

Draft for consultation



Working together for a fairer future

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's
Strategic Equality Plan 2020 – 2024

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Working together for a fairer future

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2020 – 2024

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Introduction

It is with a great deal of pride that I am introducing the Council's Strategic Equality Plan for 2020 - 2024 – **'Working together for a fairer future'**.

Councils play an important role in ensuring essential services reach every member of our society, taking into account a range of needs. This Plan sets out the equality agenda for the Vale of Glamorgan Council for the next four years. With partners and stakeholders, we look forward to working together to deliver our vision of a fairer future.

It is only by working together, listening and respecting each other that we can successfully meet the many challenges facing our communities and public services today. To achieve this Plan and to meet the diverse needs of our communities, we will need to work in partnership. This partnership working is wide ranging. It includes working with families, children and young people, our partners in health, the Police and the Fire service, as well other public sector bodies, the third sector, Town and Community Councils, our trade union colleagues, and our communities.

In this Plan, we present our strategic equality objectives in the context of the Council's four draft new well-being objectives. We believe these complement each other and that collectively they will deliver our local well-being outcomes and the seven national well-being goals:

Draft Well-being Objectives	Draft Strategic Equality Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To work with and for our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide services that meet the needs of residents and local communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To support learning and employment for protected groups, focusing on those who are most disadvantaged
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To support people at home and in their community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To support the safety and well-being of people at home and in their community

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure our local environment can be enjoyed by a diverse range of people
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The Vale of Glamorgan is a diverse area comprising very different communities with different aspirations, needs and concerns. Our Plan sets out how the Council will work to meet those needs, address concerns and help people of all protected groups achieve their aspirations. Whether you live or work in one of our towns or in one of our more rural communities, we will continue to strive to make life better and to play our part in addressing the issues that affect the people living, working, and visiting here.

We are an ambitious and forward-thinking authority. I am confident that staff, elected members, the community and all those with a stake in the Vale can continue ‘working together for a fairer future’. In this way, we can ensure we all achieve ‘Strong Communities with a Bright Future’.

Rob Thomas

Managing Director

Purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan

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

The public sector equality duty covers eight protected characteristics:

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

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

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

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

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and

- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

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

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

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

To identify the priorities, we have used research from the Equality & Human Rights Commission and feedback from residents and organisations working in the Vale of Glamorgan. We have also taken into account the draft strategic equality objectives of the Welsh Government. We plan to use this information to help us improve the way we provide services and employ people.

Context

The world is changing rapidly and the context for this Plan is very different to what it was in 2016. What remains the same is the need for the Council to engage with the community and plan for the future, to work with our partners and embrace change. We must also consider how our actions and decisions will affect future generations.

Opportunities and experiences vary across the area with people living in some areas experiencing disadvantage and deprivation. In addition to this we have an ageing population and we need to ensure that services can meet the changing needs of the population as they grow older. We need to think about what services we provide and how we provide them. We must consider the diverse needs of the population whether that be due to their protected characteristics, financial circumstances, or one of the many other reasons that can affect what services and support people need.

The Vale of Glamorgan and our Council

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

The principles described in the general duty must underpin the wide range of services that we provide. These include housing, education, social care, and libraries as well as looking after our coast, parks and gardens.

The Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2020–2024 has been drafted to link with the recently revised draft Corporate Plan 2020-2025.

The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision for the Vale of Glamorgan, our values and our main priorities. The priorities of the Corporate Plan will help make communities in the Vale of

Glamorgan more equal. The equality objectives in this Strategic Equality Plan will support this work and it is for this reason that the objectives of both plans have been aligned.

Vision and values

Our Council's vision is '**Strong communities with a bright future**'.

We have a set of corporate values that underpin our work: ambitious; open; together; and proud. Here are what they mean when we are thinking about equality and working together to build a fairer future.

Ambitious Forward thinking, embracing new ways of working and investing in our future.

For equality, this means supporting people to achieve their potential and a good life for themselves whatever their background or protected characteristics.

Open Open to different ideas and being accountable for the decisions we take.

For equality, this means talking to people and organisations that can help us understand the issues and barriers for people with protected characteristics. We can then take these into account when we are making our decisions.

Together Working together as a team that engages with our customers and partners, respects diversity and is committed to quality services.

For equality, this means working with partners to deliver services that meet the diverse needs of our residents and communities.

Proud Proud of the Vale of Glamorgan: proud to serve our communities and to be part of the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

For equality, this means that everybody feels that they are living in a community where they feel included, can be proud of who they are and the part they play in making the Vale of Glamorgan a good place to live.

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

Our equality priorities take into account the Well-being of Future Generations Act and in particular will help us to contribute to the Welsh Government's well-being goals, including creating a more equal Wales.

Developing this Plan

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

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission's national research reports 'Is Wales Fairer? 2018 (an update on previous research in 'Is Wales Fairer? 2015' and 'How Fair is Wales? 2011');
- information from Council documents such as the Corporate Plan;
- local information and data;
- consultation;
- feedback from people representative of one or more of the protected groups through engagement and consultation between May 2019 and November 2019;
- draft equality objectives of the Welsh Government;
- information from the Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales.

This information, together with national evidence from research, has shaped the action that will be taken to achieve the Council's equality objectives between 2020 and 2024.

The following information about the local population provides some of the context for what needs to be achieved. This data is drawn from a range of external sources including the Office for National Statistics, Data Cymru and Stats Wales.

The most robust data available for the Vale of Glamorgan is data from the 2011 Census. More up-to-date data is available for the Vale of Glamorgan from the Annual Population Survey 2019. Data is available for a number of protected characteristics at a regional level from the Annual Population Survey, this data is presented for 2015-2017. Both the Census and Annual Population Survey are produced by the Office for National Statistics.

Equality Data

Ethnicity

The 2011 Census estimated that 126,336 people lived in the Vale of Glamorgan. Of these, the majority, 121,838 (96%) identified as White. 1,695 (1.3%) identified as Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, 1,967 (1.5%) identified as Asian or Asian British, 489 (0.3%) identified as Black, African, Caribbean, or Black British and 347 (0.2%) from other ethnic groups.

Data is available for the Vale of Glamorgan from the Annual Population Survey for 2019. It is estimated that 4,200 (3.3%) residents of the Vale of Glamorgan were Black, Asian and minority ethnic.

Nationality

Respondents are able to select multiple answers in response to the question of nationality in the Census. The 2011 Census estimated that the majority of residents in the Vale of Glamorgan identified as English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, or British. (2.4 %) identified as another nationality only.

Data is available for the Vale of Glamorgan from the Annual Population Survey for 2019. It is estimated that 77,400 (61%) identified as Welsh and 49,500 (39%) as non-Welsh.

Main Language

According to the 2011 Census, 52,443 (98%) of households have English or Welsh as a main language, and 393 (0.7%) of households have no people in the household with English or Welsh as a main language.

Data is available for the Vale of Glamorgan from the Annual Population Survey for 2019. It is estimated that 21% are Welsh speakers.

Disability

The 2011 Census estimated that 13,091 (10%) of the Vale of Glamorgan residents' day to day activities were limited a little. 12,538 (10%) of residents' day to day activities were limited a lot.

Data is available at a regional level for Wales and is based on the Welsh Government analysis of the Annual Population Survey. For South East Wales between 2015 to 2017, it was estimated that 206,700 (22%) of people were disabled.

Age

The 2018 mid-year population estimates based on the 2011 Census estimated the population of the Vale of Glamorgan to be 132,165. It is estimated that the majority of the population, 80,023 (61%), were aged 16-64, 27,691 (21%) were aged 65 and over, and 24,451 (18%) were aged 0-15.

Gender

The 2018 mid-year population estimates based on the 2011 Census estimated that 68,043 (51%) of the population were female and 64,122 (49%) were male.

Gender Reassignment

No reliable data is available on gender identity. In December 2018, the UK Government published a White Paper laying out the UK Statistics Authority's proposals for the conduct and content of the 2021 Census. The proposals include a recommendation for the inclusion of a voluntary gender identity question to be asked of those aged 16 years and over.

Sexual Orientation

There is no data on sexual orientation available for the Vale of Glamorgan area. Data is available at a regional level for Wales and is based on Welsh Government analysis of the Annual Population Survey. For South East Wales between 2015 to 2017, it is estimated that 1,155,500 (95.8%) people aged 16 and over identified as heterosexual or straight, 18,200 (1.5%) as gay or lesbian, 9,500 (0.8) as bisexual, and 23,500 (1.9%) did not respond.

Religion and Belief

The 2011 Census estimated that 92,225 (73%) of the population identified as Christian, 41,564 (32.9%) stated that they had no religion, 9,348 (7.4%) did not state a religion, other faiths represented less than 1% each.

Data is available at a regional level for Wales and is based on Welsh Government analysis of the Annual Population Survey produced by the Office for National Statistics. Between 2015 to 2017, for South East Wales it is estimated that the majority, 726,300 (48%) people were Christian, 689,000 (46%) people were of no religion, 34,000 (2.2%) were Muslim, 41,300 (2.7%) were of any other religion and 3,200 (0.2%) did not respond.

Marital Status

There is no data on marital status available for just the Vale of Glamorgan. Data is available at a regional level for Wales and is based on Welsh Government analysis of the Annual Population Survey produced by the Office for National Statistics. Between 2015 to 2017, for South East Wales it is estimated that the majority, 574,700 (47%) people were Married or in a Civil

Partnership, 433,300 (36%) were Single, 125,300 (10%) were Divorced, Separated or Dissolved Civil Partnership, and 81,400 (7%) were Widowed or Surviving Civil Partnership.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Little data is available on pregnancy and maternity. In 2015, the most up-to-date data available, there were 1,333 live births in the Vale of Glamorgan. According to the Office of National Statistics, for England and Wales conception rates for women of all ages in 2017 were 76.1 per 1000.

Socio-economic

- 13% of people are estimated to be living in income deprivation – below the Welsh average of 16%.
- Real differences can be observed between areas. In some more deprived areas, it is estimated that 38% of people are living in income deprivation.
- For some more deprived areas, it is estimated that 53% of children are living in poverty.
- 80.4% of the working age population are in employment, 3.4% are unemployed.
- The percentage of people employed is higher than the Welsh average of 73.1%.

Working to support equality

Our Council

The information below provides some key facts about the Council, its resources and how the organisation works to support equality.

- To support the services we deliver, the Council relies on a skilled workforce that includes teachers, engineers and social workers.
- In total, the Council employs over 5,000 staff, including those employed in schools.

- In the 2018 Staff Survey, 74% of respondents reported they were proud to work for the Council, 70% said they would recommend the Council as a place to work.
- There are 57 schools across the Vale of Glamorgan, including 7 Welsh Medium schools.
- The Council has 3,829 homes.
- There are 47 elected councillors including the Cabinet, made-up of the Leader of the Council and six other Councillors.

It is clear that the public sector will go through a period of significant change over the next five years. How we work, what is expected of us and the level of resource available to us will be subject to many changes.

Our duty is to ensure that we continue to deliver services to the most vulnerable members of our community, that young people have the best start in life and that the Vale is safe, clean and an area where people still want to live, work and visit.

The objectives and actions detailed in this Strategic Equality Plan provide the framework for our activities over the next four years, working with and for our local communities to meet their diverse needs and aspirations.

Training

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

- Equality awareness
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual awareness

- Transgender awareness
- Race awareness
- British Sign Language awareness

In addition to the equality training programme, equality issues are covered in other corporate training, such as recruitment training. The equality training programme is kept under review to cover a range of protected characteristics.

Assessing Impact

A process is in place to evaluate the likely impact on protected groups of policies or practices being proposed, reviewed or revised. The process helps the Council to consider the impact of our work on each of the protected groups.

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

This process is used, for example, to assess the likely impact of policies and practices including the Corporate Plan and the annual budget. We think about whether there is a risk that our decisions are likely to have a significant impact on protected groups. If we can see that there might be one, we carry out a full assessment of impact.

Where there is a significant impact details are published on the Council's website.

Examples of good practice

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

Here are some examples of our work.

- We have annual programmes of work with Show Racism the Red Card to promote awareness of race issues amongst children in schools and workshops.
- We work with Remploy to provide job opportunities.
- We hold an annual Holocaust Memorial Day event.
- We are working towards higher levels of the Insport disability standards. We have been awarded the Bronze standard. We are now working towards the Silver standard.
- We have a Gypsy and Traveller Forum that can quickly respond to assess the welfare needs of Gypsies and Travellers when they arrive in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- We support the Vale 50+ Forum. A very active public engagement group that offers a voice for the over 50s.
- The Vale of Glamorgan's largest town, Barry, has been awarded 'Dementia Friendly Town' status by the Alzheimer's Society. We have an active steering group to make sure we achieve our action plan. We have a significant number of trained Dementia friends.
- We have a digital inclusion working group developing a strategy to get more people on line. Our library staff are digital champions who are able to help the public with their queries. The public can access computer suites in libraries. The Adult Community Learning team and libraries offer a range of digital inclusion training programmes. We have improved wi-fi access in sheltered homes and plan on doing this in care homes.
- We provide Greenlinks community transport in rural and urban areas. This includes buses that can be used easily by disabled people. Greenlinks helps people without transport to access services and to interact socially.

- We provide a bus to Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern, a grass roots community support service. This helps to transport people to a new medical centre which is not easily accessible.
- We have TREV (The Reassurance and Engagement Vehicle) that helps us take information about safety out into the community.
- We have an annual leave purchase scheme in place and are piloting changes to our flex time system to give staff greater flexibility in managing their work-life balance.

We are committed to continuing with this work. More examples can be found in our [annual equality reports](#) published on our website.

Equality objectives – achievements

Between 2016 and 2020, good progress has been made against each of the eight existing equality objectives. The following provides a summary of what has been done for each. The learning from this activity has helped identify and inform the strategic equality objectives for the next four years.

Equality Objective 1:

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

We have increased the number of services collecting and analysing data by protected characteristic. Services look at this information to see how they can improve services for people in protected groups. Services are also able to use this information when they are thinking about the equality impact of changes to their services.

More information about this can be found in the Annual Equality Monitoring Reports on the Council's website.

Equality Objective 2:

Close attainment gaps of children in protected groups

Our focus has been on the attainment of the following groups: Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Pupils; children who are looked after by our local authority; children with additional learning needs; pupils eligible for free school meals; and pupils learning English as an Additional Language. Generally, performance outcomes have been good and compare well with peers across Wales. A gap still exists for pupils eligible for free school meals and narrowing this remains a priority.

School Exclusions

The percentage of vulnerable pupils excluded from Vale mainstream schools has remained consistent over the last 2 years. In 2017 / 18, there was a slight decrease in exclusions of pupils with special educational needs and a slight increase in exclusions of pupils with English as an additional language. More boys than girls were excluded during 2017 / 18. Boys are approximately 4 times more likely to be excluded than girls.

In secondary schools, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs that were excluded reduced by more than 10% between 2016/17 and 2017/18. Rates of other groups remained similar over the same period.

In primary schools, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs excluded increased by nearly 10% between 2016/17 and 2017/18. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language that were excluded nearly doubled over the same period.

Alongside the Council's schools, the Behaviour Improvement Team, the Youth Service, the Educational Psychology Service, and the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Outreach Team from Ysgol y Deri all work to support pupils who may be at risk of exclusion.

Equality Objective 3:

Make public documents easier for people to read and understand

The Council raises awareness of plain language guides. A plain language and style guide is available for staff to refer to on the Council's intranet. There is also a guide to grammar, a plain language dictionary, and a guide to punctuation.

An e-learning module covers the essentials of plain language. It provides information on planning in advance, avoiding complex language, being clear and shows examples.

We are developing a core competency framework. We have a communication competency which will include using plain language. Assessment against this competency will take place during the appraisal process. There will be support for further learning where required.

Equality Objective 4:

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

Equality awareness training continues to be offered. This includes equality impact assessment training and raising awareness of the needs of specific groups such as the deaf community. E-learning training modules are also available. These cover equality awareness, equality impact assessments, and transgender awareness.

Raising public awareness through social media, events and working with other organisations continues and has featured issues such as mental health, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.

Equality Objective 5:

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

An equality impact assessment process in place. This has been reviewed and relaunched, with links to guidance, examples, and research to help officers carry out effective assessments.

The Council's Communications Team that provides advice on engagement to Services. The Communication Team keeps a list of organisations that we can talk to about the needs of protected groups to assist in this process. This helps services to find out about the views and needs of protected groups so that these shape policies, decisions and services.

Examples of equality impact assessments can be found on our website. You can read about how the engagement process works in the Communications report our Annual Equality Monitoring Report on our website.

Equality Objective 6:

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

Community Cohesion

The Council coordinates a Community Cohesion Group with members are from the community and representatives from the Community Safety Team, South Wales Police, and the Police Youth Volunteers. It meets quarterly to monitor and respond to tensions in the Vale as part of a multi-agency partnership.

The Community Cohesion Group has put in place a development plan and uses online and social media platforms to get information about what is happening in the community. It has made links with new partner organisations.

The Community Cohesion Group looks at reports on hate crime every three months. These reports include information on protected characteristics. They also have data and case studies on anti-social behaviour, stop and search, and the use of force. The Community Cohesion Co-Ordinator and the Hate Crime Officer meet regularly to monitor tensions in the community. The South Wales Hate Crime Officer has delivered outreach sessions in schools and prisons to promote awareness of hate crime and how to report incidents.

The Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff CONTEST (Counter Terrorism) Boards have merged. The CONTEST Board makes sure that key officers understand potential community tensions and trends concerning extremism. In summer 2018, the Board agreed to develop a regional 'Channel' process. 'Channel' is an early intervention multi-agency process designed to safeguard vulnerable people from being drawn into violent extremist or terrorist behaviour. 'Channel' works in a similar way to existing safeguarding partnerships aimed at protecting vulnerable people. This will help it share expertise across the region and support the exchange of resources and information. In turn, this will develop a better understanding of regional trends.

The Regional Community Cohesion and Community Engagement Unit supported Glamorgan Cricket to secure funding to deliver workshops for young people. They received funding through the support of the Counter Extremism department of the Home Office, under their 'Building a Stronger Britain Together' programme. This has resourced a series of 'Beyond the Boundaries' workshops, focusing on a range of themes connected to hate crime, human rights, and extremism.

The Regional Community Cohesion Co-Ordinator provided feedback to the All-Wales Race Equality Forum regarding the Welsh Government's future race-related hate crime fund. The Co-ordinator worked collaboratively with eligible organisations to develop local bids to ensure victims of hate crime are supported appropriately.

In 2019 - 2021, the Community Cohesion Group's work to prevent hate crime within the Vale will be further developed by the newly appointed Cohesion Officer, based in the Community Safety Team at Barry Police Station.

Anti-bullying in schools

The Council works with our schools to reduce bullying. We focus on vulnerable groups who are more likely to be victims of bullying. We have achieved this by:

- providing schools with a wellbeing 'capacity building tool' with good practice to deal with bullying;
- monitoring bullying incidents school by school;
- sharing this information with Challenge Advisers;
- monitoring bullying incidents by protected characteristics;
- developing a model anti-bullying policy which all schools have adopted;
- support and challenge visits to schools to look at data, with review visits if necessary;
- suggestions for activities for anti-bullying week;
- safeguarding training to all schools, including information on bullying and on-line bullying;
- development of a Transgender Toolkit to provide guidance to schools on the risk of bullying for this group of young people, outlining how schools can prevent this.

These elements have a clear focus on children and young people feeling safe in schools.

Data on the number of incidents of bullying by protected characteristics is collected and monitored to identify if there are trends that need to be dealt with. However, no trends from the current data have been identified which need action. This indicates that the range of interventions in use are working. However, we recognise that national and UK data shows that certain groups are more at risk of bullying:

- pupils with Additional Learning Needs;

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

The Council will continue to work closely with schools so that there is awareness and measures are taken to deal with bullying.

Show Racism the Red Card and Stonewall Cymru have delivered training which highlights that children and young people often have a number of protected characteristics and that this increases vulnerability to bullying. This is an area we will seek to develop in future.

The challenges have been as follows:

- ensuring that all schools complete the bullying return on a termly basis;
- developing a common understanding of what constitutes bullying;
- our capacity to monitor anti-bullying procedures in schools;
- the number of reported incidents of identity-based bullying is low.

The support the Council has provided to schools has helped them to support children and young people. The schools' inspectorate, Estyn, has recognised this. Of the schools it inspected since 2016, Estyn rated 98% of them as either good or excellent for Wellbeing and Care Support and Guidance.

Equality Objective 7:

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

The Council has recently worked with Cardiff and Vale Health Board to develop a Regional Strategy for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence 2018-2023. This sets out how partners will shape and deliver responses to all forms of domestic abuse and sexual

violence across the region. The vision is that people who live, work, study in, and visit Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, have the opportunity to live positive, independent lives without being affected by violence and abuse.

We work in partnership with the Specialist Domestic Services - Atal Y Fro and the Council's Supporting People Team. Together we ensure that victims of domestic abuse have access to help, support, and protection. This includes: refuge, second stage and dispersed housing; and counselling access to relevant programmes, including outreach support.

We signpost to specialist services when required such as BAWSO, DYN Project, Rainbow Bridge and Live Fear Free.

Training and awareness raising days and activities are arranged and widely advertised across the Vale of Glamorgan. For example, campaigns and awareness events are run throughout the year and are targeted around certain events in the calendar such as the White Ribbon campaign, International Women's Day, 16 days of action, PRIDE, Safeguarding Week. We focus on relevant topics about violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence. These campaigns are face to face, engaging service users, conferences, social media, radio, television and the press. Information will also be on leaflets, letter heads, and emails.

Atal y Fro advertises its services through social media, press, and awareness training events. It works with statutory and third sector organisations to ensure their services are advertised to as many people as possible including the rural Vale.

Quarterly and annual reports to Welsh Government are submitted on the Regional Delivery Plan. We report on progress with the Cardiff and Vale Regional Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Strategy 2018- 2023. This report includes information on protected characteristics. We also report to the Community Safety Partnership.

The Council actively supports the work of the Vale 50+ Forum to increase visibility and services across the Vale of Glamorgan.

Equality Objective 8:

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

Data is collected by protected characteristic and reported annually in the Council's Employment Information Report. This is part of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report (Appendix 5), published on the Council's website.

We collate, report and publish our Annual Employee Pay Policy. This provides a framework to make sure that our employees are paid fairly and objectively and ensures it is an open and transparent process.

The Council supports young people leaving care so they can to access work experience and apprenticeship routes to support their continued career development. This has concentrated mainly on improving the employment rates of young people who are underrepresented in our workplace.

We work with young people, older people, redundant workers, single parents, and disabled people. In this context, the Council continues to hold its "Disability Confident" and works with the local Job Centre Plus to undertake core actions. For example, training and work experience opportunities for people who have protective characteristics and /or who are long term unemployed are provided.

The provision of work experience opportunities to young lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender person through a Stonewall scheme is planned.

The Council has a workforce plan which contains actions to ensure the Council's employees reflect that of the community. This includes actions to reduce the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap has reduced in recent years:

- On 31 March 2016, the gender pay gap was 8.88%.

- On 31 March 2017, the gender pay gap was 8.81%.
- On 31 March 2018, the gender pay gap was 8.01%.
- On 31 March 2019, the gender pay gap was 5.48 %

This has been achieved in a variety of ways.

The Living Wage was introduced in April 2016. This was enhanced by the Council determining to stop using the lowest pay point within its structure. This impacted more beneficially for women in the workforce.

There has been a significant change in the gender balance of Chief Officers. There is now a more even balance. Most of the Chief Officer appointments were made following a competitive process in which internal applicants were successful. This is testament to the Council's management development and succession planning.

There has been a significant change in the gender balance of Chief Officers. There is a more even gender balance (one more female than male) which has resulted in a significant change in the gender pay gap.

The Council has attended school, college, university and local careers job fairs to promote the range of career and jobs in the Council. This has a focus on removing job and career stereotypes and challenging people's ideas about the sorts of jobs open to them.

The appraisal system has been revised. This provides an opportunity for staff to put forward ideas about developing their potential. They can explore development opportunities for themselves that will fit with business needs. This is complemented by the Council's Leadership Café which promotes the personal development of employees, helps them to network and to break down barriers.

Reporting on the pay gap for people from ethnic minorities has been successfully completed. Data will be included in the latest Public Sector Equality Duty report. Data will be provided for 2017/18 and 2018/19 to provide a comparison.

Attracting more young people to work with us is a priority as the proportion of young staff that we employ does not reflect the proportion of young people in our community. The use of apprenticeships is a key measure to support this objective. The Council has offered, and continues to offer, a number of foundation apprenticeships to young people who are 16 - 24 years old. There are 23 apprentices currently in the Council. From April 2017 to March 2018, we employed apprentices mainly on an agency basis. From March 2018, we employed apprentices directly.

It is intended to continue attending school, college, university, and local careers job fairs to continue to promote the range of careers and jobs we have in the Council. focus will remain on removing the job and career stereotypes and preconceptions that many people have.

Progress on this work is reported each year in the Council's Employment Information Report which forms a part of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report published on our website.

Equality objectives – what we will do

The Council has identified a number of actions to take over the next four years between 2020 and 2024.

We believe that many of these equality objectives will benefit all protected groups and cut across protected characteristics. As we work towards them, we make progress in meeting the general duty. We will continue to improve our understanding of what we need to do to meet the needs of protected groups.

However, given that we have increasingly limited resources, we have chosen to focus on those areas where research, data, and experience tell us that there is most need.

Many of the actions will also contribute to the achievement of more than one of our objectives. This section provides more information about each of our 2020–2024 equality objectives, why we have chosen them, what we are seeking to achieve and the activities we will take to deliver them.

Objective One:

To provide services that meet the needs of residents and local communities.
<p>Our previous equality objectives have had more of an internal focus. This reflected the need to establish, develop, or improve systems to collect data on the protected characteristics of our service users and to engage with them. This has helped us to understand who our service users are and to identify gaps in service provision. This practice is now better established.</p> <p>The focus now needs to shift to looking at how this information and awareness raising will improve outcomes for protected groups. We need to use our knowledge and experience to continue to improve our understanding of people's diverse needs and any barriers to our services that might exist.</p> <p>The Council will also develop the workplace to ensure it offers an inclusive environment for all our colleagues. In response to research in 'Is Wales Fairer? 2018', we will also look at how we can support the development of elected members and promote the role of Councillors.</p>

Objective 2

To support learning and employment for protected groups, focusing on those who are most disadvantaged.

Overall, attainment outcomes for the groups where we have focused our efforts have been good but require continued focus.

In terms of school exclusions, progress has been made in some areas but there have been increases in other areas and this will remain an area of focus for our new Plan.

Much work has been done on anti-bullying in schools. Research shows that certain protected groups are more vulnerable to bullying and we will continue to work with schools to identify effective ways to address bullying.

In anticipation of the introduction of the socio-economic duty under the Equality Act 2010, we will focus too on assessing the impact of our work on those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

Objective 3

To support the safety and well-being of people at home and in their community.

The work of our previous equality objectives has focused on safety, namely hate crime and domestic abuse. For our new plan, we will continue with this work. However, the focus will be broader to include well-being, looking at housing needs and access to transport and other activities.

Objective 4

To protect the facilities in our local environment that mean people with a diverse range of needs can participate in the local community.

Our previous equality objectives did not specifically address access to the local environment and participation in the local community. Our engagement with local organisations representing the needs of protected groups has told us how important this is. We will consider these needs as we work with our partners to sustain local facilities and make sure protected groups know what is available to them.

In this context, the Council has developed the following strategic equality objectives and actions.

Our first Corporate Objective is **to work with and for our communities.**

Strategic Equality Objective One

To work in a way that meets the needs of residents and local communities.

We work with partners to make sure that our services meet the diverse needs of our residents and local communities. In doing this, we will think about people who may be disadvantaged due to their protected characteristics.

We want to do that for the people living and working here now. We also want to make lasting improvements in equality and fairness for future generations.

We will work in a way that provides an open and inclusive environment for our employees which embraces diversity and equality of opportunity.

Actions

1. Improve how we involve, engage and communicate with protected groups about our work, decisions and their impact so that we can consider the needs of protected groups now and in the future.
2. Develop our strong culture of good customer service in line with our values to promote equality of opportunity and respond to the diverse needs of our customers.
3. Strengthen equality of opportunity in our employment by embracing our values, increasing diversity, removing barriers, and supporting staff from all backgrounds to reach their potential in an inclusive environment.

4. Continue to reduce the gender pay gap and improve employment opportunities for protected groups, particularly disabled people.
5. Provide support and development to elected members on equality issues and promote the role of councillors to encourage contributions from all sections of the community.

Our second Corporate Objective is **to support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth.**

Strategic Equality Objective Two

To support learning and employment for protected groups, focusing on those who are most disadvantaged.

We want residents to have a fair opportunity to become well-educated, skilled, and to achieve their potential as they develop and learn. We are committed to encouraging people's ambitions and to ensuring that individuals and communities can prosper and achieve their best.

Actions

1. Deliver and evaluate programmes and interventions aimed at addressing attainment gaps to make sure they have a positive impact on socio-economic disadvantage, disability, sex, race, and other protected characteristics.
2. Seek to minimise exclusion rates for children with certain protected characteristics, including socio-economic disadvantage, ethnicity and disability.
3. Analyse bullying data gathered by schools, including racist bullying, to identify trends and review anti-bullying strategies so that there are effective solutions in place.
4. Work with partners to support people to prepare for employment.

Our third Corporate objective is **to support people at home and in their community.**

Strategic Equality Objective Three

To support the safety and well-being of people at home and in their community.

We work in partnership to make sure people are safe at home and in the community and can make choices that support their overall well-being. We give people the necessary advice, care and support when they need it.

Actions we will take

1. Work with partners to deliver preventative programmes and provide advice and support to people who experience abuse, harassment, hate crime or bullying, including women from ethnic minorities, disabled women, women with complex needs, children and young people, and men.
2. 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.
3. Work in partnership to consider issues relating to transport accessibility, particularly for disabled people and older people.

Our fourth Corporate Objective is **to respect, enhance and enjoy our environment.**

Strategic Equality Objective Four

To ensure our local environment can be enjoyed by a diverse range of people.

We understand how our environment contributes to individual and community well-being. We are committed to respecting and enhancing our environment to ensure we all have access to our local area, know about it, and can enjoy it.

Actions we will take

1. Consider the needs of people with protected characteristics when working with community groups and other partners to provide and sustain local facilities.
2. Promote our natural and built environment and cultural heritage so that where possible, they are accessible and known to all protected groups.

Monitoring Progress & Publishing Results

The Council will continue to check on progress towards meeting our equality objectives and report on this each year to the Council's corporate management team, Equality Consultative Forum and Cabinet in the annual equality report. This is published on the Council's website and includes an assessment of the effectiveness of the steps we are taking to meet the equality objectives.

We will be complemented by other equality and employment information each year that is published annually.

The Council is aware that the Welsh Government will soon be consulting on the introduction of the socio-economic duty as part of the Equality Act 2010. We will review our strategic equality objectives and actions when it becomes clearer about what the duty will require the Council to do when the legislation comes into force in April 2020. In the meantime, we have included actions that will help us to think about the impact of our work on people who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

For More Information

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If you have a query about Council services, please contact us:

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- or call 01446 700111