

Meeting of:	<b>Cabinet</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Thursday, 20 March 2025</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Learning and Culture
Report Title:	Strategic Equality Plan 2025-29
Purpose of Report:	To seek Cabinet approval of updated Strategic Equality Plan for the period 2025-29
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services
Responsible Officer:	Tom Bowring – Director of Corporate Resources
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	The Strategic Equality Plan is relevant to all wards, individual Member consultation is therefore not appropriate
Policy Framework:	The Strategic Equality Plan sets out the Council’s priorities for the next four years and informs the annual service planning processes
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Strategic Equality Plan sets out the Council's strategic equality objectives. The Council are required to do this under the Equality Act 2010 and the specific duties for Wales. The new Plan has been produced to align with the objectives of the new Vale 2030 corporate plan.</li> <li>• The new Strategic Equality Plan and supporting equality objectives set out how the Council will deliver its equalities vision for ‘working together for a fairer future’ and support delivery the Council’s Vale 2030 corporate objectives for the next four years.</li> <li>• The new Strategic Equality Plan and supporting equality objectives draw on extensive national and local data and citizens’ experience of life in the Vale of Glamorgan.</li> <li>• Over the course of 2024/25 and specifically during formal consultation on the draft Plan the Council has engaged a range of key stakeholders in shaping the final objectives. There is support for the objectives and actions in this Plan.</li> <li>• The Strategic Equality Plan also details the Council’s achievements in tackling inequality in during the life of the previous Plan.</li> <li>• Progress in delivering the Strategic Equality Plan is monitored by Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee. This is done annually via the Annual Equality Monitoring Report.</li> </ul>	

## **Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet approve the revised Strategic Equality Plan 2025 - 2029 (contained in Appendix A) and notes the equality impact assessment (Appendix B).
2. That a review of the Equalities Consultative Forum be completed and reported to Cabinet with recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of the Council's mechanisms for engaging with those with protected characteristics and the voluntary and advocacy groups representing them.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

1. To ensure that the Council has reviewed and has in place a Strategic Equality Plan for 2025 – 2029 with equality objectives that reflect the work being undertaken across the Council to improve equality and fairness in the Vale of Glamorgan.
2. To ensure that the Council's engagement mechanisms continue to develop in line with the ambitions of Vale 2023 and the Public Participation Strategy.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector equality duty ('the general duty'). The general duty requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- 1.2 In addition to this, the Council (as a listed body under the Act) must comply with the specific duties in Wales, designed to help performance of the general duty and to aid transparency.
- 1.3 The specific duties in Wales cover a range of requirements, including the requirement to draw up and publish a strategic equality plan which includes equality objectives.
- 1.4 The Strategic Equality Plan is a live document and can be reviewed and updated at any time.
- 1.5 There is a requirement to publish an equality objective to address any gender pay gap identified or else publish reasons why it has not done so. It must have due regard to the need to have objectives to address the causes of any pay differences that seem reasonably likely to be related to any of the protected characteristics. The Plan has an action to deal with pay gaps.
- 1.6 The current Plan was developed in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the specific duties for Wales. It sets out the Council's equality objectives and how it will deliver them.
- 1.7 Progress is monitored annually and reported on in the Annual Equality Monitoring Report. This is considered by the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee. The annual report is published on the Council's website.
- 1.8 The Equality and Human Rights Commission ultimately monitors compliance.

- 1.9 Equality objectives must be reviewed no less than every four years, and the Council published its current equality objectives in 2024 for the period 2024 – 2025.
- 1.10 The equality objectives need to be reviewed and objectives agreed and in place by 31st March, 2025.
- 1.11 This report seeks approval for the equality objectives and action for the period 2025-2029 (Appendix A).

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

- 2.1 A Strategic Equality Plan is the device used to detail information that demonstrates that the Council is meeting the general duty. It must include information on a number of prescribed issues, such as its arrangements to identify and collect relevant equality and employment information, arrangements for assessing the likely impact on protected groups of any policies and practices, and how the authority will promote knowledge and understanding of the general and specific duties among employees. The Plan is structured to ensure this.
- 2.2 A key element of the Strategic Equality Plan is its equality objectives. The Council is required to publish objectives for each of the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act (2010) or to publish reasons why not. It is possible to have a smaller number of equality objectives which benefit a number of protected characteristics. The Council must justify where it does not have an objective for each protected characteristic.
- 2.3 There were a number of significant achievements during the life of the previous Strategic Equality Plan such as;
  - Supporting those experiencing barriers to work and training through a number of schemes and initiatives with Communities for Work+
  - Being awarded a silver award in 2024 and ranked in the Stonewall Workplace Equalities Index top 100 employers.
  - Being awarded Race Equality First Silver Trailblazer status and Safe Space Plus Trailblazer status.
  - Receiving the Families First Quality Award in recognition of the good work done providing advice and assistance to families.
  - Enhanced our focus on participation to ensure young people's voices are heard through work with the Youth Council, Youth Action groups, and School Council Networks as well as helped schools and learners to launch junior Diverse groups, initially in Holton and St Cyres.
  - Launched the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse, and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) strategy, updated for 2023-2028.
- 2.4 The most significant achievements for each of the previous strategic equality objectives are detailed in the new Plan.

- 2.5** To formulate the Council's equality objectives for 2025-2029, national research from the Equality and Human Rights Commission ('Is Wales Fairer? 2023') was used, took account of the Welsh Government's equality plans, and sought the views of officers across the Council and key external stakeholders.
- 2.6** The new Strategic Equality Plan is supported by robust data and research. This is needed to ensure the Council's equality objectives are the right ones and make a meaningful impact on areas of known disadvantage nationally and locally. As part of this, the Council takes into account national research and the latest census data.
- 2.7** To ensure this national insight applies to communities in the Vale of Glamorgan, the Council's own local research has been taken into account which included the Let's Talk about Life in the Vale survey results.
- 2.8** The Plan has been developed alongside the Vale 2030 plan which it supports and so the insight gained through consultation on this Plan has also been taken into account.
- 2.9** The insight gained from this was sense checked through extensive discussion at various internal forums including the Council's Insight Board and at directorate management team meetings and considered in the context of the Council's corporate wellbeing objectives.
- 2.10** The resulting Strategic Equality Plan 2025 – 2029 sets out the steps the Council intend to take to meet each objective and how to monitor progress. There are strategic level actions for each of the equality objectives which have prioritised the areas where it is believed the most impact could be made.
- 2.11** For each objective the Plan also sets out the extensive local and national evidence that underpins it.
- 2.12** A formal consultation exercise was undertaken on an initial draft of the Plan in December 2024 and January 2025. This was promoted online and directly to the Council's Equalities Consultative Forum and other key partners. An in-person consultation drop-in session was held in January 2025 and an offer made to key partners to attend any upcoming meetings to share and discuss the Plan. The Plan was also considered at a meeting of the Council's Elected Member Champions. An overview of insight gained through engagement with these groups is set out in the Consultation Report (Appendix C).
- 2.13** External engagement with the standalone consultation exercise was limited. In part this is attributable to declining attendance and engagement with the Equalities Consultative Forum.
- 2.14** It is recognised that in order to deliver on the objectives of this Plan, Vale 2030, and the Public Participation Strategy, more effective mechanisms for engaging on issues of equality and inclusion are required.
- 2.15** The feedback received emphasised the importance of the following issues which are addressed in the Plan:

- the poverty agenda;
- prioritising investment in schools;
- public transport;
- apprenticeships;
- encouraging under-represented groups to speak freely of their experiences;
- foodbanks and the cost-of-living;
- support for victims of bullying and education to reduce the risks of this;
- digital exclusion;
- more affordable housing close to local amenities;
- supporting employees with disabilities;

**2.16** and making sure that there are clear targets for achieving the objectives and actions.

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

- 3.1** The Strategic Equality Plan contributes to the national Well-being Goals as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act through the delivery of its strategic equality objectives.
- 3.2** The equality objectives were developed in accordance with the five ways of working.
- 3.3** The involvement of partners and stakeholders in the development and delivery of the equality objectives is important as is the need to work in a more integrated way, recognising the connections across Council services and with other partners.

### **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. The Plan has an action on climate change.

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

#### **Financial**

- 5.1** There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. The equality objectives are in line with the Council's Corporate Plan objectives which reflect the Council's priorities for 2025 – 2030. This informs the way resources

are allocated, whilst also taking account of the availability of resources to deliver it.

- 5.2** The outcome of the Council's budget consultation and revenue settlement from the Welsh Government will inform the content and extent of delivery of the plan in coming years.

### **Employment**

- 5.3** There are no direct employment implications associated with this report.

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

- 5.4** The Council is required to review its strategic equality objectives no less than every four years.
- 5.5** The equality impact assessment for the 2025 – 2029 Strategic Equality Plan has been updated and can be found in Appendix B.
- 5.6** The equality impact assessment confirms that the impact of the equality objectives is anticipated to be positive. It acknowledges that there has been a focus on particular protected characteristics where the evidence supports this.

## **6. Background Papers**

[Vale of Glamorgan Strategic Equality Plan 2020 - 2024](#)

[Vale of Glamorgan Strategic Equality Plan 2024 - 2025](#)



# Working together for a fairer future

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's  
Strategic Equality Plan 2025 – 2029

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# **Working together for a fairer future**

## **The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2025 – 2029**

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## Introduction

We are pleased to be introducing the Council's Strategic Equality Plan for 2025 - 2029 – **'Working together for a fairer future'**.

Amongst other data and research, we have taken into account 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 have aligned our strategic equality objectives with our corporate wellbeing objectives which in turn have been developed with extensive engagement with stakeholders. We believe that developing the priorities for our Strategic Equality Plan in this way will better align them with our business and strengthen their impact.

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

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

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

<b>Draft Well-being Objectives</b>	<b>Draft Strategic Equality Objectives</b>
<b>Creating great places to live and work</b>	<b>To create fairer places to live and work</b>

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

The Vale of Glamorgan is a diverse area comprising very different communities with different aspirations, needs and concerns. Our Plan sets out how the Council will work to meet those needs, address concerns and help people of all protected groups achieve their aspirations. Whether you live or work in one of our towns or in one of our more rural communities, we will continue to strive to make life better and to play our part in addressing the issues that affect the people living, working, and visiting here.

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

**Councillor Lis Burnett**

**Rob Thomas**

**Leader of the Council**

**Chief Executive**

# Purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan

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

The public sector equality duty covers eight protected characteristics:

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

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

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

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

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

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

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

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

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

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

To identify the priorities, we have used research from the Equality & Human Rights Commission and feedback from residents and organisations working in the Vale of Glamorgan, including our public opinion survey 'Let's Talk Life in the Vale'. We plan to use this information to help us improve the way we provide services and employ people.

### **The Socio-economic Duty and Tackling Poverty**

On 31 March 2021, the Socio-economic Duty came into force in Wales. It improves decision making and helps those who are socio-economically disadvantaged. We have updated our equality impact assessment process to reflect this and included actions related to this in the Plan.

We know that within the Vale there are inequalities between our most deprived and least deprived communities. Some people and families are struggling and need more help and support, either temporarily or more long term. Some groups of people face particularly high levels of poverty. These include:

- larger families
- families whose childcare responsibilities limit their ability to work
- people of the global majority
- disabled people
- informal carers
- families not in work
- part-time workers and the self-employed
- people living in rented accommodation
- families claiming income-related benefits
- older people on fixed incomes

This Plan identifies action to prevent and tackle poverty as does our corporate plan, Vale 2030.

## **Welsh Language**

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

## Context

The world is changing rapidly and the context for this Plan similarly changes regularly. What remains the same is the need for the Council to engage with the community and plan for the future, to work with our partners and embrace change. We must also consider how our actions and decisions will affect future generations.

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

Since we agreed the last Strategic Equality Plan in 2020, there have been many changes that have impacted upon people's lives including Covid and the cost-of-living crisis. The Welsh Government has published a number of plans such as the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales, and Age Friendly Wales. There is some reflection of these priorities in this Plan and we will continue to take developments relating to these plans into account in our work.

## The Vale of Glamorgan and our Council

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

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

The Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2025–2029 links with the Corporate Plan, Vale 2030.

The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision for the Vale of Glamorgan, our values and our main priorities. The priorities of the Corporate Plan will help make communities in the Vale of Glamorgan more equitable. The equality objectives in this Strategic Equality Plan support this work and it is for this reason that the objectives of both plans are aligned. The equality objectives also align with the Council's Public Participation Strategy.

## Vision and values

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Developing this Plan**

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

- The latest census data.
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission's national research reports 'Is Wales Fairer? 2023



- information from Council documents such as the Corporate Plan, Vale 2030;
- local information and data, including the Council's public opinion survey, 'Let's Talk Life in the Vale';
- consultation and engagement;
- Welsh Government plans;
- information from the Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales.

This information has shaped the action that will be taken to achieve the Council's equality objectives between 2025 and 2029.

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

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

## Equality Data

### Ethnicity

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

### Nationality

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

### Main Language

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

### Welsh Language

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

### Disability

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

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

## **Age**

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

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

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

## **Gender**

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

## **Gender Reassignment**

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

## **Sexual Orientation**

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

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

### **Religion or Belief**

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

### **Marital Status**

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

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

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

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

### **Socio-economic**

Our analysis of the most recent economic data (January 2025) shows that:

- In **December 2024**, there were **2,515 people, 3.19%** of the working-age population, who **were not in employment and in receipt of unemployment support in the Vale of Glamorgan**. This is a decrease from the previous month.

- The numbers of people recorded as not in employment and in receipt of unemployment support has seen **no change for 18–24-year old people, and a decrease for 25–49-year old people and 50+ year old people since last month.** Figures remain above pre-pandemic levels for all age groups other than 18–24-year old people.
- The highest number of people by LSOA who were **not in employment and in receipt of unemployment support in the Vale of Glamorgan** are recorded in **Castleland 1, with 115 people** estimated to be not in employment and in receipt of unemployment support. This **compares to 5 in Stanwell 2 and Illtyd 6.**
- **In November 2024, a total of 13,075 people** were in receipt of **Universal Credit in the Vale of Glamorgan, 8092** of those in receipt of Universal Credit were **Not in Employment, while 4,982 were In Employment, this represents 8% of total number of people in employment in the Vale of Glamorgan.** Since March 2022, there has been a consistent month-on-month increase in the total number of people in receipt of Universal Credit. This is part of a long-term Govt. Strategy to move people from Housing Benefits to UC, a process that is taking longer than anticipated.
- Those Lower-Level Super Output Areas (LSOAs) identified as more deprived by WIMD 2019 in the Vale of Glamorgan, show the higher numbers of people claiming Universal Credit. **Areas in the East of Barry** show higher numbers of people in receipt of Universal Credit; data for **November 2024 shows Castleland 1 as recording the highest number of people in receipt of Universal Credit at 625 people, of these, a majority of 425 were not in employment, compared to 201 in employment.** (Please note, LSOA estimates may not round to total due to procedures to ensure individual cannot be identified).

- In the **Year ending September 2024**, it is estimated that the **Employment Rate** in the Vale of Glamorgan was **72.80%**. **This is 3.8 percentage points down on the year.**
- In the **Year ending September 2024**, it is estimated that the **Unemployment Rate** in the Vale of Glamorgan was **3.2%**. **This is the same as the previous year.** The **unemployment rate has increase by 0.2% in the last quarter from 3.0% to 3.2%**. This data is drawn from the Annual Population Survey undertaken by the Office for National Statistics - Unemployment rate is based on returns of 10-25 responses to the survey and should be used with caution.
- **In May 2024**, the total number of people in receipt of **Pension Credit** in the Vale of Glamorgan was **2,725**. The number of people in receipt of Pension Credit has seen an **overall decrease since February 2020**. In May 2024, out of the total number of people in the Vale of Glamorgan in receipt of Pension Credit, **49% were aged between 70 and 79**. Pension Credit is a means tested benefit, therefore the amount awarded varies depending on circumstance. In May 2024 the largest proportion, **22%, of people were in receipt of £100 to under £150 a month, overtaking the proportion of people on under £20 which had been the highest amount since February 2020**. In May 2024, the LSOAs with the highest number of people in receipt of Pension Credit were Dinas Powys 3 (108), Cadoc 1 (81) and Dyfan 3 (81). In May 2024, the Electoral Wards with the highest number of people in receipt of Pension Credit were in the Cadoc (242), Buttrills (199) and Illtyd (197) Wards.
- In **November 2024**, the **Median House Price paid** in the Vale of Glamorgan was **£292,490**, this is a **£7,536** increase on the year and represents a **£8,027** decrease on the quarter.
- In **December 2024**, the **average Private Rental Price** was **£894**, **up on the year from £833** and following the consistent increase since June 2021. In December

2024, the private rental price annual change was 6.4%, down from 6.5% in November 2024.

- In **December 2024, Consumer Price Inflation (CPI)** was estimated to be **2.5%**, **down from 2.6% in November 2024.**
- The Vale of Glamorgan's **economic inactivity rate for October 2023 to October 2024 was 25.6%**. This was a quarterly increase of 2.6% from 23% in July 2023 – June 2024. Of those that were economically inactive in the Vale of Glamorgan, **84.9% do not want a job, 1.4% percentage points up from the previous quarter.** iiiThis compares to **13.9%** of those that were economically inactive in the Vale of Glamorgan who do want a job, down 1.4% percentage points from July 2023 – June 2024.

## Working to support equality

### Our Council

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

- To support the services we deliver, the Council relies on a skilled workforce that includes teachers, engineers and social workers.
- In total, the Council employs over 5,000 staff, including those employed in schools.
- In the Staff Survey 2022, 76.7% of staff either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I am proud to work for the Vale of Glamorgan Council'. 68.2% of people either agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the Vale of Glamorgan Council as a good place to work.
- There are 55 schools across the Vale of Glamorgan, including 7 Welsh medium schools.
- The Council has nearly 4,000 homes.
- There are 54 elected councillors including the Cabinet, made-up of the Leader of the Council and seven other Councillors (five women, three men).

The public sector continues to face many challenges. How we work, what is expected of us and the level of resource available to us will be subject to many changes as we progress our plans.

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



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

## **Awareness Raising**

We have an online learning platform where colleagues can access a range of e-learning modules. These include:

- Cultural awareness
- Disability and discrimination
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality and diversity – building awareness
- Equality and diversity at the Vale
- Equality impact assessments
- LGBTQ+ and Pride awareness
- Trans awareness
- Welsh language awareness

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

Building awareness and understanding helps our colleagues know how to provide a fair service that meets the diverse needs of the people using it.

## **Assessing Impact**

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

economic disadvantage and the Welsh language. The process helps the Council to consider the impact of our work on each of these groups.

We encourage colleagues to collect and analyse information and data to see how people are using Council services. We can use this information as part of our evidence base in equality impact assessments.

We use this process, for example, to assess the likely impact of policies and practices including the Corporate Plan and the annual budget. We think about whether there is a risk that our decisions are likely to have a significant impact on protected groups. If we can see that there might be one, we can think about whether we can do anything to avoid this happening, or to mitigate it.

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

We keep this process under review and seek to make improvements including those recommended in Audit Wales report 'Equality Impact Assessments: More than a Tick Box Exercise'.

### **Examples of good practice**

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

Here are some examples of our work.

- We support staff networks: **GLAM** - our network for lesbian, gay, bisexual trans and non-binary (LGBTQI+) colleagues; **Diverse** – our network for global majority and ethnic minority colleagues; and **Abi** – our network for colleagues with disabilities.
- We invite the leaders of the staff networks to Senior Leadership Team meetings for updates, dialogue and support.

- We have Wellbeing Champions who promote health and wellbeing campaigns, signpost colleagues to relevant services, and encourage colleagues to participate in the Council's wellbeing initiatives and activities.
- We have run workshops for corporate and school staff on race awareness.
- We are actively working towards greater race inclusivity, working within relevant frameworks to guide our work so that we are informed by people's lived experience. Race Equality Matters has awarded us Silver Trailblazer and Safe Space Plus Trailblazer status.
- We have held Safe Space meetings between our Diverse Staff Network and our Senior Leadership Team to discuss race issues and agree priority actions.
- We have applied to be recognised as a County of Sanctuary and have an action plan to support this.
- We are actively working towards greater inclusivity of lesbian, gay, bisexual trans and non-binary people, working within relevant frameworks, to guide our work so that we are informed by people's lived experience. We are a Stonewall Diversity Champion. We have been awarded Silver for our Workplace Equality Index submission and are in the Top 100.
- We work with partners to provide job opportunities.
- We hold an annual Holocaust Memorial Day event.
- We support the Vale 50+ Forum. This is an active public engagement group that offers a voice for people over 50 years of age.
- The Vale of Glamorgan's largest town, Barry, has been awarded 'Dementia Friendly Town' status by the Alzheimer's Society. We have an active steering group to make

sure we achieve our action plan. We have a significant number of trained Dementia friends.

- We worked with the Public Services Board to make the Vale of Glamorgan a better place to age and we became the fourth Local Authority area in Wales to be awarded Age Friendly Status by the World Health Organisation.
- We have a digital inclusion working group developing a strategy to get more people online. Our library staff are digital champions who are able to help the public with their queries. The public can access computer suites in libraries. The Adult Community Learning team and libraries offer a range of digital inclusion training programmes. We have improved wi-fi access in sheltered homes and plan on doing this in care homes.
- We provide Greenlinks community transport in rural and urban areas. This includes buses that can be used easily by disabled people. Greenlinks helps people without transport to access services and to interact socially.
- We provide a bus to Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern, a grass roots community support service. This helps to transport people to a new medical centre which is not easily accessible.
- We have TREV (The Reassurance and Engagement Vehicle) that helps us take information about safety out into the community.
- We have an annual leave purchase scheme in place and are piloting changes to our flex time system to give staff greater flexibility in managing their work-life balance.
- We host an Equalities Consultative Forum, bringing together officers and teams across the Council with external organisations, groups, and charities with a particular interest in people with certain protected characteristics.

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

## Equality objectives – achievements

Between 2020 and 2024, good progress was made against each of the ten equality objectives. The following provides a summary of what has been done for each.

### Strategic Equality Objective 1

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

We launched the Participate Vale portal to ensure that the Council's consultation, engagement, and participation activities are brought together into a single and easily accessible online hub. Along with the Public Participation Strategy, the Council aims to be more diverse in methods to engage and connect with as many stakeholders as possible in the decision-making process.

Our Communications Team manages the Council's social media accounts including Facebook, X/Twitter and more recently Instagram. The corporate Facebook account has 25,000 followers. The Welsh language account has 144 followers. The corporate X/Twitter account has 22,400 followers whilst the Welsh language account has 653 followers.

The Equality Consultative Forum (ECF) is made up of external organisations that represent different protected characteristics and groups. These include Diverse Cymru, Race Equality First, Stonewall, Mind in the Vale, Vale People First, Citizens Advice Bureau, and the Vale 50+ Forum. Nominated elected members attend as do Council officers connected with the Youth Service, Age Friendly Vale, Healthy Living Team, Social Services and Human Resources.

The Equality Consultative Forum met up to four times a year to discuss a range of corporate plans and initiatives as well as some items from external partners.

We continue to support the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum who are a voice for older people in the Vale of Glamorgan. We support the Forum to hold in-person meetings for people aged 50+ to share their views on important topics as well as a suite of public 'Have Your Say' events.

We appointed an Age Friendly Vale Officer who continues to progress the Age Friendly Vale action plan. We have held a number of events with older people and members of the Vale 50+ Forum.

The Strategy and Insight team encourage the use of data to support and shape Council policies and decisions. The team produces the Economic Monthly Report, the Cost-of-Living Analysis, and Census 21 analysis which provide invaluable insight into communities in the Vale of Glamorgan, including those who may be deprived, experience socio-economic pressures, and those with protected characteristics. The reports are shared with Council departments to use to better inform the decision-making process.

These Council wide methods of engagement and information gathering are supplemented by similar work in individual services. They are valuable in informing the way we deliver our services.

## **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 increased slightly from last year. The difference in mean hourly rate between male and female employees is £0.65, a decrease from £1.03 last year. The difference in median hourly rate between male and female employees is

£0.59. The mean gender pay gap as a percentage of men's pay is 3.71% and the median gender pay gap as a percentage of men's pay is 3.81%, which is less than the UK median gender pay gap of 8.1%.

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 is 5.73%, an increase from last year.

The last pay review in 2019 in relation to the revised NJC spine had a positive impact on the gender pay gap. We will continue to monitor 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 continue to work on improving our diversity profile.

### **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 supported those experiencing barriers to work and training through a number of schemes and initiatives with Communities for Work+. We use data to target specific groups such as engaging more females through lone parent work. We worked on different projects for specific groups where evidence shows employment is harder to access.

We hold employability events, raise awareness of apprenticeships, and worked with the Youth Service on a successful youth training and employment event in 2023.

We have funded employment mentors through the Shared Prosperity Fund to help people with mental health problems, disabilities, sensory needs and autism secure skills and employment.

We introduced a new employee record system, Fusion, in April 2023. This is a self-service portal that allows staff to update their own personal details. We ran a

communication campaign to encourage staff to update their details. We have reported a 7.3% increase in recorded information. As such, we can more accurately report on our workforce in terms of protected characteristics and can identify new trends and groups on which to focus recruitment.

Human Resources launched an overseas recruitment project in 2023 to address caring vacancies. We have worked with communities to support new recruits.

#### **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 encourage all staff to set aside time for personal development and take part in programs such as Infuse and reverse mentoring. The Learning Café network relaunched in October 2023. It aims to bring staff together from across the authority to share ideas and resources, promoting collaboration on themes such as ‘community power’ and ‘transformation’.

We currently support three staff networks:

- **GLAM:** for LGBTQ+ members and allies
- **Diverse:** for Black, Asian, global majority, racialised people, and allies
- **Abi:** for staff with disabilities and allies

The networks provide support and information to members, share knowledge and experiences, are consulted on Council policies, and help inform training. The networks are important in showing how the Council delivers its corporate values and culture as an inclusive employer of choice. We worked with the networks to achieve various



accreditations. We display and promote these on our external recruitment pages. We added links to the accreditations and networks on the website banner.



We continue our work as a Stonewall Diversity Champion using the Stonewall Workforce Equality Index to benchmark our work. We monitor and evaluate improvements towards further inclusion of our LGBTQ+ workforce. In the Stonewall Workplace Equalities Index, we were awarded a silver award in 2024 and ranked in the top 100 employers.

We are members of Race Equality Matters and have used its Trailblazer process to evaluate a progress to becoming more inclusive for our global majority colleagues. We have been awarded Silver Trailblazer status and Safe Space Plus Trailblazer.

We post articles on Staffnet to mark various awareness days and events. Sharing information about these awareness days and events means we can raise awareness of different groups and minorities, contributing to a more inclusive work environment. In addition, we ensure relevant equalities-related content on iDev is available.

For National Inclusion Week in September, we hold an online event where representatives from GLAM, Diverse, Abl, and the Wellbeing Champions were able to discuss their networks and answer questions from staff.

Wellbeing champions promote a range of wellbeing activities across the organisation and opened a wellbeing garden in the Civic Offices courtyard in 2022.

The Learning Café relaunched in October 2023 for staff across the Council and schools. It includes eight topic groups which aim to drive personal and professional growth, and promote meaningful discussions and collaboration across the authority.

### **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 resources, previous sessions and presentations via MemberNet. We have since provided information on women's equality issues and race awareness.

We made equality and diversity training for elected members mandatory in 2022 as part of the new member induction program. We keep Members' training and development under review and arrange to meet identified needs.

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

### **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.**

School attendance remains a concern. We undertook a widespread communications campaign to encourage school attendance. We have offered training and support, and also established School Attendance Officer Forums and a drop-in service for schools to discuss issues with the team.

The Family Information Service (FIS) achieved the Families First Quality Award

recognising the good work done providing advice and assistance to families.

The Vulnerable Groups team was renamed the Learning Links Team after discussions with children and young people.

We worked with schools to improve the identification and recording of bullying incidents and one-off incidents of prejudice within the My Concern database.

We delivered a range of programmes and interventions to support vulnerable learners to make positive progress. We hold regular clinics in schools with the Children and Young People's Service to triage and signpost children in need of care and support.

We have a virtual school report in place to monitor and track attendance of children including children who are looked after and previously looked after who are at risk of underachieving; service children; young carers; and children from the global majority.

We worked closely with schools to ensure children from the global majority are effectively supported with their education. No global majority children or children where English is an additional language left compulsory education, training, or work-based learning without an approved external qualification.

We hold monthly meetings about school places with departments who support asylum-seeking families. The Adult Community Learning Team maximise grant funding to deliver ESOL courses to local primary schools.

We work with Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) to ensure Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children (UASC) have access to education provision wherever they are placed. To date, twelve UASC have successfully settled into schools and colleges in the Vale of Glamorgan.

We helped schools and learners to launch junior Diverse groups, initially in Holton and St Cyres. We supported both schools in holding junior safe space meetings with members of the Council's Strategic Leadership Team, where the children and young people asked questions of the Council's senior leaders. We facilitated an arts project at

Holton School to celebrate Windrush Day in 2023. Senior officers and councillors were invited to the school to view the work.

Our first cohort of anti-racist schools presented their Action Research in June 2023. The second cohort presented their Action Research in July 2024.

We launched the Young Interpreters Scheme in nineteen schools, delivering training to the schools on using the resource to raise the wellbeing and self-esteem of multi-lingual learners. We facilitated the Giglets language and literacy resource in 37 schools to enable multi-lingual learners to access texts and resources in their own language.

These projects have helped schools as we support them to become Schools of Sanctuary alongside our Council working to become a County of Sanctuary.

We have focused on participation to ensure young people's voices are heard, including the Youth Council, Youth Action, and School Council Network initiatives.

We supported the 'Her Voice Wales' group with its #wedontfeelsafecampaign which aimed to raise awareness of sexual harassment. The group was awarded the Youth Excellence Award for Demonstrating Excellence in partnership planning and delivery.

We have youth work initiatives that support young people with protected characteristics including I AM ME, HWB, and Youthy18+.

We developed the Trans Toolkit and Guidance, and rolled out to schools and governors in 2023/24. The toolkit forms part of the suite of guidance that we provide to schools on a range of issues including bullying, safeguarding, and protected characteristics.

From September 2022, we offered free school meals to children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. From April 2023, this was extended to all primary school children. These dates were in advance of Welsh Government ambitions

Schools continue to encourage qualifying parents to apply for School Essential Grants (previously known as Pupil Development Grants), including for Children Looked After.

Cadoxton Primary School reached the final 3 of the World's Best School Prize 2023 in the Overcoming Adversity category.

A new specialist school, Derw Newydd, opened in 2023. It replaced the previous pupil referral units, Y Daith at Cowbridge and Amelia Trust. Derw Newydd offers bespoke provision for pupils that require support for complex social, emotional, and mental health needs.

### **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.**

#### **Safer Vale Partnership Strategy 2023-28**

We launched the new Safer Vale Partnership Strategy for 2023 – 2028. You can view the strategy [here](#).

We have worked with Safer Wales and several specialist services to signpost victims who may require different support. These services include Bawso, the Dyn Project, New Pathways, Rainbow Bridge, and Live Fear Free. We worked with the Vale Domestic Abuse Service (Vale DAS) – the specialist support provider in the Vale of Glamorgan.

We launched the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse, and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) strategy, updated for 2023-2028. The updated strategy includes new commitments around strangulation and children as victims in their own right as well as new policies for street and workplace harassment.

We facilitate twice weekly multi-agency meetings which improve outcomes for victims of high-risk domestic abuse.

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.

We processed standard and medium Public Protection Notices (PPNs) where the victim has given consent for their data to be shared. Domestic abuse victims report feeling safer because of security improvements to their homes delivered by the Safer Vale Partnership.

The most common hate incidents are due to race, sexual orientation, and transgender issues. We continue to work with South Wales Police to actively promote the reporting of hate crime. As such, increases in the number of reported incidents are not necessarily indications of actual increases in hate crime.

We run the Community Cohesion Group, with staff reaching out to communities that are currently under-represented. A dedicated Community Cohesion officer supports progress on the actions in the community cohesion plan and helps to promote community initiatives and national days via our social media platforms.

The Community Safety team has a remit to tackle anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour in specific areas like derelict buildings in Barry town centre and youth nuisance at parks prompted the Community Safety team to take more preventative measures. We secured funding for engagement work with young people.

We work with South Wales Police to tackle anti-social behaviour along the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff coastline under Operation Elstree. This multi-agency approach aims to keep coastal areas safe and family friendly.

We have piloted a new service for male domestic abuse victims. We commissioned a refuge service for male victims and transgender victims of domestic abuse.

We have a metric on violence and aggression in the workplace. The violence and aggression statistics and behaviour escalation statistics for schools include monitoring whether protected characteristics are a factor.

Her Voice Wales is a group of girls aged 13-17 from the Vale of Glamorgan who started the #wedontfeelsafecampaign to raise awareness of catcalling and sexual harassment. Her Voice Wales worked with Community Safety to join the Vale of Glamorgan Council to the

Safe Places National Network. This provides local venues and businesses with stickers to indicate a safe place to escape catcalling or sexual harassment. Her Voice Wales won a national prize with at the Youth Work Excellence Awards.

### **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.**

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 will feature in the Age Friendly Vale action plan.

The Vale 50+ Forum launched a housing topic group, as housing is a key focus of the members. The leads of the housing group met with staff from the Housing department to discuss the draft Older People's Housing Strategy.

We opened a third 'smart house' to enable people with learning disabilities to access high-quality modern accommodation that promotes their independence through digital technology.

We completed the refurbishment of Vale residential homes. All four residential homes are now dementia friendly, reflecting population need and improving outcomes for residents.

We developed the Older Persons Housing Strategy and have worked to complete the actions within it.

Homelessness prevention continues to be a priority. We appointed a Rapid Rehousing Officer to progress actions within the Council's Rapid Rehousing Policy.

Vale Telecare and TEC Cymru were nominated in the Up-and-Coming TEC Innovation category at the International Technology Enabled Care Conference 2024.

We developed around 90 units of temporary accommodation 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 Vale Resettlement Team continue to assist refugees to resettle into the Vale of Glamorgan. The Council has a strong track record of assisting people from other parts of the world including those fleeing wars in Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine. The Team works closely with other Council teams to provide integration into new lives in the Vale.

We published the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment in 2022 and continue to consider current and future need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the Vale of Glamorgan within the Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) period to 2036.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction help many people across the Vale of Glamorgan with their housing costs. There has been a decrease in the working-age Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction caseload reflecting that more working-age people have moved onto Universal Credit. Our monitoring helps to ensure that pensioners continue to apply for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

We work with the Homelessness Team to ensure vulnerable tenants are identified so we can do what we can to ensure rent is paid, such as awarding Discretionary Housing Payments.

### **Strategic Equality Objective 9**

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

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 has a strong relationship with the Council's 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 as well as a feature of the emerging Age Friendly Vale draft action plan.

We completed the transport interchange at the Docks Offices in Barry.

We use Active Travel funding from the Welsh Government to help residents choose active travel options every day to be healthy and connected to communities. We also receive Section 106 financial contributions to improve active travel and transport services in localised areas.

We completed pedestrian and cycle improvements across the Vale.

We worked with Fairfield Primary School in Penarth and Sustrans to launch the Vale's first school street closure in 2023 as part of the 'School Street' initiative to provide a traffic-free, safe environment for pupils to get to school.

We contribute to the national scheme to provide concessionary bus passes for people aged 60 and over, and people who have certain disabilities. Around 72% of Vale of Glamorgan residents aged 60 and over possessed a valid concessionary bus pass. We also run the Greenlinks Community Transport buses.

We also actively promote the My Travel Pass scheme which provides discounted travel for young people aged 16 to 21 years old, and the Orange Wallet scheme for people with autism.

We continue to use Welsh Government grants to enable upgrades to bus stops and shelters, including accessibility improvements.

## 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.**

Central to this objective is one of the Public Services Board's 2023 - 28 Well-being Objectives: a more resilient and greener Vale, a more active and healthier Vale, a more equitable and connected Vale.

The Vale 50+ Forum established a new 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. This features in the Age Friendly Vale action plan. We held consultation events to inform the action plan.

We signed the Placemaking Wales Charter and now receive funding from Welsh Government to bolster how the Council works with local communities to identify development opportunities. We developed placemaking plans for the four Vale town centres with a focus on identifying key priorities to improve their unique physical, cultural, and social identities to enable them to thrive for the long term.

The Tourism and Events team support a wide calendar of events throughout the year. While some are supported financially, others are supported with advice, equipment, and marketing.

Play Streets pilots took place in two residential streets in Barry, led by residents with support from the Vale Play Team and Play Wales. This involved closing the road for two hours a month during which children and residents could safely engage in outdoor play and socialisation.

The Creative Rural Communities funding ended in December 2021 and was replaced in 2022 by Creative Communities, a new funds and grants team has been developed.

## Equality objectives – what we will do

Our vision '**Strong Communities with a Bright Future**' is the Council's ambition to create a Vale of Glamorgan with strong, happy and healthy communities, where every member of our community feels valued, supported and able to live their life to the full. We want to work closely with our communities and to create and foster good relationships with all community partners. This includes third sector organisations, community groups, town and community councils, social enterprises, public bodies and businesses.

Our values are **open, together, ambitious and proud** and we are committed to ensuring that these are reflected in how we work with others.

We have a number of long term objectives and actions to take during the period between 2025 and 2029. We believe that many of these will benefit all protected groups and cut across protected characteristics. Some will focus more on people with particular protected characteristics where they are disproportionately affected by disadvantage.

As we work towards them, we make progress in meeting the general duty. We will continue to improve our understanding of what we need to do to meet the needs of protected groups. As we have increasingly limited resources, we will focus on those areas where research, data, and experience tell us that there is most need.

This section provides information about each of our equality objectives - what we are seeking to achieve and the activities we will take to deliver them. In the last section of this Plan, we provide evidence we have drawn upon to develop our objectives.

We show how our equality objectives link with the Vale 2030 corporate objectives – important so that there is alignment of the work in both Plans. This will help to mainstream our work on tackling areas where there is most pressing disadvantage.

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

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

## Vale 2030 Objective 1:

### Creating great places to live and work

## Strategic Equality Objective 1:

### To create fairer places to live and work

## Protected characteristics, socio-economic disadvantage, the Welsh Language

This objective is beneficial to all protected characteristics and in particular, age, disability, race, people living in poverty, Welsh language.

<b>How are we going to achieve this</b>	<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<b>How we will know how we are doing</b>
In line with creating an age friendly Vale, use procurement and funding mechanisms to address barriers to older people's access to high quality all age apprenticeships.	Improved opportunities for older people to access apprenticeships.	Increase in number of apprenticeships held by older people.  Procurement and funding data - – data disaggregated by protected characteristic
Use procurement and funding mechanisms to address the under-representation of disabled participating in and completing apprenticeships.	Improved opportunities for disabled people to access apprenticeships.	Increase in number of apprenticeships held by disabled people and people from the global majority.

		Procurement and funding data – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.
Use procurement and funding mechanisms to address the under-representation of global majority people participating in and completing apprenticeships.	Improved opportunities for people from the global majority to access apprenticeships.	Increase in number of apprenticeships held by disabled people and people from the global majority.  Procurement and funding data – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.
Support more people with disabilities to access work.	More disabled people find employment.	Increase in number of disabled people accessing employment through Vale Employability Service. (Vale Employability data).
Model and share best practice in inclusive recruitment.	People with protected characteristics are successful in their job applications.	Number of partners that we have shared best inclusive recruitment practices with. (Human Resources data).
Increase and improve Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in Wales.	There is improved accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.	Increased number of sites for Gypsies and Travellers - Housing data.  Better facilities at sites for Gypsies and Travellers.  Housing data – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.

<p>Use the Council's house building programme to target extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people.</p>	<p>Improved housing for vulnerable groups and those who need extra care or emergency accommodation.</p>	<p>Increase in extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people</p> <p>Housing data – data disaggregated by protected characteristic</p>
<p>Implement actions that will lead to the Vale of Glamorgan becoming a County of Sanctuary.</p>	<p>People who come to the Vale of Glamorgan to live or work will feel welcomed and valued.</p>	<p>The Council is awarded County of Sanctuary status.</p>
<p>Review how the Discretionary Housing Payment fund is administered and promoted to help those who are unable to pay their rent.</p>	<p>There is updated guidance in place to help assessors make appropriate payment decisions.</p> <p>People who need assistance to pay their rent know how to apply for additional financial support in the most straightforward way.</p>	<p>Discretionary Housing Payments monitoring data disaggregated by protected characteristic and analysed to inform future practice.</p>
<p>Promote opportunities to use the Welsh language in the community.</p>	<p>People are aware of the opportunities there are to use Welsh in the Vale of Glamorgan.</p>	<p>Number of opportunities to use Welsh language - Menter data / Fforwm information / Welsh Language Promotion Strategy monitoring data.</p>
<p>Implement the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2022 – 2036 to secure the best</p>	<p>Older people feel that they have been supported to live</p>	<p>Surveys</p> <p>Strategy implemented.</p>

quality of life for older people to live as independently as possible in later life.	independently in appropriate housing.	
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## Vale 2030 Objective 2:

### Respecting and celebrating the environment

## Strategic Equality Objective 2:

### To create fairer access to the local environment

## Protected characteristics, socio-economic disadvantage, the Welsh Language

This objective is beneficial to all protected characteristics and in particular, age, gender, disabled people, disadvantaged groups, people living in poverty.

How are we going to achieve this	Expected outcomes	How we will know how we are doing
Provide advice on managing climate change for everyone but particularly young people and those living in poverty.	People have practical, no cost things that they can do to manage climate change and the impact that it may have on them personally.  Stronger engagement with the climate change agenda.  Young voices are heard on a matter of particular importance to them.	Number of information campaigns.  Let's Talk Life in the Vale public opinion survey – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.
Continue to work with partners to support foodbanks and food projects so that	People experiencing poverty have access to food and basic	Increased promotion of food banks and food projects.

<p>those in poverty have access to food and basic provisions that they otherwise could not afford.</p>	<p>provisions that they otherwise could not afford.</p>	
<p>When planning and promoting active travel and public transport services that are subsidised by the Council, work with transport providers to ensure that they are affordable and accessible.</p>	<p>Barriers to use of active travel and public transport are minimised by considering the impact of planning on people.</p>	<p>Public transport surveys – data disaggregated by protected characteristic</p>
<p>When improving our green infrastructure, ensure that there is good physical access to the natural environment.</p>	<p>Barriers to the natural environment are minimised.</p>	<p>Local placemaking activities.</p> <p>Let's Talk Life in the Vale public opinion survey public opinion survey – data disaggregated by protected characteristic</p> <p>Check with Ian Robinson and Emily Shaw how we present and measure.</p>

### Vale 2030 Objective 3:

#### Giving everyone a good start in life

### Strategic Equality Objective 3:

#### To give everyone a fairer opportunity for a good start in life

### Protected characteristics, socio-economic disadvantage, the Welsh Language

This objective is beneficial to all protected characteristics and in particular, race, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, poverty, Welsh language.

<b>How are we going to achieve this</b>	<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<b>How we will know how we are doing</b>
Improve attainment and attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM).	Strategies to enhance the performance of all vulnerable learners with a particular focus on eFSM pupils  Improved attainment of eFSM pupils  Improved attendance for eFSM pupils.	Data disaggregated by protected characteristics to address any disproportionate negative impact on children eligible for free school meals.  Key stage 4 attainment and progress data with comparison between eFSM and non FSM pupils .  Attendance data with a comparison between eFSM and non FMS pupils.

		<p>Maximised use of data insight to enable schools to better interrogate and use their data to actively plan for improvements that will raise levels of attendance, engagement and outcomes for learners.</p>
<p>Address bullying based on gender identity including recording and reporting incidents.</p>	<p>Children feel safe, respected and valued whatever their gender identity.</p> <p>Systems for recording, reporting and monitoring incidents are in place.</p> <p>The effectiveness of procedures is evaluated and action taken where trends are identified.</p>	<p>Bullying data – disaggregated by protected characteristic</p>
<p>Reduce the risk to pupils and students of experiencing discrimination or bullying arising from their sexual orientation.</p>	<p>Children and young people feel safe, respected and valued whatever their sexual orientation.</p> <p>Systems for recording, reporting and monitoring incidents are in place.</p> <p>The effectiveness of procedures is evaluated and</p>	<p>Bullying – data disaggregated by protected characteristic</p>

	action taken where trends are identified.	
Further develop inclusive and community focused schools where children and their families feel valued and respected whatever their background.	<p>Children and young people feel they are a valuable member of the school community and that they are able to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>Schools are embedding CFS approach to inform their improvement planning.</p>	<p>Engagement with Learning Links Team</p> <p>CFS data- via CFS Manager includes data on take up of CFS FaCE toolkit and actively involved with improvement planning.</p> <p>Selfie data (pupil wellbeing data from Yr 2 upwards - specific to the Vale).</p> <p>SHRN data (School Health Research Network) national pupils' wellbeing data in place for secondary schools.</p> <p>Attendance data</p>
Support schools to become Schools of Sanctuary as set out in the vision of Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary, which was initially set out in the <a href="#">Refugee and asylum seeker plan (nation of sanctuary)</a> and built upon in the <a href="#">Updated Anti-racist Wales Action Plan</a>	<p>Established good practice in fostering a culture of welcome, belonging and solidarity for those seeking safety.</p> <p>Schools of Sanctuary award criteria are met and maintained.</p>	Percentage of schools working towards and awarded Schools of Sanctuary status.

<p>Continue to support schools to become more actively anti racist through professional learning using the <a href="#">Updated Anti-racist Wales Action Plan</a>.</p>	<p>Staff and pupils have a better awareness of how to be anti-racist.</p> <p>Everyone in the school community feels respected and able to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>CSC curriculum support when available.</p>	<p>Number of schools participating in anti-racist professional learning.</p> <p>Number of professional learning events to share good practice.</p> <p>Attendance at professional learning events.</p>
<p>Support schools to raise awareness of climate change.</p>	<p>Young people are learning about how to contribute to managing climate change.</p>	<p>Number of schools supported.</p> <p>Engagement activities with schools, for example, Make your Mark Survey</p> <p>Planned consultation and engagement on Ysgol Sant Curig Nature Neighbours Project to explore establishing a nature reserve for use with the school as a teaching resource and as a community engagement project to promote and protect biodiversity.</p> <p>School Council engagement.</p>

		Engagement activities with schools delivered by SCfL as part of community benefits.
Promote the opportunity to learn through the medium of the Welsh language and other opportunities to learn and use the Welsh language.	<p>More families choose Welsh language schools for their children.</p> <p>Sustain high levels of transition of learners from Welsh Medium primary to Welsh Medium secondary schools.</p> <p>Young people have access to Welsh medium youth provision and more opportunities to use the Welsh language.</p>	<p>Monitor the actions in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (WLPS).</p> <p>Data from the LWtV NQF Report and associated data metrics.</p> <p>Youth Service data on Welsh medium provision via Urdd.</p> <p>Number of teachers attending professional learning events to develop Welsh language skills.</p> <p>Number of English medium schools participating and gaining the Welsh language Cymraeg Campus award.</p> <p>Number of Welsh medium schools participating and gaining the Welsh language Siarter Iaith award.</p> <p>Percentage of learners that transition from Welsh Medium</p>

		primary to Welsh medium secondary.
Address the high and rising numbers of children looked after.	<p>Early intervention and prevention programmes in place.</p> <p>Programmes to tackle poverty and build community resilience.</p> <p>Services aimed at keeping families together.</p> <p>Integrated 'edge of care' services.</p>	Reduced numbers of children looked after.



## Vale 2030 Objective 4:

### Supporting and protecting those who need us

## Strategic Equality Objective 4:

### To support and protect those who experience most disadvantage

## Protected characteristics, socio-economic disadvantage, the Welsh Language

This objective is beneficial to all protected characteristics and in particular, race, age gender identity, religion.

How are we going to achieve this	Expected outcomes	How we will know how we are doing
Reduce levels of homelessness including the disproportionate number of people from the global majority experiencing homelessness.	Fewer people are homeless.  Fewer people from the global majority are homeless.	Housing data – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.  Targeted projects?
Work with partners to improve support for victims and witnesses to report hostility and intimidation and develop effective mechanisms for tackling it.	Victims and witnesses of hostility and intimidation feel able to report it, feel supported,  There are effective mechanisms in place to tackle hostility and intimidation.	Community Safety Data – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.  Surveys – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.

<p>Conduct carers needs assessments and then act on the needs identified to ensure carers' health and well-being needs are met.</p>	<p>Action plan to improve health and wellbeing based on feedback from carers.</p>	<p>Survey carers – data disaggregated by protected characteristic</p>
<p>Increase digital inclusion for those aged over 65.</p>	<p>People over 65 feel supported to use digital services.</p>	<p>Age Friendly Vale action plan.  Let's Talk Life in the Vale public opinion survey – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.</p>
<p>Ensure that services, including health and social care, are accessible for those without access to the internet or digital literacy skills.</p>	<p>People can access services in different ways if they do not have access to the internet or digital literacy skills.</p>	<p>Let's Talk Life in the Vale public opinion survey – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.</p>
<p>Support South Wales Police in recording, reporting and monitoring incidents of bullying based on gender identity and evaluate effectiveness of procedures.</p>	<p>More people are aware and confident to report gender identity bullying incidents.</p>	<p>Hate crime and victim support data.  Surveys – data disaggregated by protected characteristic</p>
<p>Support the review and development of more appropriate services for victims and witnesses of hate crime, understanding ethnic disparities in experiences of sexual assault and ensure</p>	<p>Victims and witnesses of hate crime feel confident to report hate crime.  More people from the global majority are aware and confident to report hate crime and incidents.</p>	<p>Hate crime and victim support data – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.  Surveys – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.</p>

that incidents are reported and recorded.		Campaigns targeted at the global majority community
Use the new National Framework for commissioning care and support to ensure the provision of care services meet the needs of trans people.	More trans people feel that their care and support needs are being met appropriately.	Survey of people receiving care and support – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.  Let's Talk Life in the Vale public opinion survey – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.  Targeted engagement with trans people.
Use the new National Framework for commissioning care and support to address issues of access to social care for people from the global majority.	More people from the global majority feel that their care and support needs are being met appropriately.	Survey of people receiving care and support – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.
Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of social care users' equality data, including those who complain about or challenge decisions.	Poor outcomes experienced by people who share protected characteristics identified and addressed.	Data disaggregated by protected characteristic analysing social care user complaints.
Take action to become a County of Sanctuary where everyone feels welcomed and valued as someone who lives	People coming to live or work in the Vale of Glamorgan feel welcomed and valued.	Let's Talk Life in the Vale public opinion survey – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.

<p>or works in the Vale of Glamorgan.</p>	<p>A culture of hospitality and welcome is established, especially for individuals seeking sanctuary from war and persecution.</p>	<p>Other surveys – data disaggregated by protected characteristic?</p>
<p>Deliver our Age Friendly commitments and ensure older people have access to services, support and opportunities locally and have a strong voice.</p>	<p>Older people feel a valuable part of the community whose needs are met.</p>	<p>Let's Talk Life in the Vale public opinion survey – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.</p> <p>Age Friendly Vale Action Plan.</p>

## Vale 2030 Objective 5:

### Being the best Council we can

## Strategic Equality Objective 5:

### To put fairness at the heart of Council services and employment

## Protected characteristics, socio-economic disadvantage, the Welsh Language

This objective is beneficial to all protected characteristics and in particular, gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity.

How are we going to achieve this	Expected outcomes	How we will know how we are doing
Reduce gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps, including through positive action, as permitted in the Equality Act.	Reductions in gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps.  A better understanding of what is driving the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps in the Vale of Glamorgan so that we can work on improving this.	Employment data – data disaggregated by protected characteristic  Diversity dashboards
Address barriers to older people's access to high quality all age apprenticeships.	Age friendly workplace / Age Friendly Vale	Employment data – data disaggregated by protected characteristic  Diversity dashboards

<p>Address qualitative and quantitative data gaps for individual and intersections of protected characteristics, disaggregating data across human resource policy areas.</p>	<p>Strengthened evidence-based policy and decision making.</p>	<p>Employment data – data disaggregated by protected characteristic</p> <p>Diversity dashboards</p>
<p>Keep the equality impact assessment process under review to ensure that the Council is systematically considering the impact of its work on people with protected characteristics, who are socio-economically disadvantaged or who wish to use the Welsh language.</p>	<p>Equality impact assessment process is embedded in the Council’s systems of working.</p> <p>The Council considers the impact of its work on people with protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Number of equality impact assessments</p> <p>Quality of equality impact assessments</p>
<p>Keep under review engagement and consultation methods to ensure that all voices in the Vale of Glamorgan are heard and their views taken into account.</p>	<p>Engagement and consultation targets and takes into account the views of people with protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Survey data disaggregated by protected characteristic.</p> <p>Number of engagement events targeting protected groups.</p>
<p>Use Welsh Government action plans, benchmarking information and good practice to guide improvement of equality action plans including for race, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.</p>	<p>Action plans in place for race, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.</p>	<p>Monitoring of action plans</p> <p>Staff surveys disaggregated by protected characteristic.</p>

<p>Review the Equalities Consultative Forum to ensure that there is effective dialogue on Council business with stakeholder groups that represent the interests of people with protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Regular feedback on progress with the Strategic Equality Plan and other key strategies and policies from stakeholder groups that represent the interests of people with protected characteristics.</p> <p>Engagement methods are in line with the Participation Strategy.</p>	<p>Number of meetings.</p> <p>Feedback is representative of a diverse range of people with protected characteristics</p>
<p>Bring together groups in the Vale who are working towards equity and inclusion.</p>	<p>Space created for groups to build better communities.</p>	<p>Number of communities benefitting from joint working</p>
<p>Continue to support the staff networks to influence a more inclusive workplace, including joint working to bridge intersectional issues.</p>	<p>A more inclusive workplace.</p> <p>A stronger voice for staff with protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Number of staff networks in place.</p> <p>Benchmarking such as Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and Race Equality First Trailblazer</p>
<p>Ensure the People Strategy is developed and implemented with a guiding principle of equality and inclusion.</p>	<p>Inclusive culture</p> <p>Diversity of workforce</p> <p>Responsive services</p> <p>Improved employee experience</p> <p>High performance</p>	<p>Employment data – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.</p> <p>Equality dashboards</p> <p>Staff surveys – data disaggregated by protected characteristics.</p>

<p>Foster a talented, diverse, and high-performing workforce that can deliver exceptional services to the community through the Recruitment and Retention Strategy.</p>	<p>Attract a diverse range of high-quality candidates, reducing time-to-fill vacancies.</p> <p>Ensure that we have the right people in the right roles, ready to meet future challenges.</p> <p>Create a culture of continuous improvement where employees feel supported in their personal and professional growth.</p> <p>Increase employee satisfaction and engagement, reducing turnover and improving productivity.</p>	<p>Employment data – data disaggregated by protected characteristic.</p> <p>Equality dashboards</p> <p>Staff surveys – data disaggregated by protected characteristics</p>
<p>Establish whether there is a difference in the employment opportunities for people who have physical and mental disabilities, including those who are neurodivergent.</p>	<p>More people with disabilities are successful in getting jobs with the Council.</p>	<p>Employment data disaggregated by protected characteristic</p>
<p>Continue to review how the workplace can be made more inclusive for disabled people</p>		<p>Staff survey data disaggregated by protected characteristic</p>
<p>Continue to work towards greater inclusivity for global majority and ethnic minority staff, measuring progress</p>		<p>Race Equality Matters Trailblazer feedback</p>



<p>through Race Equality Matters Trailblazer process.</p>		
<p>Continue to provide support and develop collaborative relationships with existing and emerging staff networks, including GLAM, Diverse and Abl.</p>		<p>Race Equality Matters Trailblazer feedback.</p> <p>Stonewall Workplace Equality Index / Staff Survey feedback.</p> <p>Feedback from staff networks - GLAM, Diverse and Abl.</p>

## **Monitoring Progress & Publishing Results**

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

## **For More Information**

### **Visit our website**

[www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

### **Social Media**

Keep up to date with all the latest news, events and information from the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Follow @VOGCouncil on Twitter or like Vale of Glamorgan Council on Facebook.

## Evidence

### Corporate Wellbeing Objective 1:

#### Creating great places to live and work

### Strategic Equality Objective 1:

#### To create fairer places to live and work

### The evidence that supports this

#### Is Wales Fairer? 2023 Evidence – Key findings

- In 2021/22, 57.2% of people in Wales aged 16 and over were in employment. However, pre-pandemic employment growth has stagnated since our last statutory review, with gains in employment tailing off.
- The highest unemployment rates are among the 16–24-year-old age group (11.4% in 2019/20) but the unemployment rate had declined notably between 2010/11 and 2019/20. There is no other age group that is more likely to be in insecure employment and earn less.
- Among adults aged under 65 (excluding students), those aged 55–64 had the lowest employment rates (58.4%) and highest rates of economic inactivity (40.1%) in 2019/20.<sup>16</sup> This age group's employment rates rose between 2010/11 and 2019/20, though they saw no growth in hourly earnings.
- The employment rate of those 65 and over (the 65–74 and over 75 age groups) increased between 2010/11 and 2019/20. Only 16–24 year-olds were more likely to be in insecure work than the 65–74 age group, as 11.7% of workers aged 65–74 were in insecure employment.
- Disabled adults are less likely to be employed than non-disabled adults. However, the disability employment gap narrowed from 39.6 percentage points in 2013/14 to 36.2 percentage points in 2019/20. Despite employment gaps improving, earnings

gaps are worsening, as disabled workers earned 15.1% less in 2019/20, compared to 8.0% less in 2013/14.

- Trans people in Wales are afraid of facing discrimination in the workplace. A 2018 survey found almost half of trans respondents hid their gender identity at work and almost a third experienced negative comments from co-workers.
- In Wales, ethnic minority workers are more likely to be in insecure employment (8.0%) than White British workers (14.2%) in 2019/20. However, this gap in insecure employment has narrowed overtime. Ethnic minority workers were also more likely to work in a low paid occupation.
- Ethnic minority groups in Wales are more likely to report experiences of discrimination and bullying in the workplace.
- Evidence suggests that health and social care workers from ethnic minority backgrounds face serious discrimination and prejudice.
- Religious minorities are less likely to be employed than those with no religious affiliation, with an employment rate of 52.2% compared to 65.9% for the No Religion group.
- Christians are most likely to live in owner-occupied households while Muslims are most likely to live in privately rented or social housing. Muslims also experience the highest rate of overcrowding, as 14.2% of Muslim-headed households were overcrowded in 2021.
- The trend for more women than men to have post-compulsory qualifications at level 4 or above continues, as 61.3% of higher education students and 55.8% of apprenticeship starters were female in 2021/21. However, apprenticeship data shows that there is a clear gender distinction in subject choices between the sexes.
- The pay gap between men and women persists, as women are on average paid 14.1% less than men in Wales. However this gap has narrowed slightly between 2010 and 2019. The gender pay gap varies greatly across regions in Wales.
- Childcare needs and caring responsibilities continue to be a significant barrier to gender equality in employment and education.

- Women’s representation in local government and as chief executives in public appointments has risen.
- Gay and lesbian adults are more likely to be employed (67%) than adults who identify as heterosexual (55%), bisexual (52%) or any other sexual orientation (49%).
- Heterosexual workers are more likely to work in construction, manufacturing, agriculture, energy and water industries than all other sexual orientation groups.
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Wales are at risk of experiencing a range of discriminatory or bullying behaviours while at work and in education. They are more at risk of hate crimes due to their sexual orientation.

### **Let’s Talk Life in the Vale Evidence – Key findings**

- There was not enough data from most protected characteristics (disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) to get any valuable findings based on these.
- 19.3% were very concerned and 28.4% were fairly concerned about employment opportunities in the Vale
- 26.4% of people who responded to the survey felt that they are able to take part in formal learning to help gain new skills.
- 6.9% of respondents were very dissatisfied with the Vale of Glamorgan as a place to live and 14.2% were fairly dissatisfied. This compares to 17.8% who were very satisfied and 41.8% who were fairly satisfied.
- 61% of residents didn’t know what the council were doing to support people looking to upskill and gain employment, 18.4% thought that the council we’re doing enough.
- 33.6% of residents have physical and mental health conditions lasting more than 12 months, of these 76% had reduced ability to carry out day to day activities
- 55.3% of residents felt they were able to buy or rent a good quality home.
- Respondents that did not select a form of public travel (bus or train) were also asked “What would encourage you to use public transport more often?”, which was an open text question. Some of the themes given by respondents to the questions were:
  - More reliable services

- More frequent buses and trains
- More bus routes
- Cheaper bus and train services

## Corporate Wellbeing Objective 2:

### Respecting and celebrating the environment

## Strategic Equality Objective 2:

### To create fairer access to the local environment

## The evidence that supports this.

### The Race Equality Foundation

Adapting to a changing climate while transitioning to Net Zero emissions by 2050 will impact people and groups in complex ways. On a national level, evidence points to minorities and **older people** being most at risk from climate-related effects, including from exposure to air pollution, overheating and flooding.

Climate change is an issue that affects everyone, but inequalities in society mean that not everyone is affected in the same way.

minority populations are disproportionately affected, particularly **women as primary caregivers and providers of fuel and food**.

A new [report](#) from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) reveals that the health impacts of climate change will be disproportionately felt by **disadvantaged communities**, significantly **exacerbating existing health inequalities**.

The findings show that **vulnerable groups** – including **people with disabilities**, **homeless populations**, and **those in deprived areas** – will bear the brunt of extreme weather like heat waves and floods, which are becoming more common due to greenhouse gas emissions. **This amplifies existing disparities, where those in poverty already have lower life expectancy**.

Experts, like Sir Michael Marmot, are urgently calling on policymakers to take decisive climate action with equity at the forefront. **Measures around housing, transport, work and food must prioritise supporting disadvantaged groups** through the transition to sustainability. Failure to do so could further entrench unequal health outcomes.



The report projects severe **intergenerational impacts**, with **today's children** facing increasingly extreme weather through retirement. Scientists emphasise the need to cut emissions and boost adaptation efforts so overburdened health systems can manage escalating risks.

Allowing climate change to continue unchecked means accepting the severe worsening of health inequalities. Urgent climate action with equity central to policy decisions is vital to prevent this outcome. The Race Equality Foundation is working with others to make a change and implores leaders to heed the report's concerning projections and protect the most vulnerable by creating climate plans that leave no one behind.

## **Corporate Wellbeing Objective 3:**

### **Giving everyone a good start in life**

## **Strategic Equality Objective 3:**

### **To give everyone a fairer opportunity for a good start in life**

## **The evidence that supports this.**

### **Is Wales Fairer? 2023 Evidence – Key findings**

- A smaller proportion of children who are eligible for free school meals achieved 5 GCSEs grade A\*-C (52.5%) in 2020/21 compared to those who are not eligible (79.8%). The attainment gap has not changed since the last report and remains higher than the gap in England.
- In Wales adult and child poverty rates have been variable. It is too soon for the data to show the full effect of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis but in 2020–2022 over one-in-five people (adults and children), and over one-in-four children, were living in relative income poverty.
- The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) has been falling since 2010, but this decline has slowed since 2017.
- Levels of poverty remain high among young people aged 16–24, as 28% of people in this age group were in poverty in 2020-2022, in Wales.
- In 2021/22, there were on average only 10 children from Wales aged 10- 17 in custody. This is the lowest number on record.
- The education attainment gap at foundation phase level between disabled and non-disabled children has widened. In 2018/19, 42.5% of pupils with a disability / SEN achieved foundation phase outcomes compared to 92% of pupils without a disability / SEN.
- In 2021/22, 62% of school children who identify as neither a boy nor a girl report having been bullied in the past couple of months, compared to 28% of girls and 34%

of boys. Those who identify as neither a boy or girl report having poorer mental health.

- In the primary education foundation phase, there are a range of disparities between the attainment of different ethnic groups. The most notable disparity is for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT), who have significantly lower attainment rates than all other ethnic groups.
- For school-leavers, aggregated data shows higher attainment among ethnic minority pupils compared to White British. However, the lack of disaggregation and detail in existing evidence could be hiding similar disparities to those found at Foundation Phase.
- Girls still have higher attainment rates than boys at all levels of compulsory education.

### **Let's Talk Life in the Vale Evidence – Key findings**

- A lot of evidence that could have been in this section is covered in Corporate Plan Objective 4. There was not enough data from most protected characteristics (disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) to get any valuable findings based on these.
- 34.7% of respondents felt that they were able to access good quality schools and nurseries in their area.
- 26.4% of respondents felt that they were able to take part in formal learning in the Vale.
- Respondents wanted more medical facilities such as hospitals and dentists.

### **Corporate Wellbeing Objective 4:**

#### **Supporting and protecting those who need us**

## **Strategic Equality Objective 4:**

### **To support and protect those who experience most disadvantage**

#### **The evidence that supports this.**

##### **Is Wales Fairer? 2023 Evidence – Key findings**

- In Wales adult and child poverty rates have been variable. It is too soon for the data to show the full effect of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis but in 2020–2022 over one-in-five people (adults and children), and over one-in-four children, were living in relative income poverty.
- Between 2020 and 2022 the number of families in temporary accommodation nearly doubled in Wales, from 2,324 to 4,465 households.
- Life expectancy at birth estimates for Wales suggest that improvements in life expectancy have been slowing, with suggestions that COVID-19 mortality contributed to a drop in life expectancy in the most recent figures. Average life expectancy in Wales is lower than England but higher than Scotland.
- There are approximately 8,200 young carers in Wales, who are more likely than others of their age to live in deprived areas and experience disruption to their education.
- There were 7,080 children looked after (CLA) by local authorities in Wales in 2021. CLA numbers have been increasing substantially over the last decade compared to England and Scotland, until a recent decline.
- The pandemic had a negative impact on the mental health of children and young people as a higher proportion of pupils reported very high symptoms of poor mental health in 2021/22 (24%) compared to 2019/20 (19%). Wales has the highest demand for Community Mental Health Teams for children and young people in the UK.

- Though varying since 2010, suicides by young people aged 15–24 fell from 2016 and 2019 from 11.7 to 7.5 deaths per 100,000. In comparison, suicide rates increased in England and Scotland.
- Poverty rates rose among people aged 65–74 from 10.4% in 2010/11 to 18.0% in 2019/20. In 2021, 41% of all fuel-poor households were headed by someone aged 65 or over.
- Over-65s are more likely to report that social care and support services had helped them to have a higher quality of life (85.7 for 65–74; 86.7% for over 75s) compared to 45–54 year-olds (66.4%).
- Data for 2018–2020 shows females living in the most deprived areas of Wales can expect 53.3 years of good health and males can expect 54.2 years. When comparing the most and least deprived areas, there is a 16.9 year difference for women and a 13.4 year difference for men.
- Research suggests 18% of dwellings in Wales have at least one category 1 hazard, putting older people's health at particular risk.
- The age group with the highest percentage of unpaid carers are 55–59 year-olds (18.5%), but the age group with the highest percentage providing more than 50 hours of care per week is 80–84 (7%).
- Older adults are at greater risk of digital exclusion and disadvantage. Those aged 65 or over are still significantly less likely, than younger age groups, to have internet access at home. Furthermore, only 24% of those over aged 70 are likely to use digital technology to support their health compared to 87% of people aged 16–19.
- Disabled people are less likely to be homeowners than non-disabled people and are more likely to be living in poverty and severe material deprivation. However, there has been a significant decrease in the proportion of disabled people living in severe material deprivation, from 40.5% in 2015/16 to 24.3% in 2019/20.
- Disabled adults report poorer mental health outcomes than non-disabled adults, as 34.3% of disabled people reported having poor mental health, compared to 15.4% of non-disabled people in 2018/19.

- Disabled people have been significantly over-represented in deaths from COVID-19. People with a learning disability were three to eight times more likely to die from COVID-19 than the wider population.
- The proportion of disabled people reporting experiencing domestic abuse in the past 12 months is around three times greater than that reported by non-disabled people. Disabled people are also less likely to have confidence in the criminal justice system.
- Older trans people in Wales report that health and social care providers lack the knowledge required to care for them. Trans people also have concerns that they may not receive care sensitive to their gender identity, particularly in social care settings.
- Ethnic minorities in Wales are more likely to be living in poverty, as 40% of ethnic minority-headed households (excl. White minorities) were living in poverty, compared to 22% of White-headed households. Some ethnic minority groups are also more likely to experience homelessness and overcrowding and are less likely to be homeowners.
- Evidence suggests that health and social care workers from ethnic minority backgrounds face serious discrimination and prejudice.
- Poverty rates increased in Christian headed households from 15.0% in 2011/12 to 20.2% in 2018/19, which has narrowed the poverty gap with the No Religion group.
- Christians are most likely to live in owner-occupied households while Muslims are most likely to live in privately rented or social housing. Muslims also experience the highest rate of overcrowding, as 14.2% of Muslim-headed households were overcrowded in 2021.
- There has been a decline in all religious and non-religious groups reporting good health in Wales between 2016 and 2019, with greater decline for religious minorities (-6.7pp) other than those with No Religion (-3.4pp) and Christians (-2.1pp).

- The number of racially or religiously aggravated offences recorded by the police has increased but the proportion of offences resulting in a charge has decreased.
- 89.1% of single-parent households in Wales are headed by women. Households most likely to be living in poverty are single parent households (38%).
- Women continued to report poorer mental health outcomes (22.6%) than men (20.3%) in 2018/19. Women are also more likely to report living with a lifelong disability or illness, despite living longer.
- Women are still more likely to be unpaid carers (12.0%) compared to men (9.0%) in 2021.
- Census data on sexual orientation is available for the first time. In 2021, around 77,000 people aged over 16 in Wales identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or another sexual orientation. That is 3.0% of the total Welsh population.
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual groups experience poorer physical and mental health than heterosexual adults. The gap in physical health outcomes has improved over time, but the gap in mental health outcomes was unchanged before the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2018/19, 31.8% of lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents reported poor mental health, compared to 20.9% of heterosexual adults.
- Evidence suggests that sexual minorities' mental health has worsened during the pandemic, though more research is needed to understand the extent to which the gap may have widened with heterosexuals.

### **Let's Talk Life in the Vale Evidence – Key findings**

- There was not enough data from most protected characteristics (disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) to get any valuable findings based on these.
- 29.8% of respondents have smaller meals than usual because of the cost of living crisis, 62.8% have purposely not put the heating on.
- 83.1% of respondents feel very or fairly safe being alone in their own home, 39.6% of residents say they feel fairly safe and 36.3% say they feel very safe walking around their local area. More respondents felt very or fairly safe than very or fairly

unsafe travelling in their local area, 44.5% of respondents felt very or fairly safe travelling by bus, 53.9% travelling by train, 82.6% travelling by car and 16.3% travelling by community transport. Other areas they felt unsafe: • At night, mostly due to a lack of streetlights; • Barry, especially at night; • Dangerous footpaths / cycle paths; • Many places due to antisocial behaviour; and • Roads, as a driver and passenger.

- Most people, (50.5%) of respondents, do not believe that their local area has the necessary services and facilities to meet their needs. 35.5% of respondents believe that their local area does have the necessary services and facilities to meet their needs and 13.9% of respondents don't know.
- 36.8% of respondents felt that they were able to easily access care and healthcare services in the Vale. 34.1% felt that they were able to find things to keep them fit and healthy at a price they could afford.
- The majority of respondents were very or fairly concerned about the cost of living crisis (78.0%), services and support for children and young people (60.6%) and services and support for older people (73.1%).
- Most respondents did not know what the council is doing during the cost of living crisis (52.4%), provide services and support for children and young people (51.7%) and provide services and support for older people (51.5%).
- The majority of respondents described their physical health (67.3%) and mental health (70.3%) as very or fairly good. Whereas 16.5% of respondents described their physical health as very or fairly poor and 13.2% of respondents described their mental health as very or fairly poor.
- 85.9% of respondents would use the council website to find information about a council service if needed. 28.7% said they would call the council, 25% said they would email the council, 20.7% said they would complete an online contact form and 16.7% said they would visit social media sites and blogs. A further 15.9% said they would contact their local councillor and 3.4% said they would use other methods, including enquiring with work, googling the issue, and asking in the library. 3.8% of respondents said they don't know how to find information about a council service.





## **Corporate Wellbeing Objective 5:**

**Being the best Council we can**

## **Strategic Equality Objective 5:**

**To put fairness at the heart of Council services and employment**

### **The evidence that supports this.**

#### **Is Wales Fairer? 2023 Evidence – Key findings**

- In 2021/22, 57.2% of people in Wales aged 16 and over were in employment. However, pre-pandemic employment growth has stagnated since our last statutory review, with gains in employment tailing off.
- The highest unemployment rates are among the 16–24-year-old age group (11.4% in 2019/20) but the unemployment rate had declined notably between 2010/11 and 2019/20. There is no other age group that is more likely to be in insecure employment and earn less.
- Among adults aged under 65 (excluding students), those aged 55–64 had the lowest employment rates (58.4%) and highest rates of economic inactivity (40.1%) in 2019/20.<sup>16</sup> This age group's employment rates rose between 2010/11 and 2019/20, though they saw no growth in hourly earnings.
- The employment rate of those 65 and over (the 65–74 and over 75 age groups) increased between 2010/11 and 2019/20. Only 16–24 year-olds were more likely to be in insecure work than the 65–74 age group, as 11.7% of workers aged 65–74 were in insecure employment.
- Disabled adults are less likely to be employed than non-disabled adults. However, the disability employment gap narrowed from 39.6 percentage points in 2013/14 to 36.2 percentage points in 2019/20. Despite employment gaps improving, earnings gaps are worsening, as disabled workers earned 15.1% less in 2019/20, compared to 8.0% less in 2013/14.

- Trans people in Wales are afraid of facing discrimination in the workplace. A 2018 survey found almost half of trans respondents hid their gender identity at work and almost a third experienced negative comments from co-workers.
- In Wales, ethnic minority workers are more likely to be in insecure employment (8.0%) than White British workers (14.2%) in 2019/20. However, this gap in insecure employment has narrowed overtime. Ethnic minority workers were also more likely to work in a low paid occupation.
- Evidence suggests that health and social care workers from ethnic minority backgrounds face serious discrimination and prejudice.
- Religious minorities are less likely to be employed than those with no religious affiliation, with an employment rate of 52.2% compared to 65.9% for the No Religion group.
- The trend for more women than men to have post-compulsory qualifications at level 4 or above continues, as 61.3% of higher education students and 55.8% of apprenticeship starters were female in 2021/21. However, apprenticeship data shows that there is a clear gender distinction in subject choices between the sexes.
- The pay gap between men and women persists, as women are on average paid 14.1% less than men in Wales. However this gap has narrowed slightly between 2010 and 2019. The gender pay gap varies greatly across regions in Wales.
- Childcare needs and caring responsibilities continue to be a significant barrier to gender equality in employment and education.
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Wales are at risk of experiencing a range of discriminatory or bullying behaviours while at work and in education. They are more at risk of hate crimes due to their sexual orientation.
- The proportion of Welsh residents aged three or over that had any skills in Welsh decreased slightly from 2011 to 2021, as did the proportion who reported being able to speak Welsh. (The number of Welsh residents born outside the UK has increased by 28.3% since 2011).

- There is currently limited research focused on trans people in Wales. However, there are now gender identity questions in School Health Research Network (SHRN) surveys and the Census 2021.
- Ethnic minority groups in Wales are more likely to report experiences of discrimination and bullying in the workplace.
- Women's representation in local government and as chief executives in public appointments has risen.
- Gay and lesbian adults are more likely to be employed (67%) than adults who identify as heterosexual (55%), bisexual (52%) or any other sexual orientation (49%).
- Heterosexual workers are more likely to work in construction, manufacturing, agriculture, energy and water industries than all other sexual orientation groups.
- The proportion of public appointments of people from ethnic minority backgrounds has increased in recent years.

### **Let's Talk Life in the Vale Evidence – Key findings**

- 19.3% were very concerned and 28.4% were fairly concerned about employment opportunities in the Vale
- 26.4% of people who responded to the survey felt that they are able to take part in formal learning to help gain new skills.
- 33.6% of residents have physical and mental health conditions lasting more than 12 months, of these 76% had reduced ability to carry out day to day activities
- 80.3% of respondents would recommend the Vale of Glamorgan as a place to live compared to 19.7% who would not.
- The percentage of respondents who strongly or slightly agreed that the services provided by the Vale of Glamorgan Council are of a high quality (29.3%), the Vale of Glamorgan Council acts in the interest of local residents (25.5%), the Vale of Glamorgan Council takes residents' views into account when making a decision (16.1%) and the service provided by the Vale of Glamorgan Council represent good value for money (16.4%).

# Equality Impact Assessment

Please click on headings to find [general guidance](#) or section guidance with an example. You will find supporting information in appendices at the end of the guidance.

When you start to assess your proposal, arrange to meet Tim Greaves, Equality Co-ordinator, for specific guidance. Send the completed form to him for a final check and so that he can publish it on our Vale of Glamorgan equality web pages.

Please also contact Tim Greaves if you need this equality impact assessment form in a different format.

## 1. [What are you assessing?](#)

The Council's draft Strategic Equality Plan 2025- 2029
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## 2. [Who is responsible?](#)

<b>Name</b>	Rob Jones	<b>Job Title</b>	Operational Manager - Corporate Communications, Participation, Equalities and Directorate Development
<b>Team</b>	Corporate Communications, Participation, Equalities and Directorate Development	<b>Directorate</b>	Corporate Resources

## 3. [When is the assessment being carried out?](#)

<b>Date of start of assessment</b>	October 2024
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## 4. [Describe the proposal?](#)

What is the purpose of the proposal?
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# Equality Impact Assessment

To review the Strategic Equality Plan 2024 – 2025 equality objectives and agree a plan for 2025 – 2029. It deals with how we will meet those objectives and shows how the Council will work with its partners for a fairer future.

## **Why do you need to put it in place?**

The current Strategic Equality Plan 2024 – 2025 and equality objectives became effective from April 2024. We developed this short-term plan so that we could have the opportunity to develop our new objectives for 2025 – 2029 in alignment with the new Corporate Plan objectives 2025 – 2030. Under the specific equality duties for Wales, we must review them no less frequently than every four years.

## **Do we need to commit significant resources to it (such as money or staff time)**

The Plan sets out the Council's equality priorities and high-level supporting actions. The development of the Plan requires consultation and engagement across the Council and with external stakeholders.

The Council's Strategic Equality Plan reflects the Council's priorities for the next four years. This informs the way we allocate resources and takes into account the availability of resources to deliver it. The outcome of the Council's budget consultation and revenue settlement from the Welsh Government will inform the content and extent of delivery of the Plan in coming years.

## **What are the intended outcomes of the proposal?**

The Plan provides a set of equality priorities for the Council for the period 2025 – 2029. The Plan provides a framework for how the Council will work with its partners for a fairer future.

## **Who does the proposal affect?**

# Equality Impact Assessment

The plan affects Vale residents and those who visit and work in the Vale. The Plan is a high-level strategic document encompassing all Council services. We will include more detailed actions in Service Plans.

## **Will the proposal affect how other organisations work?**

We will deliver many of the activities in the Strategic Equality Plan in partnership. We will work closely with other organisations to deliver parts of this plan.

## **Will the proposal affect how you deliver services?**

The Strategic Equality Plan sets out the Council's equality priorities for the next four years which will influence and shape service delivery across the Council.

## **Will the proposal impact on other policies or practices?**

The Strategic Equality Plan sets out the Council's equality priorities for the next four years which will in turn influence policies and practices across the Council.

## **Can you change the proposal so that it further promotes equality of opportunity and fosters good relations?**

The purpose of the Plan is to promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

As part of the engagement and consultation process, we have asked for people's views on the proposed equality objectives and actions for the 2025- 2029 plan. There was broad agreement to these.

The objectives and actions focus and highlight areas of concern for particular groups such as disabled people, younger people, older people, people from the global majority and those who are affected by poverty.

## **How will you achieve the proposed changes?**

# Equality Impact Assessment

Council Services will deliver the Plan by working together and with the local community and other partners to ensure we deliver services that best meet the diverse needs of the community.

## **Who will deliver the proposal?**

Council Services will deliver the Strategic Equality Plan.

## **How will you know whether you have achieved the proposal's purpose?**

We will monitor the Strategic Equality Plan through the Annual Equality Monitoring Report and the Council's Performance Management arrangements. We will report progress to our Equalities Consultative Forum, Senior Leadership Team, Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee, and Cabinet.

## **5. What evidence are you using?**

### **Engagement (with internal and external stakeholders)**

We have given the opportunity to a range of stakeholders to engage with us on this Plan. This included our Equalities Consultative Forum, Engagement Champions – elected members, Strategic Insight Board.

The strategic equality objectives closely mirror the corporate wellbeing objectives which have been the subject of extensive consultation and engagement.

We have met with Service managers to determine which actions are relevant based on local experience.

To engage externally, the objectives and actions were put on the Participate Vale page for public comment. We provided a link to this page to members of our Equalities Consultative Forum. We arranged both an in person and online meetings to discuss the objectives with members of the Equalities Consultative Forum.



# Equality Impact Assessment

Information from the consultation process has been gathered and used to finalise the plan.

## **Consultation (with internal and external stakeholders)**

We used an online survey to consult people about these equality objectives between December 2024 and January 2025. We promoted this on the Council's website and through our social media channels.

During this consultation period, we sent a link to this consultation to a number of stakeholders for their comment and to send to their stakeholders.

Within the Council, we consulted with our services managers, staff networks, trade unions, and elected members.

## **National data and research**

The key piece of national research that we used was the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report 'Is Wales Fairer? 2023'. This report brings together evidence to assess levels of inequality in Wales and what progress was made to improve outcomes for protected groups since the Commission's previous report in 2018.

The report looks at outcomes for people with protected characteristics and makes recommendations for action, including for the public sector. We took these into account in developing our equality objectives.

## **Local data and research**

We used the Council's public opinion survey 'Let's Talk Life in the Vale' to inform the strategic equality objectives and actions from a local perspective. This has helped us to make sure that we are addressing issues of importance to local people where their feedback relates to the strategic equality objectives.

The majority of data relevant to protected characteristics is drawn from the national Census. The Plan has been updated with information from the most recent Census undertaken in 2021. This helped us to identify, for example, that we have an ageing

## Equality Impact Assessment

population and that the number of young people we employ is not representative of the local population.

### 6. How robust is the evidence?

#### Does it show what the impact will be (positive and negative)?

The aim of the Council's work is to have a positive impact on residents, visitors and workers in the Vale of Glamorgan. The Strategic Equality Plan sets out the priorities of the Council in working towards more positive outcomes for people with protected characteristics and / or who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

For each of the equality objectives, the Plan outlines the positive outcomes expected from achieving the equality objectives.

The equality objectives align with the Council's well-being objectives to be achieved over the next five years:

<b>Corporate Wellbeing 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

# Equality Impact Assessment

The Council is confident that, in working in a more integrated approach towards these five objectives, it can continue to influence a wide range of activities and services across the Vale. The Council will be working towards making a positive difference to the well-being of residents and visitors. Working to achieve the equality objectives will also help maximise our contribution to delivering the national well-being goals.

## **What are the gaps?**

The Strategic Equality Plan contains high level actions that outline how we will work to achieve the five strategic equality objectives. More detail on how these actions will be achieved will be contained in an Annual Delivery Plan which is published each Spring. The Annual Development Plan actions will be translated into actions detailed in Service and Team plans across the Council. The performance against actions in Service Plans are monitored, reported and scrutinised on a quarterly basis.

## **What will you do about this?**

Officers in relevant services will need to identify gaps in data or information and to agree what needs to be done to deliver the supporting actions for each equality objective. Each year, we gather information on progress in our Annual Equality Monitoring Report.

We will also use the Annual Delivery Plan to outline the specific work that Council Services will be doing for each year of the four-year Strategic Equality Plan to achieve the high level actions and objectives. The Annual Delivery Plan is an annual document so areas of focus will be identified in part through the Service Planning process with Directors, Heads of Service and Operational Managers.

## **What monitoring data will you collect?**

The monitoring data we collect varies for each Council Service. Examples of this can be found in our [Annual Equality Monitoring Reports](#). These reports include a detailed

# Equality Impact Assessment

employment report with information about the recruitment, pay and employment of our staff analysed by protected characteristics.

Progress against the Annual Delivery Plan will be reported each year, including data on progress towards the equality objectives.

## **How often will you analyse and report on this?**

We will analyse data annually for the Annual Equality Monitoring Report and the Annual Delivery Plan. We will publish this information on our website.

During the year, each Council Service will have its own timetable for analysing the information it collects.

## **Where will you publish monitoring data and reports?**

We publish our reports on the Council's website.

We will also discuss progress with our Equalities Consultative Forum.

## **7. [Impact](#)**

### **Is there an impact?**

The purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan is to work together for a fairer future and to have a positive impact on protected groups and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged within the Council and the Vale of Glamorgan. The Plan covers all Council Services and aims to improve outcomes for these groups.

**If there is no impact, what is the justification for thinking this? Provide evidence.**

**If there is likely to be an impact, what is it?**

# Equality Impact Assessment

**Age** –The Plan aims to have a positive impact on people of different ages, for example:

- Address barriers to older people’s access to high quality all age apprenticeships.
- Model and share best practice in inclusive recruitment.
- Use the Council’s house building programme to target extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people.
- Implementing the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2022 – 2036 to secure the best quality of life for older people to live as independently as possible in later life.
- Provide advice on managing climate change for everyone but particularly young people and those living in poverty
- When planning and promoting active travel and public transport services that are subsidised by the Council, work with transport providers to ensure that they are affordable and accessible.
- When improving our green infrastructure, ensure that there is good physical access to the natural environment.
- Address bullying based on gender identity including recording and reporting incidents.
- Reduce the risk to pupils and students of experiencing discrimination or bullying arising from their sexual orientation.
- Further develop inclusive and community focused schools where children and their families feel valued and respected whatever their background.
- Support schools to become Schools of Sanctuary as set out in the vision of Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary, which was initially set out in the [Refugee and asylum seeker plan \(nation of sanctuary\)](#) and built upon in the [Updated Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#)
- Support schools to raise awareness of climate change.
- Promote the opportunity to learn through the medium of the Welsh language and other opportunities to learn and use the Welsh language.
- Address the high and rising numbers of children looked after.
- Conduct carers needs assessments and then act on the needs identified to ensure carers’ health and well-being needs are met.
- Increase digital inclusion for those aged over 65.

## Equality Impact Assessment

- Ensure that services, including health and social care, are accessible for those without access to the internet or digital literacy skills.
- Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of social care users' equality data, including those who complain about or challenge decisions.
- Deliver our Age Friendly commitments and ensure older people have access to services, support and opportunities locally and have a strong voice.

**Disability** – The Plan aims to have a positive impact on people with disabilities, for example:

- Address the under-representation of disabled participating in and completing apprenticeships.
- Support more people with disabilities to access work.
- Model and share best practice in inclusive recruitment.
- Use the Council's house building programme to target extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people.
- When planning and promoting active travel and public transport services that are subsidised by the Council, work with transport providers to ensure that they are affordable and accessible.
- When improving our green infrastructure, ensure that there is good physical access to the natural environment.
- Work with partners to improve support for victims and witnesses to report hostility and intimidation and develop effective mechanisms for tackling it.
- Ensure that services, including health and social care, are accessible for those without access to the internet or digital literacy skills.
- Support the review and development of more appropriate services for victims and witnesses of hate crime, understanding ethnic disparities in experiences of sexual assault and ensure that incidents are reported and recorded.
- Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of social care users' equality data, including those who complain about or challenge decisions.

## Equality Impact Assessment

- Reduce gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps, including through positive action, as permitted in the Equality Act.
- Establish whether there is a difference in the employment opportunities for people who have physical and mental disabilities, including those who are neurodivergent.
- Continue to review how the workplace can be made more inclusive for disabled people.
- Continue to provide support and develop collaborative relationships with existing and emerging staff networks, including GLAM, Diverse and Abl.

**Gender reassignment, including gender identity** – The Plan aims to have a positive impact on gender identity, for example:

- Model and share best practice in inclusive recruitment.
- Use the Council's house building programme to target extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people.
- Address bullying based on gender identity including recording and reporting incidents.
- Work with partners to improve support for victims and witnesses to report hostility and intimidation and develop effective mechanisms for tackling it.
- Support South Wales Police in recording, reporting and monitoring incidents of bullying based on gender identity and evaluate effectiveness of procedures.
- Use the new National Framework for commissioning care and support to ensure the provision of care services meet the needs of trans people.
- Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of social care users' equality data, including those who complain about or challenge decisions.
- Take action to become a County of Sanctuary where everyone feels welcomed and valued as someone who lives or works in the Vale of Glamorgan.

**Marriage and civil partnership (discrimination only)** – The Plan aims to have a positive impact on marriage and civil partnership, for example:

- Model and share best practice in inclusive recruitment.

# Equality Impact Assessment

- Use the Council's house building programme to target extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people.
- Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of social care users' equality data, including those who complain about or challenge decisions.

**Pregnancy and Maternity** – The Plan aims to have a positive impact on pregnancy and maternity, for example:

- Model and share best practice in inclusive recruitment.
- Use the Council's house building programme to target extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people.
- Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of social care users' equality data, including those who complain about or challenge decisions.

**Race** – The Plan aims to have a positive impact on race, for example:

- Address the under-representation of global majority people participating in and completing apprenticeships.
- Model and share best practice in inclusive recruitment.
- Increase and improve Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in Wales.
- Use the Council's house building programme to target extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people.
- Implement actions that will lead to the Vale of Glamorgan becoming a County of Sanctuary.
- Further develop inclusive and community focused schools where children and their families feel valued and respected whatever their background.
- Reduce levels of homelessness including the disproportionate number of people from the global majority experiencing homelessness.



## Equality Impact Assessment

- Work with partners to improve support for victims and witnesses to report hostility and intimidation and develop effective mechanisms for tackling it.
- Support South Wales Police in recording, reporting and monitoring incidents of bullying based on gender identity and evaluate effectiveness of procedures.
- Use the new National Framework for commissioning care and support to address issues of access to social care for people from the global majority.
- Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of social care users' equality data, including those who complain about or challenge decisions.
- Take action to become a County of Sanctuary where everyone feels welcomed and valued as someone who lives or works in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Reduce gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps, including through positive action, as permitted in the Equality Act.
- Continue to work towards greater inclusivity for global majority and ethnic minority staff, measuring progress through Race Equality Matters Trailblazer process.
- Continue to provide support and develop collaborative relationships with existing and emerging staff networks, including GLAM, Diverse and Abl.

**Religion and belief** – The Plan aims to have a positive impact on religion and belief, for example:

- Model and share best practice in inclusive recruitment.
- Use the Council's house building programme to target extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people.
- Implement actions that will lead to the Vale of Glamorgan becoming a County of Sanctuary.
- Further develop inclusive and community focused schools where children and their families feel valued and respected whatever their background.
- Work with partners to improve support for victims and witnesses to report hostility and intimidation and develop effective mechanisms for tackling it.
- Support South Wales Police in recording, reporting and monitoring incidents of bullying based on gender identity and evaluate effectiveness of procedures.

## Equality Impact Assessment

- Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of social care users' equality data, including those who complain about or challenge decisions.
- Take action to become a County of Sanctuary where everyone feels welcomed and valued as someone who lives or works in the Vale of Glamorgan.

**Sex** – The Plan aims to have a positive impact on sex, for example:

- Model and share best practice in inclusive recruitment.
- Use the Council's house building programme to target extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people.
- Support South Wales Police in recording, reporting and monitoring incidents of bullying based on gender identity and evaluate effectiveness of procedures.
- Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of social care users' equality data, including those who complain about or challenge decisions.
- Reduce gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps, including through positive action, as permitted in the Equality Act.

**Sexual orientation** - The Plan aims to have a positive impact on sexual orientation, for example:

- Model and share best practice in inclusive recruitment.
- Use the Council's house building programme to target extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people.
- Implement actions that will lead to the Vale of Glamorgan becoming a County of Sanctuary.
- Reduce the risk to pupils and students of experiencing discrimination or bullying arising from their sexual orientation.
- Work with partners to improve support for victims and witnesses to report hostility and intimidation and develop effective mechanisms for tackling it.

# Equality Impact Assessment

- Ensure that services, including health and social care, are accessible for those without access to the internet or digital literacy skills.
- Support South Wales Police in recording, reporting and monitoring incidents of bullying based on gender identity and evaluate effectiveness of procedures.
- Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of social care users' equality data, including those who complain about or challenge decisions.
- Take action to become a County of Sanctuary where everyone feels welcomed and valued as someone who lives or works in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Continue to provide support and develop collaborative relationships with existing and emerging staff networks, including GLAM, Diverse and Abl.

**Socio-economic disadvantage** - The Plan aims to have a positive impact on people and/or communities challenged by poverty, for example:

- Model and share best practice in inclusive recruitment.
- Use the Council's house building programme to target extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people.
- Review how the Discretionary Housing Payment fund is administered and promoted to help those who are unable to pay their rent.
- Provide advice on managing climate change for everyone but particularly young people and those living in poverty.
- Continue to work with partners to support foodbanks and food projects so that those in poverty have access to food and basic provisions that they otherwise could not afford.
- When planning and promoting active travel and public transport services that are subsidised by the Council, work with transport providers to ensure that they are affordable and accessible.
- Improve attainment and attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM).
- Further develop inclusive and community focused schools where children and their families feel valued and respected whatever their background.

## Equality Impact Assessment

- Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of social care users' equality data, including those who complain about or challenge decisions.

**Welsh language** – The Plan aims to have a positive impact on the Welsh language, for example:

- Model and share best practice in inclusive recruitment.
- Use the Council's house building programme to target extra care, vulnerable groups, and emergency accommodation for homeless people.
- Promote opportunities to use the Welsh language in the community.
- Promote the opportunity to learn through the medium of the Welsh language and other opportunities to learn and use the Welsh language.
- Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of social care users' equality data, including those who complain about or challenge decisions.

**All** – The Plan aims to have a positive impact on people with protected characteristics, who are challenged by poverty and the Welsh language, for example:

- Address qualitative and quantitative data gaps for individual and intersections of protected characteristics, disaggregating data across human resource policy areas.
- Keep the equality impact assessment process under review to ensure that the Council is systematically considering the impact of its work on people with protected characteristics, who are socio-economically disadvantaged or who wish to use the Welsh language.
- Keep under review engagement and consultation methods to ensure that all voices in the Vale of Glamorgan are heard and their views taken into account.
- Use Welsh Government action plans, benchmarking information and good practice to guide improvement of equality action plans including for race, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

# Equality Impact Assessment

- Review the Equalities Consultative Forum to ensure that there is effective dialogue on Council business with stakeholder groups that represent the interests of people with protected characteristics.
- Bring together groups in the Vale who are working towards equity and inclusion.
- Continue to support the staff networks to influence a more inclusive workplace, including joint working to bridge intersectional issues.
- Ensure the People Strategy is developed and implemented with a guiding principle of equality and inclusion.
- Foster a talented, diverse, and high-performing workforce that can deliver exceptional services to the community through the Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

**Human rights** – The Plan aims to have a positive impact on human rights by considering the needs of protected groups and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged and seeking to better meet these through achieving its equality objectives.

## How do you know?

**Explain this for each of the relevant protected characteristics as identified above.**

As stated earlier in this document, we have developed our equality objectives using national and local evidence to identify pressing areas of inequality. We have explained above how we think there will be a positive benefit to protected groups.

Within the Plan, we have outlined expected outcomes and how we will know how we are doing. We will use these to assess our progress together with data and information from the Annual Equality Monitoring Report and the Annual Development Plan.

## What can be done to promote a positive impact?

**Explain this for each of the relevant protected characteristics as identified above.**

## Equality Impact Assessment

We believe that achieving the work outlined in the Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives will result in better outcomes for protected groups, those challenged by poverty and the Welsh language. One of our equality objectives is to bring together groups in the Vale who are working towards equity and inclusion. As part of this process, we will be able to promote the work we are doing to achieve our equality objectives and maintain an ongoing dialogue with groups to inform our continuing work throughout the lifespan of this Plan.

### **What can be done to lessen the risk of a negative impact?**

**Explain this for each of the relevant protected characteristics as identified above.**

There is no evidence to suggest that there would be negative impacts arising from our work on our equality objectives. However, regular monitoring through gathering information and data, and ongoing engagement should alert us to any issues so that we can address these as they arise.

### **Is there a need for more favourable treatment to achieve equal outcomes? (Disability only)**

We have tried to be inclusive in the way that we have developed the Strategic Equality Plan and the Plan is intended to have positive outcomes for all protected groups as outlined above. However, where evidence indicated that an issue affects some groups more than others, we have identified appropriate actions to address this.

### **Will the impact be positive, negative or neutral?**

**Explain this for each of the relevant protected characteristics as identified above.**

In delivering its Strategic Equality Plan, the Council will seek to improve outcomes for protected groups. There should be no negative impact as a result of the implementing this Plan.

# Equality Impact Assessment

As has been set out in the previous sections of this equality impact assessment, the Council has sought to ensure that a diverse range of people has been given the opportunity to feed into, shape and influence the both the Strategic Equality Plan and its equality objectives. How the Plan is intended to impact upon these different groups has been outlined in the previous sections.

In implementing the Plan, the Council will seek to have conversations with those who the Plan affects.

## 8. Monitoring ongoing impact

### **Date you will monitor progress**

We will monitor progress at least every year through the Annual Equality Monitoring Report and Annual Delivery Plan as described above.

### **Measures that you will monitor**

We will use the information and data described in the Plan.

### **Date you will review implemented proposal and its impact**

Work to achieve the equality objectives and actions set out in the Strategic Equality Plan will be ongoing until March 2029. We will undertake a review in the last year of the plan to agree new equality objectives in line with the new corporate wellbeing objectives.

# Equality Impact Assessment

## 9. Further action as a result of this equality impact assessment

Possible Outcomes	Say which applies
No major change	No major change
Adjust the policy	
Continue the policy	
Stop and remove the policy	

## 10. Outcomes and Actions

### **Recommend actions to senior management team**

The content of the Strategic Equality Plan will be relevant to all Services across the Council. Staff should be made aware of the new Plan, any actions they will contribute towards, and the responsibility to report on progress at least annually.

### **Outcome following formal consideration of proposal by senior management team**

The Strategic Equality Plan will be put into practice. Staff will be made aware of the new Plan, any actions they contribute towards, and the responsibility to report on progress at least annually.

## 11. Important Note

**Where you have identified impacts, you must detail this in your Cabinet report when seeking approval for your proposal.**

## 12. Publication

**Where will you publish your approved proposal and equality impact assessment?**



# Equality Impact Assessment

The current [Equality webpage](#) will be updated on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website.

In addition to being available online, copies of the Strategic Equality Plan can be made available in Council offices and public libraries in the Vale.

## 13. [Authorisation](#)

<b>Approved by (name)</b>	Rob Jones
<b>Job Title (senior manager)</b>	Operational Manager - Corporate Communications, Participation, Equalities and Directorate Development
<b>Date of approval</b>	12 February 2025
<b>Date of review</b>	September 2028

## **Appendix C**

### **Strategic Equality Plan 2025 – 2029 Consultation Report**

The development of the new Strategic Equality Plan was informed by extensive data analysis and desktop research as well as direct engagement with key stakeholders.

We gathered information and insight from key pieces of research. Nationally, our main source of reference was the Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'Is Wales Fairer? 2023' report which presents the key equality issues relevant to Wales and makes recommendations on the actions that public bodies should consider taking. Locally, the main research we used was that from the Council's public opinion survey 'Let's Talk Life in the Vale'. We based our draft strategic equality objectives and actions on the findings of these reports.

A consultation and engagement process on this draft followed during December 2024 and January 2025.

#### **Internal Stakeholders**

We circulated our draft equality objectives and related actions to Heads of Service, offering them a meeting to discuss them and the opportunity to give us feedback. We subsequently arranged to meet with a number of senior leaders to discuss how the objectives and actions could be better shaped to not only build on priorities arising from national research but to reflect experience in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Where we received feedback, we made adjustments to the actions so that they align with the needs of residents in the Vale of Glamorgan as well as corporate and service priorities. Examples include liaison with Housing, Cardiff Central Consortium and Learning and Skills. The Learning and Skills Service has taken the opportunity to link the actions to its Directorate and Team Plans.

We met with the Council's Strategic Insight Board. Membership comprises senior officers from across the Council. We shared the process we had used to develop the equality objectives and actions. The Insight Board was supportive of the draft objectives and related actions.

We attended a Senior Leadership Team meeting to update them on the process of developing the strategic equality objectives and actions and to give an opportunity for any further comments. We circulated a link to the survey on the draft Strategic Equality Plan for any final comments.

### **Member Champions Meeting**

We attended a meeting with elected members who champion a range of areas including anti-poverty, disability, diversity, equalities, LGBT, older people and youth.

There was support for the equality objectives and related actions as they stand.

One Champion identified a group within the community for us to get involved with, highlighting that they don't normally feel involved. We will be making contact with them so that they can have a voice in how we move forward.

### **Public Consultation**

We put the strategic equality objectives and related actions on the Participation Vale page of the Council's website for residents, organisations and other stakeholders to comment on. This was promoted online via the Council's social media channels and directly by email to key partners, the equalities consultative forum,

The feedback we received emphasised the importance of the following issues which are addressed in the Plan:

- the poverty agenda;
- prioritising investment in schools;
- public transport;
- apprenticeships;
- encouraging under-represented groups to speak freely of their experiences;
- foodbanks and the cost-of-living;

- support for victims of bullying and education to reduce the risks of this;
- digital exclusion;
- more affordable housing close to local amenities;
- supporting employees with disabilities;
- and making sure that there are clear targets for achieving the objectives and actions.

## **Ongoing**

We intend to strengthen our links with local groups and organisations that have an interest in issues of equity and inclusion.

A recent example of this is a visit to Vale People First. They shared some of their concerns and we are going to identify what the Council can help with and signpost them to the support they need. We want to maintain this relationship so that there is regular input into our work.

Our plan is to reach out to other local organisations and groups. We want to build a wider network of people who are able to help us monitor the implementation of the strategic equality objectives and shape how they are delivered.