



Working together for a fairer future

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2024 – 2025

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Working together for a fairer future

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2024 – 2025

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Introduction

We are pleased to be introducing the Council's Strategic Equality Plan for 2024 - 2025 – **'Working together for a fairer future'**.

You will note that we have set out a plan for the next twelve months only. We have engaged with key stakeholders to propose that we maintain our current equality objectives with some slight amendments to their scope and updating of the actions related to them. This proposal has been supported. We have chosen to do this because we want to develop a new set of equality objectives alongside the development of our new corporate wellbeing objectives for 2025 – 2030.

Amongst other data and research, we will take into account the analysis of our recent 'Let's Talk Life about in the Vale' public opinion survey, the Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'How Fair is Wales? 2023' and the Welsh Government's equality objectives. We believe that developing the priorities for our Strategic Equality Plan in this way will better align them with our business and strengthen their impact.

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 year. With partners and stakeholders, we look forward to working together to continue 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 current four 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"> • Improve how we involve, engage, and communicate with protected groups about our work and decisions. • Reduce the gender pay gap in the Council, identify whether there is a pay gap for ethnic minorities in the Council by March 2021, and report on both annually. • 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 2025. • 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 2025. • Provide support and development to elected members on equality issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support people at home and in their community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement processes throughout the life of this plan to address hate crimes, violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence. • Consider the housing needs of people with protected characteristics and how our work

	<p>impacts on them, taking action to address any disproportionate impacts on these groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership to consider issues relating to transport accessibility, particularly for disabled people and older people.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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’.

Councillor Lis Burnett

Rob Thomas

Leader of the Council

Chief Executive

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 also took into account the 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.

Socio-economic Duty

On 31 March 2021, the Socio-economic Duty came into force in Wales. It improves decision making and helps those who are socio-economically disadvantaged. We have

updated our equality impact assessment process to reflect this and included actions related to this in the Plan. We will further strengthen this as we develop our equality objectives in the next year.

Welsh Language

We have a separate Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to identify our priorities and actions for the Welsh language and Welsh speakers. Welsh speakers are people with protected characteristics and we will need to consider the intersectional impact on people of any proposals and plans that we have in place. Our equality impact assessment process is being updated to strengthen this consideration.

Context

The world is changing rapidly and the context for this Plan similarly changes regularly. 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.

Since we agreed the last Strategic Equality Plan in 2020, there have been many changes that have impacted upon people's lives including Covid, the cost of living crisis, the Black Lives Matter movement. The Welsh Government has published a number of plans such as the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan for Wales, the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales and Age friendly Wales. There is some reflection of these priorities in this plan and we will further develop our thinking around these in the coming year as we develop the next set of equality objectives.

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 our 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 2024–2025 links with the 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 support this work and it is for this reason that the objectives of both plans are aligned. The equality objectives also align with the Council's Public Participation Strategy.

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?'
- 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 January 2020 and December 2023 to February 2024;

- 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 2025.

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 2021 Census. Data is available for the Vale of Glamorgan from the Annual Population Survey 2019. Data is also available for a number of protected characteristics at a regional level from the Annual Population Survey. The Office for National Statistics produce both the Census and Annual Population Survey.

Equality Data

Ethnicity

The 2021 Census estimated that 131,800 people lived in the Vale of Glamorgan. Of these, the majority, 124,800 (94.6%) identified as White. 2,987 (2.3%) identified as Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, 2,807 (2.1%) identified as Asian or Asian British, 624 (0.5%) identified as Black, African, Caribbean, or Black British. The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group within the "Other" category ("Arab" or "Any other ethnic group") increased from 0.3% in 2011 to 0.5% in 2021.

Nationality

Respondents are able to select multiple answers in response to the question of nationality in the Census. The 2021 Census estimated that of people in the Vale of Glamorgan, 55.5% or 73,276 identified with a 'Welsh only identity' and 21.1% or 27,805 identified as 'British only identity' and 2.5% or 3,357 identified as another nationality only.

Main Language

According to the 2021 Census, 98.2% or 125,798 people aged three years and over in the Vale of Glamorgan spoke English or Welsh as their main language. The next highest Main language at 0.4% was 'Other European languages (EU)' – this includes European languages such as French, German and Spanish.

Welsh Language

According to the 2021 Census, it was estimated that 13.3% of people in the Vale of Glamorgan could speak, read or write in Welsh. This is an increase from 10.8% or 17,047 people over 3 in 2011 with the Vale of Glamorgan being one of only four local authorities in Wales to see an increase (all other areas have seen a decrease).

Disability

The 2021 Census, 19.9% of respondents identified as disabled. Of these, 11% identified as disabled with 'day-to-day activities limited a little and 8.9% as disabled with 'day-to-

day activities limited a lot'. 35.3% of households identified as having a disabled person in the household.

Age

The median age of the population in the Vale of Glamorgan was 44 years.

Between 2011 and 2021, there was an increase of 24.9% in people aged 65 and over. In 2021, it was estimated that 22% of the Vale of Glamorgan's population was aged 65 and over.

The Vale of Glamorgan has seen an increase of 4.3% in children aged under 15 years. In 2021, it was estimated that 18.6% of the population was aged 15 years and under.

Gender

The 2022 mid-year population estimates based on the 2021 Census estimated that 69,124 (52%) of the population were female and 64,368 (48%) were male.

Gender Reassignment

Gender identity refers to a person's sense of their own gender, whether someone is a man, women or another category such as non-binary. This may or may not be the same as their sex registered at birth. This was a voluntary question asked for the first time through Census 2021. Of those who answered the question on gender identity in the Vale of Glamorgan, 94.5% of people aged 16 years and over selected that they have 'a gender identity the same as their sex registered at birth', 0.36% of people selected that they have 'a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth', the remaining 5.17% chose not to answer the question.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is an umbrella term covering sexual identity, attraction, and behaviour. For an individual respondent, these may not be the same. This was a voluntary question asked for the first time through Census 2021. Of those who answered the question on sexual orientation in the Vale of Glamorgan, 90.3% of people aged 16 years and over

selected 'straight or heterosexual', 3.07% selected a 'Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other (LGB+)' orientation, the remaining 6.6% chose not to answer the question.

Religion or Belief

Of the 124,397 people who chose to answer the voluntary religious question, the highest proportion, 47.9% or 63,164 people, answered that they had no religion. In 2021, 44.1% or 58,237 people answered that they were Christian. The next largest religious affiliation was Muslim at 0.9% and 1,205 people.

Marital Status

In 2021, 47.4% or 50,928 people in the Vale of Glamorgan were married or in a registered civil partnership (a slight fall from 48.9% in 2011).

Pregnancy and Maternity

Little data is available on pregnancy and maternity. In 2022, the most up-to-date data available, there were 1,171 live births in the Vale of Glamorgan.

According to the Office of National Statistics, in 2021, there were 824,983 conceptions for women of all ages in England and Wales, this is the first increase in the last six years. Women aged 30 to 34 years had the highest number and conception rate for the fifth year in a row and the lowest percentage of conceptions leading to abortion. The conception rate for women aged under 18 years in England and Wales has more than halved since 2011 when it was 30.9 conceptions per 1,000 women of the same age; in 2021 it was 13.2 per 1,000 women of the same age.

Socio-economic

The Office for National Statistics data published in February 2024 shows that:

- The employment rate was 76.6% for ages 16 to 64. Employment in The Vale of Glamorgan has decreased compared with the previous year. The Vale of Glamorgan's employment rate was higher than across Wales as a whole in the year ending September 2023.

- The unemployment rate was 32.2% for people aged 16+. Unemployment (people looking for work) has risen since a year earlier. The most recent unemployment rate for the Vale of Glamorgan was lower than across Wales as a whole.
- The Claimant Count was 2.9% for people aged 16 - 64. The Claimant Count was slightly lower in December 2023 compared with a year earlier. The [Claimant Count](#) measures the number of people who are claiming unemployment-related benefits.
- Economic inactivity rate was 22.8% for people aged 16 to 64. Economic inactivity has increased since the previous year. These are people who are neither employed nor seeking work.

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 Staff Survey 2022 76.7% of staff either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I am proud to work for the Vale of Glamorgan Council'. 68.2% of people either agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the Vale of Glamorgan Council as a good place to work.
- There are 55 schools across the Vale of Glamorgan, including 7 Welsh medium schools.
- The Council has nearly 4,000 homes.
- There are 54 elected councillors including the Cabinet, made-up of the Leader of the Council and seven other Councillors (five women, three men).

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 year, 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

From time to time, we arrange other training and awareness sessions such as race equality awareness. In addition to this equality training, equality issues are covered in other corporate training, such as recruitment training.

Assessing Impact

A process is in place to evaluate the likely impact of policies or practices being proposed, reviewed or revised on protected groups and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. 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.

We have updated this process to include consideration of socio-economic impact and we are in the process of strengthening consideration of impact on Welsh speakers.

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 support staff networks: GLAM - our network for lesbian, gay, bisexual trans and non-binary (LGBTQI+) colleagues; Diverse – our network for global majority and ethnic minority colleagues; and Abl – our network for colleagues with disabilities.

- We have Wellbeing Champions. The role of the Wellbeing Champion is:
 - promoting health campaigns such as World Mental Health Day and Stress Awareness Day;
 - encouraging colleagues to participate in the Council's wellbeing initiatives;
 - involvement in events and collaborative working with other Champions across the Council and other organisations;
 - role modelling and promoting a health culture within the workplace;
 - organising activities such as lunch-time walks, book club or hobby group;
 - signposting colleagues to relevant services.

- We have run workshops for corporate and school staff on race awareness.
- We are actively working towards greater race inclusivity, working within relevant frameworks to guide our work so that we are informed by people's lived experience. Race Equality Matters has awarded us Bronze Trailblazer and Safe Space Plus Trailblazer status.
- We have held Safe Space meetings between our Diverse Staff Network and our Senior Leadership Team to discuss race issues and agree priority actions.
- We are actively working towards greater inclusivity of lesbian, gay, bisexual trans and non-binary people, working within relevant frameworks, to guide our work so that we are informed by people's lived experience. We are a Stonewall Diversity Champion. We have been awarded Silver for our Workplace Equality Index submission.
- We work with partners to provide job opportunities.
- We hold an annual Holocaust Memorial Day event.
- We support the Vale 50+ Forum. This is a very active public engagement group that offers a voice for people over 50 years of age.
- 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 online. 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 – what we will do

We identified a number of objectives and actions to take during the period between 2020 and 2024. They are long term objectives, and following review and engagement with key stakeholders, we will continue to work on them in 2024/25 with the addition of some new actions.

We will take the opportunity during this time to develop a new set of equality objectives alongside the development of our new corporate wellbeing objectives for 2025 – 2030. This will also allow us to consider, amongst other data and research, the analysis of our recent ‘Let’s Talk Life in the Vale’ public opinion survey, the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s ‘How Fair is Wales? 2023’ and the Welsh Government’s equality objectives. The resulting Strategic Equality Plan 2025 – 2029 will then align better with our business and the equality objectives will have more impact.

We believe that many of these equality objectives 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. As we have increasingly limited resources, we will focus on those areas where research, data, and experience tell us that there is most need.

This section provides more information about each of our equality objectives, why we have chosen them, what we are seeking to achieve and the activities we will take to deliver them.

We show how our equality objectives link with the corporate well-being objectives. This aligns the Council’s work in these areas and mainstreams our work on tackling areas where there is most pressing disadvantage.

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

Our Strategic Equality Plan links with this by identifying the communities who are most disadvantaged as identified in ‘Is Wales Fairer 2018’ and through local engagement.

The following equality objectives link to this well-being objective.

- **Strategic Equality Objective One**

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

- **Strategic Equality Objective Two**

Reduce the gender pay gap in the Council, identify whether there is a pay gap for ethnic minorities in the Council by March 2021, 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.

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

Our Strategic Equality Plan aims to support learning and employment for protected groups, focusing on those who are most disadvantaged.

The following equality objective links to this well-being objective.

- **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.

Our third Corporate Well-being Objective is **to support people at home and in their community**.

The Strategic Equality Plan supports the safety and well-being of people at home and in their community, with particular regard to protected groups identified as disadvantaged in 'Is Wales Fairer 2018' and our own local information and data.

The following equality objectives link to this well-being objective.

- **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.

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

The Strategic Equality Plan seeks to ensure our local environment can be enjoyed by a diverse range of people, including disabled 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.

These equality objectives support our work to achieve the five ways of working and contribute to our well-being objectives as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Strategic Equality Plan has been developed in accordance with the five ways of working and they are also reflected in the content of the plan. There is strong emphasis on collaboration as the Council recognises the need to work with partners to deliver services and improve local well-being. The plan reflects the importance of prevention and this has been a strong theme in much of the engagement to date. This is a four year plan, extended to five years, but we recognise that many of the issues are even longer term.

The following section sets out our equality objectives in the context of our corporate well-being objectives.

For each objective, we comment on the protected characteristics to which it relates, the expected outcomes, actions, and how we will know how we are doing.

In the information on protected characteristics, we have used information from the Equality and Human Rights Commission's research report 'Is Wales Fairer 2018'. The findings of this report is set out in sections or domains so we have included in brackets the section from which we have taken this information.

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

Our Strategic Equality Plan links with this by identifying the communities who are most disadvantaged as identified in 'Is Wales Fairer 2018' and through local engagement.

Strategic Equality Objective One

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

Protected characteristics

This benefits all protected groups, but we will focus on disabled, people from ethnic minorities, women and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

These are the groups identified as being most disadvantaged in 'Is Wales Fairer 2018'. (Work)

Expected outcomes

Identified improvements in place.

Stakeholders have information about the improvements and the opportunity for input to support progress.

Actions

1. Identify how the Council currently involves, engages, and communicates with protected groups.
2. Provide advice and training to Services on data analysis.
3. Put in place action plans for improvement.
4. Put in place a communication plan to engage with and update stakeholders on progress.

5. Review how the Equalities Consultative Forum operates and its interface with relevant Council Champions.
6. Continue to implement the Participation Strategy, including using consultation feedback such as 'Let's Talk Life in the Vale', to inform the development of corporate wellbeing and equality objectives.
7. Implement actions that will lead to the Vale of Glamorgan becoming a County of Sanctuary.

How we will know how we are doing

1. Range of organisations we engage with is representative of the needs of protected groups.
2. Information and data on how engagement has been used to improve outcomes for protected groups and socio-economic disadvantaged groups.
3. Information and data on the number of front-line staff who have received equality, race, and disability training.
4. Information and data on the results of staff and service user satisfaction surveys by protected characteristic, including how feedback has been used to improve outcomes for protected groups and socio-economically disadvantaged groups.
5. Corporate wellbeing and strategic equality objectives informed by lived experience.
6. County of Sanctuary status.

Strategic Equality Objective Two

Reduce the gender pay gap in the Council, identify whether there is a pay gap for ethnic minorities in the Council by March 2025, and report on both annually.

Protected characteristics

This benefits women and ethnic minorities, groups which 'Is Wales Fairer 2018' identifies as experiencing pay gaps. (Work)

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that a gender pay gap persists in Wales, despite a small narrowing of the gap. Median hourly earnings were higher for men in Wales (£11.36) than women (£9.80) in 2016/17, representing a 13.7% gender pay gap.

The Council has achieved a significant reduction in the gender pay gap which in early 2020 is under 5%.

The Council is starting to establish systems so that it can report on the ethnic minority pay gap and to identify appropriate actions.

Expected outcomes

Gender pay gap reduces.

The Council identifies if there is a pay gap for ethnic minorities and takes appropriate action if this is the case.

The Council identifies if there is a pay gap for monitor pay gap for people with disabilities and takes appropriate action if this is the case.

Actions

1. Continue to monitor gender pay gap every month.
2. Establish process to monitor pay gap for ethnic minorities to identify pay gap.
3. Monitor pay gap for ethnic minorities every month.
4. Progress actions as part of the Council's People Strategy to address where possible issues relating to gender and ethnic minorities pay gaps.
5. Establish process to monitor pay gap for people with disabilities to identify pay gap.

How we will know how we are doing

Information and data on pay gaps, particularly for gender, race and disability.

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 2025.

Protected characteristics

This benefits all protected groups but the Council will look at how it can remove barriers to employment, apprenticeships, and work experience for disabled people and young people.

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' identifies disabled people as falling further behind in employment. They are under-represented in apprenticeships, and their employment rate is less than half that of non-disabled people. (Work)

Local engagement confirmed that disabled people would like barriers removed to take up flexible employment opportunities.

The Council has identified that there is an under-representation of young people in its workforce.

Expected outcomes

Increase in rates of employment for disabled people and young people across jobs, apprenticeships, and work experience.

Stronger links with the disabled community so that they are aware of the work opportunities available in a timely way.

Continued links with young people's groups such as the Vale Youth Cabinet.

Actions

1. Work with local groups to identify barriers to taking up work opportunities by March 2021.
2. Take action to address barriers and create more opportunity for employment by October 2021.
3. Engage regularly with local disabled and young people's groups to discuss progress.
4. Establish whether there is a difference in the employment opportunities for people who have physical and mental disabilities, including those who are neurodivergent.

How we will know how we are doing

Information and data on the diversity of our staff, including internal progression, explaining how improvements have been achieved.

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 2025.

Protected characteristics

This will benefit all protected groups.

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that the number of women gaining employment in higher paid roles has increased and the gender pay gap has narrowed. However, evidence shows high levels of bullying, harassment, and negative experiences in the workplace, including sexual harassment and discrimination as a result of pregnancy or maternity. (Work)

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans people are more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace (Stonewall's 'LGBT in Britain – Work Report (2018)'). The Council continues to be a member of Stonewall's Workplace Diversity Programme.

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that disabled people's employment rate in Wales is less than half that for non-disabled people. (Work)

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that apprenticeships remain strongly gender segregated. Ethnic minorities and disabled people are under-represented in apprenticeships. (Work)

Expected outcomes

Improved score in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index.

'Pregnancy and maternity discrimination in the workplace: Recommendations for change' report is considered and acted on as appropriate.

Increased staff awareness of sexual harassment policy and completion of training.

Improved staff engagement through engagement and innovation groups and the Learning Café.

Recruitment processes in place that challenge gender stereotypes.

Progress made in the Trailblazer process.

Actions

1. Improve lesbian, gay, bi, and trans inclusion in the workplace and measure progress through the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index every year.
2. Progress the six areas of action to address pregnancy and maternity discrimination as set out in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'Pregnancy and maternity discrimination in the workplace: Recommendations for change' report by March 2024.
3. Promote the Council's sexual harassment policy and e-learning training opportunities by March 2021, monitoring and reporting on training completion rates.
4. Hold regular meetings of the Corporate Engagement and Innovation Forum with staff to encourage wellbeing and good working practices, innovation, and improved communication.
5. Hold regular meetings of Local Engagement and Innovation Groups to increase the ability of staff to influence the direction of the Council.

6. Hold regular meetings of the Learning Café - the Council's network for sharing ideas, promoting best practice, equipping staff with the skills and knowledge to cope with workplace challenges, and supporting career progression.
7. Promote employment opportunities in a way that challenges gender stereotypes.
8. Continue to review how the workplace can be made more inclusive for disabled people.
9. Continue to work towards greater inclusivity for global majority and ethnic minority staff, measuring progress through Race Equality Matters Trailblazer process.
10. Continue to provide support and develop collaborative relationships with existing and emerging staff networks, including GLAM, Diverse and Abl.

How we will know how we are doing

Staff satisfaction surveys.

Action plans from staff Engagement and Innovation groups.

Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

Workforce data.

Race Equality Matters Trailblazer feedback.

Feedback from staff networks - GLAM, Diverse and Abl.

Strategic Equality Objective Five

Provide support and development to elected members on equality issues.

Protected characteristics

This benefits all protected groups.

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that women remain under-represented and there is limited data on other groups such as disabled people and ethnic minorities.

(Participation)

Expected outcomes

Councillors have up to date knowledge of equality issues to inform decision making.

Equality and LGBT Champions supporting priority equality issues such as improvement in inclusivity of workplace.

Elected member Champions are able to play a part in promoting equality.

Actions

1. Provide all Councillors with equality training by July 2022.
2. Engage with elected member Equality and LGBT Champions to identify how and where they can confidently support equality issues.
3. Explore how relevant elected member Champions can play a more significant role in promoting equality.

How we will know how we are doing

Number of elected members who have completed equality training.

Range of equality issues supported by elected member Equality and LGBT Champions and other relevant Champions.

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

Our Strategic Equality Plan aims 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.

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.

Protected characteristics

This benefits all protected groups.

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that attainment gaps persist for pupils in receipt of free school meals and children with additional learning needs. (Education)

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that young women and girls, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children and children with additional learning needs are more likely to be at risk of experiencing identity-based bullying. (Education)

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that poorer children, children with additional learning needs, White children and children of mixed ethnicity have higher than average exclusion rates. (Education)

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that subject choices remain highly gendered, with girls being much less likely to continue studying science and mathematics after school. (Education)

Expected outcomes

Reduction in attainment gaps.

Programmes in place to tackle identity-based bullying.

Reduced exclusion rates for children with certain protected characteristics, including disabled children and mixed ethnicity children.

Schools have current Strategic Equality Plans in place.

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, other protected characteristics and young carers.
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 deliver programmes which support people to prepare for employment.
5. Support schools to review and update their Strategic Equality Plans.

How we will know how we are doing

1. Information and data on how programmes and interventions have affected attainment gaps on children and young people with protected characteristics and who are socio-economically disadvantaged.
2. Information and data on number of children excluded by protected characteristic and socio-economic disadvantage.
3. Analysis of school bullying data showing trends and review of anti-bullying strategies to address findings.
4. Information and data on outcomes of programmes supporting people to prepare for employment.
5. Schools will have current Strategic Equality Plans in place.

Our third Corporate Well-being Objective is **to support people at home and in their community**.

The Strategic Equality Plan supports the safety and well-being of people at home and in their community, with particular regard to protected groups identified as disadvantaged in 'Is Wales Fairer 2018' and our own local information and data.

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.

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.

Protected characteristics

This benefits all protected groups.

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that the number of recorded hate crimes has increased across all protected characteristics in Wales, with evidence to suggest a spike in race and religion hate crimes following trigger events. (Justice and personal security)

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that there has been a sharp increase in the number of sexual and domestic violence offences reported to and recorded by the police since 2015. (Justice and personal security)

Expected outcomes

Processes in place to tackle hate crimes, violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Improved awareness amongst people in the community of the advice and support available to them.

Actions

1. Work with partners to deliver preventative measures 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, men, young people and children.

How we will know how we are doing

Information and data on preventative processes, including outcomes for protected groups.

Information and data on relevant advice and support provided to people experiencing abuse, harassment, hate crime or bullying, focusing on groups identified as in most need.

Information and data on number of people accessing advice and support.

Information and data on progress with Regional Strategy for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence 2018 - 2023.

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.

Protected characteristics

This benefits all protected groups.

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that disabled people face a shortage of accessible and adaptable homes and long delays in making existing homes accessible.

(Living standards)

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that rough sleeping in Wales has increased and there are high levels of homelessness. (Living standards)

A report commissioned by Ending Youth Homelessness Cymru was published in August 2019 - 'Out on the Streets. LGBTQ+ & Youth Homelessness in Wales'.

This report identifies that the LGBTQ+ community is disproportionately affected by youth homelessness and young people are more likely to be made homeless as a result of family breakdown than their non-LGBT peers.

Expected outcomes

More adapted and accessible affordable housing properties available that are suitable for disabled and/or elderly people.

Existing homes made accessible in a reasonable time scale where adaptations are needed.

Improvement in percentage of homeless cases prevented.

Actions

1. Consider evidence and feedback on barriers to accommodation and take action as appropriate.
2. Develop and implement an Older Persons Housing Strategy to meet the needs of the Vale's ageing population.
3. Implement an action plan to ensure our services are more accessible to the young LGBTQ communities.
4. Provide our staff with specialist training to enable them to provide appropriate service that meets the needs the young LGBTQ communities.
5. Implement the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2022 – 2036 to secure the best quality of life for older people to live as independently as possible in later life.

How we will know how we are doing

Additional number of adapted/accessible affordable housing properties delivered each year.

Information and data on preventative programmes, including outcomes for protected groups.

Information and data on number of people accessing advice and support.

Information and data on housing needs by protected characteristic.

Information and data on homelessness in Vale of Glamorgan.

Strategic Equality Objective Nine

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

Protected characteristics

This benefits all protected groups and in particular, older and disabled people.

'Is Wales Fairer 2018' reports that poor transport and digital infrastructure in rural areas is affecting people's ability to participate in all aspects of life, particularly households without cars, older people in rural areas, and disabled people.

(Participation)

Expected outcomes

Improved accessibility of local transport.

Actions

1. Engage with people to identify transport access issues.
2. Develop a plan to address transport access issues as appropriate.
3. Provide training to Council staff on how to help meet the needs of disabled passengers.

How we will know how we are doing

Information and data on preventative programmes, including outcomes for protected groups.

Information and data on number of people accessing advice and support.

Information and data on measures taken to improve transport accessibility.

Information and data on service user satisfaction.

Information and data on how Council staff have been trained to have the knowledge and skills to help meet the needs of disabled passengers.

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

The Strategic Equality Plan seeks to ensure our local environment can be enjoyed by a diverse range of people, including disabled 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.

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.

Protected characteristics

This will benefit all protected groups, particularly disabled people for whom there are more barriers.

Expected outcomes

Residents and visitors will be able to access information on the natural and built environment and cultural heritage, including how accessible these are and what facilities are available so they can plan their visits.

Actions

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.

How we will know how we are doing

Information and data on promotion strategies.

Information and data on community groups and other partners we have engaged with to promote environment and heritage.

Information and data on toilets and Changing Places.

Monitoring Progress & Publishing Results

We will continue to check on progress towards meeting our equality objectives and report on this each year to the Council's Senior Leadership Team, Equality Consultative Forum, and Cabinet in the annual equality monitoring report. We publish the annual equality monitoring report on our website.

For More Information

Visit our website

www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

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

- Email c1v@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk;
- or call 01446 700111