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Minister for Education
Welsh Government
5th Floor
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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22 June 2020

Dear Minister,

Our members are deeply concerned about the injustices and racial disparities that have been highlighted by the virus and by the horrific events of brutality against black people in the United States. The NEU sent a message of support to the American Federation of Teachers, for urgent action to build racial justice in the USA and deliver safety and social justice for black Americans.

We welcome that the First Minister said today that the Welsh Government is working with Estyn to ensure BAME representation on the curriculum. We welcome that the planned Curriculum 2022 guidance includes a section on 'diversity' and includes equality and human rights education. But 'race' and 'racism' are only mentioned once. We believe that Wales has the opportunity with the Curriculum for Wales to promote an end to acts of race hate, that are not new, unique or disconnected. Schools must maintain the focus on embedding anti-racism organically through classroom resources, the use of role models and offering exposure to a diverse range of stories and examples.

We welcome the petition¹ set up to call for anti-racism teaching materials for schools. We are sure members of our Organising Forum for Black members would be happy to help with this as part of any reference, or other grouping, were Welsh Government to set one up. We believe there is an opportunity now to create these ahead of the introduction of the new curriculum, and ensure that anti-racism education is embedded across the curriculum in Wales.

We know that in Wales, the Welsh Government said you have spoken about how linking the local, national and international in education "will mean examining Wales' role in the slave trade and the contribution to building the empire". This is welcome and important.

In the UK, the global health pandemic has reminded people of the centrality of black workers to our NHS and our care homes, to our transport systems and food supply, and to education and to every profession and sector of the economy. Black children and young people face racism every day and experience a curriculum that does not reflect black history, culture or global achievement, with disparities in exclusions² across the education system.

Whilst less than 2% (according to Education Workforce Council) of the workforce in Wales are from black backgrounds, they still make up hundreds of individuals who will need to have a specific risk assessment before returning to work.

In this context, and irrespective of the timescale of any new Review, we call on the Welsh Government to:

- work with us, as we have already offered, to update advice for those undertaking a risk assessment, as stated in your 'operational guidance'³, to ensure that to minimise risks to the wellbeing and safety of black and vulnerable workers and the communities in which they live, work and travel.
- review the plans for the new Curriculum 2022 to ensure it embraces that Wales is rooted in black and global history, achievement and culture, and includes the achievements of black Britons; as recommended by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.
- commit to review Initial Teacher Training to ensure that every teacher in Wales receives anti-racism training focused around

¹ <https://petitions.senedd.wales/petitions/200056>

² <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Exclusions/PermanentAndFixedTermExclusions-by-Ethnicity>

³ <https://gov.wales/keep-education-safe-operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-covid-19>

recognising, responding to and reporting racism, as well as challenging unconscious bias.

- adopt a strategy to make the pipeline of new entrants to the teaching profession significantly more diverse over the next four years.
- collect school and college data which always shows ethnicity, in order to identify and mitigate any issues.

We believe that, irrespective of the timelines of any new review, Wales need an anti-racism strategy and immediate action plan if you are to make real change and harness the potential of education.

We look forward to further engagement on these urgent issues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Evans'.

David Evans
Wales Secretary, National Education Union