

Equality Impact Assessment

Title and description of the policy, procedure, practice or decision (referred to as “policy” throughout form).

Strategic Equality Plan 2016 - 2020

Who is responsible for developing and implementing the policy?

Name	Nicola Hinton
Job Title	Corporate Equality Officer
Directorate	Resources
Division	Equalities, Performance and Development

1. Who will be affected by this policy?

This policy affects residents of the Vale of Glamorgan and staff.

2. Does the policy relate to an area where there are known inequalities?

This Strategic Equality Plan targets areas where there are known inequalities. To develop it, we have used the Equality and Human Rights Commission's research reports – 'How Fair is Wales 2011?' and 'Is Wales Fairer 2015?' and 'Not just another statistic'. These reports highlight the areas of inequality that are priorities. We have also used feedback from local consultation and engagement.

The equality objectives within the plan will help us to find out more about the needs of protected groups, educate staff and the public about the needs of protected groups and take action to improve access to services and reduce discrimination and harassment. We first put equality objectives in place in 2012 and when we asked

people how they wanted us to move forward in late 2015, they told us that they wanted us to continue working on these objectives as they were still important to them.

In choosing our equality objectives and actions, we have prioritised action that will help each of the protected groups:

- collecting and analysing data by protected characteristic so we can improve how people access and use our services;
- raising awareness of the needs of protected groups;
- using plain language to communicate so people can more easily understand our letters, forms and other information;
- making it easier for people to report harassment and discrimination and find support;

- seeking the views of protected groups on proposed changes to policy, budgets and services.

In addition to these objectives which help each protected group, we also have some objectives that target areas where research such in ‘Is Wales Fairer?’ show there are particular challenges:

- Domestic abuse: we aim to find new ways of reaching victims of domestic abuse and raise awareness of domestic abuse services in the community.
- Close attainment gaps in education: we aim to close the attainment gaps of children in protected groups.
- Pay gaps: we aim to reduce the gender pay gap and improve employment opportunities for protected groups.

3. Decisions must be based on robust evidence. Please detail the evidence that you have used to inform your assessment.

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As stated above, we have used the Equality and Human Rights Commission research reports: ‘How Fair is

Wales?'; 'Is Wales Fairer?'; and 'Not just another statistic'. We have shown the evidence we have used in detail within the Strategic Equality Plan itself and so the Plan and this equality impact assessment should be read together.

We based our original equality objectives on the 'How Fair is Wales 2011', 'Not just another statistic' and feedback from consultation and engagement. We have updated them using 'Is Wales Fairer 2015?' and another round of consultation and engagement at the end of 2015. The evidence told us that protected groups shared some common needs such there were some common needs such as the need for people to better understand their needs, to be involved in our decision making and to have information written in plain language.

In reviewing our Strategic Equality Plan, we have decided to add a new objective - to close the attainment gap for children with protected characteristics. This is one of the priorities of 'Is Wales Fairer 2015'. Our corporate plan also has an objective to raise the overall standards of achievement with a supporting action to secure improved outcomes for groups of learners at risk of underachievement, such as those entitled to free school meals.

4. Please detail engagement activities that have taken place – internally and externally.

The Corporate Engagement Team consulted and engaged with a number of different organisations able to put forward the views of protected groups. The team also asked for the views of staff, trade unions and the public using our internal and external websites.

The findings of this consultation and engagement can be found in a report as an appendix to the Strategic Equality Plan.

5. Will this policy have a significant effect on how you deliver services?

We anticipate that this policy will have a positive effect on how we deliver services.

Our equality objectives will encourage better data collection and analysis and engagement so that we can improve our understanding of who is and is not using our services, what people's needs are and what we might do to make improvements. They also encourage our staff to understand the needs of protected groups through training and the need to write in plain language – this will improve our interactions with people with protected characteristics.

Our equality objectives on hate crime, harassment and domestic abuse will help us to encourage more reporting of incidents and crimes and to promote support services to victims.

Our equality objective on pay gaps and better employment for people with protected characteristics will help us to make our workplace a more equitable place to work.

6. Will this policy have a significant effect on how other organisations operate?

The Council works in partnership with many other organisations. The equality objectives will make us a better informed organisation better able to meet the needs of protected groups in partnership with those organisations.

7. Will the policy impact upon other policies or practices?

The priorities of the Strategic Equality Plan should inform other policies and practices. For example, through

better collection and analysis of data, and through raised awareness, staff should be in a better position to develop policy and practice that will take into account the needs of protected groups. Similarly, if we improve the way we collect and analyse employment data, we can develop actions that will lead to improvements in the way we recruit and employ people with protected characteristics.

8. Have you identified any evidence that the policy could directly or indirectly discriminate against or have an adverse impact on people on any of the protected groups?

We have not identified evidence to suggest that the Strategic Equality Plan could directly or indirectly discriminate against or have an adverse impact on protected groups.

9. What can be done further to promote equality of opportunity by altering the policy?

Please detail, including opportunities to promote good relations and community cohesion.

One of the equality objectives in the Strategic Equality Plan is to raise awareness amongst staff and the public of

the needs of people with protected characteristics. Mutual respect and understanding underpins community cohesion.

10. How will you undertake future monitoring of the equality impact of this policy?

Each year, we gather information on service and employment monitoring, progress against our equality objectives and examples of good practice for our annual equality monitoring report. We publish this in our website.

11. How often will you analyse and report upon this monitoring information, and where will it be reported?

We will monitor on an annual basis and publish the information on our website.

12. How will you publish and publicise the policy to ensure equality of access to this information (including raising awareness with minority groups, producing information in accessible formats, etc.)?

We will publish the Strategic Equality Plan on our website and write to the organisation with whom we consulted to inform them of this.

13. Include recommendations for action that you plan to take as a result of this impact assessment in your Team Plan or Departmental Service Plan.

Services will include Strategic Equality Plan actions in their Team Plans.

14. An equality impact assessment may have four possible outcomes, though more than one may apply to a single policy. Please indicate the relevant outcome(s) of the impact assessment below.

No major change	The impact assessment demonstrated that the policy was robust; there was no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. We have taken all opportunities to promote equality.	√
Adjust the policy	The impact assessment identified potential problems or missed opportunities. The policy was adjusted to remove barriers or better promote equality.	
Continue the policy	The impact assessment identified the potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality. We have set out the justification(s) for continuing with it. (You must include the justification in the impact assessment and it must be in line with the duty to have due regard. You will need compelling reasons for the most important relevant policies.)	
Stop and remove the policy	The impact assessment identified actual or potential unlawful discrimination. We stopped and removed or changed the policy.	

15. Authorisation

Approved by (name)	Huw Isaac
Approved by (signature)	
Job Title	Head of Performance and Development
Date	1 March 2016