



No Status Draft

**The Vale of Glamorgan Council's
Annual Equality Report
2020 - 2021**

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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 2020 and March 2021.

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; and
- other equality work.

Background

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

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

- We looked at how much 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 plans included the Corporate Plan and the Equality and Diversity Scheme.
- We arranged events for us 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 trades unions.
- We talked to people about what our priorities should be.

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

We consulted people again towards the end of 2015 to help us decide how to update the plan for 2016 and then again for our 2020 – 2024 Plan. We used feedback from engagement and consultation to develop a new set of equality objectives that give us a more balanced focus between internal and external outcomes. We have developed these using more recent research such as 'Is Wales Fairer? 2018' by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. We have also made links with our corporate wellbeing objectives.

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

The Leader of the Council leads on equality issues. Directors take the lead in their own service area.

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

Steps taken to identify and collect relevant information

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

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

- Housing Solutions
- Housing Supporting People
- Shared Regulatory Service
- Learning and Skills – Social Inclusion and Wellbeing
- Learning and Skills - Vulnerable Groups
- Adult Community Learning
- Library and Information Service
- Adult Social Services
- Children and Young People Social Services
- Community Safety

- Creative Rural Communities
- Vale Communities for Work
- Tourism and Events
- Disabled Facilities Grant
- Strong Communities Grant Fund
- Corporate Procurement
- Adult Community Learning - Welsh for Adults
- Communications
- Corporate Complaints - Customer Relations

Some Services were unable to report as it was not possible to gather information during the pandemic due to the closure of services.

When we look at the information gathered, we consider:

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

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

To clarify why Managers need to collect the information, we use guidance from Stonewall. You can see the guidance in [Appendix 1](#). The form we used to gather information is in [Appendix 2](#).

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

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

Reasons for not collecting relevant information

Some of the reasons for not collecting information include:

- staff asking users for personal information face-to-face;
- users not wanting to complete another form as well as sometimes long application forms;
- concern that limited surveys do not reflect a true picture;
- not having systems to collect the information.

We encourage managers to explain how important this information is in improving services.

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

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

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

- We agreed the equality objectives that we would work on for the next 4 years.

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

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

Strategic Equality Objective 1

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

Our Communications Team conducted a limited number of consultations during this period, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a number of consultations did progress, including the Annual Delivery Plan and the budget. The annual budget consultation was conducted between December 2020 – January 2021 and received just 16 responses to the online survey. This is the lowest response rate recorded in recent years. Of the 16 respondents, 15 answered the equality monitoring questions which is a response rate of 93%.

There was a slightly higher response rate from residents who identify as female than males. 100% of respondents are white and heterosexual. Some have limitations on their day to day lives due to an ongoing illness or disability. Respondents were from a range of ages but the majority were aged between 35 – 74. This is not a particularly diverse group, however, it was such a small number of respondents this is not a concern.

In future, we will use a variety of methods to engage with residents. We will rely on digital methods mainly, but we will always provide another way of responding so as not to exclude anyone who may be digitally excluded.

The draft annual delivery plan was approved in March, and the Council's budget, including the level of Council tax, was set in May. The annual delivery plan contains actions that aim to improve the wellbeing of residents, engage with more protected groups and generally improve Council services.

In addition to continuing to seek the views of protected groups in respect of policies and services, we also assisted colleagues in the Office for National Statistics to reach protected and seldom heard groups with the Census, that was undertaken in March 2021.

The communications team has been involved with our staff LGBT+ colleagues and allies network and also supported a new network for Black, Asian and minority ethnic

colleagues. This has helped to raise awareness of issues faced by colleagues from protected groups.

Our Customer Relations Team monitors responses to ensure that everyone in the community has equal access to the complaints process and other customer services ensuring that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against in this respect.

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

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

Electoral Services does not monitor equalities data every time for new registrations but does a lot of work to reach various demographics. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, we have not been able to go into the community as much as in previous years, but we have tried to adapt as much of our plans as possible with online events or resources. We held the following events:

- Bus stop advertising aimed at young people and qualifying foreign nationals. This will run at the same time as UK Parliament week.
- UK Parliament week – social media campaign aimed at young people.
- International youth day – Social media campaign
- Care homes – Facilitated a point of contact in each Vale of Glamorgan care home, to ensure that vulnerable adults are able to register without barriers.
- Hostels, homeless residents, and housing agencies – Weekly movement sheets provided to us to by the Homelessness department to ensure that we can encourage homeless residents to still register to vote.

- All our social media output is distributed for sharing to the Vale of Glamorgan's Regional Resettlement Officer, who works with Syrian nationals who have resettled in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Schools – Social media and resources pack shared for distribution on Google classroom and other platforms to encourage registration for young people.
- We ran a competition to encourage young people between 14-17 to register with the prize being an iPad.
- Our annual house to house canvass enables anyone that might need assistance, to have the opportunity to register to vote.

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 2021, and report on both annually.

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

The recent pay review in 2019 in relation to the revised NJC spine had a positive impact on the gender pay gap. We are undertaking work to review the current pay structure and we will again consider both the gender and ethnicity pay gaps. When recruiting to roles, we consider where we advertise to ensure we are getting representation across all applicant groups. We are also drafting an Attraction Strategy which will focus on improving our diversity profile across the Council.

Strategic Equality Objective 3

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

We have been exploring how we reach different groups in relation to posting adverts using different outlets and more varied imagery to attract a broader range of applicants. We will work with our diversity networks to look at ways in which we can attract a more diverse range of applicants to our roles.

For young people, we provide specialised support for specific groups to support learning and learners' entry to the employment market. Covid 19 has restricted this work but we have provided wellbeing courses online and face to face when appropriate to support vulnerable learners and staff. We have provided FAN (family and friends) Groups, Men's Shed have been established to provide alternative provision, not currently covered by WG ACL funding, aimed to support individuals with their mental health and wellbeing and to combat isolation and loneliness.

Our Vale Communities for Work Team trains its project staff to be aware of their responsibilities under equality legislation so that they can challenge any unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation or other inappropriate conduct. Staff have also had disability training and have a nominated lead officer for this - a Disability Champion. We aim to ensure all of our service provisions are inclusive. As the programme targets those furthest from the job market, we work with a high number of people who tend to suffer from more barriers and some of those barriers are health-related, for example, mental health and special needs. We provide resources for people with complex barriers.

Strategic Equality Objective 4

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

We continue our work as a Stonewall Diversity Champion using the Stonewall Workforce Equality Index to guide our work. Submissions against the index were suspended during the Covid pandemic but we continued to work with our LGBT+

staff network to raise awareness of LGBT+ issues, seek feedback on workplace issues and make our workplace more inclusive.

We also continued to hold discussions between senior leadership and staff through our Corporate Engagement and Innovation Forum, including discussion of our Culture Book which provides information on our values, staff networks and how we promote inclusivity.

We focused on promoting staff health and wellbeing during the Covid epidemic at a time when there were so many changes in people's working and personal lives.

We considered how we could promote employment opportunities in a way that challenges gender stereotypes. An example of this was a Social Media campaign for Motor Vehicle Fitters which included both male and female imagery to challenge the stereotype. This was publicised through Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Another example has been our Social Care advertising which has included both male and female imagery helped by WeCareWales resources. This has been important in ensuring we obtain as many suitable applicants across both genders.

Strategic Equality Objective 5

Provide support and development to elected members on equality issues.

Members have access to iDev where they can find a range of e-learning modules on equality issues. In response to the Black Lives Matter movement, we provided anti-racism training to Members and provided them with links to on-line resources on how racist bias works and how to disrupt it and the difference between not being racist and antiracist.

We provided reports on the introduction of the socio-economic duty to raise awareness and made arrangements to provide training on this.

We keep Members' training and development under review and arrange to meet identified needs.

Strategic Equality Objective 6

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

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

Recognising that bullying can be a barrier to children and young people achieving their potential, in January 2021, we produced a Model Anti-Bullying Policy. We provided this to all schools within the Vale of Glamorgan to adopt as their own individual school policy. The formulation of this policy was a lengthy and considered process that involved consultation with young people and key stakeholders whose views were considered and reflected within the policy. The Model Anti-Bullying policy reflects the principles of the Welsh Government's 'Rights, Respect, Equality' guidance 2019. Anti-bullying data was previously collected prior to COVID lockdown and this helped inform the formulation of the policy.

The policy not only focusses on traditional unkind behaviour in the form of traditional bullying but also places significant emphasis on the focus of all forms of bullying and one-off prejudice related incidents that focus on protected characteristics, such as racism, transphobia, sexism, misogyny, special educational needs and disability. There has been consistent collection of school bullying and one-off prejudice incidents data on a termly basis throughout the academic year 20-21. This collection period has seen much school closure and reduced attendance due to the COVID19 pandemic. In this context, we are yet to identify the accuracy and true reflection of bullying data trends.

From the school data collection 2020-21 it can be seen that during Autumn 2020, the most common form bullying was verbal face to face bullying focussing on racist remarks, one-of prejudice incidents showed the most common are verbal incidents which focussed on appearance. During Spring 2021, when schools were mainly

closed it is clear that on-line bullying accounted for most of the incidents with no particular area of phobia standing out. During our initial data collection 20-21, we have not been able to identify any trends. Previous collection of data was dated and did not focus on the same categories as the new set of categories so we could not compare them.

At this time, as we continue to gather data, there has been no requirement to focus on any types of intervention or support for schools when tackling incidents of bullying and prejudice. We will continue to monitor this. We actively engage with third sector providers, such as Show Racism the Red Card to gain support for schools in raising awareness of race and other forms of prejudice.

The data we request is in line with the data reporting categories outlined by Welsh Government. This will now include an enhanced suite of data fields including the type of prejudice incident, for example, racism, transphobia, sexism, along with the type of bullying used, for example, face to face, on-line, relational, exclusion or isolation. This kind of data combined with migrated SIMS data outlining the victim's ethnicity, age, and gender will give us greater clarity. We will be able to scrutinise the data in more detail so we can identify trends and potentially forecast emerging and future issues.

During Academic year 21-22 and onwards there is an intention that all schools within the Vale of Glamorgan will manage and record all bullying and one-off prejudice incidents on a bespoke Safeguarding IT system, thereby achieving more accurate and consistent data that can be analysed with greater scrutiny.

There will be corporate analysis of school anti-bullying and one-off prejudice data on a termly basis. A web based safeguarding software solution, which integrates with the schools safeguarding IT system will enable this to take place.

We have undertaken multi-agency working to ensure schools who have identified issues around exclusions receive appropriate support and signposting to agencies and professionals to address this. This is evidenced by the targeted work with St

Cyres and Pencoedtre around support to respond to issues related to race and mental health disabilities.

We have used the Elected Home Education (EHE) WG grant to ensure elected home education learners with vulnerabilities have access to support and services.

We have placed an emphasis on a training roll out related to inclusion and exclusion issues and pastoral support plans. The creation of new Attainment Wellbeing and Engagement (AWE) team to support vulnerable families has enabled enhanced access and engagement with school offers. This is in line with our wider trauma informed approach to addressing pupils' needs related to early childhood trauma. The approach encompasses a focus on understanding and meeting the specific needs of vulnerable learners rather than adopting a punitive approach to incidents involving these learners from the outset.

We have created Virtual School reports as a mechanism to identify learners based on ethnicity. The reports enable us to track and monitor minority ethnic learners who are at risk of underachieving. Once these learners have been identified, on a school level, the team provide a programme of targeted support for the schools and their learners, whilst looking at the needs of the whole child.

Since 2017, the Vulnerable Groups Team provided a central and key point of contact between the schools and home, especially when there is no additional Home Office Funding to support the Specialist Resource Provision learners. This home school liaison has been pivotal in ensuring the families from the Specialist Resource Provision were able to support their children with home learning during lockdown. The Vulnerable Groups Team were able to allay the families' fears in enabling these groups of learners to access the hub school places offered. The team provided regular contact with families from the Specialist Resource Provision during lockdown to ensure academic, social and emotional support was in place for the children, and to continue to develop the positive relationships already established with these families, especially as many of these parents felt isolated.

The Vulnerable Groups Team supports schools to apply for Home Office funding to employ Arabic speaking Grade 5 Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). These school based Learning Support Assistants and the Vulnerable Groups Team, funded from the Minority Ethnic Achievement and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (MEAGRT) grant, provide support for the learners in the schools and liaise between home and school. The Learning Support Assistants and the Vulnerable Groups Team have developed excellent relationships with the children, their families and school-based staff. These relationships facilitate schools' and parents' communication to ascertain the changing needs of the children and how these can be met. These home school relationships were consolidated during the past year as the Learning Support Assistants and the Vulnerable Groups Team provided targeted support for the learners in the Syrian Resettlement Programme (SRP).

The team makes every effort to move the children towards a level of social and emotional independence, assisting with friendship difficulties, discussing cultural norms and rewards and consequences where appropriate. The targeted support involved upskilling the parents in online learning, such as video lessons on using online platforms and online reading resources.

In January 2020, the Vulnerable Groups Team trialled the use of 'Giglets', an award-winning online literacy platform supporting schools with multilingual literacy and language. This online resource was funded through the MEAGRT grant and piloted in Spring and Summer 2020. The team included parents in the online literacy lessons to support their children's learning, which they reported also helped improve their own English language skills. During lockdown, this online resource became an essential tool for supporting and maintaining reading skills with learners from the Specialist Resource Provision. The schools and the Vulnerable Groups Team were able to allocate online books to learners of all ages and abilities to provide relevant and appropriate opportunities to them at a time when they were unable to access structured reading materials.

All targeted learners from the Syrian Resettlement Programme retained their National Curriculum levels and reading levels to those prior to the Covid 19

restrictions. The acquisition of English language improved for all targeted Specialist Resource Provision learners within the 'New to English' competency stage.

Targeted learners from the Specialist Resource Provision in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 received continued support during Covid 19 restrictions, directly and in real time via Google classroom. All targeted Specialist Resource Provision learners in KS3 and KS4 improved their reading accuracy and comprehension age by at least 12 months (baseline YARC assessments September 2019 and re-assessed September 2020).

Two Specialist Resource Provision learners in Year 10 have achieved GCSE outcomes in 2020. One learner, who has been in school in the UK for just over 18 months achieved GCSE grade D in English literature and grade C in numeracy, and the other learner who has been in school for almost 5 years, achieved GCSE grade D in English literature and grade E in numeracy. In 2019-2020, there was one SRP learner in Year 12. The learner was in school in the UK for just under 3 years and achieved AS grade C in psychology, grade D in biology, grade C in textiles and grade E in chemistry which allowed the learner to progress to Year 13.

The latest activity to address attainment gaps for children and young people has been for St Cyres School to be recognised as a School of Sanctuary. The panel was unanimous in agreeing that St Cyres School should be recognised as a School of Sanctuary in September 2021. The team supported the school to apply for the award. The school is the first in the Council to achieve this award.

The attainment gaps based on ethnicity have been based on data produced on a national level. In the Vale of Glamorgan, learners from Ethnic Minority background are not at the greatest risk of underachievement and that is based on school level data. This may be anecdotal, but it cannot be ignored. It would be more meaningful if attainment gaps were based on level of language acquisition along with learners' ethnicity, identified additional learning needs and socio-economic background.

There has been a greater shift in the team's work in redrafting a Strategic Equalities Plan for schools to support a more inclusive education offer for learners, including

Minority ethnic learners. There has been satisfactory progress to support practitioners positively promoting race equality and being anti-racist, through the development of the Strategic Equality Plan for schools. The work plan for the implementation is on track for completion and Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee (Learning & Culture) have recently considered the draft.

There has been limited progress in the outcome to improve resources for teachers on anti-racism, diversity, and Black history. A positive step has been a dialogue in how the Central South Consortium's Strategy for Equity and Excellence could be actively anti-racist and support schools in developing the recommendations set out in the final report submitted by the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group.

In respect of supporting LGBT+ children and young people to achieve their potential, we provide support as follows:

- The Inclusion team are trained by the Resilience Project in supporting mental health needs and offering support for learners who are transitioning or who experience mental health difficulties linked to their sexual orientation.
- The Inclusion team shares resources from organisations such as Mermaids and Stonewall to support learners, their families and school professionals.
- Staff have been provided with specialist training to enable them to provide an appropriate service that meets the needs the young LGBTQ communities.

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.

We have processes in place to tackle hate crimes. The Community Cohesion Officer works closely with the South Wales Police Hate Crime Officer, who responds to all hate crimes and hate incidents across the Vale. Joint meetings support the

promotion of appropriate messages based on the types of incidents that are being reported and on ensuring that community cohesion is supported across the Vale.

We monitor how we are making improvements in dealing with violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence by gathering data. Data analysis refers to the services and work that is being implemented in respect of the VAWDASV agenda.

We are improving awareness amongst people in the community of the advice and support available to them. This year saw a significant increase in the level of engagement with the public regarding community safety advice and support. Throughout the year, we issued 24 posts specifically relating to hate crime and 72 relating to domestic abuse. The social media membership was increased to 466 Facebook followers, 140 Instagram followers and 857 Twitter followers. This wide variety of individuals received 430 tweets, 393 Facebook posts and 49 Instagram posts. This represents a positive increase in the number of advice and support messages being issued to individuals who may be vulnerable across the vale.

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.

We have reviewed and amended the allocation process for households with accessible housing needs to ensure that disabled applicants are now considered for a greater number of homes considering all reasonable and appropriate adaptations. A broader review of the Homes4U Scheme is next to be considered to ensure all social housing is allocated proportionately. Initial discussions have commenced with partners including a number of consultation initiatives.

Development of services under the Older Person Strategy has now been outsourced.

All staff have received LGBTQ+ training with a champion being appointed to drive awareness forward.

Homelessness prevention continues to be a priority and the department has also commissioned Officers through the Council's Supporting People Service / Housing Support Grant to aid the Welsh Government Rapid Rehousing approach emerging from the pressure of the pandemic.

We work with our partner agencies delivering our contracts to ensure they are working with as many people as possible who need our services. We ensure we map needs, analyse data and develop contract specifications which reflect good practice and keep people safe. Our partners ensure everyone has the opportunity to be engaged within their communities and actively promote participation.

With our third sector providers we address issues relating to employment, debt reduction and management, benefit maximisation and managing money. We also address environmental factors through our contracts.

Our third sector partners deliver support to people across the protected characteristic spectrum and ensure everyone is able to access services. We actively promote inclusion within our contracts and regularly review our providers to ensure they are delivering to a high standard.

We contract to third sector providers who support people to become active and engaged in activities and they promote healthy lifestyles and healthy living. The Supporting People programme is responsible for engaging hard to reach vulnerable clients and providing them with support to maintain their tenancies.

Strategic Equality Objective 9

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

We work with our passenger support providers to encourage them to provide relevant training to their staff in issues such as using lifts and restraints on wheelchair accessible vehicles. We ask for confirmation that this has been done. We train our own staff, for example Greenlinks volunteer drivers.

We continue to promote the take up of the Welsh Government Concessionary Travel to encourage increased uptake of the scheme. We do this by explaining the schemes available on the Councils website, including Cardiff and Valley Lines Concessionary Travel Pass and the Welsh Young Person's Discounted Travel Scheme.

We have installed a number of raised kerbs when upgrading bus shelters to assist less able people in getting on and off buses. We have incorporated electronic timetable displays in our upgrades to bus shelter which give the passenger better information and make public transport a more attractive option than use of the private car.

In addition, as part of Active Travel schemes, we have installed tactile paving crossings near to bus stops to assist those with sight difficulty.

We provide free parking for disabled persons with a blue badge. We have provided extra disabled parking spaces at Barry Island and implemented the disabled bays.

We monitor services to ensure that disabled people and older people receive high quality support services that factor in transport into individual support plans. For example, where relevant service users will be supported to claim for PIP to help with transport costs, supported with learning how to use public transport, planning journeys etc.

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.

Our work to promote the natural and built environment has been affected by the Covid pandemic. We normally undertake surveys to get feedback on what people think of our visitor destinations but this has been difficult to do this year. This process allows us to ensure that the needs of all communities are met when visiting us and that should any particular group show a change in trend or particular reaction to specific aspects then we are able to identify it and consider appropriate action.

The Strong Communities Grant Fund is a tool to empower organisations across the Vale to take the lead in developing and delivering projects that serve their communities. All projects must demonstrate how they benefit groups with protected characteristics. The range of projects supported shows that the fund is predominantly helping improve engagement with protected groups, working in partnership to consider needs relating to transport accessibility, and promoting natural and built environment and cultural heritage – including accessibility.

Other matters relevant to the general duty and specific duties

You will see in [Appendix 4](#) that there are a number of ways in which services have collected data and promoted equality.

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

Equality Impact Assessments

We have had a system for assessing the impact of our work on protected groups for many years. We review and improve it from time to time. We publish the results of our assessments on our website.

In January 2017, we introduced a new process for carrying out equality impact assessments. It links to guidance, research and data. It only allows officers to start the process and they then have to contact the Equality Team for advice. We hope that this will improve the quality of the assessments.

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

During the last few years, it has been important for us to think about how budget changes might affect our services. As we prepare budgets, we think about how changes might affect protected groups. We also think about how we can minimise adverse impacts on them. We publish on our website the assessment of how the budget impacts on protected groups.

More recently, we have also had to think about providing services in a very different way. This is because we know that each year, for the next few years, there will be greater pressures placed on budgets. As we do this, we think about how this will affect protected groups and we talk to them about it.

In preparation for the introduction of the Socio-economic Duty which came into force on 31 March 2021, we amended our equality impact assessment process and guidance to take

account of socio-economic disadvantage. At the same time, we also reflected Welsh Language considerations in the assessment process.

Equality Training

We continue to offer e-learning modules on a range of equality topics. This training covers a few areas including: basic information about equality; how to assess the impact of our work on protected groups (equality impact assessments); disability awareness; and information about transgender issues.

People can look at the e-learning modules from their Council provided computers. They can also access them from home through their personal devices. This can make it easier for some people to do the training. We can monitor who has completed this type of training.

Procurement

The Council's corporate procurement process ensures that procurement processes take into account the Public Sector Equalities Duty and are compliant with statutory legislation. This includes due diligence through tender documentation.

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

“ As an employer, do you have a policy and provisions in place to ensure that your organisation and staff comply with your statutory obligations under the Equality Act 201, and accordingly, is it your practice not to discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation in relation to decisions to recruit, select, remunerate, train, transfer and promote employees?
Yes / No”

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

Procurement Officers usually attend the annual Welsh Government Procurex Conference to ensure they are aware of the latest initiatives and best practice on Ethical and Inclusive Procurement. We receive all Welsh Government and UK Government updates and are part of the Local Authorities Head of Procurement Network for Wales. An example of supporting equality was receiving and disseminating information regarding see-through face masks to allow for lip reading.

Disability Confident Scheme

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

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

- **Accessible interviews**

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

- **Prior Consideration**

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

- **Interview location**

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

- **Developing abilities**

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

- **Supporting employees**

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

- **Raising awareness**

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

- **Reviewing the scheme**

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

Stonewall Diversity Champion

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

Our work has included supporting an LGBT+ and Allies Network, relaunched in January 2019 as 'GLAM'. Network Members take part in regular meetings related to three different workstreams: workplace impact; visibility and awareness; and social and support. Each group has a number of objectives to achieve to help make the workplace more inclusive for LGBT+ people. This work has involved reviewing policies, raising

awareness of issues affecting LGBT+ people, and arranging social events to network and provide support to staff. We have a GLAM webpage on our intranet.

We have LGBT+ Champions at both Member and senior management level.

We take part in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index normally, however, the Index was suspended during the Covid pandemic. The WEI provides a framework to improve lesbian, gay, bi and trans inclusion in the workplace.

During the previous three years, the Council has continued to improve its standing in the Workplace Equalities Index. This was particularly impressive given that the number of organisations taking part had significantly increased. For example, in 2019 there were 445 organisations and in 2020 this went up to 502.

Show Racism the Red Card Campaign

We continue to work with Show Racism the Red Card. This is a charity that works with young people to raise awareness of racism and homophobia. It uses footballers and other sports stars as role models to do this. It delivers workshops in schools and youth settings to children and young people about racism and provides fun fitness sessions.

The workshops impact positively with pupils stating they had changed the way they treat others. More than 90% of teachers would recommend the workshops to another school.

After the workshops: the knowledge and understanding of racism amongst primary school pupils increases as does confidence in talking about racism.

During November and December 2020, Show Racism the Red Card delivered anti-racism training to Elected Members and senior officers. The training covered the role of legislation, and overview of protected characteristics, prejudice and unconscious bias, an exploration of the barriers to tackling prejudice in the workplace and throughout society, and the language of equality.

Integrated Autism Service (previously Adult Autism Advice)

The Integrated Autism Service is a multiagency team of local authority and health staff covering the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan area. It provides diagnosis and support for adults with autism. The team began in 2012 and developed into the Integrated Autism Service in 2017. The Team gathers information about available services. These services come from local authorities, external service providers, and third sector organisations. The team then supports clients to access these services and provide more targeted support if there are barriers.

This work helps clients to access support or opportunities that are available to them in the wider community. Without this low-level support, they may not have known about the support opportunities or felt able to access them. It also helps us to deliver preventative services that meet the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The Integrated Autism Service short-term, targeted interventions encourage people to be independent and not to become dependent on the team.

Prior to the onset of Covid most appointments were Face to Face. Support is now available through a Virtual Advice Hub. As well as signposting and support to access other opportunities the team has always run a range of groups. Work has gone on to convert them into virtual on-line versions. When the current crisis is past having virtual version available will increase the reach of the service.

Work is ongoing. Currently the groups in virtual format are:

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

Vale 50+ Strategy Forum

The Forum speaks up for the needs of people aged fifty and over in the Vale of Glamorgan. Its members are in contact with many local and national working groups. The Forum has a constitution and an elected group of members called an Executive. The Executive decides how the Forum works.

The Executive meetings are open for all Forum members to attend. By attending, members can benefit from a range of interesting presentations on available services. Members also have the opportunity to express their opinions on service developments and planning. This year Executive meetings have continued to be held each month with alternative formal and informal meetings, however due to restrictions they have been held digitally allowing members to join online and via telephone.

Throughout 2020/21 the Forum have continued to be proactive in ensuring older peoples voices are heard in consultations and decision making. The Forum have taken part in consultations on a range of topics this year including transport, health, climate change and the impact of COVID-19.

At a time where it has been harder for older people to access information the Forum have continued to stay in contact with its members both online and via letters to ensure they are aware of the key support services available to them. Monthly e bulletins including local updates and information are sent to all members and distributed to the wider 50+ via local networks and contacts through other Council services, the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, GVS and Newydd Housing. The monthly e bulletin is in addition to the weekly newsletters you can sign up to on the [Forum's website](#) that is regularly updated.

This year discussions have taken place working towards the Vale becoming recognised as age friendly by achieving World Health Organisation [Age Friendly status](#) with the Older Peoples Commissioner.. An age-friendly community is somewhere where people come together to improve life for the people who live there, particularly as they age.

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

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

These discussions have continued into 2021 with the Public Services Board agreeing to take this work forward at the April 2022 meeting.

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

Arts Development

For more than a year life has been extremely challenging for most people due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. Eighteen-months on, isolation, loneliness, wellbeing, and health have been significant challenges throughout. The pandemic has forced people to communicate differently, mainly online. Through this creative technology, 'the arts' have significantly flourished. Individual artists and arts organisations from all disciplines including the visual, performing, music, craft, literature, poetry and more have offered a diverse mix of opportunities to all. The arts have been able to come to the fore highlighting, creativity, opportunity, inclusivity, and diversity, positively impacting on individuals' mental and physical health through a wealth of online interactive participatory opportunities.

The arts continue to communicate digitally to engage with people locally and worldwide. The Arts Development Officer has devised and delivered some key projects midst the

pandemic with the aim of addressing some of the issues mentioned. We have provided a focus for the community for all ages, backgrounds and abilities to take part or view arts opportunities. Some of the key events and activities are described below.

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is observed annually around the world on 27 January to commemorate the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Last year, the theme was 'Be the light in the darkness' by the Holocaust Memorial Trust London. This international event enables us to reflect on past actions as individuals whilst recognising the depths that humanity can fall from past events and continues to do today. The theme highlights how individually we can 'be the light!' illuminating truths, solidarity, support, and rescue to create a safer environment for future generations. We have recognised the importance of this event and for more than ten years and we have marked the day through our Arts Development Service, working in partnership with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust UK. We work to embrace both local and world issues, recognising and supporting humanitarian concerns, displacement, migration, homelessness, rescue and much more.

Due to Coronavirus restrictions, this year (January 2021) was particularly challenging as the Gallery was closed. To embrace the theme, Barry Town Hall, the home of Art Central Gallery and other key landmarks in the area including the Western Shelter, Barry Island and the Dock Offices were lit up in purple light, to show solidarity and engage with the national event.

A Commemorative Ceremony for the public, was held online during the evening of Wednesday 27 January. This allowed the community to engage in the day and hear the Council's Leader and Managing Director deliver the 'Statement of Commitment, prepared by the HMD Trust. Midst a global pandemic, it was important to pause and reflect on both historic and events happening today, recognising that this and other atrocities are never forgotten and that it is important to act and make changes for future for generations.

Women's Arts Association Wales (WAAW) arts exhibition opened in March 2020 to mark International Women's Day (IWD) a global event celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The worldwide event also aims to

accelerate gender parity and connect with women's equality. The WAAW exhibition opened for one week before, the pandemic hit and the gallery, like all Council Offices and facilities closed, with a plan to reopen in March 2021. Unfortunately, the continuing pandemic prohibited this.

Over a year later, the same exhibition of artworks created by over one hundred women artists reopened in July 21. Marked annually, International Women's Day raises awareness and celebrates women's achievements. The exhibition enables new upcoming artists and the wider community to show artworks alongside arts professionals thus creating a truly vibrant and diverse show of a variety of art works.

Online digital exhibitions were created during lockdown by the arts development service. The first was a digitalised show of the exhibition by the Women's Arts Association Wales. This enabled people to see a glimpse of the show and what was going to be available to actually see in the gallery once reopened. This happened in July 2020.

'Arts in Isolation' was an online open art exhibition for all supported by the Arts Development Services in partnership with Art Central Friends. Submissions were submitted by the local community and beyond including art works from India and Turkey. A mix of submissions included music, song, and visual arts, the artworks depicting how creativity and the arts had significantly helped individuals and families during lockdown. The online exhibition was followed by a live exhibition in Art Central once the gallery had reopened and was shown in August and September 2020. The live show was a very popular exhibition.

The third digital exhibition was in partnership with Cardiff and Vale College CAVC. After spending a year working in difficult circumstances at home, the students were able to publicly display their end of year show online. It wasn't possible to show their work in the gallery as usual, due to the pandemic.

The digital exhibitions provided an opportunity to show the exhibitions to the widest audiences during a difficult time. The exhibitions supported those experiencing social

inclusion and isolation enabling all ages and abilities to be profiled and involved when the community was so segregated and diluted.

Once the gallery had reopened and we have been able to show live exhibitions we have shown a 'Summer of Fun exhibition'. With secured funding from the Welsh Government the summer workshops encouraged young people to participate in a variety of artist led workshops that were shown in the gallery. This exhibition showed excellent work created in workshops led by freelance artists, together with works submitted by the young people that they had created at home. The workshops enabled young people from all backgrounds to meet interact, make new and see existing friends, whilst learning new skills and seeing their work shown in a professional setting.

Freelancer Cultural Recovery Funding - The Welsh Government working with Creative Cardiff and Business Wales and local authority Arts and Cultural and Economic Development services in Wales, set aside £63 million for Wales' Cultural Recovery Fund. The funding provided essential support to sustain the arts and creative sector, with the aim of enabling cultural creative organisations and individuals to thrive and receive support during the pandemic. It meant each freelancer received initially £2,500 followed by an additional equal amount with a final round of individual allocations for those most in need, to support the arts practitioners through this extended period of reduced activity.

During the lockdown and the global pandemic, the Welsh Government identified that the freelance creative arts and cultural sector plays an important contribution to the Welsh economy and cultural life. It was also identified that the sectors professional knowledge, experience, enthusiasm, and vision can help recovery midst this crisis. This is the first time the arts have been recognised equally as significant contributors to Wales creative and cultural economy.

Many Freelancers lost their jobs in theatres orchestras, television, film, and other creative roles, with the pandemic. Some have been supported by the fund and have been able to continue their creative work during the pandemic. Many used the money to help them adapt and support their practices e.g. arts professionals delivering classes by adapting their skills to record and deliver their creative practice online.

The process also brought together a Freelancer Pledge by the Welsh Government. This has enabled Local authorities and freelancers to connect for future opportunities bringing creativity and imagination to all areas of public life. The Freelancer Pledge reaffirms when developing recovery plans and aspirations that Wales has a commitment to involving the freelance arts community, a first for the UK.

To enable delivery of this funding on behalf of the Welsh Government, the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Arts Development Officer together with the Economic Development and Creative Rural Communities officers worked cross-departmentally to enable this funding opportunity to be implemented. The process took place over several months and had different funding stages implemented. All applicants received an equal figure of a minimum of £5000. The total number of freelancers supported in the Vale of Glamorgan were:

- Cultural Recovery Grant Round 1 (this included Phase 1 ,2 and 3) - 231 grants paid totalling £577,500
- Top Up Grant was paid to eligible applicants who received the Cultural Recovery Grant in Round 1 – 203 grants paid totalling £507,500
- Cultural Recovery Grant Round 2 - 40 grants paid totalling £100,000

In Wales, pre-COVID 2020, the creative industries generated £2.2billion and employed 56,000 people. The recognition of this sector has created a legacy for Freelance Artists working independently and in the creative industries recognising that artists in their broadest sense have a significant place in society whilst impacting on the wider economy, placing artist on a par and in some cases, ahead of other industries. The programme has created a comprehensive database of artists from all arts disciplines who signed up to the pledge creating a database of practitioners for this and all local authorities. New information is currently being gathered by the Welsh Government to identify the support, benefits, and outcomes.

The arts have always continued to be inclusive and this year have shown how they can embrace equality, diversity, inclusion and other factors. The arts will always continue to do this today and in the future.

Leisure Services

The Healthy Living and Performance Team, like the majority of Council departments, experienced a very different year due to the covid-19 pandemic than that originally planned.

The service needed to adapt quickly to a changing world and ensure that its objectives could be delivered in the best ways possible. This was particularly challenging for certain groups of key clients including groups identified within the Council's Strategic Equality Plan.

However, many adaptations and new initiatives were launched as a direct reaction to the challenging conditions.

One such initiative was the 'Reggie goes to the Moon' series of physical literacy books that the Council's former Disability Sports Development Officer produced and distributed to local schools, organisations and individuals. The series of six books demonstrate different ways to be remain physical active which each book tackling a different disability and offering advice specific to linked to the type of disability.

In addition, women and girls access and participation remained a key target during lockdowns as concerns continue about the gap between levels of physical activity between the sexes. A detailed consultation exercise was therefore commissioned, specific to the Vale of Glamorgan, to carry out detailed research into barriers to participation for women and girls as well as trying to identify what activities would assist in reducing the participation gap.

Some initiatives did continue throughout the pandemic with play schemes for children with disabilities remaining a high priority. There were however some changes to the play service with a greater emphasis placed on venues across the Vale of Glamorgan in an

effort to ensure transport difficulties and other issues did not impact on the ability to participate.

Some general sports and play provision was also provided when the rules permitted with this often being targeted at specific groups often linked to the Council's strategic equality objectives.

The National Exercise Referral scheme was also called upon to adapt its services quickly and moved to an online presence with some live internet classes particularly quickly. These classes were well supported by clients referred to the scheme prior to the start of lockdown.

This partly linked with a new initiative launched as a result of the pandemic, the '60+ project'. Whilst specific feedback from this initiative is yet to be formally collected and analysed, the initial feedback has been good.

Finally, as the Sports Team were unable to carry out their usual work in schools, an active school challenge programme was launched with a strong inclusive approach being at its core. This specifically took away the issues with transport and cost with the provision delivered both in schools for those pupils present and at home.

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 on the pay and grade for a job. This results in equal pay for work of equal value. The results of job evaluation are linked to our pay and grading system. We put in place a formal pay and grading system in March 2012 following conclusion of an extensive job evaluation process.

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

There are other factors that affect people's pay such as the type of jobs that they choose to do. Men and women often choose to do jobs that men and women have traditionally

done. We call this occupational segregation. It often plays a part in there being a gap between the pay of men and women – a gender pay gap.

As part of our Workforce Plan, we continue to look for ways to reduce the gender pay gap. Since 2012, we assess new and changing jobs through our job evaluation system. As part of this, we think about a number of factors including the knowledge, skills and experience people need to do the job. There are many changes like this as we reorganise our departments and think about how we can best do our work. Using this approach keeps 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 is similar to the make-up of the local community in terms of protected groups. We are currently reviewing the Council's workforce plan.

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

As part of the workforce plan, we have a strategy to look at increasing the diversity of our employees across all protected groups. As part of the strategy we are building relationships and developing offerings with local educational institutions, including Cardiff

University, University of South Wales and Cardiff and Vale College. We are striving to offer the full range of apprenticeships available in Wales.

Specified employment information, including information on training and pay

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For more information

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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