³⁷. Religion and belief is another. The Act makes illegal discrimination in various circumstances, within which fall employers and public bodies and their services and functions³⁸ (EHRC, 2011). A robust piece of legislation, the Equality Act provides many avenues for redress, and importantly encompasses an element that makes legal Positive Action; essentially allowing employers and public bodies to implement action to meet different needs, minimise disadvantage and enable and encourage participation for any group that shares a protected characteristic, where it is reasonably believed that they suffer disadvantage, have disproportionately low level of participation and/or have different needs in comparison to other groups. (Equality and Diversity Forum, 2010). Unfortunately, Positive Action remains heavily underused, and although robust, the Act itself presents various limitations and specificities that at times hinder, and at minimum do not promote racial representation in public and political life. These are also impacted by the way in which the Act is interpreted, and by whom, as well as the lack of precedent case law to define many of the components of the Act.

Within the realm of interpretation and lack of precedent case law, when the Equality Act 2010 was brought into force in the UK, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was created, with specific responsibility to protect, enforce and promote equality. In line with this, the Commission creates 3 specific Statutory Codes of Practice, which provided interpretive guidance to the various sections and obligations of the Act in relation to employment and service provision.³⁹ Looking at the Code for Services⁴⁰, it details the relationship between the Act and political life, stating clearly that 'The Act recognises that certain groups who share particular protected characteristics are under-represented among elected decision-makers.' (EHRC, 2011, pg. 144). Importantly, the Act allows parties to make special arrangements in terms of their selection processes (leading to the fielding of candidates for an election). The limit of these arrangements is not defined, and anything can be undertaken as long as it is seen as proportionate, and not moving into the realm of Positive Discrimination, which means in essence, actively favouring one group over another without evidence of under-representation amongst those elected. Specifically, 'A party's selection arrangements can include their procedures for encouraging prospective candidates to come forward, for identifying suitable

candidates and in determining how a final shortlist will be chosen' (EHRC, 2011, pg. 180). Seemingly encouraging, this part of the Act on the surface allows for direct action to be taken that would support an increased number of racialised candidates standing for election. However, some caveats exist, which make it harder and less desirable for many political parties to focus on action to improve racial representation, as well as considering the electorate's response and perceptions, should they put these actions into place. Specifically, the Code states that it is unlikely to be considered 'proportionate means' if actions focus exclusively on one group, where that focus could thereby reduce the representation of other groups. As an example given in the Code, this is demonstrated by the fact that although parties are allowed to reserve places on shortlists for racialised people, they cannot produce shortlists that encompass solely racialised individuals, 'regardless of the scale of inequality of representation' (EHRC, 2011, pg. 181). Reserved places also cannot disaggregate between a protected characteristic, and be applied to, for example, a particular race/ethnic group, but may only be applied to ethnic minorities as a whole. An exception is made in the case of women – here the Act specifically designates that due to the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002 incorporation into the Equality 2010, all-women shortlists are allowed.⁴¹ We shall refer back to Positive Action and elements of the Statutory Codes when making our recommendations in this report.

In addition to these specific exceptions made, the Equality Act embodies other limitations including redress for individuals or groups of people who are discriminated against. Although access to redress is outlined as a fundamental human right by the United Nations, the process for this in the UK requires a substantial amount of money, time, and legal capacity. As we know, many racialised people do not benefit from socio-economic equality and therefore do not have the means to seek due recourse. Following this, the Act makes provision that any case of discrimination must be raised legally within 6 months (9 months if the EHRC powers are utilised) of the date of the last experience of discrimination (EHRC, 2011, pg. 217-219) – anything brought past this date is at the discretion of the court to decide if they will hear the case or not. This of course, means that, given the lack of access to resource and capacity to take up a legal case, as well as the trauma that discrimination carries and the direct impact therefore on mental health, and specifically motivation and confidence as highlighted earlier, many times people are not able to formally bring a case to legal proceedings. Additionally, it is on the claimant to obtain all information related to the case of discrimination, and that can include requesting information from the service provider themselves, who in turn are not obligated to answer. Delays in processes of Freedom of Information Requests are commonplace, sometimes taking up to 6 months to produce.

Essentially, the Burden of Proof lies on the claimant (EHRC, 2011, pg. 219-220). What we see in the case of public and political life are examples that could constitute indirect discrimination – provision, criterion and practice that put (or would put) racialised people at a particular disadvantage. With this, should a case be brought forward, a clear comparison must be able to be made to a pool of people who do not share the same characteristic (EHRC, 2011, pg. 74-76). Cases against institutional, nuanced racism, are therefore especially hard to bring forward, let alone win, as well as cases against provisions or practices that disadvantage more than one protected characteristic.

It is here that disaggregated examples can be brought forward, laying the case for discrimination on a specific marker of race, however although this can bring more specificity against the comparator, the number of people to whom this marker applies decreases dramatically. Also, it is eventually down to the court to decide if, by undertaking formal comparative exercises, the group with the protected characteristic experiences a particular disadvantage (EHRC, 2011, pg.75-77). It is not impossible however, and if access to redress were increased and made accessible to racialised people, we are confident that more cases of discrimination on the basis of race would be seen across public and political bodies in Wales.

It is also interesting to note, in relation to the fact that the majority of research and evidence in relation to representation in public and political life is based on gender diversity specifically, that the Act makes specific provision for gender equality across a number of areas, including for the use of quotas in relation to gender and representation. Although unsurprising, it is shocking that even within a piece of legislation that encompasses protection for marginalised people with a multitude of protected characteristics, that provisions themselves are not equally provided. We find ourselves working therefore within an act that – to quote George Orwell – promotes that 'All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.'⁴²

There are many Sections of the Equality Act 2010 that actively bolster equality regarding public and political representation. We have reviewed these below and shall draw on these when delivering our recommendations in this report. One of the specific sections that is yet to be enacted is Section 106, which would mandate political parties to publish equality data in a coherent and standardised format, with specific calls being made to Central Government to either enact this or pass the powers to Welsh ministers to do so in Wales (Blair & Mathias, 2018).

The Public Sector Equality Duty and Socio-Economic Duty

In addition to this, in Wales we do currently have enacted (or soon to be) Section 149 of the Equality Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Section 1, the Socio-Economic Duty (SED)⁴³. The PSED requires all public bodies in Wales to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, while 'advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it'⁴⁴. The SED 'requires public bodies to adopt transparent and effective measures to address the inequalities that result from differences in occupation, education, place of residence or social class.'⁴⁵ Together, these elements of the Equality Act provide a solid basis to mitigate discriminative practices that put not only people with single specific protected characteristics at disadvantage, but also look at disadvantage holistically, bringing in socio-economic disadvantage as essentially, a tenth protected characteristic. The opportunities this presents are vast, and if used proactively and holistically, together with Positive Action, we could see real change in Welsh public and political life in the not too distant future.

'It is important that these – and other – opportunities are grasped.'

(EHRC, 2018, pg. 3)

This has been actively recognised by Welsh Government, who have stated that work to strengthen the PSED includes potential for incorporating UN Conventions listed above into Welsh Law (Welsh Government, 2019, pg. 5). Welsh Government is currently undertaking research into this latter element, and we look forward to finding out the outcomes, hoping there will be a positive response to not only incorporation into Welsh Law but active avenues for redress should the law then be broken, something that we have seen is greatly lacking as things stand.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

We are extremely fortunate in Wales to have the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (FGA). This Act makes it a legal obligation for all public bodies in Wales to consider how their current policies, processes, strategies, action plans, and any in development, will impact 7 areas of Welsh life in the future. Importantly, within these 7 areas sit 2 goals named broadly as a 'More Equal Wales' and a 'Wales of Cohesive Communities'. The interpretation of the Act has taken this to include equality of opportunity and equality of

outcome, tangibly linked therefore to proper representation in public and political life. It has been actively recognised however that many public and political bodies do not understand in practice what this law means, especially in relation to the Equality Act 2010 (EHRC 2018, pg. 129). In our recommendations therefore, where we make connections to legislation in place, we intrinsically call for Welsh Government to undertake more active effort in ensuring that public and political bodies are conscious of the application to them as well as the potential repercussions should they not comply.

Policy Framework

Moving into the field of policy, we see in Wales myriad policies including strategic plans that span 3 or more years, within which sit specific action plans. Some of these apply to all public and political bodies and are large in scope, others pertain to specific issues, feeding from the broader strategic plans in place. Again, due to capacity of this research, we have not been able to review in depth every piece of public and political policy that plays a role in representation. However, we would like to present here the multitude of documentation already in place. It is interesting to recognise that although strategic and action planning is incredibly important, without the elements of these plans looking at effective implementation, holistic change, providing concerted capacity, or incorporating a focus on internal culture and institutional, systemic racism, their effect can be tokenistic and effectively minimal. If this were not the case, we wouldn't still be undertaking action research and making continued recommendations to elicit change. In the same breath however, we also note that systemic, institutional and cultural change cannot happen overnight, and that policy is constantly changing and developing. At the time of writing multiple pieces of national and more localised policy (whether that be regional or applicable to only certain public bodies) is in development. Additionally, as we are moving towards a new Parliament and potentially new Government in May 2021, campaigning opportunities are being maximised by Civil Society to engage policy makers in initiatives that will, if undertaken, drive forward the fight for equity across the board. But radical change and actions must be taken on board, otherwise the drip feed of change will remain intangible to those for whom it really matters.

Welsh Government Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24

Initially, we bring attention to the Welsh Government Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24. This Plan was developed with the aim to make Wales a fairer place to live and work and was developed specifically because of the EA2010 and FGA and presents a number of actions that the Government proposes to undertake

over the next four years, addressing things like poverty, human rights, public bodies and their services, gender equality, unfair treatment, communities, and public and political involvement (Welsh government, 2020a). It is the main document guiding the work of Welsh Government in the area of equality (Welsh Government, 2019, pg. 5-6). In line with the latter, the plan dictates the equality objective as:

'By 2024, we will have increased the diversity of decision-makers in public life and public appointments, identifying areas where further action is needed to ensure greater balance of diversity among decision-makers and identify and investigate mechanisms to redress inequality.'

(Welsh Government, 2020)

Reflecting Wales in Running Wales, diversity and inclusion strategy for public appointments 2020-23

With a focus on public body boards and elected Councillor positions, the specific actions for the former have been developed in more detail in a strategy called Reflecting Wales in Running Wales, diversity and inclusion strategy for public appointments 2020-23, much of which is referenced in this report. In addition to pulling on this broad WG Strategic Equality Plan and the UK Governance Code on Public Appointments (Cabinet Office, 2016), Reflecting Wales in Running Wales also recognises that the call for action to address representation in public life goes back formally to at least 2017, in Welsh Government's 'Delivering Together' report (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020, Pg. 11) and in the UK Cabinet Office's diversity action plan to address the same, which set out an ambition for proportionate representation by 2022 (EHRC, 2018, pg. 106).

The latter focus on diversity in Local Government looks to develop specifically the 'Diversity in Democracy' programme into a second year. The evaluation of this programme has been drawn on heavily in this literature review, and we hope that the recommendations can be taken into account, to prevent another programme that does not fully meet the needs of its target group from being delivered (McConnell & Stevenson, 2019). It is exciting that we finally have a strategy to promote this, with specific focus in the first year on 'BAME' communities and disabled people, the second year moving towards increasing LGBTQIA+ representation, and hope that the proposed actions will not limit opportunity for further radical approaches as we recommend, to really entrench anti-racism in public body boards.

'Programme for Government: Taking Wales Forward' & 'Prosperity for All: The National Strategy'

In addition to the Strategic Equality Plan, equality diversity and inclusion policy in Wales also link directly to the 'Programme for Government: Taking Wales Forward', which is underpinned by the 'Prosperity for All: The National Strategy'. These two pieces of programme and strategy were brought in in 2016 and 2017 respectively to cover the term of the current government, developed due to the recent enactment of the FGA. Next year, we shall look to the new Government to develop similar strategies and plans, and hope that they will not be a repeat of what has been covered in the last 5 years, but will incorporate radical actions, drawing on the multitude of recommendations made by us and other equity focussed organisations across Wales. We look forward to the current Government reporting on their progress and lessons learnt in relation to these as well, to hopefully prevent the same mistakes from happening, and the same actions being taken forward.

Other pieces of policy in existence, but that we have not had the capacity to review in detail, include the Strategic Equality Plans that each Public Body themselves must draw up, as well as those for Ministerial Departments. These in practice look to develop the above into more specific targeted plans for the body / department in question. Also, we must look to the policies that political parties develop themselves in regard to improving racial diversity amongst candidates fielded for election, again, not yet standardised across the various players in place.

In Wales we also have in place policy documents which look to address some of the inequalities faced by particular racialised communities. These include to our knowledge, 'Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers' (Welsh Government 2018), a plan developed with the focus of developing culturally appropriate sites, and addressing access to education, health, and the labour market (nothing particularly on public and political representation); as well as the 'Nation of Sanctuary - Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan' (Welsh Government 2019a), focussing on refugees and asylum seekers' access to healthcare and integration opportunities.

Race Equality Action Plan

Finally, we are at time of publication in the midst of Welsh Government developing the first ever Race Equality Action Plan (Welsh Government 2020b), which shall incorporate a clear review of race equality across Wales, with a view to developing tangible actions across a number of areas. One of these areas is Leadership and Representation. We look forward to our work being incorporated into this, and recommendations more broadly about the benefits and pitfalls of action plans being taken into account.

Current recommendations to support diversity in public and political life

Much of the research that has been undertaken historically, especially in Wales, has focussed on gender diversity, either by design or default (see Gaps below). With this, some of the recommendations made have been taken from those evidenced to support gender diversity – and it must be noted that for the majority, they have either not been implemented with a race diversity focus, and/or the impact of such efforts on the barriers listed above have not been evaluated. Due to this, the list is not exhaustive, and our active research provides a real opportunity to review the potential impact of these actions on racialised people in Wales, from their viewpoints and lived experiences, as well as bring together evidence of the need for other actions not previously considered. Importantly, as previously recognised, we shall highlight that it is the more radical measures that seem to be more effective for all areas of diversity (Blair and Mathias, 2019, Pg. 26), and that these push beyond the current remits outlined in action plans already in place. With this, we have tried to base our recommendations in the remit of current legislation, as detailed above, however for some elements we recognise that new Law must be passed before the recommendation can become a reality. Where this is the case, we hope that Welsh parliament will consider moving towards enacting new legislation to allow for this, while recognising that holistic approaches must be adopted, as piecemeal cherry-picked options will often not have the desired effect.

General supportive mechanisms

As a starting point, we look to general measures that must be undertaken to tackle the barriers presented through existing research. Firstly, it is well documented that concerted effort must be made to increase public awareness about what Public and Political life entails. Further on we detail some of the particular activities that have been undertaken in the past in relation to this, as mentioned, mainly with focus on gender diversity, and occasionally with racial diversity at their heart. These initiatives are targeted for people who already have a desire to enter public or political life however, and do not go to addressing the deficit in understanding by the general public, which we recognise directly impacts motivation and confidence in the first instance. From encouraging and widening participation in Parliamentary activities through various adjustments to processes, to increasing representation and the scope of the Welsh Youth parliament (Assembly Commission, 2018), as well as other means that we shall explore in our active research, developing understanding is key to increasing democratic participation and therefore an early element in the path towards a position in public or political life.

A second concerted piece of action that needs to be undertaken is that which will allow us to proactively tackle online racist abuse. Current discourse on the topic is relatively new, and a White Paper is in the process of moving through Central Government looking at the topic⁴⁶, which we hope that MPs for Wales will actively support. Although Wales in its devolved capacity does not have broad scope powers to tackle online abuse, there are policy areas that public bodies and political parties could develop, including, but not limited to, codes of conducts on online intimidatory behaviour (Blair & Mathias, 2018). The details of this we hope to assess through our active research and are detailed in the continuation of this report.

A second area that is drawn on in numerous reports is that of ensuring that key players involved in the progression pathways to public and political life are provided with Equality and Diversity learning opportunities (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2018; Assembly Commission, 2019; Ladwa-Thomas, 2020; Welsh Government, 2019). However, what is detailed is an emphasis on senior staff, those involved in recruitment processes, elected officials and public body board members, and that in specificity, the only element of equality training mentioned with regularity is unconscious bias training, and at time allusions have been made to cultural competency training for frontline staff. Emphasis has not been placed on the fact that in order to effect change, training must be high quality, accessible, and ongoing, formally incorporated into a role description, applicable to different learning styles, and incorporate at minimum the following topics (this list is not exhaustive): relevant policy and legislation,

systemic oppression, anti-discrimination, anti-racism, intersectionality, decolonisation, fragility, power and privilege, organisational culture and governance and, intercultural sensitivity - as well as unconscious bias. Evidence clearly indicates that without this approach, these efforts land as tick box exercises in the best case, and in the worst case, can actually lead to increasing bias and therefore inequalities and lack of diversity.⁴⁷ It is surprising therefore how regularly this is being promoted in the research undertaken to date. Similarly, when considering institutional racism, efforts for training must not be limited to senior/recruiting staff, but applied across the board, encompassing everyone involved in public and political life, including civil servants as well as elected ministers, councillors, and their staffing teams; appointed board members, appointment panels including independent members, as well as organisations and their staff tendered to supply contracts to public and political life in Wales (such as IT companies) or those commissioned to undertake work on behalf of the Government. We look to formulate more evidence for this broad recommendation, and in our other work hope to be able to define in more detail what constitutes effective, accessible learning opportunities.

Moving to other areas documented, a lot of emphasis has been put on directed programmes with multiple components, aimed at under-represented people who already have a desire to enter public or political life. Again, it must be noted that these programmes are in broad terms in their infancy, especially in relation to racialised groups. We are currently sitting at a stage where their efficacy has been evaluated and monitored in regard to participants experiences of the programmes and their components, but the efficacy of whether this has actually led to increased diversity in public or political life remains to date unmonitored. Additionally, while these programmes develop from their gender focus to encompassing racial diversity aims, different ways of doing things are not being applied, and a similar one size fits all approach is taking place. Historically, more emphasis has been placed in the past on increasing gender diversity, and therefore elements that are effective are generally evidenced in relation to women's access to public and political life. Racialised people have been involved and contributed to evaluative processes, however their number are small in relation to the general population, or labour force population. The reasons for this are unknown, but general knowledge and understanding of engagement broadly speaking would lead us to believe that the same barriers to participation in all areas of life in Wales are also present regarding participation in these bespoke programmes. Many of these are highlighted in the evaluations of such, which have been reviewed above, and calls for broader redress to access and engagement have been made (Awan-Scully, 2018).

Mentoring opportunities have been one of the most undertaken and evaluated components of leadership programmes, and to date have been recorded as being extremely popular with people from under-represented groups (Awan-Scully, 2018; Hackett, 2016). Mentoring has been evidenced to actively support learning through other elements of programmes, increasing confidence and aspirations, developing their skills and understanding and building their contacts and networks. (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2019; McConnel & Stevenson, 2019; Ladwa-Thomas, 2020). What was particularly highlighted here however was the need to undertake proactive matching exercises between mentors and mentees to ensure that they would work well in the professional relationship. Where this wasn't taken into consideration, the mentoring was felt to have been a failure.

Following this, and sometimes actioned by a mentor, shadowing opportunities have also proven to be very effective, again in increasing confidence, as well as developing understanding of the practicalities of holding a position in public and political life, and enabling participants to see themselves in these positions of power (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2019; Awan-Scully et al, 2018; Ladwa-Thomas, 2020; Hackett, 2016; Price et al, 2020). What was particularly highlighted was that shadowing experiences however needed to be active, rather than passive, and that by having opportunity to make contribution to the environments that they shadowed, people felt much more self-confident, increased by feeling included in all activities taking place, akin to experiences of an apprentice or intern. This also impacted the perception of the board in many cases towards diversity as a positive and focus on how people new to public or political life may be supported once gaining a position, through buddying processes, is considered. (Hackett, 2016; Ladwa-Thomas, 2020).

Recorded as a positive symptom of mentoring and shadowing programmes, access to networks have followed closely as effective in supporting people into public and political life, providing opportunity to break into high level networks and building relevant contacts (Hackett, 2016; Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2019). However, as we have recognised above, the need to have networks to be able to access opportunities also presents a barrier and maintains a system that benefits those who are in the 'in-group' or favoured circle. If this need were removed, then access to networks may not have as much impact on access to public or political life or may be seen not so much as a necessity, but as a bonus to breaking down other barriers in place.

Within these programmes, more formal learning development elements have also been introduced, under the auspices of training and workshops. The recorded benefits of these programmes are mixed, and includes the experience of attending these learning opportunities, but also the accessibility of them, and the impact on a broader diversity of people with multiple and intersecting

experiences. Where positive experiences were recorded, these linked to understanding more about application processes to public body boards in particular (Assembly Commission, 2019; Hackett, 2016). Although allusions were also made to developing understanding of public and political life and therefore confidence (Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2019), it is reported that especially Academi Wales leadership programmes (referenced earlier in relation to barriers) were seen to be premised on skills deficits rather than overcoming institutional and systemic barriers and therefore ranked lowest in terms of positive mechanisms for driving diversity (Hackett 2016). It is seen to be beneficial therefore if learning opportunities are connected to clear pathways for progression, and must be properly funded, as austerity has caused delivery and access to be ‘particularly patchy.’ (Price et al, 2020, pg. 4, 10)

Importantly what has been highlighted in the majority of evaluative reports and research into these programmes and their components, is that they must be developed, planned and defined clearly, with specific target groups in mind, timetabling set out, resource and capacity set, tailored support provided, and monitoring and evaluation must be embedded, and that if shadowing is to be encouraged, mentors should be given allowances to provide for this, and any training elements must be accessible and structured. Within these programmes, consideration should be given to overcoming all the barriers presented, including institutional and systemic, as well as personal and interpersonal; and limits should be recognised with expectations clearly communicated to all parties involved (McConnel & Stevenson, 2019; Hackett, 2016; Awan-Scully, 2018).

Moving on from this, the last general recourse to representation recommended across many publications is that of the need for relevant public and political bodies, including Commissions based in Wales and the UK, to effectively, transparently and clearly collect and publish ethnicity data related to who stands/applies for, who is nominated/selected for interview and who wins elections/ is appointed to public boards. It is strongly felt also that this data should be disaggregated where possible and include reflection of socio-economic background and geographical location in addition to the stated protected characteristics (Welsh Government 2019; Ladwa-Thomas, 2020; Blair & Mathias, 2018). Without this data, it is impossible to clearly monitor the effectiveness of other actions taken to break down barriers to public and political life towards the long-term goal of increasing diversity, as well as the shorter term in regard to evaluating such processes in the first place. Not currently an obligation for all bodies involved in public and political life, we support the ask that those not legislated to do so voluntarily undertake this action, especially in relation to political parties (EHRC, 2018, pg. 136).

As detailed earlier, the process to enter public life is starkly different to that for political life, the former taking an application and assessment process into account, the latter ultimately depending on the electorate’s choices. We have therefore broken down some of the specific elements that have been considered thus far as means to redressing the imbalance in these two sectors. However, as we know that to be able to get to the point of standing before a party selectorate involves at times application and assessment processes, we see the review of barriers to public life as being applicable to political life as well, depending on the party for which someone wishes to stand.

Supportive mechanisms specific to public life

‘Improving the engagement and participation of all under-represented groups in public appointments is a key commitment for the Welsh Government. It is important in giving people power and voice and in ensuring equality of opportunity. Increased representation will also serve to assure Ministers and the public that there is a diversity of experience and views in decision-making.’

(Hackett, 2016, Pg. 15)

One core area of focus regarding public life is a review and potential overhaul of the application systems currently in place for many boards (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020). Reports reference the need to redesign candidate packs, including imagery, application forms, and person specifications as well as information on the body itself and its current make up, that clear language must be used, including clear guidance provided and that drives should be widely targeted and effectively resourced to involve proactive outreach and engagement activities. To enable this, a need for staffing capacity has been highlighted, including staff with specific focus on diversity as well as focus on overseeing strategies for improvement, providing access points for all relevant information.

Building on these external processes, internal processes must also be addressed, including ensuring that transparent unbiased recruitment processes are implemented from role design through to application format, shortlisting and assessment protocol, and decision-making. People involved in any of these elements should receive in depth training in relation to ensuring consistency and that as much bias is mitigated in the process, and independent panel members should be utilised in the appointments process. To support positive decision-making, it has also been broadly referenced that panel members and other involved in these processes should be trained in understanding

how to make full use of positive action mechanisms, including, but not limited to, setting targets or even quotas for appointment of people from groups of specific protected characteristics, and importantly valuing lived experience as equal to professional experience (cf. Hackett, 2016; Assembly Commission 2019; Ladwa-Thomas, 2020; McConnell and Stevenson, 2019; Awan-Scully et al, 2018; Wiegand & Cifuentes, 2018; EHRC 2018). We hope to be able to review these processes through our active research and provide more support for them moving forward.

Supportive mechanisms specific to political life

'Piecemeal approaches to fixing diversity clearly haven't worked... institutional solutions should be considered.'

(Blair & Matthias, 2018, pg. 19)

Regarding political life, when fielded, candidates generally stand as a representative of a specific political party⁴⁸. Regarding policy therefore, not every political party will apply the same procedures for individuals to be able to stand for election. As mentioned, where elements of application processes are involved, calls are made to align these as per recommendations made to public bodies. However, there are some unique ways in which political parties can actively increase the diversity of their candidates, and potentially even impact the outcome of who is elected as an official.

As a starting point, we see evidence of target-setting regarding increasing diversity in party selectorate shortlists. However, what has been seen as more effective are processes of reserving spaces/implementing quotas⁴⁹, twinning shortlists⁵⁰ and zipping shortlists⁵¹ (McConnell and Stevenson, 2019, Pg. 3) (Blair & Matthias, 2018, pg. 19). These examples of positive action have however only been implemented regarding women, and the law actively prohibits some of them being undertaken regarding racialised people. Additionally, it is not just political parties that can utilise positive action – Welsh Government also has the power to legislate for gender quotas, and we support the hope that before 2030, calls will be made to legislate specifically for the opportunity to introduce quotas in relation to racialised people and other under-represented groups (Blair & Mathias, 2018).

In addition to these, the reports reviewed also make direct reference to other positive action that could be enabled by political parties and Welsh Government. This include providing Access Funds to support the financial costs of campaigns, (Blair & Matthias, 2018; Awan-Scully et al, 2018) although it was recognised that some electoral regulations make this difficult to put in place; (McConnell and Stevenson, 2019), however there is room for the Senedd to address this by amending the definition of political party and candidate spending. (EHRC 2018, pg. 106)

Two areas of recourse seen to sit firmly within the powers of the Senedd and Local Government, however also considered highly polemic, are the action to increase the number of elected officials, not only therefore to increase opportunity to election, but also to mitigate the impact of time commitment that many people find a barrier to engagement as a politician. With this, there have also been calls made to move to a complete proportional representation system⁵², especially in relation to the Senedd. However, where there seems to be a contradiction in terms, is that with this, calls are made to also provide Members of the Senedd with opportunity for job sharing, but at the same time, provide Local Councillors with opportunity for full time positions (Welsh Parliament, 2020; Blair & Matthias, 2018; Awan-Scully, 2018). What we read into this is that, essentially, opportunities need to be put in place that allow flexibility of working, so that different people may undertake political roles in a way that suits their time and financial needs. By having full time members, this will prevent people working overtime and having to manage two jobs, and by having job share opportunities, this could mitigate the impact on family life and other commitments that being an MS means. Finally, one area touched upon is the efforts made by national and local governments and parliaments to engage proactively with employers and the employment sector, looking at a way in which potential candidates can be supported to maintain their work while campaigning for election, those who are in a position of having to manage part time work and a part time councillor position are supported and those who are not re-elected have pathways back into the professional world after a 5 year or more break (McConnell and Stevenson, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

Gaps in literature and evidence

There are many gaps in the research and evidence base at present, some of which have been highlighted throughout the overview above. The reasons for this are at times clear and at others nuanced. What we do find is a chicken and egg situation, where until we increase racial diversity in public and political life in Wales, we remain limited in the amount of potential research subjects we can access to evaluate experiences, and while legislation does not provide for racialised people as it does for women, a lot of action taken therefore is focussed on gender diversity, and although much is labelled as diversity in general, encompassing racial diversity, we find that specific evidence does not involve racialised people's experiences. This includes active data, monitoring and evaluation processes, and presents a view that racial diversity is not seen as important, and where approaches are taken, they have a particularly tokenistic approach as well as recognising that there remains uncertainty of the effectiveness of current programmes to date. (Welsh Parliament 2020; Blair & Mathias, 2018; Awan-Scully et al, 2018; Hackett, 2016; EHRC, 2017) This gap in the literature is also clearly impacted by the tight knit relationship between the patriarchy and white supremacy, which perpetuates the established inequalities, and again, promotes the age old Animal Farm system presented by Orwell, as described earlier.

Calls are being made for greater focus on racial diversity however, and it is with this work that we aim to start to plug this gap (EHRC, 2017; Blair & Mathias, 2018; Hackett, 2016; EHRC, 2018). If we are to achieve equity, then we must look beyond strand-specific focuses, recognising that we all encompass a myriad of identities – women are also racialised, racialised people are women, non-binary, trans, LGBTQIA+, working class and disabled by society.

Peer Research



Peer research is a participatory and co-productive approach to design, delivery, and analysis of research, led by those with lived experiences of issues explored through the research itself.

This is the first peer-led, community-based research into the racialized experience in Wales to be presented to Welsh governments and relevant institutional bodies.

Our goal through this research, as well as targeting the lack of voices in racialised communities when considering representation in Public and Political life, is to address the power balances that exist between researchers and communities. Our mission when collecting research is clear, to decolonise research practices which have historically perpetuated white dominant hegemonies. All research collected by Race Alliance Wales (RAW) is a collaborative effort to evidence, measure and challenge existing structures in society which do not serve the communities in which they claim to serve. Peer research provides an exciting platform to counter exploitative practices in relation to collecting research.

Recruitment

RAW recruited four volunteer peer researchers to research the lack of representation of racialised people in Public and Political life – Charlie, Felix, Judy and Robyn. The recruitment was through an open call process, utilising email marketing, social media and word of mouth to recruit four peer researchers across Wales. Due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic all volunteering took place online via Zoom and Google Drive. The peer researchers were selected via an anonymised recruitment process to counter biases.

Training and support

In order to ensure peer researchers felt prepared for the role, as well as equipped with the knowledge to carry out research utilising best practice, they attended a series of training sessions. Kellet (2011) explains that researchers have a responsibility to conduct high quality, reliable and valid research.⁵³ The balance between supporting volunteers to enable them to practically carry out the research, as well as protect them from any anticipated emotional distress due to the research topic, was paramount within the volunteer programme design. The peer researchers committed to over 15 hours of training for their roles which included:

- Volunteer Peer Researcher Induction (2 hours) – introduction to volunteer peer researcher role including rights, responsibilities, expectations, and support. Delivered by Jami Abramson.
- Researching Racism in Wales - Context Training (3 hours) – Leila Usmani delivered training around systems of oppression and intercultural sensitivity. Nasir Adam delivered an introduction to racialised communities in Wales, exploring migration in Wales across the centuries.
- Social Research Methods Training (6 hours) – exploring the entire research cycle including design, sample sizes, methods, ethics, analysis, and dissemination. Delivered by Jami Abramson.
- Analysis Training (3 hours) – exploring methods of cooperative decision making and ways of interpreting data. Delivered by Jami Abramson.

Charlie, Felix, Judy and Robyn collectively committed over 300 hours of volunteering.

Policy circle work

We cannot forget the contributions from policy experts working within the equality sectors in Wales. Four professionals attended two separate policy circles hosted by RAW intended to explore the issue of representation and provide further scope and context to this issue. The information explored within these sessions set the scene for the research lead and peer researchers when considering their research design. These sessions were very helpful to ensure the research was timely and complimented other research as well as relevant policy and legislation.

Methods

The peer researchers, after receiving training around social research methods, decided the approach they wanted to take. The approach was mainly informed by the research scope and most importantly the ethical aspects of the research. The peer researchers felt strongly that they wanted to make the research design inclusive and accessible to all participants, regardless of background.

From research design to analysis, the active research project took four months to complete and aimed to answer the following questions:

- Why is there a lack of racialized people in Public and Political life?
- What are the obstacles they face?
- What has been helpful in their progression or advancement?
- What can we do to improve this?

Outreach



Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Representation in Public and Political Life

Do you identify as BAME? Are you 18+ and living in Wales? Then we want to hear from you!

We are leading peer research on the theme of **BAME Representation in Public and Political Life**. We want to understand what BAME people living in Wales think, feel, and perceive about the people and institutions that run this country, that have the power to make decisions that impact on our lives, and the lives of future generations. Contributions will form evidential basis to key actions and recommendations that will be used to lobby for social and political change in Wales.

To find out more about how your information will be stored, please see our [GDPR Guidelines and Privacy Notice](#)

Don't remain silent – this is your chance to express your views!

Closing date for responses: Monday 24th August at 5pm.

We decided that our overall landscape audience would be comprised of the general public, 18+, identifying as racialized and living in Wales, with the anticipation that they may have never considered entering the Welsh public and/or political sphere.

Our target audiences for interviews and focus groups, whilst adhering to the above criteria, were further divided into 3 groups. The 3 groups comprised of: those aspiring to work in Public and/or Political life, those already or previously engaged in Public life, and those already or previously engaged in Political life.

Mixed methods data collection

The peer researchers utilised a mixture of data collection methods in order to capture a both qualitative and quantitative data. The data collection methods used were as follows:

Qualitative – Total of 25 individuals

- 3 x focus groups consisting of between 2-5 persons
- 17 x 1-2-1 interviews
- 2 x targeted questionnaires aimed at those aspiring to be engaged or already engaged within Public & Political Life (for those unable to attend interviews)

Quantitative

- 107 Responses to the Landscape survey: to gauge overall life experiences and perceptions of Public and Political life in the general public (including unengaged, aspiring, or engaged).

The main aim concerned the collection of experiences relating to aspirations, progression, and sustaining positions in Public and Political life. The landscape survey aimed to gain a broad understanding of Public and Political life in Wales from the general public. The quantitative responses from the survey – primarily from closed questioning, with opportunity to expand in open boxes – aimed to provide a context and baseline for understanding wider engagement with Public and Political life. In the qualitative process, deep dive questioning and discussion was vital in order to explore the research questions of as aspiration, barriers, and solutions. Instead of exploring representation in Public and Political life utilising a structuralist approach – collecting data in relation to the systems that already exist – we utilised a Grounded Theory⁵⁴ approach, valuing the richness and diversity of individual experiences to build a bigger picture of what is happening in Wales. The participants experiences, stories, and words generated concepts and theory in which to analyse the data.

Ethical considerations

Informed consent

Informed consent was a driving factor for the peer researchers to ensure all participants received a great deal of transparency with regards to what they were trying to achieve. Many of the peer researchers have lived experience of being a research subjects when, even though they gave full consent via consent forms, they did not know the degree to which the information would be shared. The peer researchers adamantly wanted to correct this lack of clarity and transparency in the way their stories had been extracted in the past. Now, these peer researchers were in the trusted position as a researcher, responsible for people's stories and experiences. Instead of simply ticking boxes and getting signatures, they wanted buy-in from the participants into what the research study was trying to achieve.

Minimise risk of harm

The peer researchers spent time thinking about potential risks to participants when taking part in the study. A concern was due to the nature of conducting interviews online. If someone had relayed an experience that was difficult and traumatic through video chat, it is difficult to know what to do after the interview to ensure participants receive the appropriate support. The peer researchers clearly outlined the range of perceived risks that could occur due to taking part in the study in the information sheet provided to participants. They also took time to talk through the boundaries of what could and could not be discussed. Due to the nature of this study, it was very important to also consider the peer researchers wellbeing as they may share difficult lived experiences expressed by participants. Peer researchers could utilise support from each other as well as the two RAW development workers in the event of triggers arising from difficult topics discussed.

Right to privacy; protect anonymity and confidentiality

The peer researchers stored all data relating to the research study in line with General Data Protection Regulation (2016). All data was stored in a password-protected account whereby only the RAW team could access. All data, including survey responses and transcripts were anonymised using codes for each participant. Aside from the focus groups, all interviews were delivered between researcher(s) and participants only, via Zoom. All content of interviews adhered to confidentially unless something of concern which could endanger someone's safety was raised. In line with All Wales Safeguarding procedures, following the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014), the degree

of confidentiality was explained to all participants on the information sheet and in-person prior to starting the interviews.

As referenced earlier, in an attempt to decolonise the practices in this research project, all contributors to surveys, interviews and focus groups were given the explicit opportunity to opt-in to having their names added to the research paper as contributors, and if they so wished, to be explicitly pertained to in relation to quotes used. This offer was considered again in regard to breaking down the perpetuation of researchers owning stories and contributions, and not recognising that these are owned by the people to whom they pertain. None of the contributors however decided to opt into this offer, as such, their confidentiality has been maintained.

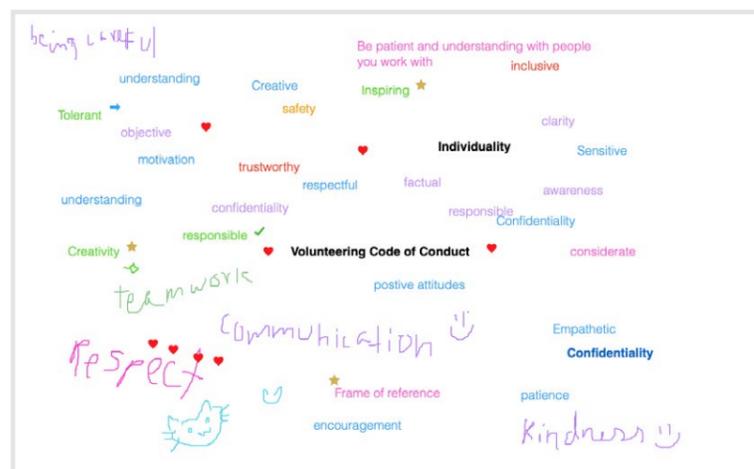
Avoid deceptive practices

All participants received an information sheet to ensure they were aware of the purpose of the research study, the expectations and what would happen with the information they shared; across focus groups, interviews and survey.

Right to withdraw

All participants received an information sheet detailing the purpose of the study, the expectations of participants, and how information would be used and shared. The participants could choose to leave the research study at any time and the peer researchers explained the right to withdraw at the start of all interviews and focus groups.

The peer researchers also extensively considered additional ethical issues that could arise, particularly around bias, perceived power imbalances between participant/researcher, and intercultural sensitivities.



Limitations

COVID-19

With COVID-19 taking precedence during 2020, this research study has taken place in one of the most challenging times to ensure accessibility and participation for participants. On the one hand, utilising technology such as video chat software allowed greater engagement with a broader demographic across Wales. On the other hand, the research would undoubtedly benefit from a larger sample size and a longer timeframe to generate a more comprehensive study of the racialized population across Wales.

Representative sample

Although the majority of people who contributed to the research were based in South Wales, primarily Cardiff, Swansea, Newport, Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend, the Vale of Glamorgan, Caerphilly and Mounmouthshire, we were also pleased to receive a number of contributions from Camarthenshire, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd. In addition, we had contribution from a variety of different racial groups, including Arab/Arab British/Arab Welsh, Asian/Asian British/Asian Welsh (including Bangladeshi, Chinese, Pakistani, Indian and other regions), Black/Black British/Black Welsh (including African, Caribbean and other regions), European, Romani and a variety of mixed heritages, with people who were Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, non-religious, and other religions represented, as well as diversity across migration status, including not only British nationals, but also migrants with temporary residence, asylum seekers and refugees. The gender divide was a close 50/50 male-female divide, with a handful of non-binary contributors, and although the majority marked as heterosexual, a distinct percentage defined as bisexual, gay/lesbian and self-defining. Contributions were made from people who identify as neuro-diverse and a relatively even split across age brackets were engaged and comprised of people in full time and part time employment, retirees, students, freelancers, and unemployed. Finally, contributors' level of education ranged from having GCSE or equivalent only, through to PhDs.

Due to the low number of contributors in total however, and the lack of time and capacity, it was not possible to disaggregate the results and compare between different groups to try and understand an intersectional picture beyond that reported directly in verbatim comments. As always, it may be worth considering how to engage with those in areas which were less represented than others in future.

In addition, perhaps the White British/Welsh experience could have been considered to draw up a comparative study between the groups to see where the underlying problems are in the system.

Focus

Overall, the research study could benefit from a more refined focus. The breadth of the Public and Political landscape in Wales is vast, although similar issues emerged across different sectors, there is definitely scope to showcase the intricacies and nuances of public and political life respectively.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Our vision for public and political life – the Wales we want to see

“It’s about challenging the narrative of what we expect to be normal”

(Public/Political Aspirant)

A fairer, diverse and representative public and political sector

When asked the question ‘In terms of Public and Political Representation – what’s important to you? What would you like to see?’ the prevailing answer from most contributors to our research was, simply, a Fairer, Diverse and Representative Public and Political Sector. People stated wanting to see the right people in the right roles, expanding opportunities for involvement for people from a variety of sectors and pathways, with a clear recognition that diversity creates better organisations, improves the work done, opening board members, politicians and staff members’ eyes to the myriad different issues faced by people in Wales - in essence - strengthening democracy. Several respondents highlighted that, without diverse representation, sectors of society are continually left behind, and that “people need to look at organisations and see they’re represented, otherwise they won’t ...get involved”. (Public Body Board Member)

“I want the people that represent us to look like us, to feel like us, to sound like us, because if they don’t, then how can we have confidence that they understand our needs?”

(Public Body Board Member)

Promoting positive role models

One of the prominent reasons for wanting this diversity was communicated as the need to promote positive role models for racialised people in Wales. Explored in more depth in the remainder of this report, contributors felt that in addition to inspiring potential new public / political candidates, role models would be able to open the door for other people and create a “leadership that trust racialised communities (in the) same way as they trust white communities”. (Public Body Board Member)

“I am from Rwanda, and we have 46% women in Parliament. This really makes me confident as a woman, growing up I knew I can make it and I couldn’t see the barrier of me being a woman because I grew up seeing other women doing it. So the same thing I want to see our BAME community here, people making it, to remove that fear... if I see so and so have made it, I can also do it, my children can do it because mummy did it.”

(Public/Political Aspirant)

Where the voices of racialised people are heard

Respondents also commented that they wanted to see a Wales where Public and Political life went beyond the tick box tokenistic exercise, and that “having diversity is enriched by more people, not just having representation from one person” (Politician), allowing for the voices of racialised people to be heard and to feel that they are accepted and belong, and that challenges to the system would be received as a positive criticism. Respondents also stated that they “always wanted a place that I can speak freely and make a difference without fear [and] as we do this going forward is not to alienate people, not to make them out the bad guys” (Survey respondent), with an elected councillor stating that racialised people “should be able to speak out, [and] feel one among us” (Politician), instead of eliciting the fragility and defensiveness that it often does currently.

‘[In regard to demographics], right now it feels we are at the beginning of change... we need to keep an eye on it, and over the next ten years, if you don’t start to see [diverse racialised representation] coming into fruition, then you have to ask what’s going wrong?’

(Public Body Board Member)

Beyond the 7% reflective of the ‘BAME’ population in Wales

With this, the call was explicit from many – we need proportionate representation, and this means going beyond the 7% reflective of the ‘BAME’ population in Wales, echoing the long-standing call that one person cannot represent all racialised communities, stating that “we use the term ‘BAME’ quite loosely, there’s a lot of communities that fall within it... [therefore] we need to increase the diversity of people that we bring to the table for providing these ‘BAME’ voices.” (Public/Political Aspirant). It was recognised that for this to

happen, we must analyse what diversity really means, questioning if the current application of the term is itself a problem, a box to tick, and an industry “an industry where people think [diversity] are the percentages, this is success?” (Public Body Board Member). It was further clearly argued that we cannot split people in half, and that to obtain true representation of the myriad races and ethnicities present in Wales, a higher percentage of seats needs to be filled by racialised people reflecting these communities. Going further, a number of contributors made explicit reference to the need for due regard to be given to other protected characteristics and their reflective representation – taking into consideration especially racialised women, Black people, racialised young people, racialised disabled people, and racialised LGBTQIA+ people, as well as consideration for regional representation to include intersectionality in practice and in reality, beyond just rhetoric.

“I would like to see everyone represented. And that means not just 7% BAME people because that’s equivalent to the population... we need more than that, maybe 30% or even 50%... doesn’t mean non-BAME people will lose out, they would still have half the power. We’re all so different so we need people represented from all the different communities here in Wales. And also, with other backgrounds like LGBTQIA+ / disabled / non-binary and women...”

(Survey Respondent)

A Wales where institutional racism has been eradicated and racialised people hold equal power to their White British counterparts

With this, a strong feeling of a view to equality was presented, with many respondents communicating that they wished to see a Wales where institutional racism has been eradicated, tackling the roots of racial inequality, especially anti-blackness, and where racialised people are not just given a seat at the table, but their experience in public and/or political life grants them access to equal power to their White British counterparts – not just in the sense of being paid equally for their contributions, but also in relation to ‘being seen’, leading to a sector that focuses on ‘human needs’ over strand needs.

“If the root isn’t right, it doesn’t matter how many branches the tree has, it will never give fruit...”

(Survey Respondent)

A utopian vision? We hope not. However, we recognise that a lot of active work needs to be done to change systems, processes, feelings and racist biases to achieve this vision. We shall continue therefore to explore how and why we are in a situation that does not embody the vision above, one that many people, marginalised or not, hold true, and how therefore we may begin to make tangible movements towards achieving a vision of an anti-racist Wales, for the least part in Public and Political life, the bodies and institutions that govern the way in which the rest of the country functions and develops.

“Because of Wales’ uniqueness, I think there can be some really ground-breaking or world-changing approaches to how we deal with race.”

(Public Body Board Member)

Broad experiences of racialised people in Wales

Racialised people disproportionately experience socio-economic deprivation

One cannot just walk into a public or political role, and much is dependent on not only networks, role models and a direct understanding of the sector, but on confidence and motivation to actively pursue an aspiration to enter public or political life. It is important to recognise that general experiences of racialised people and especially those of professional life in Wales impact the perception of one’s ability, chances and opportunities as well as desire to enter public and political life. To begin with, therefore, we felt the need to understand a bit more what the overriding experiences are of racialised people in Wales especially in relation to professional progression.

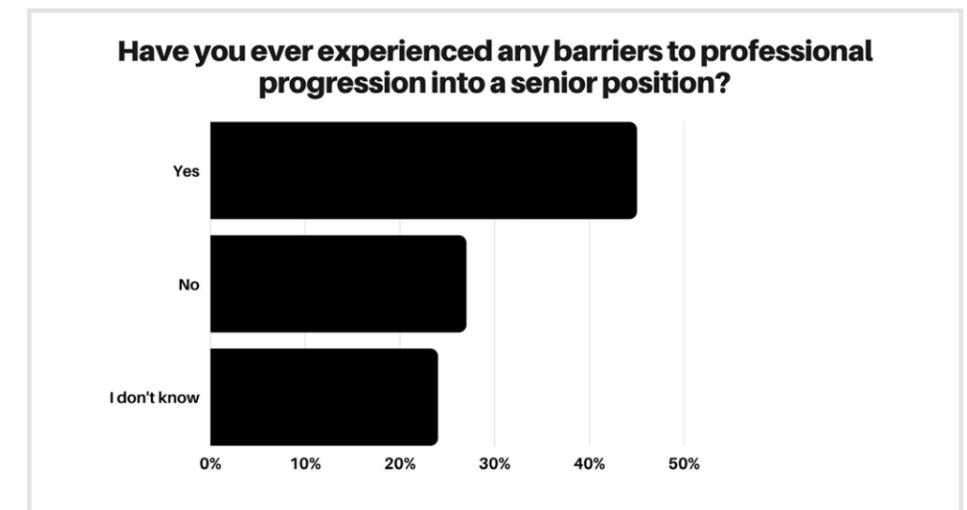
When exploring this in our research, one core element that stood out was the known fact that racialised people disproportionately experience socio-economic deprivation in Wales, and this is an experience across the board, from the general public surveyed, to people actively aspiring to public and/or political life, and those already engaged in public body board or political positions. Many respondents explained that their upbringing and family background was a working class one, with parents in precarious employment, not speaking

English and/or being illiterate, some even experiencing homelessness. Some had come from middle class lives in their countries of origin and hadn’t experienced oppression until moving to Wales. Many identified the pressure to be a ‘good immigrant’ and not criticise systems here. Facing discrimination in education and employment has a direct impact on the anxieties of racialised people that they might face the same level of discrimination in their journey to as well as in any actual positions in public and political life.

Discrimination in employment

When asked in the survey if people had faced discrimination in certain areas of life, an overwhelming 69% said they had face discrimination in employment, followed by 40% experiencing discrimination in education and 34% experiencing discrimination in society at large. Only 6% of survey respondents categorically stated they had faced no discrimination. The prevailing view of respondents was captured by one respondent who noted that discrimination has been “embedded into systems since the dawn of time.” (Public/Political Aspirant) This was reported not only in relation to race, but intersectionally, and many contributors reported discrimination due to being a woman, an older person, a younger person, due to their level of education, their sexuality, socioeconomic class, or geographic location.

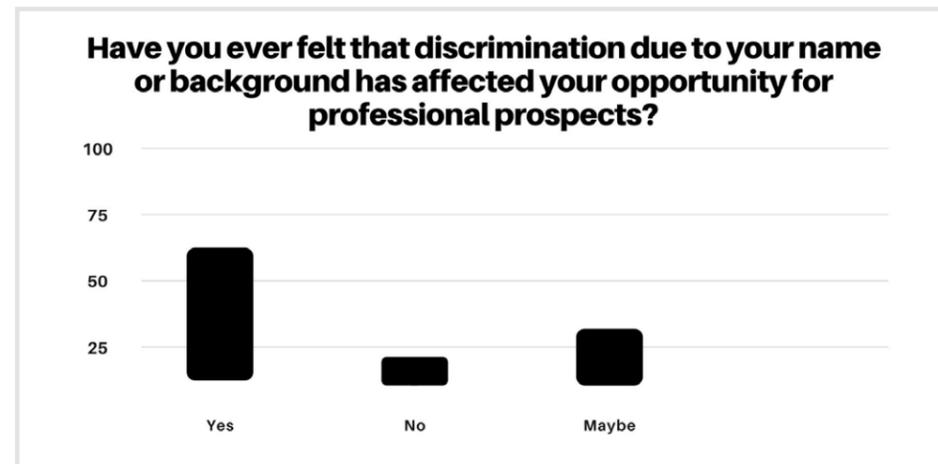
Specific barriers to professional progression



In addition, when survey respondents were asked if they had faced barriers to professional progression/into a senior position, 45% said yes and 25% said they didn't know. This was confirmed in interviews, with contributors explaining that they had done "lots of conforming to fit in... to not make people intimidated by my presence" (Public/Political Aspirant), to not be too challenging. Some spoke of dumbing themselves down, of not wanting to upset white people, and of being left feeling "whitewashed because of ... what I've had to do to fit in" (Public/Political Aspirant). Delving deeper – a combined total of 69% reported discrimination due to their name or background, with 46% saying they had changed the way they speak, with a few respondents providing anecdotes of being explicitly told that they had to learn to 'speak properly to get anywhere in life', that their command of the language was good, but their accent was too harsh. Indeed, we heard that concerted efforts were made by many to learn how to speak with an air of British politeness and professionalism.

"I have modified my accent to fit in and not get picked up on being foreign. This happened subconsciously I am now realising, but it worked. I rarely get questioned on my origin anymore."

(Survey Respondent)



Not promoted or given progression opportunities despite having the relevant skills and experience

These experiences of discrimination are further compounded by the upsetting fact that the majority of contributors had not been promoted or given progression opportunities despite having the relevant skills and experience, finding it easier to obtain work in England over Wales, and being expressly told they didn't have the right networks, or that they didn't tick certain boxes, evidencing a strong feeling of nepotism in professional, public and political life in Wales. Although one interviewee stated that they "ended up seeking jobs where my ethnic background was more valued than my education and professional development" (Politician), broadly speaking 63% of contributors felt their lived experience was not understood, considered or valued when pursuing professional opportunities, only ever being asked about professional experience, and their Intercultural abilities dismissed even though they would have been useful for job.

Codeswitching⁵⁵

In addition, 29% of survey respondents stated that they had changed their appearance, feeling that without doing so they were 'not the right fit', with male contributors recognising that without wearing a suit, one wouldn't fit in to public or political life in Wales, and females making an active decision to not wear traditional clothes, dressing in a more anglicised way. This experience of code-switching was emphasised for some who also went to the lengths of changing their names. Going further, 47% of survey respondents reported hiding elements of their personal life when pursuing professional opportunities, and 47% reported actively censoring their opinions, not standing up for themselves, trying not to voice their concerns, or seem too opinionated, to avoid being seen as a troublemaker or as the stereotypical 'angry black person'.

Institutional and systemic racism

Beyond this however, and much more prevalent in the experience of racialised people in Wales, is the exorbitant power and symptomatic expression of institutional and systemic racism, explicitly communicated by the majority of survey respondents and interviewees as the mass of white faces seen in most realms of power in Wales, especially public, political and professional realms, where many stated they had never been interviewed by a non-white person, unless it was a 'BAME-led' organisation.

“It’s a weird relationship isn’t it, Wales, people of colour, and history because... the Welsh were colonisers and they benefited massively from colonisation. But were also colonised in a way [by the English]... it becomes problematic when Welsh people are like, ‘oh no we can’t be racist, the English have like done all the [colonising]’ - ...it’s a very naïve and simplistic view.”

(Public Body Board Member)

Culture of racism

We heard many examples of an overarching culture of racism embodied by many organisations and their representatives, and of white supremacy⁵⁶ and privilege being prevalent in the workplace, including a hierarchy of racial discrimination from anti-blackness to Sinophobia. This included evidence of the prevalence of nuanced, intangible and covert racism, with people being told in patronising and condescending ways things like they were ‘lucky to be in their position’. Often, they felt that they were seen by others as hard work, difficult, challenging, ungrateful, and insubordinate, and that “there was a degree of apprehension when I did a good job” (Survey respondent). Some were left with feelings of active gaslighting – “sometimes you are being picked on so much that you think that there is something wrong with you or I’m going crazy, but there’s not. When you listen to everyone, it’s not.” (Public/Political Aspirant)

“There are people I know... I don’t rate their work, but they’re always like being described in a way in which I never see non-white people described, geniuses and that they’re disrupting the system ... [but] if a black person did it, they’re just seen as trouble...”

(Public Body Board Member)

“I was outright bullied... any suggestions or critiques I made of the culture, service design etc. was ‘far too challenging’ - I was perceived as ‘hard work’ by senior management. I was heavily scrutinised, and managers would walk into an open plan office and berate me in front of other staff members. I was cherry picked to fill in a survey on staff inductions - it was supposed to be anonymous. However, my manager picked me up on issues that I had raised stating that I was ‘ungrateful’ and ‘insubordinate’”.

(Survey Respondent)

Stereotypes, assumptions, tropes and tokenism

This culture was also rife with specific stereotypes, assumptions and tropes being thrown at racialised people directly (e.g. people being told all Muslims are terrorists, and thinking all people from one ethnic group look the same) and in the form of microaggressions, for example through racial ‘banter’. There was evidence of low levels of intercultural sensitivity, e.g. pointing out that clothes and jewellery were ‘strange’ and being told “[you’re] not like others - why can’t others be like you?” (Public/Political Aspirant)

“One problem we have is that we want to be normal, we think we’re normal, and what tells you you’re not normal is white people, they tell you you’re different, constantly remind you you’re not ‘their’ normal...”

(Politician)

One of the most prevalent examples of institutional racism that most contributors reported was tokenism, seeing it and being the subject of it. Many people commented on the fact that in professional spheres, it was widely believed that they could represent all racialised people, some being openly told they were a diversity appointment, or that they had raised percentage points of BAME representatives to X%, with one respondent stating it was “heart-breaking to be a tick box.” (Public/Political Aspirant)

“If we don’t get a job, we think was it because I wasn’t qualified enough or is it because of my skin colour and my religion or my ethnicity... And then when we do get it, do we feel that is it a token gesture, or is it because of my skills and my abilities?”

(Public Body Board Member)

Combined, these experiences have left racialised people in Wales feeling like they and their issues are not taken seriously, making it hard to have their voices heard unless they had a white person to back them up, further evidenced by a number of people explicitly stating that they had been gagged and made to sign non-disclosure agreements after raising grievances in their organisations around racism.

Overt and direct racism

While all of this would of course impact confidence, motivation and experiences and perceptions of public and political life, which we shall review in the next section, we must not kid ourselves that it is only nuanced, intangible and covert racism that is a regular experience of racialised people in Wales. In addition to the above, there was regular reporting in our research of experiences of overt racism, bias and active exclusion in professional and educational settings, including evidence of unequal pay. Furthermore, a large number of respondents reported experiences in life, both historical and more recent, of having stones thrown at them, being spat at, subjected to racist slurs and songs, with some fearing an increase in these forms of attack post covid lockdowns.

'I'm Welsh, my children are Welsh... when they say, go home, well this is my home, I'm not going anywhere!'

(Public Body Board Member)

'Any mention of my Romani background and perceptions of me shift in a negative way'

(Survey Respondent)

The experience of racism was also reported repeatedly in relation to migration status / perception of 'Welshness', not only in systemic ways such as limiting rights to work, difficulties in obtaining settled status, and failing habitual residency tests due to maladministration, but "being told that the job had to go to a "native" despite having done well at the interview" (Survey Respondent), leaving those born in Wales constantly emphasising the fact to mitigate this xenophobia.

'The assumption was made that due to being foreign I would not have the appropriate understanding of the UK health & social care system... In my first job I was actually told that they nearly didn't hire me because of this.'

(Survey Respondent)

'On arrival at an interview, I introduced myself and the first words out of the mouth of the Chief Executive were, "That's not a Welsh accent!"'

(Survey Respondent)

Understanding and perceptions of public and political life

Lack of understanding

Following this evidence of broader experiences, we wanted to find out therefore what people's specific experiences, understanding and perceptions of public and political life in Wales were. In a broad sense, many felt that they had a very superficial understanding, with many anecdotes evidencing a real lack of understanding of what public and political life is.

Lip service

Those with some understanding or experience of public or political life, felt that most people involved in these institutions only acted in self-interest, with most people in positions of authority being privileged and prejudiced, with most engagement being seen as lip service, or only surrounding negative circumstances. Some felt that engagement activities amounted to "intellectual theft by the pick your brains brigade" (Public/Political Aspirant), or amounted to nothing more than lip service, with endless reports but no changes being seen on the ground.

"MPs, MSs, Local Councillors, Commissioners, say all the right words – but situation doesn't change on the ground – election after election – are they stupid or are you stupid? Something is wrong. One of you is misunderstanding how system works."

(Politician)

The sector is exclusive

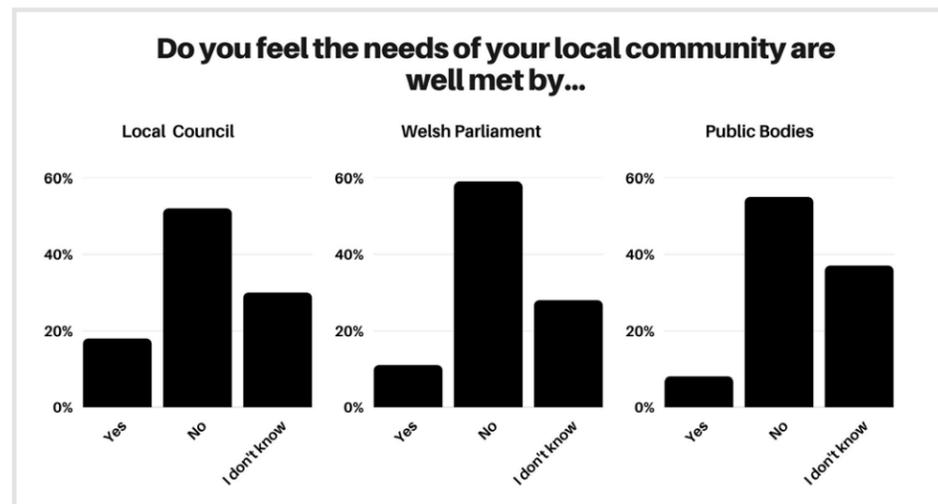
And when reflecting on political life more broadly, many contributors who were actively involved as politicians or candidates, felt that the sector was extremely exclusive, feeling that parties only wanting to place people with certain privileged backgrounds, that you must look and talk in a certain way to be a politician, driven by ego and a competition just to win seats, a sphere filled with corruption and institutional, systemic racism.

“[Political parties] are not really interested in justice, but primarily interested in power - their primary goal / existence is to gain control [and] further their own tightening of power ... they will do what they need to get there. I was not aware of this in the process, I thought [it was] more to do with individual, principles, values, but they are a secondary consideration for political parties.”

(Politician)

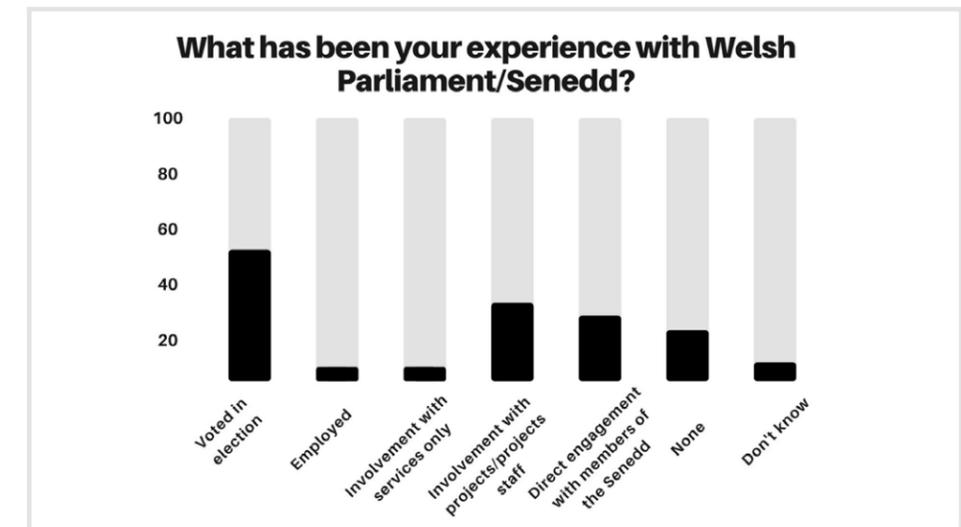
Needs not met...

We asked respondents whether they felt that their local community's needs were met by Local Authorities, Welsh Government and Public bodies. In all cases, more than half of respondents said they felt their local community's needs were not met by these institutions, although Local Authorities were the group which scored most positively out of the three.



... by Welsh Parliament

More specifically, when we asked the general public what their direct experience was with Welsh Parliament, 52% had voted, 29% had been involved with projects, 27% had directly engaged with Members of the Senedd, and only 5% had been employed or engaged with services. Shockingly however, 25% reported to having had no direct experience with the Senedd. It was not surprising therefore that when asked if they felt their Needs were met by Senedd, 60% said No, and 28% said they did not know. Only 1.32% said yes, they felt their needs were met by the Senedd.



...by Local Government

The experience of Local Government was markedly better, however arguably still lacking, with 71% having voted, 29% having engaged with Local Councillor, a higher rate of 21% employed, 26% being involved with projects, and 21% having had experiences of services only. It was good to see that only 13% of respondents felt they had no/unknown experience of local government, however this again demonstrates a clear misunderstanding of the role of local councils in the day-to-day life of racialised citizens in Wales. The picture was not much better surrounding if people felt their needs were met, with 55% saying no, and 29% saying they did not know although a higher percentage of 17%, felt their needs were met by their local council. In survey comments and interviews however, a less than positive picture of local councillors and their positions was painted, with people feeling that they only engaged with the community to raise their profile or when they wanted you to vote, and a

clear view that not only are there few racialised councillors in many areas of Wales, but the intersection of race and gender left a clear void of non-male racialised councillors across the country. Even for those councillors interviewed, the perception and experience was that only ‘tame⁵⁷’ racialised councillors were ever picked for Cabinet positions, and even then it was rare, exemplified by Cardiff continuing to have an all-White cabinet at its helm, suggesting an enduring glass or even steel ceiling in politics in Wales.

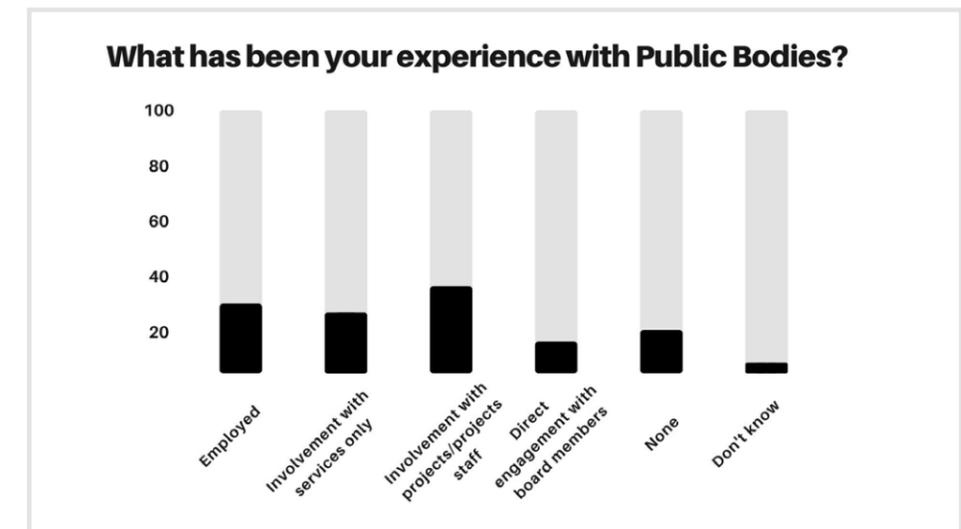


“There’s a glass ceiling in terms of political roles. You can get in at the lower rank but will that opportunity then to move up or take on a further responsibility be there? You may have a lot of BAME councillors and that will tick your box, but then how many BAME Cabinet Members do you have, how many BAME Leaders do you have? In Wales we don’t have a BAME leader, I think there’s two Cabinet members that are BAME, that’s it. For twenty-two local authorities, hundreds of elected members, and there’s no leader of a local authority that’s BAME. There’s no deputy leader of a local authority that’s BAME. It’s disappointing.”

(Politician)

...by Public bodies

Moving then to Public Bodies, in terms of the direct experience of the general racialised population in Wales, 35% reported engagement with projects, 24% with services, 28% had been employed by a public body, and 19% had had direct engagement with board members. Worryingly again however, 37% reported no/ unknown direct experience with public bodies,⁵⁸ and a stark 55% felt their needs were not met by the public sector in Wales, with a further 37% feeling they didn’t know.⁵⁹ Contributors with experience of public bodies in Wales had a lot more to say on their experiences, communicating that they were difficult to access, or it was easier for their voice to be heard via a third sector organisation, but not as an individual. Contributions from those engaged in public life moved on to explicitly state how exclusive public bodies in Wales were, that they were continually the only token racialised person in the room/ sector, again with experiences of being ‘tone policed⁶⁰’ and only welcomed “as long as you’re in a subservient role, support them and tell them how great all the work they’re doing with Black people is... it’s alright... relationships fall apart if you’re a bit pushy.” (Public Body Board Member). A couple of experiences moved into explicitly racist commentary, with respondents witnessing first hand board members stating that the focus of work must be on the White Welsh majority population, and that “maybe we shouldn’t release a Black Lives Matters statement because it’s going to upset the majority of Wales, we’ve got to think about white people...” (Public Body Board Member), as well as viewing that many board members were unfit for their roles, joining only for the title, or using their positions to obtain paid consultancy work.



“Public bodies are racist, institutionally racist ...you can't get away from that, you can't talk to me about all your diversity and all these great projects you're doing because I'm looking at your staff team and that tells me something else.”

(Public Body Board Member)

Institutional racism

These overarching experiences of public and political life in Wales are however not surprising. When explored with more vigour, a large number of contributors viewed that public and political life in Wales is inherently institutionally racist, evidenced by the clear lack of representation in Wales, a view that public body boards are all White British, as well as never having sent a racialised politician to Westminster or the EU, and selection bias and partiality to those who are viewed as similar to those in power, to ensure less disruption and conflict. It was expressed that the running of our country embodies and perpetuates systemic racism and colonial practices throughout, contributors recognised that while these intuitions may “take our culture and support Bute Town Carnival, [they] won't hire you!” (Public Body Board Member).

“We are experiencing a plague of institutional racism, heightened police violence, a lack of Windrush implementation, even BAME organisations do not hire and pay Black managers. There is a devastating level of racial inequality in Wales and nobody wants to deal with it or speak out because of a) anti-Blackness, b) fear of being shunned in Welsh public life and c) Wales' habit of butchering BAME communities politically for personal gain.”

(Survey Respondent)

Covert racism, microaggressions and tokenism

As with life and the broader experiences of racialised people in Wales, what we find again is the prevalence of covert racism, with many of those actively in public or political positions reporting experiences of undue criticism, having questions directed at leadership being diverted and made personal, their identity being weaponised against them, and being left scared to speak out and be vocal about issues, due to being ostracised by counterparts when raising issues around internal racism.

“The day I started to burn bridges with my local party was the day I started to advocate for BAME businesses. People had the view that ‘these people’ have too many barbers, fronts for money laundering, can't all be making money, why need so many take-aways... in politics, it's a nasty business... it was only so long I could keep quiet and not respond to those micro-aggressions... the level of casual racism from [politicians] who represent [one of] the most culturally diverse constituencies in Wales... it's pretty poor.”

(Politician)

This covert racism was again contextualised furthermore with experiences of microaggressions, interviewees stating they felt othered, again tokenised, and actively tokenised, being involved in public or political life as a tick box exercise, being expected to only talk on race issues, or to represent all racialised people, and therefore feeling that if they took “one day off, it was a day off for your community”. (Public body board member) In addition to this, a consistent view of lip service by public and political institutions was portrayed, with many feeling that although bodies and political parties talk about the needs of racialised people in Wales, they do not believe there is an issue in their particular establishment.

“I get contacted by the police; they want me at every single meeting to be the voice of BAME people. And it's good that you know they want to work closer, but it's a feeling that they want to buy in someone, rather than owning the work themselves. I'm always seen as the person to solve things.”

(Public/Political Aspirant)

They've failed us

These experiences and perceptions of public and political life have unsurprisingly therefore led to most respondents feeling that they are not valued, their lived experience negated and belittled and that their opinion doesn't count. They feel that their needs are ignored, or are an afterthought, and that decisions taken only reflect the needs of those in the room, spaces filled with people who are ignorant of or uninvested in the needs of racialised people and who lack empathy. Ultimately, and sadly, racialised people in Wales are left feeling that public and political realms just don't care, emphasised by

the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the lives and livelihoods of racialised communities, with particular concern for racialised people living in remote and geographically excluded areas of Wales. Respondents stated that public and political life has failed us, and with this, we are left with no reason to trust the people in / these institutions of power.

“There is an overwhelming lack of trust between communities and public sector services.”

(Survey respondent)

It's them and us, we don't belong

Racialised people are therefore left feeling that in Wales there is a clear 'them and us' system that actively isolates and segregates the population, leaving us feel that we do not belong, to the nation or our local communities, that we are not welcome and that with this, the 'feeling of attachment to where we live becomes weaker'. Many contributors clearly stated that by growing up in a country where you cannot occupy these spaces, you feel like the space isn't for you, and even if you tried, you wouldn't be considered for a position anyway. For those with clear aspirations to join public or political life, it was strongly felt that the more they learnt, the more inaccessible the spaces became.

“Being the only BAME councillor feels odd – full of 60+ all white – I feel they're thinking 'what the hell is he doing here?' – he doesn't fit here – doesn't belong' – look at all the pictures, white male dominated – privileged background ...”

(Politician)

Nepotism and gatekeeping

When looking at why there is such a lack of racialised representation, we heard a lot about nepotism and gatekeeping that is seen to plague public and political life in Wales. Explored in more detail later on, contributors recognised that by virtue of having parents in powerful positions, the same people are found on various public body boards as well as local councils, with one politician describing how his local party branch is controlled by one family who hold the power over votes, with representative politicians being in on it all. What we are left with then is a population that is reportedly left with serious negative impacts on aspirations to join these arenas, and especially young people, due to lack of role models and a continued feeling of disenfranchisement, apathy

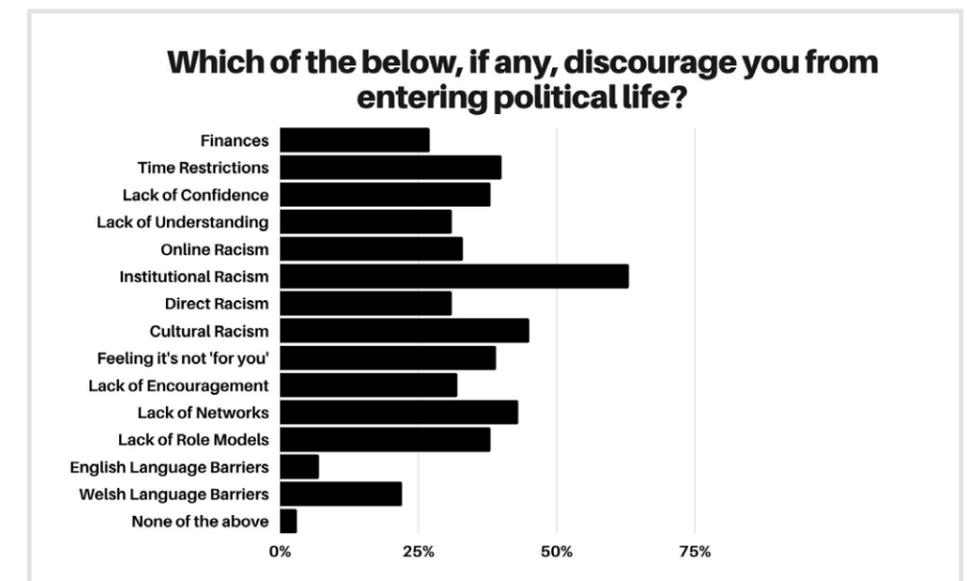
and political malaise, feeling more and more fatigued and despondent, and not engaging in public or political life, with a marked 65% of survey respondents saying they would not be interested in pursuing a political position in Wales, compared to only 19% not interested in pursuing a public body board role.

“I've not voted in an election, the Senedd has turned back time for people of colour in Wales, I don't want to vote for a system where a lack of BAME people is normalised and promoted.”

(Survey Respondent)

Barriers to entering public and political life, practical and aspirational

Given such evidence of low aspirations to enter political and public life, we sought to understand in more detail why people are particularly discouraged, and what the barriers might be. In doing so, a floodlight was shone on many of the aspirational and practical barriers that racialised people in Wales experience.



Institutional racism

As we can see, once again, the most prominent barrier to entering public and political life, a thread throughout racialised people's experiences in Wales, is the experience of institutional racism, with over 60% of survey respondents stating it actively discourages their aspiration or desire to enter these areas. Institutional racism, baked into our systems, in politics especially, was a prevalent theme in our research and interviews, with a number of people categorically stating that White British people in Wales are 'just not ready to see a Black First Minister,' let alone an increased rate of racialised representation. Interestingly, for those already politically engaged, an added layer was that it had on occasion been actively communicated to them by their White British counterparts that they would only have a chance of being successful in an election if they stood in an area of Wales that had a higher than average racialised population, and even more important was the percentage of racialised people in the party branch electorate.

"I feel like sometimes I'm too brown for the white vote and I'm too white for the brown vote."

(Political Aspirant)

Migration and 'Welshness'

Some respondents gave examples of people from England being actively prioritised over racialised people from Wales for public and political positions ignoring the wealth of experience here, from those born here and migrants combined. Some had experienced heightened online abuse due to not being Welsh, with commentary that they wouldn't get it if they didn't grow up here, and one politician being told during his journey that he was not allowed to stand in Wales due to not having been born here. In relation to Welsh language, 23% of respondents felt that the requirement for Welsh Language skills would discourage them from entering political life compared with only 6.54% feeling that English language skills requirements would discourage them.

"I'm Welsh, I was born in Cardiff, I've lived here my entire life, however, in a publicly facing position, my ancestry and my heritage and my Welshness is scrutinised straight away ...people won't even look at my track record,... what's going to be scrutinised is my brown skin, my big nose... that's what's going to be scrutinised."

(Public/Political Aspirant)

"I'm fortunate because I grew up here, I was born here, and I don't speak with an accent. And I think if I spoke with an accent or I'd moved here, then I think I'd have some different experiences."

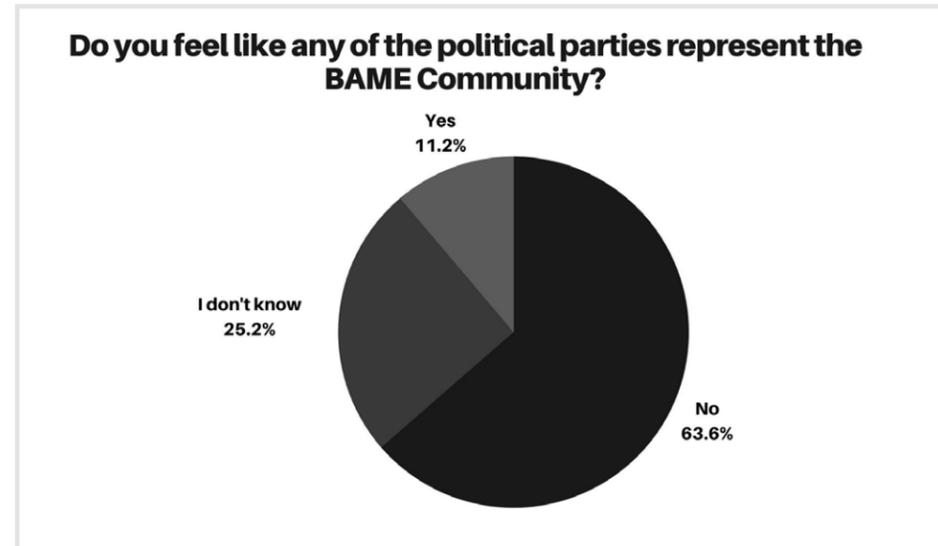
(Politician)

Public and political systems

Within this topic of institutional racism, respondents revealed that the public and political systems themselves are hugely racist, colonial and discouraging for racialised people, and that the 'archaic traditional attitudes' and inherent competition in the system is antithetical to equality and fairness - a system created for 'political lifers' and actively geared against racialised people. People with direct experience of public and political life were themselves shocked at the ability of people to 'buy titles' through philanthropic endeavours only available to those with generational wealth and the right networks, and with these titles able to obtain positions without application or election. For those interviewed, a number stated they felt they had only managed to win an election because it was a bi-election, which allowed the party to focus on their campaign, but when it came to general elections (both at the Parliamentary and Local level), the active support dwindled, and some were not successful in being elected again. This systemically racist approach was also compounded in people's experiences who felt that if there were more than one racialised candidate presented to the electorate⁶¹, they were 'splitting the BAME vote' - and if a racialised person had already been fielded by the party, they were told there wasn't a need for more. For those with an active disdain towards the idea of entering public or political life, comments included that in the best case there was too much red tape to effect change, and in the worst case, they would either lose their principles or feel complicit in the suffering of the public. Unfortunately for some with an active aspiration, conflicts of interest between the system and employment arose, leading them to have to choose and ultimately step down from a political role due to their employment position in the public sector. Others were actively victimised by employers now sitting as their constituents, not giving them time off for their councillor roles, causing them to again choose, and in one case resign from their employment.

"It's not about individual, it's about the party. If you are standing on the right ticket you can get anyone in... We must realise the political arena is a cut-throat industry, it is not interested in people primarily."

(Politician)



Political parties don't represent us

And in relation to political life more specifically, a dismaying 63.6% of survey respondents did not feel any of the political parties represent BAME people, with an additional 25.2% saying they didn't know. All interviewees viewed it as nearly impossible for a racialised person to get elected as an independent candidate first time round - within the political system in Wales you therefore must be a member of a political party to win, and within those available, a strong feeling is held that your chances of selection, let alone election are higher in only two or three of the parties represented in the political landscape in Wales. With this process therefore, many felt that even though they had joined a party, they would not or did not receive active support from the party in their aspiration or journey to political life. A number commented on not being given access to winnable seats, being asked to stand as a paper candidate or parachuted into an area with low 'BAME' populations, with no chance of winning, with one being de-selected by the party leader and removed from the field even after putting in a lot of work to be selected, being told their time would come, but it was not now.

"They don't just want people of colour, but people of colour they can control, who fall into their brand of politics, and won't challenge in any way - that is a genuine issue within the party in Wales."

(Politician)

Politicians

Perceptions and experience of politicians themselves was also an active discourager to entering political life for contributors to our research, with people referencing corruption including expenses scandals, sexual harassment and other scandals, leaving racialised people with the opinion that, essentially, all politicians are liars, with their credentials being questionable.

Practical processes

Another consistent systemic barrier referenced were the practical processes to appointment, both politically and publicly, with the majority of people, regardless of their position or experience, recognising that both were unclear, opaque, inaccessible and complex. Many felt that processes were purposefully hidden, and the only way to manage it was through active coaching, though it still left people feeling emotionally drained, with assessment periods feeling exceptionally taxing.

"When it comes to like public and political life, we don't know the routes into these spaces, they've never been made public... it's been systemically designed to keep people out, so you don't know what's available, what's accessible."

(Public/Political Aspirant)

"Information about the process isn't very clear, it's not easy to access...the legal process that you have to submit a form and this, that and the other. I think that's complicated; I don't think it's set out clearly. Things like election spend, you get something like 0.8 pence per elector to spend... could you not just tell me how much my budget is? ...and you know you must sit there and work it out and then you have to return your elections expenses, and there is no form, how do I do it? It's tough."

(Politician)

Even if the process is accessed and understood, further barriers were presented by contributors in the requirements for applicants, especially in public life, but also present in some political parties – designed around senior level professional experience, 15-20 years of experience, and it was felt that other lived and yet relevant experience is not valued or taken into account.

“Appointments to these boards are designed around previous achievements at a high level, such as leadership roles with very little information on the pathways and progression routes to gain such skills which are normally requested at the recruitment stage.”

(Survey Respondent)

Covert racism, microaggressions and tokenism

From institutional, to systemic, to again a clearly embedded culture of racism, 44% of respondents felt that the toxicity of racism discouraged any aspiration to public or political life. Again, this was experienced through demonstrations of racist bias, for example, some contributors reported negative comments in relation to the resurgence of Black Lives Matter activism in the public realm or being seen as selling something or handing out takeaway menus when canvassing and leafleting. Others noted that although there is a focus on diversity, the focus is explicitly on the representation of white women. Many respondents also noted barriers due to microaggressions, a large majority in relation to being a woman of colour, having to navigate the ‘angry Black woman’ trope, something that is much harder when in a position of power, as any necessary assertion is seen as aggressive, as well as the subservient Asian woman stereotype, with counterparts being patronising towards those with that identity, speaking to them as though they didn’t speak English very well, and asking if they were being ‘forced’ to wear a hijab. One respondent stated that when making contributions on the public body board they sat on, it was “controversial simply because I am a Muslim.” (Public Body Board Member). This has left people feeling again, that they would not be listened to, unless they adhered to Western ideals and ‘acted white.’

“It’s harder when coming from your own party as you expect people to be on your side, [but you still get] aggressive comments: ‘Mouthy young woman going on again’; ‘Angry woman of colour’ ...”

(Politician)

Last, but definitely not least, as a prevailing thread through our research contributions, an active discourager to entering public or political life is the fact that racialised people are consistently tokenised – and people in power still do not hear the call that this is not a position we are comfortable in. Consistently unifying the ‘BAME umbrella term’, leaving racialised aspirants and those engaged feeling they had to represent all racialised issues, with no space to

advocate differences between communities, let alone there to represent any other area presenting in the nation, the irony being however, that when they did then represent issues regarding race equality, they reported being stigmatised and told they were always ‘pulling the race card’. Ultimately, many of our contributors do not feel safe in public and political spheres, fearing that they would be the only person of colour there, and what that would lead to.

“My partner, a political candidate, my age, white, speaks Welsh – doesn’t deal with same things as I deal with. For example, with media opportunities – they’re invited to talk about their area [of expertise/geographic] – but they invite me to talk about racism – and I would like to talk about other topics... I get the ‘you’re not white so you have to talk about racism’...”

(Politician)

“I feel like Vaughan Gething is the poster boy of diversity, he is the go-to ...”

(Politician)

The need to work harder

Another predominant barrier to public and political life communicated by a large number of people is the need for racialised people to work harder, always taking on extra responsibility, playing catch up and having to do more to prove themselves. It was pointed out that racialised individuals aspiring to political positions must be more ‘consistently political’, with the need to constantly raise their profile to combat negative views of them and perform better to be seen as beyond reproach.

“I felt that I always had to perform 100%, I couldn’t allow myself to have a off day... as a minority, I always had to perform better than White [counterparts], to even be considered.”

(Public Body Board Member)

“You have to work harder than the general public because of your colour, and the second thing, you’re a Muslim, so you have to work even harder.”

(Public/Political Aspirant)

Overt, direct and online racism

Lest we forget with all this talk of institutional, systemic racism and its symptoms, that we are not devoid of overt racism in Wales, something that 35% of respondents felt actively discouraged them from entering public and political life. Aspirants were concerned about the culture of racial abuse that comes with being a public figure, externally and especially from the older generation, as well as internally from the system and their parties. One politician contributed a story of being sent a text message from another candidate to members explicitly stating that the party couldn’t have a racialised person stand, it had to be ‘one of us’; another detailing that despite a record of being fielded for a number of elections, as soon as they decided to wear a hijab after attending hajj, they came bottom of the list at the next electorate vote. Another important note is that overt racism has been on the rise since the UK voted to leave the European Union in 2016, with a few politicians expressing their concern at now having to canvas in an area of Wales that voted leave.

“I’m worried to knock the door... because I don’t think they see European immigrants as immigrants; I think they see brown people and Asian people as immigrants. And I think ... they voted to get us out.”

(Politician)

More so, the threat and fear of overt racism and abuse from the public being directed at them or their families was an equally prevalent barrier - 33% of survey respondents saying it actively discourages them from considering a public, and more so political role, many basing their view on examples of the abuse and attacks other racialised public and political figures in the UK have faced, compounded by threats against people in the Black Lives Matter movement, feeling that this type of life-threatening racism is to be expected in a public facing role. And the reports of these experiences from those interviewed were not thin on the ground – with politicians primarily communicating instances of direct racism when campaigning or canvassing, including being told to ‘go back to where they came from’, that they ‘sound foreign, I don’t want to talk to you’, having doors slammed in their faces with echoes of ‘the real issue is all these immigrants’, to being physically threatened, attacked, and being victims of arson.

Interestingly, though not surprisingly, given the prevailing focus on gender diversity, the above was not captured in previous research on barriers to public or political life. However, what was captured, and has been explicitly confirmed, is the prevalence of overt online racism, from individuals, on social media and from the tabloids, very much felt as a discourager to entering public and more so political life. Again, aspirants felt that this would be inevitable, and that they would potentially spend too much time dealing with online racism, especially Black, and more so Black female/women of colour politicians, given the experiences of politicians in England such as Diane Abbott and Dawn Butler. Unsurprisingly, it was mainly the female politicians interviewed who expressed clear stories of personal, gendered attacks online, including explicitly trans-exclusionary trolling, leading to having to report them as hate crimes and ending up having a significant impact on their mental health, leading some to feel that public or political engagement was a waste of time, as never really seeing benefits to the community, and a feeling that their efforts do not equal satisfying results.

“The first thing that came into my mind was I’m just going to be called the P word, I’m going to get told to go back to my country, I’m going to get told I’m a curry muncher, I’m going to get all of this, all the time.”

(Public/Political Aspirant)

Lack of confidence

In addition to these intangible, external barriers, we were presented with an abundance of intangible internal barriers, developed in individuals and communities due to their prevailing experiences of racism in Wales. A combined total of 50% of contributors felt that they lacked confidence, and with this, motivation, to enter public and political life, concerned that it would have a negative impact on their mental health, unsurprising recalling the amount of discrimination faced by racialised people in Wales, primarily in employment and education. Some respondents contributed saying in principle they would love to pursue a public or political career, but they believed they would never be considered – exemplifying a prevalent inferiority complex, recognised by a number of people as imposter syndrome - people in public and political positions constantly wondering if they were actually good enough, and fearing failure due to past experiences. With this, 38% of survey respondents reported feeling that public or political life was just ‘not for me’, due to the mould being set for elite, wealthy, landowning, Oxbridge graduates – not children of migrants.

Lack of understanding

In a more practical sense, and alluded to earlier in this report, another key barrier to public and political aspiration or pursuit was a lack of understanding, reported by a combined total of 42% of contributors. This extensive lack of understanding is in part evidenced by the fact that when asked to share positive examples of racialised role models in public and/or political life, 24 frequently cited individuals were not actually public body board members or elected politicians, but rather just well-known racialised people in Wales, including third sector staff, CEOs and Directors, but also activists, sportspeople, musicians and artists. This was combined with people feeling that they didn't have enough experience or knowledge to enter a public or political role, addressed above in terms of systemic procedural barriers, but internalised as a need to have years of senior professional experience, built on top of post graduate education, and in depth understanding of political systems, policy and legislation. Although many people internal to public and political life may argue that these are not actual requirements, and that a move is being made towards relevant lived experience, the barrier persists, thinking back to the family background of most racialised people in Wales, especially for the older, first generation of migrants, whose educational and professional experiences were plighted with much more discrimination and racism than that of the current generation of adults coming into or recently entering the labour market.

Lack of encouragement/active discouragement

Alongside this barrier, 33% of people felt that a lack of encouragement/active discouragement prevented them from entering public or political life, feeling that they were unlikely to be successful, and that 'In early meetings I observed, I was almost there to be quiet', indirectly we are being told that they were not good enough for that position. For some, due to the perceptions of public and political life as discussed earlier, they lacked family support, with a lack of engagement with public and political life at home, commenting that it was not something spoken about at home, even actively avoided, not a common topic or a priority, and therefore not an idea that is encouraged or planned into BAME lives. Added to this, was a feeling of intergenerational, cultural fear or avoidance of political or highly visible engagement, and that the 'Good Immigrant' means not making waves. In addition, some families held concerns of going into politics - relating it to 'back home' where it's corrupt, some being worried for the person's safety, even holding fears that they would be kidnapped.

"When I went to go to my first party meeting, I told my parents and thought they would be cool, but they locked me in room refused to let me go. It took my brother and sister to negotiate my release – they were terrified of us raising our heads above parapet, that I would get involved in trouble. For them as migrants, they didn't want any involvement in any political life at all..."

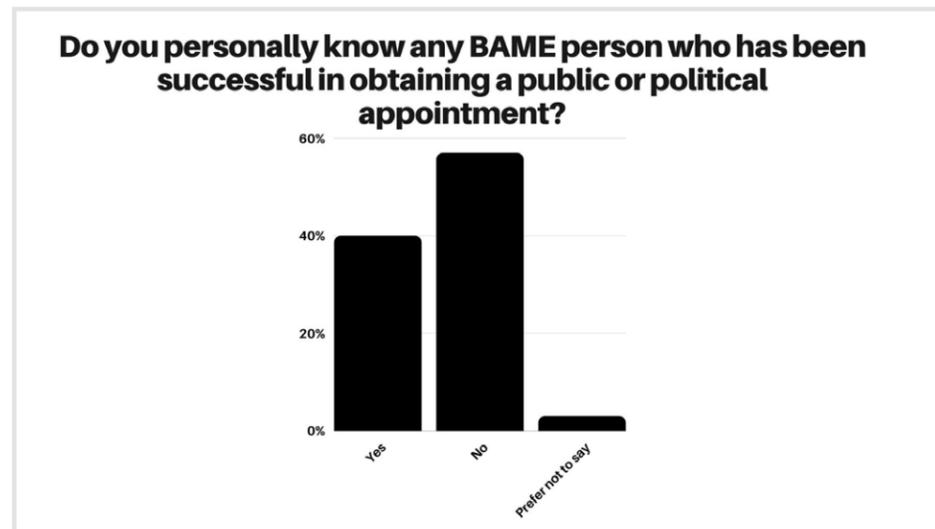
(Politician)

This family dimension also impacts heavily on women of colour, with contributors stating that their lack of family support was another manifestation of the patriarchy, which was historically weaponised against people of colour through colonialism. Many were actively discouraged from pursuing public or political roles, due to the view that they should focus on getting married, having children, and staying at home. For many women of colour interested in pursuing a political career, there was the recognition that politics was actively gendered within their communities, with men actively getting women to step down, dominating the political realm, and gatekeeping them from these spaces.⁶²

"It's important to understand the social background of the communities that we're trying to influence to go into these positions, because if they start off from a position where a woman has to be quiet in the home, women have to be obedient... for those people to be open and vocal, they need that slightly different training and mentorship... The cultural norms in many communities is [that] women don't go where men dominate. You don't have the access, means, knowledge... but even when you do, because it's dominated by men from our community, you stand back and say that's not for me."

(Public/Political Aspirant)

Lack of networks, nepotism and gatekeeping



Our respondents highlighted that a lack of network discourages people from entering public and political life, with 42% reporting that this was an active barrier for them, and 57% confirming they did not personally know anyone in public or political life. This was not just due to lack of family support however, but moreover due to the prevalence of nepotism within public and political life as reported by contributors, with people regularly appointed based on recommendation, especially in public life. The majority of our respondents recognised that 'It's not about what you know, but who you know,' an age-old adage reflected in a lot of the literature to date, viewed across the board as influencing almost every life outcome from getting work experience. Institutions were said to be 'operating like cartels,' and that by virtue of knowing someone in a position of power that can influence your ability to gain a position⁶³.

"It's sad, but I'm afraid that's how it works, you have to be in a network."

(Politician)

"No wonder it's so white. No wonder we have a system that doesn't represent people, because if you're not part of that circle, social circle or ... you would never get invited, I mean there's no application process."

(Public Body Board Member)

Sheer privilege (or lack thereof)

In addition to this, it was added by contributors that it is not always nepotism, but sometimes just sheer privilege, especially if coming from a well-off socioeconomic background, something recognised as difficult for racialised communities to contend with due to the implications of a lack of intergenerational wealth. As one public body board member succinctly put it, "I explain to them, I didn't go to Oxford or Cambridge. And they go, 'oh right...'; it's very polite after that, but I know it's all finished." (Public Body Board Member). The myth of meritocracy is challenged by the clear understanding by contributors that many people who occupy these positions obtain them because of their identity primarily, and not because of merit, but because they know how to talk the talk. Equally problematic is the role of gatekeeping, again reported by a large number of contributors, undertaken by White British people, but also by their racialised counterparts, with some saying that White British people in positions of power continuously look to self-appointed 'community leaders' who then take all the credit for the work being done by others. However, this view of privilege was less commented that that already alluded to, where racialised people feeling that they need to working harder to get ahead and can only obtain positions due to merit.

"The same people get the same work, there's so little work around, you [end up] supporting the structure, rather than bringing in other people".

(Public Body Board Member)

Lack of positive role models

Moving on, another stark barrier reported is the fact that people feel they lack positive role models to inspire them to pursue a public or political role. 36% of people who responded to our survey felt that this discouraged them from pursuing a public or political role. When asked to expand and including commentary from interviews, a shocking 43% felt that there were no or not enough positive racialised roles models in these arenas in Wales. Many stated explicitly that they had to look to England, or even internationally, and include historical figures as well, given that the UK is so far behind, especially in relation to racialised role models who are not cisgendered men. Some noted that although some people were seen as inspirational, that didn't make them role models, as they were not people they could directly relate to. The few visible racialised role models (those who were profiled – many recognising that racialised representatives are actively not) were reported as not necessarily positive or were regularly vilified (e.g. Diane Abbot, David Lammy, Dawn Butler),

tokenised (Vaughan Gething) or seen as problematic to those in the community, due to either a divisive portrayal, a spokesperson for unequal party agendas or a denier of structural racism. (e.g. Priti Patel, Munira Mirza, Kemi Badenoch). The broader impact of this was a real concern about the negative impact on young people, impacting their aspirations in the future.

“There’s lots of leaders in England that are BAME, and it’s always refreshing to be like, oh people do exist and I’m not a lone ranger out here! We just don’t have that level of diversity in politics in Wales... the poster boy and poster girl for Government here is an old white man... that’s the image. And so, people don’t consider [pursuing these roles] because they don’t see themselves in that image”

(Politician)

Time and financial commitments

In addition to the above, a number of specific practical and tangible barriers were also highlighted by contributors, with a combined total of 40% reporting that time commitments impacted their ability to join public or political life, believing that this would have a negative impact on their family. Councillors especially reported that, although on paper it was a part time role, they were actually out all week, with no annual leave being allocated to a councillor position, having to attend meetings during recess and in the evenings, and that within this public facing role, there was no reasonable excuse to constituents to not attend events that you were invited to.

“People ask, how many hours do you work as a councillor? I say... how long is piece of string – it’s never going to stop, 7 days a week... I get calls 10.pm at night... I go to a restaurant and I get stopped by my constituents. I can’t say don’t talk to me, that’s not how it works. I don’t see it as a part time role – and all the meetings you have to go to, surgery commitments, it’s quite a big commitment.”

(Politician)

With this, and more so for councillor and public body board positions, finances were recorded by 27% of respondents as an active barrier to involvement. This impact was reported early on, before being elected, with recognition of the financial cost of not only joining a political party, but then campaigning and canvassing, plus the impact on employed income by taking time out of work, and the need to undertake a lot of voluntary work, within and externally to the party, to be considered in the first place, took effect. For some this created concerns that they would not be able to feed their family, and for those councillors interviewed, a large number reported not being able to live off that wage, taking a drop in salary when obtaining the position, and the continuous concern that if at the next election, you lose your seat, you’re left out in the cold, with nothing to fall back onto.

“If you have the wealth behind you and are able to commit that – then yes you will come through. But a lot of ethnic minorities won’t have financial resource.”

(Politician)

“I spent 30 years in my career and now I realise having a voice in the political forum would serve better for my family, but would I want to step sideward? I come from a lower socioeconomic background; would I want to go back there?”

(Political Aspirant)

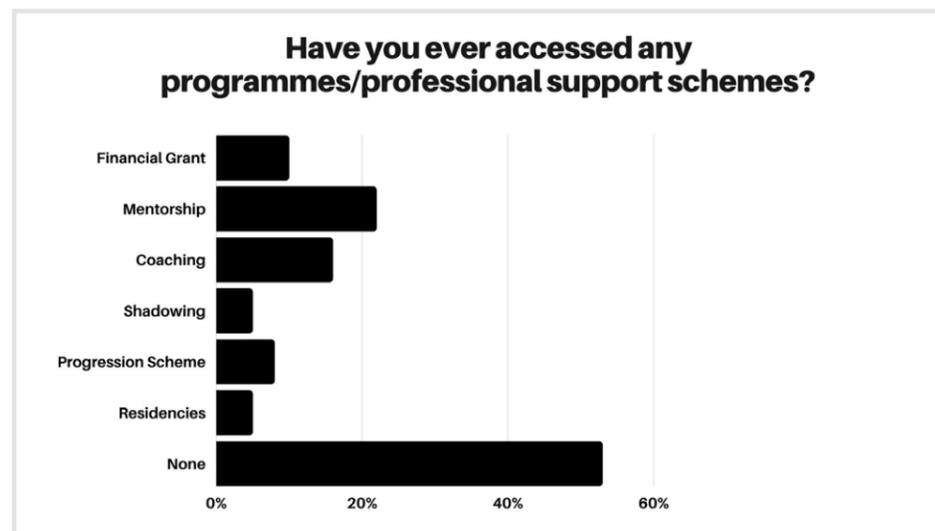
Intersectional discrimination

Many of the barriers highlighted in this section were also explicitly reported as having an additional impact on contributors due to a range of intersectional factors including being a woman, identifying as LGBTQIA+, fear of safety and abuse, a mother or carer, lack of flexibility and time to managing caring commitments, being older, having a physical disability, being limited by the system of door to door canvassing and having to undertake a large quantity of community engagement and living in rural areas, limitations with travel and increased experience of direct racism.

“It’s stressful times, in an election you probably won’t win, to throw everything at it, takes a lot of toll – a lot of voluntary work, not paid work, leaflets, door knocking – a lot of time taken. With young kids, balancing that and work is not easy for anyone to do, particularly for females from ethnic minorities”

(Politician)

Negatives elements of support schemes



Although there is a seemingly endless list of barriers to entering public and political life, tangible and intangible, internal and external, felt by racialised people in Wales, there are also support schemes and initiatives that are specifically in place already to try and encourage marginalised people to pursue a public or political position. We shall look at the positives elements of these and how they can be improved in part two, however although reported access of such schemes was at a rate of 47%, not all experiences were positive, and it was felt that at times barriers were created or maintained by virtue of the way these schemes were implemented, run or experienced. This must also be viewed in light of the wider experiences faced by many of barriers to professional progression, as detailed earlier. When asked to talk about these schemes, a substantial number of negatives were raised, which we feel important to address in this report, so we paint a fuller picture when leading to our final recommendations. Aside from some people not knowing that support schemes/ programmes/ initiatives existed, many felt that you could only get onto them if you were involved in the third sector or knew the right people, and that opportunities for support themselves were managed by gatekeepers. For some who had accessed schemes, they either felt that there was no impact on them at all, or (again), they were given tokenistic tick box spots, and experienced alienating environments once joining them, made up of majority white people, that were patronising and peddled stereotypes. In addition, a number felt that individuality wasn't accounted for, and everyone's experiences

were lumped together as one, with mixed level cohorts meaning that those with less understanding or aspiration hindered the development of others.

"I'm not going to benefit from it, this and that, you know the negative attitude but it's a negative attitude which has been created over years of experience of negativity."

(Public/Political aspirant)

So what motivates racialised people to enter public or political life?

As we saw earlier, when asked if respondents have ever been interested in pursuing a role in politics 26.17% said yes, and when asked if they would be interested in being on a public body board, a much larger 51.4% said Yes. Our research aimed to understand why therefore people develop an aspiration to public and/or political life, given the adverse and negative experiences that many hold in regard to the same.⁶⁴

Being asked to stand, headhunted or co-opted onto a board

Several people reported simply that their aspiration was due to them actively being asked to stand for election, actively headhunted or co-opted onto a board, due to their previous networks and professional or academic contacts.

"One of the staff members from the MP's office called me and said that they ... they thought there was going to be a vacancy at the borough level for the ward that I live in and would I be interested in standing? And so obviously I was flattered first of all(!) because I hadn't ... hadn't spoken to anyone from the Party or the MP or anything for about three years... the only reason I stood was because I was asked, I don't think I would have ever considered, off my own back, I would never have considered standing."

(Politician)

To use relevant skills and knowledge

Following this, a few people listed their reasons being to learn, observe and develop understanding, to see if they [politicians/ public appointees] do think of others and why certain decisions are made, with a desire to understand why it is so difficult and bridge the gap. Others cited their motivation being based on the fact that they felt they have relevant and applicable skills and knowledge which would be highly beneficial to public or political life, wanting to use their degree and transfer their skills.

“That’s why I decided to stand – again because no one looks like me, and as much as enjoy talking about diversity, no one gets certain issues and has such a broad range of experiences. I also enjoy talking about rural affairs, and I did tech at Uni, so I’m interested in science and tech policy also... I want to cover lots of bases.”

(Politician)

Personal motivation

Some aspirants also categorically stated that they wanted to be successful and further their career, seeing how these positions had benefitted peoples professional careers, naming this personal motivation as a driving factor, knowing they always enjoyed volunteering from a young age, and with that they “had this hunger in me to sort of like get out there, get you know ... and do something really. It feels like a calling” (Public Body Board Member)

Inspired by role models

Many, as opposed to those who felt a lack of role models was a barrier, were actively inspired by role models, 40% personally know someone in public / political life in Wales. The inspiration was drawn from seeing people fighting for justice, for change for the future generations in Wales, and therefore want to actively play a part in how people see things, changing the perception of racialised people by White British counterparts. Many, in addition, cited their own parents as their role models, with experiences of growing up with mothers and fathers who had held public and political positions in their countries of origin and in Wales.

“When you see someone like you, taking decisions, that makes you think that, no, actually... I got the ability to do that too.”

(Public/Political Aspirant)

Actively politicised, wanting to bring change to the system and society, to have a voice

For many others, their motivation was fed by feeling actively politicised, whether it was due to political values that had been encouraged in their upbringing, fed by seeing first-hand the impact of austerity or witnessing the impact of the miners strikes growing up, being an activist, here and in countries of origin, through their time spent at university, or the music they listened to in their youth. From this, a prevailing amount of people wish to join public or political life with the intention of bringing change to the system and society, wanting to influence change, challenge the status quo and make a difference, make the world a better place for their children, recognising that the “System doesn’t work for BAME people and never going to change if no one does anything.” (Public/Political Aspirant). An overarching motivation within this, unsurprisingly given the experiences noted so far, was that aspirants wanted to be able to have a voice and actively represent issues the key issues that affect racialised people in Wales, recognising the importance of engaging and taking part. As the saying provided goes, “if the child doesn’t cry, the mother isn’t going to feed them, so in the same system of place here – we have to raise our voice.” (Politician) be a voice for the voiceless, being able to bring new perspective and show that one size does not fit all. Additionally, in line with this, aspirants felt the desire to raise the profile of racialised people in Wales, inspired by their community members to serve them and give back, demonstrating that they have a right to be in those spaces.

“I have to participate, I have to make a decision, I have to agree and disagree... because I don’t want someone else to decide something what is going to affect me or my children, I want to be part of those people suggesting and deciding, be part of the process.”

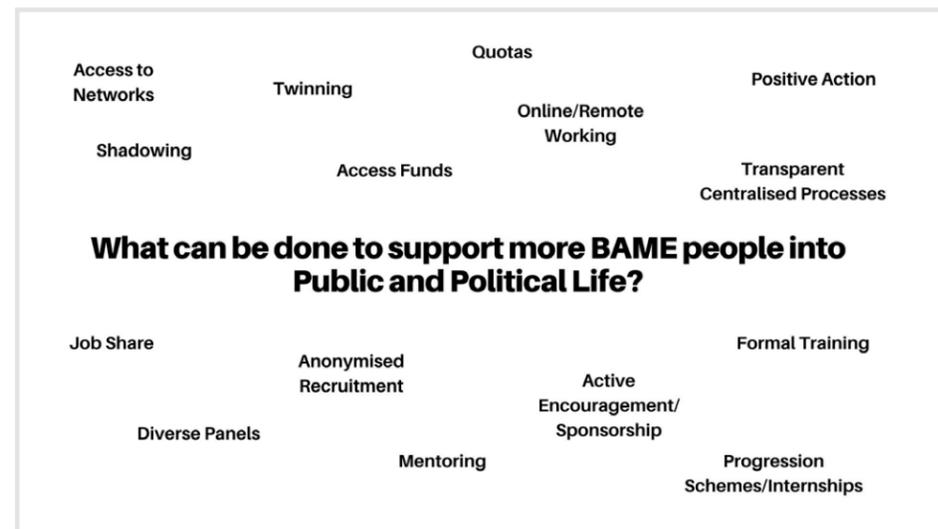
(Public/Political Aspirant)

“Part of me wants to be involved in public life to actually illustrate that everybody can have a voice, not just a select few.”

(Public Body Board Member).

Mechanisms to support access to public and political positions

Despite the prevalence of racism, seeping into nearly every caveat of racialised people's lives in Wales and the recognition of public and political life in Wales as being institutionally, systemically and culturally racist, racialised people still hold onto an aspiration to become a member of the very organisations that run, manage and dictate the lives of everyone in the country. We thus moved to find out, what has been helpful for those with this aspiration, or who have been successful in entering public and political realms. Many of these are counterweights to the barriers listed above, and when they are available, act to mitigate and minimise these barriers.



Diverse panels and anonymised recruitment

In very practical terms, for both public life and political life, at the selection stage, 82% felt that diverse panels were extremely helpful, communicating that just having at least 1 racialised person on a panel made people feeling a lot more comfortable and less afraid of the implications of covert racism on their chances of success. Following this, 53% felt that anonymised recruitment was also helpful in ensuring increased opportunity of obtaining the chance of public or political appointment, expressing however that to truly anonymise applications, it should not be only the name and protected characteristic

identifiers that are removed, but names of educational institutions, employers, addresses, locations, lengths of service, essentially anything not pertinent to the role, should be removed or blacked out by an individual independent of the recruitment panel. With this, people felt that grading proformas and criteria for shortlisting and interview should be standardised, with the same interview questions for all.

Mentoring, coaching and shadowing

In softer practical terms, looking at different types of progression schemes, a whopping combined total of 83% of contributors felt that mentoring was one of the most the most helpful things for progression into public and political life. The benefits reported were numerous, regardless of whether the mentors were obtained through an official process or not, with most people exclaiming how much the opportunity was inspirational, immensely increasing their experience and enhanced their careers, feeling more informed and knowledgeable about pathways, processes, and the 'ropes' of public and political life, having a tangible impact on their skills and abilities. People felt that having a mentor had provided them with someone they could trust, who represented them, who they could call at any time for advice and support, and with their mentors knowledge of public and political life in Wales, were able to understand what positions and organisations were more suited to them – and which to avoid. Some of the most telling outcomes of mentoring for aspirants was the development of confidence, finally feeling they could obtain certain positions, empowering them and increasing their sense of self-worth. An add-on for some was the increase in networks as well, feeling that the opportunity was a steppingstone, that it had enhanced their social capital and opened up other opportunities, something we shall develop more on in the continuation of this report.

"I am currently on [a] mentoring scheme... it has given me incredible amounts of knowledge, but most of all, confidence. This has happened through formal training, mentoring, but also through peer to peer learning. I feel a lot more confident in my career progression, but also in my self-worth and skills and abilities."

(Survey respondent)

“The most beneficial was mentoring support – new candidates who have been nominated to stand for election signed up with experienced councillor mentor.”

(Politician)

Following closely behind, 77% of contributors felt that coaching was helpful for their progression, with specific outcomes being that it supported them more in their personal and skills development, as well as practically with their career choices and opportunities, and a further 60% reporting that Shadowing was helpful, especially for those standing for election.

Aside from these formalised schemes however, a number of people importantly reported that what had been helpful was local peer support, especially support from parents and family, friends, as well as community groups and learning opportunities facilitated by voluntary grassroots organisations.

“I can’t think of any local political figures that inspired me – but my husband had political background – he said to get involved to make those changes – he pushed and encouraged me – my dad was politically involved back home.”

(Politician)

Progression schemes such as internships and formal training

In more formal terms, respondents communicated that progression schemes such as internships (accessed by 8% of contributors) and residencies (accessed by 5% of contributors) were also helpful to them in obtaining positions in public and political life, with people detailing how through these they had developed their skills, self-worth, and felt they had helped them secure a permanent position in their career progression. In addition, people felt that formal training and interactive workshop elements, especially those with a leadership and management focus would especially support personal development. A couple used examples of in-house programmes led by socially progressive organisations, where two explicitly referred to the free programmes accessed while working as a civil servant, provided by Welsh Government and Academi Wales.

Employment, especially in the third sector

What this led to was a clear picture that one of the most important avenues for someone’s progression was their employment – with a number communicating specifically their positions in Government as civil servants or in Unions in senior roles, which provided them access to more in-house opportunities. However, what was more prevalent was the fact that having experience in the third sector was a real springboard for the majority of interviewees. The majority of people who had obtained a position in public or political life had undertaken an extensive amount of volunteering and paid work for community based organisations, and this engagement had opened doors for them, giving them a chance to find out about opportunities and learn about and engage with public and political life in a more direct sense, something they never had the chance to do beforehand. For most, these opportunities had allowed them to develop their networks and even meet and make professional relationships with public and political figures, increasing their knowledge of the area.

“If you work in certain fields, then there is a chance that you’ll get missed out. By working in 3rd sector organisations, that’s when you learn more about public and political life as well as the problems BAME people face and/or the opportunities out there to help with that.”

(Public/Political Aspirant)

Active encouragement, networks and sponsorship

This experience led to people once again talking about the benefit of active encouragement, with a significant number detailing that without this, especially from their parents and families, as well as a few detailing the extensive support from their local party branch, they wouldn’t have arrived at the positions they are in. There was a categorical belief amongst contributors that it is impossible to do these things alone, and support, encouragement and external confidence in you was paramount to success. Unsurprisingly therefore, this was closely followed by the majority of people explaining that without networks and this active sponsorship, they also would not have accessed the opportunities to enter public or political life. Whether derived from the third sector, or other professional or personal experiences, including joining a political party, the need for active allies, people to champion you and open doors, was highlighted on more than one occasion, with a couple of people saying they only applied for a board position because they knew the Chair, or only stood for political election because they were actively asked and supported by the party.

“Certain people in party were keen to see me succeed - the leader basically approached me and asked me if I’d consider joining the Cabinet. [Although] some people hold contrary prejudiced views, getting key supporters behind you does help – I had a local MS support, MP quite supportive - I had renowned people backing me, it was helpful. Good network working for me.”

(Politician)

Job sharing and access to funds

In more tangibly practical terms, job sharing and access to funds were also highly ranked by contributors as things that were helpful in a path to public and political life. From providing the chance to study and undertake postgraduate endeavours, grants also allowed many to simply cover travel costs, carers allowances and childcare, to free them up to undertake what they needed in their pursuit of public and political opportunities. A few politicians explained that their success would have been impossible if the party hadn’t paid for everything when it came to their campaign, with one explaining that they waived the membership and candidate fee due to socioeconomic disadvantage. A clear shout was that financial backing is needed, and the amount and access to this needs to increase. There was concern amongst Councillors that without a full-time wage, and without opportunity for redundancy payments, there was always a concern of being left short should they lose their seat or have to compromise on their other employment. It was felt that increased financial support would make it possible for those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to compete on a financial level by making it feasible and not a financial compromise. Another practical element that many highlighted as supporting access was utilising online technology. With the experience of working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic, a large number commented how this had allowed them do more, be engaged with a broader variety of events and meetings, and that this had opened up a lot of avenues, as well as allowing them to manage family life alongside their professional pursuits.

What needs to change

As we can see above, it is not that mechanisms to overcome the barriers that racialised people face in aspiring to public or political positions do not exist, but rather that they are seemingly not working. Even as we move towards the 24th year of Welsh devolution, led by the 6th Assembly/Parliament, we are still facing the prospect of an overwhelmingly white sea of faces in public and political life. Therefore, we took time to understand from the contributors to our research what they thought needs to change and improve regarding these, as well as what else could be implemented to hasten the speed of a racially and otherwise representative public and political sector in Wales.

Improvement to programmes and initiatives

As we have already indicated, formal programmes and initiatives have been highlighted as being one of the things that can actively and tangibly support increased diverse racial representation. Contributors felt that some of the core elements of these programmes needs to be addressed however, with many of these changes being commented on in previous reports and impact evaluations of initiatives rolled out across the country. Overarching, in relation to the variety of schemes experienced or in place, the main call from contributors was that we need more such initiatives. The scale of these initiatives is not high enough, meaning that many people are losing out. With this, it was strongly communicated that these opportunities for development need to be advertised better, to bring in people from a variety of employment sectors, rather than only those already involved in the third or public sector, and those felt to be brought into these programmes by gatekeepers. As we know, the public and third sector do not have a great track record with the number of racialised people employed, at least in senior positions. There was a recognition that there would be great benefit in involving more people from the private business sector, be that large or sole traders, as they would have a lot to bring to public and political life in Wales. These individuals would also benefit from the same support as provided via the public and third sector, and effort must be made to engage with them proactively. For this to be enabled, with the expansion of the provision of these programmes, it was communicated that accessibility and inclusivity needs to be central to the design process. In practice, people explained that this means that they need to be pitched at cohorts at different stages of their journey, provided at different times of the day and week, and be applicable to the needs of the target group, with specific focus on young people and the emerging generation of leaders. For programmes to be successful, there was also a clear line presented through our research that they must be run and managed by people who understand not only the system but also

the needs of the target group itself, with a focus on longevity and follow up, mitigating the feeling that placements are tokenistic or tick boxes. Another factor that was heavily reported on was the benefit and therefore need for expanding provision specific to racialised people in Wales, with 5% of people who had accessed initiatives before not accessing 'BAME' specific or led programmes, feeling that in reality, they are few and far between.

“Women’s Equality Network have run some sessions purposefully giving space to women from BAME backgrounds. The Privilege Cafe has run incredible sessions around uncomfortable conversations that it is time to be had in Wales. But these are few and far between, because I am lucky to revolve in the right circles for it. This is far from a representative view of Welsh society.”

(Survey Respondent)

Having programmes run by racialised people, for racialised people

People explained in more detail that the benefit of having programmes run by racialised people, for racialised people, were not only that they provided an environment of intercultural sensitivity and education, elements of which were brought into the way the programme elements are designed as well as their content, but that this made people feel a lot more involved and part of Welsh society at large. Reminding ourselves however once again, that 'BAME' people are not one and the same, contributors recognised the need for disaggregating target groups further to encapsulate the myriad communities and other marginalised identities within the racialised population in Wales, and delivering provision specifically for young people, diaspora communities, and highlighted most prominently for racialised people who are not cisgendered men, something that is extremely hard to find, given our strand-specific approach to diversity in Wales. However, the overarching message from contributors was that having this provision in place is invaluable, as it not only encourages a more supportive environment, but people felt they had access to someone who understands not only the system, but also them, someone they could trust in a generally untrustworthy arena, which helped to remove the fear factor or backlash of being seen as a trouble-maker. The benefit of trust when working with a peer was evidenced indirectly by nearly all of the interviewees explicitly stating that they felt much more comfortable to engage and contribute to our research in an open and honest manner by virtue of knowing that the research team would 'get it', not pass judgement or present the desire for

explanation about the meaning of certain anecdote and terms, meaning they could speak much more freely. Following from this, as we have noted earlier, these initiatives helped to provide networks. However, many felt these external networks and provision was not enough, and what is needed is a real drive to encourage specific networks and ongoing development opportunities for racialised people within public and political realms in Wales, to support them through the inevitable racism they will face, and therefore additional barriers, when they enter these realms.⁶⁵ As stands, many felt that they had to go to England to access these and were dismayed at the lack here.

“What is system doing for BAME women? We talk about BAME boys, but what about BAME girls – who are their role models?”

(Politician)

Considerations for mentoring programmes

As mentoring programmes were one of the highest-rated and -accessed supportive mechanisms to public and political life, there were many contributions about what needs to be implemented in addition to that above, to improve these specifically and mitigate any negative outcomes. There was again a feeling that these needed to be publicised better – but not just the opportunity – a real gap was the publication of success stories from the programmes, which if given more time and energy would provide further aspirants with a real sense of belief and inspiration to join. Moving on, in the process, people clearly communicated that mentoring needed to be managed correctly – something raised as well in the literature review. People stated that programmes needed to have clear goals, with a clearly set target group, as detailed above, not just based on one characteristic, and considering the different stages some may be at in the journey, providing programmes at different levels where need be, ensuring cohorts contained people with similar goals. With this established, other comments included that robust processes need to be in place to ensure the right people sign up for the programme, and when it comes to matching aspirants with mentors, active pre-selection must take place, where possible matching someone with a similar background in terms of identity, but not compromising a match in terms of aspiration just for the sake of pairing with someone like them. (For example, it was clear that if someone only had aspiration to join public life, matching them with a mentor who had no experience of this would be a waste of time.) This would be helpful therefore in creating opportunities that could lead to direct sponsorship, and that when an aspirant is successful in obtaining a position, they have someone in the field who can support them to get on their feet.

“I have completed a mentoring scheme with Women Connect First. I feel I learnt a lot, but because my starting point was zero regarding Welsh politics, I feel that I need a second chance with another mentoring scheme to build on the gained knowledge and networks now, to actually achieve an entry in a public role career.”

(Survey Respondent)

Increase funding provision

For all of this to be possible therefore, the most important element that contributors commented on is to increase the funding provided to deliver these initiatives independently, to ensure they have enough capacity and resource, and are free of cost to those wishing to attend. Based on the experiences held by those who had accessed schemes already in place in the third sector, it was clear that funding provision for each scheme needs to be able to support at least 3 full-time staff dedicated to the programme, and each programme needs to be ongoing, as mentioned, providing opportunity for engagement beyond the scope of the year, opportunities to engage again at the next stage of their journey, and promotion of success stories. For this to happen, people communicated that mentors as well as mentees need to be committed, and especially if they are in public positions or local councillors, additional time and remuneration should be factored in for them to undertake these roles, rather than expecting them to do yet more voluntary work.

Processes need to be more transparent

In addition to the above, some practical tangible changes were communicated. Nothing revolutionary, but consistently, the argument was that processes need to be more transparent. Despite efforts in the field, many people felt that pathways needed to be clearer, and a centralised, accessible platform for this information needed to be promoted more actively. Small things like making it clear how to complete applications, the format and what recruiters would be looking for, were seen as simple yet effective changes, removing the air that applying for these positions is a job in itself, and that without the skills and knowledge of how to apply, regardless of relevant experience to the role, you would not stand a chance. Finally, people advocated for using a variety of media for applications, including allowing people to record their answers verbally and not having to write.

Actively value peoples lived experience

Within this, one of the loudest messages was that positions and processes need to start actively valuing and involving peoples lived experience, beyond that obtained professionally and through education, not basing requirements on length of experience or service. However, people explained that this value of lived experience should not be tokenised in itself by pertaining only to lived experience of racism or other forms of discrimination, but that lived experience of any issues, positive and negative, prevalent in Wales, be it rurality, transport, housing, should also be taken into account. It was clearly recognised by interviewees that to bring about change to systems and society, you need people with direct experience of life as experienced by the majority of racialised and minoritized people in Wales, and therefore it's about looking at the individual, understanding what transferable skills and abilities they can provide, recognising that even if someone doesn't have formal education or experience, it does not mean they are not in a position to undertake public and political roles. Education and professional learning alone may provide the theory, but without lived experience, it is impossible to apply that theory to real world decision making.

“Covid has taught us one thing, it's not a degree that makes you survive... A lot of ethnic minorities, you know they're working hard to achieve or survive... That's a life skill in itself, and not everybody has that.”

(Public/Political Aspirant)

Maximise on positive action provision

Moving on, contributors emphasised the need to incorporate and maximise the use of positive action in the processes to enter public and political life. Enshrined as a clear opportunity for supporting access to opportunities in the Equality Act 2010, it was felt that it has been far underused in relation to racialised communities over the last 10 years, with the majority of focus to date being on the advancement of gender equality and women specifically, again highlighted in our literature review. Contributors felt that not only providing the justification for identity-specific provision as outlined above, this together with further specific legislation (such as utilising the Equality Act 2010 Section 104 and pushing for change within Section 105⁶⁶ in 2030) or at minimum statutory recommendations from Welsh Government, could provide the chance for at best quotas, with a combined total of 36% advocating for them to be implemented in the future, and with the present lay of the land,

an obligation to reserve places for racialised people. Ideas surrounding this included having Chair positions reserved for racialised people. Recognising the current provision for political parties to enable all-women shortlists, there was a strong call for the same to be able to be applied to racialised people, and for parties to need to commit to this. Again, as recognised, this is currently not legal within the framework of the Equality Act 2010, although space reservation is legal, without a figure attached, and in 2030 we look forward to the Act being reviewed to enable all 'BAME' shortlists, and all X shortlists pertaining to other marginalised communities, hopefully by which point, with all of the other changes implemented, we will have a broader pool of candidates to fill these spaces. Within political party processes, there was also a clear call that fielding candidates alone was not enough, but that parties had to commit to diversifying their succession planning, and placing racialised representatives in winnable/ safe seats, utilising twinning where need be to manage this.

“Canton is a 3-member ward, and there is very clear stipulation that as a councillor one or more has to be a female - which is correct. Why isn't there the same stipulation when it comes to BAME people? It should be the same principle.”

(Politician)

“Absolutely a shortlist is necessary, because to start off with, to make any positive difference, you've got to have the candidate there, right?... the way that you're going to get the candidates is to have a percentage that everybody needs to achieve and work towards.”

(Pubic/Political Aspirant)

“If the political party say there are certain seats that are winnable seats, then we need to be given this seat which is winnable”

(Public Body Board Member)

Action plans with robust independent monitoring and sanctions

In addition to quotas, respondents suggested the use of guaranteed interview schemes for racialised people, and while quotas are not possible, to work with targets instead, embedded in clear action plans encompassing all the supportive mechanisms laid out in this report. However, as we have seen, action plans on their own, no matter how robust or incorporative of positive action, are ineffective. To improve the successful implementation of action plans and their core elements, contributors reported that it is imperative to publish data on the number of racialised people who not only apply for positions in public and political life, but also that are successful. Enacting Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010, as recommended in several previous reports on diversity in political life, is one clear way to ensure this is done. The rehearsed excuse that data protection laws prevent this is weak – the simple fact of officially stating that there is only 1 racialised person in the Senedd for example isn't going to identify that individual and be a breach of their data – they are already clearly the only visible person of colour there. Having clear data would support political calls for improvement. As important, contributors felt the need for robust and regular reviews and monitoring processes for public and political bodies, enabling audits to be undertaken, beyond just representation, but also in relation to ethnicity pay gaps and staff demographics, two elements that impact aspiration much earlier on. Furthermore, given the acknowledged reality of institutional racism in Wales, it was strongly felt that this scrutiny must be independent, and where investigations into cases of racism are needed, that they are paid for by the Government to an independent body, led by racialised people, as objective neutrality is not the preserve of White British people. And with this, those engaging in our active research were clear that beyond investigations, reports, and recommendations, clear sanctions need to be put in place. Without these, bodies continue to contravene their duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the elements laid out in the specific Statutory Codes of Guidance, the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Socio-Economic Duty; let alone continuing to breach the Future Generations Act 2015, and fail in their Strategic Equality Plans. People felt that sanctions, as applied to citizens when in breach of the law across the UK, would not only deter the perpetuation of active and unconscious racial discrimination, but would encourage bodies to prioritise equity alongside efficiency, leading to a world where there no longer has to be a trade-off between the two. (Goward, 2005)

“We need more visibility and have members published so people can look at objectively and recognise this is a problem.”

(Politician)

Fixed terms for positions and representatives

Another tangible way mentioned in our research that opportunities for entering public and political life could be actively increased is to implement consistent terms for positions. It was viewed by a number of people however that without limiting the time/amount of times an individual can sit on a public body board / stand for re-election, gatekeepers shall persist, and in a nation that is small, with limited public and political positions, opportunities in themselves can be scarce, with many feeling that the window of opportunity was only available when someone retired. Understandably polemic, it was also communicated that in the meantime, people need to leverage their privilege, not just by standing up, but by actively standing aside. Although many argue that to achieve equality for marginalised people, it's not about privileged people losing a slice of the pie, but about others having the same amount of pie... unfortunately it was felt that this is not the case. In this instance, the pie being seats at the table, there is only limited pie to go around, unless more seats are created, and if White British people are currently having 90% or more of the pie, well, they will have to give some of this up.

“It’s being brave enough to say no, I think you should invite somebody else; I shouldn’t be in this space.”

(Public Body Board Member)

Educational reform

However, the most important area where there was a felt need for change was in relation to broad societal changes impacting the earlier experience of racialised people, and proactive and institutional change by public and political bodies and those that currently represent them. Contributors stated that this would require reformation within our social and education system, and in particular, the need for improvements in education opportunities was highlighted as one of the biggest areas to address. In a broad sense, it was recognised that we need to be able to educate via different methods, considering different learning styles and environments, not just formally, but through community education initiatives, such as the supplementary schools set up by Black communities in the 1960s (Mohamed 2019), especially until we can be sure that racist and colonial practices are not persisting within education in Wales⁶⁷.

It was felt that improved political education is crucial, particularly given the lowering of the voting age in Wales to 16 this year, but also for university students, parents and the general public. More broadly, there was a desire to

improve teaching about human rights values of fairness, equity, diversity and anti-racism, alongside a concerted effort to decolonise education and its material. When seeking to ‘diversify the curriculum’, contributors stated that this should not be limited only to historic and negative experiences of slavery, colonialism and freedom-fighting, but should also incorporate positive, pre-colonial history, giving pride to historic and modern-day non-White achievements internationally, in the UK, and in Wales. When considering the range of learning needs, people felt that emphasis should be given to support the specific education of first-generation migrants and their children, again considering the newly enfranchised foreign qualifying citizens, who may not have the experience and knowledge that comes with being born here and brought up by parents with experience of the Welsh/British system, and that this education should clearly include information about public and political life, the systems and processes which govern access to these, setting out clear pathways for entering the civil service or third sector, and the range of helpful mechanisms available.

“No one just decides at the age of 20 to become an MP, an MS, a councillor, lead a public body... you need to understand how democracy and politics impact real life, explain about people in public life and what they do. If taught early on, we will understand what all these roles do... the whole nation needs to understand the political system and how it works.”

(Politician)

Without an understanding of what public and political bodies do, let alone what the roles in them entail, or how to start a journey towards them, we will not see the increase in aspirants let alone representation that we desire. Just as people won’t look to join the Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board, have a desire to become a Member of the Senedd and contribute to the Llywydd’s Committee or to hold a Corporate Governance and Engagement Portfolio as a Councillor if they don’t know these exist, let alone what it entails or how to get there, not enough people will aspire to other public and political positions without this clear knowledge.

Tackling racism in employment

Another approach to broader societal experiences that people felt needs to be given concerted effort in Wales is tackling racism in employment.⁶⁸ As we have heard with the way things work at the moment, unless people get senior employment positions, they are unlikely to ever get public roles.

“We need more people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and step up their leadership roles in local and national government to create a working environment that is attracting and supporting for people from all groups and backgrounds”.

(Politician)

Sanctions for media platforms

Alongside this, another thing that many called for was for Wales / the UK to introduce sanctions for media platforms which promote or allow racial hatred. The Online Harms White Paper presently sitting under consultation in central government, provides an opportunity for this to be enshrined in law, and we hope that when it is, it provides again a robust mechanism not only to make certain online acts and the management of those illegal, but also heavy sanctions if the proper management of such hate crime is not implemented by the platforms and media institutions that run them themselves, with again, an independent body to manage any need for redress.

“We need an independent body which monitors the media to rigorously challenge when they incite hatred and stereotypes and prejudices.”

(Public/Political Aspirant)

Broader reforms to public facing systems and processes

In addition to the two specific arenas detailed above, clear calls were made for broad sweeping reforms of systems and processes in Wales, with a concerted effort to decolonise these, with calls being made to not only break down colonial and imperialistic ideals, but also to close the socioeconomic divide, recognising that the working class was disproportionately racialised people. Recommendations include adequately paying people for their labour, both employed and voluntary, regular and one off, practical, intellectual and emotional, without payments impacting on state benefits received. Beyond this, some contributors brought to the table considerations of radical progressive reforms such as providing everyone with a Universal Basic income, basing tax on your relevant representation in political life, and actively engaging in systems of reparations, were further radical and pragmatic ways to start closing the gap. Additionally, respondents called for measures to proactively defund the police⁶⁹, supporting this central message of the Black Lives Matter movement.

“I liken everything I do to the Black Lives Matter movement, and I feel it’s really important that that’s taken forward with vigour, integrity... it’s a crucial time for change.”

(Public/Political Aspirant)

And where the power over a certain area is not yet devolved to Wales, people expected Welsh Members of Parliament together with the devolved Parliamentary and Local Authority powers to put exerted pressure on Her Majesty’s [Central] Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to either devolve the ability to enact our own rules, or to do so themselves. The excuse of it not being in our remit was felt as weak, and one that was widely challenged and questioned by our respondents.

Public and political institutions must actively demonstrate their equality, diversity and inclusion

Without a genuine willingness to change from the system and a clear process in place to address, it’s unlikely those with less power will be able to change the inequality within this framework. It was clearly communicated that there will need to be organised and concerted effort from the structures in place. So in relation to what public and political bodies can do themselves to break down the multifaceted barriers that exist to their arenas, one of the most called for changes was for institutions to actively demonstrate their equality, diversity and inclusion, evidencing changes, admitting mistakes and failures, and instilling confidence and encouragement by being honest and showing integrity. We must remember that ‘diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance.’ (Myers, 2017) – we argue that inclusion goes beyond this, and involves asking people how they dance, what kind of music they like, giving them space to show you how they dance, and eventually, if we want to move to a sense of belonging, creating space for new, hybrid dances that all can perform.

“Most pushback is within public and political institutions, who don’t want to accept that their culture and organisation is institutionally racist.”

(Public Body Board Member)

Broad sweeping equity, diversity and inclusion training and education for all

Part of this process was therefore felt as the urgent need to apply broad sweeping equity, diversity and inclusion training and education for all staff and representatives of public and political organisations. Not limited to traditional tick box PowerPoints or e-learning platforms, focussing only on preventing discrimination based on the 9 protected characteristics and mitigating unconscious bias, contributors communicated that this learning needs to encompass intercultural sensitivity skills, anti-racism including issues around gender rights, trans rights, LGBTQIA rights, and rights for socially disabled people, understanding historic systems of structural inequality including white supremacy, patriarchy, elitism, capitalism, and ableism, to name a few, plus how these promote systems of power and privilege. It was also felt that training and education must be made applicable and relevant to various processes, including recruitment, service provision, governance structures, internal culture, external image, marketing and communications, and should recognise the role of the Equality Act, Positive Action, as well as the other applicable equalities legislation and policies in Wales.

Finally, as alluded to above, it was commented that it is vitally important that these programmes of learning are ongoing, engaging, applicable to a variety of learning and working styles, that core time is carved out of roles to attend these, and they are designed and delivered with marginalised people at their helm, who are paid sufficiently for their time and expertise in the area. People called to discontinue the development of these educative materials by people in positions of power and privilege, without due consultation or credit given to those with lived experience of the symptoms of systems of oppression, because these people are not, as mentioned, neutrally objective, and in too many instance, true incorporation of equitable approaches within these products are missed, due to not seeing things that do not affect them.

Public and political bodies must increase their engagement with racialised communities

There was a clear consensus that public and political bodies must increase their engagement with the public and especially with racialised minoritized and marginalised communities. And that this needs to go both ways, beyond what is needed as a requirement of public body services and projects or around election time. There was a strong feeling by contributors that bodies and representatives should engage not only on their terms, but on the terms of racialised people, not just inviting racialised people to join their event, but actively seeking out community events, cultural events, attending religious

centres, and beyond the third sector, engaging with private enterprise sectors through sector associations. People felt that by meeting in these positive environments, run and managed by racialised people, relationships and trust are more likely to be developed. To encourage this, it was recognised that it would be helpful to have this engagement and outreach resourced by representative people, and at bare minimum, the representatives need to have the ability to talk with people from a variety of backgrounds, and engage in a relatable way, especially with young people. Ideas about different methods of engagement were also shared, including using online methods, many of which have proven invaluable this year during the pandemic lockdowns, including online video conferencing, social media (takeovers⁷⁰ are a successful way of engaging with broader sectors of society), but also by providing information via community hubs, charities, local shop noticeboards, GP surgeries, in formats that are accessible, including the clear provision and/or availability of translation into multiple languages, in written and verbal form. Finally, in regard to engagement, it was made clear that following this, direct action must be taken to demonstrate that opinions have been taken on board, moving towards feeding back on solutions implemented to mitigate the ongoing sense of regular talking shops full of lip service. Maintain engagement, follow up and feedback, include in the outcomes, and always, always, give credit to the people who have engaged and provided insight into possible ways forward, be they individuals or organisations.

Demonstration from public and political life of commitment and understanding, of us, our needs, our rights and our fight for justice and equity

“It’s not a fight for just BAME people, it’s for society... changing those hearts and minds of people to acknowledge BAME communities and representation, not because we ‘bang on about it’ but because it’s the right thing to do.”

(Public/Political Aspirant)

Lastly, and most importantly, seemingly not asking for much, the prevailing call was that we want to see a real demonstration from public and political life of the commitment and understanding of the need for diversifying representation, and all the elements that lead towards that in this report. Contributors called for public and political life in Wales to go the extra mile to demonstrate to us and the rest of society that you stand with us, with compassion and solidarity, wishing to be provided with validation and acceptance, that we do have the skills to hold these positions. People stated

under no terms that they want our myriad and diverse intersectional identities to be recognised and understood, with a leadership in place that actively demonstrates that ongoing racism and discrimination in all its forms will no longer be tolerated in Wales.

“We should ensure that values such as respect for rule of law and equity are enshrined in the principles of public and political life in Wales.”

(Politician)

Proactive advice for racialised individuals, in the meantime...

One final element was regularly communicated by all of the people interviewed in our research, which was that while the status quo remains the same, there are specific things that racialised communities and individuals can do, especially if they wish to understand more about public and political life, pursue a role, and contribute from the top down to the change we want to see in society. This is not saying at all that the onus is on us to do the work – as should be clear above, the onus is primarily on the systems that exist and the powerful privileged people who uphold them. But in the meantime, a single report is not going to elicit significant rapid change, so we must stand together, stand up, and fight for our rights. Of the large number of people who are engaged on public body boards or as politicians, as well as those who have specific aspirations, have accessed schemes and mentors, a wealth of advice was provided through our research. As we know, many people do not have access to these fountains of knowledge, so we lay out below a crib sheet of advice, from the role models we have, at the top, and in our homes, across the nation.

A lot of advice was given regarding personal attributes and approaches to life, which may be easier said than done, but still worth noting. Core to these was the recognition that we must develop resilience to discrimination and adversity. And alongside this, we must be confident – know you can do it, even though it may be tough. Maintain your personal motivation and have a clear vision.

More proactively therefore, in identifying some helpful steps to build resilience and confidence, a primary call was for people to be safe, and ensure we have allies and supportive people around us, both at home, in public and at work. Take the time to plan things, taking advantage of opportunities when they come your way, attending public meetings wherever possible, and proactively involving yourself in the community around us. Contributors stated that to be able to succeed, we must put ourselves out there, develop relationships, and

speak to people in positions of power, seeking active advice, help and support. Every person interviewed stated categorically that their door would be open for people to approach them if needed. And with this, it was heavily recommended that where possible, we need to take opportunities to join other boards, be that as a trustee for a charity, or a school governor, taking opportunities outside of your professional field will prepare you for the skills needed to undertake public and political roles. Finally, the most consistent recommendation was to join political parties, and get involved with local politics. Politicians stated that if you cannot afford it, request the party waive your fee, and if they don't, join another party. Join in meetings, even if just to observe and learn about the prevailing issues on the ground and internal to the branch. And when you select or elect, consider who you are voting for – what will they as an individual bring to the future of life in Wales, what do they stand for. Do not be afraid to challenge, as this will shine a light on what the internal culture really is, beyond lip service and tokenism.

And finally, interviewees stated that when we do reach positions of power – we must extend the arm to others. Be a mentor, formally or informally, not waiting for programmes to be put in place and something to land in your inbox. Be proactive in succession planning. Bring others along with you, provide coaching and shadowing opportunities. No matter how much you may feel pressured to hold onto your position and maintain your seat at the table, don't draw the bridge up behind you – draw another seat alongside you instead. And when your voice is given a platform, don't forget your community, and the broader experiences of racialised people in Wales. Stand for our rights, stand for what is contained in this report, in many reports, in books, films, tv series, speeches, blogs and social media posts, in the minds and heart of the many, not the few. The world is crying for equity, the scream has become louder. People at the bottom are not staying silent anymore – and people at the top need to join in the chant.

“Have a thick skin, don't take things personally, and stay strong through the process – don't be ashamed to seek support when you need it – build alliances and friends. It's not an easy journey by any means. But you can go by your truthfulness, by your steadfastness, being honest, having great integrity, staying positive, moving forward, never stopping or giving up, you can achieve. We can achieve.”

(Politician)

CONCLUSION

As we have seen throughout this report, a concerted effort is needed from any stakeholders and key players if we really wish to make movements towards a Wales in which we can succeed, a Wales where we have true public and political representation, where fairness and diversity is visible across the board, where positive role models are promoted and visible, where challenges to the system are seen in a positive light, and we see intersectional representation, beyond the 7%. And where institutional racism, one day, is dismantled, and we hold equal power to our White Welsh counterparts. There are still many areas to address, but with the right public and political will, we believe these changes can be made over the next term of Government.

To undertake this research, a definition of public and political life had to be applied to provide a framework for the research. Therefore, public life refers to the boards of public bodies regulated by the UK Commission for Public Bodies. Public life board members are appointed, not elected, and are usually, but not always, unremunerated. Political life refers to positions in which an individual must stand for election and then be elected by the electorate, for example as Councillors within Local Government or Members of the Senedd. In addition, as this paper is about representation, we sought to understand the current lay of the land in terms of racialised demographics in Wales. According to the 2011 census, the population of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population of Wales was made up of 4.4% of the population. However, those who selected White British or any of its denominations sat at 93%, leading to the understanding that numbers are significantly higher and are estimated to be closer to 7% of the population. Due to lack of diversity data from public and political boards however, there is no clear understanding of how many people in these positions of power are racialised. What is undeniable however is that the corridors of power and influence, continue to be a sea of largely white faces, and the Wales we live in is not reflected in these positions.

This paper worked extensively to review the current research to date, which in turn structured the questions for the active research phase. Due to an overarching lack of concerted research in regard to racialised representation in Wales specifically, with most public and political diversity work aimed at the representation of women in specificity, we looked to answer the overarching questions of why there is a lack of racialised people in public and political life, what barriers are in place, what has been helpful for those who have been successful in achieving a position, and what else could change or improve to encourage and support further racialised aspirants into these spheres.

One of the clear areas addressed throughout was the impact of institutional and systemic racism. This was touched on within the scant research available to date, however, was consistently emphasised when contributors to our

research commented on their lived experiences across the board in Wales. Racialised people disproportionately experience socio-economic deprivation, as Covid-19 has illuminated, and with a heightened sense of racism in education and employment, many face active barriers to professional progression. These barriers included not being promoted despite their skills and experience, even though this was a key motivating factor for entering public or political life. The issue of this is especially pertinent in the public and third sector, as these were key pathways to public and political life, yet where racialised people are heavily underrepresented at senior positions. Furthermore, a definite experience of codeswitching is present amongst the racialised labour force, with people feeling they had to censor their opinions, change their names and the way they dress, as well as change the way they speak. This was symptomatic of the culture of racism perpetuated in Wales, rife with stereotypes and tokenism, leading people to feel that they and their issues are not taken seriously. We must also not ignore the experiences of overt racism and active exclusion, based on other and intersecting characteristics as well.

In terms of the perception and experience of public and political life, both the literature review and the active research highlighted a lack of positive role models, which actively impact the aspiration of people, especially younger age groups, who would feel more inspired if role models were available. Following this, the literature and the active research highlighted that there is a continued limited understanding of political and especially public life, with a recognition that this could be actively tackled by increasing awareness via early education in both statutory and informal settings, and through the delivery and access of programmes and initiatives including mentoring, coaching, shadowing, and formal learning opportunities.

These experiences combined impact the confidence and motivation of people to pursue a public or political position, as highlighted in previous research and supported by evidence found through our exploration, explaining that lack of encouragement and even active discouragement are intangible barriers, and that an increase of networks and sponsorship would support people to aspire to public and political positions.

With this however, a continued thread was the impact of institutional and systemic racism within public and political arenas. Contributors, as well as our desk-based research, reported extensive experiences of not only overt and directed racism within the sector and via online platforms from the public directed at representatives in place, but also covert racism in the form of microaggressions and tokenism, with details being alluded to in relation to migration status and their view of 'Welshness'. A great majority of people were left feeling that public and political bodies do not meet their or their

community's needs, feeling that they are undervalued, ignored and that these sectors do not care about racialised people and persist in failing sectors of society therefore. Regarding politics, there was an overarching feeling that the current systems present a barrier to involvement, with none of the political parties representing racialised communities, and politicians being associated with corruption and being seen to pursue their own interests above those of the electorate.

Our research revealed the active barriers to entering public and political life. As highlighted in the literature reviewed, many felt that positions were obtained through direct selection or appointment, and that nepotism and gatekeeping were rife in both sectors exemplified by people being asked to stand or being co-opted onto boards, especially seeing that extensive experience in senior positions is required by most. This was echoed in the active research phase, with an overarching feeling that the sectors are extremely exclusive, people obtaining positions due to sheer privilege, and that this perpetuated a them and us feeling, and that racialised people do not belong.

The desk-based research allowed for extensive reviews of purportedly transparent processes, recognising that criteria was vague and opaque, access to additional information and development opportunities was scant and assessment processes were not relevant or suited to those applying. Again, our active research substantiated this, with people claiming that these processes presented active barriers, that it was extremely hard work to complete, and that an overhaul of processes was needed, aligning public bodies and separately political party processes, including the inclusion of diverse panel members and anonymised applications. As in the literature review, there were clear demands to more fully utilise positive action provision as laid out in the Statutory Codes supplementing the Equality Act 2010, including but not limited to providing access funds for campaigns⁷¹, guaranteed interviews, quotas where possible and in lieu, at minimum clear targets, twinning and zipping in political selections and elections, reserving spaces on shortlists and when possible, implementing 'all-BAME' shortlists, similar to that provided for women in Section 105 of the Equality Act. To manage this, a clear call was made for equality monitoring data to be published clearly by all public and political organisations, with a need to enact Section 106 of the Equality Act to enable this, and for action plans to be teamed with clear monitoring, audits and independent reviews where necessary, including sanctions for continued breaches of equality legislation and policy. Finally, in regard to the clear barrier of time commitment and finances presented to many in the current literature and through our active research, a continued call for opening up the

opportunity for job sharing for Members of the Senedd, full time positions and wages for Local Councillors, and increased remuneration for public body board members was made.

Racialised people do have motivations to enter public and political life, with a desire to be successful, bring a change to the system and society, and to have a voice and actively represent the key issues that affect racialised people in Wales. The current supportive mechanisms laid out in the expansion of this report must be maintained, and with this, more must be done to improve these and make active changes where possible.

We recognise that there are several current pieces of legislation and policy that can be used as mechanisms to support the argument that something must be done in this regard. The United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), ratified in 1965 by the UK, laid out clearly the need for member states to support the call for racial diversity in public and political life, supported directly by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). This year Wales shall be reporting on its status against these conventions and their articles, and we hope that in 5 years' time, when we look to report again, a clear difference in the representation of racialised people is related.

We also recognise other components of the Equality Act 2010, in addition to the Sections referenced above with concern to public and political representation, especially the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Socio Economic Duty, and the supplementary Statutory Codes of Practice provided by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. Clear provision is laid out providing for legal opportunity to implement positive action in a variety of forms, however this persists in being underused, and we call for it to be at the forefront of decision-making regarding increasing diversity across the board.

Finally, in terms of legislation, Wales is unique in having enshrined the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. With specific recourse to achieving a vision of 'a more equal Wales', this act mandates public and political institutions to proactively make decision and implement changes to support the pursuit of equality, amongst 6 other specific goals. Again, this provides a clear hook on which to hang the continued recommendations of this report, without room for excuses.

Moving to policy in place and in development, we recognise that there are a number of pieces, some due to be renewed with the next Government, that should be central to the right for racialised representation in public and political life. The Welsh Government Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 provides

overarching opportunity for developing these strategies to increase diversity, hand in hand with the 'Programme for Government: Taking Wales Forward' and 'Prosperity for All: The National Strategy.' With a more disaggregated focus, 'Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers' and the 'Nation of Sanctuary - Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan' provide specific details on the needs of some of the most marginalised communities within the racialised demographic in Wales. In relation to public life, we look to the recent 'Reflecting Wales in Running Wales, diversity and inclusion strategy for public appointments 2020-23', and call for actions developed within this to contain those recommendations laid out herein.

Finally, we await the much-anticipated Race Equality Action Plan, currently in development, with 7 key areas including Leadership and Representation. We hope that this report will be considered in the development of this section, and that with this, the new Government will consider the call made in Race Alliance Wales' manifesto for an Antiracist Wales – for Welsh Government to commit to being an anti-racist government, akin to the commitment made by Carwyn Jones, the previous First Minister, to be a 'feminist government.' And that to begin this, an independent review of race equality in Wales will be undertaken, leading to a Wales where all racial and ethnic groups shall have an equal share of power, influence and resource.⁷² To achieve this, taking into consideration the above, our conclusive recommendations are laid out below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Braver and bolder: Commit to broader societal changes needed in Wales

Broad sweeping reformation of systems and processes, including increasing and improving political education at all levels and engagement with racialised communities. A concerted demonstration of commitment and understanding of the need for diversifying representation – our leaders must demonstrate that racism is not tolerated at any level of society. Employers must tackle racism head on, active sanctions must be implemented for online abuse, and efforts to decolonise systems and move to a new economy must be made.

Ongoing and concerted effort must be made to change the landscape in Wales in order to improve the general experience of racialised people living here. As we can see from our research, the institutions and systems in Wales are continuing to perpetuate racist environments. These lead to a lifetime of discrimination, most prevalent in employment and education. Unless our communities start to have more positive than negative experiences, we will not achieve a country where enough racialised people have aspiration to public and political life, let alone being successful in obtaining these positions. There must be a concerted effort to decolonise our systems and processes, including ensuring we are paying people for their input – whether that be in cash, or by providing professional credit for contributions made to research, roundtables and reports. Some radical recommendations made by contributors to our research in relation to welfare reform including Universal Basic Income, reparations and taxation based on representation. Finally, as we move into the second decade of widespread use of social media and online means of communication, we urge those in power to enact active sanctions for media platforms who do not modify the racist hate speech and content that is perpetrated on their platforms, either by their staff or by members of the public. We must start to protect those in public and political positions from the vitriol that is directed at them 24/7.

One of the largest reforms needed to take place is within our systems of education. From an early age, statutory education in Wales must improve its provision of socio-political education. Children, young people and university students should receive proactive education in relation to public and political life, what it entails in practice and in terms of the systems and processes that it functions by and what the pathways to these realms are. This provision must be extended beyond formal statutory education and be made available via community groups and to adults, taking into consideration a variety of methods and learning styles. Central to this must be a focus on success stories, increasing

the active promotion of diverse role models in Public and Political life.

Leading on from this, public and political bodies must increase their engagement initiatives with racialised communities across Wales. It is not enough to invite people to join in event facilitated by the bodies themselves – efforts must be made to create a two-way stream of relationship building, by attending activities and spaces run by racialised groups, something that Councillors and other politicians do very well, generally in the lead up to election, but that is not experienced in relation to public body representatives. In addition, engagement must be ongoing – feedback must be provided, clearly explaining how any contributions will be used, what solutions are possible / in development, and when they have been implemented in policy decisions.

Encapsulating all of this, we finally call for public and political bodies to actively demonstrate their commitment and understanding of the value of diversity in representation. For this to land, we need to see leaders of political parties, of Parliament, of Government departments, and of public bodies, publicly demonstrating that racism and discrimination in all its forms will not be tolerated within the institutions they run, and within broader society.

Show us you care: Encourage racialised communities and individuals into Public & Political life

Proactively support racialised people along their journey to public or political life. Increase the range, scale, accessibility and inclusivity of formal programmes and initiatives, and ensure that these programmes are run by racialised people, for racialised people. Ensure that programmes are aimed at people at different stages of the journey and increase the funding provision for these initiatives.

With the above in place, we will certainly start to see an increase in the number of people from racialised communities that wish to pursue a public or political position. Therefore, provision of programmes and initiatives to support people along their journey to public and political life must be increased, to allow people to not only develop their understanding but also their networks, key to being successful in public or political aspiration. However, they cannot replicate the way in which they have been delivered over the last 10 years. As the evidence has demonstrated, these programmes must take into consideration accessibility in the design process, not only in practical terms, thinking about where and when they are delivered, but also importantly in relation to scaling them to different levels and stages of the journey, from those who have just

developed an aspiration and want to understand more to make a decision on what to pursue, to those who are ready to apply to a board or stand as a potential candidate in their local party branch.

With this, initiatives need to be delivered internally and externally – political parties need to ensure that they have programmes available for first time candidates with concerted support embedded in them. Public bodies need to offer access to programmes to those they are succession planning into place, including the provision of shadowing opportunities. And political institutions need to offer non-partisan advice on the rules, regulations and processes to becoming and being an elected Councillor or Member of the Senedd. In addition, a focus on longevity needs to be factored in, moving on from a once chance access, with no follow up to individuals years after their engagement, to actively continuing relationships with those who have helped aspirations, to gather their input into impact evaluations, offering them spaces on the next level of programme when suitable.

These must be supplemented however by independent programmes, run not only within the public sector, or the third sector, but increasing provision and outreach to the private sector, thereby including the swathe of racialised professionals who are prime for appointment, but do not have access to the same circles and knowledge of opportunity that the public and third sector provide their employees. Here, importance must be placed, after the above in terms of accessibility, on provision run by racialised people, for racialised people, as our evidence shows that this encourages an environment of trust, removing the fear factor of institutional racism and all of its symptoms being experienced by those pursuing these roles.

For this to be possible, two considerations must be taken – disaggregating initiatives where possible, especially provision for racialized people who are not cis-men. Secondly, funding provision must increase. Current programmes are few and far between, and those available do not have enough staffing capacity to run them in the best way possible. Taken the evidence into account, we argue that every programme needs sufficient staffing (at least 3 workers) to ensure that they can meet the criteria of a successful programme, from design, to engagement, to delivery, evaluation and follow up.

Use your power: Modulate processes to ease racialised communities and individual's entry into Public and/or Political life

Application forms, shortlisting, interview and assessment processes must become more transparent and easier to complete. They must actively value people's lived experience alongside professional and educational backgrounds. Positive action needs to be utilised by public and political bodies, who must stop shying away from implementing quotas, targets, place reservations for racialised people and limits on the number of times an individual can stand for position. Panels must be diverse and applications anonymised. Job sharing, fulltime positions and access funds must be implemented without delay. Diversity action plans need to be teamed with robust monitoring and auditing mechanisms, with independent reviews and sanctions in place for continued breaches of equality law.

The process in some arenas has begun, as seen with the public body appointment strategy for Wales, as well as evidence of alternative processes for application being implemented in some political parties. However, there needs to be more consistent effort made to ensure clear pathways are available on a centralised platform, with detailed advice on how to complete applications, the format to write them in and what recruiters are looking for, as well as opportunity for applications and processes to be undertaken via a variety of means, for example voice recording answers to applications, and guaranteed interview schemes should also be implemented for racialised applicants who meet minimum criteria.

Criteria must start to include provision for the intrinsic value of people's lived experiences beyond those obtained in professional and academic settings, removing requirements for length of service. This lived experience must be viewed beyond the realm of experiencing discrimination however, with focus given to experiences of living in Wales and engagement in the myriad of public services and goods available. To bring about change to society we must marry theoretical policy development with lived experience of the policy issues at hand.

Finally, until we realise a truly anti-racist Wales, public and political bodies must start to maximise on the opportunities laid out in the Equality Act 2010 for positive action in regard to racialised and other marginalised communities, moving from single strand provision to intersectional provision as applicable. As evidenced, some opportunities for positive action, especially in relation to political parties, such as all 'BAME' shortlists, are not legally provided for, and opportunity for this will arise in 2030 with the revision of Section 105 of the Equality Act. However, provision for reserving places on shortlists in party and

national election processes is allowed, and the application of quotas in public body boards can also be used to emphasise the need for more applicants and efforts across the board. In addition, we urge political parties and institutions to utilise twinning processes for racialised candidates as has been done for women in the past, with much success, and for public and political institutions to implement clear terms for positions / for re-election/ re-appointment, with provision that succession planning be undertaken by individuals in these positions to actively progress the opportunity for their marginalised counterparts.

For positive action to be successfully implemented, clear action plans must be developed for all public and political bodies, encompassing the provision of all the relevant elements in this report, laid out in the recommendations. Robust and regular monitoring mechanisms must be put in place, and to enable this, we call on Section 106 of the Equality Act to be enacted in Wales, to mandate political parties to publish data on the demographics of their candidates and those successful in election. With this, a provision for independent external audits and, if need be, investigations, must be created beyond the scope of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, with Welsh Government funding these on a regular basis. Where ongoing contraventions and shortcomings of the duties under the Equality Act persist, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and Socioeconomic Duty, we call for sanctions to be implemented, as without these, there are no consequences to these bodies for their continued failings in regard to race and broader equality.

Remove the smokescreen: Public and political bodies must demonstrate their equality, diversity and inclusion.

Admit mistakes and failures. Be honest and show your integrity in making changes from recruitment, service provision, governance, internal culture, and external image. Implement broad sweeping equity, diversity and inclusion training and education for all public and political staff and representatives, led appropriately by marginalised people. The fight for equal rights must be as one, moving away from single strand approaches to genuine intersectional equity.

Coming full circle therefore, we land once again with the need for public and political bodies to do more internally to demonstrate their commitment to equity. 2020 has provided an impetus for many institutions to review the way in which they approach equity, diversity and inclusion. However, either not enough is happening, or once again, we are being shut out and not told about

these changes and proactive moments towards an anti-racist Wales. Public and political organisations must start to emphasise a concerted effort to regularly and publicly admit their failures and demonstrate their integrity by exemplifying changes that have been made.

And one of these key changes needs to be the provision of staff and representative education. Not one-off, online, tick-box education. This education needs to be integrated and ongoing, engaging and applicable to a variety of learning and working styles as well as departments and sectors. Core time must be carved out for civil servants, public body board members, political parties and politicians to regularly engage in training opportunities that address not only unconscious bias and the Equality Act, but that push the boundaries, and encompass intercultural sensitivity skills, an understanding of values and culture, anti-racism including understanding the beliefs and forces of inequality that underpin our society and institutions, not limited to White Supremacy, but also the patriarchy, elitism, capitalism and ableism. People in public and political life in Wales, at whatever level, must embody the fight for the rights of racialised people, as well as the rights for people of different genders, trans rights, LGBTQIA+ rights and rights for socially disabled people, if we are ever to achieve the vision laid out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. And we must discontinue the development of these training programmes by people in positions of power and privilege, prioritising the leadership of minoritized people who have first-hand experience of these systems of oppression and the symptoms of them, consulting when needed and ensuring due credit and payment is provided.

In the meantime, what can we as racialised people, with a route to public and political life do...?

While the status quo remains in place, we must develop our resilience, be confident, maintain our motivation and keep hold of our vision. Surround yourself with allies, plan and make the most of opportunities, involving yourself in the local community. Develop relationships – reach out to people with experience, and search for board positions on a smaller scale to build experience. Join political parties, attend meetings, and consider who you vote for, not just what the party stands for.

And for those of us in public and political life – extend your arm to others. Provide coaching and shadowing opportunities and be proactive in your succession planning. And stand up for our rights, join the chant, raise your voice. We will stand behind you.

It will take more than this paper, more than all the cries for changes to break down racism in public and political life for changes to happen. So, while we continue to fight, to call for action, there are things that those of us ready to take on the journey to public and political life can do. All the people interviewed provided not only reams of advice, but also the willingness to provide proactive support for aspirants. We lay out the advice here, for everyone to access, while we continue the struggle towards racial equity and representation in public and political life.

Central is the need for us to develop our resilience to discrimination and adversity that will continue to plague us until we have exposed and equalised the underlying forces that dictate the running of our country. We must be confident, even though it will be hard. Maintain our motivation and keep hold of our vision. To do this, we must stay as safe as possible by ensuring we surround ourselves with supportive allies, at home, at work and in public realms. Together, take the time to plan your pathway, and take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves – joining meetings in the public and third sector, and getting involved in our local geographic communities. Here, use spaces to develop relationships and speak to people in positions of power, proactively seeking advice and support on your journey. They are there to serve you. Take chances with smaller scale board positions such as charities and school governors and join political parties. If you cannot afford it – ask the branch to waive your fee. Attend meetings, find out what is on the agenda. Do not be afraid to challenge in these spaces, as that challenge can shine swathes of light on the real culture of the group. And be considerate in who you select or elect – look at the person, not just the party, and what they are promising to bring the future of Wales.

And for those of us successful to public body boards, to becoming candidates for election and even winning seats. Extend your arm to others – don't pull up the drawbridge behind you. Be a mentor to others, formally or informally, and be proactive in your succession planning, knowing when it is time to step up, and when it is time to step aside. Bring others along with you for shadowing opportunities – you have the right to draw an extra seat alongside you. And never forget to stand up for the rights of racialised people. Stand for what is contained in this report, and all the other reports on equity and new economics. And as they are published, wave them in the faces of others. Join the chant and get your counterparts to stand with you, and the rest of us will stand firmly behind you, as the proactive, positive role models we all need to see.

APPENDIX 1

FULL LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS RESEARCH

Name	Role in contribution
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Also, a massive thank you to the 132 individuals who shared their experiences with our team through our online survey, interviews and focus groups, none of whom wished to be named.

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF PUBLIC AND POLITICAL POSITIONS REFERRED TO AND OMISSIONS

Political

Welsh Parliament – Elected Members of the Senedd – Constituent and Regional Seats

1. Aberavon	22. Islwyn
2. Aberconwy	23. Llanelli
3. Alyn and Deeside	24. Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
4. Arfon	25. Monmouth
5. Blaenau Gwent	26. Montgomeryshire
6. Brecon and Radnorshire	27. Neath
7. Bridgend	28. Newport East
8. Caerphilly	29. Newport East
9. Cardiff Central	30. Newport West
10. Cardiff North	31. Ogmore
11. Cardiff South and Penarth	32. Pontypridd
12. Cardiff West	33. Preseli Pembrokeshire
13. Carmarthen East and Dinefwr	34. Rhondda
14. Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire	35. Swansea East
15. Ceredigion	36. Swansea West
16. Clwyd South	37. Torfaen
17. Clwyd West	38. Vale of Clwyd
18. Cynon Valley	39. Vale of Glamorgan
19. Delyn	40. Ynys Môn
20. Dwyfor Meirionnydd	41. Regional - Mid and West Wales
21. Gower	42. Regional - Mid and West Wales
	43. Regional - Mid and West Wales

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 44. Regional - Mid and West Wales | 53. Regional - South Wales East |
| 45. Regional - North Wales | 54. Regional - South Wales East |
| 46. Regional - North Wales | 55. Regional - South Wales East |
| 47. Regional - North Wales | 56. Regional - South Wales East |
| 48. Regional - North Wales | 57. Regional - South Wales West |
| 49. Regional - South Wales Central | 58. Regional - South Wales West |
| 50. Regional - South Wales Central | 59. Regional - South Wales West |
| 51. Regional - South Wales Central | 60. Regional - South Wales West |
| 52. Regional - South Wales Central | |

Local Government – Elected Councillors to the following Local Authorities

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council | 14. Monmouthshire County Council |
| 2. Bridgend County Borough Council | 15. Neath Port Talbot Council |
| 3. Caerphilly County Borough Council | 16. Newport City Council |
| 4. Carmarthenshire County Council | 17. Pembrokeshire County Council |
| 5. Ceredigion County Council | 18. Powys County Council |
| 6. City and County of Swansea | 19. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council |
| 7. City of Cardiff Council | 20. Torfaen County Borough Council |
| 8. Conwy County Borough Council | 21. Vale of Glamorgan Council |
| 9. Denbighshire County Council | 22. Wrexham County Borough Council |
| 10. Flintshire County Council | |
| 11. Gwynedd Council | |
| 12. Isle of Anglesey County Council | |
| 13. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council | |

Public

Public Bodies⁷³ to which we refer, focussing on representation on these boards

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Advisory Panel to the Welsh Language Commissioner | 16. Career Choices Dewis Gyrfya (aka Careers Wales) |
| 2. Agricultural Advisory Panel for Wales | 17. Children's Commissioner for Wales |
| 3. All Wales Medicines Strategy Group | 18. Commissioner for Older People in Wales |
| 4. All Wales Programme Monitoring Committee for the European Structural Funds | 19. Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Health Council |
| 5. Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum of Wales | 20. Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Local Health Board |
| 6. Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council | 21. Design Commission for Wales |
| 7. Aneurin Bevan University Local Health Board | 22. Education & Skills Ministerial Advisory Group |
| 8. Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group | 23. Education Workforce Council |
| 9. Arts Council of Wales | 24. Future Generations Commissioner |
| 10. Betsi Cadwaladr Community Health Council | 25. Health Education Improvement Wales |
| 11. Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board | 26. Higher Education Funding Council for Wales |
| 12. Board of Community Health Councils | 27. Hybu Cig Cymru |
| 13. Brecon Beacons National Park Authority | 28. Hywel Dda Community Health Council |
| 14. Cardiff & Vale Community Health Council | 29. Hywel Dda University Health Board |
| 15. Cardiff & Vale University Health Board | 30. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales |
| | 31. Industry Wales |
| | 32. Life Sciences Hub Wales Board |
| | 33. Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales |

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 34. National Academy for Educational Leadership | 45. Snowdonia National Park Authority |
| 35. National Adviser for Violence against Women and other forms of Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence | 46. Social Care Wales |
| 36. National Library of Wales | 47. Sports Council for Wales |
| 37. Natural Resources Wales | 48. Swansea Bay Community Health Council |
| 38. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority | 49. Swansea Bay University Local Health Board |
| 39. Powys Community Health Council | 50. Velindre National Health Services Trust |
| 40. Powys Teaching Health Board | 51. Welsh Ambulance Services National Health Service Trust |
| 41. Public Health Wales NHS Trust | 52. Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board |
| 42. Qualifications Wales | 53. Welsh Language Commissioner |
| 43. Regulatory Board for Wales | 54. Welsh Revenue Authority |
| 44. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales | |

Omissions

The following are not all listed as public bodies (as above) – there was some cross over and some omissions.⁷⁴ Many of these are advisory bodies, sub-Groups, steering groups, forums, and councils, with a lack of clarity on the implication of the name. Some are even labelled as commissions. The appointment to them is unregulated, and many would apply an invitation to join basis. The details of appointment processes for each one was not researched due to time restrictions. These could be included in future research on the topic, especially as many are recognised as having resonance in what people experience and view as ‘public life’ in Wales. In addition, many other bodies perceived as ‘public bodies’ were highlighted and omitted for not being on the list regulated above. These included Local Authority Public Service Boards, Charity Boards, Executive Boards, Associations, School Governor Boards, Appeals Tribunals, Inspectorates, Audit Offices, Welsh Financial Institutions, Consular Associations, Fire and Rescue Authorities, the Police, Magistrates, as well as Town and Community Councils, of which there are 730 in Wales with 8000+ councillors. The number of these became too expansive and time consuming to list here in any clear or concise manner.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ▪ Access Reform Advisory Group Advisory body | ▪ Cadw |
| ▪ Active Travel Board | ▪ Cafcass Cymru |
| ▪ Adjudication Panel for Wales | ▪ Commission on Justice in Wales Advisory body |
| ▪ Agricultural Dwelling House Advisory Committees Advisory body | ▪ Committee for Administrative Justice and Tribunals, Wales |
| ▪ Agricultural Land Tribunal for Wales | ▪ Council for Economic Development Advisory body |
| ▪ Anglesey Enterprise Zone Advisory Board Advisory body | ▪ COVID-19 Moral and Ethical Guidance for Wales Advisory Group Advisory body |
| ▪ Animal and Environment Antimicrobial Resistance Delivery Group Advisory body | ▪ Decarbonisation of Homes in Wales Advisory Group Advisory body |
| ▪ British-Irish Council Advisory body | ▪ Deeside Enterprise Zone Advisory Board Advisory body |
| ▪ Building Control Performance Standards Advisory Group | ▪ Dementia Oversight of Implementation and Impact Group Advisory body |
| ▪ Building Regulations Advisory Committee for Wales | |

- Disability Equality Forum Advisory body
- Distribution Sub-group Advisory body
- Education Change Board
- Education Delivery Board
- Education Independent Advisory Group Advisory body
- Education Strategic Stakeholder Group
- Estyn
- European Advisory Group Advisory body
- Evidence and Scenario Sub-group (Roundtable Wales and Brexit) Advisory body
- Expert Group on the Needs of the Armed Forces Community in Wales
- Fair Work Commission Advisory body
- Faith Communities Forum Advisory body
- Finance Sub-group
- Financial Inclusion Steering Group Advisory body
- Firefighters' Pension Scheme Advisory Board Advisory body
- Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee Advisory body
- Ford Bridgend Taskforce Advisory body
- Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone Advisory Board Advisory body
- Health Protection Committee Advisory body
- Homelessness Action Group
- Housing Information Group Advisory body
- Improving Outcomes for Children Advisory Group Advisory body
- Independent Appeals Panel (rural grants and payments) Advisory body
- Independent Maternity Services Oversight Panel
- Innovation Advisory Council for Wales Advisory body
- Inter Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Interim Youth Work Board Advisory body
- Invasive Non-Native Species Group Advisory body
- Joint Ministerial Committee Advisory body
- Joint Ministerial Task and Finish Group on a Whole-School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being Advisory body
- Justice Stakeholder Group Advisory body
- Land Management Sub-group (Roundtable Wales and Brexit) Advisory body
- Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group Advisory body

- Legislation and Regulation Sub-group (Roundtable Wales and Brexit) Advisory body
- Marine Conservation Zone Task and Finish Group Advisory body
- Marine Planning Decision Makers Group
- Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group Advisory body
- Marine Protected Area Management Steering Group Advisory body
- Mental Health Review Tribunal for Wales
- Ministerial Advisory Group for Carers Advisory body
- National Advice Network Advisory body
- National Independent Safeguarding Board Advisory body
- National Infrastructure Commission for Wales Advisory body
- National Joint Professional Advisory Committee Advisory body
- National Mental Health Partnership Board Advisory body
- National Museum Wales
- National Procurement Service Non-ministerial department
- Partnership Council for Wales
- Payments for Ecosystem Services Practitioners Group
- People and Communities Sub-group (Roundtable Wales and Brexit) Advisory body
- Planning Inspectorate
- Policing Partnership Board for Wales
- Port Talbot Waterfront Enterprise Zone Advisory Board Advisory body
- Procurement Board
- Public Services Staff Commission Advisory body
- Public Transport Users' Advisory Panel Advisory body
- Regional Investment for Wales Steering Group
- Residential Leasehold Reform Task and Finish Group
- Residential Property Tribunal Wales
- Review of Digital Innovation for the Economy and the Future of Work in Wales Advisory body
- Review of Health and Social Care Advisory body
- Seas and Coast Sub-group (Roundtable Wales and Brexit) Advisory body
- Snowdonia Enterprise Zone Advisory Board Advisory body
- South East Wales Transport Commission
- Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales
- Strategic Education Delivery Group
- Strengthening and Advancing Equality and Human Rights Steering Group

- Substance Misuse National Partnership Board Advisory body
- Supply Model Taskforce Advisory body
- Supporting People National Advisory Board
- Taskforce for the Valleys
- Tax Advisory Group for Wales Advisory body
- Tech Valleys Strategic Advisory Group Advisory body
- Technical Advisory Cell Advisory body
- Third Sector Meetings with Welsh Ministers Advisory body
- Third Sector Partnership Council Advisory body
- Third Sector Statistics User Panel Advisory body
- Trade and Supply Chains Sub-group (Roundtable Wales and Brexit) Advisory body
- Transport for Wales Public corporation
- Unadopted Roads Taskforce Advisory body
- Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group Advisory body
- Wales Anti-Slavery Leadership Group
- Wales Employment and Skills Board Advisory body
- Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group Advisory body
- Wales Marine Fisheries Advisory Group Advisory body
- Wales Programme Monitoring Committee Advisory body
- Wales Race Forum Advisory body
- Wales Resilience Forum
- Wales Revalidation Oversight Group
- Wales Science and Innovation Advisory Council Advisory body
- Wales Screening Committee Advisory body
- Wales Tree Health Steering Group Advisory body
- Wales Wildlife and Rural Crime Group
- Welsh Dental Committee Advisory body
- Welsh for Adults Scrutiny Committee
- Welsh Language Partnership Council Advisory body
- Welsh Language Tribunal
- Welsh Medical Committee Advisory body
- Welsh Naming and Approvals Committee
- Welsh Nursing and Midwifery Committee Advisory body
- Welsh Optometric Committee Advisory body
- Welsh Pharmaceutical Committee Advisory body

- Welsh Scientific Advisory Committee Advisory body
- Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee Advisory body
- Welsh Therapies Advisory Committee Advisory body
- Welsh Tribunals
- Whole-School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being Stakeholder Reference Group Advisory body
- Whole-School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being Youth Stakeholder Group
- Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Board Advisory body
- Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel Advisory body
- Workforce Partnership Council Advisory body
- Working Group on Local Government
- Ystadau Cymru

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1. We have used different terminology to 'BAME' in the continuation of this report. Please see the literature review for details on this.
2. A full list of contributors can be found in APPENDIX 1.
3. Further explanation in the continuation of this introduction to the terminology used
4. Prior to 2020 known as Assembly Members within the devolved Parliament
5. Further detail below is given to the demographic in Wales
6. A full list can be seen in the attached APPENDIX 2
7. When speaking with the author of the Strategy, it was noted that Public Boards that fall outside this scope are not regulated, and therefore actions on increasing diversity do not fall under Welsh Government's remit. However, as mentioned below, we see that all the recommendations made in this report should be taken on board by all public bodies and beyond, and encourage Welsh Government to support this messaging, whether in their remit or not.
8. Therefore, Welsh Government is not included for example, as apart from Ministers who lead departments, this forms part of the Civil Service, who are paid employees. This again is due to the capacity given to undertaking this research report, which would need to be increased if to consider civil servants. Additionally, the difference between being a paid member of staff and either a voluntary board member or elected official, and the barriers presented to representation in the such, are stark and would be hard to consolidate. We look to our next piece of research focussed on employment where we shall consider representation in this context.
9. Again, although charities are seen broadly as integral to Public life, they do not hold decision making power and are regulated instead by the Charity Commission. Scope and capacity of this research report also limited inclusion of such boards under the remit of public life, however again, we shall look to address this in our next piece of research focussed on employment.
10. At times where direct quotes are used from previous publications, we shall leave the use of the term Assembly members in place
11. Welsh Government Cabinet members and ministers
12. It is notable here to make connection between these departments and the public bodies that sit at arm's length from them, considering the opportunity for Ministers therefore to directly appoint to these boards if they wish.
13. Welsh Government Local government bodies in Wales

14. Some seemingly Public Bodies/ Organisations are not (See Omissions section on Annexed document) – this is usually due to how they are regulated and/or funded, and it may be that the research we undertake looks at these as well, and recommendations for change reflect the differences / are made more broadly speaking
15. We have decided to use the term ‘White-British’ to determine people who racially identify as White and nationally as British, including English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish. This categorisation does not include Other White ethnicities, such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups or people who identify as ‘White Other’, including different nationalities. (ONS, Writing about ethnicity)
16. BBC News, 2020 Census 2021: Asian and Black Welsh terms to be added to survey
17. In his book ‘Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire’, Akala explained in depth how historically people of Irish nationality and descent have experienced similar persecution under the systems of xenophobia in the UK, exemplified by the persistent ‘No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs’ signs held in establishments throughout the 60s. It is interesting to consider therefore the inclusion of people who identify as Irish in the scope of racialised people who experience levels of discrimination in British society. Whether this is as prevalent in Wales as it is and has been in other parts of the UK was unfounded. (Akala, 2018)
18. (ONS, Writing about ethnicity)
19. European Network Against Racism
20. We recognise that as the discourse on racism develops, so does the terminology used, understood and accepted by racialised people in Wales and beyond. Various other terminologies have been considered, including People of Colour, however we felt this term not only ignores people who may not identify as a person of colour due to being White/ White-passing in their skin tone, even if they are not White British, but also perpetuates the idea that whiteness is the default and white people therefore have no particular race; race therefore being a special identity marker that is only assigned to people who are not white; who are the other. (Guess, 2006)
21. Office For National Statistics, 2011 Census: Key Statistics for Wales, March 2011; Ethnic Group and Identity
22. Welsh Government, Stats Wales – Population and Migration/Population/Estimates/Ethnicity

23. Note on the Reliability of Estimates: Population estimates by ethnic group for Wales are produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) using a cohort component method. This requires the estimation of the base population, ageing the population on, adding births, subtracting deaths and adjusting for migration. They have not yet been shown to meet the quality criteria for National Statistics. Usual residents away from home temporarily are included, but visitors are excluded. Students are counted at their term-time address. Short-term migrants (e.g. migrant workers from Eastern European countries) are not counted in the population estimates. Welsh Government, Stats Wales – Population and Migration/Population/Estimates/Ethnicity/Population Estimates by Local Authority
24. This process was not possible in relation to public life as not all bodies provide names or photos of the people on their boards
25. Further on we outline some of the keep pieces of legislation and policy applicable to public and political institutions in Wales that should, in practice, be at minimum tool, and at best a legal mandate, for addressing all the barriers in place.
26. Note that Debbie Wilcox is White British and now stands as baroness Wilcox of Newport in the House of Lords.
27. Black female MP for the constituency of Hackney, London.
28. Academi Wales Great Leadership through Learning
29. At the time of writing (January 2021), Wales is moving towards the next Senedd Elections due to take place in May 2021. Some political parties have already implemented changes with a view to improve diversity, and others are committing to do so moving forward, as most candidates have already been fielded. These are referenced in the continuation of this report. The next Local Government elections shall take place in 2022. We hope that recommendations in this report will be taken on by parties well ahead of the fielding process for these elections.
30. Welsh Parliament Members' Pay and Expenses
31. This Act was superseded by future acts and finally incorporated into the Equality Act 2010.
32. Other conventions ratified by the UK include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention against torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (CRPD).

33. OHCHR 1965
34. OHCHR 1966
35. OHCHR 1966a
36. These include direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and also covers discrimination by perception and association.
37. This could therefore include (and is not limited to) language, food, dress, name, accent, dialect, physical features and other specific cultural customs.
38. This includes voluntary and private organisations that provide public services or functions (EHRC, 2011)
39. Equality and Human Rights Commission, Equality Act Codes of Practice
40. EHRC 2010
41. Other exemptions are also made in the Act, in relation to public and political life. Specifically, functions of or exercisable in connection with official business of Parliament and judicial functions are excluded, including steps within legislative processes, (EHRC, 2011, pg. 164), acts and measures and any orders or regulations made therein, or laws made before the Act came in. (EHRC, 2011, pg. 185). Unfortunately, due to lack of capacity, we were not able to consult a lawyer on the implications / applications of these exceptions, and it is not made clear what would constitute official business of Parliament.
42. A proclamation by the pigs who control the government in his novel Animal Farm The sentence is a comment on the hypocrisy of governments that proclaim the absolute equality of their citizens but give power and privileges to a small elite. (Dictionary.com)
43. Enaction delayed due to Covid, due March 2021
44. EHRC 2019
45. The Equality Trust
46. Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, UK Government
47. Government Equalities Office
48. Some may stand as Independent candidates.
49. This is where a party will specifically reserve places on its constituent shortlist

- for people from particular underrepresented groups or states a specific quote of people it will field for election. Note here to remember that it is illegal to reserve all places for any particular characteristic, with exception made for women, and that quotas can legally only be made in regard to women, not other protected characteristic.
50. This is where a constituency will combine its shortlists with a safe seat constituency, and the vote will go out to the combined party selectorate, meaning that greater opportunity is given for diverse candidates to be fielded.
 51. This process refers to strategically positioning names on a shortlist in a certain order, to ensure that under-represented candidates have a priority space in the list. This is a psychological approach seeking to address the impact of primacy being seen at the 'top of the list'
 52. Regional members of the Senedd are currently elected to a proportionate representative system, which has allowed for more diversity in political party representation, but hasn't yet been seen as effective for racial diversity, in most part due to other measures not being taken by parties to diversify the candidates they field.
 53. Kellett M (2011) Empowering children and young people as researchers: Overcoming barriers and building capacity. Child Indicators Research 4(2): 205-219
 54. "Grounded Theory is an inductive methodology... It is the systematic generation of theory from systematic research. It is a set of rigorous research procedures leading to the emergence of conceptual categories. These concepts/categories are related to each other as a theoretical explanation of the action(s) that continually resolves the main concern of the participants in a substantive area. Grounded Theory can be used with either qualitative or quantitative data" (Glaser & Strauss, 2014)
 55. Adapting elements of behaviour, identity and looks to fit into the 'norm' presented in certain environments. (Morris, 2020)
 56. The belief that white people are superior to other races and should therefore dominate them, thereby maintain the defence of white power and privilege.
 57. As in subjugated, being under control and made subordinate.
 58. This demonstrates a misunderstanding of public bodies in Wales and some of their regular interaction with our lives, especially those related to health, with some commenting that they didn't even know public bodies existed. This misunderstanding is evidenced and explored in further detail in the continuation of this report.

59. A sadly low 7% of racialised people felt their needs were met by public bodies in Wales.
60. Criticising someone from expressing emotion, taking away from the validity of the point they are trying to make.
61. A political parties local, regional and/or national members and representatives who internally elect who will stand for local, national or general election for their respective constituencies or wards.
62. A number of interviewees however commented on their motivations for entering public or political life being based upon their family's encouragement and engagement with these areas both in the UK and in their countries of origin. This is explored in the continuation of this report.
63. In the continuation of this report, we provide more reference as to why a lack of networks and lack of role models discourage entry by evidencing the number of people who have felt that networks and role models have been one of the most helpful things in their aspiration to public and political positions.
64. It is unsurprising that there is more aspiration for public over political, given the especially negative perceptions and barriers to political life overviewed above - the more political, the more visible and thus the more either discouraged or apprehensive people become, and that Power structures appear to be more intact and less inclusive for BAME people in politics than public office.
65. We must not forget that purely assimilationist policies, designed around equality of opportunity, are not enough. All they seek to do is to enable people to get a seat at the table, and then welcome meritocracy, ignoring the persistent difficulties marginalised people will face once entering certain arenas.
66. Provision for political parties to utilise All-Women shortlists.
67. Race Alliance Wales shall soon be publishing an in-depth action research report on the state of racism in education, which we encourage people to read as supplementary to this report.
68. In 2021-2022 Race Alliance Wales shall be completing a concerted piece of action research based on this area of life.
69. Defunding the police is a call to shift and divest funding from the police to more socially competent public safety providers, such as social services, youth services, mental health services, domestic violence series and other forms of street level community support. (Black Lives Matter UK 2020; Elliott-Cooper 2020)

70. Social Media takeovers allow individuals and organisations with prominent following figures to leverage their social capital and provide a platform for other, less resourced organisations, to take over and share their messaging directly, to increase coverage for the new, information, campaigns and insights that others can provide. (Sehl, 2019)
71. Similar to the Access to Elected Office Fund confirmed on a pilot basis by Welsh Government to support disabled candidates in the May 2021 Senedd Elections and the May 2022 Local Government Elections.
72. Davies 2018
73. Regulated by the UK Commission for Public Bodies and as distinguished from, for example, a charity board (Ladwa-Thomas, 2020)
74. Sourced from: gov.wales/organisations. We also managed to source the following list <https://gov.wales/register-devolved-public-bodies> Again, there was cross over and confusion as to the regulation and position of the numerous bodies listed across the two and the list included in our research.



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