

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



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Strategic Equality Plan

Annual Report 2012/2013

(Covering the period 1.4.12 – 31.3.13)

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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 community 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;
- We have established a taxi forum 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.
- We are continuing to increase the number of raised kerbs at bus stops and dropped kerbs at pedestrian crossing points;
- We promote concessionary bus travel schemes available in the County Borough on our website;
- Working with our partners a "mystery passenger scheme" has been developed to test transport providers' employees' equality and diversity awareness;

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;
- 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;
- We are reviewing our bank of publicity images to ensure that it is fully representative of all protected characteristic groups;

- We became members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Excellence Centre;
- We advertise, support and attend Cardiff Mardi Gras, Swansea Sparkle and Swansea Pride;
- Work began in 2013 to develop Bridgend's 1st Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender forum;
- We openly support LGB & T History Month (February) by raising the rainbow and transgender flags throughout the month and decorating our Civic Offices;
- Our Holocaust Memorial Day event makes clear reference to all the groups of people who faced (and continue to face) persecution during holocausts. The theme for the 2013 event was "Bridges" and we focused on issues facing Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people.

The council's role as an employer

- Our "meet and greet" induction process now describes the importance of inclusivity, equality and diversity to the council;
- Our job advertisement pages clearly promote the council as a diverse and inclusive employer;
- We have developed equality and diversity training courses for our managers and front line customer facing staff and our induction process will soon be updated to reflect the council's all inclusive approach to employment;
- We have also retained our 'two ticks' disability symbol status, which recognises our commitment to employing disabled people. We guarantee a job interview to disabled applicants who meet the main requirements of the job;
- An Autism Awareness e-learning module has been developed and made available to employees on issues which may affect customers and employees.

Equal Pay

- We have introduced a new pay and grading system which helps ensure that all employees are treated fairly;

Leisure

- We have provided equalities training to Leisure Services managers;
- We have undertaken a number of Equality Impact Assessments on leisure provision;
- We have undertaken several surveys of young people and customers;

Data

- We have undertaken stage 1 of a data collection exercise to gather up to date equalities information relating to all our employees;
- 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;

- A set of standard equalities monitoring questions covering all of the protected characteristics has been developed, and will shortly be rolled out to all service areas for their service users to complete. These questions are already being incorporated into surveys produced by the council during consultation activities;
- Our service areas now have a consistent approach to consultation and engagement questions when responding to complainants.

Communication, consultation and engagement

- Positive feedback from the d/Deaf community following British Sign Language videos being added to our website on key areas of information including:
 - [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;
- 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. 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 2014;
- A number of our public facing employees such as those at the customer contact centre have received Start to Sign training and a number are undertaking further British Sign Language Training (level 1 and 2);
- We have also produced a guide for our employees regarding accessible communications.
- In December 2012 we developed an equalities consultation and monitoring guidance toolkit;
- Our "2 ticks" symbol is clearly displayed on our website;
- We support Bridgend College's LGB & T group and promote their activities for example their "Stop the hate campaign".

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 needs further attention.

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 equality and diversity training needs analysis of our employees. This revealed that we needed 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 and 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**

These sessions raise awareness of the issues employees need to consider when working with/ providing services to people from protected characteristic groups. The course covers sensory impairments (visual, hearing and speech) mental health conditions, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and cognitive impairments. It includes legislative requirements in terms of physical access and communication, the Access to Work scheme and health and safety considerations.

- **Equality Impact Assessments**

These sessions take attendees through the toolkit and identifies 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 officers will undertake either basic equality and diversity awareness or advanced equality and diversity awareness training;

- Our employees whose jobs are heavily customer focussed such as those at the Customer Contact Centre and Telephone Contact Centre, Library Services and Human Resources Team will be undertaking a programme of awareness raising sessions specific to disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race and religion, though some of these employees would need to attend every session.

Procurement arrangements

The Engagement team works with the procurement service to ensure that equality issues are fully integrated into the procurement process. In 2012 a new tender application / procurement process was agreed and implemented. These documents are now included in all contract tenders sent out.

Employment Information

- The ways in which data is collected on job applicants and employees is improving;
- An equalities questionnaire forms part of the application process;
- Applicant and employee information is stored on our human resources/payroll system, providing statistics for inclusion in our equality reports as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- Employees remain anonymous to comply with law;
- 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 Cymru'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 2013 by gender and pay grade

Grade	Male	Female	Total
Scale 1 – 6 (£12,145 - £23,708)	776	3661	4437
Senior Officers (£24,646 - £28,636)	144	164	308
Principal Officers (£27,849 - £41,616)	228	316	544
Chief Officers (£73,080 - £122,323)	8	5	13
Soulbury & youth officers (£26,799 - £85,632)	37	44	81
Teachers, Head, Deputy, and Assistant Head Teachers (£21,558-£110,418)	331	951	1282
TOTAL	1524	5141	6665

People employed by us on 31 March 2013 by (where known) protected characteristic

Description	Schools	Other Services	Total	%
Headcount	2967	3698	6665	100
Full Time	1322	1917	3239	48.6
Part Time (one post held)	1275	1632	2907	43.6
Multi Part Time	370	149	519	7.8
Male	519	1005	1524	22.9
Female	2448	2693	5141	77.1
Disability Declared	10	79	89	1.3
Carer Responsibilities	61	208	269	4
Ethnic Minority	27	43	70	1.1
Welsh Speaker	152	99	251	3.8
Age Profile: 16 - 25	220	190	410	6.2
Age Profile: 26 - 35	673	641	1314	19.7
Age Profile: 36 - 45	929	939	1868	28
Age Profile: 46 - 55	768	1171	1939	29.1
Age Profile: 56 - 65	354	710	1064	15.9
Age Profile 65 and over	23	47	70	1.1

People who applied for jobs with us.

Between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013 we received 16,511 job applications from 6,790 individual applicants. The analysis of applicants is as follows:

Description	No. Applicants	%
Male Applicants	2247	33.1
Female Applicants	4528	66.7
Unspecified	15	0.2
Disability declared/recorded:		
	294	4.3
Age Profile:-		
16 – 25	2185	32.2
26 – 35	1913	28.2
36 – 45	1317	19.4
46 – 55	962	14.2
56 – 65	323	4.7
65+	10	0.1
Unknown	80	1.2
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	5210	76.7
Bisexual	41	0.6
Gay Man	49	0.7
Gay Woman/Lesbian	37	0.5
Prefer not to say	179	2.7
Other	27	0.4
Unknown/not declared	1247	18.4
Marital Status		
Married	2031	29.9
Living with Partner	1063	15.7
Same Sex or Civil Partnership	17	0.3
Separated/divorced	469	6.9
Single	2927	43.1
Widowed	38	0.5
Prefer not to say	61	0.9
Unknown/not declared	184	2.7
Race		
White	6417	94.5
Asian/Asian British	87	1.2
Black/Black British	41	0.6
Chinese	12	0.2
Mixed Race	63	1
Prefer not to say	96	1.4
Unknown / not stated	74	1.1

Internal Job Applicants

Of the 776 employees who applied internally for a different job within the council, 308 were successful. The table below outlines those employees' protected characteristics (where known).

Employee/Applicant Description	Successful	
	Yes	No
Gender		
Female applicants	226	379
Male applicants	82	89
Transgender		
Prefer not to say	0	4
Age Category		
16 – 25	39	72
26 – 35	68	153
36 – 45	82	141
46 – 55	73	91
56 - 65	44	11
65 +	2	0
Disability		
Yes	6	11
Race		
Asian or Asian British	3	1
Black or Black British	1	0
Chinese	0	1
Mixed	3	0
Not known / prefer not to say	30	55
Other	1	0
White	270	411
Sexuality		
Bisexual	0	2
Gay woman/lesbian	1	1
Heterosexual/straight	52	265
Gay man	1	0
Other	0	1
Prefer not to say/unknown	254	199
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Married	117	186
With partner	13	35
Prefer not to say	59	44
Civil partnership	2	1
Separated / divorced	22	35
Single	91	166
Widowed	4	1

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. A process is being developed which will enable us to record any employee whose request for training is refused from 2013/2014. During 2012/2013, 14 employees were successful in their application for post entry training and development.

Characteristic	No. of employees
Female	7
Male	7
Transgender	0
Age:	
• 16 – 25	1
• 26 – 35	5
• 36 – 45	8
Disability	0
Race	(White) 14
Sexuality	(Prefer not to say) 2
Civil Partnership/Marriage:	
• Married	5
• Partner	1
• Single	8

No formal applications for post entry training and development were refused in 2012/2013.

During 2012/2013, there were 4750 personal learning events in Bridgend County Borough Council. Employees' attendance at these events (individual training courses) comprised the following:

Employee/Applicant Description	Number of employees attending
Gender	
Female	3890
Male	860
Transgender	
Yes	0
Age Category	
16 – 25	395
26 – 35	968
36 – 45	1332
46 – 55	1400
56 - 65	619
65 +	36
Disability	
Yes	65
Race	
Asian or Asian British	23
Black or Black British	3
Mixed	11
Not known / prefer not to say	446
Other	11
White	3983
Sexuality	
Bisexual	3
Gay man	6
Gay woman/lesbian	7
Heterosexual/straight	789
Other	3
Prefer not to say/not stated	3942
Marriage and Civil Partnership	
Married	2139
With partner	143
Prefer not to say	56
Civil partnership	6
Separated / divorced	371
Single	1078
Widowed	36

Employees involved in a grievance or disciplinary procedure

All our grievance and disciplinary cases are recorded centrally.

Grievances 2012/2013

14 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	10
Male	4
Transgender	0
Age:	
• 26 – 35	2
• 36 – 45	3
• 46 – 55	4
• 56 – 65	5
• 65+	0
Disability	Not disclosed
Race	0
Sexuality	0
Civil Partnership/Marriage:	
• Married	1
• Single	1

Disciplinary procedures

39 employees were involved in a disciplinary procedure.

Characteristic	No. of employees
Female	31
Male	8
Transgender	0
Age: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 – 25 • 26 – 35 • 36 – 45 • 46 – 55 • 56 – 65 	 6 4 14 10 5
Disability	1
Race: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian • White • Not disclosed 	 1 36 2
Sexuality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heterosexual/straight 	6
Civil Partnership/Marriage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married • Partner • Prefer not to say • Separated/divorced • Single • Widowed 	 13 4 1 5 6 1

The number of people who left our employment

Reason for Leaving	
End of contract	406
Ill health	38
TUPE	4
Dismissed	15
Resignation	460
Age retirement	91
Redundancy (Voluntary)	10
Death in service	9
Capability (Performance)	2
Capability (Health)	25
Redundancy (Compulsory)	10
Total leavers	1070

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 2013 / 2014 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](#)