

A FEMINIST ROADMAP FOR WALES



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FOREWORD

At Oxfam Cymru, we believe that poverty and inequality cannot be tackled in isolation from the fight for gender and climate justice. Across the world, those who contribute least to the climate crisis—particularly women, people living in poverty, and communities marginalised on the basis of gender, race, class, disability, or migration status — are the ones who bear its greatest costs. That is why Oxfam’s global strategy commits us to advancing feminist and decolonial alternatives that place care for people and planet at the heart of economic transformation.

This report, *A Feminist Green New Deal for Wales*, contributes to that global vision by grounding it in the Welsh context. It recognises that the economic and climate crises are deeply interconnected as interlocking consequences of unjust systems—patriarchy, neoliberalism, and extractive economics—that exploit people while degrading the environment. Within this, the undervaluing of care—both paid and unpaid—illustrates how these systems rely on exploitation while failing to sustain the very foundations of our societies. **A just transition** must therefore be feminist: tackling inequality at its roots, revaluing care as essential social infrastructure, and ensuring no one is left behind.

Grounded in Wales’s own context, including the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the momentum toward a wellbeing economy, this discussion paper sets out practical proposals across four key areas—social care, work, transport, and energy. These recommendations call on government, public services, and civil society to act now to shape a fairer, greener future.

This paper envisions an economy that nurtures both people and planet: where care is recognised as a human right and public good, and where decisions are guided not by short-term profit for the few but by long-term wellbeing for everyone. We hope it sparks the urgent conversations and political action needed to build a fairer, greener, and more caring Wales—whilst standing in solidarity with global struggles for justice across the Global South and beyond.

Sarah Rees

Head of Oxfam Cymru

INTRODUCTION

A FEMINIST GREEN NEW DEAL FOR WALES

A Feminist Green New Deal (FGND) approach argues that a gender perspective should be central to policymaking for climate adaptation and mitigation, and that women's feminist grassroots organisations need to campaign on the climate impacts for women, on an intersectional basis, but often lack capacity to do so.

This report considers current Welsh policymaking in four areas central to ensuring women benefit from the policies that aim to create a fair social and economic transition to a 'greener' future (Social Care, Work, Transport and Energy). Current policy to address climate change adaptation does not sufficiently consider the unequal impacts of climate change on women, and the potentially unequal impacts of climate change mitigation policies. This omission is also present in progressive policies such as the Green New Deal (GND), which are not sufficiently gender sensitive (Cohen and MacGregor 2020).¹ FGND thinking offers the opportunity to suggest 'greener' actions in Wales that seek to tackle the root causes of inequality, rather than reinforce them.

For Noam Chomsky and Robert Pollin (2022), the Green New Deal (GND) project must include the following four priorities:

1. the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (and set out by the IPCC 2018 and individual governments)
2. investments that dramatically raise energy efficiency, standards and supply
3. fair jobs and work for workers in the fossil fuel industry, and for vulnerable groups
4. sustainable economic growth.²

The principles of a GND do emphasise fair jobs for workers and marginalised groups, but a gender perspective goes further by seeking to address existing systemic inequalities. This is because climate policies must recognise that climate change and resulting mitigation or adaption policies place a greater burden on those who are most vulnerable to climate change, but have the least resources to mitigate or adapt (MacBride-Stewart and Parken, 2021).³ In the race to acquire the 'green skills' needed for the Net Zero transition, will an opportunity to address inequalities and increase workforce diversity and inclusion be missed? Or worse, will existing inequalities be further entrenched? (Parken et al., 2023).⁴

Every country is facing the same conundrums. In Wales, we have the distinction of having the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* that requires us to act both locally and globally, for a more equal greener, healthier, resilient, and prosperous Wales. The legislation guides us to build cohesive communities, which brings the challenge of equitable redistribution. In theory, the WBFGB (Wales) Act 2015 aims to increase the responsibilities on public bodies to reduce the costs of climate mitigation and adaption for those most affected and least resilient to such change. Action is needed now to prevent existing inequalities from being reproduced for future generations: to prevent a widening of the gap between the most and least vulnerable.

This report for Oxfam Cymru begins to consider what actions are needed in four policy areas to realise women's inclusion, on an intersectional basis, in the policy and programmes that will take us to a decarbonised future in Wales. Oxfam's aim is to highlight the policy changes needed to develop a caring and green economy that is centred on the wellbeing of people and the planet.

The report begins by exploring the evolving thinking behind a Feminist Green New Deal (FGND) and then provides an overview of key Welsh policies in four areas: Social Care, Work, Transport and Energy. We set out proposals for change within these policy areas, which could support an intersectional Feminist Green New Deal for Wales. Of the four policy areas under consideration, energy is not devolved. Further work is needed in linked areas such as housing, health and education.

APPROACH

This report offers proposals for a Feminist Green New Deal (FGND), set within the Welsh policy context. To do this, the report engages with academic and 'grey' literatures on Feminist Green New Deals from the United States and the United Kingdom. It provides a gender sensitive analysis of current policies in four areas of economic vulnerability for Wales: Social Care, Work, Transport and Energy. However, as we highlight throughout, little policy consideration is given to intersectionality, and intersectional data gaps remain in these policy areas.

Our initial proposals for change were refined through a stakeholder group discussion with organisations representing Welsh think tanks, TUC Cymru, Office of the Future Generations Commissioner, and voluntary and community organisations working in social care, transport, sustainability, energy and employment (see Appendix 1). The expanded proposals set out here, and in the accompanying Executive Summary Report, propose the initial, necessary steps for an intersectional Feminist Green New Deal for Wales.

WHAT IS A FEMINIST GREEN NEW DEAL?

Thinking on a feminist green new deal began in the USA and has been transposed to the UK, notably by the UK Women's Budget Group (WBG UK) in partnership with the Women's Environmental Network (WEN UK). The table below summarises some of their recommendations and shows how thinking has been shaped by the need to address the macro frameworks that define our times (patriarchy, colonialism, globalisation) and has since evolved to create calls for change at multi-levels of governance.

Table 1. Feminist Green New Deal Principles and Proposals (UK)

Principles FGND	Roadmap	Goals: Green and Caring Economy
<p>Address:</p> <p>Gendered social, economic and power disparities</p> <p>Institutionalised gendered/intersectional inequalities</p> <p>Unequal political participation and social inclusion</p> <p>Misogynist and racist stereotypes, violence against women and girls</p> <p>Undervaluing of paid and unpaid care work</p> <p>Unfair distribution of the costs of social reproduction.</p>	<p>Actions:</p> <p>Policy and Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intersectional policy analysis at every stage of decarbonisation transition devolve power to citizens' assemblies, co-provision of services <p>Care Jobs are Green Jobs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in care as social infrastructure, and in the 'greening of care' <p>Fair Work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real Living Wage, inclusive workplaces, flexible work Investment post COVID to include female as well as male-dominated sectors <p>Built Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical infrastructure – built with women's needs in mind Energy – decarbonised and decolonised Revitalise community ownership models/ create sustainable jobs 	<p>Move from prioritisation of profit to a Wellbeing economy</p> <p>Democratise ownership of natural resources</p> <p>Put public investment in decarbonising physical infrastructure and expanding social infrastructure should be at the centre of UK fiscal and monetary strategy.</p> <p>A global green and caring economy: reorder the global economy around climate justice.</p>
<p>Full set of principles: <u>Cohen and MacGregor (2020) Towards and Feminist Green New Deal for the UK</u></p>	<p>Full Roadmap: <u>Cohen and MacGregor (2021) Draft Roadmap Feminist Green New Deal</u></p>	<p>Full set of goals: <u>Women's Budget Group and Women's Environmental Network (2022) A Green and Caring Economy</u></p>

Sources: <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Feminist-Green-New-Deal.pdf>, <https://www.wen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Draft-Roadmap-Feminist-Green-New-Deal-2.pdf>, <https://www.wbg.org.uk/publication/greenandcaringeconomy/>

'A Green and Caring Economy' was the final report of the FGND collaboration between the Women's Budget Group (WBG UK) and the Women's Environmental Network (WEN UK). Besides, setting out 4 key goals (see Table 1), the report also described the 'necessary shifts' in policy that would be needed to realise these goals:

1. A right to safe, decent and affordable housing.
2. Investment in an integrated, affordable national public transport system.
3. The equal distribution of paid and unpaid work.
4. Reduction in consumption patterns, for example, by zero-VAT rating repair services.
5. Building a sustainable food system.
6. Investing in a universal quality social care service and universal free childcare from 6 months to primary school, improving reach and quality of care and creating millions of good, green jobs (Women's Budget Group and WEN, 2022).

Finally, a series of **WBG and WEN policy papers** set out the details of these ‘necessary shifts’, leading to feminist macro-financial, labour market, employment, transport, food, and community policies that would mainstream gender equality on an intersectional basis.⁵

Research and thinking on realising these ambitions in Wales has been undertaken by the Institute for Welsh Affairs (IWA) for Oxfam Cymru. In the report ‘**A Wales that Cares for People and Planet**’ (2024), we see the echo of the wider thinking on a ‘green and caring economy’ in the recommendations that challenge the assumption that care will be provided unpaid and in so doing, support the formal, paid, economy:

1. Welsh Government to embed considerations of gender and care across all policymaking and implementation.
2. Welsh Government to set a new vision for the economy – one that creates a shared discourse and set of values for the public and private sector to adhere to its vision for Wales’s well-being economy and clearly challenge the ways in which established economic thinking is failing communities.
3. With the UK government, the Welsh Government should set out an alternate set of economic indicators to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross Value Added (GVA) to include a broader measure of liveability, etc. (IWA, 2024).⁶

A mainstreaming equality panel has also set out the necessary steps to tackle existing employment inequalities and attain the skills that will be needed to reach Wales’s Net Zero ambitions. Indeed, the research report of the panel, ‘**An Equal and Just Transition to Net Zero**’, argued that without an interventionist step change in occupational segregation and inclusion, Wales cannot meet its Net Zero targets. The mainstreaming equality panel’s recommendations were:

1. Carbon literacy for all – to take the fear out of change.
2. National Climate Programme (investment and training) – national programme of renewal and retrofit investment and skills building.
3. Addressing existing workplace inequalities to address entry and retention barriers in decarbonising industries – without which diversity initiatives may fail.
4. Care jobs as green jobs – valued as needed for a greener future.
5. Job redesign – all jobs will change, redesign roles and train for a sustainable future workforce (Parken et.al 2023).⁷

The Welsh Government has established that the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, will form the framework for a Just Transition.⁸ The Future Generations Commissioner has put a wellbeing economy at the heart of a new action approach.⁹ The question is, what is happening in these areas to address gender inequalities on an intersectional basis?

We set out what is needed to ensure policy is, at the very least, gender sensitive, but with the aim that it should address current and forestall future inequalities by mainstreaming an intersectional gender perspective into policy design and implementation.

SOCIAL CARE AS SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE



Our analysis of the policy landscape in Wales argues that social care should be a key area for inclusion in climate change and decarbonisation policy. Fundamentally, arguments about care and the indispensability of care work are central to the notion of a FGND, primarily because care holds up society rather than just the economy. At the same time, social care is an under recognised area of climate policy focus.¹⁰

In the Oxfam definition of care, paid and unpaid care work are bound together with social care and childcare.¹¹ Paid childcare is often seen as an investment in the future with long term economic and social benefits, whereas the social care infrastructure takes an integrated approach to equity between generations, suggesting that it is responsive to the needs of those who are and have already contributed to society. The argument in support of focusing on an integrated social care infrastructure is given by WEN (2022):

Jobs and training for carers and educators is widely known to be economically, environmentally and equality sound. The Women's Budget Group research found that a 2% GDP investment in care (e.g. social care, childcare, parental leave and care level) creates double the number of jobs for women and almost as many for men, as the same investment in construction.¹²

The case for including care goes beyond a case of 'care jobs are green jobs'. The perspective from FNGD thinking is that climate change will cause the greatest pressures on the social systems that are needed most for sustaining wellbeing and social cohesion. For example, the frequency and severity of water shortages and floods caused by climate change puts pressure on water systems that in Wales, are essential for the provision of a range of health and social care services, energy and internet services.¹³ Care sector workers, as well as care institutions, will need to adapt their practices, preparedness and skills to manage these new pressures and deliver the same standard of care.

To avoid undermining the benefits of green transition, a FNGD would seek a collective and institutional approach to tackle the lack of sustained and historical lack of investment in social infrastructure.¹⁴ Our FNGD advice extends beyond the call for care workers to adapt. Instead, it points to the existing care crisis in Wales and the intersectional dynamics of this, both in terms of caregivers and receivers. Care systems should themselves adapt by improving pay and conditions, building interlinkages between informal and formal care, and providing upskilling and investment in aspects like digital care. This protection forms part of a wider picture of 'care security' and is similar to integrated approaches used for food and water security.

SUMMARY

Health and Social Care represent one of the areas of legislative responsibility that is devolved in Wales. Health and Social Care is covered by several pieces of legislation that represent both breadth of coverage and responsibilities. Health and Social Care combined is the largest public sector service by delivery, staffing and budget in Wales, including a budget for its substantial assets and estate.¹⁵ (n.b. the environment 'estate' is probably the largest, but the health and social care estate includes hospitals, care homes and GP surgeries).

Recently published workforce data from the Welsh Government shows the size of the social care workforce in Wales. This is estimated to be about 84,134 people (Social Care Wales 2025).¹⁶

In 2024, gross annual earnings for all workers in Wales (full-time and part-time excluding overtime) were £29,614 compared to (provisional figures) £31,602 for the UK.

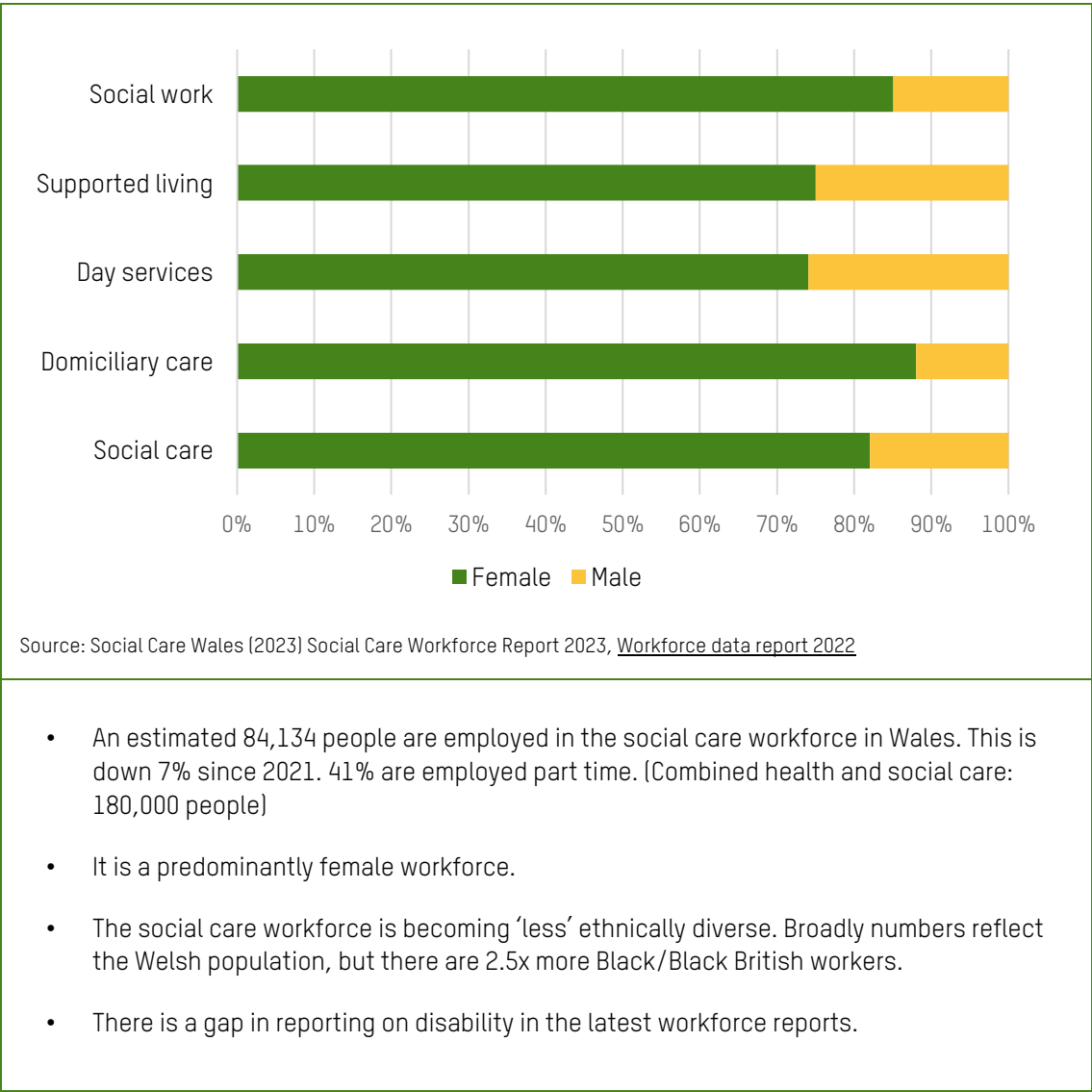
Annual Gross Median earnings data is available for paid care workers in the UK (ASHE Table 26, 2024) but not for care workers by residency, which would provide data for Wales. This data gap has also been noted in the 'Care Policy Scorecard for Wales, 2025', which calls for Welsh Government monitoring.¹⁷

The closest earnings estimate for Wales would be based on the Standard Occupational Category (SOC) Caring and Personal Services roles. This is a much broader category of occupations. It provides median annual gross earnings of £21,910 for all workers. This is 26% below the median annual earnings for all workers in Wales.¹⁸

Indicative employee job data in this category shows that of all workers, there are 18,000 men and 52,000 women, with median annual earnings of £28,560 and £20,222 respectively. This annual earnings gender pay gap of 29% is likely to mainly be due to the disparity of contracted hours of work between men and women. Of 18,000 men in such jobs, 14,000 work on a full-time basis (77% of men's employment in this occupational category), whereas of the 52,000 women in Caring and Personal Services, 60% work full-time and 40% part-time. Women's gross part-time annual earnings are £14,427. Low pay adheres to part-time work in the services sector, and women's jobs are much more likely to be constructed on a part-time basis (Parken and Ashworth, 2019).¹⁹

However, the category Caring and Personal Services cannot adequately substitute for a detailed breakdown of employment and pay for men and women working as Care Workers in Wales. And we would reiterate the call for such data to be collected by the Welsh Government and Social Care Wales.

Figure 1: Summary of Welsh Social Care Workforce²⁰



We also know carers (who are part of the informal workforce) are most likely to need health care services because their self-reported health is often the poorest.²¹ For example, the general picture of 'reported good health' in Wales provided by the 2021 census found that for people reporting good health in 2011, their health had improved.²² However, health had decreased for people reporting poor health in 2021. The local authority areas in Wales with the largest proportions of unpaid carers were also the areas that had the largest proportions of people reporting very bad health.²³

Evidence on emissions in the health and care sector is growing, and there is an urgent need for the care sector to decarbonise, especially in areas of transport and estate, medical goods and in the shift to digital care. There are also calls for more radical and systemic strategies for health and social care decarbonisation that focus on efforts like sustainable procurement and consider the whole life cycle of 'care products'.²⁴

In relation to the Feminist New Green Deal, we have focused on identifying aspects of relevant health and social care legislation. This includes a focus on decarbonisation, workforce planning and procurement, as well as AI/digital futures. Decarbonisation is critical in the care sector. Although the Climate Change Committee has excluded the sector from its reporting on progress towards decarbonisation in Wales, largely due to data challenges in measuring emissions,²⁵ the transport emissions generated by the domiciliary care workforce are significant, as reported in *Our Carbon 2030 Net Zero Plan*.^{26,27}

Similarly, decent work and unmet care needs are relevant as the size of the care system is increasing along with an ageing and sicker population, even as it is described as 'gridlocked' (CQC, 2022) due to chronic underfunding and staffing shortages.^{28,29} On the other side of this are the increasing numbers of people who need to balance their work with some form of unpaid care responsibilities or leave work entirely to provide care. The over-70 population is projected to increase at double the rate of care workers, leading to both a gap in care provision and an increase in responsibilities in relation to informal care (Strange et al, 2023).³⁰

These observations are supported by the rapid care analysis conducted by Oxfam in 2016.³¹ The review highlights that:

1. significant natural hazards and conflicts are a threat to the sustainability of care, and interventions are required to support and maintain care. This is particularly urgent given that the workforce is predominantly made up of women, who are disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
2. the care sector is growing but there is a threat from the financialisation of care, which means costs are increasing but conditions for workers are not being improved.

There are other emerging issues for the care sector, which include: inadequate data collection on the status of women and social care; populism and misinformation about the role of care and welfare being fuelled by a lack of investment in social care infrastructure; and financial vulnerabilities of the migrant care workforce (Diski 2022).³²

Fundamentally, FGND arguments about care go beyond a 'care jobs as green jobs' perspective. Rather, the care economy 'must be built on a feminist foundation' since the labour of caring for people 'not only upholds the wage economy but is also its greatest subsidy' (Muchhala 2022).³³ From the Covid-19 pandemic to climate change, there are examples of the indispensability of care work, and growing gaps in its funding due to a bias towards austerity (ibid.). The feminist foundation of care places emphasis on both macro and bottom-up policies that consider how a robust care system benefits and affirms women and children. From the Covid-19 pandemic to climate change, there are examples of the indispensability of care work, and growing gaps in its funding due to a bias towards austerity (ibid.). The feminist foundation of care places emphasis on both macro and bottom-up policies that consider how a robust care system benefits and affirms women and children. For example, investing in paid care and supporting a more equal division of unpaid care between women and men gives women more opportunities for careers and leadership outside the family unit.³⁴

The methodology that we have used for Health and Social Care is to identify and make comments on the alignment between:

1. Relevant Welsh Health and Social Care legislation, derived from extensive searches, including analysis of the gaps in relation to women and
2. Relevant principles or suggested actions towards a Feminist Green New Deal in the UK, derived from manifestos and academic research

3. NGO actions and evidence presented in publications and as part of public engagement, e.g. Oxfam, etc.

There is a matrix of legislation and policy that covers Health and Social Care jointly in Wales, along with others that address only Health (i.e. NHS including education and mental health) or Social Care (inc. private bodies and care of children and young people). These are presented in the table below. This is a non-exhaustive list of care policies, but our aim is to represent what dimensions a FGND analysis might provide.

Table 2. Examples of key areas of action leading to joint climate and care reform

Policy or plan	Areas of alignment: government policy, FGND principles & NGOs actions and *gaps
Our 2030 net zero carbon action plan Social Care Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • calculate and minimise social care activities' carbon footprint • work with and support other organisations to reduce carbon footprint • education and bring about workforce behaviour change at every step of service planning and provision to reduce carbon footprint. • create change in 7 areas: · strategy, policy, procurement, facilities, information, collaboration, personal behaviours. <p><i>*Compartmentalisation of care leads to a lack of attention to gender pay gaps, and informal labour</i></p>
NHS Wales decarbonisation strategic delivery plan GOV.WALES (2024-2026)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decarbonisation at national level to focus on: · Buildings (new and existing buildings) · Transport · Procurement · Estate Planning and Land Use · Approach to Healthcare (Education, Healthcare & Medicines and Waste) • individual plans to be created by Health Trusts and subsidiary health bodies like Public Health Wales <p><i>*Gap in focus on care workforce (travel and education), and need for scrutiny of 'green' financing of redevelopment/new care facilities to address gender and intersectional equity and fairness</i></p>
A Healthier Wales (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver a whole system approach to health and social care • bring health and social care services together and to ensure they are designed and delivered around the needs and preferences of individuals • focus on prevention <p><i>*Need clarity in processes for involving women in building social partnerships and innovations related to citizens' right to care and the provision of care as a public good</i></p>
A Digital Strategy for Wales (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supports the ambition of 1. 'A healthier Wales' (2018) 2. 'A digital strategy for Wales' 2021 and 3. National Clinical Framework, which includes progress on National Data Resource (NDR) programme, NHS cyber resilience unit, digital patient solutions programme (DSPP), Welsh nursing care record (WNCR), Welsh Patient Administration (WPAS), and Digital Medicines Transformation (DMTP) • establishes 'Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW)', a new NHS Wales organisation focused on transforming the way digital

	<p>health and care services are delivered using digital technology, data, and standards.</p> <p><i>*Improvements in access must be evaluated in relation to gender, including gendered values, daily experiences and meanings around digital use</i></p>
Health Service Procurement (Wales) Act 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principles of procurement that include (a) ensuring transparency; (b) ensuring fairness; (c) ensuring that compliance can be verified; (d) managing conflicts of interest • include circularity • include principles related to reducing environmental harms (e.g. supply chain and financing) and/or benefits <p><i>*Procurement needs to include principles related to reducing environmental harm for women and vulnerable groups</i></p>
Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate private profit from the care of children looked after, • enable the introduction of direct payments for Continuing NHS Healthcare. • bring changes to the existing Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 and Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 <p><i>*Some aspects apply to a wider social care workforce; understanding barriers for women and girls across the life-course must be considered</i></p>

* Summary April 2025. Not an exhaustive list. See **Key legislation (social care)** [Key legislation \(social care\) | Law Wales and The Health and Social Care \(Quality and Engagement\) \(Wales\) Act: summary \(HTML\) | GOV.WALES](#).

Note additional key Feminist Green New Deal reports, not included in the table here but referenced in the document (Diski 2022;³⁵ WEN 2022;³⁶ EC 2020;³⁷ EUAFRA 2025³⁸), and other research focus on sectors like energy, transport, agriculture and welfare, but not necessarily on care (Heffernan et al, 2021, Autonomy 2023, Feminist Action Nexus 2025).^{39,40,41,42}

Gender inequality is a consequence of how the care economy is organised. Care must therefore be considered within New Green Deals as an ethical and foundational approach that includes the right to care and the protection of care, as it impacts all the sectors of the economy (Parken et al. 2023, Turkmen 2022, Cohn & Duncanson, 2023).^{43,44,45}

PROPOSALS FOR A FEMINIST NEW GREEN DEAL FOR CARE

After analysis of the literature and policy landscape below, and in consultation with partners, we have proposed several priorities for FGND to address the economics of care. They are based on the recommendation that there needs to be a paradigm shift and a value shift in relation to care and the care workforce in Wales, which can be enabled in part by existing policies and pilots.

Proposal 1: Take the profit out of care/social investment. Taking profit out of the looked-after-children sector has been a legislative goal in Wales, and this proposal builds on learning from progress in that area.^{46,47} Options include worker contributions to ownership; commissioning social care hubs that act as centres for the provision of social care; separate housing stock from care provision, and responsible procurement. It may also mean understanding what profits are being made in care, by whom, and who is paying for this.

Learning from Wales teaches us that there has been some work on taking the profit out of the care sector, but there has been some resistance from unions and policymakers to this, that we need to

better understand. The advice is that some of this resistance comes from the impacts in Wales of wider legislative changes around care, and concerns that both the Welsh Government and women will be left to pick up these responsibilities despite existing demands on them. For example, Wales's capacity to respond economically is determined by the 'Barnetisation' of care (perceived to create unevenness for Wales in the way UK Treasury allocates money for public services), and the impacts of cuts to local authority budgets, along with new responsibilities in the existing Barnet formula.^{48,49} However, the argument in support of taking the profit out of care calls for reform of the existing reliance on a growing unpaid care labour force who report increasing levels of poor health. Furthermore, Social Care Wales and the Social Partnership Forum make the argument for profits from social care to be reinvested in social care, with a community benefits model linked to procurement and the overall social care strategy for Wales.^{50,51}

Proposal 2: Pay care better. This focuses on addressing pay and conditions in the care sector. Looking at case studies like Germany, where the pay of care workers has been increased and the contributions of care home residents have been reduced, and analysis of 'living wage' in Scotland, the impacts on women must be addressed through 'hard' legislative pay reform.⁵² Evidence from Scotland shows the unintended consequences of 'soft reform' – i.e. optional inclusion of living wage providers can also lead to private care bodies leaving the care system.⁵³

Improving pay for care workers may extend living wage discussions towards increasing the value of previously underpaid and undervalued sectors historically dominated by women. However, more research is needed. As the value of the care sector work improves, it may attract a wider set of workers needed for management and logistics roles. These workers may bring a range of skills associated with effective regulation, management and planning of the care sector, including opportunities for care workers to progress within the sector.

What the experience of the care and other sectors shows is that we are still learning from different living wage models in the UK and elsewhere. However, the 'feminisation of labour' literature shows us that as the perceived and economic value of a sector falls, this drives a shift in the shape and size of the workforce. The recent drop in the care workforce in Wales could be an indicator of its perceived change in value but also that low pay, lack of sick pay, high work demands, and insecure working patterns must be addressed. Current actions to address this are either too slow or not delivering success. The issue is that wages still drive the value of sectors. FGND principles should help mobilise investments in care workforce pay that build better value in the sector itself and support the transition of this sector into the already valued green skills sector.⁵⁴

Proposal 3: Centralise 'care security'. Wales has had a long history of an educated migrant workforce supplying additional labour for its largest sectors, i.e. seafaring and export (a range of nations), general practice (India and Pakistan), and nursing (Caribbean, Philippines, eastern Europe). There is a need to address care security, much like we protect food supply chains and talk about food security. There is a need for a Welsh-specific policy in light of UK Government visa reforms. Improvements in the protection and recognition of migrant workers in the care workforce overall reflects an ambition to protect the long-term security and sustainability of the care workforce in and for Wales.

One longstanding aim of climate policy is to ensure the security and stability of public services in the face of external and ongoing pressures. Some work has been done in Wales to address care workforce training needs and to add resilience by ensuring that there are several routes to care jobs, from apprenticeships to degrees. When this report was written, one of the emerging concerns was that the Higher Education sector had become extremely vulnerable to the externalities of national (UK) immigration policy and the global economy. This proposal relies on health care economists helping the government to better understand the costs of not investing in care security, and to consider how, along with a lack of investment, the costs of climate change and the ongoing costs of gender segregation in the care workforce reinforce the vulnerability of the sector.

Proposal 4: Active decompartmentalisation of care. Currently, care is transactional and defined by fixed locations, age (child, elderly) and economic relations, i.e. caregiver, care leaver, care provider, care home, care recipient, care worker, and unpaid carer. We propose changing the language of care away from distinguishing locations and roles to integrating ethics, rights and an intersectional way of doing green and economy (suggested by the organisation [Care Full](#)).⁵⁵ This could also be a means to alternative pathways to paid carer careers. Implications include changing the division of care based on existing gendered relations.

Proposal 5: Build legislation around social partnerships and innovative participatory infrastructure to inform economic decision-making related to care. To make change happen, economic discussions need to be inclusive and intersectional (across policy and areas). Care users are often considered to be hard-to-reach because of perceived vulnerability, autonomy, literacy, and disability, but also ruralisation, immigration, precarity and mobility of a diverse workforce. Participatory infrastructure allows for bottom-up care indicators in response to a diverse workforce and local needs. Implications include the inclusion of women in decision making and learning from Cwmpas's efforts to build social care social enterprises in light of permissive legislation. The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023, which sets out our responsibilities for procurement, provides the opportunity to understand how the application of social partnership principles can be applied to wider social policy redesign.

Proposal 6: Digital solutions. The health care sector in Wales, and the care sector outside Wales (China, EU), has been actively engaged in developing digital infrastructure to support the growing care sector. Many of these digital solutions have been designed for cities and urban areas and need to be tested in Wales' rural and digitally weak areas and communities. This would be an explicit goal of enabling digital solutions, and building partnership between education, information technology and security and health services, along with private providers, to test and understand the implications of advancing digital technologies in Wales. As women are largely left out of the digital sector by lack of inclusive workplaces and greater digital poverty, locating areas where women are digital natives (audiology for example) and service support would be necessary to build this kind of infrastructure in Wales. The implications of supporting women and girls through digital pathways are critical for this kind of work.

Proposal 7: Social Care Climate Fund. The opportunities for the care sector to participate in climate change actions proposed by a FGND are reduced because of time poverty and wage poverty, and the burden of increasing costs of care (i.e. care premium relating to costs for heating etc making up a larger proportion of income because people stay in the house longer or need to pay for taxis rather than public transport). The idea of a social care climate fund is that it will correct the negative impacts of the care premium and additional and disproportionate costs imposed by climate change. In principle the fund is based on the EU idea of a Social Climate Fund, which '*aims to counterbalance the negative impacts of increased prices for home heating and care fuel*' (Heffernan, 2021, p.21).⁵⁶ It would be both compensatory and committed to addressing inequalities across heterogeneous green initiatives, and across the scope of climate-affected care provision. It would be intended to support incentives for sustainable transport, energy, water, food growing/allotment fees, along with investments in personal and community green care resources.

CONCLUSION

To develop our social care-focused argument, we began by examining the broader care policy landscape—what we refer to as the "care policy complex"—alongside a set of feminist Green New Deal actions that raise critical questions and offer alternative perspectives. These generate different policy responses or actions, crucially, some of which would be more transformational than others. While there are different types of GNDs, in Wales, the core concerns of legislation are tackling climate change and environmental crises through the Wellbeing for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, by transitioning the public sector to more foundational, wellbeing economy approaches and tackling care by taking an interconnected systems approach.

Whether or not policies are explicitly framed as ‘care’, ‘health and social care’ or ‘wellbeing’, the approach in Wales tends to share the belief that public services can be transformed without radically transforming the current dominant model of care. Under the current situation, women’s unpaid labour is not presented as a crisis of care, but as an issue of inclusion to ensure that care provision does not worsen (Cohn and Duncanson, 2023, p.17).⁵⁷ However, such an analysis does not consider the recent impacts of austerity and the cutting of care budgets, and the need for a radical approach to account for unpaid and underpaid care work – despite care being essential to a green transition (Weise, 2022).⁵⁸ To reiterate, many of these proposals are untested as ‘green care’ plans. For them to act as green care, a set of thresholds or principles about the level of carbon reduction or the amount of reduced carbon emissions achieved through economic or other measures would have to be ascertained, including the public perception of their effectiveness as green measures. Weise (2022) in particular, argues that any efforts towards a FGND for care must facilitate the shift away from a maintenance ‘business as usual’ approach towards one that radically re-envision and values care, creating value for unpaid and underpaid care as part of the wellbeing economy.⁵⁹

Overall the conclusions reached from many of the policy documents speak to the need for **investment in a care infrastructure** – for women in a FGND this means investment in timeliness, access, pay (including access to sick pay) and conditions, through available and novel social mechanisms like workforce and pay scale planning, job guarantees, shaping just transition discourses towards care security, and development of 3rd sector spaces i.e. Long Term Care centres that utilise decaying town centres.

WORK



A feminist green new deal considers women and work in two ways – the revaluing of paid and unpaid social care as social infrastructure (as necessary to support work in the paid economy), adding its value to GVA, while also focusing on shifts to a wellbeing economy. Secondly, ensuring decent work and that women do not lose out on opportunities to gain skills, secure employment and progression in a changing labour market (sectors and occupations introducing AI and digitisation, and in processes of decarbonisation).

As the first of these FGND concerns - valuing women's care work- has been considered above, this discussion focuses on what is needed for a feminist approach to women's employment in growth areas such as decarbonising industries. Current policy relating to employability, employment and acquiring skills for the transition has been reviewed.

Economic transitions can exacerbate existing labour market inequalities (Brynjolfsson and McAfee, 2014).⁶⁰ In the transition to the knowledge economy in Wales (knowledge-intensive businesses, incorporation of ICT, etc), more of women's employment became precarious and associated with low-paid part-time work, while men were able to take advantage of the expansion of sectors that they already dominated (Parken and Rees, 2011).⁶¹

Wales evidences the negative economic and employment outcomes of a badly managed transition from coal. Wales also evidences a distinct approach to equality for all through the constitution (Chaney and Fevre, 2002), taking a Children's Rights approach to policymaking, efforts to mainstream equality in the work of the, then National Assembly for Wales and innovative Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (Wales) 2015 and commencing s.1 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'socio-economic' duty (see Parken 2022 for further examples of Wales's distinct approach to equality). Wales was also an early champion of efforts to promote equality on an intersectional basis (Parken and Young, 2008; Parken, 2010; Parken, 2022).⁶² However, this approach to policy development and the subsequent drive to become a 'feminist government' through a Gender Equality Review (2018–2020) has not been fully implemented (Chwarae Teg, 2019).⁶³ In-depth reviews of women's employment between 2004–2014 showed both changes (increases in women's economic activity, employment rates and entry into the professions) but continuities in gender segregation by occupation, grade, working hours, and contract type, resulting in significant pay gaps (Parken et. al, 2014, Parken, 2016).⁶⁴

It is time to repeat such an in-depth inquiry. Of sectors key to a Just Transition to Net Zero, women are 7.9% Agricultural of workers, 24.2% of Energy, 18% of Construction, 22% of Transport, 29.9% of Water, waste etc., and 25% of ICT (WEN Wales, 2024).⁶⁵ A future focus of research must be to undertake the difficult task of looking at women's employment across sectors and occupations (SIC and SOC classifications combined) for an insight into what work women are doing within decarbonising industries.

The Welsh Government's 'Wellbeing of Wales Report' (2024) gives an overview of progress towards equality and highlights areas where more effort is required:

- In 2023, 45.0% of working age adults (aged 18 to 64 years) were qualified to at least higher education level (level 4) – a rise of 14% in the last 15 years.
- The proportion of working-age adults qualified to at least level 2 (equivalent to 5+ GCSEs at grade A* to C) stood at 87.4% in 2023 (large regional variation - 17% had no qualifications in Blaenau Gwent, compared to 3% in the Vale of Glamorgan).
- The proportion of women in full-time work has been rising since 2012 (and notably during the pandemic, probably due to the availability of working from home and hybrid working), but is now falling: 58.3% of women are working full-time, and 41.7% part-time
- The median hourly gender pay gap for all employees is 11.8% (April 2023)
- The median hourly gender pay gap for full-time employees is 5.5% (April 2023)
- The median hourly disability pay gap for all employees is 12.2% (Dec 2023). The key issue is the low employment rate for disabled people in Wales – a gap of 30.9%
- The median hourly ethnicity pay gap for all employees is 13.3% – the gap has been increasing since 2019 (Dec 2023)
- The percentage of people earning the Real Living Wage has fallen to 64%, and 21% of all people were in relative income poverty in 2020–2021 and 2022–2023
- In 2023, 58.5% of women earned at least the Real Living Wage in comparison to 68.3% of men

- There has been an increase of approximately 20% in the number of working-age adults who are economically inactive due to ill health (between March 2020 and March 2024) (WG Well-being Report, 2024).⁶⁶

In summary, steps forward and back, and in each economic shock or transition, policy gains could be undermined. For example, the Welsh Government agreed to the recommendations of the government-commissioned *Gender Equality Review* 2019 that policy should aim to support economic independence for women, and that unpaid work is valued. However, policies that support the net zero transition could forestall such aims, and existing inequalities could be reproduced in a changing labour market. For example, care jobs could be further undervalued in comparison to jobs in sectors viewed as 'green', and reduced working from home or hybrid working arrangements will impact women's ability to build working hours.⁶⁷

Table 3 summarises where women's equality concerns are mentioned in Welsh Government strategies for fair work, Just Transition, economic growth and skills, and where these policy areas are integrated into equality plans.

Table. 3 Employability, Employment, Pay and Skills related to gender equality and Net Zero

Report	Actions listed as relating to women
Welsh Government, 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales: A Plan for Employability and Skills, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues noted are a loss of attachment to the labour market for women post-COVID, persistent gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps. • Recs: Set and monitor challenging diversity targets for all employability programmes, undertake an anti-racist review of employability programmes to ensure accessibility. Ensure no one is left behind.
Welsh Government, 'Net Zero Skills Action Plan', February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Personal Learning Accounts - for Net Zero skills, includes a stated intention to promote their take-up by women. • Build on community employability programmes (such as Community Work+ for people disadvantaged in the labour market) to deliver intensive support for priority groups which are listed as: Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (including migrants), disabled people, those with a learning disability, women, lone parents, carers, young people and older workers. • Young Person's Guarantee – each 16–24-year-old will have a place in education or training. • CRe8 – supporting young people in schools to design STEM energy-efficient products supported by local business mentors. • Address gender imbalances in some sectors • Assess evidence of the Mainstreaming Equality Panel report on promoting equality in Net Zero sectors/workplaces.
Just Transition to Net Zero: Consultation Document, December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent new inequalities arising in the transition to Net Zero; ensure fair distribution of costs and benefits; take a Children's Rights approach; ensure workplaces are representative of society and communities; the public sector should consider decarbonisation measures as part of fulfilling the socio-economic duty.
Just Transition: Call for Evidence Synthesis: Final Report', Welsh Government, October 2023	<p>Consultation responses JT Framework 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender mainstreaming and setting specific gender targets in skills development - leverage transferable skills.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributive, procedural, restorative, recognitional, intergenerational justice approach (using WBFGA), and a More Equal Wales – equal workplace and public-sector representation, while embedding socio-economic considerations in decarbonisation strategies. (Toy report Oct 23).
Response to Just Transition Framework: Consultation Document, Dec 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... the importance of inclusion and engagement of all relevant stakeholders throughout the design, production and implementation of a just transition, with particular emphasis on co-production and engaging communities. ensuring equality for groups that might be adversely impacted by the transition (Alma Economics, June 2024)
Welsh Government, 'Climate Action Wales: Public Engagement Strategy 2023 to 2026', 12 July 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intends to - support the people and communities of Wales, with fairness and equality at the heart of everything we do for the people of Wales and future generations. <p>*Equality is not mentioned after this. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requirement for diversity in decision-making is noted.</p>
Welsh Government, 'Economic mission: priorities for a stronger economy', November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove regional barriers for disabled people, women, carers, and ethnic minority people whilst improving workplace practices and culture.
Fair Work Commission: Progress Report 2024⁶⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National milestone established for the elimination of pay gaps by 2050 (gender, ethnicity and disability), and Real Living Wage.
Green Economy, Senedd Report (2025)	<p>Recommendation 11. The Welsh Government and UK Government should work with partners, including industry and educational institutions, to tackle the gap in diversity in the renewable energy workforce. This could include developing more inclusive education and training routes into renewable energy roles, and leading work to ensure partners can contribute to cultural change in energy workplaces that makes them more attractive to underrepresented groups.</p>
Welsh Government Anti-Racist Plan: Update, 5th Nov 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ethnicity gap in the employment rate decreased from 2014-2024, but the unemployment rate remains higher and has increased from the previous year (WG, Well-being of Wales, 2024). Higher rates of precarious work. Successfully embedded community representation and outreach in Jobs Growth Wales programme – has increased the participation of ethnic minority young people, set up EDI Subgroup on the workforce council and sectoral forums show progress. Future goals: cross-cutting government work to eliminate pay gap by 2050; embed EDI in the programmes of the Social Partnership and Workforce Councils to foster inclusive workplace cultures and raise awareness of workers' rights.
Senedd Equality Committee Report March 2025 'Anything is achievable: Tackling the disability employment gap'	<p>Calls upon the Welsh Government to publish the Disabled People's Rights Action Plan (published 25 May 2025).</p>

Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan 2020	Vision: All women can have economic independence, and paid and unpaid work is valued; diverse women are fairly represented in positions of influence and empowered to play a meaningful role in society; all women are free from discrimination and free to live their lives as they choose; violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence stops; existing power structures that disadvantage women are challenged and all women, men and non-binary people enjoy equal rights and protections and equality of outcome. Actions design an intersectional approach to policymaking, piloting gender budgeting approaches, full employment and pay review of Welsh Government staff, linking Fair Work and gender equality plans.
Welsh Government Strategic Equality Plan	Consultation responses under analysis. Relevant goals include reducing poverty, addressing violence, fair employment; environmental policy does not make things worse for people living in poverty. Ensure and integrate all policies and plans so that they work towards increasing equality/equity.

Summary April 2025. Not exhaustive.⁶⁹

This is an encouraging list of stated intentions, but more detail is needed on action. For example, what will the efforts be to ‘ensure equality for groups who might be adversely impacted by the transition’ (Welsh Government, 2024)?⁷⁰ How has delivery of the Net Zero skills action plan increased women’s take-up of Green Personal Learning Accounts in decarbonising sectors? Has an audit taken place to ensure that these are not only qualifications for service occupations in these sectors but also in technical, more highly paid roles? And what are the outcomes of these efforts?

Further, in each of these plans, a detailed analysis of women’s poverty and barriers to access is missing. For example, Stronger, Fairer, Greener (2022) lacks specific gender equality actions and outcome measures. Fair Work Wales would benefit from an analysis of the gendering of decent work and an identification of which women in which sectors are still not receiving the Real Living Wage. In addition, an intersectional approach is absent in most of the equality plans.

PROPOSALS FOR A FEMINIST GREEN NEW DEAL FOR SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT

Proposal 1: Evidence. Understanding what works to address gender segregation The Welsh Government Wellbeing Report (2024), the EHRC report ‘Is Wales Fairer?’ (2023) and NGO reports, such as the Feminist Scorecard (WEN Wales, 2024), provide a valuable overview of women’s employment but an in-depth intersectional analysis is needed of which women work where, and under what conditions in Wales.⁷¹

Addressing gender segregation is challenging as it requires addressing the gendered division of labour, historical ‘breadwinner/homemaker’ pay policies which are still embedded in pay systems, and the ‘gendering’ of sectors and occupations linked to role expectations and our identities (Parken and Ashworth, 2019).⁷² Addressing segregation by sector, occupation, contract type and working hours requires coordinated action for the long-term. There have been a few recent academic reviews of gender segregation in the labour market. The last international in-depth review of gender segregation across the European Union, with suggested actions, was by Bettio and Verashchagina in 2009.⁷³ Depressingly, they found little overall change in the period 1992 to 2007. In 2014, research for the Women Adding Value to the Economy (WAVE) research programme examined gender segregation and segmentation in Wales, and found that:

... 86 of the 353 jobs in our dataset show gender balance (SOC 4 Digit). Working in gender-segregated jobs is the norm for three-quarters of employed and self-employed people in Wales. One fifth of employed and self-employed workers in Wales work in gender balanced occupations (Parken, Pocher and Davies, 2014: ix).⁷⁴

Updated data is urgently needed to provide a gender perspective to support FE and HE colleges and decarbonising organisations who want to respond to sector reports which evidence a need for greater diversity to reach employment and skills targets (see National Grid 2020, CITB, 2021). Without greater diversity, our ability to deliver Net Zero is compromised and the value of skilled employment and associated earnings will be lost to the Welsh economy. Without a plan to tackle gender segregation and segmentation in sectors and occupations, these aims cannot be achieved.⁷⁵

The review should include an intersectional gender beneficiary analysis of education, training and upskilling programmes (Green PLAs and apprenticeships, etc). Analysis sector by occupation is needed, particularly of occupational segregation in the growing renewables sector in Wales. In-depth examination of the impact of poorer working conditions (temporary, fixed, zero hours and agency working), RLW, and analysis of gender pay gaps by sector and occupation, and seniority are needed. A benchmark must be established in order that we can see the impact of policies and programmes, and the specific training and employment interventions that are needed to ensure that diverse women have opportunities to work in skilled renewable energy jobs, where employment is expanding and pay is rising due to skills shortages.

Wales's unique Welsh Specific Equality duty on gender pay differences requires each public sector employer to produce a combined occupation, grade, contract type, working hours and pay analysis by gender. Policymakers need a detailed analysis of the whole economy if they are going to embed a gender perspective and specific actions into each of the plans discussed in Table 3.

Proposal 2: Pay gap duties for ethnicity and disability. The disability gender pay gap is lower in the public sector than in the private, but the public sector shows evidence of a 'glass ceiling' (Jones, 2024). The ethnicity pay gap is increasing in Wales (Welsh Government, 2024).⁷⁶ Eliminating these gaps by 2050 is a new National Milestone. This commitment is to be commended. New duties for ethnicity and disability should be developed when the Welsh Specific Equality Duties are renewed.

However, too many of Wales's public bodies bypass the detailed analysis of employee and organisational data required by the Welsh Specific Duty on 'gender pay differences', which is designed to demonstrate to employers how such disparities develop in employment structures (Parken, 2022).⁷⁷ The Welsh duty also requires an action plan and an annual progress update. Instead, public bodies report against the UK Gender Pay Gap Reporting Regulations 2017, which require only the publishing of mean and median pay and bonus gaps, quartiles of distribution of men and women (although updated guidance now suggests the inclusion of an action plan).⁷⁸

The UK government is consulting now on pay gap duties for ethnicity and disability. We must guard against the watering down of existing Welsh Specific Equality Duties for the public sector, by setting out duties for disability and ethnicity based on the in-depth analysis and requirement for action in the 'gender differences duty'. Collaborative work between government policymakers, trade unions, NGOs and academics needs to begin now to ensure these duties are underpinned by the data requirements for understanding the drivers of inequality, and the requirement for action plans and progress reporting.

Proposal 3. Collation Building. With the trade unions, establish a Welsh Government Working Group on Women and a Just Transition. The model could be like the coalition of women's groups, statutory agencies and government officials who jointly led the 'Close the Pay Gap campaigns' (Fitzgerald 2007, Minto and Parken, 2021).⁷⁹ The new coalition will need an intersectional focus from inception and will work to improve employment conditions in the transition to Net Zero:

- ensure equality is embedded in the implementation of new employment rights under the Employment Rights Bill 2024.
- support the implementation of new ethnicity and disability pay gap duties, supporting their aim to address occupational segregation by job, grade, working pattern and contract types
- champion flexible and hybrid working patterns (monitor their availability and impact on progression),
- and bolster the campaign for the Real Living Wage, etc.

The coalition would deliberate on the initial evidence requirements set out in Proposal 1, build recommendations from the findings, create toolkits to support employers and campaign for change. The coalition could also build stronger links with national organisations such as WISER, the national organisation that promotes women in STEM, to help revitalise the Welsh Government's Women in STEM strategy, the Women's Environmental Network and expand the work of the Wales Women's Budget Group working with the UK WBG.

Proposal 4: Audit of gender equality outcomes: Assess any increases in women's participation and employment outcomes, on an intersectional basis, as a result of Welsh Government employability, employment, net zero skills and Just Transition programmes and investments.

Proposal 5: Mainstreaming Equality on an Intersectional basis: in all climate policies and related labour market programmes, and to foster intersectionality within the Welsh Government equality plans for disability, ethnicity and gender.

TRANSPORT



Transport represents one of the areas of legislative responsibility that is devolved in Wales. Transport is covered by several pieces of legislation, from highways to cycle legislation and a newly proposed bus travel Bill. Transport is also identified as one of the seven major sectors for decarbonisation in Wales and is represented in several health and social care policies that integrate travel into active travel planning, and the reduction of traffic air and noise pollution across Wales. However, despite being a sector that is continuing to grow, transport is one of the most unequal sectors, with the top 10% income group using 45% energy for land transport, and 75% for air (Heffernan et al, 2021).⁸⁰ The inequalities in transport also create further inequalities that affect journey times, access to other public and private services, differences in their personal carbon output, and risk of exposure to threat, lack of safety or poor weather. As public transport

users are more likely to be women, young and older people and minoritised ethnic people, these factors make transport a site for widening discrimination and marginalisation (Gore et al, 2021).⁸¹

Gender is one of the most robust determinants of sustainable transport use, with different mobility patterns according to gender and people providing care for others. Women are more likely to walk and use public transport (30% more than men)⁸² and are shown to engage in more sustainable or green forms of travel, often having trips that are both shorter and greener (Heidegger et al, 2021).⁸³ At the same time, travel systems are not gender neutral and women's travel needs, as well as the needs of private travel users, are prioritised over public transport users, and public travel systems are often modelled on men's direct commutes to work. Men use private travel more as drivers and driving license holders. Care providers, who are disproportionately women, are likely to take shorter trips, at off-peak hours, with multiple stops while accompanying others. This manifests itself as different journeys from men, who are more likely to take individual trips commuting between home and workplaces.

Additional evidence gathered about the transport sector workforce in Wales finds that women are 20% of the transport and communication workforce. Women in the transport workforce are younger on average than men, but the sector is not ethnically diverse, nor representative of disability; there is vertical and horizontal segregation (Chwarae Teg 2022).⁸⁴ If we say that the problem of transport is travel, it must be highlighted that 20% households in Wales have no access to a car (Active Travel Annual Report 2023–24).⁸⁵ Adding in the issue of rurality, people in rural areas are more likely to use a car, but less likely to use public transport or participate in active travel, than people in urban areas.⁸⁶

In terms of gender, the transport sector is already distributed unequally in terms of:

1. Transport **modes**,
2. **Trips**, and with respect to transport pricing structures, does not take into account trip-chaining (ibid. p.110),
3. **Safety** – men tend to drive more dangerously, women are more vulnerable, with fear of harassment driving decisions about what routes to take, and times to use public transport, and
4. **Employment** – the figures for Wales are consistent across the EU, where women make up 22% of the transport sector labour force and experience vertical segregation

There is a push for the transport sector in Wales to contribute to Net Zero and for more public engagement with active travel (or modes of travel that involve physical activity) in Wales. The Wales Transport Strategy (2021) has specific priorities for:

1. Reducing the need to travel,
2. Moving to more sustainable travel and
3. Improving incentives and reducing barriers for sustainable travel.⁸⁷

This plan aims to be equitable by delivering well-being through accessibility. It commits Wales to achieve best practice in design, training and service standards in line with equality, language and human rights duties set out in well-being, transport and disability strategies (ibid. p.19). However, none of these actions and measures are gender-specific but are presented as intersectional and with an aim to make the sustainable transport sector more attractive to users and remove barriers in specific areas, i.e. rural. They are also integrated in policy terms by focusing on 4 pathways – decarbonisation, equality, journey planning and rurality. A gender lens is needed to ensure that incentives, for example, are allocated to those who work shift patterns, part-time work, and travel with dependants.

In relation to the Feminist New Green Deal, we have focused here on identifying aspects of the relevant transport legislation. In Wales, making transport more accessible, inclusive and sustainable is one of the core priorities of the new transport strategy. This also reflects the priorities of the EU and the European Green Deal (Heffernan et al, 2021).⁸⁸ Despite women being only

a fifth of the transport workforce due to labour segregation and not well represented in decision-making, we are calling for policies that lead to co-benefits for accessibility and sustainability and provide the overall direction for future transport policies in Wales.

The IWA notes that a '*productive policy direction can be seen across numerous recent policy documents, from Llwybr Newydd, the National Transport Delivery Plan, Planning Policy Wales and the National Active Travel Delivery Plan*' focusing on investing in large scale road building schemes, the implementation of a sustainable hierarchy, investment in safe, secure and accessible active travel routes and attempts to refocus transport sector investment more broadly. The IWA also note that there have also been '*...additionally, broader policies which seek to deliver more attractive public transport options by bringing services into the public sector, such as with the nationalisation of Transport for Wales and planned widespread reform to bus services*' (IWA 2024).⁸⁹

Community transport and active transport have provided several solutions for accessible and affordable travel in Wales. Both sectors have their own networks and set of expectations for the government to act in ways so that everyone can access transport that meets their needs, aligning with a key principle of FNGD. Notably, these sectors argue that their solutions have not been taken on or their 'voice' is not as valued as other parts of the transport system (CTA 2024, ATB 2023), possibly because they are comprised of a range of social enterprises, community groups and public or environmental health advocates.^{90,91} Community transport and active travel is more solution focused. It has largely drawn attention to the needs of older people, disabled people, rural residents and deprived households, with the needs of women not directly addressed, except within the broad scope of equalities, across these areas of exclusion. More so than the rest of the transport sector, these sectors pay particular attention to transport as exclusion as well as the role of the sector in providing access to health, care, education and social opportunities. In addition, as the IWA (2024) notes, delivery is most often at the local level, i.e. LA's and individuals, with evidence of grossly uneven performance implementing accessible, inclusive travel even more challenging.⁹²

One area of attention in the Wales Transport Strategy is technology, which is addressed largely in terms of fuel, logistics and autonomy or intelligent transport systems.⁹³ The strategy recognises that sustainable transport is a sector shaped by ongoing technological advancement, through the phasing out of fossil fuels, investment in electric vehicles for public transport fleets, as well as the use of smart technologies (for public and private travel planning, and data capture). The Welsh government has invested significantly in green infrastructure (rail services, active travel routes, road connectivity, flood repair), and decisions on transport planning have received scrutiny with respect to environmental decision making (e.g. M4 relief road) and accessibility (reduced bus fares for under 25s) and as mentioned, carbon emissions.

Notably, the emphasis on technological solutions in the community and active transport sector is different. The community transport sector focuses on digital capacity and demand-driven transport solutions and services, as well as autonomous or semi-autonomous vehicles (CTB 2024).⁹⁴ The active travel sector focuses on technologies used to promote health (including carbon calculators), as well as the use of social media technologies to promote behaviour change and widen the groups who engage in active travel using assistive technologies (ATB 2023).⁹⁵ The role of technology in transport and the costs of transport are increasing but no integrated evaluation of the role of gender or equality has been included or is planned.

Despite its efforts, the effectiveness of the Welsh Government's transport approach, which seeks inclusiveness, cannot be determined with respect to gender. Particularly, it focuses on inclusiveness and protected characteristics only in relation to modal shift and involvement, and equality in relation to access (to and by transport), design of some services (active travel, bus), expertise as part of a Transport for Wales Advisory Panel, and the Welsh Language. Second, the environment features more prominently, focusing on the impacts of travel change as part of the legislative framework. It does not provide enough direction or measures about how to improve inequalities and reduce environmental impacts, e.g. with increased access likely to increase travel demand or costs for users. Hence, it appears to continue to prioritise modal shift over other economic considerations, which do not equally benefit all people. Third, there are no measures to

address the effects of technological advances for women, or address concerns about whether transport systems repeat past issues with design, including the type of journey and safety. Overall, the existing transport strategy for Wales could be subject to an integrated gender and economic as well as a sustainability analysis, such as that offered by the FGND principles, especially in the design rather than the review process. A review is currently planned for the new Active Travel strategy for Wales (Active Travel Delivery Plan 2024 to 2027), which leaves a gap for more inclusive planning and design.⁹⁶

The methodology that we have used for Transport is to identify and make comments on the alignment between 1. relevant Welsh Transport and active travel legislation, and community transport perspectives derived from extensive searches and 2. Scrutiny of these through a gendered analysis and suggested actions towards a Feminist Green New Deal in the UK, derived from manifestos and academic research 3. NGO actions and evidence are presented in publications and as part of public engagement.

Note several key Feminist Green Deal reports focus on transport, placing emphasis on inclusivity, access and decarbonisation (WEN, 2022).⁹⁷

This may be a non-exhaustive list of transport policies, but our aim is to represent what dimensions a feminist NGD analysis might provide.

Table 4. Examples of key areas of action leading to joint climate and transport reform

Policy or plan	Areas of alignment: government policy, FGND principles & NGOs actions and *gaps
Transport (Wales) Act 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aims for safe, integrated, sustainable, efficient, economical transport facilities and services for people and freight, and includes pedestrians and cyclists • economic efficiency and effectiveness are aims of the Transport (Wales) Act 2006 • includes meeting the needs of the elderly or disabled in the transport provision <p><i>*Does not yet include women as part of a group identified by need or gendered travel patterns</i></p>
Llwybr Newydd: the Wales transport strategy 2021 [HTML] GOV.WALES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sets out priorities for Wales based on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, evidence and consultation on mobility, sustainability and trends, e.g. includes hydrogen vehicles, ultra-low emissions zones, border issues • specific priorities include: 1. Reduce the need to travel – this is an integrated priority, for example, include support for remote working to reduce the need for travel and locate public services close to where people live, 2. Move to more sustainable transport, including rural, accessible and co-produced services and infrastructures, 3. Reduce disincentives and barriers • policy also has wellbeing and equality and decarbonising/environment, as well as economic and cultural ambitions <p><i>*Strategy is integrative across policies and calls for people before profit, but does not yet consider sectors dominated by women, which may be impacted by efforts to localise services, including learning from these sectors, e.g. home care</i></p>

Wales Regional Hub Women in Transport	<p>Provide evidence on gender segregation in the sector, and suggest action areas -improving the perception of the sector; -pathways into and within the sector; -the organisation of part-time work; cultures and diversity</p> <p><i>*Needs gender disaggregated data to understand who is using and delivering what kinds of transport, and why</i></p>
Active Travel in Wales: Annual Report 2023-2024 - Active Travel Board (August 2024)	<p>In their latest report, they call for: 1. C-SMART Objective Setting for all organisations in receipt of WG finds, 2. Radically improving data collation and research, 3. Overcoming capacity issues, 4. Reimagining active travel funding, 5. Prioritising active travel and reducing car use and reprioritising cyclist and pedestrian safety, 6. Creating a supportive environment where more children can walk, wheel and cycle to school, 7. Overhauling data collation in schools; 8. Mainstreaming a cross-government and cross-sector approach, 9. Place-making design</p> <p><i>*Issues include paused meetings of the inclusive active travel secretariat; the need to address the gendered perceptions of un/safety as a key factor in active travel; and active travel being a core part of multimodal travel</i></p>
Active travel delivery plan 2024 to 2027	<p>Comprehensive plan that is comprised of several areas of focus: 1. Leading the change including leadership training; 2. Stepping up delivery including the active travel hub; 3. Demonstrating what active travel can do inc. communications; 4. Create high quality network; 5. Active Travel Delivery Strategy</p> <p><i>*Issues include the understanding that the gendering of poverty means the transition to low-emission travel is particularly burdensome for women and girls in low-income neighbourhoods, so a strategy for capacity building and inclusion in the active transport sector is needed.</i></p>
A-Better-Future-for-Transport-2024-Community Transport	<p>The manifesto has 5 strategies: 1. modernising for growth; 2. improving access to health and social care; 3. investing in community solutions; 4. accelerating community-led climate action; 5. delivering a fair deal for volunteers</p> <p><i>*Issues include the rural Wales transport problem for girls and women, including costs, availability and safety; and poor public transport as a source of inequality</i></p>
Bus Services (Wales) Bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires ministers to identify services that are required for safe, efficient and integrated transport • Enables both planning, procurement, and flexibility along with sanctions if requirements are unmet (from the public perception) <p><i>*The bill is under consideration and includes gender as part of an EIA assessment, including efforts in protecting the rights of women and intersectional groups to use bus transport, including to enhance their wellbeing, but there is a need for integration across policy areas, and co-design that prioritises the experiences of majority users, i.e. women in bus plans.</i></p>

*Summary April 2025. Not an exhaustive list. See [Transport | Topic | GOV.WALES](#)

Note additional key Feminist Green Deal reports, not included in the table but referenced in the document, include IWA,⁹⁸ Urban Transport Group, 2025,⁹⁹ EC 2020,¹⁰⁰ Sustrans,¹⁰¹ WEN.¹⁰² New legislation in relation to bus transport provision has also just been agreed in Wales, which may do much to shift the transport equality landscape in Wales.

PROPOSALS FOR A FEMINIST NEW GREEN DEAL FOR TRANSPORT

After analysis of the literature and policy landscape below, and in consultation with partners, we have proposed several priorities for FNGD that can address the economics of transport. They are based on the recommendation that there needs to be a paradigm shift and a value shift in relation to transport, travel, mobility and the transport workforce in Wales, which can be enabled in part by existing policies and pilots.

Proposal 1: Make active travel safe and accessible through updating road safety strategies ensuring that roads, cycle paths and footpaths become more attractive for walking, wheeling and cycling, and including women and intersectional groups (missing from the policies outlined in the table above) into the planning and design of travel and transport, procurement and digital solutions. This should be the case wherever there is investment in resources, leadership training, or technologies that seek to improve the transport and travel infrastructure.

One of the long-standing debates in the transport sector in Wales is that active travel still impacts and excludes the most vulnerable, especially women of all kinds, including parents, older women and women in rural areas who may also have disabilities or be less used to riding a bike through cultural or economic reasons. Integration, inclusion and resources are needed to ensure that women's current and future needs are addressed. For example, fully serviced and accessible bikes, including e-bikes, could make a real difference to active travel, where routes are designed with the places that women want and need to travel to in mind. Rather than planners assessing the trips that women may make, it is essential that safety is not 'done to' these groups, but there are opportunities to properly co-design and build active travel with women. Understanding that car-dependent users are less likely than public transport users to engage in modal shift to active travel is one way of also better understanding the rural travel challenges for women.

Proposal 2: Integrate Active Travel across policies, i.e. with economics, health, crime policies and pedestrian/cyclist etc safety, with a focus on gender and marginalised groups. Active travel initiatives are built on the presumption that they build better equality in human and environmental health, and reduce costs for social as well as environmental services. This is one reason the 20mph road strategy was brought in, with benefits for sound and air quality as well as public health (see the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024.¹⁰³ However, levels of active travel in Wales are low and may be fragmented regionally as well as across policy areas. Need to build policy across related areas to support active travel resourcing, planning and use.

As the Bus Services (Wales) Bill suggests, public ownership should mean more opportunities for participation and engagement in co-engagement in the design of services that respond to local needs.¹⁰⁴ While we must reach Net Zero in less than 10 years, the experience from the transport sector suggests that sustainable and active travel remains vulnerable in the current climate. This is because, politically, they can be made to look like an unpopular and costly choice for local service provision. Still, infrastructure plans that include travel to key public services like hospitals and schools are not being addressed. The advice is that some of this wider intent about active and low carbon travel still needs direction and input from an integrated policy approach, that is also genuinely co-created with communities.

Proposal 3: Address the rural Wales transport problem– when transport strategies are made for Wales, data must be sufficiently disaggregated for women in rural areas. This applies to safe and accessible travel options across the day and evenings, as well as seasonally, considering journey times, to examining entire policy agendas for rurality and how they conceptualise rural inequalities in what is being designed and what transport systems are planning to do. Community transport has evolved to address rural Wales (as well as the needs of disabled communities), but these are systems that speak to the gap in existing provision and have a role in the identification of need and support needs. As public bodies in Wales are beginning to recognise that transport is driving the

poor delivery of public services, particularly in rural areas, support may be needed to develop a network or group tasked with addressing inequality, climate change and just transport.

Proposal 4: Bridge the Skills and Capacity Gap in transport and policy sectors (that address the needs for women, the disabled, and those in need of safer transport options). This gap is identified in the active Wales transport strategy and would build on and support innovations like Cymru Wales built environment team 'Healthier Places', comprising mostly of women with degrees in urban design and engineering who can support local authorities in active planning and the Community Transport and Active Travel networks, who have specific expertise in travel that is accessible and inclusive.

What the experience of the transport workforce shows us is that while there have been small (2%) increases in the percentage of women in the Transport for Wales, gender pay gaps are unchanged. The sector itself retains many aspects of traditionally male-dominated industry sectors. Given the urgency for decarbonisation of this sector, incentivisation for gender inclusivity and diversity of the sector is also needed. In the same way that transport procurement for bus services may open opportunities for small-scale operators who can generate jobs within local communities, there is now a framework that can be used to support these local operators to ensure these new jobs are also good jobs for women.

Proposal 5: Address the private sector transport climate problem: Decarbonising the transport system is a goal of Welsh policy, but the focus has largely been on public services and public behaviour. Reducing the emissions from the private transport system is regarded by some as an essential but missing part of the picture of inequalities, especially as the private sector receives significant road, fuel and airport subsidies. In this view, FGND needs to assess the disparities between the private and public transport systems of transport, and how this impacts inequalities for women. This was advocated by several different organisations in our stakeholder discussion. Examples include bringing private companies and businesses into the discussion in novel ways, e.g. tyre companies being involved in reuse and soil/water pollution schemes or private hire companies being used to help transport planning, but with clear goals of carbon/fuel reduction and addressing inequalities.

Proposal 6: Introduce a public travel allowance for climate participation. Based on the work of Atkinson (2014) the idea of a participation allowance, replaces universal transport allowances (i.e. free bus passes) and subsidies and their conditionalities (i.e. age, citizenship, locality) and instead makes the allowance and subsidy conditional on activity that contributes to the climate economy, informally or formally, or in the receipt of some form of climate education or training.¹⁰⁵ Developing learning from schemes like mytravelpass for 16-21 year olds in Wales is a good place to start.

Proposal 7: Support Put Passengers before Profit action– this is part of the Llwybr Newydd, Wales transport strategy, with one key aspiration being to transform the Welsh bus network to put passengers before profit, improve connections across the country and make bus journeys a more viable option for more people. This is one of the active campaigns for the Wales Community Transport sector.

Proposal 8: Undertake Gender Responsive Budgeting for Transport – considers the role of gender from the outset in the budgeting procedure for transport. This is helpful for understanding how transport budgets affect women and what the overall gender effects of allocating budgets in particular ways are, especially regarding intersectional effects. Sustrans and WBG have been doing some of this work, and there are some good examples, including using equality mainstreaming. There is an opportunity to learn from these case studies about the impacts of gender responsive budgeting on improving the access and use of public transport for marginalised groups. Similarly, there are opportunities to build resources into community transport and bus franchising budgets to ensure gender responsive budgeting.

Proposal 9: Build and prioritise off-peak capacity in cities (inter-city) and rural (inter-city) areas, and at-peak capacity and affordability in rural (intra-city) areas. This is an approach proposed by the Women's Environmental Network.¹⁰⁶ They argue that off-peak and affordable transport prioritises the needs of women and girls and puts their needs at the centre of travel plans. Again, there is an opportunity to learn about the impacts of Wales's newly implemented *mytravelcard* for improving the access and use of public transport by women, minoritised ethnic and disabled people aged 16-21, in rural and urban areas.

CONCLUSION

To make our transport and travel argument, we first reviewed the transport policy complex, including active travel and community travel. We reviewed these, considering the arguments made about transport within feminist new green deal thinking, which generated different or integrated policy responses or actions. While there are different levels of addressing a recognised inequality problem in transport, in Wales, some progress has already been made in transport plans that make similar arguments to those found in the FGND literature. The emphasis is on active travel and transport planning that is made more community responsive when arranged through gender responsive budgeting and works to directly reduce the metrics of transport inequality across the board (from employment, to access opportunities to transition to less polluting forms of travel).

Transport is devolved under the remit of the Welsh Government and action is being genuinely taken across the board to improve active travel and offer people alternative modes of transport to cars. There is an outstanding concern, however, that fundamental inequalities remain, where transport is presented as an issue of equality of access rather than equity. The community transport advocates, who support largely rural and disabled communities, provided the most insight into the gaps in funding and practical solutions to address inequality. To reiterate this point further, many of the proposals are encouraged universally as green and are argued to support the most vulnerable communities in transitioning to low-carbon travel. What a FGND perspective can and should address are the relative costs to the different groups identified here – rural/urban, disabled/able, public/private, low socioeconomics/affluent, as interjectionally relevant for improving how women/men do across a range of transport options, i.e. bus, train, walking, cycling, etc.

Overall, the conclusions reached from the many policy documents speak to the shift towards the overall decarbonisation of the sector and a disinvestment in the private sector, through subsidies, grants and procurement. For women, what needs to happen is investment in community-level capacity, pay, access, responsiveness through micro-level financing like community transport schemes, e-bike sharing, maintenance and storage, and accessible transport to schools, shops and healthcare facilities.

ENERGY



When money is short in low-income households in Wales, after cutting back on days out, clothing and toiletries, women turn the heating down or off (Bevan Foundation, 2019).¹⁰⁷ Income poverty particularly impacts lone parents, 86.4% of whom are women (ONS, 2021), and households with a disabled person are more likely to be in income poverty (WG, 2024).¹⁰⁸ In April 2022, 45% of all Welsh Households were found to be in fuel poverty (98% of all low-income households) (ibid.).

Women are, or should be, involved as consumers, producers and decision makers in the supply of energy. As producers, women are 20% of the workforce, and 18% approx. senior leaders in the European Economic Area. They are concentrated in clean energy (not oil/gas, etc.).¹⁰⁹

Job growth estimates for energy jobs in Wales vary widely from 25,100 by 2050 (National Grid, 2021) to 64,000 potential new energy jobs in the North Wales Region (dependent on investment) (Data Cymru, 2022).¹¹⁰ There is also variation in the estimation about the extent to which these will be new jobs or reskilled jobs. But there is no doubt that employment in the sector is growing:

*In Wales, the Energy production and supply sector had the largest increase (up 6.8%) in the number of paid employees when compared to the previous year (Stats Wales, January 2024).*¹¹¹

The CCC Progress report for Wales 2020 lists jobs in the priority sector of energy as including: production and maintenance, operations, engineering for production design, innovation and installation for electrification, heating assessment, supply and fit, retrofit, supply of energy, materials and waste, monitoring, R&D, policy development, project management.¹¹² Given that the varied list of occupations crosses several sectors, a gender breakdown within energy-related sectors requires building a bespoke data set. However, even without tackling gender segregation, we can assume that there will be opportunities for women.

Industry and trade recognise that without diversifying the traditional demographic of energy workers, skills needs for the energy transition will not be met. Recent research from the International Energy Agency argues that increasing the supply of women in STEM will not be enough as there is also very low take-up by women in vocational qualifications: electrician, roofer, plumber, etc., and that these qualifications account for half of all energy workforce jobs.¹¹³

They recognise too, the significant barriers to women joining the existing energy industry and are making efforts to ensure women feel included in the transition, not least by the use of terms such as ‘clean energy’. Several reports show that young people are keen to work in new green sectors where they can make a difference to planetary liveability (LWI, 2021), but are also thwarted by not knowing exactly what ‘green jobs’ are or how to access them.^{114,115} Women’s networking in energy is burgeoning internationally and at the UK level, and companies are making efforts to foster inclusion, but such efforts are urgently needed in Wales. An ‘energy diversity gap’ is already apparent in renewables internationally (Pearl Martinez and Stephens 2016), and STEM Women predict that women will hold only 25% of UK ‘green jobs’ by 2030.^{116,117,118}

Retraining and reskilling efforts are based on existing oil, gas and steel workers, which will replicate the narrow and exclusive cultures of existing energy industries (Emmons Allison et al, 2019).¹¹⁹ Lack of skills is driving competition for workers, with the result that skilled men can move jobs routinely for higher pay in Wales (Reynolds, 2023, unpublished MBA dissertation).¹²⁰ There are more women working in social enterprise and community interest company renewable energy organisations in Wales, and the sector is more attuned to the need for diversity and inclusion measures but there is a pay penalty (Reynolds, 2023, unpublished MBA dissertation, *ibid.*).

The Welsh Government has set a target for clean power by 2035, with 1.5 GW of local ownership of renewable electricity and heat capacity in Wales by 2035, and for all new energy projects to have at least an element of local ownership (WG, 2023 RE Vision, update 2). Recently, the Welsh Government’s Ynni Cymru programme has invested £10m of grant funding to update renewal energy systems in schools, leisure centres, and increase charging points for electric cars, etc.¹²¹

No table of Welsh Government community and local energy strategies related to women is included here as they are not expressly considered. However, it would seem plausible, given women’s dominance of jobs and careers in the voluntary and community sector, that they could be leading the way for developing Community Energy Networks. A recent meeting between Rebecca Evans MS, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, and women working in the energy sector indicates a willingness to increase inclusivity among workers.¹²² The same efforts are needed to address anecdotal evidence that suggests there is a divergence in the community energy sector, with more men in paid positions and women in volunteering roles. Further research is needed.

Community-owned projects with defined benefits can provide much needed support for community assets and services. Some projects are designed to reduce fuel costs. Longer term, it may be beneficial for earnings to be invested in retrofit to reduce energy demand for householders/tenants who cannot afford insulation or transferring to renewable heat sources (see for example Swansea Community Energy).¹²³ This is an area in which women could lead in a green energy revolution but there are policy issues to overcome.

In our stakeholder meetings, we heard that developing community projects has been stymied by current energy and planning policies. The letting of very large projects excludes the Community Energy Sector, and it appears that collaboration and shared ownership models are not attractive to large producers. The Community Energy Learning Network (ELN) argues that fully realised collaborations have the potential to provide participatory benefits, so that communities do not feel 'done to' and therefore resistant to new renewable projects, redistributive benefits can prioritise social and environmental good over profit, and scale projects to help to meet overall targets.¹²⁴

They note the ways in which community energy projects are being hampered:

- Limited access to funding
- Difficulties connecting to the grid
- Policy clarity and devolution regarding the Great British Energy Bill¹²⁵

Ynni Cymunedol Cymru/Community Energy Wales (CEW) produced a state of the sector report in 2024.¹²⁶ It calls for everyone to be able to become stakeholders in new energy projects, and legislation for defined community benefits schemes from all projects. This recommendation is also expressed in the Net Zero 2035 Challenge report on energy, which argues for a statutory percentage of each project to be for community benefit and for a statutory framing of how that money is used.¹²⁷ CEW also call for a right to purchase from local energy markets, mandatory shared ownership to prevent private providers from developing but then selling on what should be a community asset, and a mandatory right to buy assets that would benefit the community before going to the open market.¹²⁸

The CEW report argues that although the Welsh Government set an ambition for 'New renewable energy projects to have at least an element of local ownership from 2020', this has not been met:

Despite the initial interest, CEW notes that only a small number of developers appear to be making sincere efforts to meet the Welsh Government's objective or to even seriously engage with Community Energy Wales (CEW, 2024: 27).¹²⁹

A feminist green new deal could support women's involvement in shared ownership models and ensure that they have a role in deciding where to reinvest community benefits - in skills, supply chains, and to support retrofit to reduce fuel poverty by reducing demand.

We also note that the renewables sector, both private and community-led, needs to invest in equality and diversity to establish inclusive organisational cultures, systems and processes. As we argued in 'An Equal and Just Transition', new entrants to the jobs market are dissuaded from industries and occupational sectors where they may be 'the only one' and where they anticipate that they may not fit into, or experience discrimination, within white homosocial workplace cultures. Indeed, and sadly, a recent Estyn report notes the increasingly prevalent misogyny that women students are experiencing from men within further education in Wales.¹³⁰ Tackling this is urgent if women are to be included in higher-paying energy occupations.

PROPOSALS FOR A FEMINIST GREEN NEW DEAL FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

Proposal 1: Defined community benefits and Mandatory shared ownership models for new renewables. Defined community benefits should be put on a statutory footing with clear direction that surpluses will be reinvested by the community in retrofit, community upskilling for employment, community transport, other forms of climate adaptation and measures to address inequalities.

In shared ownership models, requirements should be placed on private sector organisations to follow the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 '5 ways of working' for genuine engagement and collaboration with communities. Both community and private sector partners should have diverse gender gender-balanced leadership teams and boards.

Proposal 2. Positive Action Access to training/retraining is currently focused on an already skilled workforce in declining traditional energy industries, thus exacerbating inequalities.¹³¹ To address gender segregation, including addressing the 'chill factor' of sexual harassment, significant investment is needed to encourage diverse women to enter the clean energy sectors. A feasibility study for positive action women-only training in further education should be undertaken.

Further, the Welsh Government should review the positive action measures that governments around the world are taking, to increase the participation of a wider pool of learners in education, training and skills, in both vocational and higher education. For example, Growing our Clean Energy Workforce: subsidised apprenticeships, professional mentoring and access to ongoing education for women in the clean energy space (Australia), and the Green Jobs Internship Programme for young people (Canada).¹³²

Proposal 3. Workplace Cultures Without intervention, green energy companies and community energy projects may reproduce traditional androcentric workplace cultures and structures, which will reinforce inequality. Providing women and marginalised groups with access to a Net Zero job training or reskilling may not be enough; a dedicated programme of workplace cultural change is required. The role of the Social Partnership Act (2022) is vital, working alongside the Economic Contract to ensure recruitment is backed by investment in retention initiatives within workplaces.

CONCLUSION

This review finds concurrence with initial scholarship on Feminist Green New Deals – policymaking in general, and climate policies in particular– that insufficiently consider gender inequalities in policy design. An intersectional gender perspective is needed in their design, not just to ensure that climate adaptation and mitigation do not reinforce existing inequalities, but that, through such policies, gender equality can be actively promoted.

This report sets out why and where intervention is needed. A gender-blind approach, evident in many of the policies reviewed, does not have a neutral impact. It is detrimental both to achieving our climate adaptation and clean growth ambitions and to gender equality.

Many of the proposals call for feasibility studies, further research and engagement, as these areas of inquiry show underinvestment. With Welsh Government and equality organisations working together to fill these gaps, we see the opportunity to address the other aspect of a feminist green new deal – diverse women’s organisations coming together to adopt climate change challenges as part of their focus.

APPENDIX 1: ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED IN THE STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION

Cynnal Cymru

Cardiff University Business School

Cardiff University School of Healthcare Sciences

Cardiff University School for Social Science

Community Energy Wales

Co-production Network Wales

Cycling UK/Cymru

Disability Wales

Institute of Welsh Affairs

Nesta

Office of the Future Generations Commissioner

Oxfam Cymru

Sustrans Cymru

TUC Cymru

Wales Women's Budget Group

Women's Institute Cymru

Women in Transport Cymru

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