

**Bridgend County Borough Council**  
**Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr**



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# **Strategic Equality Plan**

## **Annual Report 2014/2015**

**(Covering the period 1.4.14 – 31.3.15)**

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## **Introduction and background**

As an authority our aim is to understand and tackle the barriers to equal opportunities that people face so that everyone has a fair chance to fulfil their potential. We aim to ensure that equality is a part of everything we do and of the services we deliver.

In April 2011 the Public Sector Equality Duty ([the PSED](#)) was introduced and, in the same month, the Welsh Government introduced new regulations putting in place a series of specific duties to underpin the general duty outlined in the Equality Act.

These specific duties help us to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

The Government and the [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\)](#) have made it clear that we must mainstream equality both internally and externally. To address this we developed our [Strategic Equality Plan](#) in April 2012.

This is our annual report for the period 2014/15 and it:

- Monitors and reviews our progress;
- Reviews effectiveness of arrangements;
- Reviews objectives and processes;
- Covers stakeholder engagement and transparency with our partners and the public.

## **Developing our Strategic Equality Plan (overview)**

In developing our equality objectives we revisited all the previous work we had undertaken.

Draft objectives were developed in January 2012 and our Strategic Equality Plan was published in April 2012. Engagement with service managers and representative groups meant the final action plan was approved in September 2012. In October 2013 we reviewed and updated the [action plan](#).

In developing the action plan we also engaged with:

- The Corporate Director Resources (senior lead equalities officer);
- The Deputy Leader of the council (political equality champion);
- The Equalities Cabinet Committee who are responsible for monitoring the Strategic Equality Plan and how we implement our objectives.

Our heads of service and senior service managers are responsible for ensuring the actions in the Strategic Equality Plan Action Plan are achieved within their service areas.

Quarterly updates on our action plan are provided to the Bridgend Equality Forum, membership of which includes a number of third sector groups and organisations, (representing a number of protected characteristic groups), as well as a number of key local service providers.

More detailed information on how the Strategic Equality Plan was developed can be found [here](#).

### **Identifying, collecting and using relevant information**

In preparing this annual report, we:

- Reviewed and reflected on previous work that already met the general and specific duties;
- Revisited our strategic equality objectives to ensure they are still relevant;
- Used the information gathered during the Strategic Equality Plan consultation and engagement exercise to understand whether:
  - we had the staff and resources to manage the objectives;
  - we felt confident that we could achieve the objectives;
  - the objectives would make a difference to peoples' lives, and;
  - we could meet the objectives within our set timescales.

From this it became clear that we needed to break down each of the objectives to decide on responsibility, timescales, which groups would be affected and how we could measure success in meeting the duties outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

In collating our information we were able to identify gaps in data. However, since our equality objectives were set, we have developed stronger links with the LGB & T and local Muslim communities and will be in a better position to gather relevant information which we can use to revisit our objectives. A need has been identified to engage better with the National Gypsy Council for advice and guidance in gathering relevant and meaningful data and information.

We have made concerted efforts to engage formally via questionnaires or by meeting face to face with people and representative groups. We have developed strong links and will continue to work closely with them to build a collaborative approach to developing our services.

Our reason for improving equalities data on protected characteristic groups was to help us develop an evidence base on which to build effective and meaningful objectives. Our Strategic Equality Plan Action Plan will be updated annually.

### **Our Strategic Equality Objectives**

We developed, consulted on and then agreed the following nine strategic equality objectives:

<b>Equality Objective 1: Transportation</b>	We will help to provide an accessible, cost effective, all-inclusive transport network within Bridgend County Borough.
<b>Equality Objective 2: Fostering Good Relations</b>	We will positively promote a fairer society in Bridgend County Borough by increasing public awareness of the issues faced by people with a protected characteristic.

<b>Equality Objective 3: The council's Role as an Employer</b>	We will build on our efforts to be an inclusive, supportive employer, promoting diversity and equality within our workforce.
<b>Equality Objective 4: Mental Health</b>	Our Adult Social Care service will build on its partnership work with the third sector to provide mental health support and services.
<b>Equality Objective 5: Equal Pay</b>	We will ensure that our employees are paid the same for doing the same job regardless of their protected characteristics.
<b>Equality Objective 6: Leisure</b>	We will provide fair and equal access to participation in sport and recreation activities to all members of the community.
<b>Equality Objective 7: Benefits</b>	We will introduce measures to mitigate for the effects of the national benefits review on Bridgend County Borough residents.
<b>Equality Objective 8: Data</b>	We will develop a system to collect, collate, monitor and publish equalities data on our service users and employees.
<b>Equality Objective 9: Communication, Consultation and Engagement</b>	We will improve the ways in which we communicate, consult and engage with those who share a protected characteristic.

**Progress in meeting our objectives during 2014/15 has been:**

### **Transportation**

- The Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People has had further meetings with public transport companies to promote equality and diversity and develop training for drivers and staff. The coalition has influenced the content of the training provided with the result that a better quality service is provided. The Coalition is also working with First Cymru buses to develop audio visual provision on buses;
- Our Bridgend taxi forum has not been able to increase the number of wheelchair accessible taxis as we had hoped. We will continue to work with local providers to increase the number;
- Working with our partners a “mystery passenger scheme” has been developed to test transport providers’ employees’ equality and diversity awareness. As membership of the Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People has greatly increased since the exercise was undertaken, this exercise will be repeated with a view to gathering further feedback from disabled customers;

### **Fostering good relations**

- We have continued to mark and support national campaigns related to each of the protected characteristics via twitter, face book and our website to raise awareness amongst the general public of wider diversity activities and celebrations;
- The fourth annual young peoples’ anti-bullying conference took place in 2014 and we are continuing to monitor and raise awareness of the effects of school bullying. Bullying in schools continues to be an issue to address;

- We organised our first anti-bullying schools calendar competition in 2014
- We advertised, supported via twitter, face book and our website Cardiff Mardi Gras, Swansea Sparkle and Swansea Pride demonstrating the council's support for LGB & T issues and events;
- Bridgend's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender forum continued to develop in 2014/15
- We supported and promoted via twitter, face book and our website LGB & T History Month (February) by raising the rainbow and transgender flags throughout the month and decorating our Civic Offices;
- Our annual Holocaust Memorial Day event made clear reference to all the groups of people who faced (and continue to face) persecution during holocausts. In this way we are able to ensure that the memory of these atrocities is kept alive.

### **The council's role as an employer**

- We have developed and delivered equality and diversity training courses for managers and front line customer facing staff.
- A range of e-learning modules to compliment the face to face training have been developed or updated
- Our induction e-learning module has been relaunched and includes core equality information which will assist us in our aspiration to ensure that equalities issues are embedded in everything our managers and employees do;
- We developed and launched our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender staff network;
- We produced employee guidance on working with customers who are transgender or who are from a BME background.

### **Training and development**

We are aware of the need to provide our employees with general equality and diversity training to meet our strategic and statutory obligations. Our programme of training was approved in 2013/14 by our Cabinet Equalities Committee. We deliver:

- **Equality and Diversity Training – Basic Overview**

An e-learning module looking at the general duty within the Public Sector Equality Duty, the nine protected characteristics and links to the Strategic Equality Plan.

- **Equality and Diversity Training – Advanced Overview**

This course covers in more detail the Public Sector Equality Duty, an overview of the specific duties in Wales, our Strategic Equality Plan and issues related to the nine protected characteristics. (These sessions also raise awareness of the issues employees need to consider when working with/ providing services to people from protected characteristic groups ). They cover sensory impairments (visual, hearing and speech) mental health conditions, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and cognitive impairments. Sessions also include legislative requirements in terms of physical access and communication, the Access to Work scheme and health and safety

considerations. Targeted employee groups and senior managers undertook this training.

## **Data**

- Further equalities information was collected on our employees in 2014/15, this includes information on new employees and individual employees updating their own records.

## **Communication, consultation and engagement**

- In 2012 we became the first public body in Wales to be awarded the Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID), ‘Louder than Words’ charter mark. The award recognizes the work we do to ensure that d/Deaf customers and employees can access all of our services. We were reassessed for, and retained the award in 2013, 2014 and 2015;
- In 2013 we began work on the assessment process for the British Deaf Association’s BSL Charter Award which we gained in 2014.
- Guidance for employees on engaging with people who share a protected characteristic/s has been produced and has been published on our staff website. All employees with Intranet access can view these documents.

Our strategic equality objectives each have a range of specific themes and actions documented in the [Strategic Equality Plan](#).

Our objectives aim to improve outcomes for people who share one or more of the protected characteristics. Through our equality work and engagement activity we are aware of some specific priority issues in respect of race, sex and disability. Experience, knowledge and expertise in respect of age, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership is developing.

## **Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)**

We have conducted EIAs since 2009 and have become more aware of the need for EIA training and support for officers. A more detailed but user-friendly EIA toolkit has been developed and introduced to make the information gathered more meaningful. These documents together with a list of EIAs done are available on our website. Our new toolkit has proved effective on a number of high profile EIAs including those on our new customer charter, the council budget and the relocation of Bridgend Library. Further EIA training is planned.

## **Procurement arrangements**

The Engagement team works with the procurement service to ensure that equality issues are fully integrated into the procurement process.

## **Employment Information**

### **Employees as at 31 March 2015 by gender and pay grade. Gender / pay differences and information.**

Our Pay and Grading Structure was implemented on 1 September 2013 and a clear and robust mechanism is in place for evaluating the relative grades of positions. This is based on roles and responsibilities as opposed to any individual factor relating to the employee.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
JE grades 1 – 8 (£13,500 - £23,698)	678	3903	4581
JE Grades 9 – 10 (£25,440 - £29,558)	143	220	363
JE Grades 11 – 16 (£30,978 - £48,364)	187	318	505
Chief Officers (£74,542 - £131,091)	7	7	14
Soulbury & Youth Officers (£19,236 - £60,633)	11	43	54
Teachers, Head, Deputy, and Assistant Head Teachers (£22,023 - £107,210)	349	1028	1377
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1375</b>	<b>5519</b>	<b>6894</b>

Please note, the above figures are based on the number of positions across the authority. If an employee has more than one position, they will be counted in the above table for each position they hold. As such, the above figures will not correlate with other totals in this report which are based on Headcount.

**People who applied for jobs with us.**

Between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015 we received 8,794 job applications from 4,008 individual applicants. The analysis of applicants is as follows:**Table 3**

Description	No. Applicants	%
Male Applicants	1049	26.2
Female Applicants	2952	73.7
Unspecified	7	0.1
<b>Disability declared:-</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>4.4</b>
<b>Age Profile:-</b>		
16 – 25	1224	30.5
26 – 35	1193	29.8
36 – 45	822	20.5
46 – 55	544	13.6
56 – 65	178	4.4
66+	18	0.5
Unknown	29	0.7
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		
Heterosexual	3506	87.5
Bisexual	17	0.4
Gay Man	35	0.9
Gay Woman/Lesbian	45	1.1
Prefer not to say	125	3.1
Other	15	0.4
Unknown/not declared	265	6.6
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	1303	32.5
Living with Partner	631	15.8
Same Sex or Civil Partnership	15	0.4
Separated/divorced	248	6.2
Single	1669	41.6
Widowed	21	0.5
Prefer not to say	37	0.9
Unknown/not declared	84	2.1
<b>Race</b>		
White	3829	95.5
Asian/Asian British	29	0.7
Black/Black British	16	0.4
Chinese	4	0.1
Mixed Race	28	0.7
Prefer not to say	47	1.2
Other Ethnic Group	10	0.3
Unknown / not stated	45	1.1

## **Internal Job Applicants**

The council reported on this figure in the 2013/14 Annual Report. However, there is concern about accuracy of the report for 2014/15, so work is being undertaken to rectify this position to ensure accurate and reliable data is available.

### **Employees who applied to undertake training and how many of those applications were successful.**

We currently record formal post entry training applications we receive from our employees. An analysis of employees' data by protected characteristic is included below. During 2014/2015, 6 employees were successful in their application for post entry training and development.

**Table 4**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>No. of employees</b>
Female	5
Male	1
Transgender	0
Age:	
• 26 – 35	5
• 36 – 45	1
Disability	
• Disabled	1
• Not disabled	5
Race	
• White:	6
Sexuality	
• Straight / heterosexual	5
• Unknown / not disclosed	1
Civil Partnership/Marriage:	
• Married	3
• Single	2
• Separated/divorced	0
• Partner	1

No formal applications for post entry training and development received by the Learning and Development Team were refused in 2014/2015.

## **Grievance and Disciplinary Hearings held during 2014/2015.**

During the reporting period, 36 employees submitted a grievance and 72 employees were subject to a disciplinary proceeding

### **Grievances 2014/2015**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>No. of employees</b>
Female	21
Male	14
Transgender	1
Age:	
• 16 – 19	0
• 20 – 25	0
• 26 – 35	5
• 36 – 45	12
• 46 – 55	16
• 56 – 65	2
Disabled	3
Not Disabled	28
Not known/Not Disclosed	4
Race (White)	33
Not Stated/Disclosed	2
Sexuality – Heterosexual	16
Sexuality – Gay Woman	2
Sexuality – Prefer not to say	2
Sexuality – Not Disclosed	15
Civil Partnership/Marriage:	
• Married	16
• With partner	5
• Separated/divorced	4
• Single	6
• Not Stated	4

### Disciplinary procedures

Characteristic	No. of employees
Female	35
Male	37
Transgender	0
Age:	
• 16 – 19	2
• 20 – 25	1
• 26 – 35	7
• 36 – 45	23
• 46 – 55	25
• 56 – 65	14
Disability (yes)	1
Disability (no)	40
Disability (unknown/not stated)	31
Race:	
• White	55
• Asian	1
• Mixed	1
• Not stated	11
• Not disclosed	4
Sexuality	
• Heterosexual/straight	12
• Gay Woman/Lesbian	1
• Prefer not to say	3
• Not Stated	56
Civil Partnership/Marriage:	
• Married	27
• Partner	5
• Prefer not to say	1
• Separated/divorced	2
• Single	16
• Widowed	1
• Not Stated	20

## **The number of people who left our employment between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015.**

The council reported on this figure in the 2013/14 Annual Report. However, there is concern about accuracy of the report for 2014/15, so work is being undertaken to rectify this position to ensure accurate and reliable data is available. Meanwhile a summary of gender and age profile is available as follows.

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>No. of employees</b>
Female	542
Male	249
Transgender	1
Age:	
• 16 – 19	5
• 20 – 25	96
• 26 – 35	172
• 36 – 45	143
• 46 – 55	148
• 56 – 65	203
• 66+	24

## **Engagement and consultation**

We aim to include the views of representative groups in our planning and decision making processes. This shows our commitment to developing accessible services for the public and our employees.

Engagement is an important part of our work so we put specific processes in place to ensure that peoples' needs are taken into account and that the dimensions of diversity are all addressed.

Employees and stakeholders who represent the protected characteristic groups will be fully involved with the delivery, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of our objectives.

We will publish reports on the outcome of our engagement activity to show clearly how people have influenced planning and decision making within Bridgend County Borough Council.

Further information on how people were engaged in the development of our objectives and how they influenced the process can be seen [here](#).

## **Contact us**

Our Strategic Equality Plan annual report is not just a council report; it has been written following work we have done with our partners such as the Bridgend Equality Forum, and seeks to ensure that Bridgend County Borough is a fair and welcoming place to be. The plan was written based on what we knew about our services and on the views and needs of Bridgend citizens and the people who use our services.

If you would like a copy of the Strategic Equality Plan in hard copy or in an alternative format please let us know:

By email: [talktous@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:talktous@bridgend.gov.uk)

By telephone: 01656 643643

By textphone: 18001 01656 643643

By fax: 01656 668126

In writing:

Bridgend County Borough Council Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB.

Our Customer Contact Centre is open from 8am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday

and we have a [Complaints Procedure](#).

Or, to contact a department directly, please refer to the [A-Z of Services](#)