

Vale of Glamorgan Council's Strategic Equality Plan



Summary of Strategic Equality Plan

2 April 2012

You can ask for this in a different format.

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Contact

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For a copy of the full Plan:

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Please note:

The meaning of words and phrases written in **bold** can be found in the Glossary at the end of the Strategic Equality Plan.

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Purpose of the Plan

This Plan describes how we meet our duties under:

- the **Equality Act 2010**;
- the **Public Sector Equality Duty (general duty)**; and
- the **specific duties for Wales**.

The Act, the duties and this plan are about the eight **protected characteristics**:

Protected characteristic	What this means
Age	People of different ages
Disability	Disabled people
Gender Reassignment	People who have changed their sex
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are expecting a baby or are on a break from work after having a baby
Race	People of different races
Religion or Belief	People with different religions or beliefs or with no religion or belief
Sex	Women and men
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and straight people

It is also about doing what we can to stop **discrimination** against marriage and civil partnership.

When we provide or buy services and employ people, we must give proper consideration to how we can meet the '**general duty**' to:

- stop unlawful **discrimination, harassment and victimisation**;
- make sure that people from different groups are treated fairly and equally; and

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- encourage people from different groups to get along well.

When we give proper consideration to treating people fairly and equally, it involves:

- eliminating or minimising disadvantages experienced by different groups of people;
- taking steps to meet the needs of different groups of people where these are different from the needs of others; and
- encouraging different groups of people to take part in public life or in other activities where they do this less than others.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

We provide a wide range of services to different groups of people living in towns, countryside and by the coast:

<p>Living</p> <p>Recycling and waste Traffic and highways Planning and building control Schools Housing Environment Transport Social Care Youth Service</p>	<p>Working</p> <p>Business rates Education and skills Regeneration Licensing Business support Environmental health Trading standards Jobs, training and careers Procurement</p>
<p>Enjoying</p> <p>Coast Parks and Gardens Arts and Culture Events Leisure and Activities Libraries Community Centres</p>	<p>Our Council</p> <p>Consultation Complaints and compliments Housing benefits Press and communications Equal Opportunities Council Tax Properties for sale or let</p>

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We want to provide fair and equal access to people using these services and to people who work for us.

We have talked to different groups of people to help us decide on the main areas for improvements in the way we provide services. This plan tells you what action we take, and plan to take, to meet our duties.

Equality Information

We have used information from different places to work out our **equality objectives** (the things we plan to do to provide fairer and more equal services and employment).

We have used:

- national research from the Equality and Human Rights Commission such as 'How Fair is Wales' and the 'Not Just Another Statistic' reports;
- information from our **Community Strategy, Corporate Plan, and Single Equality Scheme**;
- local information and data;
- opinions from organisations who represent different groups of people (during meetings in November 2011).

We want to improve the way we collect equality and employment facts and figures, work out what these are telling us and decide what other information we need to collect. We have started this work and will let you see it when it is ready.

Equality Objectives

We must decide on **equality objectives** (goals) and tell you what they are at least every four years.

In November 2011, we met with lots of different organisations which know about the needs of different protected groups. They told us the most important things to work on. These things were much the same as those in national research. This helped us to

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develop **equality objectives** and work out the most important issues to deal with first.

We found out that you want us to:

- write down the objectives in a way you can understand;
- make clear what we will do and how we will check on progress;
- tell you how we are doing.

We also found out that there are a number of things that will help everyone. You want us to:

- understand better the issues that affect you;
- understand better who is using our services;
- improve how you can access our services;
- help you feel more confident about reporting **discrimination** and **harassment** to us;

We will work on these areas. We will also work on:

- improving the way you can get support for dealing with **domestic violence** - a national priority;
- planning to deal with the difference in pay between men and women - another national priority (we have a system of fair pay, but we need to help people choose jobs that are right for them and not just because they are traditionally done by men or women and which may be paid less).

Taking into account this information, we have decided to work first on improvements that will make the most difference to you.

1. Collect Data and Monitor Access to Services

- Find out and tell you who is using our services by 31 March 2013;
- use this information to improve how you can access services by 31 December 2013; and
- check if the improvements mean that more of you are using more of our services by 30 April 2015.

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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. Improve Access to Public Documents

- Improve guidance on writing documents so you can understand them better by 30 November 2012; and
- make sure you can easily understand all documents we make public by 31 March 2013.

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. Raising Awareness

- Help people who work here understand their responsibilities under the **general and specific equality duties**; and
- help people who work in the Council and live in the Vale of Glamorgan to understand the issues affecting those with **protected characteristics** by 31 March 2016.

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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. Involve Different Groups of People

- Develop guidance on how to involve different groups of people in developing, reviewing or changing services by 31 March 2013; and
- check if more groups of people have been involved in this by 31 July 2015.

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. Harassment and Discrimination Reporting

- Encourage more people to report **harassment** and **discrimination** by using the **hate crime** helpline and complaints system by 31 March 2013; and
- check if more people use these systems by 31 March 2016.

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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. Domestic Violence

- Make people more aware and more confident to use **domestic abuse** support services by 31 March 2016.

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. Gender Pay Difference

We must have an **equality objective** to deal with the causes of the difference in pay between men and women (the **gender pay gap**) if those causes are related to the fact that someone is a man or woman.

We know that there is such a difference, even after we have put in place a **job evaluation scheme** (a system of fair pay). The **job evaluation scheme** makes sure that people are paid the same amount for similar work.

The main reason for the **gender pay gap** is that a higher proportion of women work in a small number of jobs at lower levels of pay. This is called **occupational segregation**. Many factors in

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society lead to this happening. We can play a part in dealing with this.

- Develop an action plan to reduce the **gender pay gap** by 31 December 2013; and
- check if these actions are reducing the **gender pay gap** by 31 March 2016.

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

There may be pay gaps for other **protected groups**. When we have collected better **employment information**, we will be able to see if this is the case. If there are pay gaps for different **protected groups**, we will think about **equality objectives** to help reduce these.

What difference will these objectives make to you?

Most of these objectives will make a difference to everyone, that is, people from all the **protected groups**. We will work towards getting them done over the next four years. This work will help us understand your needs better and what we need to continue to do or change to meet these needs.

Monitoring and Publishing Results

We will check on our progress every year and report on this to the senior management team, **Equality Consultative Forum** (made up of organisations that know about your issues) and **Cabinet**.

We will put this annual report on our website, together with other **equality and employment information**. We will also put the

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information in our main buildings such as the Civic Offices and libraries.

Assessing Impact

We have a way of considering how any new or changing policies and practices might affect you. When we think you might be affected a lot, we put this information on the equalities page of our website.

Training

We make staff aware of their responsibilities to deal with people fairly through a range of equality training courses. Equality issues are also covered in **corporate training**, particularly in **corporate induction** and **recruitment training**.

We will think about how we encourage people who work here to understand the general and specific duties that come from the Equality Act 2012. We will update our **equality training programme** to raise awareness of this.

Other Information

We will encourage people from different groups to get along well. We have done a number of things to help this, including:

- annual workshop programmes by **Show Racism the Red Card** to promote awareness of race issues amongst children and young people;
- schools calendar competition with **Race Equality First**;
- working with **Remploy** to provide job opportunities;
- improving access to the most used public buildings;
- equality training and development, including a **mentoring programme** and regular **women's development programmes**;
- **equality impact assessments** of new and reviewed policies;
- annual **Holocaust Memorial Day** event;
- Housing Services working towards the **Rainbow Award** through the **LGBT Excellence Centre**.

We are committed to continuing with this work.

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Glossary

If there are words or phrases that you do not understand in the Strategic Equality Plan, we have given you the meaning of the main ones in the alphabetically ordered list below.

Annual report

This is a report that will tell you what progress we have made with the equality objectives and other equality matters.

Assessing impact

This is a system which helps us understand the likely impact on protected groups.

Cabinet

The Cabinet is made up of the Leader of the Council and up to nine other Councillors. It makes decisions on services, functions and how the Council should be managed. There are some things that it cannot do on its own such as decide on the Council's budget – this is decided by the full Council.

Community Strategy

We develop this plan with our partner organisations that provide services in the Vale of Glamorgan. It helps us to provide you with consistent, good quality services.

Corporate induction

This training helps new members of staff to understand how the Council works. The training includes information about equality responsibilities.

Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan tells you what the Council is doing to help achieve the aims of the Community Strategy with our partners.

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Corporate training

This is training for staff to help them understand their responsibilities, do their jobs and improve in their careers.

Discrimination

This is treating someone worse than other people because of a protected characteristic. This might also happen because they are connected to someone with a protected characteristic.

Domestic abuse or violence

This is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse that takes place between adults in an intimate or family type relationship. This behaviour could be psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional and is used to control another person.

This can include forced marriage and so-called 'honour crimes'.

Domestic violence may include a range of abusive behaviours, not all of which are 'violent'.

Employment Information

This is information about people who we employ, or have applied for training, changed job position, been involved in grievances or disciplinary procedures or left their jobs. It is also about people outside the Council who have applied for jobs with us.

We must publish this information broken down into protected groups (see below).

In relation to men and women we employ, we also have to show this information by job, grade, pay, contract type and working pattern.

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Equalities Consultative Forum

This group meets to consider and make recommendations on the Council's equality policy and practice. Its members are people from equality organisations working in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Equalities pages (website)

These are the pages on the Vale of Glamorgan Council website where we put equality information.

Equality Act 2010

This is a law that tells us that we must treat all people fairly and what we must do to achieve this.

Equality information

This helps us see whether our services are fair, whether you can access them easily and if they help different groups get along.

We can use it as evidence to develop equality objectives. We can also use it to assess the impact of our policies and decisions on protected groups.

Equality objectives

These are targets for making services fairer, more accessible or better meet the needs of protected groups.

Equality training programme

This is to promote knowledge and understanding of the general and specific duties. It is also to help people understand issues affecting protected groups.

Gender pay difference or gap

This is the difference in pay between men and women (the gender pay gap) if it is caused by the fact that someone is a man or woman.

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General duty

This helps us contribute to a fairer society by advancing equality and good relations in our day to day activities. We are expected to achieve good equality outcomes in the way we design our policies and services.

Harassment

Under equality law, there are three types of harassment:

- unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic
 - that violates someone's dignity; or
 - creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person;

- unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature
 - that violates someone's dignity; or
 - creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or

- less favourable treatment because of submission to or rejection of previous sex or gender reassignment harassment
 - that violates someone's dignity; or
 - creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or

- less favourable treatment because someone rejects such behaviour.

To decide whether harassment has taken place, the following things are taken into account:

- the perception of the person who has experienced the unwanted behaviour;
- the other circumstances of the case; and
- whether it is reasonable for the conduct to have the effect on the person that it did.

The relevant protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

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Hate crime and incidents

Hate crime is any criminal offence where someone targets the victim because of a protected characteristic. This can happen whether they have that protected characteristic or the criminal just thinks that they do.

Hate incidents are the same except that they are not criminal in nature.

Hate crime can be directed at individuals. It includes verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, offensive graffiti, harassment, malicious communications, damage to property and violence.

Hate crimes and incidents can be directed at whole communities. It includes vandalism of graveyards or places of worship, offensive graffiti in public places, or acts of terrorism.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January) is a national event in the United Kingdom. It is a day when we remember victims of the Holocaust.

Job evaluation

The job evaluation scheme makes sure that people are paid the same amount for similar work.

LGBT Excellence Centre

This organisation provides support to people on issues about sexual orientation and gender identity.

Mentoring programme

This is a programme that provides support to people with protected characteristics who want to develop their careers.

Occupational segregation

This is what we call the employment of mainly men or women in certain types of jobs. There are a number of causes such as

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social expectations, inflexible working, and under-valuing certain types of roles and occupations.

Protected characteristics

There are nine characteristics that are protected under equality law. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Protected group

This is a group of people who share the same protected characteristic. We all belong to several different protected groups.

Public documents

These are documents that we share with you by putting them on our website or in public buildings.

Public Sector Equality Duty

This is a duty which gives guidance on how we must do what we need to do under the Equality Act 2010.

Race Equality First

This organisation offers advice and support to victims of racial discrimination and harassment. It also provides equality advice, training and information to organisations.

Rainbow Award

The Rainbow Mark is an equality standard. It promotes good practice and knowledge of the specific needs, issues and barriers facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in Wales.

Recruitment training

This is training for people who work for the Council and who advertise, select, interview and choose who will get jobs

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(recruitment). This training includes making sure the people recruiting know their responsibilities under equality law.

Remploy

This organisation provides employment opportunities to disabled people.

Sexual Orientation

This is a term that means whether you are heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Sexual orientation is the attraction someone feels towards people of one sex or another or both. The following words describe sexual orientation:

- Lesbians are women who are attracted to other women;
- Gay men are men who are attracted to other men;
- Bisexual are people who are attracted to women and to men;
- Heterosexuals are people who are attracted to people of the opposite sex.

Same-sex attraction is called homosexuality. We often call men and women who are homosexual either 'gay' (for men) or 'lesbian' (for women).

Opposite-sex attraction is called heterosexuality. We often describe people who are heterosexual as 'straight'.

Both-sex attraction is called bisexuality. We usually use the word 'bisexual', or occasionally just 'bi', to describe people who are attracted to both sexes.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual

Lesbians are women who are attracted to other women. Gay men are attracted to other men. Bisexual people are attracted to women and to men.

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Show Racism the Red Card

This is an anti-racist educational charity. It aims to combat racism through role models, who are mostly but not all footballers. These role models present an anti-racist message to young people and others.

It achieves its aims through educational resources, activities to encourage people (including young people) to challenge racism, and challenging racism in football and other sports.

Single Equality Scheme

This plan contained information and actions about equality issues with the aim of improving fairness and equality.

Under the public sector equality duty for Wales, this has been replaced by a different kind of plan called a Strategic Equality Plan.

Specific duties for Wales

The specific duties have been put in place to help us achieve the general duty better and to help you know what we are doing about equality issues.

Strategic Equality Plan

This is a plan which tells you which areas we will improve in the next few years to make sure we treat everyone fairly, you feel safe and respected, and you get what you need.

Victimisation

This is when a person is treated badly because they have made a complaint about discrimination or have given evidence in a discrimination case.

This could include:

- labelling the person a 'troublemaker';
- denying them opportunities or services they would normally have (such as a promotion at work); or
- ignoring them.

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A person who victimises someone else can be forced to pay their victim compensation. This also applies to organisations that do not stop their employees victimising somebody.

Women's development programme

This is designed to help women develop their confidence, knowledge and skills so that they can better develop their careers.