



Vale of Glamorgan Council

Equality Policy

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The purpose of this policy

We have put this policy in place to show:

- that we think equality is important;
- how we work towards equality; and
- how we want people to behave.

What the law says

There is law to guide us in our work:

- the Equality Act 2010;
- the public sector equality duty; and
- specific duties for Wales;
- the Welsh Language Act 1993.

This law and these duties protect us all. There may be other laws which protect us in similar ways to these. We have a duty to think about the needs of people with protected characteristics (see below). We also have a duty to support good relationships across our community.

The Equality Act lists the protected characteristics. We explain them below.

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Protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	What this means
Age	<p>People of different ages. This includes young and older people.</p>
Disability	<p>People who have a physical or mental impairment which has a big and long term impact on how they can carry out normal day-to-day activities.</p> <p>This includes disabilities that you can see, for example, if someone uses an aid like a guide dog or a wheelchair.</p> <p>It also includes disabilities that you cannot see such as diabetes, dyslexia, autism, Asperger syndrome, poor mental health, and learning difficulties.</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>People who change the way they appear to others.</p> <p>This includes anyone who proposes to, starts, is going through or who has completed a process to change his or her gender.</p> <p>A person does not need to have medical procedures for the law to protect them. For example, the law protects a woman who decides to live as a man without going through any medical procedures.</p> <p>It includes a person's own view of their gender and how they choose to present themselves (gender</p>

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	identity). This might fall outside or be a mix of male and female.
Marital or civil partnership status	People who are married or who have a civil partner.
Pregnancy and maternity	Women who are expecting a baby, who are on a break from work after having a baby, or who are breastfeeding. They are protected for 26 weeks after having a baby whether or not they are on maternity leave.
Race	People of a different race, nationality, colour, culture or ethnic origin.
Religious belief or non-belief	People with a religion or belief or with no religion or belief. The term 'religion' includes a religious or philosophical belief.
Sex	Women and men.
Sexual orientation	<p>People who are attracted to other people of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the same sex (lesbian or gay); • the opposite sex (heterosexual); • both sexes (bisexual). <p>Some people do not identify as male or female or they may identify as a mix of both. They may be attracted to people regardless of their gender identity or sex (pansexual).</p>

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As well as the above characteristics, this policy covers two other areas.	
Appearance	This is about how someone presents themselves. For example, people who wear gothic clothes, or hooded clothes.
Welsh Language	People who communicate using the Welsh language.

The last two are not protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. We take them into account for other reasons.

There have been cases of people being treated badly because of their **appearance**. For example, people wearing gothic clothes have been victims of hate crime; shop keepers have stopped young people wearing hooded tops going into shops. We want to provide the same level of service to people whatever their appearance.

We promote use of the **Welsh language** to meet our duties under the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Protected groups

'Protected groups' are people who are protected under equality law. People in a protected group share one or more of the protected characteristics. We all belong to more than one of these groups.

Fair treatment

In our work, we must treat everyone fairly and try to meet their needs.

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This means not treating someone worse because of who they are or what they look like. If we did, that would be **discrimination**.

We must not intimidate, humiliate or degrade anyone. We must not be hostile or offensive to anyone. If we did, that would be **harassment**.

We must not treat anyone badly because they have complained about unfair treatment or harassment. If we did, that would be **victimisation**.

We also have a duty to:

- treat people from different protected groups fairly;
- help people from different protected groups to get along well.

Remember treating people ‘equally’ means giving people different types of support to do their jobs or use a service. It does not mean treating them the same.

Plans that support this policy

We have a Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme.

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/equalities/strategic_equality_plan.aspx

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/equalities/welsh_language_scheme.aspx

These show the work that we do to promote equality.

The Strategic Equality Plan tells people about our equality work and how we do it. It shows our main priorities. We call these equality objectives.

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To develop these, we talked to lots of organisations and did some research. This helped us understand what we needed to improve for protected groups.

The Welsh Language Scheme is similar but it deals only with Welsh language issues. It tells people about the work we do to promote the Welsh language and actions we will take to improve on this. When new Welsh standards come into force, we will put in place a new action plan. This will replace the Welsh Language Scheme.

Each council service helps us to get our main priorities done. We have systems in place to monitor progress.

What does equality mean to us?

Equality is about meeting people's needs so that they can use a service or do a job. This can mean making adjustments to the way we provide a service or do a job.

We use the social model of disability. This model says that we, as a society, cause disability by the way we organise things. It looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people. When we do this, disabled people can be independent and equal in society. It gives people choice and control over their lives.

Our general equality aims

- We want to do what we can to take away barriers to jobs, information, services, buildings and facilities.
- We want to find and stop every day practices that discriminate (**institutional discrimination** – see below).
- We want to raise awareness of the needs of different protected groups.

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- We want to challenge unfair beliefs about people.
- We want to challenge overly simple ideas about people (stereotypes).
- We want to challenge opinions based on too little knowledge or irrational feelings (prejudices).
- We want to promote a culture that respects and values diversity and individuality.

Institutional discrimination

This is a type of discrimination you can find in some organisations. It happens when the ways of working are unfair. This might be because of prejudice. It might be because nobody has thought about the needs of different groups of people.

Our aims for the workplace

- We want to treat people fairly and with respect.
- We want to support people to do a good job.
- We do not want people to face unwanted behaviour.
- We want to make decisions about people based on their ability.

We want people to be able to work for us or use our services whatever their protected characteristics.

Our aims for people living and working in the Vale of Glamorgan

- We want the Vale of Glamorgan to be a pleasant place to live and work.

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- We want it to be a safe, clean and attractive place.
- We want people to be able to improve their health, wellbeing and happiness, and wealth.
- We want people to be able to learn, train, and improve their skills.
- We want to help to make their community a good place to live.

To help this happen, we aim to:

- offer services fairly to people, and with respect;
- talk to people to find out their needs;
- support community groups where their needs have not been met as well as those of other groups;
- support those who are not as well off or have particular needs to take part in community activities;
- support people to live well together in their communities;
- tell people where they can go to report unlawful, unfair or unwanted treatment;
- stop unfair treatment that is against the law;
- say that we promote equality in other policies;
- tell people about this policy.

As part of our promise to promote equality, we know that people need to:

- have similar life opportunities whatever their backgrounds;

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- know their rights and responsibilities;
- trust us to act fairly;
- share a vision of the future and have a sense of belonging;
- look at what communities have in common and value diversity; and
- have good relationships with people from different backgrounds.

We support equality and community cohesion across the Vale of Glamorgan.

How has this policy been developed?

This policy has been developed by talking to:

- a group of employees from key service areas;
- councillors, employees, trade union representatives;
- groups who know about the needs of people with protected characteristics.

We also published the draft policy for comments from the public and staff.

Who must follow this policy

People who work for or on behalf of the Council must follow this policy.

This includes:

- councillors;
- employees;
- agency workers;
- contractors;
- managers;
- contract workers;
- trainee workers;
- volunteers;

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- students on work experience or placements; and
- organisations and others that provide a service on our behalf.

What must we do?

We all have a role to play in putting this policy into practice. The Cabinet takes the lead and the Leader of the Council has a special duty for equality.

We provide information and training on equality. This can help people better understand how to work in a fair and respectful way.

General Responsibilities

Responsibilities	Councillors	Managing Director	Chief Officers	Employees / other workers
Show respect for others, treat them fairly and be sensitive to their needs.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Do not bully or harass any person.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Do not use power or position to stop people from complying with this policy.	✓	✓	✓	
Create fair chances for people to work well and access services.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support people to work well together.	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Think about the impact of services as you develop them. Use research and engage with people to understand the impact.	✓	✓	✓	
Think about how you can stop or lessen the damaging effects of policies and decisions.	✓	✓	✓	
Provide resources to support equality in the workplace and the community.	✓	✓	✓	
Make sure that we meet our equality commitments across the Council.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Show leadership on equality issues.	✓	✓	✓	
Help achieve actions in the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Make sure work plans say what equality work we will do.			✓	
Provide information each year on your equality and Welsh language work. We will include this in our yearly monitoring reports.			✓	✓
Be fair and supportive to people in the workplace.	✓	✓	✓	
Provide training and information on equality law and the needs of protected groups.	✓	✓	✓	
Have systems in place to monitor who is using our services. Analyse this by protected characteristic to see if you need to make improvements.		✓	✓	
Involve people in policy and decision making. This allows us to take their needs into account.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Remove barriers to services where possible so that a range of people can access them.	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Do not make jokes, offensive remarks or show disrespectful images about people's protected characteristics.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Have due regard for meeting the needs of people where these needs arise from their protected characteristics or because they wish to use the Welsh language.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tell managers about anything that you think might discriminate or be against the law.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Act in line with this policy in or near the workplace and at work related events.	✓	✓	✓	✓

Responsibilities in Key Areas

Recruitment and retention

We aim to:

- use recruitment and promotion processes that promote equal opportunities and do not discriminate;
- allow only employees trained in non-discriminatory techniques to assess for recruitment or promotion;
- make fair, unbiased and lawful decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or other benefits;
- take positive action to encourage, train and recruit employees from particular protected groups where we have objective evidence that this will help us to develop a more diverse workforce;
- include equality in the job descriptions, work objectives and competencies of employees;

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- treat job applicants, employees and others who work for the Council fairly, taking into account needs arising from their protected characteristics;
- create a diverse workforce, monitoring the outcome of recruitment and selection to make sure this happens.

Training and awareness raising

We aim to:

- tell staff about this policy in the best way for the team they work in (for example, through team meetings);
- tell staff about equality law and let them know what they should do for people with different needs.
- provide equality training and advice.

Conduct

We aim to:

- act in line with the law and our own policies;
- stop harmful jokes, comments and images that can be offensive and create an uncomfortable working environment;
- stop unfair or unwanted behaviour that is against the law (discrimination, harassment or victimisation);
- support employees if they experience unwanted behaviour and take appropriate action to deal with it.

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Personal and sensitive information

We have to deal with people's personal information in confidence and within the law.

Promoting equality

We aim to:

- support people from protected groups to take opportunities, when suitable;
- tell contractors and partners about this policy and promote equalities when we get or buy goods or services from other organisations;
- expect organisations with whom we do business to support our policies;
- include actions in the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme that will help us to improve our services and working life;
- tell people about this policy, including groups who this policy affects.

Involving people

We aim to:

- talk to lots of different people when we have new or changing services, policies and decisions;
- talk to groups that know about the needs of protected groups so that services meet their needs; and

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- use venues that people can easily access for public events.

Good relationships in the workplace and community

We aim to support people to get along and treat one another with respect in communities and in work.

Reporting unwanted behaviour (discrimination, harassment or victimisation)

We aim to report unwanted behaviour that we see to organisations or groups that need to know.

Information and publicity

We aim to:

- write information in plain language, free from jargon.
- use images that show the diverse range of people who live in our community.
- provide information in English and Welsh where our Welsh Language Scheme says that we will do this.

Breach of Policy

These practices will help us to:

- attract, keep and develop the talents of our employees;
- deliver fair services that meet people's needs.

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Everyone who works for the council must abide by the policy.

If an employee does not comply with this policy, we may take disciplinary action. We may deal with serious breaches as gross misconduct and take action up to and including dismissal.

Individuals should also be aware that if they do not comply with this policy and equality law, we could take legal action against them.

Feedback

Feedback from employees

Employees can tell us what has worked well for them or their customers by informing their line manager or the manager responsible for the service. If we know what works well, we can protect and promote that practice. If we know what has not worked, we can change the way we do it.

There is a procedure for employees to report unwanted behaviour (discrimination, harassment or victimisation). Details are on StaffNet or someone in Human Resource Services can provide a copy.

We will deal with complaints of discrimination promptly and in confidence.

We will take disciplinary action against anyone who treats someone unfairly because he or she has made a complaint (victimisation). This could lead to dismissal.

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Feedback from the public or other organisations

We are committed to treating people fairly and with care, but sometimes, despite our best efforts, things go wrong. We want to know about it. We also want to know when things go really well.

Your feedback can help us to learn what is going well and what we might need to improve.

We have a corporate complaints procedure. It is available on our website or from the contact centre.

Feedback from job applicants

People applying for jobs can use the corporate complaints procedure to tell us if they think they were discriminated against or harassed.

Feedback can be given by:

mail	Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry, CF63 4RU
text	text your message to 60066
telephone	contact centre 01446 700111
website	complete an online form www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or www.bromorgannwg.gov.uk
email	nhinton@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or ljbrown@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

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Feedback to Social Services

The Social Services Directorate has its own procedure for complaints and compliments. You can ring 01446 704800 to get a copy of this procedure.

Promoting the policy

It is important that people know about this policy. To do this, we will tell people about it in a number of ways:

- website;
- email bulletins;
- induction packs;
- presentations;
- staff notice boards;
- core brief;
- contracts of employment;
- circulars and letters;
- annual reports.
- intranet;
- application packs;
- meetings with groups;
- team meetings;
- ‘cascade’ systems;
- training;
- handbooks;
- newsletters; and

We can provide information in other formats, for example, larger font or easy read.

Equality in Practice

You can find examples of the work we do in our annual equality monitoring report. You can find this on our website on the equality pages.

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http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/equalities/Annual-Equality-Monitoring-Report.aspx

Equalities on our Website

We have guidance on a range of equality issues on our website.

<http://staffnet.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Directorates/Resources/Performance-and-Development/Equalities/Equalities-Policies-and-Guidance.aspx>

This includes:

- Access Guidance for Building Managers;
- Consulting Disabled People;
- Disability Access Checklist;
- Equality Handbook;
- Equality Impact Assessments;
- Open Meeting Guidelines;
- The Role of Overview and Scrutiny in Assessing Equality Performance*.

We also have guidance specifically for schools:

- Briefing on Equality Act and Specific Duties for School Governors;
- Briefing on Public Sector Equality Duties in Wales – Education and Schools*;
- Common Equality Risks in Education*;

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- Equality Issues in Education*;
- Annual Equality Monitoring Report Template for Schools *.

* The Welsh Local Government Association produced these publications.

Policies

We have the following policies in place:

- Career Break;
- Carer;
- Harassment and Bullying;
- HIV and Aids;
- Job Share;
- Maternity & Adoption Leave/Pay;
- Parental Leave;
- Procurement Policy, Strategy and Guidance; and
- Code of Conduct for Elected Members.

Monitoring and Review

We aim to develop monitoring systems to make sure this policy is working successfully.

We aim to develop systems for producing information on employment and how our services are being used (or not used) by each protected group. We will include this information in our annual monitoring reports

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on equality and the Welsh language. You can find these on the equality pages of our website.

This will help us to understand how our equality work is progressing, including how we are complying with this policy. We will develop an action plan to deal with areas where we need to make improvements.

Reporting

The Managing Director has responsibility for reporting on how this policy is working in practice. This will be done as part of the annual monitoring reports on equality and the Welsh language.

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/equalities/Annual-Equality-Monitoring-Report.aspx

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/equalities/welsh_language_scheme.aspx

Review of this policy

This policy explains what we do to promote equality. There is more information about this in our Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme which are on our website:

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/equalities/Annual-Equality-Monitoring-Report.aspx

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/equalities/welsh_language_scheme.aspx

Each year, we will review our progress on putting this policy into practice. We will do this at the same time that we review progress with our Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme.

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We will formally review this Policy when we set new equality objectives for the Strategic Equality Plan.

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Glossary

Access	How you get into or use a building.
Agency workers	Someone who has a job with an agency or organisation. The agency pays that person to do work for another organisation (in this case the Council).
Annual equality monitoring report	A report which sets out the work that we have done each year to meet our duties under equality law.
Cabinet	A group of councillors who make policies and decisions for the Council. This includes decisions about plans, services, and budgets.
Competencies	The skills and knowledge you need to do a job.
Contract workers	Workers who we contract to do a specific job for the Council. We do not employ these workers.
Corporate Complaints Procedure	The formal system people can use to make a complaint to our Council.
Discrimination	This means treating someone worse because of who they are or what they look like.
Equality	This means everyone having the same chances to do what they can. Some people may need extra help to get the same chances.
Equality Act 2010	This is the Government's new law

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	to make sure all people are treated fairly. The Act became law when Parliament agreed it was right.
Equality objectives	These are targets that help us focus on the areas of equality work that we have decided are most important. We decide what they are by looking at research and talking to people who work for us and who live this local authority.
Harassment	This is when someone intimidates, humiliates or degrades someone because of who they are or what they look like.
Human Resource Services	This is the department in the Council that deals with staffing matters.
Impairment	A long-term limitation of a person's physical, mental or sensory ability.
Institutional discrimination	This is a type of discrimination that you can find in some organisations. It happens when the ways of working are unfair. This might be because of prejudice. It might be because nobody has thought about the needs of different groups of people.
Jargon	Language that is often used by a particular group of people and is difficult for others to understand.
Leader	The councillor in charge of the Cabinet (see above).

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Protected characteristics	These are the characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. We list and explain them in the policy.
Protected groups	People protected under equality law. People in a protected group share one or more of the protected characteristics.
Promotion	This is getting a better level of job.
Public sector equality duty	This is a law for public bodies telling us how we must think about making our work support equality. For example, in our services, through our jobs, and through the money we spend.
Recruitment	This is taking on new staff.
Retention	This is keeping the staff we already have.
Selection	This is choosing which people to give jobs to.
Social Services Directorate	This is the department in the Council that supports families and safeguards children. It also provides services to adults and older people with physical and learning disabilities.
Specific duties	These are the duties that public bodies in Wales have to follow to show they are working on equality.
Strategic Equality Plan	This is a plan to tell people about

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	the local authority, the equality work that we are already doing and what we intend to do to improve equality for staff and people who live here.
Victimisation	This is treating someone badly because they have complained about unfair treatment or harassment.
Welsh Language Act	This is the law that tells public bodies what they need to do to promote the Welsh language.
Welsh Language Scheme	This is the plan which sets out what we will do to promote the Welsh language.
Work objectives	These are targets to make improvements in different areas of our work.
Workforce	This is the staff we employ.