



Vale of Glamorgan Council
Gender Equality Scheme
2007–2010

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This Scheme is available in Welsh or English

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Foreword from Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Equalities and Chief Executive

The Gender Equality Duty (GED) has been hailed as having the potential to be the most significant change in sex equality legislation in 30 years, since the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975. The Vale of Glamorgan welcomes this change in legislation, recognising that it will bring about opportunities for employment, equal pay and work-life balance for both men and women working for the Council as well as improvement to services that take into account the different needs of men and women. In addition the legislation will provide protection against discrimination and harassment for transgender people.

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and providing real access to employment opportunities, services and facilities for everyone within the community. Our aim is to enable people to access their rights and be treated fairly and with respect.

This scheme aims to address gender inequalities, focussing on improving outcomes for our employees and residents. The Council already has a number of initiatives in place to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination, and we are encouraged by our progress towards achieving equality. However, this legislation represents a window of opportunity in the journey towards bringing about equality between men and women. It gives us the opportunity to review and challenge current practice in order to adopt a proactive approach in the future.

A key issue will be bringing about a gender balance in leadership and public roles in order to ensure a better understanding of gender equality issues in the decision making process.

The Council recognises that gender equality is an issue that affects both men and women in the workplace as well as service users. We recognise that family life has changed significantly in the last generation and that it should now be equally possible for men to take time off work for family responsibilities. Far more mothers are looking to continue their careers and more fathers want to be hands-on parents. With an increase in the aging population, more of us will also need to provide some support for older relatives in the future.

These are some key employment issues that are considered as part of this scheme. We recognise that the rapid change in technology and changing customer expectations can offer flexible working solutions that can be of benefit to our customers and employees.

The Council is committed to designing employment opportunities and services around the needs of modern society, ensuring that we take into account the different needs of men and women. In doing so we can contribute to the well being of our employees and provide accessible services, thereby building stronger communities.

Councillor Margaret Randall	Mr John Maitland Evans
Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Equalities	Chief Executive

Introduction: The Gender Equality Duty (GED)

The GED encompasses two fundamental changes: firstly, the requirement to promote gender equality; and, secondly, there is a focus on action and outcome. It therefore represents an important step in bringing about equality between men and women. The duty applies both to employment practices and the provision of services. In order to achieve these requirements the Council has developed this Gender Equality Scheme with gender equality objectives and actions. There is an emphasis on prioritising action to address the most significant gender inequalities including the issue of equal pay.

The Scheme will assist the Council is to review progress and to adopt a more proactive approach to gender equality.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is committed to fulfilling the gender equality **general duty**: when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- To promote equality of opportunity between men and women

The Council is also committed to meeting **specific duties** to plan, deliver and evaluate action to eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

EOC guidance to public authorities in Wales suggests the following five key steps:

- **Gather and analyse information** on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services
- **Consult stakeholders** in order to determine gender equality objectives
- **Assess the impact** of current and proposed policies and practices on equality for men and women (e.g. Gender Impact Assessments)
- **Prioritise and implement** gender equality objectives
- **Report and review** progress with a view to continuous improvement in implementing the duty

(EOC Code Paragraph 2.33)

From April 2007 public authorities will also be required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment on grounds of gender reassignment in the fields of employment, vocational training (including further and higher education). This provision will also be extended to the provision of goods, facilities and services from December 2007.

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN AND ITS COUNCIL

The Vale of Glamorgan Council was established in 1996 following local government reorganisation. It is Wales' most southern unitary authority, bounded to the north by the M4 motorway and to the south by the Severn Estuary. It covers 33,097 hectares with 53 kilometres of coastline including 19 kilometres of Heritage Coast.

Population

Based on the 2001 Census, the population of the Vale is approximately 119,212 and this number is expected to remain stable for the remainder of the decade. There are 57,356 (48.1%) males, and 61,936 (51.9%) females. 2.2% of the population of the Vale of Glamorgan are from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. 19.9% of the residents of the vale have a limiting long-term illness with 6.4% being permanently sick or disabled.

Housing

There are 53,579 domestic dwellings in the Vale. The majority of households are owner occupiers (77.7%); 4,320 households (8.9%) rent from the Council; 1,991 (4.1%) rent from a housing association or registered social landlord and 4,511 (9.2%) rent privately.

Age

The current profile (2001 census) indicated that 21.5% of the population are aged 0-15, 59.1% of the residents are of working age and 19.4% are of retirement age. The age profile of the Vale's population is expected to change; the number of children (age 0 - 15) is forecast to drop from 23,693 to 22,789 whilst people of pensionable age will increase from 23,182 to 27,556.

Life Expectancy

Statistics for 2003 indicated that 65% of the residents of the Vale who were over 80 were women and 35% were men. Life expectancy at birth for males born in the Vale of Glamorgan is similar to that in Wales (76) while females can expect to live to 80.9.

Welsh Language

Three-quarters of the Vale of Glamorgan's residents were born in Wales, and one in ten aged three or more can speak Welsh, compared to one in five across Wales.

Employment

There are some 47,000 residents in employment with 20,640 leaving the Vale and 10,060 coming to work in the Vale each day. Unemployment in the Vale has declined in recent years. In March 2004 it was 2.3% (2.6% for Wales as a whole).

The service sector dominates as it does in the rest of Wales and there are a higher percentage of tourism related jobs in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The median (middle value) annual pay for full time workers in the Vale of Glamorgan exceeds £25,300, nearly £4,000 more than the national median.

THE COUNCIL

There are 47 Councillors (15 female, 32 male) in the Vale of Glamorgan who represent the community and make decisions about priorities and use of resources. The Council has agreed a Cabinet system of governance with a constitution. The Cabinet comprises 10 Councillors (6 male and 4 female) who make decisions on both strategic and operational issues. The current Leader of the Vale Of Glamorgan Council is a woman.

Councillors not in the Cabinet remain involved in Council business through a system of Scrutiny and other Committees. They have a vital role in examining how decisions are made and in finding out the views of communities which they represent. The Scrutiny Committees examine issues in more detail and report their findings back to the Cabinet for further consideration. There are four Scrutiny Committees - Community Well Being & Safety, Corporate Resources, Economic and Environmental, and Lifelong Learning. 38% of the Committee Members are female, there is one female chair (3 male) and one female vice-chair (3 male) or these Committees.

As a major employer and service provider the Council needs to have clear aims on equality issues that relate to our vision:

'Our vision for the Vale is a place that is safe, clean and attractive, where individuals and communities have opportunities to improve their health, prosperity and well-being and where there is a strong sense of community in which local groups and individuals have the capacity and incentive to make an effective contribution to the future of the area'

Therefore the Council is committed to achieving equality of opportunity and access to services for all. Underneath this vision the Council has a number of key priorities:

- **Community Leadership:** to work with partners from the voluntary, public, private and other sectors to deliver a shared vision for the future of the Vale and to ensure a co-ordinated approach to realising that vision.
- **Lifelong Learning:** to provide high quality, accessible learning opportunities that meet the needs of learners of all ages and to develop and promote a culture of lifelong learning for all.
- **Community Well-Being:** to promote a strong, healthy and just society by making the Vale a safe, healthy and enjoyable place in which individuals, children and families can live their lives to their full potential.
- **Environment:** to achieve a quality environment through the promotion and use of sustainable practices and by making the best use of current and future resources.
- **Regeneration:** to encourage the development of a diversified and sustainable community, environmental and economic regeneration

- **Corporate Resources:** to manage the Council's workforce, money and assets efficiently and effectively in order to maximise its ability to achieve its aims in a sustainable manner.

Equality Framework

The Equality Standard for local government in Wales has been introduced to provide a common approach for dealing with equality for race, Welsh language, gender and disability. The standard provides a systematic framework for the mainstreaming of equalities in terms of race, gender and disability and it was launched in Wales in 2002. In January 2005 the Vale of Glamorgan Council formally adopted the Equality Standard as a tool for measuring and improving performance. In line with the Standard the Council is in the process of producing a Corporate Equality Plan (CEP) to link all of the Council's equality aims and objectives.

The Council has reviewed its Race Equality Scheme and has produced a Disability Equality Scheme (available on the Council's website). In addition, the Equal Opportunities Policy can be found on the Council's website. A Corporate Equalities Working Group has been formed to bring together the monitoring of all equality action plans. This group comprises of senior officers as well as the Cabinet member for Equalities.

Actions from the equality schemes will also be incorporated in Service Plans, as part of the Council's Performance Management Framework.

How we have developed the Gender Equality Scheme

Consultation activities within the Council have taken place during January and February 2007 and March 2007. These included staff questionnaires and focus group, Corporate Equality Working Group workshops (service managers) and Equality Consultative Forum Workshops (stakeholders and elected members). Details are listed in Appendix A and Appendix B

Key issues that emerged from both the questionnaires and the focus group were discussed with managers within the Corporate Equalities Working Group.

CURRENT POSITION – EMPLOYMENT

The Council is responsible for providing a range of local government services. As of April 2007 the Council's workforce was approximately 6,146 employees of which 1,465 are male and 4,681 female. At senior management level there are 5 Directors (including 1 temporary post) of which 4 are male and 1 is female. There are currently 15 Heads of Service, 10 are male and 4 are female. There are 33 Operational Managers 24 of which are male and 9 are female. The current Chief Executive is male.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

The Council operates a number of employment policies that aim to promote gender equality, eliminate harassment and facilitate work-life balance:

Equal Opportunities Policy

The Equal Opportunities Policy outlines the Council's commitment to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality on all equality grounds, including gender and transgender grounds, in its employment opportunities, service delivery and provision of facilities.

Maternity/Adoption Scheme

The maternity scheme applies to all pregnant employees and those considering adoption regardless of the number of hours per week or length of service.

Employee's rights during pregnancies and maternity.

- The right to paid time off during working hours for antenatal care
- The right to special protection under health and safety legislation
- The right to be paid Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Occupational Maternity Pay subject to the qualifying conditions.
- The right not to be discriminated against on account of pregnancy or maternity leave.
- The right to take maternity leave and return to work.
- The right not to be dismissed on account of pregnancy or maternity leave.

All relevant entitlements listed in the maternity pay also apply to employees granted adoption leave.

Paternity leave

Statutory duty states that "Maternity support of 5 days with pay shall be granted to the child's father or the partner or nominated carer of an expectant mother at or around the time of birth." In addition to this the Vale of Glamorgan Council pays a statutory rate for the second week to those who provide support to the mother at or around the time of the birth.

Anti- Harassment and Bullying

The Council's Anti-Harassment and Bullying policy includes a specific reference to harassment on the grounds of gender and gives examples of inappropriate behaviour. The policy applies both to harassment in the workplace and in the delivery of services. This policy is available for men, women and transgender people to raise complaints.

The Council's Flexitime Scheme

The Council has introduced flexitime, which enables some employees to work flexible hours within the working week within the needs of the service and prior agreement of their line manager. This can assist employees to manage their work-life balance.

The current scheme allows qualifying employees to arrange with their manager to start work between the hours of 8am-10am in the morning, to take lunch between the hours of 12pm – 2:15pm (minimum half hour) and to leave between 4pm -6pm (3:30pm-5:30pm on a Friday).

The flexitime scheme allows individuals to take flex leave (half or full day) with any accumulated time up to a maximum of one day in a four-week period.

The procedure does not apply to employees who are employed to work weekends or shift patterns.

The Right to Request Flexible Working

In accordance with Employment Act 2002, the Council has a procedure in place that allows qualifying employees to request flexible working.

This statutory right currently applies to the parent, adopter, foster parent or guardian of a child under 6 (18 in the case of a disabled child) or to be married to, or the partner of, the child's parent, adopter, foster parent or guardian. This will be extended however from April 07 to include carers (within the statutory definition of a carer).

Both men and women are entitled to make an application (if they meet the qualifying criteria) under this procedure.

Saturday and Sunday Working

This procedure is to assist employees, including those who may have parental or caring responsibilities, to work more flexibly. It provides an opportunity for employees who are presently employed on Monday to Friday working week basis to apply to work on a Saturday and/or Sunday and to take the equivalent day/days off in the week instead (subject to the exigencies of the service). The procedure does not apply to employees who are employed to work weekends or shift patterns.

Career Break

A career break is an extended period of unpaid leave that is granted to assist an employee who requires a break from work commonly due to domestic pressure. The Council gives sympathetic consideration to applications for

career breaks to support domestic requirements. This policy is currently under review.

Job sharing

The Council has a job-share policy in place that states that all posts will be open to a job-sharing application (unless agreed as exempt by the Head of HR & Equalities). The Council's job share policy assists with providing opportunities for part-time working at every level within the Council. Job-sharing is of particular relevance to those with caring responsibilities for children or other dependents.

Recruitment and Selection

The Council has a robust recruitment and selection policy in place that has incorporated equality of opportunity into its practices and processes. There is a monitoring process in place to monitor the gender of employees and gender of senior managers.

The Council's recruitment policy states that the Council will ensure that every job applicant and employee receives equality of opportunity regardless of gender (including transgender), sexual orientation, marital status, race, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, age, or disability and is not disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified. Individuals will be selected, promoted and treated in their general employment on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

The Council holds job fairs and school career events with young people to promote a career in local government and raise awareness of the range of posts offered by the Council. This assists the Council in addressing under-representation of staff in the younger age groups, particularly the representation of younger men. Personnel Officers conduct mock interviews with pupils at Cowbridge Comprehensive school in order to provide feedback and advice on interview techniques and promote careers in local government. The Human Resources Division will look to expand this service to other schools in the Vale of Glamorgan, as well as working more closely with the Lifelong Learning service e.g. via Job Shop Extra, Vibe and the Enterprise Centre to expand opportunities for young people and women returning to work.

Special Leave

The Council's special leave scheme has a number of provisions for paid and unpaid leave that assists employees to take time off work for health and family purposes.

Childcare Voucher Scheme

The Council has introduced a 'salary-sacrifice' childcare voucher scheme (from April 2007). This scheme allows employees to benefit from tax and national insurance relief on the amount paid for childcare vouchers when they opt to receive the vouchers as part of their salary.

Working Carers Policy

The Council has consulted with its working carers through questionnaires and focus groups and is in the process of putting together a working carers policy to address the issues raised and recent legislation relating to flexible working.

TRAINING

The Council provides a number of corporate training sessions for the development and support of their staff as well as providing opportunities for staff to attend external training.

Women into Management Training - Positive Action Initiative

The Council has run a 'Women into Management' training course for a number of years. This course is run as a positive action initiative to redress the imbalance of women and men in the Council's senior management posts. The course is aimed at women who would like to progress with their career and provides a number of modules that cover key managerial skills e.g. finance, time management, assertiveness presentation skills etc. The course also provides delegates with networking opportunities.

Other management courses

The Council also offers other training opportunities to develop managerial skills. These courses are available to both men and women to attend. A summary of attendance figures is attached in Appendix C

Corporate Training

The Council provides a number of corporate training courses on an annual basis. A summary of attendance including information relating to the gender of attendees is also included in Appendix C

PDRS

The Council has a Personal Development Review System in place that provides an opportunity for managers to discuss with their staff their working performance, training needs and development opportunities.

Apprenticeship

The Council provides a number of places on Foundation Modern Apprenticeships on an annual basis. In 2006-07 the Council had 13 people on Foundation Modern Apprenticeships placements, 8 women and 5 men.

CHILDCARE

The Council does not currently have any in-house childcare provision in place for its employees. The Council operates a childcare voucher scheme (detailed above) and information relating to childcare in the Vale of Glamorgan is available from the Children and Young People's Information Service, which provides information in induction packs for new employees. This includes information on registered childcare, play schemes and working tax credit. There is however a shortage of private nursery places particularly in the Barry area.

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF EMPLOYEES

The Council is committed to setting and achieving high standards of health, safety and welfare in all its activities. Corporate Policies are in place on smoking, alcohol, misuse of drugs and substances, violence at work, first aid and stress management.

An Occupational Health Nurse is employed whose key role is to promote occupational health, safety and welfare amongst employees. She provides a comprehensive advisory and support service to both management and staff, regarding matters of occupational health.

The Council provides a number of health checks including testing for osteoporosis and in future is looking at providing advice and testing for prostate cancer.

Car Parking for Staff

Issues have been raised in the past about the Docks Office Car park which is poorly lit. Floodlights were installed in 2005 but the installation of extra columns will be reviewed again.

EQUAL PAY

Job Evaluation

The National Joint Council has recommended that all Councils undertake a grading review on employment. The Unions have been involved in discussions with the Council's Job Evaluation Team in developing draft pay structures to achieve fair and consistent rates of pay/conditions of service and to remove anomalies. It is intended that job evaluation will do much to further equality of pay and grading for all staff employed by the Council.

The majority of posts are being assessed against set criteria within a nationally recognised evaluation scheme. Each post is scored in set categories by a joint panel of managerial and trade union representatives. The points gained build into an overall score for each post.

The process is designed to establish the relative worth of each post compared to other posts within the organisation, and eventually to establish fair and consistent rates of pay and conditions of service to remove existing discrepancies. The process is conducted without reference to gender or other personal factors, and is designed to provide the data necessary to ensure that the Council's pay structure complies with both equal pay legislation and national bargaining commitments.

Following the job evaluation process the information will be subject to equality audits to ensure that any inequalities can be identified and removed prior to any new pay models being put into place.

The new pay structures adopted as a result of job evaluation will be subject to an equal pay audit on an annual basis following job evaluation to ensure ongoing equality and equal pay.

Current position – Service Delivery

Education

The Education Service tracks the progress of individual pupils. It is monitored on an annual basis and support is provided as well as advice and specific training where indicated. Boys generally have weaker reading skills and so are more frequently supported than girls. Individual schools employ a range of strategies in order to close identified gender gaps and these are often included in their development plans. Estyn is currently compiling a document for WAG to highlight good practice in Wales and a number of examples have come from the Vale.

Advice on careers and subject options (including encouraging non traditional stereotypes) is the responsibility of the individual schools.

Leisure & Tourism

In sports, arts and play development activities the emphasis is on equal access to the activities provided. Women and girls have traditionally been a specific target group as their physical activity participation levels have been generally lower than boys and men. Some sessions are therefore run specifically for certain target groups to try to address any imbalances that exist. A significant movement, in recent years, has been to increase the number of women and girls playing more traditional male sports such as football, rugby and cricket and this has been supported in a variety of ways with many positive results.

The Council's leisure centres offer predominately mixed sessions in all their activities however some specific women only sessions are provided in health suites.

The Tourism section ensures that positive images of all sectors of the community are portrayed in its marketing message to attract potential visitors to the area.

Children & Young People's Information Service (CYPIS)

The Children & Young People's Information Service was established in May 2005. The aim of the service is to act as a first point of contact for parents and carers, who need quality, accessible and impartial information, guidance and advice on the full range of childcare services and a full range of services for children and young people in the Vale.

The service provides information on all registered childcare including: childminders, day nurseries, playgroups, cylch meithrin, crèches, holiday

playschemes and out-of-school clubs and the availability of places. This information is tailored to suit the parents and children's needs.

In addition, they provide information on all unregistered childcare such as parent and toddler groups, nannies, babysitting agencies, open access playschemes and other activities for children. The service produces a holiday activities brochure called *Activale* and have organised annual fun days for families in the Vale.

The service also makes parents aware of Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit, especially the childcare element of Working Tax Credit if a parent works for 16 hours or more.

Help and advice is also on offer for anyone who is interested in setting up their own childcare provision.

The service is expanding to include information on services for children & young people age 0-20yrs.

'Flying Start'

The Council is involved in the National Assembly's 'Flying Start' initiative with the aim of giving children a Flying Start pre school.

Families targeted as part of the initiative will be offered:

- Quality free part-time childcare for 2-3 year olds
- Intensive Health Visiting / health Support
- Parenting programmes
- Basic Skills

Lifelong learning

The Lifelong Learning Service offers a wide range of provision across the Vale. Courses are offered on different days at different times in an attempt to accommodate as many people as possible. Crèche facilities are available for those participating in daytime courses at Palmerston Adult Education Centre and The Open Learning Centre.

Many of the centres have access and facilities for disabled people. The Open Learning Centre will be re-locating in 2007 to better accommodate disabled learners. There are also a number of courses offered at SCOPE's Sully Skills Development Centre. Barry Community Enterprise Centre provides courses for community development, which can be tailored to the needs of the group.

A Youth Service course is available that addresses responsibility, anger management and social inclusion for young women at risk of offending.

Enterprise Centre

In 2003 – 2005 the Community Enterprise Service ran a European funded programme called *Women on the Move*. This project was very successful and helped make a difference to the lives of 70 women in the Vale.

During the Women on the Move programme there were many requests from a number of unemployed men to join such a programme. They were facing the need to change direction in their employment and also lacked confidence and IT Skills. This was a first step to returning to work.

Following the success of Women on the Move the Community Enterprise Service was able to sustain a new programme called Moving On, which started in September 2005 working in collaboration with YMCA Wales Community College and the University of Glamorgan. The programme is open to men and women across the Vale offering free training to help them gain the skills and confidence for future personal development and employability.

The Centre also offers a free training and mentoring programme to support volunteers running community groups or projects in the Vale e.g. mother and toddler groups or residents and tenant groups.

Transport

A database has been established to record incidents involving public transport when they are reported to the Council and to ensure that incidents are reported to the police.

Since January 2004 there have been 34 incidents recorded to date (April 2007).

CCTV has recently been provided at the new Rhoose and Llantwit Major interchanges through Transport Grant funding provided by WAG, following concerns of vandalism/behaviour incidents in these areas.

Certain operators (Cardiff Bus / First / Veolia Transport) are starting to provide CCTV on their newer vehicles.

Where and when funding becomes available, new bus shelters are provided that have lighting and provide easy vehicular access with Kassel kerbs.

Transport information is currently being examined by Sewta (South East Wales Transport Alliance), of which the Vale of Glamorgan Council is a member. The aim is to provide high quality bus stop-specific information throughout the region.

Taxis

The Council's licensing department has produced 'taxi safety' posters and leaflets to assist women and men to increase their safety when using taxis in the Vale. Information includes advice on identification and documentation required by licensed taxi drivers and gives a clear message not to use cars that do not carry the correct information. Licensed Hackney and Private Hire Drivers are required to apply for an enhanced CRB disclosure every 3 years.

Car Parking

The Council operates 24 car parks including one multi-storey. In line with Home Office Safer Parking guidelines we have completed a programme of improvements at this multi-storey car park at Court Road, Barry. These include lighting, staffing and streamlining of exits. The car park has now obtained the 'Safer Car Park' certification.

Housing

The Public Housing Division aims to ensure that the needs of applicants with access to children are met. Preference is given to housing applicants with access to children. This includes positive action to assist families that are separating where at least a 'silver priority' is awarded to the partner leaving the property. This becomes a higher level where the person leaving the property will become homeless as a result.

The Council's code of guidance allows for each case to be considered on its own merit and this allows for the requirements of men who do not have children living with them, but have regular or occasional access to children to be considered. The Council also allows properties to be under occupied and single people can be accommodated into 2-bedroom accommodation, allowing separating partners to have a room available for visiting children. A single person can bid for a 2-bedroom property if they have any family needs. This is often applicable to men, who tend to have occasional access to children on separation. Where there is shared care of children both parties require adequate accommodation.

Supporting People (Housing)

The Council's Housing Division provides a 'supporting people' service that provides additional support to vulnerable people. This includes people suffering from domestic abuse. There is a refuge facility for women suffering from domestic violence. There is also support for both vulnerable men and women in their own homes. An annual report on assistance provided is produced and this information is monitored by gender to ensure that both men and women receive appropriate support.

Domestic Violence

The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator for the Vale is currently based in one of the Vale Of Glamorgan Council offices in Barry. This officer is responsible for developing a Domestic Violence Strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan, including input from the Council.

Social Services

The Social Services Directorate aims to treat every person as an individual, regardless of gender, disability or race. Since the department has implemented a new unified assessment process, there is equality in the way in which adults are assessed and services provided across health and social care.

Within the services provided, account is taken of the different needs and preferences of men and women. For example, although there is a standard

day service plan for each individual within the day services for people with physical and with learning disabilities, there is provision for men's and women's groups within the services offered. When people are offered the home care service, they are asked for a preference of whether they would like to have a male or female carer if possible. Within respite services for people with learning disabilities, account is taken of a persons gender, interests and friendships when organising a period of respite care.

Council and private residential homes are mixed with men and women. There is a drive to promote healthy living and a healthy diet and residents are offered the opportunity to take part in the schemes `Active for Life` and `Moving More Often`.

The Telecare Strategy is a new initiative from the Welsh Assembly Government, and it aims to support older and disabled people to be more independent at home using new technology. This will be available to people with lower level needs in the community. The National Service Framework for Older People sets standards in the way services should be delivered across health and social care.

The Older Peoples Forum with its executive group and subgroups is giving a voice to older people in the community and empowering them to have a say in the services being planned and developed. It enables them to express their needs and aspirations in the services required to improve the quality of their lives.

One Stop Shop

The Council is developing a one-stop shop for residents to call in to discuss issues relating to the Council's services. The Council will aim to ensure that the main facility in the Civic Offices and facilities in Llantwit Major, Penarth and Cowbridge libraries consider the access needs of the community, including parents with young children in the design of these facilities.

Areas to be developed – Employment (Key priorities)

Our Key priorities for employment are:

Career opportunities

There are two key gender issues relating to current employment figures:

- An under representation of women in senior management posts
- An under representation of men, particularly in the younger age group working for the Council

There is also an issue of men and women working in traditionally stereotyped posts.

In order to address these issues the Council will include actions to consider positive action initiatives for career progression in its action plan including:

Women's career development

- Develop mentoring opportunities for women who wish to develop as managers
- Provide development sessions on 'kick starting your career' for women returning to work
- Raise awareness of the Council's 'work-life balance' policies
- Ensure childcare information is available and investigating other options of supporting childcare
- Work with managers to identify and address concerns and develop positive support for work-life balance applications

Under representation of men

- Promote a wider range of posts within the Council as a career opportunity for men at job fairs and career events at schools colleges
- Work more closely with secondary schools, job shop extra etc. to improve application and interviewing skills of prospective candidates

Flexible working/ Worklife Balance

While the Council has a flexitime scheme in place, feedback from staff has indicated that they would like this scheme to be more flexible. Feedback has indicated that a longer range of hours, the ability to clock out more than once during the day, working from home options and other flexible working options e.g. annualised hours would all be useful to balance work and home life. Feedback also indicated that these options should be available both to men and women and should extend to all possible posts including senior managers to tackle issues such as the glass ceiling.

Staff feedback also indicated that policies and procedures relating to flexible working needed to be clear, consistent and well publicised.

These issues will all be addressed in the action plan for this scheme.

Equal Pay

The Council's Job Evaluation process is a key priority for the Council in 2007. The new pay structure will be audited on an annual basis to ensure that equality implications and equal pay issues are taken into account.

<u>PI Ref</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>	<u>Performance 2006/07</u>	<u>Target 2007/8</u>	<u>Target 2008/9</u>
	% of chief officers who are women (OM and above)	26%	28%	30%

Areas to be developed – Service delivery

Transport

Statistics show that women are more likely to use public transport on a regular basis than men (“A statistical focus on diversity in Wales 2005”). In order to ensure that public transport is accessible to women safety and information are key issues to consider as well as improving access for pushchairs and buggies.

Leisure

Men are more likely to participate in sport and use the Council’s leisure facilities than women. A number of steps have already been taken to improve this situation. The Council will seek to improve participation by monitoring the uptake of leisure services by men and women, using positive role models for women to encourage participation in sport and investigating need for women only sessions in some leisure facilities. Sports development will focus on the involvement of young women in sports activities.

Lifelong Learning

Both women and men need to continue to develop skills and experience to access employment opportunities. Women’s and men’s needs are sometimes different in this area e.g. women are often looking to return to work following a period of looking after children or elderly relatives whereas younger, unqualified men are more likely to be unemployed. In order to address these issues the Council seeks to ensure that a variety of lifelong learning opportunities offering practical employment skills are available including the continuation and extension of the ‘Moving On’ initiative.

The Council aims to improve the attendance of women on its ‘skills for self employment training’, which currently has a greater uptake by men. In order to improve uptake the Enterprise Centre will develop workshop sessions aimed at women entitled: ‘Have you ever thought of working for yourself?’ which will provide initial information on self-employment to lead into the more detailed self-employment training.

Housing

The council will improve its support for women or men who are suffering from domestic abuse. Consideration will also be given to the different family and housing needs of men and women to ensure that the accommodation needs of parents are considered.

Domestic Violence

The Council aims to improve its services relating to domestic violence including provision of training, raising awareness and ensuring information is widely available e.g. providing information in libraries.

Social Services

The Vale Health Alliance is working to improve the health and well being of all residents, and will focus on ways of meeting the needs of people who have lower and moderate needs, which are not being met by the statutory services.

Older men do not take care of their health needs as well as older women. There is a need to engage with GP Practices to make more use of the unified assessment process so that older men, particularly those who live alone, are encouraged to improve their healthy living and healthy diet options.

Involvement in public life and decision making

The Council operates a Citizens Panel, which provides a view of public perceptions about Council and other public services. The views of the Panel are highly respected and are taken into account by managers and elected members. Women are well represented on the Panel, at just less than half of the total number. However, young women in particular are underrepresented and recruitment activities are taking place to ensure greater representation.

Women are underrepresented as Elected Members. The Wales Local Government Association regularly undertakes monitoring of elected officials and takes part in national campaigns to increase the number of women in elected roles. The various political parties operating in the Vale must also be encouraged to address the imbalance of its membership on the grounds of gender and other equality grounds (e.g. race, disability, age). The Council will conduct a review of barriers to participation by women in public life and take action to address the issues that arise.

<u>PI Ref</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>	<u>Performance 2006/07</u>	<u>Target 2007/8</u>	<u>Target 2008/9</u>
	Percentage of female residents who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area	Not collected	30%	35%
	Percentage of female residents who are happy with the service delivered by the VOG Council	Not Collected	70%	75%

COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION

The Council currently collects monitoring data on employment including recruitment and selection, women in senior posts and the provision and uptake of training opportunities. This will continue to be monitored as part of the Gender Equality Scheme.

Consultation activities relating to service delivery highlighted a need for a process of analysing by gender the level of use of our services. Service managers are often not in a position to identify gender issues within their service due to absence of monitoring data. We need to ensure that services are accessible and that the take-up is equitable. Customer satisfaction levels can be monitored by gender, but is not generally undertaken or analysed as current practice. This issue will be incorporated into the action plan.

Assessing the impact of current and proposed policies and practices

The Council has a duty to consider the needs and requirements of the community and staff who are affected by its policies and procedures. The equality impact assessment process was developed to ensure that relevant individuals and groups are neither directly or indirectly discriminated against in the planning, delivery and business of the Council in compliance with relevant legislation and good practice. The Equality Section has developed an impact assessment checklist and guidelines, which is included on our web-site. This tool has been used to carry out impact assessments on the issue of race, gender, disability and Welsh Language on all policies originally identified as part of the Council's Race Equality Scheme. The tool is further used as part of the development of all relevant new and revised policies in order to consider equality implications as part of the development process.

Training on completing assessments has been provided to managers and staff and 113 policies and procedures have been assessed for impact on the grounds of race, disability, Welsh language and gender. The assessments were undertaken by service managers, and subsequently reviewed by a quality-check panel. The Council aims to publish these policies, and detail their impact on equality grounds on its internet site.

Structures and mechanisms are in place to ensure proper consideration, monitoring and review of the assessments and that actions are undertaken to provide more positive outcomes for women from the policies that are agreed.

Publishing/reporting, monitoring and review

Actions arising from this scheme will be incorporated into service plans and progress against actions will be monitored on an annual basis. Actions will also be incorporated into the Corporate Equality Plan.

The Scheme will be comprehensively reviewed on a 3-year basis.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Consultation with employees and stakeholders

Gender Equality Scheme Consultation

Group/organisation/ Individual consulted	Date	Subject & method
Corporate Equality Working Group	9 th November 2006	Presentation and Workshop – service delivery
Equality Consultative Forum	13 th November 2006	Workshop – education, employment and service delivery
Employees	Nov/Dec 2006	Questionnaire – employment
Corporate Equality Working Group	January 2007 March 2007	Workshop – employment and service delivery
Employees	February 2007	Focus group – employment

Appendix B

A questionnaire was devised by the Equalities team with the help of the Consultation Officer. This was paced on our intranet site from 8th –18th January. We had 52 responses from 16 males and 36 females. We also held a consultation session in February which was attended by 5 members of staff – 4 females and one male. Both the questionnaires and the group reflected a mix of grades and ages.

Themes which emerged from the questionnaires and the group were similar and are outlined below:-

Key Issues

Barriers to Career Progression

- Lack of qualifications/training
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of work experience
- Family responsibilities
- Difficulty in managing home/work balance
- Attitudes to age
- Lack of childcare
- Lack of Access to informal networks

Flexible Working

Preliminary analysis of the gender breakdown of the replies indicates that 25% of men and 28% of women are concerned that taking a flexible working option would damage their career progression and that it could prove difficult to step back into a full-time post.

Management Posts

Lack of promotion opportunities was also seen as a key reason for the relatively low number of females in senior positions within the Council (26%). It was felt that the upper level of management posts is dominated by officers within the same age group.

Appendix C

Training Monitoring Information – Management and Corporate courses

Attendance on Management Skills courses

Certificate of Management Studies

Total attendees	14
Women	8 (57%)
Men	6 (43%)

Institute of Leadership and management (certificate in first line management)

Total attendees	15
Women	7 (47%)
Men	8 (53%)

Office for Public Management Training

(Compulsory training for senior management team (operational manager and above) and limited places for staff of 'Team Manager' level)

Total attendees	74
Women	28 (38%)
Men	46 (62%)

(Women made up 61% of the attendance of the non-compulsory attendees i.e. places open to officers that were not senior managers)

Total corporate courses:

The figures 1st April 2006 to March 16th 2007 are:

Civic	204 female: 94 male
Docks	74 female: 138 male
Social Services	482 female: 77 male

Number of courses attended by gender:

Civic	Female	407 courses
	Male	163 courses

Docks	Female	179 courses
	Male	295 courses

Social Services	Female	1340 courses
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Male 188 courses

These figures give the following averages (courses per person):

Civic	Female 1.99 courses	Male 1.73 courses
Docks	Female 2.42	Male 2.14
Social Services	Female 2.78	Male 2.44