

Meeting of:	<b>Cabinet</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Thursday, 05 February 2026</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Live Well Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2024-2025
Purpose of Report:	To seek approval of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report.
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services
Responsible Officer:	Director of Corporate Resources
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Strategic Leadership Team
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This report brings to the attention of Cabinet the Vale of Glamorgan Council's progress against the equality objectives of the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2025 and other actions taken to improve equality for people living and working in the Vale of Glamorgan.</li> <li>• It summarises what services have done to collect and analyse equality data on how people with protected characteristics have used their services. It notes what they have done to make improvements in the reporting period 2024-2025. Not all services responded to the request to submit information for this report.</li> <li>• It comments on progress made with each of the equality objectives and where we need to continue to focus our efforts.</li> <li>• It refers to appendices which show the data collected and the form used to collect data.</li> <li>• This report has been to Live Well Scrutiny Committee with no recommendations.</li> <li>• Following consideration and approval by Cabinet, the report will be published on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's external website in English and Welsh.</li> </ul>	

## **Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet approves the Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2024-2025 as described in the body of this report and at Appendix 1.
2. That the report be published by 31st March 2026 to meet statutory duties.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

1. To allow the Vale of Glamorgan Council to meet its reporting duty under the specific duties for Wales and continue to make progress towards meeting the public sector equality duty whilst ensuring our equality work is available for scrutiny by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and others.
2. To enable Cabinet to consider the report and to enable publication by 31st March 2026 to meet statutory duties.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector equality duty (the 'general duty') and there are specific duties for Wales.
- 1.2 The specific duties include the requirement to publish an annual report for the previous year by 31st March each year to demonstrate the progress made on equalities issues that are contained within the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and any associated equalities activity.
- 1.3 This report provides Cabinet with the Annual Report for the period 2024-2025 for approval.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1 The Annual Equality Monitoring Report for 2024-2025 can be found in Appendix 1. The report provides information relating to the ten equality objectives contained in the Council's [Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2025](#).
- 2.2 These objectives are:
  - Improve how we involve, engage, and communicate with protected groups about our work and decisions.
  - Continue to reduce the gender pay gap in the Council, identify whether there is a pay gap for ethnic minorities in the Council by March 2025, 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 working 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.
- 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 potential.
- 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 impacts on them, taking action to address any disproportionate impacts on these groups.
- Work in partnership to consider issues relating to transport accessibility, particularly for disabled people and older people.
- 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.

**2.3** The Annual Equality Monitoring Report is structured so as to meet the requirements of the Equality Act and specific Duties for Wales. The Report therefore includes:

- Background information about the purposes of the Report and the way it has been developed;
- The steps the Council has taken to identify and collect relevant information (and any reasons for not collecting information);
- How the Council has used this information in meeting the three aims of the general duty;
- A statement on the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information;
- Progress towards fulfilling each of the Council's existing equality objectives (setting out what has been done, what has been learnt, where the challenges lie and what still needs to be done);
- A statement on the effectiveness of the steps that the Council has taken to fulfil each of its equality objectives;
- The report contains specified employment information, including information on training and pay.

**2.4** To demonstrate how other relevant matters (outside of the specific work on the equality objectives) have contributed to this work, the annual report also includes a section on these issues and their contribution to show the wider work underway across the Council.

- 2.5 The Annual Equality Monitoring report contains a series of appendices to provide further information and make linkages with other relevant reports.
- 2.6 Once approved, the Annual Equality Monitoring Report will be translated so that bilingual versions are available.

### **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1 The Strategic Equality Plan and its delivery demonstrates the five ways of working and the pursuit of the Council's well-being objectives.
- 3.2 It is a long-term plan aiming to improve equality for residents over a period of time through the achievement of its equality objectives. We have used research and evidence from the Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'Is Wales Fairer' which outlines the key challenges for improving equality in Wales.
- 3.3 It aims to prevent identified challenges from getting worse and to put in place measures which can improve fairness and equality for people who live or work in the Vale of Glamorgan. This is underpinned by our responsibilities under the 'general duty' of the Equality Act 2010 and the specific equality duties for Wales.
- 3.4 The equality objectives can only be achieved if there is collaboration across Council Services.
- 3.5 There are equality objectives relevant to most services, such as collecting and analysing data, and engaging with protected groups. Others are specific to a particular service, such as the domestic abuse objective. In turn, some of these will need collaboration with external partners. For example, our Community Safety Team works closely with Vale Domestic Abuse Service - an external organisation providing services for those experiencing domestic violence.
- 3.6 To develop the original Strategic Equality Plan in 2012 and to update it in 2016, 2020 and 2024, we involved people through an engagement and consultation process with stakeholders and the public to develop our equality objectives. Each of the equality objectives has an action plan to explain what we aim to do to achieve that objective. There is an equality impact assessment in place which describes the impact of this work on protected groups.

### **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct climate change or nature implications associated with this report. Climate change can have a greater impact on certain groups such as older people, women, poorer people, disabled people, and people in poor health particularly those with respiratory difficulties. In this context, our work to address inequality is important.

## **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

### **Financial**

- 5.1** Officer time is needed to collect, analyse, and report on equality and employment information on a regular basis. The benefit is a better understanding of how to target resources to deliver services which best meet the needs of users.
- 5.2** The actions ensure that the Council complies with legislation (avoiding a potential adverse cost implication for non-compliance).

### **Employment**

- 5.3** Officers collect, analyse and report on employment information. The benefit is a better understanding of how to target resources to provide employment opportunities which best meet the needs of staff and applicants.
- 5.4** The Plan contains equality objectives specifically related to employment (regarding the reduction of the gender pay gap and ethnicity pay gap) and makes references to the employment profile of the Council as required by the Equality Act.

### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

- 5.5** The Equality Act 2010 created a public sector duty, replacing the race, disability and gender equality duties. The duty came into force in April 2011. The duty covers age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Under the general duty, public sector organisations must have due regard to the need to:
  - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - advance equality of opportunity between different groups;
  - foster good relations between different groups.
- 5.6** The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnership.
- 5.7** The Equality Act gives Welsh Ministers the power to impose specific duties through regulations. The specific duties are legal requirements designed to help public bodies meet the general duty. These were published in April 2011.
- 5.8** The Equality and Human Rights Commission published guidance on the public sector equality duty for Wales on 8th June 2011. It performs a regulatory role to ensure that listed bodies comply with the duty. If the Equality and Human Rights Commission believes that the Council has not complied with a public sector equality duty, it has the power to seek compliance.
- 5.9** The Annual Equality Monitoring Report sets out how the Council has been working to meet the general duty and public sector equality duty for Wales.

- 5.10** The Council is required to collect, use, and publish equality and employment information to help understand how its policies, practices and decisions affect individuals who share one or more of the protected characteristics. This process is essential if the Council is to comply with the requirements of the public sector specific equality duties in Wales. The information is required to accurately inform the equality impact assessment process, the Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives.
- 5.11** The work reported upon in the Annual Equality Monitoring Report will assist in promoting community cohesion by meeting the diverse needs of local people and improving equality of opportunity.
- 5.12** The Socio-economic Duty came into force in Wales on 31st March 2021. It improves decision making and helps those who are socio-economically disadvantaged. The introduction of the Socio-economic Duty means that some public bodies, including local authorities, now have to think about how their strategic decisions, such as setting objectives and developing public services, can improve inequality of outcome for people who suffer socio-economic disadvantage.

## **6. Background Papers**

Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance: [Annual reporting, publishing and Ministerial duties: A guide for listed public authorities in Wales](#)

Welsh Government '[2012 - Collecting Equality Data and Harmonised Standards Best Practice](#)' guidance.

[Equality and Human Rights Commission's Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty Wales](#)



**The Vale of Glamorgan Council's**

**Annual Equality Report**

**2024-2025**

**NO DRAFT STATUS**

**You can ask for this document in other formats.  
For example: larger font or on different colour paper.**

**This document is available in Welsh.  
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg.**

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## Introduction

We must report on progress towards meeting our equality objectives and other equality matters every year by 31 March for performance in the previous year. This report tells you about our equality work between April 2024 and March 2025.

We do this to meet our duties under:

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

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

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

We also tell you about:

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

## Background

We describe our main equality work in our [Strategic Equality Plan 2024-25](#).

We agreed this plan in March 2024. We engaged with key stakeholders to propose that we would maintain the equality objectives from the 2020-24 Plan. We chose to do this

because we wanted to develop a new set of equality objectives alongside the development of our new corporate wellbeing objectives for 2025-2030.

It progresses our work from our previous plans in 2012 and 2016. There were things we had to do to develop the first plan.

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

This helped us to decide on our equality objectives - an important part of the Strategic Equality Plan. We build on these foundations each time we review our Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives.

We consulted people in 2019 for our 2020-2024 Plan and in 2023 for the 2024-2025 plan. We used feedback from engagement and consultation to develop the equality objectives. We used more recent research such as '[How Fair is Wales? 2023](#)' by the Equality and Human Rights Commission as well as the Let's Talk About Life in the Vale survey carried out in Autumn 2024. We made links with our corporate wellbeing objectives.

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

We have a Cabinet member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services to lead on equality issues as well as an elected member Equalities Champion. Directors take the lead in their own service area.

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

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, and the Black Lives Matter movement. The Welsh Government has published several 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 latest Strategic Equality Plan, and we will further consider our thinking around these in the coming year as we develop the next set of equality objectives.

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

We collect information about who uses our services. There is a corporate approach available for doing this so that our Services can collect data on protected groups in a consistent way. See the corporate equalities monitoring form in [Appendix 3](#). We encourage services to improve how they use this information to help them plan their work to better meet people's needs.

When we look at the information gathered, we consider:

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

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

We asked services to complete an [online Microsoft Form](#), which can be seen in [Appendix 2](#).

We asked our services:

- What have you achieved in respect of equality objectives from the Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2025 that are relevant to your service?
- What other work have you done during this period that supports equality and meeting the three aims of the general duty?
- Do you have effective arrangements for collecting equalities information?
- What do you do with the equalities monitoring information and data you collect? How have you used it to make changes, improve services, and influence decisions that improve outcomes for protected groups?
- Which protected characteristics have you monitored?
- If there are any you do not monitor, why not?
- Have you monitored socio-economic disadvantage? If not, why not?

You can find the equality information that Services have collected in [Appendix 4](#).

The form encourages services to show how they have used the information to make improvements to services.

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

Some of the reasons for not collecting information include:

- users not wanting to complete another form or provide additional information;
- concern that limited surveys do not reflect a true picture;

- not having systems to collect the information;
- inappropriate or difficult to collate the information;
- availability of data;
- lack of understanding of how collecting data would impact work.

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

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

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

- We used national research to help us understand the issues such as the '[How Fair is Wales? 2023](#)' report produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- We looked at whether we had any information in the Council to tell us more.
- We talked to groups who know about the interests of protected groups.
- We looked at the information we had on the people using our services. We especially wanted to know which protected groups were using our services.
- We consulted with our own staff and the public.
- We agreed the equality objectives that we would work on for the next four years.

We show what work we have done on these in this report.

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

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

**Strategic Equality Objective Three** – Improve employment opportunities in the Council for protected groups, particularly disabled and young people, to more closely reflect the diversity of the local population by March 2025.

**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.

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

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

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

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

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

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



## **Summary of work carried out in line with Strategic Equality Objectives**

### **Strategic Equality Objective 1**

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

#### **Communications**

The corporate Facebook account has over 26,000 followers. The Welsh language account has 153 followers.

The corporate X/Twitter account had 21,600 followers whilst the Welsh language account had 626 followers by the end of March 2024. The number of Facebook followers has increased since last year and the number of followers on X / Twitter has decreased. This is however reflective of a general decline in use of X / Twitter. In April 2025, we announced that we would no longer use X / Twitter.

We launched the corporate Instagram accounts in November 2024. There are separate English and Welsh accounts which share the same posts. The English account has 333 followers, and the Welsh account has 22 followers.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council also has a corporate LinkedIn account, with over 11,000 followers. All posts are bilingual, with English and Welsh text in the same post.

#### **Consultations**

We engaged with residents of the Vale of Glamorgan throughout 2024-25 on consultations, including the Strategic Equality Plan 2025-2029 and the Corporate Plan 2025-2030.

We undertook more than 30 consultation and engagement projects of various scope and size across the course of the year. Usually, service area teams did these, sometimes with support from our central Communications Team.

The Placemaking Team undertook a comprehensive engagement programme, involving over 2,500 participants in the development of new Place Plans for Barry, Penarth, Cowbridge, and Llantwit Major. In Llantwit Major, we delivered 15 separate consultation activities which engaged more than 700 individuals. We placed particular emphasis on engaging underrepresented groups, for instance, to address low participation among young people. The team collaborated with the Vale of Glamorgan Youth Service to facilitate a week-long series of lunchtime sessions at a local comprehensive school.

### **Equality Consultative Forum**

The Equality Consultative Forum met twice in 2024-2025 to discuss a range of corporate plans and initiatives as well as some items from external partners. Items discussed included:

- New planning protocol
- Corporate Plan
- Reshaping
- Let's Talk About Life in the Vale

### **Vale 50+ Strategy Forum and Age Friendly Vale**

We continue to support the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum who are a voice for older people in the Vale of Glamorgan. We supported the Forum to hold a series of in-person meetings for people aged 50+ to share their views on important topics as well as public 'Have Your Say' events in May and July 2024, and participation in the Age Friendly Christmas event in December 2024. Feedback from the events helped shape the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan.

The Age Friendly Officer and the Public Services Board (PSB) launched the Age Friendly Vale Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2028 at the beginning of 2025.

More than twenty partners from the Public Services Board, third sector and local community groups as well as invited older people attended the Age Friendly Action Planning workshop at St Pauls Community Centre in Penarth in April 2024. They provided feedback and helped shape the Action Plan alongside a further eleven community feedback events.

We have publicly celebrated Intergenerational Week on Vale of Glamorgan social media. We highlighted examples of good practice, joining partners such as Welsh Government and the Older People's Commissioner for Wales in encouraging intergenerational activities.

We marked International Older Peoples Day on 1 October by launching the Age Friendly Vale Positive Aging Campaign video, featuring local residents. The video received over 1,000 views, helping to promote positive aging and tackle negative stereotypes. The video can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrkuHZsOZnA>

### **Social Services – Adult Services**

The Integrated Discharge Service started to use Talking Mats and a Sonido Portable Loop for citizens who have communication difficulties.

### **Data and Insight**

The Strategy and Insight team encourage the use of data to support and shape Council policies and decisions. They share reports with Council departments who can use the data to better inform the decision-making process.

The Monthly Economic Update report for April 2025 can be viewed [here](#).

### **Strategic Equality Objective 2**

**Continue to reduce the gender pay gap in the Council, identify whether there is a pay gap for ethnic minorities in the Council by March 2024, and report on both annually.**

We monitor the gender pay gap on a quarterly basis. We report the median gender pay gap to the Welsh Government. We report on the gender pay gap quarterly through performance indicators and annually through this report.

The gender pay gap has decreased from last year. The difference in mean hourly rate between male and female employees is £0.41, a decrease from £0.65 last year. The difference in median hourly rate between male and female employees is £0.26. The mean gender pay gap as a percentage of men's pay is 1.61% and the median gender pay gap as a percentage of men's pay is 2.26%, which is less than the UK median gender pay gap of 7.0%.

We also monitor the ethnicity pay gap on a regular basis, reporting as part of the Council's Quarterly Performance Indicators. The mean ethnicity pay gap as a percentage is 6.85% (higher than last year) and the median ethnicity pay gap as a percentage is 6.32%, (lower than last year).

We continue to work on improving our diversity profile and using the diversity dashboards to address the ethnicity and gender pay gaps.

### **Strategic Equality Objective 3**

**Improve employment opportunities in the Council for protected groups, particularly disabled and young people, to more closely reflect the diversity of the local population by March 2025.**

#### **Communities for work**

We continue to work on different projects to support specific groups and reduce barriers into employment.

- **QuickStart**

QuickStart provides an opportunity for individuals aged 18-25 to gain a six-month paid work placement in a Council department. During 2024/25, sixteen individuals gained placements and twelve have now completed their placement, either continuing to work in their department, moved into external opportunities, or gone to university. Four remain in their placements and are awaiting details on next steps. A further round started in April 2025, with nine individuals being placed into roles.

- **Supported Employment Mentors**

The Supported Employment Mentors continued to support individuals aged 18-30 with disabilities and/or neurodiverse conditions.

- **Economically Inactive**

In February this year, in collaboration with Youth Service, CELT+ and Cardiff and Vale College, a large Apprenticeship and Careers Fair was held to encourage individuals from all ages and backgrounds to engage with local employers and support services. Over 1000 individuals attended.

- **Job Clubs**

The Youth Job Club and 25+ Job Club began to be delivered from The Pod, on Holton Road in Barry.

## **Social Services – Adult Services**

Members of Vale People First are on the interview panel for all social care staff and manager appointments within the Learning Disability teams. They are also key partners in monitoring the Supported Living Contract.

Following engagement work with citizens attending the Day Service, we worked with Communities for Work to identify training and employment opportunities for some of the citizens attending the Day Service.

We worked in partnership with Prevention and Partnership to secure funding through the Shared Prosperity Fund for three supported employment mentors. The mentors work with people with mental health, physical and/or learning disabilities, sensory needs and autism to develop skills and confidence to secure voluntary and paid employment.

## **Human Resources**

We continued to promote and encourage greater use of the Equality Dashboards.

We continued to develop the People Strategy, taking a draft version to scrutiny and arranging feedback sessions with managers and staff.

We arranged and attended a number of career and job fairs, including an Apprentice and Careers Fair at the Memo in February and supporting mock interviews at St Cyres School.

We continued to facilitate work experience opportunities. We have helped our care homes develop structured programmes for work experience, working with local colleges to provide training and inductions.

Following work with Organisational Development and Learning, we identified work experience opportunities within the Housing and Building Services teams. These placements allow candidates to experience the work environment before making a full commitment into apprenticeship or more permanent roles.

## **Strategic Equality Objective 4**

**Continue to work on developing a more inclusive work environment that supports staff from all backgrounds to reach their potential through implementing a range of actions by March 2025.**

Our staff networks GLAM, Diverse and Abl, continue to grow in membership and support staff and shape decisions. The networks regularly meet with senior leaders and Human Resources.

For National Inclusion Week 2024, we shared a video featuring the staff network leads explaining why the networks are so important to the Council as an organisation and to the individuals they represent.

Race Equality Matter's awarded us its prestigious Silver Trailblazer Status which recognised our work to address racial inequality within the organisation. Work highlighted included:

- Championing our Diverse Staff Network.
- Giving our diverse members of staff a voice to share their stories through a series of internal profile pieces.
- Working with and supporting our schools to become actively anti-racist.
- Taking significant strides in recruiting and retaining members of staff from the global majority.

Stonewall announced us as one of its Top 100 Inclusive Employers. We were one of only two Welsh councils to appear on the list announced in June 2024. This is a significant achievement for us. We were proud to join top organisations across the UK recognised for exceptional commitment to supporting LGBTQ+ staff, customers and residents.

Over the past year, we have taken further steps towards creating an inclusive working environment, including championing LGBTQ+ colleagues, celebrating local pride events, and continuing to support and promote of our LGBTQ+ staff network, GLAM.

We held an online panel event with the GLAM network, “Empower Unite”, featuring senior leaders and representatives from Stonewall Cymru and Pride Cymru.

We encourage all staff to set aside time for personal development and take part in programs such as Infuse and reverse mentoring. The Learning Café continued to promote opportunities for personal and professional development, training, webinars, and other events. The Learning Café has grown to over 100 members. Network meetings have taken place across the different topic groups. We share information about learning and development opportunities as well as topics and events that support the Reshaping and Corporate Plans.

To mark International Women’s Day in 2025 and celebrate inclusion, we invited staff to ‘shout out’ their female colleagues and the women who inspire them. We shared profiles on a range of our female colleagues.

We told colleagues about our Reverse Mentoring Scheme, where junior team members mentor senior leaders. This flips the traditional dynamic to offer a unique opportunity for junior officers to share their experiences, challenges, and perspectives with senior members of staff.

## **Strategic Equality Objective 5**

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

Members have access to iDev which hosts a range of e-learning modules on equality issues. They can access previous sessions and presentations via MemberNet. We provided information during the year about race awareness.

We keep Members' training and development under review and arrange to meet identified needs. The presentations, links, and resources from all training are available to members at any time via Membernet.

The Strategy and Insight team provide data and analysis to elected members including information on equalities issues and protected characteristics.

The Annual Equality Monitoring Report is taken to scrutiny committees each year.

## **Strategic Equality Objective 6**

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

#### **Social Services – Children and Young People's Service (CYPS)**

We held a Young Carers Celebration in March 2025 aimed at providing 150 Cardiff and Vale Young Carers with a fun day of activities and a break from their caring roles.



The regional and cross-sector working group ensured accessibility for the venue, necessary travel arrangements, and catered for cultural and religious dietary needs to remove barriers for young carers to attend.

We will plan next year's event to ensure the date does not clash with any cultural or religious festivals that may curtail attendance and participation.

We have carried out engagement work around the commissioning of services for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) with the development of accommodation services tailored to individual needs.

The Family Information Service (FIS) achieved the national Families First Quality Award accreditation, demonstrating excellence in providing information, advice, and assistance to local families. The assessor highlighted the FIS Index as a strength. It supports carers and parents of those with complex needs by providing up to date information about services, events and activities.

The report applauded the team's partnership working to deliver an outreach service to parents in the community. It identified the FIS Christmas Family Party, which welcomed over 700 attendees, as an excellent opportunity for parents to connect with partners and learn about the local support available to them.

## **Youth Service**

The Vale Youth Service Team achieved the prestigious Gold Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales. This was a significant milestone that highlights their commitment to excellence and impact on young people across the Vale of Glamorgan.

The reach of the Youth Service increased from 2907 to 4516, representing a 55.35% increase. Of the 4516 individuals engaging with the service, 509 accredited outcomes were achieved, which is a 283% increase from 2023/24.

The Youth Service was also highly praised in an Estyn inspection report:

“The quality of youth work is consistently high. Youth workers are very clear about the principles of youth work and reflect this in their practice ... They are valued by young people and their parents and carers.”

“The Vale of Glamorgan youth service is strongly based on the voice of young people and on providing the support that they need to grow as confident and informed citizens.”

Monitoring equalities data revealed that young people from the global majority are under-represented in the Youth Service. We have linked with a third sector partner, EYST, to consult with young people from the global majority to identify what services are accessed, any barriers to engagement, and to develop strategies to move forward.

We worked on projects with learners who are classed as ‘at risk’ of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and those who are NEET on the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. This helped to support young people with programmes, training, and accredited courses to prepare for employment.

We spoke with LGBTQ+ young people to understand needs and identify barriers to attending the I AM ME youth club, such as parental support, location, and timing. We worked with Vale People First to offer a joint provision to support young people.

We developed an inclusive youth club called ‘Hub Club’ for young people with registered disabilities. Around 30 young people attend on a weekly basis to engage with a range of informal and accredited learning activities.

## **Inclusion**

We continued to support the rising demand associated with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) through a varied approach across the whole school. During 2024-25, we refreshed the SEMH and Wellbeing Strategy and offered ALN training to all early years settings to support staff and families. We provided 24 training sessions to early year settings and provided schools with 200 copies of the ‘Inclusion for All’ guidance. We shared this to provide

practical help and information to enable inclusion for all children including those with emerging or identified needs and disabilities.

Attendance rates continued to improve. Primary sector attendance levels recovered at a faster rate than secondary schools when compared with pre-Covid levels.

Attendance has seen an increase in primaries from 2023/24 of 1.39% (from 92.23% to 92.9%), and an increase in secondaries from 2023/24 of 3.28% (from 84.96% to 87%)

We measure attendance per year group. We identified Year 8 as a particular concern and have worked with schools on targeted support. We worked with agencies such as the Youth Justice Early Support Service (YJESS) to support schools to reduce exclusions for girls, after identifying an increase in this area.

### **Learning Links Team (formerly Vulnerable Groups Team)**

The Learning Links Team supports schools to meet the needs of learners with additional challenges. It helps to track their achievements and assist them in overcoming any barriers to their success, ensuring they achieve their full potential.

The Team continues to monitor the Virtual School Reports for Children Looked After, Children from the Global Majority, Multilingual Learners, Young Carers, and Service Children to be proactive in identifying and supporting learners.

We purchased licenses for Gilets for all schools in the Vale and arranged for all schools to access the Young Interpreters Scheme.

We worked in partnership with the Ministry of Defence to ensure that children from the families of entitled persons temporarily housed in the MOD sites had access to full-time education provision that met their needs. We worked with children from service families with one or more parents serving in the Armed Forces to design and develop an awareness raising project.

We engage with families who arrive under the vulnerable persons resettlement programmes so that children have access to education provision within statutory timescales. We facilitate interpreters and translation for families with English as an additional language for school communication and the admissions process.

We worked with Young Carers to design the 'Young Carers Your Views' awareness raising project which included a video produced and presented by Young Carers.

We consulted with children looked after and unaccompanied children and young people seeking asylum who are looked after by the Council. We ensured that their One Page Profiles on their Personal Education Plans best captured their wishes and how to support their educational needs.

We worked with children and young people from groups who face additional challenges that may impact negatively on their lives to design and develop Child Friendly Policies for schools for:

- Anti-Racism Policy
- Multilingual Learners Policy
- Care Experienced Children Policy
- Young Carers Policy
- Service Children Policy

We delivered equality and diversity training for school governors and continue to support schools with their Strategic Equality Plans and professional learning for school staff. The second cohort of the Anti-Racist Schools Action Research project presented their findings in an event at Stanwell School in June 2024. The third cohort of schools began the project later in the year. The project is intended to help schools take the necessary actions to become actively anti-racist, making significant changes to improve inclusion and embed anti-racism in the schools.

We worked with schools to become Schools of Sanctuary. Three schools received the Schools of Sanctuary award in 2024/25, with a further 22 schools actively working towards achieving their award. As part of this work, the Learning Links Team delivered professional learning to school staff and set up a Schools of Sanctuary network for schools to access resources and share good practice. We also supported

schools to implement the Young Interpreters Scheme, with 26 schools currently signed up and supported with training.

## **Governors**

Members of the Council's staff network groups, Diverse, GLAM and Abl, were signposted to the latest Governor vacancies to increase the diversity of governing body memberships. We designed an electronic equalities form for Vale governors to find out the current diversity of our governor population. Once returned, this analysis will be used to help identify opportunities where we can widen the diversity of our governor pool.

## **Transgender Toolkit for Schools**

The Transgender Toolkit and Guidance for schools has been published and continues to be embedded across our schools.

## **Leisure Services**

The Active Young People programme included a range of projects to support more young people to be more active, more often as well as to improve their well-being and confidence. Over 17,600 young people participated in sport and physical activity opportunities created through the Active Young People programme in partnership with over 170 organisations, clubs, schools, and governing bodies. Leisure Services carried out consultations with young people to identify what sports and activities they wanted to do and from that, created new opportunities for sports including basketball, dodgeball, and pickleball.

- **Young Ambassadors**

Over 100 secondary school pupils are Young Ambassadors, delivering activities and raising awareness. Young Ambassadors have led sport sessions in autism resource bases, visited primary schools to upskill younger pupils, worked with Year 7 pupils on attendance consultations, and monitor equipment loaning at lunch breaks. Over 150 sessions were delivered through the Young Ambassador programme.

- **Energise YOUth**

This was a targeted project working with partners to improve well-being and activity levels, remove barriers to participation, and support behaviour change. Over 60 young people took part. Registered young people could access free activities from a list of providers. We provided additional help to support those without appropriate clothing.

- **Leisure centre youth takeovers**

We arranged five 'takeover' sessions for young people, including special sessions for over-14 year olds and girls following feedback. Over 250 young people took part and tried a range of activities. 86% felt more motivated to be more active.

- **Disability inclusion**

Our School Sport Survey in 2022 indicated that 34% of young people with a disability or impairment participated in organised sport outside of the curriculum three or more times a week, compared with 44% of pupils without disabilities or impairments. To tackle this, along with our Young Ambassadors, we delivered 35 sessions to pupils. We delivered them in autism resource bases, raised awareness of available activities and clubs, promoted community sessions, and arranged two multisport events bringing pupils from different schools together. As a result, 6 young people joined community sessions, and 5 young people joined clubs at school.

- **Targeting inequalities**

We arranged for equipment loans at food pantries and libraries to enable children and young people to participate in sports and activities requiring specialist equipment. We worked with Entitled Persons in St Athan to ensure all young people were able to access sport and activities. We delivered over 70 free sport sessions, impacting over 600 participants.

## **Strategic Equality Objective 7**

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

### **Youth Service and Her Voice Wales**

The Youth Service delivered a range of programmes and prevention to address this area. This included projects such as EmpowerHER and Gloves which focus on healthy relationships and misogyny as well as wider health and well-being topics. Her Voice Wales continued to develop safe spaces for females feeling unsafe or facing abuse.

### **Community Safety**

We facilitated twice weekly multi-agency meetings which improved outcomes for victims of high-risk domestic abuse. There were around twelve cases reported each month.

We continued to actively promote Clare's Law as a vital tool to support the safety of women who think they might be at risk of being in a relationship with a perpetrator of domestic abuse. There were on average six Clare's Law applications each month.

Between April and September 2024, the Domestic Abuse Assessment and Referral Coordinator (DAARC) received 299 referrals for review, contact, and support. In the same time period, 47 properties received Target Hardening security improvements to enable the victim and families to remain in their own home but feel safer to do so.

## **Strategic Equality Objective 8**

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

## **Strategy and Partnership - Vale 50+ Forum and Age Friendly Vale**

The Vale 50+ Forum continues to host a housing topic group which had two meetings in 2024. Housing is one of the eight domains recognised by the World Health Organisation as a feature of age friendly communities. Working towards a more age friendly Vale of Glamorgan is a commitment within the Public Services Board's Age Friendly Vale Charter and Age Friendly Vale Strategy and action plan.

## **Housing Solutions**

There has been a significant reduction in the use of hotel accommodation. This is due to the completion of a large number of temporary homes in Llantwit Major, as well as new housing developments in Barry and St Athan. By the end of 2024/25, there were no families in bed and breakfast accommodation with a significant number of families moving into longer-term social housing.

Homelessness prevention continues to be exceptionally challenging as a result of changes to legislation and guidance, particularly for single households. This year a positive prevention action succeeded in preventing or relieving homelessness in 25% of households supported, which is below the 40% target for the year. Work continues to help prevent homelessness and support people who are recently out of homelessness.

We have started work on other initiatives to help provide accommodation for single people. Examples include conversions of existing Council homes into shared accommodation, purchasing Houses of Multiple Occupation on the open market, and developing specialist temporary accommodation such as the former Olive Lodge Bed and Breakfast into self-contained accommodation for single people. We hope the ten units will be ready by Summer 2025.

## **Refugees**

We developed around 90 units of temporary accommodation at Heol Croeso in Llantwit Major to provide high-quality short-term housing for Ukrainian refugees. We are committed to the Welsh Government's declaration that Wales is a 'Nation of Sanctuary' and continue to make a significant effort to helping those in need. The site



is split between Ukrainian refugees and homeless families who have been living in temporary accommodation.

### **Supporting people**

Following the annual needs mapping survey, we identified gaps in provision and started to plan more services for people with learning and physical disabilities, commissioning the Esgyn service to meet this need. We commissioned a gender-neutral dispersed refuge to meet the need for domestic abuse accommodation for males and transgender people.

### **Gypsy and Traveller accommodation**

We have an approved assessment of current and future need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in place in the Vale of Glamorgan.

## **Strategic Equality Objective 9**

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

### **Strategy and Partnership - Vale 50+ Forum and Age Friendly Vale**

Transport continues to be a key concern for many older people and a focus for the Vale 50+ Forum. The Vale 50+ Forum's transport topic group continues to have a strong relationship with the Vale of Glamorgan Council transport team and other local providers. Transport is one of the eight domains recognised by the World Health Organisation as a feature of age friendly communities. Access to suitable forms of transport is a commitment within the Public Service Board's Age Friendly Vale Charter and features within the Age Friendly Vale Strategy and Action Plan.

### **Highway maintenance**

The Highway Maintenance Team was involved in road closures to facilitate Pride marches in Barry and Cowbridge in June 2024. This also enabled people with wheelchairs or access needs to partake in the full event.

We lowered kerbs and installed two uncontrolled crossing points in Barry which helped enable a child with disabilities to leave their house more frequently and easily.

### **Active Travel**

We improved over 4km of cycle routes and over 10km of pedestrian and wheeling routes in Barry. We installed new lighting to improve the route to St Richard Gwyn High School and improved the pedestrian routes to Sully Primary School.

### **Public transport**

We carried out a Public Transport and Road Safety Survey. We used the findings to update the accessibility of a number of bus stops. We will identify and prioritise bus stops that require upgrading using funding that we secured for 2025-26. We passed on concerns about the font size of timetables to the bus operators.

We also asked about accessibility of the Greenlinks Community Transport in the survey. We subsequently made changes to scheduling and accessibility of the electric vehicles.

We used Welsh Government funding to install Brompton bike lockers in Barry and add over 150 bike and scooter spaces in the form of pods and shelters in schools and other areas requested by the public.

## **Strategic Equality Objective 10**

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

### **Strategy and Partnership - Vale 50+ Forum and Age Friendly Vale**

The Vale 50+ Forum continues to host their climate change topic group. Accessible outdoor spaces is one of the eight domains recognised by the World Health Organisation as a feature of age friendly communities. Working towards a more age

friendly Vale of Glamorgan where people have access to safe outdoor spaces and buildings with suitable facilities is a commitment within the Public Services Board's Age Friendly Vale Charter and the Age Friendly Vale Strategy and Action Plan.

## **Place Making**

Development of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) has progressed steadily, with a proposed deposit Plan scheduled for late 2025. This Plan, alongside our four placemaking plans, will form the strategic framework for guiding sustainable development and economic growth across the Vale of Glamorgan.

We have continued to embed placemaking principles across the organisation and within communities, encouraging broader participation in local governance and regeneration efforts. Over the past year, over 2000 residents from Llantwit Major, Cowbridge, Penarth, and Barry contributed to shaping town-specific plans. We also secured £350,000 and £450,000 in placemaking funding for 2025/26 and 2026/27 respectively.

In addition, we confirmed over £55 million in government funding to support regeneration, including £20 million for Barry over 10 years and £19.5 million for the Barry Making Waves waterfront project. Our successful delivery of the £14 million Shared Prosperity programme has supported town centre revitalisation, net zero initiatives, and community-based cultural and heritage events, delivering enhancements to our town centres and facilities.

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

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

In addition, we report below on other matters that help us to promote equality and showcase the equality work across the Council.

## **Socio-Economic Duty**

We continued the Warm Spaces / Mannau Cynnes scheme in 2024-25. We reviewed the web page to make it easier for residents to search for venues and activities.

## **Equality Impact Assessments**

We assess the impact of our work on protected groups. We continue to support managers to think about their work in this way.

We think about how changes might affect people with protected characteristics and how we can minimise adverse impacts on them.

We consider the impact of our work on the Welsh language in the assessment process, in line with Welsh Language Standards.

We have considered the Audit Wales report 'Equality Impact Assessments: More than a Tick Box Exercise'. We keep our process under review, with a view to simplifying and digitalising the process.

We trialled a bespoke Equality Impact Assessment for budget proposals as part of the budget setting process for 2025 to provide decision makers with a wider range of insight and enable a more meaningful public consultation.

## **Equality Training**

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

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

We raise awareness of equality issues throughout the year with articles on Staffnet and information in the Chief Executive's weekly newsletter.

## **Strategic Equality Plan 2025-2029**

We produced new strategic equality objectives and drafted the new Strategic Equality Plan for 2025 – 2029, 'Working together for a fairer future'.

Amongst other data and research, we considered the analysis of our recent 'Let's Talk Life about in the Vale' public opinion survey and the Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'How Fair is Wales? 2023'. We held a consultation session and discussed the objectives with Equality Consultative Forum members.

We aligned the new strategic equality objectives with the new corporate wellbeing objectives which in turn were developed with extensive engagement with stakeholders. We believe that developing the priorities for our Strategic Equality Plan in this way better aligns them with our business and thus strengthens their impact.

<b>Well-being Objectives</b>	<b>Strategic Equality Objectives</b>
Creating great places to live and work	To create fairer places to live and work
Respecting and celebrating the environment	To create fairer access to the local environment
Giving everyone a good start in life	To give everyone a fairer opportunity for a good start in life
Supporting and protecting those who need us	To support and protect those who experience most disadvantage
Being the best Council we can be	To put fairness at the heart of Council services and employment

We will report on our progress against the new Strategic Equality Objectives in the next Annual Equality Monitoring Report. We will request updates from responsible

parties on a six-monthly basis and use other reporting systems such as the Annual Development Plan to monitor progress.

## **Libraries and Arts**

The Vale of Glamorgan Council libraries held many events and activities throughout the year, several of which focus on groups with particular protected characteristics:

- Barry Library hosted two major events: Mental Health Awareness Fayre and Dementia Awareness Fayre.
- Penarth Makerspace worked with the Council's Refugee Support team to host art workshops for Ukrainian children.
- Barry Library and Palmerston Learning Centre hosted Digital Communities Wales, Cwmpas, and Jane Hutt, Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip, at a training session for our Tablet Loan Scheme. It was attended by over 20 of our Digital Champions. It celebrated the libraries' Tablet Loan Scheme where members of the library can borrow an iPad for a 3-week period.

## **Dementia Friendly**

We supported existing Dementia Friends groups in Cowbridge and Barry and the establishment of new Dementia Friendly Barry and Penarth groups. We distributed dementia related resources to public outlets including GP surgeries, libraries, hubs, and offices.

## **The Index**

The Index is a quarterly newsletter for families and carers with children or young people with disabilities and additional needs, providing information about events, services, and activities.

The Index was a finalist at ThinkEDI's Diversity and Inclusion Awards in December 2024. The awards showcase the achievements of individuals, organisations, and communities driving progress and creating a more inclusive society in Wales. A member of the Early Help Team in Social Services won the award for 'Inclusive Front-Line Professional'.

## **Procurement**

The Procurement Policy and Strategy was reviewed during 2024-25. We spend a large proportion of our resources on procurement. The way in which we procure our goods and services plays a key role in the delivery of the Corporate Plan and as such, the Procurement Policy and Strategy focuses on social value, ethical practices, supporting local employment and the local economy, and climate action.

We seek to work with organisations who maintain high standards of ethical conduct, treat their employees fairly and promote equality and diversity in employment and service provision. As such, the policy sets out clear expectations of suppliers at minimum, expected, and preferred levels. The policy has sections on working for our communities, protecting the wellbeing of young people and vulnerable adults, as well as a statement on modern slavery.

New objectives have been added to align the policy with the policies of the other Ardal partners. The revised policy sets clear expectations for equality and diversity throughout, showing the extent to which these issues are now embedded in our thinking and ways of working.

## **Disability Confident Scheme**

We are proud to be a member of this scheme. It recognises employers who help disabled candidates into work and support employees if they suffer ill health during their working lives. For more information, visit the [Disability Confident website](#).

## **LGBTQ+ Work**

We continued to work on our action plan to improve the workplace for LGBTQ+ people. This helps us ensure we treat people fairly when they are employees or applying for jobs.

Our work includes supporting the LGBTQ+ and allies' network, GLAM. We have LGBTQ+ Champions at both Member and senior management level.

We continue to be a member of Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme. We work with GLAM to make positive changes, taking into account feedback from Stonewall and other sources. This helps us to improve inclusivity for people, whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Council has continued to improve its standing in the Workplace Equalities Index. The Vale of Glamorgan Council was awarded a silver award for 2023/24 and ranked 91 out of 246 organisations. It is a significant achievement to make it into the top 100.



For more information, visit the [Stonewall Diversity Champions website](https://www.stonewalldiversitychampions.org.uk/).

## Race Work

### Trailblazer

We were awarded Race Equality Matter's prestigious Silver Trailblazer Status which recognised our work to address racial inequality within the organisation.

After successfully achieving REM Trailblazer Bronze Status in August 2022, we were recognised for continuing to take action on race inequality.

Becoming a Trailblazer means the work the Council has done has resulted in change and made an impact across the breadth of the entire organisation. A step that aims to successfully address racial inequality and become a more diverse, inclusive and equal organisation.





## Safe Space

We use a number of the solutions offered by Race Equality Matters, including Safe Space Plus. This is a facilitated dialogue between senior leadership and ethnically diverse colleagues intended to inform, educate, and understand the issues from the perspective of those with lived experiences and take action to make improvements.

We held a Safe Space meeting in July 2024. We created an action plan for senior leaders to make sure actions continue to progress.



## Race Equality Week

We marked Race Equality Week by highlighting some of the important work happening in the Vale of Glamorgan to raise awareness and fight racism and discrimination. We shared stories about anti-racism work in schools and the Diverse network. We decided to hold Race Equality Matter's Five-Day Challenge later in the year.



## Windrush Day

We marked Windrush Day 2024 by raising the Windrush flag outside the Civic Offices. We also displayed Holton Primary School's Windrush art project banners in the Civic Offices for staff to view.

## National Inclusion Week

For National Inclusion Week 2024, we shared a video featuring the staff network leads explaining why the networks are so important to the Council as an organisation and to the individuals they represent.

## Staff Networks

Our staff networks work collaboratively across the Council as well as providing support to colleagues. They contribute to our Stonewall Workplace Equality Index submission, Race Equality Matters Trailblazer application, and the Disability Confident scheme amongst other programmes.

### GLAM



GLAM is our LGBTQ+ staff network, welcoming LGBTQ+ staff and allies from across the Council. GLAM supported management training sessions and produced information packs and articles on awareness days. GLAM presented information for Strategic Leadership Team meetings and Joint Consultative Forum meetings.

GLAM produced and shared resources and information for some key awareness days throughout the year including World AIDS Day, Lesbian Visibility Day, IDAHOBIT, and LGBT History Month.

GLAM collaborated with the LGBTQ+ staff network at Cardiff Council to continue the LGBTQ+ Families series of online events with a session in November 2024 about adoption and fostering. GLAM organised a panel event with senior leaders and representatives from Stonewall Cymru and Pride Cymru, called “Empower. Unite.” GLAM also facilitated free attendance for Equalities and Human Resources staff at LGBTQ+ training events with Hays Recruitment and Pride Cymru.

GLAM organised a flag-raising event for Pride Month and members attended Pride marches and celebrations in Barry, Cowbridge and Cardiff during June 2024.

GLAM members in Barry for Barry Pride in June 2024:



GLAM members in Cowbridge for Cowbridge Pride in June 2024:



## Diverse



The Diverse staff network aims to raise awareness, provide a social and supportive environment, and have a positive impact for colleagues from the global majority. All Council employees and members are welcome to join.

Diverse works across the Council to promote race equality and improve employment and service delivery for global majority colleagues and communities. Diverse presented information to Strategic Leadership Team meetings and Joint Consultative Forum meetings.

Diverse held regular meetings where members discussed policies and personal stories. A member profile was shared during the Global Inclusion Week in June 2024.

Diverse members have played a significant role in the Safe Space meetings and achieving the Silver Trailblazer accolade from Race Equality Matters.

## Abl

We continued to develop the staff disability network.



We held meetings and appointed leaders in late 2024. The leaders met with colleagues from Human Resources as well as the Strategic Leadership Team. The

leaders are working with Equalities colleagues to identify priorities and objectives for the network and its Senior Champion has reviewed its Terms of Reference.

### **Integrated Autism Service**

The Integrated Autism Service continued to deliver preventative services and support for adults and families with autism.

### **Vale 50+ Strategy Forum and Age Friendly Vale**

The Vale 50+ Forum represents the interests of older people in the Vale of Glamorgan. Members are in contact with many local and national working groups. The Forum works closely with the Council to ensure that the interests and welfare of older people are considered. They receive financial and administrative support from the Council.

A program of meetings and events were held throughout the year. The Forum readily participated in consultation and engagement activities.

### **Leisure Services**

In addition to the activities listed in Strategic Equality Objective 6, we have worked closely with Disability Sport Wales and sports clubs in the Vale of Glamorgan in relation to the Insport award.

The Healthy Living Team were winners in the Statutory Services category in the Understanding Disability Awards in January 2025, organised by Cardiff and the Vale Parents Federation. This recognises the Team's outstanding efforts to include people with disabilities in active life.

As part of the Play Sufficiency Assessment, we held a formal discussion session and 'Play in the Vale' survey aimed at parents, carers, and other responsible adults, as well as using a variety of methods to consult with children and young people. We continued to hold a wide range of play opportunities and sessions for children across the Vale of Glamorgan, including holiday open-access play sessions.

We continued to run the Golden Pass programme for older people across the Vale of Glamorgan.

## **Culture Book and induction**

We recognise how diversity, equality, and inclusion strategies have a significant impact on employee attraction, engagement, and retention. These themes are encapsulated in the culture book. The culture book is used as a recruitment tool as well as by staff.

Our induction programme reinforces our organisational values and culture from the beginning of new starters' Vale employment. We advertise the staff networks and encourage new starters to get involved.

## **Job Evaluation**

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

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

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

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

## **The Workforce Plan**

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

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

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

We record the protected characteristics of our staff. This means we can compare our statistics with local and national statistics to see what progress we are making. We can then plan how to make improvements.

As part of the workforce plan, we have a strategy to look at increasing the diversity of our employees across all protected groups.

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

We have been collecting employment data for many years. We collect information on the following:

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| • gender             | • gender reassignment |
| • race               | • gender identity     |
| • disability         | • national identity   |
| • age                | • religion or belief  |
| • sexual orientation | • marital status      |

We ask about protected characteristics when people apply for jobs with us.

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

We use data from our employee management system, Fusion, to obtain up-to-date snapshots of our workforce. This data informs quarterly equalities dashboards which we discuss at department management meetings with Human Resource Business Partners and managers.

You can see what we have found out in [Appendix 5](#) of this report. However here is a summary of the headlines by protected characteristic. The figures refer to corporate staff and do not include staff employed in schools.

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

## **Age**

- We have more employees than this time last year. All age groups increased.
- The age range with the most employees is still 55-59 years at 14.6% of the workforce.
- The highest percentage of applications was from people in the 25-29 age band (18.2%), this remains the same as last year but a lower percentage.
- The highest proportion of people attending training came from the 55-59 age group (14.1%).
- Most people who left were between 65+ years of age: 15.3% of all leavers.
- All average salaries increased. The biggest increase is for the age range 45-49.
- People aged between 45 and 49 had the highest average salary, £36,302.

Our Workforce Plan 2021-2025 includes a target to employ more young people, whilst supporting and developing all our employees. The percentage of people aged 16 to 24 employed by the Council has remained around the same percentage, from 4.5% to 4.4% but an actual increase from 108 to 117.

We continue to look for ways to improve our numbers of young employees and to offer opportunities for those wishing to start their careers with the Council, through apprenticeships, traineeships, graduate opportunities, and work experience. We continue to engage with local employment partners, training providers, schools, and local universities to promote the Council as an employer of choice.

## **Gender**

- Our corporate workforce was 64.8% female and 35.2% male. It is usual to find more women than men working for local authorities.
- The number of female employees has increased from 1533 to 1728, and the number of male employees has increased from 854 to 938. More women work in the lower paid casual roles, or front-line care roles, which make up a large position of our corporate workforce. More men make up the workforce in the front-line services for the Corporate Environment & Housing Directorate.
- Most employees, both male and female, work in permanent full-time jobs.
- 68.7% of people who attended training were women and 31.2% were men. These percentages reflect the same proportion of males and females employed.
- Most people applying for jobs were female (64.9%). Again, it is usual to find more women working for local authorities than men.
- More women than men left their jobs. We would expect this as we employ more women than men.
- 28.9% of women and 21.0% of men held jobs paid between £25,000-£29,999.



- 35.8% of all jobs are paid between £20,000 and £24,999. This has gone up from last year because of the pay increases awarded this year and the commitment to pay the real living wage for all staff.
- The average salary for male employees (£33,526) is higher than females (£32,727). The gender pay gap is lower than last year.

### **National Identity**

- Most employees said they were Welsh (1125) 42.2% or British (938) 35.2%.
- 1891 applicants said they were Welsh. This remains the highest identity for applicants at 46.9%.
- The highest national identity for leavers is Welsh, at 42.3% which is expected as most employees are Welsh.
- All groups apart from Northern Irish had an increase in average salary.

We have equalities dashboards focusing on all protected characteristics. The dashboards are taken to DMTs by the Human Resources Business Partners to discuss what action, if any, needs to be taken.

### **Race and Ethnicity**

- Most employees (85.6%) identify as White. The highest group was White and British, at 64.5%.
- White and British remains the highest category for applicants at 57.8%. 62.2% of people applying for jobs were White, less than the previous year (76%).
- The number of applicants who did not disclose their ethnicity has drastically decreased on the previous year, but the number who did not record their ethnicity increased. Both have reversed from last year.

- Over 82% of leavers were White. There was an increase in the percentage of White and British leavers which remains the highest group at 65%. This makes sense, as most employees are White.
- All groups had an increase in salary apart from White and Irish, White and Black Caribbean, Mixed Other, Indian, and Pakistani. Those identifying as White and Black African had the largest increase from £27,477 to £31,906 whilst those identifying as Pakistani had the biggest decrease from £37,959 to £35,385.
- The number of employees who did not disclose their ethnicity has drastically decreased on the previous year, but the number who did not record their ethnicity increased. Both have reversed from last year.
- Most applicants continue to record their ethnicity as White and British, 66.9%.
- There was a significant drop in the number of applicants recording their ethnicity as African, from 752 to 449, a percentage change from 16.0% to 11.1%.
- The mean ethnicity pay gap has increased slightly and the median ethnicity pay gap has stayed the same.

An anti-racism dashboard has been created to focus on global majority employees, applicants, and leavers. We have set target equalities figures and have considered the time it would take at our current onboarding rates to reach the target figure. We also have current resident rates available. The dashboard is taken to DMTs by the Human Resources Business Partners to discuss.

## **Disability**

- 70.7% of our staff said they did not have a disability. 3.2% said they had a disability that limited them a little.
- The percentage of applicants who said they had no disability remains similar to last year 86.9%, to last year's 85.2%.

- The number of applicants who said they had a disability that limits a little has increased slightly from last year.
- The majority of staff who left employment at the Vale of Glamorgan Council declared no disability (65.0%) or did not record their disability (26.7%). No staff with a disability that limits a lot left last year.
- The average salary for all disability related options increased, apart from those who reported 'Yes' but did not clarify limited a little or a lot.

The Council is registered and committed to the Department of Work and Pensions national 'Disability Confident Scheme'. We have achieved Level 2 - 'Disability Confident Employer'. This helps people to feel confident to apply for jobs and promotion. They can do so knowing that they will not experience discrimination or disadvantage.

We are developing a People Strategy which will include how we recruit staff in protected characteristics categories. We also work closely with the various networks, including the Abl disabled staff network.

### **Sexual Orientation**

- Most of our staff said they were heterosexual (70.2%). The percentage of the workforce who said they were gay, lesbian, or bisexual has increased slightly from 3.4% to 3.6%.
- We monitor the success of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people from application to successful appointment. In 2024-25, the success rate for applicants was 5% compared to 16% in the previous year.
- Most applicants said they were heterosexual (83.3%) and unsurprisingly, most leavers also said they were heterosexual, 66.7%.
- 63% of LGBTQ+ employees were employed in the salary band £30,000-£39,999, an increase from 24% last year.

We work closely with the GLAM network. We have equalities dashboards focusing on all protected characteristics, this will also look at leavers, this dashboard will be taken to DMTs by the Human Resources Business Partners to discuss what action, if any, needs to be taken.

### **Religion or Belief**

- Most staff either had no religion (42.8%), did not record their religion or belief (26.6%), or said they were Christian (28.4%).
- Most applicants stated that they had no religion (47.3%), followed by Christians (34.0%).
- Most leavers recorded no religion, 40.7% compared to 37.3% last year.

### **Marital Status**

- The number of those who are married remains the highest category in marital status for employed staff at 41.9%, followed by single people at 35.3%.
- Most applications were from single people, 49.7%.
- The number of applications from married people has decreased from 1657 to 1358, but the percentage remains around the same, 35.3% last year to 33.7% this year.
- Fewer staff overall left the Council in 2024-25. The number of not recorded and prefer not to say increased slightly.
- Average pay increased for all groups. The group with the highest average pay (£52,805) is legally separated.

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

- There were 60 corporate employees who had maternity, paternity or adoption pay and leave during 2024-25, compared with 61 last year.

## **Welsh Language**

Welsh language courses are available to all staff at all levels. Employees can attend at no cost and during work time through the Work Welsh offer.

- The percentage of our staff saying they have no Welsh language skills has increased from 36.9% to 37.7% this year. These percentages are based on the average of the 'none' option for understanding, speaking, reading, and writing.
- The percentage of staff with Welsh language skills rated between Basic and Fluent have increased: understanding 30.6%; speaking 26.4%; reading 24.0%; and writing 19.5%.
- The percentage of staff with no Welsh skills is still high, but it is encouraging to see an increase in the percentage of staff reporting Welsh skills across all competencies.
- This could be because we ran a Welsh Skills Assessment in 2024-25 with an updated Skills Framework. We encouraged staff to also update their Welsh skills on Fusion.
- Welsh language skills for applicants were as follows: understanding 2.3%; speaking 2.3%; reading 2.3%; and writing 2.2%. These are much lower than the rates reported last year.
- 83.2% of applicants chose not to record their Welsh language skills, compared to 31.7% of applicants last year, which is a concerning increase as the Welsh Language Standards state that all jobs should be advertised as Welsh essential/Welsh desirable/or Welsh to be learnt upon appointment, and that we must assess the Welsh language skills of all employees and applicants.

We continue to think about how we can promote Welsh language training and to improve opportunities for Welsh language training in line with the Welsh Language Standards.

## **Moving forward**

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

We do not have all the information that we need to collect to meet the general and specific duties. This is because reporting systems need further updating and some staff choose not to disclose personal information. Following the implementation of Fusion, we delivered a communication campaign to encourage staff to update and complete the personal information. We will carry out a similar campaign every year.

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

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