

Women's health and gender equity in policy making

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What is women's health?

What we tend to see:

Mental health

Chronic conditions

Maternal health

Menopause

Endometriosis

Health conditions and health services

What women's health also is:

Clean air and green spaces

Resilience

Access to education

Living wages

Financial support for parents

Good quality and secure housing

Participation

Income security and social protection

Healthy living conditions

Employment and working conditions

Stable social environment

Building blocks for health



The Health Foundation (2022)

The building blocks of health are the **non-medical factors that influence health outcomes**.

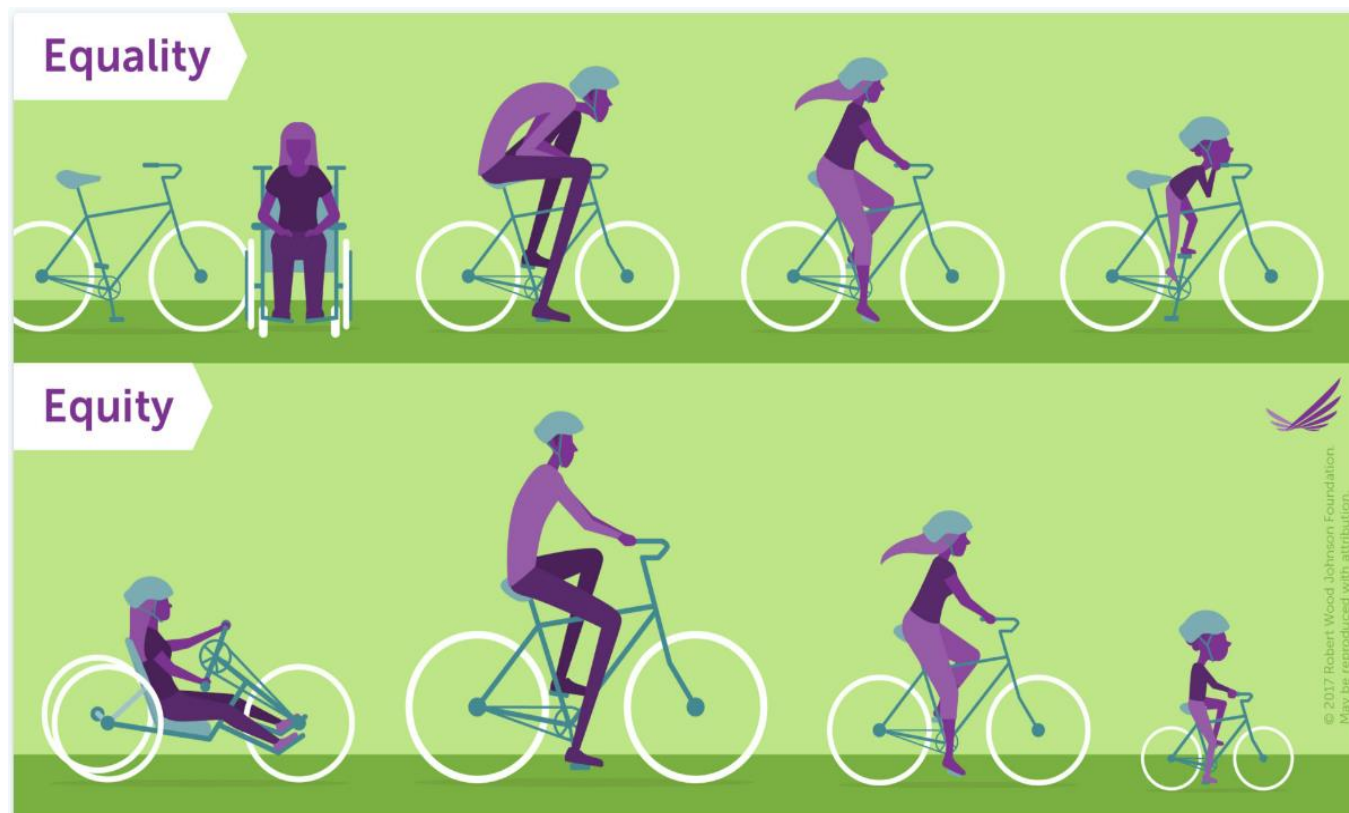
Wider factors on health have been shown to have a **greater influence on health** than either genetic factors or access to health services.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2024)

What is women's health equity?

"*Women's health equity* refers to the state in which all individuals who are women and/or were assigned female at birth have **a fair and just opportunity** to attain their **highest level of health.**"

National Institutes of Health (2024):
Women's Health Equity and Inclusion



What is women's health equity and why should we care?

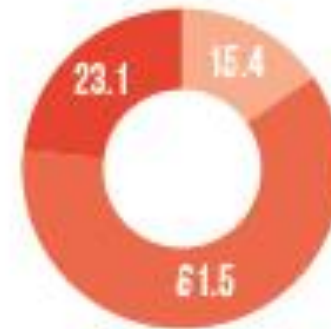
*Achieving **gender equality and empower all women and girls** marks the 5th **sustainable development goal**.*

United Nations (2024)



THE WORLD IS **NOT ON TRACK** TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY BY 2030

OUT OF GOAL 5 INDICATORS:



"ON TRACK"
AT A MODERATE DISTANCE
FAR OR VERY FAR OFF TRACK

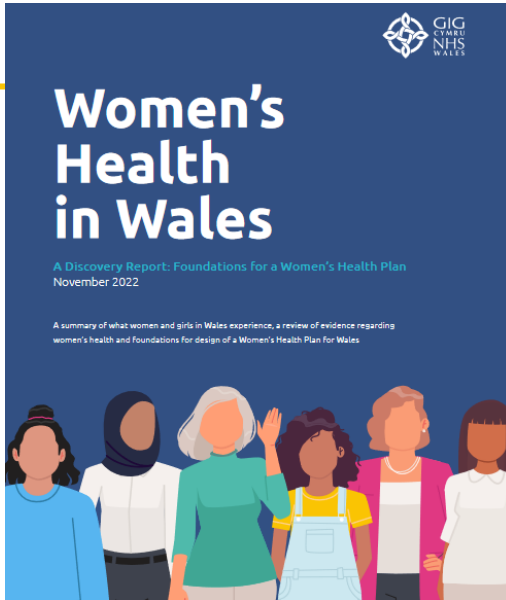
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United Nations (2024)



How is the state in Wales?



„A **life course approach** focuses on the changing health and care needs of women and girls throughout their lives.“



„This plan sets out a long term future vision of a **‘whole system approach to health and social care’**, which is focussed on health and wellbeing, and on preventing illness.“

"But are we ensuring that the approach is at the heart of what we do?"

A public health perspective



The **impacts** are on a **similar** scale to the **Covid-19 pandemic**



Trade-offs between competing demands
("eating or heating")
Manifesting in **long-term health consequences**

An equity perspective



The adverse effects are pronounced among **low-income groups**



Gendered nature
Women and other gender **minorities** entered this period with lower financial resilience

Leaving women at a higher risk for immediate and long-term health consequences

Findings

Underlying factors of gender equity



None of the policies addressed the underlying factors of gender equity ("**mitigation measures**"), perpetuating pre-existing inequities.



Data collection and baseline

There is a **lack of** (publicly available) **data** regarding the policies' foundation, monitoring and evaluation. Challenges faced by vulnerable groups may not be considered.



Eligibility criteria

Five policies build on existing social security mechanisms, previously criticised for narrow eligibility criteria, solely considering income, savings and other capital

Lump sum payments



Policies relying on lump sum payments do not consider the unique financial circumstances of individuals and households ("**one-size-fits-all**").



Household-level payments

Household-payments may overlook individual financial disparities and power imbalances, and may facilitate economic abuse, with women constituting 71.2% of the affected individuals.



Uptake of policies

The range of policies, each requiring separate applications, poses challenges for women, who contend with competing responsibilities, lower financial literacy, and less proactive benefit-claiming behaviour.

Policy options/solutions

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to improve the quality of public policies, programmes and projects, ensuring a more efficient allocation of resources. Better results mean increased well-being for both [all genders], and the creation of a more socially just and sustainable society.

Council of Europe (2024)



Address underlying factors

Adopt a **gender-transformative approach** to policy-making by addressing the root causes of gender-based inequities.



Inclusive data sources and monitoring

Gender impact assessments: Establish a robust system for consistent and high-quality data collection, disaggregated by all protected characteristics to strengthen monitoring, evaluation and quality improvement.

Inform policy-making by a **diverse range of data sources**



Gender-sensitive eligibility criteria

Develop **gender-sensitive eligibility criteria**, tailoring funding to the specific circumstances of applicants.

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Council of Europe (2024)



Gender Budgeting

Adopt a **gender budgeting approach**, which considers the distinct financial needs and challenges by all genders, thereby, promoting fairness and equal opportunities.



Individual-based payments

Establish individual-based payments and ensure their allocation to separate bank accounts.



Strengthening uptake

Undertake a **holistic awareness campaign**, serving to gender-specific factors in benefit uptake.

Establish a comprehensive system that consolidates all cost-of-living benefits applications into a **single, user-friendly, streamlined process**.

Take away messages

Women's health is not only comprised of health conditions and health services.

Women's health is comprised of all building blocks of health.

Every policy and decision should weigh its impact on gender equity.

Gender mainstreaming best-practices provide a step-by-step guide for investments in gender equity.

Prioritising women's health and gender equity isn't just morally right; it's a strategic investment for a sustainable and fair future. It's among the most impactful, efficient, and economical ways to build a better world for everyone.

Gweithio gyda'n gilydd
i greu Cymru iachach

Working together
for a healthier Wales

