

Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 Executive Summary

Plain text version

Introduction and background

The following is a joint statement from Council Leader Huw David and Chief Executive Mark Shephard.

Welcome to Bridgend County Borough Council's third Strategic Equality Plan covering the period 2020 – 2024.

Like its predecessors, it ensures that equality and fairness remain firmly at the heart of how the council plans, provides and delivers important services to the people of Bridgend County Borough.

Building on our previous equalities work, the plan details how Bridgend County Borough Council intends to deliver on its equalities commitments while continuing to be an inclusive and effective organisation.

Our Strategic Equality Plan demonstrates not only the council's responsibility towards meeting the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory

Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, but sets out our vision to promote equal opportunities as we set about making a real difference to the lives of the people we serve. We want to ensure that Bridgend is a place where no one experiences disadvantage or discrimination because of their background or identity, ensuring that every resident has access to a range of high quality services that meet their individual needs.

During 2016-2020, some of the key achievements in terms of delivering our equality objectives included:

- Working with Stonewall and Show Racism the Red Card to support the prevention of LGBTQ and racist bullying in schools;
- Delivering a successful programme of dementia supportive activities with partners BAVO, Halo and Awen;
- Developing an LGBTQ school network with the inclusion and school and vulnerable groups team.

- Supporting more than 30 Syrian refugees to resettle in the county borough, with good access to local services and schools.
- Establishing Learning Resource Centres for children with additional needs across the county borough in some of our English medium and Welsh medium mainstream schools.

This new plan seeks to build upon these achievements. We want to be fully representative of our community, and effectively demonstrate that we will not tolerate discrimination of any kind, irrespective of whether it concerns race, sex, disability, age, religion or belief, transgender status, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation.

As a responsible employer, our commitment towards equality includes our staff, and we recognise and welcome the duty set upon us by Government and the Equality and Human Rights Commission to ensure that our equality objectives include our internal functions as much as our external ones. [Click here to visit the Equality and Human Rights Commission website.](#)

As such, our policies, practices, procedures and training activities are all designed to eliminate institutional discrimination, reflecting our core values at all times while ensuring that equality remains a guiding principle in all that we do.

We hope that you will find the Strategic Equality Plan interesting and informative. It reflects our belief that discrimination and prejudice have no place in Bridgend County Borough, and that people should be respected and treated equally at all times.

This ends the joint statement from Council Leader Huw David and Chief Executive Mark Shephard.

About us

Bridgend County Borough is a diverse and vibrant area with 144,876 residents and over three million annual visitors. As one of the county borough's largest employers and service providers we recognise our unique role and influential position within the area and the contribution we can make to the development of inclusive and confident communities.

We are committed to the principles of equality and diversity and we work to ensure that this is demonstrated in our service delivery and in our employment practices.

We have three well-being objectives/corporate priorities:

- Priority one: Supporting a successful sustainable economy
- Priority two: Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient
- Priority three: Smarter use of resources

The council is governed by 54 elected Members with 39 wards and operates a Cabinet system. It has a Senior Management Team headed by the Chief Executive, and employs over 6,000 employees in a variety of service areas and roles based within the following directorates: Chief Executives; Education and Family Support ; Social Services and Wellbeing and Communities.

The Purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan

The Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 has been developed to demonstrate the Council's commitment to meeting the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, which came into force on 6 April 2011. [Click here to find out more about the Equality Act 2010.](#)

Building on our previous equalities work the plan will explain to residents, our workforce, elected members and stakeholders how Bridgend County Borough Council will deliver its equalities commitments whilst continuing to be an inclusive and effective organisation that is representative of our community and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. We will deliver high quality services to our residents, taking into account their different needs while ensuring that no one experiences disadvantage or discrimination due to their background or identity.

Within the Equality Act 2010, public bodies have an additional responsibility to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty:

The General Duty

When making decisions and delivering services we must have due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (protected characteristics are explained later in this report).
- Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Specific Duties

The Equality Act provides a power to make regulations imposing duties on public bodies to support better performance of the general duty; these are known as the Specific Public Sector Equality Duties and are different in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Specific Duties underpin the General Duty and have been developed around four main principles: Use of evidence; Consultation and Involvement; Transparency and Leadership

Who is protected under the Equality Act 2010?

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their protected characteristic. This is the term used in the Equality Act 2010 to identify the types of things that affect how people are treated and can mean people may experience discrimination. The law is designed to protect them, they are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex

- sexual orientation

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Council is committed to embedding the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 into all its service delivery and activities making sure that when we make decisions we take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future. The act aims to create a more equal Wales, where everyone has the opportunity to participate, reach their full potential and is able to contribute fully to the economy, will enable Wales to be more prosperous and innovative. The Act has been put in place to make sure that public bodies are doing all they can to contribute to the improvement of the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. [Click here to read more about the Well-being of Future Generations Act \(Wales\) 2015.](#)

The wellbeing of Future Generations Act asks individual public bodies to apply **five ways of working**:

- 1. Long term** The importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long term needs.
- 2. Prevention** How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.
- 3. Integration** Considering how the public body's wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives and on the objectives of other public bodies.
- 4. Collaboration** Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.
- 5. Involvement** The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the areas in which the body serves.

The five ways of working have been used to shape the Council's equality objectives.

Our Equality objectives

To develop the equality objectives we have engaged with our residents, stakeholders and our workforce and used relevant information, including EHRC reports, Welsh Government reports and internal strategies.

We have set our objectives in line with the findings of the EHRC Is Wales Fairer report and the public consultation. The following overarching objectives have been developed following the consultation to reflect the views of residents and stakeholders from across the county borough:

- **Education:** Everyone who accesses education should be free from discrimination, bullying and abuse in educational settings.
- **Work:** Promote a more inclusive workforce and improve the participation, wellbeing and opportunities for development for those with protected characteristics.

- **Living standards:** Tackle poverty and support independent living by considering the impact of any policy changes or decisions under the socio-economic duty
- **Health and wellbeing:** Support and promote good mental and physical health within our communities and our workforce and provide opportunities to participate in leisure and cultural activities.
- **Safety and respect:** Ensure that people within our communities have access to services that support them to live without fear of violence or abuse, and to be treated with respect.
- **Participation:** Encourage people and communities to participate and engage in issues that are important to them, and influence the decisions that affect their lives.

We will develop an outcome focussed **Strategic Equality Plan Action Plan** to support this plan which will outline:

- The actions we are seeking to progress under each of our objectives which will make a positive difference to residents and employees' lives;
- When we expect to achieve these actions;
- Who is responsible for taking the actions forward; and
- How we will measure our success.

How we will deliver and monitor the Strategic Equality Plan

Successful delivery of our objectives requires strong leadership which is driven primarily by the Future Generations and Well-being Cabinet Member, our Chief Executive and council Leader.

Responsibility for operational delivery rests with all service areas and teams within the authority. Each Corporate Director and Head of Service ensures their employees have the appropriate skills and knowledge of equality that are required. Our Cabinet Equalities Committee monitors delivery against the objectives and scrutinises information available to ensure we

identify and implement new strategies and objectives
appropriately.