

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



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Strategic Equality Plan

Annual Report 2013/2014

(Covering the period 1.4.13 – 31.3.14)

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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 annual report:

- 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:

Equality Objective 1: Transportation	We will help to provide an accessible, cost effective, all inclusive transport network within Bridgend County Borough.
Equality Objective 2: Fostering Good Relations	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.

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

Progress to date:

Transportation

- The Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People meets regularly 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;
- We established a taxi forum initially to promote an increase in the number of wheelchair accessible taxis and hackney carriages in use, and increase awareness of relevant equality and diversity issues. The number of wheelchair accessible taxis has not increased as we had hoped and we will continue to work with local providers to increase the number;
- We are continuing to increase the number of raised kerbs at bus stops and dropped kerbs at pedestrian crossing points. Whilst there has been an increase in both, we are mindful that more dropped and raised kerbs are still required in Bridgend County Borough;
- 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 developed a calendar of the various annual public awareness campaigns related to each of the protected characteristics (e.g. UK Older People's Day). We use this to mark and support these national campaigns via twitter, face book and our website to raise awareness amongst the general public of wider diversity activities and celebrations;
- The third annual young peoples' anti bullying conference took place in 2013 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 advertise, support via twitter, face book and our website and attend Cardiff Mardi Gras, Swansea Sparkle and Swansea Pride openly demonstrating the council's support for LGB & T issues and events;
- Bridgend's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender forum was established by a partnership including Bridgend County Borough Council, South Wales Police, Bridgend College and Bridgend's ABFABB project. The forum is proactive and is the link between service providers and service users;
- We openly support and promote 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 makes 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 equality and diversity training courses for our managers and front line customer facing staff. Our induction e-learning module has been updated and is soon to be launched which will assist us in our aspiration to ensure that equalities issues are embedded in everything our managers and employees do;
- Our guidance note for line managers, to assist in their conduct of appraisals, refers to the issue of equalities to enable a natural conversation around this subject.

Equal Pay

- We have introduced a new pay and grading system which helps ensure that all employees are treated fairly;
- We have better promoted our flexible working policy amongst male employees to breakdown the stereotypical views of carers and encourage more male employees to consider flexible working;

Data

- We are continuing work on a data collection exercise to gather up to date equalities information relating to all our employees enabling us to more accurately report on employee demographics and address any issues of inequality;

- To improve the quality of our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process, a new EIA toolkit has been introduced within all services and EIA training has been provided to a number of officers responsible for completing these assessments. EIAs are an integral element of our decision making and effective training ensures EIAs are carried out thoroughly, consider the impact of a policy on all protected characteristic groups and are transparent;
- Our service areas now have a consistent approach to consultation and engagement questions when responding to complainants. This allows all areas to monitor complaints and identify any issues of inequality;
- All service areas now use equality related feedback forms in relation to the services they provide allowing all areas to monitor respondents;
- All service areas now deploy a consistent approach to consultation and engagement questions ensuring that an accurate analysis of respondents may be undertaken.

Communication, consultation and engagement

- Positive feedback from the d/Deaf community has been received following British Sign Language videos being added to our website on key areas of information. We worked with the British Deaf Association to develop these BSL videos which include:
 - [Teen Complaints Brochure](#)
 - [5 - 11 Complaints Brochure](#)
 - [Customer Service Charter](#)
 - [Social Services Disclaimer](#)
 - [Corporate Complaints](#)
 - [Disability Benefits](#)
 - [Social Services Complaints](#)
- British Sign Language interpreters regularly attend council hosted public events to ensure that d/Deaf people can fully engage with community events and activities;
- 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;
- In 2013 we began work on the assessment process for the British Deaf Association's BSL Charter Award. We hope to gain this award in recognition of our ongoing engagement with Deaf customers and the Deaf community;
- Guidance for employees on engaging with people who share a protected characteristic/s and those who do not has been produced and has been published on our website for access by all our employees.

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. A review highlighted the need for further EIA training and support for officers, and a more detailed but user-friendly EIA toolkit to make the information gathered more meaningful. A new toolkit and supporting documents have been developed which, together with a list of EIAs done, is available [here](#). 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. We publish EIAs on our website. Further equality and diversity training is planned underlining our commitment to equalities and supporting the development of EIAs.

Training and development

We have undertaken an assessment of the Council's equality and diversity training needs. This revealed that we need to provide our employees with general equality and diversity training to meet our strategic and statutory obligations. Gaps in employees' knowledge were also identified specifically in areas such as EIAs. Our programme of training was approved in 2013/14 by our Cabinet Equalities Committee. Over the next 2 years we aim to 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 briefly covers the Strategic Equality Plan.

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

This course covers the Public Sector Equality Duty in more detail, a detailed overview of the specific duties in Wales, our Strategic Equality Plan and issues related to the nine protected characteristics.

- **Raising awareness of disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race and religion with targeted employee groups.**

These sessions raise awareness of the issues employees need to consider when working with/ providing services to people from protected characteristic groups. The sessions 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.

- **Equality Impact Assessments**

During 2015, these sessions will take attendees through the toolkit to identify what needs to be assessed, when, by whom and how.

Delivering the training:

- Our senior managers will be undertaking Advanced Equality and Diversity Awareness and Equality Impact Assessments;
- Other targeted officers will undertake either basic equality and diversity awareness or advanced equality and diversity awareness training;

Procurement arrangements

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

Employment Information

To help us report on accurate employee data, a data collection project is ongoing. Returns to date have been low. The project will enable us to report on employment activity by protected characteristic. We are aware, however, that some employees will not want to share this information with us. Our approach to the data capture project is based on Stonewall’s booklets “What’s it got to do with you” and “What’s it got to do with me”.

People employed by us on 31 March 2014 by gender and pay grade

Grade	Male	Female	Total
Scale 1 – 6 (£12,145 - £23,708)	715	3405	4120
Senior Officers (£24,646 - £28,636)	155	269	424
Principal Officers (£27,849 - £41,616)	204	344	548
Chief Officers (£73,080 - £122,323)	6	7	13
Soulbury & youth officers (£26,799 - £85,632)	16	45	61
Teachers, Head, Deputy, and Assistant Head Teachers (£21,558-£110,418)	337	959	1296
TOTAL	1433	5029	6462

People employed by us on 31 March 2014 by (where known) protected characteristic

Description	Schools	Other Services	Total	%
Headcount	2944	3518	6462	100
Full Time	1673	1943	3616	55.9
Part Time (one post held)	855	1424	2169	33.6
Multi Part Time	413	151	677	10.5
Male	524	909	1433	22.2
Female	2420	2609	5029	77.8
Disability Declared	14	89	103	1.6
Carer Responsibilities	59	226	285	4.4
Ethnic Minority	30	40	70	1.1
Welsh Speaker	277	656	933	14.4
Age Profile: 16 - 25	213	156	369	5.7
Age Profile: 26 - 35	668	584	1252	19.4
Age Profile: 36 - 45	926	903	1829	28.3
Age Profile: 46 - 55	772	1128	1900	29.4
Age Profile: 56 - 65	333	692	1025	15.9
Age Profile 65 and over	32	55	87	1.3

People who applied for jobs with us.

Between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014 we received 10,323 job applications from 4,709 individual applicants. The analysis of applicants is as follows:

Description	No. Applicants	%
Male Applicants	1512	32.1
Female Applicants	3166	67.2
Unspecified	27	0.7
Disability declared/recorded:		
	201	4.3
Age Profile:-		
16 – 25	1391	29.5
26 – 35	1354	28.8
36 – 45	976	20.7
46 – 55	712	15.1
56 – 65	224	4.8
65+	9	0.2
Unknown	41	0.9
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	3967	84.2
Bisexual	25	0.5
Gay Man	39	0.8
Gay Woman/Lesbian	35	0.7
Prefer not to say	113	2.5
Other	21	0.5
Unknown/not declared	509	10.8
Marital Status		
Married	1567	33.3
Living with Partner	711	15.1
Same Sex or Civil Partnership	18	0.4
Separated/divorced	297	6.3
Single	1965	41.7
Widowed	15	0.3
Prefer not to say	34	0.7
Unknown/not declared	102	2.2
Race		
White	4496	95.5
Asian/Asian British	30	0.6
Black/Black British	30	0.6
Chinese	8	0.2
Mixed Race	27	0.6
Prefer not to say	47	1
Unknown / not stated	71	1.5

Internal Job Applicants

The council reported on this figure in the 2012/13 Annual Report. However, during 2013/14, the council's Human Resources and Payroll System (Trent), from which this data is extracted, required a number of software updates. This has resulted in the council being unable to report on this data for 2013/14 however, the data is expected to be available for the 2014/15 Annual Report.

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

We currently record all of the formal post education and training applications we receive from our employees. An analysis of employees' data by protected characteristic is included below. During 2013/2014, 11 employees were successful in their application for post entry training and development.

Characteristic	No. of employees
Female	5
Male	6
Transgender	0
Age: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 – 25 • 26 – 35 • 36 – 45 • 46 – 55 • Unknown 	 1 3 3 3 1
Disability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not disabled • Not disclosed / unknown 	 3 8
Race <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White: • Unknown / not disclosed 	 9 2
Sexuality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straight / heterosexual • Unknown / not disclosed 	 3 8
Civil Partnership/Marriage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married • Single • Separated/divorced • Not disclosed/unknown 	 6 1 1 3

No formal applications for post entry training and development received by the Learning and Development Team were refused in 2013/2014.

Employees involved in a grievance or disciplinary procedure

All our grievance and disciplinary cases are recorded centrally.

Grievances 2013/2014

18 employees were involved in a grievance procedure. This figure represents 'the person about whom a complaint has been made'. Work is ongoing to include employees involved in a grievance process whether as a person making a complaint or as a person about whom a complaint has been made.

Characteristic	No. of employees
Female	9
Male	9
Transgender	0
Age:	
• 26 – 35	3
• 36 – 45	2
• 46 – 55	3
• 56 – 65	1
• 65+	0
• Unknown	9
Disability (no)	8
Disability (unknown)	10
Race (White)	8
Race (unknown)	10
Sexuality – Gay Man	1
Sexuality – Heterosexual	3
Sexuality – Prefer not to say	1
Sexuality - unknown	13
Civil Partnership/Marriage:	
• Married	6
• With partner	1
• Separated/divorced	1
• unknown	10

Disciplinary procedures

45 employees were involved in a disciplinary procedure.

Characteristic	No. of employees
Female	24
Male	21
Transgender	0
Age:	
• 26 – 35	5
• 36 – 45	8
• 46 – 55	5
• 56 – 65	1
• 65+	1
• Unknown	25
Disability (no)	15
Disability (unknown)	30
Race:	
• White	18
• Prefer not to say	2
• Not disclosed	25
Sexuality	
• Heterosexual/straight	3
• Gay woman	1
• unknown	41
Civil Partnership/Marriage:	
• Married	5
• Partner	1
• Prefer not to say	1
• Separated/divorced	1
• Single	7
• unknown	30

The number of people who left our employment between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014.

Characteristic	Numbers
Gender	
Female	777
Male	334
Age Category	
16 – 25	124
26 – 35	256
36 – 45	232
46 – 55	185
56 - 65	251
65 +	63
Disability	
Yes	27
Race	
Asian or Asian British	8
Black or Black British	1
Not known / prefer not to say	126
Other	6
White	970
Sexuality	
Gay woman/lesbian	2
Heterosexual/straight	310
Prefer not to say/not stated	799
Marriage and Civil Partnership	
Married	507
With partner	44
Prefer not to say	157
Civil partnership	2
Separated / divorced	64
Single	329
Widowed	8

The equalities data we currently hold on our employees is not complete. However, the ongoing data collection project will put us in a position to better report on this in the 2014 / 2015 annual report.

Gender / pay differences and information

Gender and pay differences are an issue nationally. Our equal pay objective outlines our approach to ensuring our employees are paid the same for doing the same job regardless of their protected characteristics. We have recently agreed our new pay and grading model following our Job Evaluation Project. We asked independent experts we were working with to assess our proposals for the new pay and grading scheme and they said that:

- *“The proposed pay structure improves the gender pay gap on a grade by grade basis. As employees progress through the structure with annual increments, the gap will close even further”*
- *The proposed structure demonstrates a visible narrowing of the gender pay gap in both basic pay and total pay”.*

We know that equal pay is generally regarded as being a sex/gender issue. However, we will be monitoring the pay of our employees to ensure that we are aware of any trends in relation to any of the protected characteristic groups. Our new pay and grading system is based on the job and not on the person so assists us to meet the general duty and will also ensure that all of our employees are paid fairly.

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

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](#)