



WEN ALL ABOUT CEDAW



Uywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

This resource introduces CEDAW, explains why it is so important and provides examples of when it can be used.

WHAT IS CEDAW?

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

- An international bill of rights for women
- Defines the meaning of discrimination against women and sets out what **state parties** must do to end this discrimination
- It is a document that outlines **formal equality** with the intention of creating **substantive equality**.


State parties
=
governments

Formal equality =
written in the law
Substantive equality =
real lived equality

CEDAW ARTICLES

Article 1: Definition of Discrimination

Discrimination against girls and women means directly or indirectly treating girls and women differently from boys and men in a way which prevents them from enjoying their rights.



**Articles 2-4
= what the
state needs
to do**

Article 2: Obligations to eliminate discrimination

States must not allow discrimination against girls and women. There must be laws and policies to protect them from any discrimination. For example, in Wales, boys and girls in school must be allowed to take the same options i.e.

childcare/ construction. All national laws and policies must be based on equality of girls and women and boys and men. There should be punishment for not following the law.

Article 3: Guarantee of basic human rights and freedoms.

States must take actions in all fields – political, social, economic, and cultural – to ensure girls and women can enjoy basic human rights and freedoms. For example, in Wales women can go to rugby/golf clubs or become First Minister without any legal obstacle.

Article 4: Temporary Special measures. States should take affirmative action or temporary special measures (e.g. quotas or women only services) to end discrimination against girls and women. These specific measures should last until equality between girls and women and boys and men is achieved. In Wales, all women shortlists have been introduced to try and increase the number of women in politics/decision making roles.

Articles 5-16 = the details and context

Article 5: Roles based on stereotypes.

States must take
appropriate
measures
to eliminate

stereotyping, prejudices and discriminatory cultural practices.
For example, in Wales it is not permitted to say that men are

better at decision
making roles by
only having men
represented in
adverts for local
government
decision makers.



Article 6:
Trafficking and
prostitution. States
must act to end
the exploitation of
women and girls
through trafficking
and prostitution. In

Wales, BAWSO are given Welsh Government funding to help victims of trafficking.

Article 7: Political and public life.

States must ensure that women vote and are eligible to be elected to government positions. Girls and women have the right to take part in the decisions a government makes and the way it carries them out. They have the right to participate in non-governmental organisations (NGOs).



Article 8: Participation at the international level. Girls and women have the right to represent their country at the international level and to participate in the work of international organisations (e.g. United Nations and the European Union) on an equal basis to men.

Article 9: Nationality. Women have equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality and that of their children. These rights are not changed by marriage or by any changes made by the husband (issues around immigration and asylum are often discussed here).

Article 10: Education. States must end discrimination against girls and women in education. Girls and women have a right to education including equal access to school buildings and equipment; and opportunities to get scholarships and grants, the same as boys and men. Girls and women have the right to take part in sports and physical education, and to get specific information to ensure the health and well-being of families. Governments should make sure girls do not drop out of school. They should also help girls and women who have left school early to return and complete their education.





Article 11:
Employment.

Women have a right to work just like men. They should be able to access the profession of their choice. Women must have the same opportunities to find work, get equal pay, promotions and training and have access to healthy

and safe working conditions, as men. Women should not be discriminated against because they are married, pregnant, just had a child or are looking after children. In Wales, Chwarae Teg

works to promote women in the workplace.

Article 12: Health.

Girls and women must get health care on the same terms as boys and men. In particular, women have the right to services related to reproductive health.



Article 13: Economic and social life. Girls and women have the same rights as boys and men in all areas of economic and social life, like getting family benefits, rights to mortgages, getting bank loans and taking part in sports and cultural life.



Article 14: Rural girls and women. States must take action to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas. Girls and women in rural areas must be supported to take part in and benefit from rural development, healthcare, social security, credit and loans, education,

development planning equally with men. Examples in Wales include agricultural loans and bus services.

Article 15: Equality before the law. Women and men are equal before the law, including access to justice, laws about freedom to go where they choose, choosing where to live, signing contracts and buying and selling properties.

Article 16: Marriage and family life. Women have the same rights as men during marriage including reproductive rights, as parents and other aspects of family life. Women also have the equal right to the property that they get with their husband while they are married. To end child and early marriages, governments must set a



lowest age for marriage and make sure this is followed. All marriages must be registered (officially recorded with the government).

Article 17-22: These articles set up the committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the CEDAW Committee) to review what progress has been


made by countries. These articles say how the committee works.

Article 23-30: These articles deal with the administration (or management) of the convention. The articles say how the United Nations and governments should work together to make sure rights of girls and women are protected. The articles also say how disagreements between governments about girls' and women's rights can be settled.



ABOUT THE CONVENTION

- Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are known as State Parties and are legally bound to implement its provisions, although governments can enter reservations (a kind of opt out clause), at the time of ratification
- The UK government signed the CEDAW Convention on 22nd July 1981 and ratified it on 7th April 1986
- State Parties are required to submit periodic reports on progress every 4 years to the CEDAW committee
- The committee (made up of 23 experts on women's rights from around the world) meets three times a year to review the periodic reports and issue recommendations to individual governments (known as concluding observations)
- The committee also makes general recommendations on any issues affecting women that it thinks a state party should be addressing e.g. violence against women, women's health, equal pay, access to justice



**ratified/acceded
= sign/agree to or
give formal consent,
making it officially
valid**

CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UK

- ensure that women can access courts effectively
- ratify the Istanbul Convention (a Council of Europe convention combating violence against women)
- make forced marriage a criminal offence
- adopt a comprehensive national action plan to tackle trafficking in women and girls
- improve mental health care in all prisons
- take steps to end occupational segregation (the concentration of men and women in certain jobs, or in certain levels of job) and reduce the gender pay gap.

FURTHER READING

WEN Wales CEDAW resources: <http://www.wenwales.org.uk/resources-2/cedaw/>

A Lever for Change: Using the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. EHRC Commission

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/a_lever_for_change.pdf

Women's Resource Centre - <http://thewomensresourcecentre.org.uk/our-work/cedaw/>

Equality and Human Rights Commission - <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-human-rights-work/monitoring-and-promoting-un-treaties/convention-elimination-discrimination>

UN CEDAW pages: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cedaw/pages/cedawindex.aspx>



The Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales is a representative women's network working to influence policy-making and empower women to achieve equal status in corporate and civil life. Having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW), our charitable objects, for the public benefit, are to promote equality and human rights with specific reference to women and gender equality in Wales.

The Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales aims to carry out its objects by providing a network for communication between women in Wales, encouraging them to use their talents to the full, extend their knowledge, education and skills and to participate fully in local, national and international affairs, in voluntary activities and in their working lives. This includes: facilitating networking and learning opportunities, undertaking research, providing advice, publishing and distributing information, co-operating and entering into partnerships with other bodies.

WEN's vision is a fairer society in which ALL women and girls can live free from prejudice and gender discrimination and enjoy equality in all aspects of their daily lives.

website: www.wenwales.org.uk

email: admin@wenwales.org.uk

facebook: Women's Equality Network Wales

twitter: @wenwales