



Strategic Equality Plan

2016 - 2020

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You can ask for this document in Welsh. You will find a Welsh version on our website.

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1. Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this Strategic Equality Plan is to describe what we are doing to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (general duty) and the specific duties for Wales.

The public sector equality duty covers eight protected characteristics:

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Age | Race |
| Disability | Religion or Belief |
| Gender Reassignment | Sex |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | Sexual Orientation |

It applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only for having due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The Equality Act lists councils as public authorities with certain duties. This means that when we carry out our public function, we must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The specific duties set out the steps that public authorities in Wales must take to demonstrate that they are paying due regard to the general duty. They cover:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Objectives | Staff training |
| Strategic Equality Plans | Procurement |
| Engagement | Annual reporting |
| Assessing impact | Publishing |
| Equality information | Welsh Ministers' reporting |
| Employment information | Review |
| Pay differences | Accessibility |

This Strategic Equality Plan explains what action we take, and plan to take, to meet these duties.

To identify the priorities, we have used research from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and feedback from people living in the Vale of Glamorgan. We plan to use this information to help us improve the way we provide services and employ people.

2. The Vale of Glamorgan Council

The Vale of Glamorgan Council covers 33,097 hectares with 53 kilometres of coastline including 19 kilometres of Heritage coast. The Vale consists of both urban centres and rural communities, with a diverse population.

The principles described in the general duty must underpin the wide range of services that we provide. These services include:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Living</p> <p>Recycling and Waste Traffic and Highways Planning and building control Schools Housing Environment Transport Social Care</p> | <p>Working</p> <p>Business rates Education and skills Regeneration Licensing Business support Environmental health Trading standards</p> |
| <p>Enjoying</p> <p>Community Centres Coast Parks and Gardens Arts and Culture Events Leisure and Activities Libraries Visit the Vale</p> | <p>Our Council</p> <p>Consultation Complaints and compliments Housing benefits Press office Council Council Tax Jobs Properties for sale or let</p> |

We want to make sure that everyone in the Vale of Glamorgan is able to obtain fair and equal access to these services. We also want them to receive fair and consistent treatment in their dealings and employment with us.

3. Links with our Corporate Plan

We want to make sure that our Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020 links to our recently revised Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020.

The Corporate Plan tells you about our vision for the Vale of Glamorgan, our values and our main priorities. The priorities of the Corporate Plan will help make communities in the Vale of Glamorgan more equal. The equality objectives in this Strategic Equality Plan will support this work and it is important that there is a good fit between the two plans.

In our Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020, we tell you about our vision and values.

Our vision is:

Strong communities with a bright future.

Our values are:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Ambitious | Forward thinking, embracing new ways of working and investing in our future. |
| Open | Open to different ideas and being accountable for the decisions we take. |
| Together | Working together as a team that engages with our customers and partners, respects diversity and is committed to quality services. |
| Proud | Proud of the Vale of Glamorgan: proud to serve our communities and to be part of the Vale of Glamorgan Council. |

Our values are consistent with the five ways of working central to the Well-being of Future Generations Act. They are long term, they work together, and involve working with others. Our values will support a greater focus on prevention as we work to deliver our vision.

Our corporate priorities take into account the Well-being of Future Generations Act. We have been pro-active and began taking these steps ahead of the requirements of the Act.

Our well-being outcomes are:

| | |
|---|---|
| An inclusive and safe Vale | Citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan have a good quality of life and feel part of the local community. |
| An environmentally responsible and prosperous Vale | The Vale of Glamorgan has a strong and sustainable economy and the local environment is safeguarded for present and future generations. |
| An aspirational and culturally vibrant Vale | All Vale of Glamorgan citizens have opportunities to achieve their full potential. |
| An active and healthy Vale | Residents of the Vale of Glamorgan lead healthy lives and vulnerable people are protected and supported. |

We remain committed to making sure that everyone in the Vale of Glamorgan is able to obtain fair and equal access to services and employment. We will engage with people to understand their needs and prioritise services accordingly.

Our corporate plan priorities will help us to contribute to the Welsh Government’s well-being goal of creating a more equal Wales:

- Reducing poverty and social exclusion
- Promoting sustainable development and protecting our environment

- Providing decent homes and safe communities promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment
- Promoting sustainable development and protecting our environment
- Raising overall standards of achievement
- Valuing culture and diversity
- Encouraging and promoting active and healthy lifestyles
- Safeguarding those who are vulnerable and promoting independent living.

The equality objectives in our Strategic Equality Plan support many of the actions for these priorities by asking services to collect and analyse data and to involve people in developing and review services, budgets and making decisions.

4. Equality Information

We have used a variety of sources to gather the information we needed to produce this plan and the equality objectives. These include:

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission's national research reports 'How Fair is Britain? 2011', 'Is Britain Fairer? 2015', 'How Fair is Wales? 2011', 'Is Wales Fairer? 2015', and the 'Not Just Another Statistic';
- information from Council documents such as our Corporate Plan;
- local information and data;
- consultation;
- feedback from people representative of one or more of the protected groups through consultation and engagement between October and December 2015.

'Is Wales Fairer?' 2011 updates the research in 'How Fair is Wales' 2015. Information was gathered for 'How Fair is Wales' in 2008. Information was gathered for 'Is Wales Fairer' in 2013. 'Is Wales Fairer?' uses evidence to look at the changes between 2008 and 2013.

In Appendix 1, there is a report summarising feedback from our consultation and engagement. We have used this information, together with national evidence from research, to shape the action we will take to achieve our objectives between 2016 and 2020.

We are committed to improving the way we collect and analyse data. We want to build a consistent approach across our services to deal with gaps in the information we have. This is why we continue to have an equality objective to improve in this area. We need to do this for both equality and employment information.

What data we have, we have been telling you about in our annual equality monitoring reports each year. We publish this information on the equality pages of our website.

5. Equality objectives – what we did 2012 - 2016

We must set and publish equality objectives at least every four years. We have to develop objectives by involving people representative of one or more of the protected groups. The protected characteristics of these groups are listed above (page 1).

In 2011, we talked with people about what they thought our objectives should be and about the national research available at that time. Their feedback suggested that our draft objectives were well focused and addressed issues of priority to residents in the Vale. The results of the consultation appeared to confirm that the national research used to develop draft objectives mirrored the experience of Vale residents.

It was important to those involved that we should write the objectives in a way that:

- is easy to understand;
- reflects the issues most talked about;
- shows how we will deliver them;
- says how we will assess and monitor progress; and
- tells people how we will let them know about this information.

There was general agreement that a number of actions would assist all people with protected characteristics and that we should prioritise these. These were:

- improved understanding of the issues that affect people with protected characteristics;
- improved understanding of who is using services;
- improved access to services;
- improved confidence in reporting discrimination and harassment.

We took this into account when we developed our objectives for the Strategic Equality Plan 2012 – 2016.

In addition, we had to have an equality objective to deal with a gender pay gap if there was one. This objective must address the causes of the pay difference where it seems reasonably likely to be related to gender.

When we developed our first set of equality objectives, we knew that we had a gender pay gap and would therefore need to have an equality objective to try to close that gap.

We had already carried out an equality impact assessment of our proposed job evaluation process and pay and grading structure. We identified that there would be a gender pay gap of 10.94%, significantly less than that seen in similar councils and comparable with the Annual Survey of Household earnings for the economy as a whole. The Equality and Human Rights Commission expect public sector organisations to investigate a gap of more than 5%.

The job evaluation process makes sure that there is a fair and systematic approach to deciding on pay for a job but it cannot deal with issues arising from occupational segregation.

The main reason for the continued pay gap was due to the composition of the workforce – 76% female and 24% male, with a higher proportion of female employees concentrated in a small number of jobs at the lower levels of the pay structure.

Occupational segregation is where there is a concentration of men and women in different kinds of jobs (horizontal segregation) or in different grades (vertical segregation). These kinds of segregation happen for a number of reasons, including:

- gender stereotyping – where males and females work in jobs that males and females have traditionally worked in, where typically, the jobs done by women are in lower pay grades;
- inflexible working – where women with children or caring responsibilities are constrained in finding work that allows them to fulfil their caring responsibilities, so they are often forced into part-time, low paid work.

We cannot overcome the wide range of factors in society that lead to occupational segregation and a gender pay difference. However, we can play a part by identifying what we can reasonably do within the scope of our work.

Between 2012 and 2016, our first set of objectives has helped us make good progress. Here is a summary of what we have done.

| Objectives 2012 - 2016 | What we have done |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Collect and publish data to see which people from protected groups are using, or are not using, our services.</p> <p>Use this information to improve how people can use services.</p> | <p>We introduced a corporate form for collecting data so that there is a consistent approach across our services.</p> <p>We began to work with a group of core services to collect and analyse information about protected characteristics each year. We have increased the number of services that report in this way in the last four years.</p> <p>We provided data analysis training to help services use this information more effectively.</p> <p>Every year, we report on data that shows which protected groups are using our services. We put this report on our website. We have improved this information each year.</p> |
| <p>2. Improve advice on how to write for the public so that people can understand the information we give them.</p> | <p>We have improved our guidance and put it on a web page for staff to use.</p> <p>We have told staff about it through various</p> |

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| | <p>briefings.</p> <p>We are updating a training course on using plain language. The course will tell people about this guidance.</p> |
| <p>3. Help staff understand the public sector equality duties. Help staff and the public to understand the needs of people with protected characteristics.</p> | <p>We carried out an equality training needs analysis and put in place a training programme to meet the needs of staff.</p> <p>We developed training courses, e-learning modules and written guidance so staff can find out what they need to know about equality law.</p> <p>We tell the public about matters that affect people from protected groups. We do this in a number of ways including by using posters in our Reception area, promoting campaigns on social media, using TREV (The Reassurance and Engagement Vehicle) in communities, and attending events.</p> |
| <p>4. Put in place advice on how to engage and consult with people from protected groups about changes to services.</p> | <p>We put in place new guidelines for engaging with people. We agreed to use the National Principles of Public Engagement in Wales.</p> <p>We talk to people and ask them what they think when we are making changes to services. In particular, we engage often with Vale 50+ forum (our older people's</p> |

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| | forum) and the Youth Cabinet. |
| 5. Increase use of the hate crime helpline and the complaints system to report harassment and discrimination. | <p>We have put up posters, told people about hate crime at meetings and events, and on our website. We check how many reports of hate crime there are.</p> <p>We promote the Victim Support Helpline since the Welsh Government funded it to run a national service for Wales.</p> <p>We have started to look at how many complaints we get from people with protected characteristics. We report on this.</p> |
| 6. Increase awareness and confidence in use of domestic abuse support services. | <p>We work in partnership with Atal y Fro and others. We have put in place a plan to prevent domestic abuse, support victims and increase awareness and reporting.</p> <p>We have run campaigns like 'Behind closed doors' and White Ribbon' campaigns.</p> <p>We have put in place a workplace policy to support managers and staff to deal with domestic abuse.</p> <p>We are working on improving data.</p> |
| 7. Develop a workforce plan with actions to reduce the gender pay gap and check on progress. | <p>We have a workforce plan to help ensure the Council's employees reflect that of the community. This includes actions to reduce the gender pay gap. We look at data to check on progress.</p> |

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| | <p>The gender pay gap has reduced in the last two years from 9.95% to 9.80%.</p> <p>In our annual equality reports, we have reported on a range of employment information: pay for men and women; different age groups, gender reassignment, national identity, race and ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief, marital status and Welsh language ability.</p> |
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6. Equality objectives – what we will do 2016 – 2020

In 2015, between 28 October and 18 December, we consulted and engaged with people and organisations again. We told people what our objectives had been for the last four years and what we had done to make progress. We asked their views on what our objectives should be looking forward.

For each equality objective, we tell you about:

- the actions we will take to achieve it;
- why we originally chose the objective (telling you about the evidence available at that time);
- recent evidence including feedback from our consultation and engagement and Welsh national research; and
- which protected characteristics it covers.

When we carried out consultation and engagement, the majority of people and organisations wanted us to continue working on the same equality objectives. We have taken feedback into account when developing actions to help us make more progress.

We must also have an equality objective on closing the gender pay gap as even though it has reduced, it still exists.

We have made the following objectives our priorities.

1. Collect and analyse service data by protected characteristic so services meet the diverse needs of the public

| How are we going to do it? | | |
|--|---|---|
| Action | By Whom | Timescale |
| <p>1. Increase the number of services collecting and analysing data by protected characteristic to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show who is using our services; • find out who is not using our services; • find out barriers to services; • find out if there are gaps in information; • find out how people with more than one protected characteristic are affected; • improve access to services; • improve satisfaction with services; • ensure services meet the needs of protected groups. | <p>Heads of Service</p> <p>Corporate Equality Officer</p> | <p>2016 – 2020</p> <p>Report annually on progress</p> |
| <p>2. Publish the information each year and show how we have used the information to make changes to services.</p> <p>Include this information in our annual equality reports and publish on our website.</p> | <p>Heads of Service</p> <p>Corporate Equality Officer</p> | <p>2016 - 2020</p> <p>Report annually on progress</p> |

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|--|--|--|
| 3. Use the information collected to inform equality impact assessments and publish them. | Heads of Service Corporate Equality Officer | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
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| Why are we going to do it? |
| Source: Council engagement events November 2011 |
| <p>At that time, people thought:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it was important to gather information to find out if there is discrimination or barriers to using services; • we should be clear why we are collecting data and what it will be used for: • each service should collect data in the same way, using the same categories. <p>Since then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we have introduced guidance on collecting data for services; • we encourage services to use the Stonewall leaflet 'What's it got to do with you?' - it explains why we collect data and what we do with it; • we have introduced a form so that there is a standard way of collecting data. |
| Source: Council consultation and engagement December 2015 |
| <p>People wanted us to continue working on this objective. Some people suggested that we should:</p> |

- review the monitoring form and make some minor amendments;
- collect data on satisfaction with services by protected characteristic and;
- monitor service use and satisfaction by people, including those with more than one protected characteristic;
- publish the full data for each protected group;
- say what changes we have made as a result of using the data and publish this.

Source: Council data 2015

There are still gaps in the equality information that we have. We now have in place a form for collecting data. This helps each service have the same approach. It also makes sure that we have information on each of the protected characteristics.

Each year, we encourage more services to use this standard approach. You can see the information we have collected in our annual equality monitoring reports.

Source: How Fair is Wales March 2011

“Gaps in the evidence mean relatively little is known about inequality faced by people of different religious faiths or lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and also about Gypsy Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers. The lack of evidence and the small size of the groups concerned does not mean, of course, that there are no inequalities to be addressed. What evidence there is suggests many of these groups face inequality and discrimination, for example higher rates of bullying and harassment.”

“Better use of existing data sources, and more sophisticated data collection techniques, would allow us to understand better the various needs and aspirations of different people. This is prerequisite to understanding whether and how we are making progress as a society towards greater equality.”

Source: Is Wales Fairer? December 2015

In undertaking this review, it is clear that more comprehensive and better quality evidence is needed to enable us to assess progress.

Sometimes the data is not available at all, and it is often impossible to undertake a more sophisticated assessment of key areas of disadvantage, for example, where people's characteristics intersect.

Some small groups of people such as those aged over the age of 80, transgender people, Gypsies and Travellers, children and young people affected by abuse and exploitation, are often invisible in the data.

The Welsh Government and public authorities in Wales should take steps to improve the evidence collected.

The research identifies the following priorities:

- Close attainment gaps in education.
- Encourage fair recruitment, development and reward in employment
- Improve living conditions in cohesive communities.
- Increase access to justice and encourage democratic participation.
- Improve access to mental health services and support people experiencing poor mental health.
- Prevent abuse, neglect and ill-treatment in care and detention.
- Eliminate violence, abuse and harassment in the community.

| Which protected characteristics does it cover? | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|---|
| Age | √ | Race | √ |
| Disability | √ | Religion or Belief | √ |
| Gender Reassignment | √ | Sex | √ |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | √ | Sexual Orientation | √ |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | √ | | |

2. Close attainment gaps of children in protected groups

| How are we going to do it? | | |
|---|--|--|
| Action | By Whom | Timescale |
| <p>1. Analyse attainment gaps by protected characteristic and pay particular attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gypsy / Roma children; • looked-after children; • children with Special Educational Needs; • children eligible for Free School Meals. <p>Put in place plans to reduce the gaps.</p> | Head of School Improvement and Inclusion | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| <p>2. Review school exclusions by protected characteristic and put in place plans to reduce them. Pay particular attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • boys; • pupils eligible for Free School Meals; • ethnic groups; • pupils with Special Educational Needs. | Head of School Improvement and Inclusion | 2016 - 2020 Report annually on progress |

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| Why are we going to do it? |
| Source: Council's Draft Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020 |
| <p>Corporate Objective 5: Raise overall standards of achievement.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure improved outcomes for groups of learners at risk of underachievement, such as those entitled to free school meals. • Increase the learning opportunities for disadvantaged individuals and vulnerable families. • Secure aspirational outcomes for learners with additional learning needs through early intervention and effective collaboration in line with the proposed Additional Learning Needs Bill. |
| Source: How Fair is Wales March 2011 |
| <p>There are significant differences in participation and achievement in education by income throughout a person's life, and to a lesser extent by gender, ethnicity and disability.</p> |
| Source: Is Wales Fairer? December 2015 |
| <p>The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* - C including Maths and English or Welsh has increased. There has been little reduction in inequalities between different groups and for some groups the gap has widened.</p> <p>There are some children whose attainment of five or more GCSEs at Grades A* - C, including Maths and English or Welsh, remains strikingly low:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gypsy / Roma children; • looked-after children; |

- children with Special Educational Needs;
- children eligible for Free School Meals.

There is a strong correlation between exclusion from school and low attainment.
Overall, the proportion of pupils excluded from school in Wales decreased.

There has been some reduction in exclusions of boys compared with girls and between pupils eligible for FSM and pupils not eligible, although the gaps between the groups remain large.

There have been reductions in the exclusion rate amongst all ethnic groups.

The exclusion rate for pupils without SEN decreased, that for pupils with SEN did not change significantly, so the gap has widened.

| Which protected characteristics does it cover? | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|---|
| Age | √ | Race | √ |
| Disability | √ | Religion or Belief | √ |
| Gender Reassignment | √ | Sex | √ |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | √ | Sexual Orientation | √ |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | √ | | |

3. Make public documents easier for people to read and understand

| How are we going to do it? | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Action | By Whom | Timescale |
| 1. Raise awareness of plain language guides. | Corporate Equality Officer | 2016 – 2017 Report annually on progress |
| 2. Provide training on plain language. | Training and Development Manager | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 3. Make people aware that they can have documents in other formats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include a statement on documents to say that documents are available in other formats and languages; • produce key documents and forms in audio, large print, and Easy Read. • make documents and forms readily available in other formats and languages on request. | Heads of Service | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 4. Find out if people think the information they get is easier to read and understand. | Communications Manager | 2018 – 2020 Report annually on progress |

Why are we going to do it?

Source: Council engagement events November 2011

At that time, people told us:

- they want information they can understand, particularly younger and older people, disabled people, and Black, Asian and minority ethnic people.
- plain language is essential to improving access.
- information on our website needs to be in an appropriate format.
- there were many voluntary groups and support services in the Vale and Cardiff and that we could promote them more and signpost people to them.

Since then:

- we have reviewed and updated our plain language guidance and put it on our staff website;
- we are updating our plain language training;
- we have reviewed our website and simplified it, and people can use text only, change the size of the text or use Browse aloud;
- worked more closely with Citizens Advice Bureau who provide equality advice for us to the public;
- continued to work with Race Equality First who support some community groups for us;
- continued to work with Show Racism the Red Card which visits schools to raise

awareness of equality issues with children and young people;

- continued to work with many other voluntary groups and support services;
- continued to put links to other organisations on our website.

Source: Council consultation and engagement December 2015

People still feel that the information we send them is too complicated and that they do not understand it.

As well as plain language information, people want us to produce information:

- in easy read documents or summaries;
- in community languages on request; and
- to produce simpler forms.

Which protected characteristics does it cover?

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| Age | √ | Race | √ |
| Disability | √ | Religion or Belief | √ |
| Gender Reassignment | √ | Sex | √ |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | √ | Sexual Orientation | √ |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | √ | | |

4. Help staff know more about equality law, and staff and the public to understand the needs of protected groups

| How are we going to do it? | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| Action | By Whom | Timescale |
| 1. Continue with staff training programme to raise awareness of equality law and equality for protected groups. | Corporate Equality Officer | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 2. Expand training programme to include training on the needs of specific protected groups. | Corporate Equality Officer | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 3. Provide training on equality impact assessments. | Corporate Equality Officer | 2019 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 4. Continue to raise awareness of public through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reception board, electronic boards, social media; • working with other organisations. | Corporate Equality Officer | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |

Why are we going to do it?

Source: Council engagement events November 2011

At the time, people felt that we should:

- train staff to better understand people's needs, build mutual awareness and respect;
- raise awareness gradually;
- target groups for certain types of equality training;
- build a more consistent understanding of how to meet the needs of disabled people.

Since then, we have:

- carried out an equalities training needs analysis; launched a new equality awareness training programme, as well as equality awareness and equality impact assessment e-learning modules;
- provided written guidance for staff unable to access other types of training;
- provided other types of equality training such as British Sign Language training, lesbian, gay and bisexual training and transgender training;
- a programme of equality impact assessment training aimed at officers involved in policy and decision making;
- had a public awareness raising campaign using posters and social media.

Source: Council consultation and engagement December 2015

People wanted us to continue with this objective and suggested:

- use role models;
- take the message to schools and communities;

- make sure every service takes responsibility for equality and not just the equalities department;
- provide training on the needs of each of the protected groups;
- provide links to other organisations for further support;
- work with others to raise awareness of issues in the local community;
- evaluate whether training and raising awareness has made a difference – do we engage with the public more, is it easier to use our services?

Source: Not Just Another Statistic November 2010

Protected groups want to see a change in the way people think about them and behave towards them. They need lots of organisations to help to make this happen. To do this, we need to raise awareness of the needs of protected groups.

Most people talked about how important staff attitudes are. If staff attitude is poor, people will not think well of an organisation. It would be a big step forward if there were simpler systems and recognition that the same approach is not suitable for everyone.

| Which protected characteristics does it cover? | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|---|
| Age | √ | Race | √ |
| Disability | √ | Religion or Belief | √ |
| Gender Reassignment | √ | Sex | √ |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | √ | Sexual Orientation | √ |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | √ | | |

5. Seek the views of protected groups on proposed changes to policy, budgets and services

| How are we going to do it? | | |
|---|--|--|
| Action | By Whom | Timescale |
| 1. Engage with protected groups to find out about their views and needs so that these shape policies, decisions and services. | Heads of Service Communications Manager | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 2. Develop resources to help officers know where to find relevant research on the needs of protected groups. | Corporate Equality Officer | 2016 – 2017 Report annually on progress |
| 3. Review methods of engagement to ensure that we reach 'seldom heard' groups. | Communications Manager Corporate Equality Officer | 2016 – 2017 Report annually on progress |

| Why are we going to do it? |
|--|
| Source: Council engagement events November 2011 |
| At that time, people felt that: |

- consultation was sometimes reactive and they wanted an ongoing dialogue with service users;
- some people needed advocacy services to help them get involved in decision making
- we often dismissed the views of young and older people and gave less priority was given to older people.
- access to buildings in general (rather than Council buildings) was poor.

Since then:

- we have continued to consult with our Citizens' Panel and a list of third sector organisations;
- we regularly engage with the Vale 50+ Forum and the Youth Cabinet to take their views into account;
- we continued to use buildings that have ramps and hearing loops for our engagement events.

Source: Council consultation and engagement December 2015

People wanted us to continue with this objective. They made some suggestions:

- have a pool of people from protected groups that we can use to seek their views;
- improve education programmes to address the under-achievement of BME communities;
- make sure engagement reflects the diversity of citizens in the Vale of Glamorgan;
- use a wide variety of engagement and involvement methods to reach all communities

and 'seldom heard groups';

- work with third sector and community groups to improve response rates to engagement activities;
- engage diverse communities when making budget decisions, policy revisions, implementation plans, and decisions to maintain services and deliver existing services to ensure decisions meet the needs of all citizens;
- have a youth helpline to provide information about local services and opportunities for young people, including those not in education, employment or training.

Source: Not Just Another Statistic November 2010

Many people spoke about the role of advice and advocacy as a life-line in coping with everyday tasks and in understanding rights.

Source: How Fair is Wales March 2011

"...the evidence... suggests that those from protected groups are yet to fully participate in decision making or to exert the same power and influence that some groups have enjoyed for decades.

Source: Is Wales Fairer? December 2015

In Wales, less than one in four feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area. Some groups feel less able to do this than others:

- older people;
- disabled people;
- women.

| Which protected characteristics does it cover? | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|---|
| Age | √ | Race | √ |
| Disability | √ | Religion or Belief | √ |
| Gender Reassignment | √ | Sex | √ |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | √ | Sexual Orientation | √ |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | √ | | |

6. Encourage people with protected characteristics to report hate crimes, harassment and discrimination

| How are we going to do it? | | |
|---|--|--|
| Action | By Whom | Timescale |
| 1. Encourage reporting of hate crime, harassment and discrimination by promoting the ways in which this can be done and the support available for victims. | Principal Community Safety Officer | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 2. Record and analyse reports by protected characteristic and put in place plans to reduce hate crime, harassment and discrimination. | Principal Community Safety Officer | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 3. Review how other organisations such as the police and third sector organisations can help to encourage reporting of hate crime and work together to make improvements. | Principal Community Safety Officer | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 4. Promote corporate complaints system to general public. Explain how we deal with complaints of discrimination and why we monitor protected characteristics. | Customer Complaints Officer | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 5. Record and analyse reports of discrimination by protected characteristic. | Customer Complaints Officer | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 6. Monitor whether people with protected characteristics are using the corporate complaints | Customer Complaints | 2016 – 2020 |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| system and take appropriate action. | Officer | Report annually on progress |
| <p>7. Monitor incidents of bullying in schools by protected characteristic and take action to reduce them.</p> <p>Pay particular attention to those most likely to experience bullying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils with Additional Learning Needs; • disabled pupils; • lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils; • ethnic minority pupils; • pupils from a religious background. | Head of School Improvement and Inclusion | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |

| |
|---|
| Why are we going to do it? |
| Source: Council engagement events November 2011 |
| <p>At that time, people felt that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the objective needed to cover protected groups in general; • it was important to raise awareness of services to encourage more reporting of harassment; |

- we would need to explain the meaning of harassment;
- people need to feel able to report discrimination without fearing lower levels of service as a result;
- people need to feel that their comments, complaints and opinions are taken seriously.

Since then, we have:

- worked with Race Equality First to produce a poster to promote reporting of hate crimes;
- explained what harassment is on that poster;
- promoted the Victim Support hate crime helpline;
- started to monitor complaints by protected characteristic.

Source: Council consultation and engagement December 2015

People felt that we should continue to encourage reporting of harassment and discrimination. There were some suggestions for improvement:

- Provide community-based education to encourage people to report harassment and education.
- Work with other community safety partners to tackle prejudice and discrimination and reduce hate crime and harassment.
- Work with Police to tackle transgender harassment and discrimination which is a daily issue for this community.

Source: How Fair is Wales March 2011

“Young men and ethnic minority groups have the greatest risk of being a victim of violent

crime in general, with women being by far at the greatest risk of sexual violence (including rape) and of domestic abuse. Women, disabled people, older people, ethnic minority groups and people from lower socio-economic groups are most likely to fear violent crime.”

Low levels of confidence lead to significant under-reporting of hate crime and often justice is not achieved. Preventing hate crime is an essential step in building good relations between groups in society. Where hate crime occurs, increasing reporting rates is an urgent task.

People from ethnic minority groups, disabled people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people and transgender people are all at risk from hate crime and bullying.

Many people report that they experience discrimination, harassment and abuse. About 10% of the population as a whole has experienced an incident of discrimination, harassment or victimisation in the last five years.

Some groups, such as young people, disabled people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, refugees and asylum seekers, transgender people, people with mental health conditions and older people report very much higher levels of discrimination and harassment – up to a third of all disabled 16-39 year olds said they had been the victim of discrimination or harassment.

Incidents targeting people because of who they are (for example, hate crimes) are under-reported, meaning many victims are unable to access the support they need, or to secure justice.

Source: Not Just Another Statistic November 2010

Many people spoke about the role of advice and advocacy as a life-line in coping with everyday tasks and in understanding rights.

Source: Is Wales Fairer? December 2015

There has been no overall reduction in the violence, abuse and harassment experienced by some people but there has been an increase in reporting of incidents to the police and in conviction rates.

In Wales, 7% of adults aged 16 and over reported experiencing discrimination, harassment or abuse in the previous 12 months. These incidents were much higher amongst some groups than others:

- one in five people from an ethnic minority;
- one in five people from a religious minority;
- one in ten young people;
- one in ten disabled people;
- one in ten people who have never worked or who are long-term unemployed.

Between 20% and 50% of pupils in Wales are estimated to have experienced bullying at some point in their school lives (Estyn 2014). Bullying is a particular risk for:

- pupils with Special Educational Needs;
- disabled pupils;
- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils;
- ethnic minority pupils;
- pupils from a religious background.

Instances of bullying were found to be higher in secondary schools and cyber-bullying remains a concern.

An Estyn report drew attention to wide variations in pupils' experiences of bullying and schools' actions to deal with it. Many schools strategic equality plans did not 'pay attention to the full range of protected characteristics'. Schools' awareness and understanding of bullying and their policies and procedures was often found to be weak (Estyn, 2014).

| Which protected characteristics does it cover? | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|---|
| Age | √ | Race | √ |
| Disability | √ | Religion or Belief | √ |
| Gender Reassignment | √ | Sex | √ |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | √ | Sexual Orientation | √ |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | √ | | |

7. Find new ways of reaching victims of domestic abuse and raise awareness of domestic abuse services in the community.

| How are we going to do it? | | |
|--|---|--|
| Action | By Whom | Timescale |
| 1. Review whether people from a range of protected groups know about and can access domestic abuse services. | Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 2. Campaign to raise awareness of support available to victims of domestic abuse. | Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 3. Regularly monitor and report on use of support services by protected characteristic and use information to increase use of the service. | Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 4. Deliver and develop services across Western Vale In partnership with Vale 50+. | Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator | 2016 – 2020 Report annually on progress |

| |
|--|
| Why are we going to do it? |
| Source: Community Strategy 2011 - 21 |
| The number of serious sexual offences in the Vale of Glamorgan had increased compared to 2009 -10. For the majority of cases the suspect is known to the victim and is usually a family member, acquaintance or friend. |
| Source: Council's Corporate Plan 2010 – 14 (revised December 2011) |
| Increase the awareness of domestic abuse support services. |
| Source: Council's consultation and engagement December 2015 |
| <p>People wanted us to continue working on this and made some suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it needs a higher profile; • make roles clear; • there is not enough focus on emotional abuse; • it's not always women who are abused and it is not always in heterosexual relationships; • there needs to be more robust monitoring of how useful or well used the Council's domestic abuse support is and how confident its staff are using it. |
| Source: Council information 2016 |
| Since 2013, Atal y Fro has seen a year on year increase in number of older people (50+) accessing domestic abuse services. |
| Source: How Fair is Wales March 2011 |
| One in four women in England and Wales has experienced some form of domestic abuse |

since reaching the age of 16.

Three-quarters of domestic abuse offences are repeat offences.

Women in Wales are twice as likely as men to be victims of sexual violence, or of non-sexual violence by their partner or family.

Source: Is Wales Fairer? December 2015

There was no significant change in the number of self-reported victims of domestic abuse.

The number of domestic incidents recorded by the police increased by 20%.

| Which protected characteristics does it cover? | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|---|
| Age | √ | Race | √ |
| Disability | √ | Religion or Belief | √ |
| Gender Reassignment | √ | Sex | √ |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | √ | Sexual Orientation | √ |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | √ | | |

8. Reduce the gender pay gap and improve employment opportunities for protected groups

| How are we going to do it? | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| Action | By Whom | Timescale |
| 1. Continue to improve the collection of data by protected characteristic to help improve employment and training policies. | Head of Human Resources | 2016 – 2017 Report annually on progress |
| 2. Use the above data to improve the employment rates of those with protected characteristics and who have been identified as underrepresented. | Head of Human Resources | 2017 – 2020 Report annually on progress |
| 3. Undertake specific work to reduce the pay gap especially for women and people from ethnic minorities. | Head of Human Resources | 2016 – 2018 Report annually on progress |
| 4. Continue to develop strategies to address the decreasing representation of young people in the workplace. | Head of Human Resources | 2016 – 2017 Report annually on progress |
| 5. Put in place reporting arrangements for the above actions to monitor progress. | Head of Human Resources | 2017 – 2018 Report annually on progress |

| |
|---|
| Why are we going to do it? |
| Source: Equality Impact Assessment of Job Evaluation System 2011 |
| The impact assessment of the job evaluation scheme showed a gender pay gap of over 10% and recommended workforce strategies to address it. |
| Source: Council consultation and engagement December 2015 |
| People want us to continue to try and decrease the pay gap. It was suggested that this should also include other groups with protected characteristics. |
| Source: Council's Human Resource Strategy 2013 - 2017 |
| <p>We made commitments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the number of 16-24 year olds as a percentage of the workforce; • ensure that our workforce is reflective of the wider community; • launch a Council wide professional apprenticeship scheme; • decrease in gender pay gap by 10% by 2015. |
| Source: Council's Workforce Plan 2013 - 2017 |
| <p>The workforce plan described the employment situation in the Vale of Glamorgan at the time we prepared the plan. Here is what we found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A disproportionate percentage of young people aged between 17 and 24 were unemployed. • We employed a lower percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) employees than in the wider population. |

- The percentage of disabled people we employed remained lower than the population in the Vale.
- Of our permanent workforce 76% were women and 24% men. The proportion of women to men in salary ranges up to £40k was broadly in line with the overall gender balance in the Council. At the salary ranges above £40k the proportion of female to male employees decreased.

As a result of these findings, the workforce plan committed to some actions:

- We aimed to develop strategies to deal with occupational segregation within our workforce to promote the employment of women in male dominated occupations (and vice-versa).
- As part the Single Status Agreement, we committed to explore actions to address occupational segregation in the workforce and to seek incremental reductions in the gender pay gap.
- We planned to promote the Council as a potential employer for school leavers setting out on their careers.
- We planned to think about the implication of our policies on youth employment and apprenticeships.

Source: How Fair is Wales March 2011

The review of research evidence found marked occupational segregation in Wales across all protected characteristics, although the quality and timeliness of the data was variable. There is some evidence that occupational segregation by gender is higher in Wales than in the rest of Britain.

Source: Is Wales Fairer? December 2015

In Wales:

- The gender pay gap narrowed from 20% to 17%. The gap narrowed because men's average pay declined more than women's.
- Women's employment continues to be concentrated in low wage sectors.
- Pay gaps widened for young people, ethnic minorities and people from lower socioeconomic groups compared with some other groups. Young people were the lowest paid of all by 2013.
-
- There was no overall improvement in representation in senior roles.
- Inequalities by gender, disability, ethnicity and socioeconomic group have persisted. Inequalities between young people and other age groups have increased.
- Less than half of disabled people (42%) were in employment in 2013 compared with nearly three-quarters (71%) of non-disabled people. Disabled people's unemployment rate rose to nearly one in eight.
- Substantial gaps in employment rates between ethnic minority and White people persisted – 51% compared with 72%. Unemployment for most ethnic groups rose over the period.
- Young people's employment has decreased markedly while employment rates amongst older age groups increased, creating a substantial gap between younger and older people. Unemployment amongst 16 – 24 year olds increased so that they are now more than four times as likely to be unemployed as those aged 35 –

54.

In Britain:

- White people continued to earn on average 50 pence an hour more than ethnic minorities.

Which protected characteristics does it cover?

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| Age | √ | Race | √ |
| Disability | √ | Religion or Belief | √ |
| Gender Reassignment | | Sex | √ |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | | Sexual Orientation | |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | | | |

7. Impact of objectives on protected characteristics

Most of these objectives apply to each of the protected characteristics. As we work towards them, we make progress in meeting the general duty. We will continue to improve our understanding of what we need to do to meet the needs of protected groups.

This is why we are giving priority to these cross cutting objectives rather than one for each of the protected characteristics.

8. Monitoring and publishing results

We will continue to check on progress towards meeting our equality objectives and report on this each year to the senior management team, our Equality Consultative Forum, and Cabinet.

We will report on progress in our annual equality report. We will publish this report on our website. It will include an assessment of the effectiveness of the steps we are taking to meet the equality objectives.

We will also publish other equality and employment information each year on our website.

9. Assessing impact

We have in place a process to evaluate the likely impact on protected groups of policies or practices being proposed, reviewed or revised. We review and improve this process from time to time. The process helps us think about the impact of our work on each of the protected groups.

We provide equality impact assessment training from time to time and there is an e-learning module on our website that staff can use at any time.

We encourage staff to collect and analyse data to see how people are using our services. We try to improve on this each year by increasing the number of services that collect data and encouraging better analysis of data. Staff can use this information as part of their evidence base in their equality impact assessments.

You can find the assessment tool and examples of equality impact assessments on the Equality page of our website.

We use this process to assess the likely impact of the annual budget. We think about whether there is a risk that our decisions are likely to have a significant impact on protected groups. If we can see that there might be one, we carry out a full assessment of impact.

Where there is a significant impact, we publish the details on our website.

10. Training

We have reviewed our training programme carried out a training needs analysis.

We provide equality training so that staff know how to provide a fair service that meets the needs of the diverse range of people using it. The following courses are provided:

- Equality awareness
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual awareness
- Transgender awareness
- British Sign Language awareness
- Data analysis
- Hate crime training

In addition to the equality training programme, equality issues are covered in corporate training, particularly in corporate induction and recruitment training.

We keep the equality training programme under review and we intend to expand it to cover other protected characteristics.

We will keep under review how we promote knowledge and understanding of the general and specific duties among employees, including through performance assessment procedures to identify and address training needs.

11. Examples of good practice

We are committed to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different people. We carry out a wide range of work that contributes to this.

Here are some examples of our work.

- We have annual programmes of work with Show Racism the Red Card to promote awareness of race issues amongst children in schools and workshops.
- We have an annual schools calendar competition with Race Equality First.
- We work with Remploy to provide job opportunities.
- We hold an annual Holocaust Memorial Day event.
- We are working towards higher levels of the InSport disability standards. We have been awarded the Bronze standard. We are now working towards the Silver standard.
- We have a Gypsy and Traveller Forum that can quickly respond to assess the welfare needs of Gypsies and Travellers when they arrive in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- We support the Vale 50+ Forum. A very active public engagement group that offers a voice for the over 50s.
- The Vale of Glamorgan's largest town, Barry, has been awarded 'Dementia Friendly Town' status by the Alzheimer's Society. We have an active steering group to make sure we achieve our action plan. We have a significant number of trained Dementia friends.
- We have a digital inclusion working group developing a strategy to get more people on line. Our library staff are digital champions who are able to help the public with their queries. The public can access computer suites in libraries. The Adult Community

Learning team and libraries offer a range of digital inclusion training programmes. We have improved wi-fi access in sheltered homes and plan on doing this in care homes.

- We provide Greenlinks community transport in rural and urban areas. This includes buses that can be used easily by disabled people. Greenlinks helps people without transport to access services and to interact socially.
- We provide a bus to Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern, a grass roots community support service. This helps to transport people to a new medical centre which is not easily accessible.
- We have TREV (The Reassurance and Engagement Vehicle) that helps us take information about safety out into the community.
- We provide equality advice through the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- We support an LGBT Coffee Morning through Race Equality First.
- We support a Taxi Drivers' forum through Race Equality First.
- We support a Disability Forum through Race Equality First.
- We are piloting an annual leave purchase scheme to give staff greater flexibility in managing their work-life balance.

We are committed to continuing with this work. More examples can be found in our annual equality reports:

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



Appendix 1

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Report on engagement on equality objectives

December 2015

Introduction

A review of the Council's Strategic Equality and Equality Objectives was undertaken from 28 October to 18 December. The aim of the review was to consult service users who are representative of protected groups, and strategic partners, to ensure that the Equality Objectives are addressing the issues that Vale residents feel to be most important. The consultation was also designed to capture any other issues, which were not included in the Equality Objectives that residents felt ought to be.

Methodology

An engagement form was sent to a directory of 42 local organisations representing people from protected groups asking for their views on the Council's Equality Objectives. The form included an overview of what the Council had done to achieve the objectives to date.

The engagement form and an online form were available on the Council's website. This page was promoted on social media, using the Council's Corporate Twitter and Facebook accounts.

Council staff were informed of the review via Core Brief, an internal newsletter, and given the opportunity to share their views by completing the engagement form or the online form.

The Council's Public Engagement Officer attended a local LGBT coffee morning to discuss the equality objectives and gather feedback. Race Equality First, an organisation which is partly funded by the Council to work with protected groups in the community, also spoke to the Rainbow Women's Group; a Taxi Drivers Forum and visited a local Mosque to gather feedback on the Council's behalf.

Results

There were 15 responses to the online survey, 5 local groups or organisations took the time to complete the engagement form to send us their feedback and 4 local groups were visited and gave verbal feedback. Below is a list of organisations contacted and those that responded.

| Organisation |
|--|
| 50+ Strategy Forum |
| Advocacy Matters (Wales) |
| Age Connects - Cardiff & the Vale of Glamorgan |
| Age Cymru |
| Alzheimer's Society - Cardiff & Vale Branch |
| Atal Y Fro |
| Barry and District Mencap Society |
| BAWSO |
| Gypsies and Travellers Wales |
| Cardiff Vales and Valleys (part of RNIB Group) |
| Carers UK - Vale of Glamorgan Branch |
| Chwarae Teg |

| |
|---|
| Crossroads Care in the Vale |
| Disability Sports Wales - Vale of Glamorgan Council |
| Diverse Cymru |
| Filipino Association for Community Empowerment |
| HAFAL – Vale of Glamorgan |
| Hafod Care Association |
| Home Access Trust |
| LGCM De Cymru (Lesbian & Gay Christian Movement) |
| Llantwit Major Deaf Football Association |
| Mental Health Support Group - Eastern Vale of Glamorgan |
| Menter Bro Morgannwg |
| Mind in the Vale of Glamorgan |
| Multiple Sclerosis Society - Cardiff & Vale Branch |
| National Autistic Society - Cardiff & Vale Branch |
| Race Equality First |
| Remploy |
| Rising STAR Orphans |
| Show Racism the Red Card |

| |
|--|
| Stonewall Cymru |
| Sunshine Club |
| The Rainbow Women's Group |
| Transgender Awareness Wales |
| Vale Centre for Voluntary Services |
| Vale of Glamorgan Stroke Support Group |
| Vale Older People's Strategy Forum |
| Vale Youth Forum |
| ValePlus |
| Welsh Refugee Council |
| Welsh Women's Aid |
| Women Connect First |

Respondents were asked if the Council should continue working on each of the Equality Objectives. This is how they responded.

Objective 1 – Collect Data to see who is and who is not using our services.

Of the 20 written responses 14 said 'yes', 5 said 'yes but with changes' and 1 said no.

When asked to detail changes they would like to see respondents said:

- Please amend the equalities monitoring form to include 'other' and a space where a person can write down how they identify themselves, simply 'male' or 'female' is too limiting.
- This should continue but the full information should be available on the Council's website... What changes were made to Council services after this data showed services are not accessed by certain protected groups?
- Most members of the public dislike the more intrusive/personal questions on sexuality and religion. If these could be dropped our relations with customers would be better.
- We recommend that this objective include: "Collect and publish data on satisfaction and appropriateness of services for people from different protected groups."
- Need to more carefully evaluate what we are collecting, why we are collecting it and what we are then doing with it.

The respondent who said 'no' said that it was a 'waste of time and money' when asked to explain why not.

These responses demonstrate that whilst partner organisations recognise the importance of identifying barriers to services, it would be beneficial to better explain to members of the public why the Council is collecting this information and how we intend to use it.

Objective 2 – Make documents for the public easier to read and understand.

18 of the 20 respondents said 'yes' the Council should continue working on this, the other two respondents said 'yes but with changes. Their suggestions were:

- Please continue and improve this initiative. Most of the people we spoke to stated that they found Council information too complicated and not understandable. It is also important to provide a translation of forms into community languages where required / requested.
- It is important to provide easy read versions or summaries of documents as well as plain language for people with dyslexia, learning difficulties and people from the Gypsy and Traveller community. But also include a link to the 'full version' because some people will want all of the information.
- This shows that the Council as a whole needs to improve the way information is communicated to members of the public, particularly when collecting important information on forms or distributing important messages.

Objective 3 – Raise awareness of equality

When asked if the Council should continue working on this 15 of the 20 respondents said 'yes', 3 said 'yes but with changes' and 2 said 'no'.

Those who said 'yes but with changes' suggested the following:

- How about celebrating the diversity of staff and residents more visibly? Not sure how you might do this but personal stories in the press might be one way and celebration days might be another.
- Take in to schools, communities.
- Equality should be more of a golden thread through the work of the Council rather than being seen as the work of the equalities department. Certain departments should take on responsibilities for some of the equality initiatives directly.
- Those who said no said, 'no need, awareness is already high' and 'It should be just part of what the council does. Cuts mean that this extra promotion is not a priority'.

This demonstrates that there is support for this objective. Even those who said we should not continue working on this think that it should be something that is carried out by all Council departments and not a priority for one team.

Objective 4 – Involve people with protected characteristics.

All of the respondents agreed that this is something that the Council should continue working towards. None of the respondents suggested changes to this objective; however some did make further comments such as:

- I believe that there must be a pool of groups that can be involved within this process from all of the protected characteristics.
- Protected characteristics may be a factor in educational achievement. The Council needs to improve or make changes to education programmes to address the under achievements of some BME communities.
- This demonstrates that all of the respondents agree that people from protected groups should be involved in developing Council policies such as the Strategic Equality Plan.

Objective 5 – Harassment and discrimination reporting

18 of the 20 respondents agreed that the Council should continue to encourage harassment and discrimination reporting. 2 respondents agreed that it should continue and suggested the following changes:

- We recommend adding an action on community-based education to this objective...
- We recommend adding a reference to work with other community safety partners to tackle prejudice and discrimination and reduce hate crime and harassment.

It was clear from the discussion at the LGBT coffee morning that harassment and discrimination is a big issue for the transgender community. The group stated that they do report incidents but felt that it is not enough to deter people from harassing them on a daily basis. It was suggested that there should be coordinated effort from the Council and the Police to tackle this issue.

Objective 6 – Domestic violence (increase awareness and confidence in use of domestic abuse support services).

Of the 20 respondents, 16 said 'yes' the Council should continue working on this, 2 said 'yes but with changes' and two didn't respond. Those who suggested changes said:

- This needs to be given a higher profile.
- Make roles clear.

During the discussion with the LGBT group one respondent said that 'there is not enough focus on emotional abuse' and another said 'it is not always women who are being abused and it is not always in heterosexual relationships but this is how it is portrayed in the media'.

One of the partner organisations added; 'There needs to be more robust monitoring of how useful or well used the Council's Domestic Abuse support is and how confident their staff feel about using it.'

As with other objectives, it is clear that respondents agree that the Council should continue working on this, however there is more that can be done to support people in the community and to raise awareness of the support that is available through partner organisations.

Objective 7 – Reducing the gender pay gap

16 of the 20 respondents said 'yes' the Council should continue to work on this, 1 said 'yes but with changes' and 2 said 'no'. The respondent who suggested changes said:

- 'To include all sexual orientations, why just male/female?'

One of the respondents who said 'no' gave the following explanation of why not:

- 'job evaluation should have sorted this shouldn't it? If people are doing the same job or an equivalent job they should be paid the same.'

The majority of respondents are in support of the Council continuing to work on this objective.

Conclusion

From reviewing the responses received during the consultation period it is evident that members of the community, partner organisations and Council staff agree with the objectives that have been identified. Although there have been some suggested amendments, there have been no suggestions of other actions that should be prioritised over these objectives. Therefore, it is suggested that the Council continue to work on these objectives.