

Equalities Policy and Action Plan

1. Commitment

1.1 Tÿ Elis is committed to equal opportunities for its clients, staff and volunteers.

2. Legislation

2.1 The Equalities Act 2010 brought together existing equalities legislation and simplified them all into one place. Also, it makes the law stronger in some areas, for example what “disability” means. This is an interesting development for Tÿ Elis because disability may now include someone with a mental health issues, for example depression or post-traumatic stress disorder.

2.2 Organisations now need to make “reasonable adjustments” if you are at a substantial disadvantage when compared to someone else, for example, being more flexible with a member of staff’s start times because their medication means that they need more time in the morning to be able to work.

2.3 The Act sets out nine “protected characteristics” for equalities:-

- Age e.g. young, old
- Disability e.g. physical, mental
- Gender reassignment e.g. transsexual
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Civil partnerships and marriage

For each “protected characteristic” we need to consider access issues including: location, physical access, costs, communication, timing of services, caring responsibilities, food and diet, publicity and marketing and people.

2.4 Many organisations are concerned by this legislation as discriminating against a member of staff can lead to uncapped employment tribunal claims. Tÿ Elis should be mindful of this risk, but broadly this legislation is consistent with Tÿ Elis’s ethos and counselling and psychotherapy ethics e.g. service accessible to everyone, counselling being non-judgemental etc.

2.5 Organisations are required to take “positive action” around the nine protected characteristics, although there is no legal requirement to do so. Positive action may involve, for example, advertising our service to a particular minority group, who may be less aware of our service

- 2.6 Taking positive action is voluntary, but consistent with Tŷ Elis's ethos, in particular, that there are "no barriers" to accessing Tŷ Elis. Also, our potential funders (and existing funders) would expect us to.

3. Equal Opportunities – Statement of Policy

Service Delivery

- 3.1 Tŷ Elis will take every reasonable step to ensure genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities as a service provider.
- a) The service will endeavour to provide services that recognise and respect diversity within the community which it services.
 - b) Positive action will be taken to reduce barriers to services so as to encourage take up of services in under-represented groups.
 - c) The service will endeavour to ensure that the workforce is aware of good practice in relation to equality of opportunity.

Employment

- 3.2 The service will take every reasonable step to ensure genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities as an employer.
- a) Ensure that employment decisions are made with regard to relevant legislation and are consistent with necessary requirements and proper performance of the job.
 - b) Ensure that when an employment decision is made about an individual, the decision is made solely on the capability and suitability to perform the job.
 - c) Seek to ensure that existing in-balances in the workforce and employment patterns are addressed.
 - d) Ensure that all individuals involved in the employment selection process receive training on equalities.
 - e) Ensure that employees are given equality of access to training and development.
- 3.3 Selection criteria and procedures will ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relative merits and abilities. Feedback will be offered to unsuccessful applicants.

4. Equalities Impact Assessments

- 4.1 A key way to ensure that we do not discriminate is to carry out what are called equalities impact assessments (EIA). EIAs are common in the public sector and are carried out for any major change in policy or service delivery, so for example new services being delivered from a new building should have an EIA. A simple template EIA is set out in Appendix X. This should be used for any major change at Tŷ Elis.

5. Community Engagement, Stakeholders and Guidance

- 5.1 Very few people would discriminate against another human being on purpose. Most discrimination is unconscious, borne of a lack of awareness and understanding. It is impossible to think through the impact of a major change of policy or service delivery on the protected characteristics without talking to groups who represent these characteristics and individuals.
- 5.2 Community Voice is a Big Lottery funded project. The aim of the project is to increase the voice of citizens, especially those who are most marginalised in local policy and planning processes. There are seven community engagement groups supported by this project. Tŷ Elis has made contact with every group and will continue its dialogue with these groups (and look to expand the number of groups it is in contact with), as part of our expansion plans.
- 5.3 The seven groups are:-
1. Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People;
 2. Action for Children: "Young Adult Carers Voice Project";
 3. Age Cymru "SHOUT";
 4. Bridge Mentoring Scheme "AB FABB";
 5. Mental Health Matters: "Self Harm Self Help"
 6. Every Link Counts "Understanding Learning Disabilities"
 7. Ogmore Valley Community Council: "Ogmore Future's"
- 5.4 There is also plenty of guidance and organisations who can help in these areas. There is plenty of guidance on further sources of information in this Policy.

6. Bullying and Harassment

- 6.1 Bullying and harassment as a result of a protected characteristic is a key concern. Tŷ Elis's Complaints Policy applies in this instance. It is important that clients, staff and volunteers are aware of this policy.

7. Equalities Monitoring

- 7.1 We have recently updated our equalities monitoring process and now use a set form with tick boxes for recruitment (staff and volunteers), clients and students. This information is entered on to various databases. At least once a year we should review this information, report it to Trustees and identify any trends and actions arising.

8. Responsible Officer

- 8.1 The Clinical Director has overall responsibility for this policy with the Business Development Manager having day to day responsibility.

9. Training

9.1 Equalities legislation is complex. It is important to stay up to date with legislation, legal precedent and good practice. The Business Development Manager will attend an equalities course through the WCVA every two years.

10. Awareness

10.1 It is an important that client, staff, students and volunteers are aware of equalities legislation and how it affects them. Our policy and action plan will be circulated by email, put on the noticeboards and discussed each year in the counsellor, receptionist and student groups.

11. Policy and Action Plan Update

11.1 The policy and action plan will be updated annually and reported to Trustees for agreement.

Equalities Action Plan

Ref.	Planned Action	Completion Date	Responsible Person	Success Criteria
4.1	Complete EIA for Big Lottery project and update equalities action plan.	12 May-14	HB	Successful Big Lottery application and positive feedback from Community Voice Groups.
5.2	Continue dialogue with Community Voice organisations, in particular, seeking views on detailed architectural plans	Second half of 2014	HB	Detailed feedback on detailed plans as the Big Lottery project progresses.
9.1	Undertake training on Equalities Act 2010	Sep-14	HB	Revised policy and action plan.
10.1	Ensure Equalities Policy and Action Plan is circulated to all staff, students and volunteers.	31 May-14	HB	Positive feedback and suggestions for improvement.
10.1	Publish policy and action plan on our website and social media.	30 Jun-14	HB	E-feedback from interested stakeholders.
11.1	Take updated policy and action plan to Trustees for approval.	23 Apr-14	HB	Approval
Table 2	Review Training and Development Plan in light of continued community engagement and specific training on "hot topics" e.g. transitioning, self-harm etc.	31 Mar-15	TW	A training programme that reflects identified equality needs.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Please refer to the [guidance notes](#) when completing this form (see Appendix 3).

1. Is the planned change an important or 'major change' and/or is it likely the change will impact upon a large number of clients, staff, students or volunteers?

Yes

(If yes, please complete the table overleaf. If unknown you need to undertake community engagement and research to find out. If no, explain why below).

Yes, the Reaching for the Heights project is the biggest step change in Tŷ Elis's history since its inception. It will involve a major refurbishment, new services and new locations.

2. Is it possible that any aspect of the policy will impact on people from different groups in different ways? (See guidance for list of 'protected characteristics' to consider)

The founding principle of Tŷ Elis is that there should be "no barriers" to someone accessing counselling and psychotherapy if they are ready to start i.e. it is about equal opportunity, in particular, access. The proposed expansion of services and locations should mean that this service reaches more people which is a good thing; however, community engagement work has identified that in order for the new services to reach all sections of our communities, we need different approaches to ensure equal opportunity of access.

Characteristic	Yes	No	Unknown	Explanation of impact
Age	X			Community engagement has identified that older people are less aware of the service and that they can go to their GP and be recommended to refer to Tŷ Elis. Younger people are savvier on the Internet and there is a wider acceptance of counselling. Engagement work with older people identified that providing information in larger print leaflets work and through networks was a good way to reach older people.
Disability	X			Community engagement work has identified that a building that is DDA complaint will significantly improve access for people with mobility impairments, however, due regard needs to be given to avoiding some of the “silly mistakes” that are still made and to other impairments e.g. hearing loss and sight loss. Providing information on the Internet, via networks and in hospitals e.g. rehabilitation units was identified as important.
Gender reassignment	X			Discussions with a local LGBT group identified that unisex toilets are important. Asking someone “transitioning” to use the disabled toilet would break the law. “Transitioning” was identified as a process where more access to counselling would be welcome. Specific training for counsellors on “transitioning” may be appropriate.
Pregnancy and maternity	X			There are significant mental health issues associated with pregnancy and maternity. There is a local charity called “Fathers Reaching Out” which deals with the impact of post natal depression, not just on the mother, but on the whole family. Tŷ Elis can access this charity, which are supportive of this project, to help spread news about our project. See also gender overleaf.
Race			X	There has been no direct community engagement with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in Bridgend Borough. These communities are small, but this actually makes them more of a minority. A discussion with BCBC’s Equalities and Community Engagement Officer may help identify how to reach these communities.

Religion/belief			X	The same as race. No direct approach has been made. In both cases, the “no barriers” approach of Tŷ Elis and the “non-judgemental” nature of counselling should mean that there is no discrimination on the grounds of race or religious belief. There may be an issue of awareness and access to the service.
Sex (gender)	X			A number of community engagement exercises have identified gender as an issue. Childcare issues and the time required to travel to Porthcawl, have been cited by a number of people as an issue that may prevent people from accessing Tŷ Elis. Outreach locations should rectify this. A number of people consulted have also identified the need to provide information in settings where vulnerable woman may find out about Tŷ Elis.
Sexual orientation	X			It is unlikely that Tŷ Elis would discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. Community engagement activity identified opportunities for engagement with the local LGBT Forum, which Tŷ Elis will take up. The other issue identified is that in valley communities people may be less open about their sexuality.
Civil Partnerships and Marriage	X			We will need to ensure that the couples and families service is available to civil partnerships and single sex families and that this is understood by the LGBT community.

For each protected characteristic think about the following access issues: location, physical access, costs, communication, timing of services, caring responsibilities, food and diet, publicity and marketing and people.

Please expand on your answers if necessary:

See four priorities in part 4 overleaf.

3. What is the risk that the planned major change could in fact lead to discrimination or adverse effects against any group of people?

It is unlikely that the proposed changes would directly discriminate. The main identified issue is publicity and marketing so that all sections of our communities are aware and feel comfortable about accessing Tŷ Elis.

4. What action has been taken to mitigate this risk?

(and please update the Equalities Action Plan accordingly)

There are four key actions which Tŷ Elis will undertake:-

- Continue the community engagement it has started so that it becomes a dialogue through the project and beyond.
- Focus on targeted marketing and publicity so that all the “protected characteristic” communities are made aware of Tŷ Elis.
- Work with the various forums and community groups, in particular, the Bridgend Coalition for the Disabled, to ensure that the new building is as accessible as possible.
- Deliver a training and development plan that includes specific training for counsellors and psychotherapists on equalities issues e.g. “transitioning”, counselling people with learning disabilities etc.

The Equalities Action Plan and Communications and Marketing Plan contain more detailed information on each of these three points.

Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment: Guidance

Places for further information, organisations to contact for consultation and guidance expertise and resources you can refer to yourself include:

The Equality and Human Rights Commission

www.equalityhumanrights.com

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/equal-rights-equal-respect/useful-information/useful-links/>

Age

Age UK



www.ageuk.org.uk/

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales

<http://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/splash.aspx>

Children's Commissioner for Wales

<http://www.childcom.org.uk/>

Disability

Disability Wales

<http://www.disabilitywales.org/>

RNIB

<http://www.rnib.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

RNID

<http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/>

Mencap

<http://www.mencap.org.uk/>

Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People

http://www.bavo.org.uk/bridgend_disability_coalition.htm

Gender

Fawcett Society

<http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/>

Women's Equality Network Wales

<http://wenwales.org/>

Womankind worldwide

<http://www.womankind.org.uk/>

Women's Sport Foundation

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/>

Women Making a Difference

<http://www.womenmakingadifference.org.uk/>

Gender Reassignment

Press For Change



<http://www.pfc.org.uk/>

Wales LGBT Excellence Centre

<http://lgbtec.org.uk/>

Transgender Wales

http://transgenderwales.bravepages.com/about_us.htm

Pregnancy and Maternity

Race

VALREC

<http://www.valrec.org/>

All Wales Saheli Association

MEWN Cymru

<http://www.mewn-cymru.org.uk/>

BAWSO

<http://www.bawso.org.uk/>

Religion and Belief

Faith Forum

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/equality/rightsequality/faith/faithforum/?lang=en>

Three Faiths Forum

<http://www.3ff.org.uk/>

Muslim Youth UK

British Humanists Association

<http://www.humanism.org.uk/education>

Glam Faith Wales

<http://www.glamfaith.org.uk/>

Sexual Orientation

Stonewall

<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

Schools Out



<http://www.schools-out.org.uk/>