



## No Status Draft

**The Vale of Glamorgan Council's**

**Annual Equality Report**

**2021-2022**

**You can ask for this document in other formats.**

**For example: larger font or on different colour paper.**

**This document will soon be available in Welsh.**

**Bydd y ddogfen hon ar gael yn fuan yn Gymraeg.**

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# Introduction

We must report on progress towards meeting our equality objectives and other equality matters every year by 31<sup>st</sup> March for performance in the previous year. This report tells you about our equality work between April 2021 and March 2022.

We do this to meet our duties under:

- the Equality Act 2010;
- the Public Sector Equality Duty (known as the ‘general duty’); and
- the specific duties for Wales.

We tell you how we have collected and used information to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- advance equality of opportunity; and
- foster good relations.

We also tell you about:

- how we are getting on with our equality objectives;
- the people we employ
- other equality work.

# Background

We have described our main equality work in our [Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024](#).

We agreed this plan in March 2020. It progresses our work from our previous plans in 2012 and 2016. There were a number of things we had to do to develop the first plan. We list the main steps below.

- We looked at the information we had on the people using our services. We especially wanted to know which protected groups were using our services.
- We met with local organisations to see if there were areas that we could work on together.
- We looked at other plans to see if they had actions that needed to be in the Strategic Equality Plan. These included the Corporate Plan and the Equality and Diversity Plan.
- We arranged events to meet with other organisations that have an interest in the needs of protected groups. We went to their meetings if they could not come to ours.
- We consulted with the public, staff, and trade unions.
- We talked to people about what our priorities should be.

This helped us to decide on our equality objectives. These are an important part of the Strategic Equality Plan.

We consulted people again in 2019 for our 2020 – 2024 Plan. We used feedback from engagement and consultation to develop a new set of equality objectives that give us a more balanced focus between internal and external outcomes. We have developed these using more recent research such as '[Is Wales Fairer? 2018](#)' by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. We have also made links with our corporate wellbeing objectives.

To make sure we achieve the equality objectives, we put actions in service plans. These plans guide the work of each service area (such as Housing or Visible Services). Each service has to monitor progress with these actions and report on this.

The leader of the Council leads on equality issues. There is also a Cabinet member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services to direct on equality issues as well as an Equalities Champion. Directors take the lead in their own service area.

We find out about the latest issues and guidance in a number of ways, including through the Equality and Human Rights Commission network.

## **Steps taken to identify and collect relevant information**

We have been collecting information about who uses our services for some time. There is a corporate approach available for doing this so that our Services can collect data on protected groups in a consistent way. We encourage services to improve how they use this information to help them plan their work to better meet people's needs.

In this year's report, we report on the following services:

- Additional Learning Needs and Wellbeing
- Adult Community Learning
- Autism Service
- Benefits
- Communications
- Community Safety
- Customer Relations
- Disabled Facilities Grant
- Electoral Services
- Housing Solutions
- Human Resources
- Learning and Skills – School Access and Organisation
- Learning and Skills – Social Inclusion and Wellbeing
- Learning and Skills – Vulnerable Groups
- Legal and Democratic Services
- Leisure Service
- Older People – Vale 50+ Forum
- Policy and Business Improvement – Vale Public Services Board
- Procurement

- Regeneration and Planning – Planning Policy
- Registration Service
- Social Services – Adult Services
- Social Services – Children’s Services
- Shared Regulatory Services (SRS)
- Strong Communities Grant Fund
- Supporting People Team (Housing)
- Tourism and Events
- Wellbeing
- Youth Service

When we look at the information gathered, we consider:

- the data gathered over the last few years;
- the systems used to gather the data; and
- how Services use this information to make improvements.

This helps managers to identify gaps in the information and take appropriate action.

To clarify why managers need to collect the information, we use guidance from Stonewall.

You can see the guidance in [Appendix 1](#). The form we used to gather information is in [Appendix 2](#).

You can find the equality information that Services have collected in [Appendix 4](#). Each Service says how it has used the information to meet the three aims of the general duty.

The form we use to gather information for this report encourages Services to show how they have used the information to make improvements to services.

## **Reasons for not collecting relevant information**

Some of the reasons for not collecting information include

- staff asking users for personal information face-to-face;
- users not wanting to complete another form;
- users not wanting to provide additional information;
- concern that limited surveys do not reflect a true picture;
- not having systems to collect the information;
- inappropriate to collate the information; and
- availability of data.

We encourage managers to explain the importance of this information to service improvement.

## **Statement on the effectiveness of steps taken to fulfil each of our equality objectives**

Here is a short outline of how we developed our original objectives. You can find full details of this in our first [Strategic Equality Plan](#).

- We used national research to help us understand the issues. For example, we looked at 'How Fair is Wales' and 'Not Just Another Statistic' reports. The Equality and Human Rights Commission produced these reports.
- We looked at whether we had any information in the Council to tell us more.
- We talked to groups who know about the interests of protected groups
- We consulted with our own staff and the public.

- We agreed the equality objectives that we would work on for the next four years.

To review our objectives, we looked at more recent research such as 'Is Wales Fairer? 2018' by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. We also carried out engagement and consultation.

Following this, we agreed our equality objectives, listed below. We show what work we have done on these below.

**Strategic Equality Objective One** – Improve how we involve, engage, and communicate with protected groups about our work and decisions

**Strategic Equality Objective Two** – Continue to reduce the gender pay gap in the Council, identify whether there is a pay gap for ethnic minorities in the Council by March 2022, and report on both annually.

**Strategic Equality Objective Three** – Improve employment opportunities in the Council for protected groups, particularly disabled and young people, to more closely reflect the diversity of the local population by March 2024.

**Strategic Equality Objective Four** – Continue to work on developing a more inclusive work environment that supports staff from all backgrounds to reach their potential through implementing a range of actions by March 2024.

**Strategic Equality Objective Five** – Provide support and development to elected members on equality issues.

**Strategic Equality Objective Six** – Develop and implement plans throughout the life of this plan to address attainment gaps for children and young people and provide support to overcome barriers to them reaching their full potential.

**Strategic Equality Objective Seven** – Develop and implement processes throughout the life of this plan to address hate crimes, violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence.

**Strategic Equality Objective Eight** – Consider the housing needs of people with protected characteristics and how our work impacts on them, taking action to address any disproportionate impacts on these groups.

**Strategic Equality Objective Nine** – Work in partnership to consider issues relating to transport accessibility, particularly for disabled people and older people.

**Strategic Equality Objective Ten** – Develop and implement plans throughout the life of this plan to promote our natural and built environment and cultural heritage, including accessibility, to protected groups.

## **Strategic Equality Objective 1**

### **Improve how we involve, engage, and communicate with protected groups about our work and decisions.**

The Communications Team has conducted a number of public engagement exercises during this period including surveys and consultations which have informed a wide range of Council decisions and actions. Response rates to public surveys are usually high. We collect equalities data to monitor the accessibility of public engagement work.

- We held a consultation period for the Local Development Plan from November 2021 to January 2022. We encouraged residents to get involved by viewing and commenting on the relevant documents via the Council's website. The consultation was advertised on the Council's website and social media. Views and comments were accepted digitally, via email, and over the phone.
- We held a consultation in December 2021 on the budget for 2022/2023 and potential Council Tax increases. Again, this was advertised on the website and via social media.
- We ran a survey in February 2022 in partnership with the Public Services Board (PSB) to obtain residents' views on how the Vale can become more age-friendly.
- The PSB ran the Well-being Assessment consultation, which will inform the development of the Well-being Plan.

Response rates to public surveys are usually high.

The Communications Team has been involved with the Council's staff networks, GLAM and Diverse. Their work has included setting up internal web pages, communicating information, and promoting events. The networks help to raise

awareness of issues faced by colleagues from protected groups and to ensure the Vale of Glamorgan is a positive, inclusive, and nurturing place to live and work.

Our Customer Relations Team monitor responses to ensure that everyone in the community has equal access to the complaints process and other customer services, ensuring that we don't discriminate against those with protected characteristics.

Where people who share a protected characteristic are not represented in the feedback, we undertake targeted promotion to ensure that those groups are not being unfairly disadvantaged through lack of access to the complaints process.

Where we receive complaints from those who share a protected characteristic, we can ascertain how services are delivered to that group ensuring no discrimination.

We have continued to work on our response times to complaints. In quarter 1, 63.04% of complaints were addressed within timescale against a target of 75%, a significant improvement when compared with performance in the same period of 2020/21, 59.8%. The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales has begun to publish comparative performance figures for complaints resolved within 20 working days. Based on this measurement, the Vale of Glamorgan Council is placed 9th in Wales overall with 84.78% resolved in 20 days, against the Welsh average being 78.05%.

We have invested in digital platforms to enhance our reach and engagement with citizens, service users, learners, and partners.

We have developed a public engagement database and rolling calendar of activities and adopted a new 'Participate Vale' portal for e-petitions and engagement activities as part of the Council's Public Participation Strategy.

We have renewed our focus on building in the voice of young people in all aspects of Council business: strengthening the partnership between young people and the Council in shaping our recovery priorities and developing sustainable services.

We implemented the first phase of a project to improve customer experience at C1V. This has added new functionality, such as using maps to better identify incident

locations, the ability to create an account so that residents can track transactions, and better email communication.

Teams in Social Services have involved their service users in different ways, including staff appointments, consultations, and tender processes. Children's Services provided opportunities for young people to participate in the recruitment process for Operational Managers and Social Service strategic posts, as well as the recruitment and interview process for Youth Offending Service Prevention Officers. Adult Services set up a Service User Panel of citizens with learning and/or physical disabilities for Supported Living tender evaluations. The panel devised questions and exemplar answers and were supported throughout by colleagues from the Contracts Team and Vale People First.

We have explored different ways to engage with service users, including social media as a tool for communicating information and sharing surveys with young people and families. We have involved children and young people to help develop child friendly and accessible versions of mission statements, self-assessment questionnaires, and surveys.

The Adult Placement Service consulted with service users and carers, working out the most appropriate and convenient means of communication for each party. This included telephone calls, emails, and focus groups, as well as providing support with completion of surveys and questionnaires. We involved service users in the response to the regional Dementia Plan, focusing on the specific needs of individuals and carers at memory clinics hosted at the Vale Community Resource Centre. Similarly, Residential Services have introduced intergenerational activities, helping to establish a dementia friendly local community as well as links between different age groups. Day services provide activities to promote interaction and are tailored to individual need, following feedback from service users.

Electoral Services does not monitor equalities data every time for new registrations but works hard to reach various demographics. To encourage eligible residents of the Vale of Glamorgan to register to vote, we have undertaken various activities to ensure registering to vote is available to all:

- We used social media campaigns for International Youth Day and Local Democracy Week.
- We facilitated a point of contact in each Vale of Glamorgan care home to ensure that vulnerable adults can register without barriers.
- We use the weekly movement sheets provided to us to by the Homelessness Department so we can encourage homeless residents to register to vote. We started an incentive of £10 shopping voucher for any successful registration for anyone in homeless or supported accommodation
- We distribute all our social media output for sharing to the Vale of Glamorgan's Regional Resettlement Officer, who works with Syrian and Afghan nationals who have resettled in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- We have used social media and a resources pack for schools which was shared for distribution on Google classroom and other platforms to encourage registration for young people.
- We have utilised bus stop advertising aimed at young people and qualifying foreign nationals.
- We ran a competition to encourage young people between 14-17 to register.
- We carry out an annual house to house canvass to enable anyone that might need assistance to have the opportunity to register to vote.

Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) identifies and collects equality data to seek feedback from businesses and properties with regards to customer satisfaction and service improvement. We collect details of first-language use during food inspections and subsequently utilise the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS) for non-Welsh and non-English speaking service users. We provide access to NoiseApp as an initial response to the majority of domestic noise complaints, but provide a

different version for customers with specific needs or disabilities as well as a paper Noise Diary for customers without digital access. We also arrange to meet service users in their home if they have difficulty accessing the office or virtual meetings. We ensure that we respect religious events when timing visits and inspections. Within SRS, we also monitor equality information in terms of communicable disease. This helps us to identify certain risk groups and to properly target interventions.

## **Strategic Equality Objective 2**

**Continue to reduce the gender pay gap in the Council, identify whether there is a pay gap for ethnic minorities in the Council by March 2022, and report on both annually.**

We monitor the gender pay gap on a quarterly basis. We have seen a significant decline in the median gender pay gap which we report to the Welsh Government. The mean gender pay gap has remained similar over the last few years. We report on this quarterly through performance indicators and annually through this report.

The gender pay gap has increased slightly from last year. The difference in mean hourly rate between male and female employees is £0.71, an increase from £0.60 last year. The mean gender pay gap as a percentage of men's pay is 4.67% and the median gender pay gap as a percentage of men's pay is 5.73%, which is less than the UK median gender pay gap.

We also monitor the ethnicity pay gap on a regular basis, reporting as part of the Council's Quarterly Performance Indicators. The difference in mean hourly rate between White British and Ethnic Minorities is £0.29, which is less than last year. The mean ethnicity pay gap is 1.97%. The difference in median ethnicity pay gap is £0.15 which is 1.17% as a percentage.

The last pay review in 2019 in relation to the revised NJC spine had a positive impact on the gender pay gap. We are undertaking work to review the current pay structure and we will again consider both the gender and ethnicity pay gaps. When

recruiting to roles, we consider where we advertise to ensure we are getting representation across all applicant groups. We continue to work on improving our diversity profile.

### **Strategic Equality Objective 3**

**Improve employment opportunities in the Council for protected groups, particularly disabled and young people, to more closely reflect the diversity of the local population by March 2024.**

We have explored how we reach different groups in relation to posting job adverts such as using different outlets and more varied imagery. We will continue to work with our staff networks to look at ways in which we can attract a more diverse range of applicants. We plan to consult with both internal and external groups to identify barriers to employment.

The Children and Young People's Service (CYPS), part of Social Services, has worked in partnership with Human Resources and other Council departments to ring-fence the availability of Foundation Modern Apprentice (FMA) positions for looked-after children and those leaving care. The numbers are still low, as there were no apprenticeships during the pandemic but there is currently one apprentice working at a primary school in the Vale of Glamorgan. There is also a care leaver on the Welsh Government internship/apprenticeship with the Department for Works and Pensions.

CYPS has provided opportunities for young people and care leavers to participate in the recruitment process for Operation Managers and Social Services strategic posts. Similarly, the Youth Offending Service (YOS) involved young people in the recruitment and interview process for YOS Prevention Officers.

The Vale Communities for Work Team trains its project staff to be aware of their responsibilities under equality legislation so that they can challenge any unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation or other inappropriate conduct. The programme targets those furthest from the job market. This includes a high number

of people who face additional barriers, some of which are health-related such as mental health and special needs. We provide resources for people with complex barriers and aim to provide an inclusive service.

Vale Courses continue to run a wide-ranging programme of courses for adults aged over sixteen, designed to enhance wellbeing and opportunities to develop interests which enrich quality of life. Courses are held at accessible community venues across the Vale of Glamorgan. As enrolment is completed over the phone, 100% of learners have completed equality monitoring. We ask about disabilities so we can identify any support needed with learning.

We ask about the age of our learners as we need to make sure learners are over sixteen years old to access the courses. We noted that no learners aged between 16 and 25 enrolled in September 2021, so we pursued support through the Winter of Wellbeing funding in March 2022 to attract young people. We also ask about gender and have found that only 22% of enrolment is from learners identifying as male. We will therefore need to look at the programme of courses and consult with the community to identify barriers to learning and potential courses to attract more men. Working with our residents to improve their wellbeing and develop interests through the courses on offer can help boost employability and confidence in seeking work.

Similarly, Learn Welsh the Vale based at Palmerston Centre use equalities monitoring data to plan future promotional work. We compare our data to Vale-wide statistics to expose differences and where future classes or advertising can be targeted. This year, Learn Welsh the Vale advertised on Bro Radio to reach a wider audience, provided prospectuses to schools to target young people, and worked alongside Families First.

We continue to support those experiencing barriers to employment and training opportunities through our Communities for Work (C4W) schemes. The project finished this year at 126% against target, with 76 actual enrolments against a target of 60 people. We worked with the JobCentre in 2021 to deliver outreach sessions to engage more people in the Communities for Work scheme. More people engaged than last year.

The number of Vale of Glamorgan young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) is at a record low. Contributory factors have been the success of the European Social Funded (ESF) Inspire to Achieve and Inspire to Work programmes and effective partnership arrangements, particularly with Careers Wales. During the latter half of this period, between 125% and 175% against target of young people were engaged through the Inspire to Work scheme. In the first quarter of 2021/22, the Kickstart initiative saw over 100 of 146 placements across 51 local businesses filled. By winter, over 45 young people aged 16 to 24 had taken part in the Kickstart scheme at the Council. Of these, three participants have obtained permanent positions.

#### **Strategic Equality Objective 4**

**Continue to work on developing a more inclusive work environment that supports staff from all backgrounds to reach their potential through implementing a range of actions by March 2024.**

We continue our work as a Stonewall Diversity Champion using the Stonewall Workforce Equality Index to guide our work. Submissions to the index were suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic but restarted in 2021.

We continue to monitor and evaluate improvements towards further inclusion of our LGBTQ+ workforce. Once again, have improved our standing in the Workplace Equalities Index. This is particularly impressive given that the number of organisations taking part had significantly increased. We were awarded a silver award for 2021/22 and rank 190<sup>th</sup> out of 403, with a score of 63.5 out of 200.

We work with the GLAM staff network to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ issues, seek feedback on workplace issues, and to make our workplace more inclusive.

We also work with the Diverse staff network to promote positive experiences for staff from ethnic minorities. We took part in Race Equality Matter's Race Awareness

Week event for the first time in 2022. We became a spotlight organisation when we made an early commitment to certain actions including running a Safe Space Meeting in February 2022.

We have continued to promote staff health and wellbeing through a range of activities and initiatives from remote exercise sessions to online courses. Wellbeing champions are supported to promote health living and wellbeing.

We have a broad range of self-enrolled courses available to staff on iDev, which can be accessed from both corporate and personal devices. These courses can help staff improve their knowledge and awareness of protected groups, inclusivity, and discrimination. This can then help improve experiences for staff with protected characteristics. We have promoted the Council's sexual harassment policy which is covered in the Council's Grievance and Resolution Policy. We also post articles on Staffnet that highlight and explain days of awareness or significance, including National Inclusion Week, LGBTQ+ Month, and Black History Month.

We have considered how we could promote employment opportunities in ways that challenge stereotypes. Our Social Care advertising has included both male and female imagery, which is important in ensuring we obtain as many suitable applicants as possible. Likewise, we have ensured there is fair representation in the imagery used in adverts for other Council positions on our social media as well as graphics in our Careers in Care job fair advertisement to encourage applications from all genders, ages, races and regardless of disability. We also ensure that any messages communicated via social media challenge gender stereotypes.

We have also started to address the six areas of action for pregnancy and maternity discrimination, focusing on the Recommendations for Change report for March 2024.

## **Strategic Equality Objective 5**

**Provide support and development to elected members on equality issues.**

Members have access to iDev where they can find a range of e-learning modules on equality issues. They are also able to access previous sessions and presentations via MemberNet. Information has been provided during the year specifically in relation to race awareness.

We keep Members' training and development under review and arrange to meet identified needs. We are planning for Equality and Diversity training to be mandatory for all members from 2022 with an initial session to be held as part of the new Member Induction programme. This will include information from the staff networks, GLAM and Diverse. The training will take place from June 2022 after local elections.

## **Strategic Equality Objective 6**

**Develop and implement plans throughout the life of this plan to address attainment gaps for children and young people and provide support to overcome barriers to them reaching their full potential.**

We have developed and implemented actions in a number of ways to address attainment gaps for children and young people who may have barriers to attainment and engagement linked to their protected characteristics.

Each year the Council consults with residents on school admission arrangements where there are significant proposed changes to admission arrangements to help inform equality impact assessments.

There were two statutory consultations between April 2021 to March 2022 which resulted in two Equality Impact Assessments. In Penarth, the proposed changes were to incorporate Bute Cottage Nursery and Cogan Nursery schools into Evenlode Primary and Cogan Primary schools respectively. In St Nicholas, the proposal involved the school being rebuilt onsite at a larger capacity, to also include nursery provision.

Both proposals were found to have either a positive or neutral impact upon protected groups. The Penarth plans found that there would a positive impact on age and disability criteria, but no or neutral impact on other protected characteristics. The St Nicholas plans echo the Penarth findings and in addition, as a Church in Wales school, increasing provision would allow more children to be taught in a faith school. In terms of socio-economic disadvantage, the proposals would have a positive impact due to increased employment opportunities at the school and nursery provision in the area helping parents with child-care solutions.

Children were also invited to give their views in consultation workshops, as well as drop-in sessions for parents, carers, guardians, and members of the community.

During 2021/22, we delivered the following school buildings in line with the low and net zero carbon projects as part of the School Investment and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme: Pencoedtre High School's new build which opened January 2022, the Whitmore High School Specialist Resource Base in September 2021, South Point Primary opened in March 2022 as Wales' first net carbon zero school, Ysgol Sant Baruc construction started in January 2022, and the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Resource Base Gladstone was established.

The Inclusion team are trained by the Resilience Project in supporting mental health needs and offering support for learners who are transitioning or who experience mental health difficulties linked to their sexual orientation. They support learners, their families, and school professionals, and share resources from organisations including Mermaids and Stonewall. Staff were provided with specialist training to provide an appropriate service that meets the needs of young LGBTQ+ people.

We have undertaken multi-agency working to ensure schools which have identified issues around attendance have received the appropriate support and signposting to agencies or professionals to effectively address any issues. This is shown by targeted work with St Cyres and Pencoedtre around issues related to race and mental health disabilities.

We monitor the rates of attendance for pupils who are entitled to free school meals (eFSM) as this an indicator of social economic disadvantage and key to promoting equality of opportunity. We also monitor additional learning needs (ALN) and gender. We have identified reduced attendance rates for children with certain protected characteristics coming out of the pandemic which is exemplified by the reduction in eFSM attendance.

We received approximately 3100 Pupil Development Grant applications in the 2021/22 academic year, and paid out 2759 Pupil Development Grants, 69 of which were for looked-after children. The total spend on Pupil Development Grants was £368,125. Welsh Government extended qualifying conditions to all school years in 2021, meaning we received more applications and awarded more grants than previous years. Parents, carers, and independent young people can claim the Pupil Development Grant if they meet the qualifying criteria for free school meals via the same application form, so this is a good indicator of the number of children entitled to free school meals.

The Council has responded proactively with targeted support to those schools where there has been a reduction in the attendance of non-white British learners.

There has also been use of Elected Home Education (EHE) grants to support and ensure EHE learners who have vulnerabilities and/or protected characteristics have access to support and services. Increased and targeted support from the EHE team has resulted in increased engagement with families and take-up of support sessions.

We have placed an emphasis on a training roll-out relating to inclusion / exclusion issues and Pastoral support plans. The Attainment Wellbeing and Engagement (AWE) team was created to support vulnerable families, many with protected characteristics, and has enabled enhanced access and engagement with schools. This is in line with the Council's wider trauma-informed approach to addressing pupil's needs related to early childhood trauma. This approach encompasses a focus on understanding and meeting the specific needs of vulnerable learners rather than adopting a punitive approach to incidents involving these learners.

The Children and Young People's Partnership continue to commission and develop services for children, young people, and families, including in-house projects and other projects funded by Families First. They also deliver the Youth Wellbeing Service. Young people and service users are encouraged to be involved in the redesign or recruitment of staff, such as participating in shortlisting and interviewing panels, as took place in the recommission of three services in this period.

Individual projects and services collect equalities data, and where relevant, it influences the design and provision of services. We use data to check on the educational outcomes and wellbeing of vulnerable groups. Schools and community-based counselling data reported a 3% increase in young people identifying as female accessing services, which is now above the national average. They have also noted an increase in non-white young people, which again will be monitored. Families First report data per project and following the creation of new monitoring processes, they have seen a decrease in the number of 'prefer not to say' returns.

Following training on 'No Outsiders' offered to schools, the Children's and Young Peoples' Partnership purchased a copy of the 'No Outsiders' course book and forty-five recommended different book titles. Aimed at primary age pupils, the books cover a vast array of topics challenging stereotypes and areas of discrimination. For example: books on sexuality, gender expression, discrimination, race, age, and acceptance. A selection of thirty books were distributed to every primary school.

Schools were provided with a Model Anti-Bullying policy in January 2021. This looks at all forms of 'traditional' bullying as well as one-off prejudice related incidents that focus on protected characteristics, such as racism, transphobia, sexism, misogyny, Special Educational Needs (SEN), and disability.

In December 2021 ESTYN published a report in response to a national victim's campaign, 'Everyone's Invited'. The report is entitled 'We don't tell our teachers' and focuses on peer-on-peer sexual harassment in secondary school settings. This report also highlighted the worrying presence of homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia in school settings. In response, the Welsh Government published a list of

eleven recommendations for schools, Local Authorities and Welsh Government. We are currently working to progress these actions with our schools.

From November 2021, the collection and analysis of school bullying data and data of one-off prejudice incidents has become an automated process with an ICT system called 'Clarity'. This can extract anonymised data from the 'My Concern' ICT system which is a bespoke record management system used by all schools in the Vale of Glamorgan to manage any safeguarding concerns. Analysis of this data shows the following:

- 133 incidents of bullying were recorded across all schools.
- The bullying category with highest recorded levels was 'bullying focussed on appearance' (29 records), followed by Homophobic/Biphobic/Transphobic bullying (18 records).
- The most common method used for carrying out bullying was verbal (56 records), with 1 record where any form of physical force was used.
- A total of 48 'one-off prejudice incidents' were recorded, the highest recording for a particular category was for 'race' with 27 being recorded.

We are currently unable to complete any comparable data examination on an academic yearly/termly basis, as the new way of reporting has only been active since November 2021. This should be possible in the 2022/2023 reporting period.

We actively engage with third sector providers to gain support for schools in raising awareness of racism and other forms of prejudice.

A pilot which included the temporary appointment of a Family and Community Engagement (FaCE) officer, targeting ethnic minority learners has been undertaken by the Vulnerable Groups Team in conjunction with St Cyres School. It was very insightful and produced meaningful suggestions in response to the findings, including

a proposed framework for anti-racism practice. The framework forms the basis of how St Cyres School, the local authority and other schools can raise the aspirations, attainment, and attendance of ethnic minority learners across the Vale of Glamorgan.

Alongside the pilot, St Cyres School was the first school in the Vale of Glamorgan to achieve the School of Sanctuary award in March 2022. This has led to the Vulnerable Groups Team becoming active members of the Schools of Sanctuary UK network, showing our other schools how they can welcome all children and support pupils to feel seen, supported, and included.

The 14 Plus team in Children and Young People's Services have worked to increase engagement with care leavers. We have promoted the team's Facebook page which can only be accessed by care leavers. The page is subsequently used more than previously and is a good way to share useful information for care leavers as well as providing the opportunity to communicate through Messenger. Following consultation with foster carers, young people, and Social Service quality assurance, we now send questionnaires via text or email with a link, which makes it easier for young people to respond and engage with the survey, improving the scale and number of responses received.

Family and secure home life are crucial to addressing attainment gaps and providing support to overcome barriers to reaching full potential. To help ensure that children and young people have the best possible start in life, we have taken action with our adoption and fostering strategies.

We have been working on the Adoption service recruitment strategy and how to attract applications from wider demographics. As such, we carefully monitor protected characteristics of applicants, in particular the marital status of the applicant and faith or belief. In this respect, we have been in contact with Christian and Muslim adoption groups to establish working relationships. Similarly, we have been involved with New Family Social, an LGBTQ+ adoption agency. This work is reflected in Tweets by the Council in October 2021 and July 2022 where photos, text and emojis of same-sex couples were used in adoption-related promotion posts.

We have worked to promote the fostering service and to provide clear and accessible information about becoming a foster carer. This has involved doing more to monitor protected characteristics. We have run myth-busting campaigns and used under-represented groups in promotion work to challenge perceptions about foster carers. We posted articles on our external website in September 2021 to promote the Foster Wales initiative to keep cared-for children in the same area. We continue with work that started in 2019 to update the Children's Information document following consultation with professionals, foster carers, and young people. We have also updated fostering service questionnaires to include young peoples' viewpoint and have adapted questions in terms of age and ability.

A foster carer award ceremony organised by the Children and Young People's Service was held in the Summer at Sully Sports and Social Club to recognise and celebrate achievements. This was a positive opportunity to interact with foster carers and staff from other departments including Education.

We monitor data on protected characteristics for the Families First Advice Line as the service is personalised depending on the family's needs and concerns. Likewise, FACT (Families Achieving Change Together) monitors protected characteristics to identify appropriate agencies who can help develop a plan of action for the family. Both teams support and help empower families to implement changes to help children and young people overcome barriers to fulfil their potential. The Flying Start team also provide an important role in supporting families to give children a better start in life and improving children's development, health, and wellbeing in preparation for school. Childcare settings, support services, and health visitor services have returned to pre-pandemic ways. The service engages with parents and carers through surveys and questionnaires, finding that social media is an indispensable tool in connecting families with the right services.

The Youth Offending Service (YOS) have developed a child-friendly version of their mission statement and self-assessment; and have involved young people in focus groups and consultations. Children and young people have also been involved in the recruitment and interview process for YOS Prevention Officers. The YOS assess all

children and young people within the service to identify any needs or protected characteristics that need additional assistance or referral to appropriate services, ensuring each service user is given the right support to reach their full potential.

We implemented an Anti-Social Behaviour Early Prevention Programme for young people. This has helped to reduce first time entrants into the criminal justice system by 48.25%.

Over 1,400 vulnerable young people accessed youth work projects, interventions, well-being support, well-being mentoring and homelessness prevention digitally and face-to-face.

### **Strategic Equality Objective 7**

#### **Develop and implement processes throughout the life of this plan to address hate crimes, violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence.**

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is committed to the provision of services to prevent, protect, and respond to domestic abuse. The Council works in collaboration with Cardiff Council, the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, and other partners to deliver actions in line with the Violence Against Women Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) 5-year Regional Strategy (2018-2023). The strategy recognises the need to focus on ensuring services are equitable for those with protected characteristics. It places an emphasis on honour-based violence or forced marriage, ensuring that we work to improve understanding of how forced marriage affects individuals with protected characteristics. The Community Safety team has been working with VAWDASV colleagues in Cardiff to prepare for the refresh of the VAWDASV strategy in 2023.

The Council has a Domestic Abuse Assessment Referral Co-ordinator (DAARC) who receives reports of police incidents of domestic abuse. We carry out a robust risk assessment and offer victims support and signposting, dependent on their wishes

and needs. We have recently started to ask more questions to fully appreciate the correlation between domestic violence and protected characteristics including race.

We are also responsible for co-ordinating the Multi Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) which are held fortnightly to discuss high-risk domestic abuse cases. A variety of agencies, including Council departments, work together to devise action plans to best support victims and their families, and ensure risks are mitigated. Over the year, 100% of domestic abuse victims reported that they felt safer in their own homes because of target-hardening and safety measures.

We recommissioned Atal y Fro in 2021/22 as the specialist support provider in the Vale of Glamorgan. Atal y Fro work with the Vale Council and the Supporting People Team to ensure that victims of domestic abuse have access to help, support, and protection. This includes refuge; second stage and dispersed housing; and counselling and relevant programmes including outreach support. We work with several specialist services to signpost victims who may require different support:

- Bawso – generic and specialist services for Black and minority ethnic communities affected or at risk of domestic abuse and all forms of violence including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-based violence, human trafficking, and modern slavery.
- Safer Wales Dyn Project – support services for straight, gay, bi and trans men who experience domestic abuse from a partner.
- Rainbow Bridge – a Victim Support run service that specifically supports victims of domestic abuse who identify as lesbian, gay, bi or trans.
- Live Fear Free – a Welsh Government service providing help and advice about violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence.
- New Pathways – delivers current and historical sexual abuse counselling for women, men and children.

The Safer Vale Partnership has continued to work with the Vale of Glamorgan Council to create a safer environment for people to live, work, and visit, free from crime, disorder, and the fear of crime. The 2020-2023 Safer Vale Partnership strategy focuses on anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, community cohesion, and community engagement, responding actively to any other community issues that arise.

We have increased engagement with members of the public regarding community safety advice, support, and awareness. Social media membership with the Safer Vale Partnership has increased to 935 Twitter followers, 557 Facebook followers, and 155 Instagram followers, receiving over 350 tweets, over 440 Facebook posts, and over 40 Instagram posts. This represents a positive increase in the number of advice and support messages being issued. We let people know about community safety engagement events; we educate and inform about anti-social behaviour and security and fraud alerts; and we raise awareness of local and national campaigns and significant days including Home Shouldn't Be A Place of Fear, International Women's Day, LGBT History Month, Call Out Only, and Mental Health Awareness Week.

We host a Community Cohesion Officer who engages with members of the community to promote inclusivity and eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. They also work on increasing membership of the Community Cohesion Group, and share community safety information to help create safer, more cohesive communities. They work closely with the South Wales Police Hate Crime Officer to keep hate crime figures in the Vale lower than the South Wales average. The Community Cohesion Officer also acts with regards to the Tension Monitoring Process in the Vale. There were 43 Tension monitoring forms received last year, which is a 72% increase on the previous year. This reflects the promotion work carried out by the team to provide earlier intervention to community issues, working alongside colleagues from South Wales Police and the Housing department.

The Community Safety Team is responsible for driving forward the Contest Agenda across the Vale. This year, we began a restructure of the Prevent Board, who

monitor the Channel Panel. The Channel Panel is a multi-agency board where individuals thought to be at risk of radicalisation are discussed and provided with support and interventions to prevent them being drawn into extremism or terrorist behaviour. It is crucial for understanding trends and sharing resources. The restructure will also include a refreshed Prevent Action Plan.

Members of staff from Learning & Skills have attended different anti-racism training sessions to ensure the most appropriate and useful workshops are delivered in Vale schools.

### **Strategic Equality Objective 8**

**Consider the housing needs of people with protected characteristics and how our work impacts on them, taking action to address any disproportionate impacts on these groups.**

A broad review of the Homes4U Scheme is in process, to ensure all social housing is allocated proportionately. We have begun initial discussions with partners about consultation initiatives.

We have reviewed and amended the allocation process for households with accessible housing needs to ensure that disabled applicants are considered for a greater number of homes.

Homelessness prevention continues to be a priority. We have commissioned officers through the Council's Supporting People Service/Housing Support Grant to aid the Welsh Government Rapid Rehousing approach to emerging from the pressures of the pandemic.

We continue to follow Welsh Government guidance to remove priority need investigations, which were historically important in managing demand. The number presenting as homeless and applying for housing has increased since the removal of this test, particularly in single males. This has added pressure on temporary

accommodation and procurement of hotel accommodation. 126 hotel rooms were block-booked up to 31 March 2022.

Colleagues from Regeneration and Planning have worked with Housing as part of the Replacement Local Development Plan for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments. The work is ongoing but started during this period.

The Children and Young Persons' team (CYPS) identified a gap in accommodation provision for young people involved with the CYPS team over the age of sixteen and with complex needs. Subsequently, in partnership with the Housing department and a third sector provider, we opened a supported accommodation provision for young people and adults with complex needs. This helps the Council provide appropriate accommodation for young people and adults who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness.

Customers wishing to claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction now do so via online application forms. We include equalities monitoring questions are part of the online application so the move from paper applications means the we can now more closely examine protected characteristics such as sex, age, and disability. Customers are also able to select their nationality or ethnic group, which has no bearing on their benefit entitlement but can be monitored for equalities reasons. Customer satisfaction questionnaires generally have a poor response rate, especially as the in-person counter service has had reduced opening since 2020 due to the pandemic.

We extract and examine data regarding the age, disability, and income status of benefit customers throughout the financial year to monitor caseload and trends. It is also used to report on accuracy and caseload to the Department for Works and Pensions. This data also assists with budgetary planning for Council Tax Reduction and Discretionary Housing Payments budgets, as these are local schemes and not fully funded by central government. Data extraction also helps us to future-plan and consider staffing levels.

We continued to see a decrease in the working-age Housing Benefit caseload during this period, as well as an increase in working-age Council Tax Reduction claims for those who do not get a benefit that entitles them to maximum Council Tax Reduction. These findings highlight the increase in the number of people claiming Universal Credit in the Vale of Glamorgan, the majority of whom are also working. This helps us understand the socio-economic demands of our communities.

Benefits staff also work closely with colleagues from Homelessness and Housing including the Money Advice Team, to ensure positive outcomes for mutual clients. Additionally, the Disabled Facilities Grant helps people stay in their own homes and remain living in their own communities. The high satisfaction levels from customers during the delivery of the disabled facilities grant shows how the scheme is effective in involving customers and families with protected characteristics at all stages of design and decision making.

We approved plans to develop Council housing stock across three sites in Barry, which includes adapted housing in Clos Holm View for disabled residents and families with disabilities. We provided eleven units of modular eco-friendly housing at Court Road, with outdoor space to help encourage social interaction and community building. These are self-contained temporary accommodation for homeless clients moving on from bed and breakfast hostel accommodation. This has benefited single men and women. We have approved plans to develop older peoples' apartments in Penarth.

We have continued to deliver the One Stop Shop advice service and have returned to in-person provision. We provide a full range of housing related support, advice, and assistance for residents in areas like tenancy support, access to employment, mental health, homelessness, and budgeting. This has helped tenancies to last longer for lots of residents, including disabled people.

During 2021, we fulfilled our pledge to rehouse Syrian families via the UKRS scheme and have made a further pledge to support two Afghan families affected by the current crisis in Afghanistan.

## **Strategic Equality Objective 9**

**Work in partnership to consider issues relating to transport accessibility, particularly for disabled people and older people.**

The 2022 survey by the Vale 50+ Forum reveals that following health, transport is the top topic which members wish to receive information about or attend meetings to discuss, showing how important transport is to older people. Nearly a quarter of respondents agreed that public transport in the Vale is reliable, safe, accessible, and well connected.

We have secured funding to further secure the future of Greenlinks community transport in rural and urban areas. This includes accessible buses, helping residents without transport to access services and enable social interaction. We also provide a bus to Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern, a grass roots community support service.

After missing a year due to covid restrictions, the Barry Island Customer Satisfaction was carried out in 2021. From this survey, 26% of respondents stated parking was ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’, 12% gave these classifications to road access, and 19% believed public transport to be ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. Over 30% of respondents were over 55, which highlights that transport and accessibility to local facilities are important and require consideration.

We provide free parking for disabled people with a blue badge. We have also installed tactile pavement crossings near to bus stops to assist those with sight difficulties and raised kerbs at bus stops to assist less able people getting on and off buses.

We worked in collaboration with Welsh Government, the Regional Transport Authority, and the Cardiff Capital Region to explore opportunities for transport improvements throughout the Vale of Glamorgan. We have progressed projects at Barry Docks and Cogan and have made further access adaptations to Barry and Cadoxton stations to enable step-free access to platforms via a lift.

We made a further commitment to supporting staff to choose healthier and more sustainable forms of transport in line with our Healthy Travel Charter. To mark Healthy Travel Wales Day in September, we launched a programme of events and activities for our staff including the Cycle2Work scheme, a cycle maintenance session at the Civic Offices with opportunity to trial an e-bike, train and bus discounts, promotion of walking maps and the free trial of e-bikes through OVObike. We also installed three cycle repair kits at the Alps, Civic Offices and Docks Offices enabling staff to make emergency repairs to their bikes. We have also promoted active travel in schools with 18 schools participating in Living Street's WOW project, to walk one day a week to school.

### **Strategic Equality Objective 10**

**Develop and implement plans throughout the life of this plan to promote our natural and built environment and cultural heritage, including accessibility, to protected groups.**

The Strong Communities Grant Fund helps to empower organisations across the Vale to take the lead in identifying, developing, and delivering projects that serve their communities. All projects must demonstrate how they will benefit groups with protected characteristics and consider the socio-economic disadvantage, to provide a more inclusive environment that can be enjoyed by a diverse range of people. Several projects benefit people from more than one protected characteristic. It is also important for organisations that apply to the fund to have an appropriate equalities policy to ensure they are eligible for support.

Applications in this period came from a variety of organisations including community centres, music and arts groups, and sports clubs. The range of projects shows that the fund is helping to improve engagement with protected groups, working in partnership to consider accessibility needs, social inclusion, and promoting natural and built environment and cultural heritage.

The Barry Island Customer Satisfaction survey allows us to obtain feedback from tourists and visitors to ensure the needs of all communities are met. If any particular group show a change in trend or notable reaction to specific aspects, then we are able to identify and consider appropriate action.

The Replacement Local Development Plan will inform planning and development in the Vale for the next fifteen years. We held public consultation between November 2021 and January 2022 to obtain the views of stakeholders. We monitored equalities information via the online consultation form, which has helped develop a clearer picture of the range of people engaging and identifying groups who may need to be targeted to diversify and widen the scope of public engagement.

Creative Rural Communities funding ended on 31 December 2021. Some previous projects were still live from March to December 2021, but we did not issue any new funding in this period. Projects that were still operational at this time had to demonstrate that the project addressed one or more of these themes: Equal Opportunities including the Welsh Language; Sustainable Development; and Poverty and Social Exclusion. Since Creative Rural Communities ended, the grants and funding team within Regeneration and Planning have been in the process of setting up a new team to oversee new similar functions. The new schemes are funded by the central government and have detailed criteria about characteristics to capture, so the new 'Creative Communities' will only have scope to influence the equality aspect in the design of new projects.

We have helped communities in the St Luke and St Paul's estate in Penarth to make the area cleaner, greener, and healthier as part of the 'Clean Slate' project. This work has helped develop the food pod, information hub, play area, and community garden. We have planted similar community gardens and allotments at Palmerston Learning Centre creating new accessible opportunities for volunteers and learners.

We involved residents in local environmental improvement projects including St David's Crescent play area, Belle Vue pavilion, and the Penarth Historic Shelter public art scheme.

## **Other matters relevant to the general duty and specific duties**

You will see in [Appendix 4](#) how which services have collected data and promoted equality.

In addition, we report below on other matters that help us to promote equality.

### **Equality Impact Assessments**

We assess the impact of our work on protected groups. We publish the results of our assessments on our website.

The process for carrying out equality impact assessments links to guidance, research, and data. Only officers may start the process before contacting the Equality Team for further advice. We hope this process will improve the quality of the assessments.

We continue to support managers to think about their work in this way. We provide training on how to carry out assessments. There is an e-learning module for people to learn how to do it. We ask them to show their considerations in a formal record that we can publish.

It is important for us to consider how budget changes and increased pressure on budgets might affect our services. As we prepare budgets, we think about how changes might affect protected groups. We also think about how we can minimise adverse impacts on them. We publish on our website the assessment of how the budget impacts on protected groups.

In preparation for the introduction of the Social-economic Duty which came into force on 31 March 2021, we amended our equality impact assessment process and guidance to take account of socio-economic disadvantage. At the same time, we also reflected Welsh language considerations in the assessment process.

## **Equality Training**

We continue to offer e-learning modules on a range of equality topics. This training covers areas including equality and diversity; discrimination; the Equality Act; how to assess the impact of our work on protected groups (equality impact assessments); disability awareness; and LGBTQ+ and trans issues.

Staff can access the e-learning modules from their Council provided computers and from their personal devices. This can make it easier for some people to do the training. We are also able to monitor who has completed the training.

## **Anti-Racism Training**

We explored how we could best deliver anti-racist awareness training with a view to piloting options in schools and on a corporate basis in 2022/2023.

## **Procurement**

The Council's corporate procurement process ensures that procurement processes consider the Public Sector Equalities Duty and are compliant with statutory legislation. This includes due diligence through tender documentation. Corporate Procurement is planning for a review of Procurement Policy and Strategy.

The selection stage of the Council's procurement process has seven scored questions which can become mandatory pass or fail if required. The first question is:

“As an employer, do you have a policy and provisions in place to ensure that your organisation and staff comply with your statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010, and accordingly, is it your practice not to discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation in relation to decisions to recruit, select, remunerate, train, transfer and promote employees? Yes / No”

The award stage of the procurement process can also include equality and diversity requirements for evaluation.

We receive all Welsh Government and UK Government updates and are part of the Local Authorities Head of Procurement Network for Wales. This includes the introduction of the new procurement lifecycle tool; National Themes, Outcomes, and Measures (TOMs) for Wales, providing further opportunities to deliver on the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Work to revise the Procurement Strategy will be undertaken in the coming year.

## **Disability Confident Scheme**

We are proud to be a member of this scheme. It recognises employers who help disabled candidates into work and support employees if they suffer ill health during their working lives.

Under the scheme, we help people with disabilities in a number of ways:

- **Accessible interviews**

We remove barriers to interviews by providing things like car parking; signers; Braille; wheelchair access; a loop system; or interpreter.

- **Prior Consideration**

We guarantee an interview to people with disabilities so long as they meet the essential requirements of the person specification for the post.

- **Interview location**

We can arrange for a visit to the interview location before the interview. We can then make adjustments or adaptations before the interview if needed.

- **Developing abilities**

We make sure there is an opportunity for people to develop and use their abilities. We do this through our Personal Development Review system, #itsaboutme.

- **Supporting employees**

We support staff to stay in employment if they become disabled. We provide an occupational health service and a counselling service.

- **Raising awareness**

We arrange training to help staff know more about disability. We also advertise our commitment on Staffnet and on posters in the building.

- **Reviewing the scheme**

We check regularly how the scheme is running and plan improvements. We have been able to trial a job experience scheme and have offered placements to several job seekers.

## **Stonewall Diversity Champion**

We continue to be a member of Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme. We developed an action plan to improve the workplace for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people. This helps us to make sure that we treat people fairly when they are employees or when they are applying for jobs.

Our work has included supporting an LGBTQ+ and allies' network, relaunched in January 2019 as 'GLAM'. We also have LGBTQ+ Champions at both Member and senior management level.

We take part in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index. The WEI provides a framework to improve lesbian, gay, bi and trans inclusion in the workplace.

As part of our work for the Workplace Equality Index and with support from Stonewall, we have drafted a Transitioning at Work Policy and trans question and answer document.

During the previous three years, the Council has continued to improve its standing in the Workplace Equalities Index. This is particularly impressive given that the number of organisations taking part has significantly increased. The Vale of Glamorgan Council was awarded a silver award for 2021/22 and ranked 190<sup>th</sup> out of 403 organisations.

## **Staff Networks**

Our staff networks work collaboratively with many Council departments and staff members as well as providing support to Council employees. They also contribute to the Council's Stonewall Workplace Equality Index submissions.

### **GLAM**

The LGBTQ+ staff network, GLAM, welcomed a new chairperson in 2021 and presented a new constitution, terms of reference, and committee. The network welcomes LGBTQ+ members from across the Council, as well as allies. There are around 40 members, made up of staff members, senior leadership, and councillors. Plans are in place to address membership and engagement, as well as to encourage participation in local Pride events. GLAM also supports management training sessions on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion as well as promoting pronouns in email

signatures. It works with the Diverse network to ensure the Vale of Glamorgan is a positive, inclusive, and nurturing place to live and work.

## **Diverse**

The Diverse staff network was established during 2020 and formally launched in 2021. It aims to raise awareness, provide a social and supportive environment, and have a positive impact for colleagues from ethnic minorities in the workplace. All Council employees and members are welcome to join. The Diverse network works with different Council departments in relation to the implementation of the race equality action plan and to improve employment and service delivery for ethnic minority employees and communities. The Diverse network also supports mandatory race awareness and unconscious bias training for staff as well as supporting anti-racism workshops in schools.

## **Race Equality Matters – Race Awareness Week**

We took part in Race Equality Matter's Race Awareness Week event for the first time in 2022. We became a spotlight organisation when we made an early commitment to certain actions including running a Safe Space Meeting in February 2022.

## **Integrated Autism Service**

The Integrated Autism Service is a multiagency team of local authority and health staff covering the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan area. We provide diagnosis and support for adults with autism. We deliver preventative services and support that meet the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2010.

To encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low, we collect information about available services. These services come from local authorities, external service providers, and third sector organisations. We then support clients to access these services and provide more targeted support if there are barriers.

This work helps clients to access support or opportunities available in the wider community. Without this low-level support, they may not have known about the support opportunities or felt able to access them.

The Integrated Autism Service delivers short-term, targeted interventions to encourage people to be independent and not dependent on the team. Such autism specific support is essential when taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups as these may be different from the needs of other people.

As we move out of Covid, face-to-face appointments have been gradually reintroduced. However, learning from our experiences over the past year, support is still available online through a Virtual Advice Hub. This allows access to people who cannot attend in person.

As well as signposting and support to access other opportunities, we also runs a range of groups. These help to remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics. Currently the groups include:

- a post diagnostic group where adults learn about the condition they have been diagnosed with and how it may affect their lives;
- a social skills communication workshop;
- mindfulness;
- healthy eating and balanced diet;
- 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.

During Covid, we worked to convert the groups into virtual on-line versions. We recognise the availability of virtual versions has actually increased our reach.

## **Vale 50+ Strategy Forum**

The Forum speaks up for the needs of people aged fifty and over in the Vale of Glamorgan. Members are in contact with many local and national working groups.

Executive meetings are open for all Forum members to attend. Members can then benefit from a range of interesting presentations on available services. Members express their opinions on service developments and planning. Executive meetings are held digitally every month with alternative formal and informal meetings.

Throughout 2021/22, the Forum has continued to be proactive in ensuring older people's voices are heard in consultations and decision making. We raised concerns and issues directly with speakers including the Older People's Commissioner and the Minister for Social Justice.

We continued to stay in contact with members both online and via letters to ensure they are aware of the key support services available as access to information was affected by the pandemic. We produce monthly e-bulletins which include local updates and information. These are sent to all members and distributed to the wider 50+ population via local networks and contacts through other Council services, the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Glamorgan Voluntary Service (GVS), Newydd Housing and Safer Vale. The monthly e-bulletin is in addition to the weekly newsletters on the [Forum's website](#) which is regularly updated.

During February and March this year we came together with the Vale Public Services Board (PSB) to hold a joint survey. This was to find out what older people would like to see from the Forum going forward, to help it to grow and develop, and

see what older people think of aspects of the Vale related to the 8 age friendly community domains.

There are 8 domains that are essential features in age friendly communities:

- Outdoor space and public buildings
- Transport
- Housing
- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community support and health services

We will consider the findings in informing the structure of the Forum going forward as well as the Age Friendly Vale application. This is being developed by the Vale PSB to help make the Vale of Glamorgan a more age-friendly place where people can live happily and healthily, especially as we grow older. More information on the work to become an Age Friendly Vale can be seen [here](#).

You can join the Forum if you are over fifty and live, work or volunteer in the Vale of Glamorgan.

## **Menopause Awareness**

The Council recognises that a large and increasing proportion of its workers will be working through and beyond the menopause. To increase understanding and enable everyone to talk about menopause openly and without embarrassment, the Occupational Health team planned and prepared Menopause Awareness sessions for staff throughout 2022. We recognise that by raising awareness and offering support and acceptance, the sessions can contribute to a more inclusive workplace.

## **Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board Well-Being Assessment**

The Well-being Assessment is a statutory duty placed on Public Services Boards (PSB) by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The 'View of the Vale of Glamorgan: An Assessment of Current and Future Well-being' is the second assessment undertaken by the Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board. The Well-being Assessment is conducted every five years and must consider the state of economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being in an area as a whole and for distinct community areas. The community areas used in the 2022 well-being assessment are Barry, Eastern Vale and Western Vale. The PSB must publish a Well-being Plan by May 2023 which must be informed by the findings of the Well-being Assessment. Statutory guidance sets out the process by which PSBs must produce an Assessment of the state of well-being in the PSB area. This Assessment must be published twelve months before the publication of the PSB's Well-being Plan, therefore by May 2022.

The Well-being Assessment has drawn-on a range of national and local data, research, evidence alongside the findings of the 'Let's Talk' engagement survey to develop an analysis of the experiences of well-being in and across the Vale of Glamorgan. A data catalogue was developed with PSB partners to ensure the information considered through the Assessment was reflective of the different elements of well-being. The data set includes the national well-being indicators that accompany the Act. Data is presented at both a Vale of Glamorgan level and at a community level where available and appropriate.

For many, well-being in the Vale of Glamorgan is good. Against a number of key indicators, and when compared to other areas of Wales, we can see that we have good educational outcomes, earnings above the Welsh national average, people live in good health, have lower experiences of crime and disorder, are satisfied with where they live and have access to high quality green and blue spaces. However, this experience is not consistent. For some, their well-being continues to be affected by experiences of financial hardship, poorer health, crime and disorder and an unequal exposure to environmental risk. While the coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on all lives in the Vale of Glamorgan, research, data, and people's shared experiences suggest that this impact has been experienced disproportionately by certain people, groups, and communities. It has placed increased pressure on the economic, social, cultural, and mental and physical well-being of residents who may have reported good well-being prior to the pandemic; while for those who were already struggling under the burden of poor well-being, the pandemic has weighed heavy.

It is clear, that although we now appear to be emerging from the worst of the pandemic, it will continue to have a long-lasting impact on many aspects of our lives. Some changes may help us to meet future challenges such as the need to reduce emissions; others have further exposed the unequal nature of the experiences of well-being. A number of challenges and opportunities will shape the future of life in the Vale of Glamorgan, it is most likely that the climate and nature emergency will have the largest impact. It is likely to shape key aspects of our future well-being, not only our interaction with the natural environment but to the way the economy develops and how we think about and deliver health and social care. It is critical that the changes necessary to address the climate and nature emergencies are undertaken in a way that addresses disparities in well-being and improves opportunities and well-being as whole.

The Well-being Assessment brings together data and evidence from a number of different sources, this data and evidence provides a good source of evidence to enable colleagues to meet the general duty.

The Well-being Assessment will inform the development of the PSB's Well-being Plan. The Plan will set out the steps through which the PSB will work to maintain and improve social, economic, cultural, and environmental well-being in the Vale of Glamorgan over the next five years. This will include improving outcomes for protected groups.

The data, evidence, and analysis set-out in the Well-being Assessment underpins the importance of the equality objectives from the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024. Many of the issues highlighted through the assessment align to the equality objectives, as such work to address the issues set out in the assessment through the Well-being Plan will also work towards the Strategic Equality Plan equality objectives.

The Well-being Assessment is an on-going process. Work will continue to enhance and develop the PSB evidence base. This will include continuing to improve our knowledge base through new data and evidence, further developing our existing data and research and enhancing our engagement findings through more in-person interactions with residents and other stakeholders

## **Leisure Services**

The Healthy Living and Performance Team, like many Council departments, experienced a very different year due to the continuing covid-19 pandemic. However, this also gave opportunity for new activities including 'Summer of Fun' and 'Winter of Well-being'. These had inclusive provision as a key objective.

We quickly adapted services to the changing world and ensured that objectives are met in the best possible ways, despite the challenges this involved. Initiatives that targeted communities and residents with fewer opportunities include:

- Summer of Fun

We provided taster activities with local partners as part of Welsh Government Summer of Fun targeting the least active (only 10% of participants met government guidance for activity levels) and those unable to afford community summer provision. The sessions impacted on 699 children and young people, over 134 sessions. As a result, 87% of participants felt more motivated and confident to take part in more activity and 60% wanted to join local clubs to continue activity.

- Winter of Wellbeing

As part of a Welsh Government project to re-engage young people post Covid, we worked with 44 different organisations to deliver sport and physical activities, impacting on at least 4630 children and young people from pre-school age to 24 years.

- Best Start in Life

This was formed of projects with partners including Public Health Wales, pre-schools and Early Years Wales to deliver family activity sessions for least-active children, to encourage activity in early years, to develop family resources, and to provide equipment loan bags for families in most-deprived areas, encouraging them to be more active.

- Active at Home

This is a partnership food and physical activity project with Newydd Housing HAPI project which impacted on 39 families to be more active and provide access to food. 95% of participants reported improved health and wellbeing, with 75% reporting increased activity levels after six months.

- Active Education Beyond School Day

This is a successful Insport Wales and Welsh Government pilot project to extend physical activity beyond the school day. As a result, at least 115 sessions were delivered to over 150 pupils in secondary school, serving high numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals.

The National Exercise Referral scheme moved to an online presence during Covid but is now returning to a near normal service. The demand has been understandably high for referrals, and we are working hard to see as many customers as possible.

General sports and play provision have returned. These are often targeted at specific groups often linked to the Council's strategic equality objectives.

- Social running

New run leaders and coaches were supported to create more social running opportunities, which has resulted in two new running groups.

- Park Run

Junior Park Run was supported with equipment to assist with developments post Covid. Equipment was provided to help set up Cosmeston Park Run.

- Walking Netball

Walking netball was re-established to engage those wanting to get more active in a low-impact social activity. 100% of those taking part felt more confident to take part in another physical activity and 100% felt more motivated and healthier.

We also worked with the Leisure Centre delivery partner, Legacy Leisure, to ensure that Leisure Centres have been able to quickly and efficiently return to a normal operating model.

Initiatives that continued throughout the pandemic remain a high priority and continue to be oversubscribed. One example is play schemes for children with disabilities. The changes previously made to the service, with a greater emphasis placed on venues across the Vale of Glamorgan to alleviate transport difficulties and other issues, are now delivering a more balanced programme of play activities across the area as planned.

## **Women and girls**

Women and girls' access and participation remained a key target during lockdowns. We still have concerns about the gender gap of levels of physical activity. Building on previous research, specific to the Vale of Glamorgan, new activities have been provided to reduce the participation gap. The school sports survey that is currently underway should demonstrate if these initiatives are working.

- We carried out consultation with female residents to identify motivations and barriers to taking part in more physical activity. This has resulted in a new female-only swim session, as well as plans for more water-based activities and leader-led walks.
- We have worked with Hindu Cohesion Mandal to increase activity levels for women and families
- We have held girls-only community physical activity sessions targeting girls who are least active. These have resulted in 100% feeling healthier and more confident and motivated to take part in other activities.

## **Disability and inclusion**

- Regional partnership working to deliver online physical activity sessions during lockdowns

- 115 primary age pupils attending Admiral Play Together Awareness training, given them the knowledge to support their disabled peers in physical activity.
- Vale clubs have been encouraged to be part of the Insport programme to develop inclusive community opportunities
- Three of our run leaders have been trained to assist visual impaired residents in accessing running opportunities

### **Older people – the Golden Pass**

This partly linked with a new initiative launched due to the pandemic, the ‘60+ project’, in partnership with the Vale Healthy Living Team, Sport Wales and Public Health Wales. The pilot stage of the Golden Pass project in Barry has proved extremely successful and will be rolled out across the whole of the Vale of Glamorgan in 2022. It encompasses thirteen different activities with the aim of increasing physical activity opportunities to the targeted age group.

- 140 Barry residents aged 60+ engaged in the Golden Pass program
- Key targets to reduce the time spent sitting, time walking, and time engaged in moderate activity were all met
- Wellbeing targets were met as participants recorded feeling optimistic ‘often’ rather than ‘some of the time’

### **Job Evaluation**

We have a job evaluation scheme in place. This scheme is for staff paid under the Single Status collective agreement. It makes sure that there is a systematic way of deciding the pay and grade for a job. This results in equal pay for work of equal value. The results of job evaluation are linked to our pay and grading system. We put

in place a formal pay and grading system in March 2012 following conclusion of an extensive job evaluation process.

It has helped us to pay people fairly and in a consistent way.

There are other factors that affect people's pay such as the type of jobs that they choose to do. Men and women often choose to do jobs that men and women have traditionally done. We call this occupational segregation. It often plays a part in there being a gap between the pay of men and women – a gender pay gap.

As part of our Workforce Plan, we continue to look for ways to reduce the gender pay gap. We think about the knowledge, skills, and experience people need to do the job. We also need to consider the impact of reorganising departments and finding new best practices to work. Using job evaluation helps keep pay and grading fair and consistent.

## **The Workforce Plan**

We have a workforce plan. This plan makes sure that we have:

- the right people
- with the right skills
- in the right place
- at the right time

This helps us to continue to provide our services at a time when there are great financial challenges and increasing demand for our services. We plan to make sure that the make-up of our workforce reflects the make-up of the local community in terms of protected groups. We are currently reviewing the Council's workforce plan.

We have put in place a way of recording the protected characteristics of our staff. This means we can compare our statistics with local and national statistics to see what progress we are making. We can then plan how to make improvements.

As part of the workforce plan, we have a strategy to look at increasing the diversity of our employees across all protected groups. As part of the strategy, we are building relationships and developing offerings with local education institutions, including Cardiff University, University of South Wales, and Cardiff and Vale College. We are striving to offer the full range of apprenticeships available in Wales.

## **Culture Book**

During 2021, we launched our digital Culture Book. The Culture Book encompasses and builds on the Staff Charter. It highlights the diversity of our organisation, the exceptional work our staff do, and showcases us delivering our values in action. The book has been developed by the Organisational Development and Learning team who have worked with Engagement and Innovation Champions and representatives from every area of the Council. As part of the launch, the Managing Director hosted a special question time session in September 2021.

## **Specified employment information, including information on training and pay**

We have been collecting employment data for many years. We have collected information on the following protected characteristics:

- gender;
- race;
- disability; and
- age.

We have continued to develop new systems. This will let us report on more protected characteristics in the future. We will be able to collect and record information on:

- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- gender identity;
- national identity;
- religion or belief; and
- marital status

We wanted to focus on some key actions. To help us, we used guidance from the Welsh Government. The name of the guidance is ‘Collecting Equality Data: Harmonised Standards and Best Practice’.

We also changed the form we use to collect information about people when they apply for jobs with us.

We now ask about all protected characteristics on the form. You can see the form in [Appendix 3](#).

We developed a staff survey and used this to ask staff about their protected characteristics.

We improved the way we record this information. Doing this helps to improve what we know about protected groups within our workforce.

We have looked at the information that we have collected. You can see what we have found out in [Appendix 5](#) of this report. Here is a summary of the headlines by protected characteristic below. The following figures refer to corporate staff and do not include staff employed in schools.

## **Age**

- We employ more people but the number of 16 - 24 years, 35 - 39 years, and 45 - 49 years has decreased since the previous year.
- The age range with the most employees is 55 - 59 years.
- The highest percentage of applications was from people in the 25 - 29 age band (15.6%). This was also the highest band in the previous year (21.6%)
- The highest proportion of people attending training came from the 50 - 54 age group - 300 or 17.1%. This is the same as the previous year where the highest proportion of people attending training was the 50 - 54 age group at 202 or 15.3%.
- Most people who left were between 20 and 24 years of age. This increased from 14 to 48 in number and from 6.6% to 16.1% in percentage. There was an increase in the number of people leaving in all age brackets, apart from the 50 – 54 age group, which decreased from 16 to 14.
- There was a slight drop in the average salary for employees in the 16 - 19 age group, 35 – 39 age group, and 60 – 64 age group. The average salary for people in other age ranges increased.
- People between 40 and 44 years of age had the highest average salary.

## **Disability**

- 78.1% of our staff did not have a disability. 2.5% said they had a disability that limited them a little.
- The number of people employed who told us they had a disability that limited them a lot has increased since the previous year.
- The percentage of applicants who said they had no disability was 78.3%, a decrease from 89.0% the previous year. The percentage with a limited disability increased from 3.3% to 4.5%. The percentage who did not record a response increased from 5.1% to 14.5%.
- The average salary for those with disabilities, disabilities that limited a lot, and no disabilities all increased from the previous year.
- The average salary for those who said they had a disability was £27,445 compared to £26,954 for those with no disability, £28,080 for those with a disability that limited them a little, and £28,429 for those with a disability that limited them a lot.
- The average salary for those who did not record a response or who preferred not to say decreased.
- 2.9% of people who attended training had a disability that limited them to some extent. 82.5% of people who attended training had no disability. These percentages are similar to last year.
- The number of leavers who said they had no disability increased from 159 to 234 since the previous year, a percentage increase from 75.0% to 78.5%.

## **Marital Status**

- The number of those who are married has decreased from 1171 to 1150 but remains the highest category in marital status for employed staff, followed by single people at 940.

- Most applications were from single people, at 43.7%.
- The number of divorced leavers has increased from 5.7% to 9.1%, but most leavers were single (43.0%).
- The highest average salary was for those in a civil partnership, at £38,972.
- Average pay increased for all groups except for those who said they were living together, those who prefer not to say, and widowed, which all decreased on the previous year.

### **Maternity, Paternity, and Adoption**

- There were 63 corporate employees who had maternity, paternity or adoption pay and leave during 2021/2022, an increase 3 compared to the previous year.

### **National Identity**

- Most employees said they were British (1119) or Welsh (983).
- The number of applicants who said they were Welsh remains the highest identity for applicants at 48.0%.
- The highest national identity for leavers is Welsh, at 42.6% which has increased from 34.4% last year.
- The group with the highest average salary remains Northern Irish at £42,576, although this has decreased from £43,325 the previous year.
- All other groups apart from other and prefer not to say had an increase in average salary.

## Race and Ethnicity

- Most employees were White - over 83%. The highest group was White and British, at 63.6%.
- White and British remains the highest category for applicants at 72.6%. 79% of people applying for jobs were White, less than the previous year (88%).
- The number of applicants choosing not to record their race or ethnicity has increased to 14.4%.
- The number of people who attended increased in all categories. The percentage of White and Welsh increased from 11.1% to 15.4%.
- For people with White ethnic backgrounds, pay increased for those in seven out of the nine groups since the previous year. White and Scottish and White and Black African both had a decrease.
- There was a decrease in pay for people in the Bangladeshi and not disclosed groups. There was an increase in pay for all the other ethnic groups and those who chose not to record their ethnicity.
- The difference in median hourly rate between White British and Ethnic Minorities is £0.15 (£12.82 for White British and £12.67 for Ethnic Minorities) which is a reduction compared to the difference of £0.35 last year (£12.56 for White British and £12.21 for Ethnic Minorities). The median ethnicity pay gap as a percentage is 1.17%.
- The difference in mean hourly rate between White British and Ethnic Minorities is £0.29 which is less than the previous year. The median ethnicity pay gap as a percentage is 1.97%.

- Over 81% of leavers were White. There was an increase in the percentage of White and British leavers which remains the highest group at 69.1%.

## **Religion or Belief**

- Most staff either had no religion (37.0%), were Christian (28.8%), or did not record their religion or belief (29.4%).
- The number of staff who have no religion, prefer not to say, or did not record their religion or belief all increased.
- Most applicants stated that they had no religion (48.9%) which was a decrease compared to the previous year (57.6%).
- There was an increase in the number of applicants who prefer not to say or opted not to record their religion or belief, and those who said they were Jewish or Sikh.
- Most employees who attend training have no religion (37.4%) which is a decrease on the previous year (38.8%). The next highest group is Christian (32.6%).
- More leavers recorded no religion, 40.6% compared to 37.7% last year.
- The highest average salary was for those who told us they are Hindu at £34,833.
- There has been an increase in the average salary for those who said they are Buddhist, Christian or Hindu. There has been a decrease in the average salary for those who said they were Jewish or Muslim.

## **Gender**

- Our corporate workforce was 67.3% (1793) female and 32.7% (873) male. The number of female employees has increased from 1744 to 1793 and the number of male employees has also increased from 872 to 873.
- Over two thirds of the people we employ are female. It is typical to find that more women than men work in local authorities.
- Most females continued to work in permanent full-time jobs (644 employees in 2021/22). This has increased from the 615 in the previous year. The number of females in permanent part-time jobs has stayed the same at 556.
- Most males continued to work in permanent full-time permanent jobs (577 employees in 2021/22). This has increased from the 563 in the previous year. The number of males in the relief positions has increased from 129 to 140 since the previous year.
- 32.0% of women and 25.7% of men held jobs paid between £15,000 - £19,999. 29.9% of all jobs are paid between £15,000 and £19,999 which is a decrease on the previous year where 32.0% of all jobs were paid at this salary band. This is the highest overall salary range and the highest for women, but the highest salary band for men is £20,000 - £24,999, at 27.9%.
- Average pay for males remains the highest average salary. The average salary for male and females has increased, but more so for males. This was the same as the previous year. There was a £409 rise for women compared to £576 rise for men.
- The difference in mean hourly rate between male and female is £0.71 (£15.21 for male and £14.50 for female) which is an increase from £0.60 last year. The mean gender pay gap as a percentage of men's pay is 4.67%.
- The difference in median hourly rate between male and female is £0.77. The Median gender pay gap as a percentage of men's pay is 5.73%.

- More than 66% of the people who attended training were female. This is a decrease from 76.3% the previous year. The percentage of people who attended training and are male has increased from 23.7% to 33.5%.
- More people applying for jobs were female (57.4% or 1883). This is in comparison to 28.2% or 924 that were male. The number not disclosing their gender has increased from 5.1% to 14.5%.
- More women than men left their jobs. We would expect this as we employ more women than men. The percentage of people who left their jobs and were female decreased (63.8% compared to 67.9%) and the percentage of people who left their jobs and were male increased from 32.1% to 36.2%.

## **Sexual Orientation**

- Most of our staff said they were heterosexual (66.4%). There was an increase in the number who said they were gay, lesbian, or bisexual. There were fewer employees who did not tell us their sexual orientation, but a higher proportion of employees chose not to record their sexual orientation (28.8%) than last year (27.0%).
- When looking at the pay of LGBTQ+ employees, 38% were employed in the salary band £20 - £29,999. The highest salary band has changed from last year, which was 33% in band £0,000 to £19,999.
- The average salary for those who prefer not to say or who are bisexual decreased. Other groups saw an increase in average salary.
- We monitor the success of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people from application to successful appointment. For 2021/22, there were 160 applications and 33 successful appointments (21%) compared to 19 out of 163 in the previous year (12%). This covers both internal and external vacancies.

- The total percentage of applicants who said they were bisexual, gay or lesbian slightly decreased to 4.7% from 4.9% in the previous year. The percentage of applicants who said they were heterosexual remains the highest (72.2%). The number of applicants not recording their sexual orientation has increased from 5.1% to 19.9%.
- Over 66.8% of leavers were heterosexual. This has increased from 62.3%. There have been increases in all other fields, including gay, lesbian, and bisexual.

## **Welsh Language**

- Over two-fifths of our staff have some level of Welsh language skills: understanding 40.3%; speaking 42.1%; reading 44.1%; and writing 47.8%.
- Of those employees with Welsh language skills, those who have a good understanding of Welsh had the highest average pay (£35,145).
- Welsh language skills for applicants were as follows: understanding 45.9%; speaking 40.4%; reading 36.6%; and writing 31.1%.

We will continue with this work. We want to be able to report on all protected characteristics.

We do not have all the information that we need to collect to meet the general and specific duties. The reasons for this are:

- reporting systems need further updating;
- some staff choose not to disclose personal information;
- extra and up-to-date data on protected characteristics needs to be collected;

- limited guidance meant we had to clarify what we had to report on.

We have improved our data on Welsh language. We intend to survey staff in 2022/2023 to get up to date information on Welsh language skills.

Even when we make improvements, we may not get the information we need. We think some people choose not to tell us about some of their protected characteristics. We encourage people to do so by explaining:

- why we are asking for this information; and
- how we can use it to better meet their needs.

The information for this report comes from systems in Human Resources. This means that the information is as correct and complete as possible. We know that we will need to continue to work on this information for future reports. This will help us meet the requirements of the general duty.

## **For more information**

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- Call 01446 700111